



# GUIDE TO UNDEATH

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

**A RESOURCE TO THE DANGEROUS ARTS**













# GUIDE TO UNDEATH

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## CHAPTER 1: LORE TOWARDS THE UNLIVING



FROM THE ENCROACHING DARKNESS OF A breached crypt a shape emerges. Shuffling and groaning with a dim awareness, the freshly risen form possesses an insatiable hunger to snatch the spark of life from the living. With dark purpose, it lurches forward. So begins many an undeadly legend..

Yet, other origin tales exist. Other, more purposeful slides into undeath. Other stories of benign masters over life and death. Stories hinted at in the margins of arcane history. Stories buried in texts that speak of those who dared adopt the form if not function of the unliving. Indeed, such champions of undeath can be found across the lands. These beings pay little heed to self-righteous stances against their work. Instead they pay fealty to undeath. They recognize the power and enduring nature of such a journey. Why, they ponder, should immortality be reserved for the gods alone?

Unfortunately all too often these knowledge-seekers are known for their most nefarious members: liches, necromancers, vampires. Yet the ranks of those who seek True Undeath are myriad. Their interests are often inquisitive. Or desperate. Or materialistic.

Some are explorers, wishing to investigate the border between life and death. Others are pragmatists, seeing the utility of halting the ravages of the impermanent flesh. And of course, like any tradition there are those who seek simple and raw power, if only to rail against the inevitability of their own demise.

Regardless of their initial motivation a common trait among undeadly savants is a desire for authority and the autonomy that such pursuits bestow.

Written for both players and Dungeon Masters, this book is for those unafraid of the admonishment heaped upon free-spirited and eternally curious beings. This guide is for those who seek knowledge and power in whatever form it takes and through means far removed from innocence and self-denial. This guide is for those who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty. *Very dirty.*

This guide is for those who wish to become masters of the *Unliving Arts*.

*I knew from an early age I had no desire to grow old and die. My uncle, a powerful abjurer of the family, and also my mentor, informed me that only foul mages sought the unnatural and undesirable magics offered by the Dark Arts. His ignorance of their specifics made them easy to cultivate without suspicion. Despite his hopes, my most thrilling achievement came not from the school of Abjuration. In the end his lessons were not nearly so helpful as was his aged, yet surprisingly strong and healthy anatomy.*

*One never forgets their first zombie.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend  
Lich of the  
White Tree*

## THE DANGEROUS ART

Many believe the secrets of undeath are the exclusive domain of a single school of magic: Necromancy. While the Tradition holds perhaps the largest body of work on the subject, Necromancy as a whole encompasses a great deal of knowledge that falls outside this narrow understanding of the school.

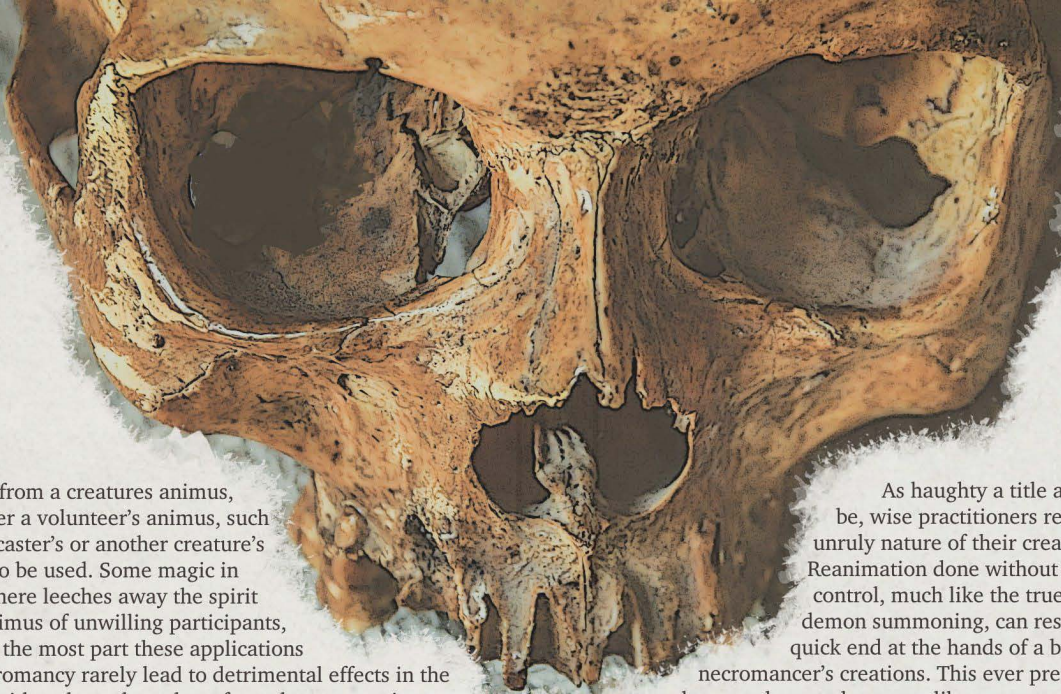
To begin with, Necromancy as a tradition is comprised of three separate spheres of research. The initial sphere, the one typically studied by most initiates, concerns manipulation of the force of life that animates and infuses all living creatures. To practitioners of Necromancy this driving force is called the *animus*. It is responsible for a creature's muscles and emotions. The animus is also how practitioners are able to affect a creature's physical well-being.

Separate from this energy is a creature's immortal soul. Whereas the animus can be thought of as the spiritual blood and guts of a living being, the soul is what drives it. It is a creature's heart and mind. The combination of these two aspects, a creature's spirit, acting as operator, and it's animus, the energizing fuel, are what gives a body its purpose and utility. Mastery in this first sphere of Necromancy allows a practitioner astonishing power over both these divine energies.

By manipulating one or the other, Necromancy grants arcanists the ability to impart temporary healing, create protective barriers and fundamentally alter a creature's restorative capabilities. These healing magics derive their







power from a creature's animus, however a volunteer's animus, such as the caster's or another creature's can also be used. Some magic in this sphere leeches away the spirit and animus of unwilling participants, but for the most part these applications of Necromancy rarely lead to detrimental effects in the caster, either through study or from the community at large. Most mages choose not to delve past these forms of Necromancy due to the unsavory and potentially ostracizing nature of the Tradition's other spheres: the spheres of death and undeath.

Death magic focuses on the siphoning and corruption of the animating forces of life. Through tapping directly into a creature's animus a necromancer is able to alter this energy and through careful study, drain or wither away its potency. With increasing expertise, even the engine that drives the animus, the soul of a creature, can become the target of death magics.

For these debilitating effects, practitioners and outsiders alike refer to this sphere as the *Dark Arts*. Nefarious and evil minded spellcasters seem perfectly willing to accept this moniker. More knowledgeable arcanists, tend to see the harmful effects created by powerful death magic as little different from the fireballs and stinking clouds cast by the average evoker. These adepts, both within the school and without, recognize that it is the third and final sphere where the entire tradition earns its maleficent reputation: the sphere of undeath.

Undeath is the final and most secretive area of study in the Tradition of Necromancy. It involves the school's most signature effects: the animation and control of the dead. Practitioners by this point have learned to both strengthen and weaken a creature's life force and return or expel a creature's very soul. Once this mastery is attained they learn to 'revive' in proper fashion the remaining animus of a creature's body with or without its original spirit.

Whereas the soul departs immediately upon death, animus fades away slowly as the body rots, similar to the heat from a dying fire. In the same way that a transmuter unlocks the latent energies in gold, so too does a student of Necromancy impose their will upon the husk of a creature's form long enough to compel it to act in a shadowy manner of its former self.

Because of this 'corruption' of a body's remaining animus, Necromancy is considered evil by design. And while nefarious masters within the Tradition gleefully promote this image, others view these 'inventions' instead through a more prideful lense.

To these individuals their 'creations' are nothing short of direct challenges to the gods themselves as most sages confess that the gods and the gods alone can create and destroy souls. With supreme egoism, they refuse to refer to their work in the pejorative. These masters choose instead to wrap their studies in a more affirming title: the *Unliving Arts*.

As haughty a title as this may be, wise practitioners realize the unruly nature of their creations.

Reanimation done without absolute control, much like the true dark art of demon summoning, can result in a quick end at the hands of a budding

necromancer's creations. This ever present fact makes neophyte and master alike come to refer to this sphere privately as the *Dangerous Arts*.

But the Dangerous Arts encompass more than just the reanimation of corpses. In this final sphere of Necromancy, practitioners can extend their own life by unnatural means.

And here is where the Tradition of Necromancy finds common cause with others on the road to *True Undeath*. Through such practices as the consumption of powerful undead blood, the taking of sacred and profane Oaths and even worship of unliving beings directly, the sphere of undeath joins with those who seek immortality and unlifed by other, more mundane means.

## HARVESTERS, ADMIRERS AND THE FAITHFUL

By their very nature, undead are imbued with enough magical potency that even the lay person has the ability to tap into this raw if highly corrupted residue of arcane energy. The simplest means of acquiring this reservoir is through harvesting specific parts of the undead.

Much like residuum, reinvigorated and magically charged animus housed in specific parts of certain undead beings can be extracted and used to alter a living creature's abilities and powers. Organs such as the eye, the heart and the brain of many undead are filled with potent amounts of necrotic charged animus that drives these undead creatures. To those with a steady hand, the physical implantation of these parts through grafting techniques can bless individuals with powerful abilities that mimic the features of their former undead owners.

Other portions of the undead including the blood, flesh or the ectoplasmic secretions of certain incorporeal forms can confer many benefits on those who partake or employ their essences. Such practices have produced entire Orders of Paladins devoted to the acquisition of these remains. Likewise, the anointing of certain undead residual emanations can enhance mundane gear as well as the physical prowess of those who employ these distillates.

While grafts and the like do not impart a mastery over death itself, some view them as but one step on a long path

Blood, sweat and tears. From the living, quite useless components. From the unliving however, now that is a profitable adventure indeed.

-Zorander Barlowe  
Hunter's League





towards achieving True Undeath. For those with a less grisly disposition, true believers can acquire similar abilities and powers without the need for harvesting when they begin to adopt philosophies devoted towards undead creatures directly.

Knights, warlocks and others who decide to venerate such beings find their convictions lead to powerful endowments. Rather than forcefully taking the remains of these creatures, those who come to serve them develop a benign connection with their unliving masters. Through service, such acolytes have the potential to transition into undead or manifest certain undeathly traits. These traits and transformations are often determined by the type of undead they choose to revere.

## THE RANKS OF THE UNLIVING

Not all undead are created equal. Those who seek True Undeath would view their reanimated corpse returning in zombie form as a complete failure. An investigation then, of the variations of undead are a core point of study by all who take a serious interest in achieving some form of eternity. For the less ambitious, even a cursory understanding of the various types of undead is at least a proper precaution. And for those who wish subjugation or control of the undead, such education is mandatory.

### SOULED AND SOULLESS

If the animus of a form is revived without a viable soul being inserted back into the body, the resulting creature is a soulless undead. Zombies are the most well known of these types of creatures, however intelligent and hideous *bodaks*, whose souls are damaged beyond repair through foolish devotion, as well as flesh eating ghouls, also fit within this category. Even more bizarre manifestations like the serpentine *forsaken shell* and the vengeance seeking *mohrg* are similarly reanimated. Incorporeal soulless undead include the lore-maddened *allip* and the hate infused shadow, whose existences are driven solely by the need to extinguish life and spread their suffering.

Soulless undead are considered nothing more than mindless animals and suitable only for ridicule and disdain. To prevent such a dismal fate, it is common for True Undeath seekers to venture towards eternity alongside others. Fellow adventurers for instance, unaware of a companions ultimate goal, offer useful protection on raids into long-sought crypts and well-hidden temples. Societies of undeath admirers filled with aspirants of immortality can also guide a neonate away from outcomes arrived at through careless mistakes.

In contrast to the soulless undead, souled undeath is the fate every hunter of the True Undeath wishes to achieve. The most emblematic outcome of such a quest is the form of the lich: a powerful undead caster impervious to death and housed in self-reanimating corpses that allows for an eternity of study and ever expanding experiences.

Vampirism is the next most sought after means of True Undeath. Both of these forms are considered evil by default yet legendary means of retaining one's mortal sensibilities and ethics even after achieving True Undeath hold out hopes that the slide into darkness may not always be the ultimate price for immortality.

### UNDEAD PHYSIOLOGY

Undead are driven by a variety of motivations. Soulless undead rarely have a sentience that responds to anything beyond immediate stimuli and follow commands to the letter without ingenuity. Undead with souls are more cunning, but their perception of time can lead to truly bizarre and insane approaches to problems.

Whereas a zombie will take a direct route to an approaching knight, a vampire may spend years cultivating their enemies downfall, using loved ones, neighbors and entire communities as nothing more than pawns. Wights and deathlocks may approach an adversary on a more immediate timeline but use similarly compassionless tactics to weaken an opponents resolve.

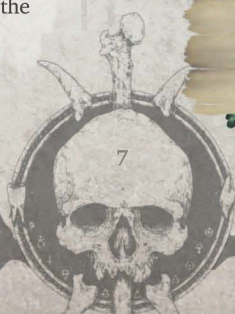
These approaches are due to the fact that undead do not live, they simply exist. This existence generally turns an undead mind into a highly emotionless construct that perceives the world through a very narrow, unchanging lense.

Even those that require the living for food or for companionship eventually come to see these connections in purely abstract terms. They rarely feel loss or empathy when such beings are removed from their unives, viewing these departures similar to the death of a particularly good servant or a highly productive workhorse.



Many neonates believe zombies are the worst form of failure that can befall any who begin the study of Necromancy. This is generally because they've never heard of a bodak before.

- Alistair Lurecock, Member of the Church of Ash





Much like the purposeless and soulless undead, there are souled manifestations that followers may become which are viewed with equal disdain. Perhaps worst among these is the *boneclaw*, the product of a botched lichdom ritual wherein a creature's soul is bound inside a random mortal's physical form while their body rises elsewhere as an uncontrollable undead menace.

Betrayal on the path of undeath can also lead to one becoming a tormented and soul-trapped *skull lord*, joined with their betrayers at the whim of evil and displeased deities. Ineffective warlocks may be reanimated by their enraged patrons as servile *deathlocks*. Especially hate-filled beings, as is too often a case for those who seek True Undeath, may even spontaneously return as *wights* or *ghosts*, driven by unfinished plans of vengeance or uncontrollable rage.

All of these fates, even those perhaps sought by seekers are ultimately considered failures by those who understand the power of lichdom and vampirism. Yet those who merely wish to acquire harvested parts or mastery over the undead, rarely see any of these outcomes, even these two sought after forms, as desirable results.

Because of these varied means of failures and successes, many seekers decide that the road towards eternity or its mastery is one best not walked alone. For the resourceful, or lucky, joining societies of undeath can be the surest path towards attaining one's goal.

## OPTIONAL RULE: PLAYER CHARACTERS AS UNDEAD

The *Monster Manual* provides for a variant rule of allowing player characters to transform into vampire spawn and vampires. With the exception of DM control, these changes can be applied to many undead found in various published 5E material.

If a player character becomes an undead creature a DM may wish to convert that character into a variant undead form. Such modifications are always applicable only to souled undead and should have the potential to allow characters to retain some semblance of their humanity, even if touched by undeath.

The following changes to player characters are left to the discretion of the DM if they are to be included in a game. These options alter a character's abilities far above the normal capabilities of a player character and should be considered carefully by the DM before their inclusion. The changes are meant to drastically affect a campaign, and should be viewed as both a consequence of a player's actions but also a potential reward, depending on the individual player's ultimate designs for their character.

**Death Knight.** A character must satisfy the following before becoming a death knight: The character must have at least one level in the class of Paladin with the Oathbreaker Oath and must have an alignment of Neutral or Evil. A character retains its statistics when they become a death knight, including class, spells, feats and abilities but gains the following traits:

**Alignment.** The character's alignment becomes chaotic.

**Magic Resistance.** The character gains advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



DEATH KNIGHTS RARELY FORGIVE,  
AND NEVER FORGET.

**Hellfire.** The character gains the death knight's *Hellfire Orb* action. The saving throw DC for this effect is equal to 8 plus the character's proficiency bonus plus the character's Charisma modifier.

**Rejuvenation.** The character gains a lich's *Rejuvenation* trait, but without the need of a phylactery. Instead, the character appears in a place of the DM's choosing and does not require souls for this ability to function.

**Turn Resistance.** The character has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

**Undead Nature.** The character no longer requires air, food, drink or sleep. Instead of sleeping, the character must enter a contemplative, mentally calm state that lasts 4 hours once every 24 hours. For the duration the character is considered unconscious and incapacitated. Not even a *wish* spell may rouse the character while they are in this state. After being dormant in this way, the character gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Undead Resistances.** The character gains immunity to necrotic and poison damage and cannot become exhausted, frightened or poisoned.

**Undead Sight.** The character gains darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.

**Lich.** A character must satisfy the following before becoming a lich: The character must have access to at least one spell slot of 9th level. A character retains its statistics when they become a lich, including class, spells, feats and abilities but gains the following traits:

**Alignment.** The character's alignment becomes evil.





**Legendary Resistance.** If the character fails a saving throw, it can instead choose to succeed. Once this ability is used, the character can not use it again until 24 hours have passed.

**Rejuvenation.** The character gains a lich's **Rejuvenation** trait. In addition, the character must abide by the **Soul Sacrifices** section found in the lich entry of the *Monster Manual*. Every 7 day period after a character becomes a lich, if they fail to abide by the rules of the Soul Sacrifices section, they must make a d20 roll. On an 11 or above, the character becomes a demilich under the DMs control.

**Turn Resistance.** The character has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

**Undead Nature.** The character no longer requires air, food, drink or sleep. Instead of sleeping, the character must enter a contemplative, mentally calm state that lasts 4 hours once every 24 hours. For the duration the character is considered unconscious and incapacitated. Not even a *wish* spell may rouse the character while they are in this state. After being dormant in this way, the character gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Undead Resistances.** The character gains resistance to cold, lightning and necrotic damage as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. In addition the character gains immunity to poison damage and is immune to being charmed, exhausted, frightened, paralyzed or poisoned.

**Undead Sight.** The character gains darkvision out to a range of 120 feet.

**Sword Wraith.** A character retains its statistics, including class, spells, feats and abilities but gains the following traits:

**Alignment.** The character's alignment becomes evil.

**Martial Fury.** The character can choose to gain advantage on one weapon attack per round.

**Undead Nature.** The character no longer requires air, food, drink or sleep. Instead of sleeping, the character must enter a contemplative, mentally calm state that lasts 4 hours once every 24 hours. For the duration the character is considered unconscious and incapacitated. Not even a *wish* spell may rouse the character while they are in this state. After being dormant in this way, the character gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Undead Resistances.** The character gains resistance to necrotic damage and from bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. The character also gains immunity to poison and cannot become exhausted, frightened or poisoned.

**Undead Sight.** The character gains darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

**Wight.** A character retains its statistics, including class, spells, feats and abilities but gains the following traits:

**Alignment.** The character's alignment becomes evil.

**Life Drain.** The character gains the wights *Life Drain* action, with an attack bonus equal to their Strength modifier plus their proficiency bonus and the damage bonus equal to their Strength modifier. The maximum number of zombies a character can reanimate and control is equal to their Wisdom modifier.

**Undead Nature.** The character no longer requires air, food, drink or sleep. Instead of sleeping, the character must enter a contemplative, mentally calm state that lasts 4 hours

*Capable if unpredictable soldiers, wights serve their purpose.*

*It is always helpful to conserve one's resources, and a wight's zombies are just as effective as your own, so long as they follow orders as willingly as their masters.*

*But even more beneficial, when rivals refuse to heel, caravans in the dead of night are easy enough motivators for these life eaters and their progeny.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

once every 24 hours. For the duration the character is considered unconscious and incapacitated. Not even a *wish* spell may rouse the character while they are in this state. After being dormant in this way, the character gains the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the character has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Undead Resistances.** The character gains resistance to necrotic damage and to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered. The character also gains immunity to poison and can not become exhausted.

**Undead Sight.** The character gains darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

## UNDYING PRAYER

For a character to become a death knight, sword wraith or wight, DMs may order that a dying character must invoke a prayer to a deity of undeath, destruction or vengeance as their soul departs. When a character dies, the character would make a Religion check with a DC set by the DM to convince a deity to allow them to continue with their mortal work. A character that is a follower of a specific deity known to grant such desires may, at the DMs discretion, make this roll with advantage. On a success, the character rises the following round as one of these creatures, potentially altering the entire campaign in the process, for good or for ill.

## HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: SOCIETIES OF UNDEATH

The few societies in the world devoted towards undeath are guided by a variety of methods and philosophies much like their individual members. As focused a cause as a personal achievement in undeath and its mastery may seem, many seekers are not wholly self-interested creatures. At least, some aren't until after they achieve True Undeath. But even afterwards, the bonds and community that these disparate factions create are usually still able to foster new members and potential aspirants on the path. Finding such societies, much less learning of their existence, is a rare thing indeed. It is perhaps why loved ones and life-long friends may sooner be forgotten than the ties individuals form once they join such knowledgeable and purpose-driven groups.

## THE CHURCH OF ASH

*Allies in the Arts*

To those who worship gods and goddesses with a portfolio devoted towards undeath, the need to operate secretly is a







constant concern. While not all individuals with such beliefs are of an evil bent, even the neutral minded realize the need for caution and discretion. The Church of Ash is more a code-word to denote this shared connection among various faiths. Members come from diverse followings but all recognize the need for allies and for safe spaces in the areas and communities they operate in.

The Church is nothing more than a collection of worshippers who seek undeath or the mastery of the Dangerous Arts in private and who pledge to assist others with similar goals. As individuals with faith, they recognize a shared connection typically not found in the faithless of the world.

Church members do not hold large gatherings or operate as a cohesive organization, rather they are simply supporters of one another who offer hospitality and aid when needed. Knowledge as well as useful information such as local ordinances and potential enemies in an area are exchanged between members. Affiliation with the church is acknowledged through a simple illusion spell that conjures up the image of a corpse made of ash, cast in private after long hours of cautious conversation. Once identified, members will often spend the next few days exchanging notes and expertise in the Dangerous Arts before going their separate ways, having gained a useful ally and potentially new information in the process.

## HUNTER'S LEAGUE

### *Undead As Sport*

In the borderlands between states and along the outskirts of civilized societies there are regions of the world filled with terrible creatures, living and unliving. Members of the Hunter's League enjoy nothing more than the pursuit of such creatures and the acquisition of their various body parts as trophies. Indeed, the Hunter's League, a loose collection of avid rangers, fighters and others devoted towards taking down the most difficult and dangerous beings of the world, are largely responsible for identifying the many harvestable and useful parts of the undead, and using those parts in their pursuit of becoming truly terrible and effective huntsmen.

As a group, the League concerns itself with a few main activities: the hunting of the undead for sport and fleeing, and increasing strife and instability in regions so as to allow for the former. The League began as a tight-knit mercenary force that hunted large and mighty foes, mostly dragons at its outset. Equipping themselves with the scales and various body parts of these magical creatures they began to realize the rarity of such beings and the large swaths of time spent waiting for the opportunity to engage in such hunts. The League shifted its focus after it began to unlock the secrets of undead harvesting. Realizing the vastly more common and equally resourceful parts of the undead that existed in the world radically altered the priority of the League. With many more opportunities, and the eventual awareness that the League itself could create the circumstances for such opportunities, the League developed into its modern incarnation.

League members are mostly martial types, bent on acquiring trophies and powers of undead creatures the world over. The League runs annual and periodic challenges whereby the senior members, oftentimes ancient and cunning beings who are masters in every conceivable fighting style, reward newer hunters with rare and powerful items from the most dangerous creatures they themselves have fought and defeated. Unlike more traditional and clearly defined gladiatorial fights, the League creates the conditions in small regions of the world where undead creatures can run unchecked in the countryside with members competing for the highest body count. Especially difficult opponents, vampire lords and death knights are even courted and lured by the League into such areas, through discrete and anonymous channels, just so the League can hunt and acquire their valuable parts. In all of these scenarios, the League sees the societies and regions it operates and hunts in as little more than preserves of living cattle that fuel their own sporting ambitions.

When the League chooses a suitable area or community, it will first sow strife and distrust between neighboring governments, preferably ones that already possessed a hostility towards one-another. Brutal and bloody sports contests, including gladiator tournaments and animal fighting, with accompanying gambling will rise sharply in the months before the League begins their Challenges. This serves to foster an atmosphere where life becomes increasingly cheap, but also as a means of spotting potential new members. Raids and skirmishes are encouraged and engineered by members, with the ultimate goal to create small wars so their Challenges can be attributed to the outbreaks of these hostilities. Once begun,





the League will persist for as long as possible acquiring new trophies and powers from their undead quarry.

Individuals of the League will often keep journals with long lists of adversaries and foes. These lists will also include the entities abilities and harvested parts. Additional notes, like dates and times of upcoming Challenges in various nearby regions and local allies are also written within. The League is careful to operate discretely and members can identify one another by crossed index fingers to represent crossed swords, a typical gesture the regional Master of the Hunt will make to begin the next Challenge.

## THE RED KNIGHTS (ORDER OF THE VAMPIR)

### *The Vitae Seekers*

Formed centuries ago by a single blasphemous paladin of a faith denied by any who are even aware of this Orders existence the Red Knights are a group devoted towards attainment of mystical powers through consumption of the blood of vampires. Known amongst themselves as the Order of the Vampyr they typically introduce themselves to outsiders as a Knight of the Red Orchid.

Small in number, the Knights of the Order travel the lands openly, masking their true intentions with a convincing facade. They present themselves as powerful undead slayers and offer their services for a hefty price to kingdoms and townships besieged by undying monsters. However, their true quarry are vampires and the Knights will only venture to lands were rumors or evidence of such creatures have surfaced. When such an opportunity presents itself, anywhere from 2 to 5 Knights, along with their squirely retinue will descend upon the region and begin searching out the true source of their devotion.

During these hunts, or Blood Crusades as they call them, the Knights go to great lengths to capture rather than slay any vampire or vampire spawn they manage to track down. Once in their possession, the Knights slowly bleed the creature and its spawn of the potent nectar they swear fealty to. Through dark and secretive rituals, the Knights are able to empower themselves with vampire blood, which they call *vitae*, growing strong in this process.

While not overtly evil, the Knights do operate with a narrow and self-centered view of the world. Typically venturing alone, the more senior members of the Order eventually come to acquire long-standing pages and perhaps a skilled assassin or rogue as companions after many failed attempts prior, to aid in the image of a stately figure. When members do congregate, the events generally happen in an establishment owned by a wealthy thrall, an associate of the Order who are not themselves members but are addicted to the vitae the Knights provide them with. These happenings generally take place in large metropolises where the Knights can easily pass for followers of other faiths and move through districts that ask little questions of visitors.

Because of the nature of their Oath, the Knights do not have a large written body of knowledge and most members keep coded journals filled with notes and vague references easily identified only by other members and thralls. The organization is run and funded by the Paladins who actively pursue their vampire prey and who take the Oath of Blood. The Order also relies on thralls in the cities and regions they operate in to help with financing which are wealthy and useful individuals who the Knights have been able to get addicted to vitae but who have not taken

the Oath. Occasionally, when these thralls fail to become useful anymore or become too addicted, they serve as much needed 'replenishers' to their quarry, thus completing the cycle of blood. When the Order does wish to show some sign of their passing, they will leave a red orchid, a funerary flower with a reference to their quarry, in a circle of crushed and powdered bone to symbolize their undying commitment to the vitae they seek.

## THE SOCIETY OF THE EBON HOOD

### *A Network of Vengeance*

When a deity or some other agent of divine power chooses







to reanimate and infuse a lost soul into the body of a revenant, it often takes time for these confused creatures to discover the purpose of their return. There are however some lucky few who are immediately graced with a straight path towards their goal. These are generally revenants who have been found and instructed by members of the Ebon Hood.

A very loose confederacy of tormented souls, the Ebon Hood draws its members from those who have been wronged or betrayed by a great injustice. With promises of vengeance and retribution the Hood instructs its members in the near worship of risen beings the organization calls Ebon Hoods: divine executioners who the society believes are unleashed back into the living world as a balancing force by the gods. The Society actively seeks out such returned beings and gives them training and teaches them how to use their powers on their quests for divine retribution.

While the Society presents itself as almost benign protectors and guardians to the newly risen it finds, it also takes the opportunity to direct these creatures towards targets of their own members misfortune. Viewing the risen as powerful and highly unstable dervishes, they assist revenants on their personal quests, but also subtly implicate individuals who they themselves wish to see eradicated by these destructive forces of the gods. As such, there are a good deal of rather wealthy and mercantile members of the Society who fund the network hoping to see a rival fall to the wrath of a newly risen undead.

This odd symbiotic relationship that the Society has created with revenants was not started purely for capitalistic purposes. It is believed to have come about due to certain clergy members of a god of vengeance who took it upon themselves to personally train the first Ebon Hood they came across. Realizing that such creatures were destined for short existences, they decided to elevate the creatures purely personal reasons for rebirth into more communal ones. Members of the Hood typically tattoo their inner forearms with the black outline of a bound noose to identify one another, and as a means to hopefully ward off any revenants who may mistake them for one of their enemies.

## SOCIETY OF THE WHITE TREE

### *Bureaucracy of the Undead*

Not all liches are evil. Those that belong to the society of the White Tree, generally are. However, members of this organization are evil within the bounds and rules of the societies they operate in. Where other liches may kidnap, torture and outright murder to achieve their aims, the Society of the White Tree instead rely on equally effective tactics of bribery, commerce and political intimidation. This is because members of the Society seek a truly bizarre outcome: the full integration of the undead with the civilizations of the living.

The means by which the Society attempts to achieve this goal are strategic. Members most often will push for adoption and normalization of necromantic practices within an area as a first step. For instance, the allowance and decriminalization of zombie and skeletal servants are a good sign the Society has begun to operate in a given area. Further attempts to integrate the undead into the world of the living include the establishment of respected schools



Revenants present an interesting dilemma. On the one hand their bodies are host to prodigious resources. On the other, their determination and fearlessness make them troublesome adversaries. And that's not even the ones who've managed to find an ally or two on their fatalistic quest for vengeance. Best strategy, find a way to convince them a local warlord was involved in their murder. Step back, enjoy the show, and collect your corpse.

-Zorander

of anatomical study, hospices for the dying and eventually guilds devoted to the Unliving Arts will become prevalent. The Society's ultimate goal is not truly an integration of the dead and the living however, but a subjugation of the living to the whims of undead masters. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on one's perspective, the Society has yet to completely take over the reigns of a governmental power but were that the case, the Society would be able to operate openly. This would yield a harsh and brutal reality for the living of such a realm who would become little more than working cattle, with any disobedience met with instant transformation into more willing and pliable undead servitors. Indeed, Society members look favorably on the idea of industries run by zombie and skeletal workers lorded over by obedient human 'managers'.





Until the Society is able to truly implement their grand vision of an undead kingdom over the living, the lichs operate as exceptionally powerful and paranoid merchant and sorcerous figures. Because of the nature of lichdom and the need for constant souls, most members make use of subjugated clans of goblins, kobolds and other small humanoid creatures who breed rapidly and serve as both slave labor and sacrifice.

The tell-tale signs of the beginning of a Society's presence in an area, even before any new regulations are passed, is typically the appearance of small, hooded figures coming to and fro a newly arrived merchant abode under cover of night. Unlike most lichs, White Tree members are careful to make their homes in highly prosperous communities where they have the chance for daily interactions with the living. While their mindset may not change, these interactions keep the lichs connected with their eventual servants and thus keep the Society's members from becoming out of touch and in danger of obsolescence.

The symbol of the Society is the engraving of a leafless whitebeam tree, a benign enough emblem that actually references the location of the first communal meeting held by the three founding lichs who formed the Society on a moonless night a little over a century ago.

## IN CELEBRATION OF THE DEAD

Despite many of the societies that champion undeath being devoted towards less than savory goals, and despite many lands being entirely against the practice of the Dangerous Arts, there are some nations and cultures where communication with the dead and genuine incorporation of the deceased into daily activities are viewed not with fear but with reverence.

Such communities can run the gamut from small tribal villages to highly complex theocracies. In such societies, priests and sacred practitioners who incorporate Necromancy into their ceremonies and celebrations are considered normal and often highly revered, functioning as vital members in the service to the health and well-being of their peoples. These practitioners develop extensive knowledge of the first sphere of Necromancy, the life sphere, however they often become masters of the other spheres of the Tradition as well.

Festivals, celebrations and holy days in some cultures look to these generally good-aligned Necromancers to make use of the undead sphere of the Tradition for very short periods of time. During such activities, these White Necromancers will often raise the body of a deceased at the behest of family members as a means of celebrating and revering their departed kin. Special and elaborate steps that require careful embalming techniques and extensive mortuary preparations of the body will necessarily be a prerequisite at the time of death in such cultures, and the activity is largely seen as symbolic due to the fact that these animated personages are usually devoid of the soul and memories they had in life. However these reanimated individuals are often dressed in elaborate costume, paraded through a familial community, offered gifts and despite their grisly form, treated with respect and benevolence. Of course such reanimated corpses are not your typical zombie or skeleton and White Necromancers are rumored to infuse undead of this sort not with negative and shadow energy, but positive life forces siphoned from the love and devotion of their descendants and family members.

Especially powerful and devout Necromancers in these societies are rumored to have the ability to create temporary doorways to the realms of the dead and allow the departed and the living a brief chance at interaction.

However, most scholars believe such possibilities are largely considered to be done solely at the pleasure of a particular deity or its avatar. Nevertheless these societies usually go out of their way to respect the dead at all times so that when such festivities do occur, there is a chance, however small, to gain an audience with their loved ones, even if only for a brief moment.





## VARIANT RULE: BENIGN UNDEAD

If a character wishes to raise a corpse using the animate dead spell and their intentions for such an act are truly good, for instance as a means of reuniting loved ones then the option to animate benign versions of a skeleton or zombie might be something the DM may wish to consider.

For benign undead, rather than a corrupting force of necrotic energy infusing their remains and bringing them back into a foul semblance of their former selves, practitioners, White Necromancers for instance, may instead tap into the positive life force or animus of those who wish to see the corpse reanimated and impart a corpse with a bit of this living life force. If a bond exists between a nearby creature and a reanimated form, and that bond is one of companionship, friendship or especially love, then the caster of the spell may infuse the animus of the corpse with a bit of positive energy, causing the reanimated skeleton or zombie to obey the will of not the caster, but the creature who offers a bit of their own life force in the casting of the spell.

Such a sacrifice may entail the loss of hit points, or cause a profound spiritual experience on the part of the offerer. In any case, the reanimated undead might have the normal statistics of a zombie or skeleton, but lack these creatures' typical hatred of the living and in fact, merely be reanimated and functional only so long as the bonded creature chooses it to be: moving and acting solely at the discretion of the individual who once cared for the departed.

The ultimate implementation of this type of reanimation is up to the DM, but incorporating undead that are reanimated with benign or even positive aspirations is certainly an option that DMs and players may find rewarding to explore.

*I have noticed a troubling attribute on more than one occasion of servitors brought back in lands where the dead and undead are revered instead of reviled.*

*Some bizarre remnant of loyalty remains in the corpses of those whose bloodlines have a history of tribute and celebration of their dead.*

*When a zombie refuses to lay a hand on some second or third cousin it has some vague awareness of, I see little merit in taking root in the area.*

*Imagine-- zombies with a conscience. Truly despicable.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

*Odd thing, sharing a drink with a corpse. Odder still, doing it with the corpse's grandson and his new wife watching and giggling the whole time. Still, its always a good idea to adopt the local customs before a hunt.*

*-Zorander*









## CHAPTER 2: CHARACTER OPTIONS



WHEN ADVENTURERS DECIDE TO TAKE an interest in undeath and a pursuit of the *Dangerous Arts*, a world of options suddenly unfolds before them. This chapter begins by presenting a new race to complement those found in the *Player's Handbook*: the revenant. This new race is available when you make a character, provided your DM allows it in your campaign. The revenant was

originally presented by Wizards as a subrace in the online supplement *Unearthed Arcana: Gothic Heroes*. As presented here, the class borrows heavily from this playtested material and offers a more fully-fledged version of the vengeance-seeking undead race.

Following this, the chapter continues with additional class options for characters. The focus of these additional options is to provide players strong thematic builds around individuals with a fealty towards undeath. This section includes a total of 11 new class options that expand on the 12 presented in the *Player's Handbook*.

Next, readers will find a selection of new feats for characters who wish to delve deeper into the Unliving Arts. These feats follow the material found in the *Player's Handbook*. This section also includes a variant rule for including *Talents* in the construction of your character. Talents are a system developed independently from the Core Ruleset, and are detailed on the *DMSGuild* in the supplement entitled *Character Options: Talents (5E)*.

Following these new feats and Talents are two new backgrounds for players to choose for their character. They are similar to the ones described in the *Player's Handbook*: the Anatomist and the Occultist.

The next section presents tables for adding details including Events and Quirks to your character's backstory akin to the tables found in *Xanthar's Guide to Everything*.

The chapter concludes with a selection of trinkets focused on items that might be found on a typical practitioner of the Unliving Arts and are available during the creation of your character or by the good grace of your DM while embarking on your Unliving travels.

### UNDEAD RACES

This guide presents only a single undead race, the revenant. There are of course many other potential undead races that would make excellent options for players but the focus of this guide is on expanding new rules and new choices for players and DMs that have not been heavily explored in other available guides and supplements.

The many options available on the *DMSGuild* include races such as the *Dhampir*, the *Awakened Undead*, the *Bound Spirit* and more.

The ultimate goal of this supplement is to emphasize undeadly arts.

### REVENANT

Consumed by a burning desire to seek justice, a revenant is a risen creature brought back to life for one goal: the enactment of some form of judgment. Reanimated to fulfill this purpose by none other than the Raven Queen herself a revenant is no mere aimless corpse but the embodiment of a lost soul granted the power to enact divine retribution on those who wronged them. A revenant is thus a special creation of the goddess, given uniquely formed bodies of her choosing that closely resemble humans but that are marked as representatives of her power.

### ALTERED FORM

Revenants are souls of the dead returned to a semblance of life by the Raven Queen or some other agency that holds sway over the domains of the afterlife. They do not appear as undead horrors or anything like their former selves, instead they emerge from the shadow of death fully formed in a body that resembles a human though one that is slender for their height and that possess an uncanny toughness that contradicts their apparent build. Revenants have the same range of complexions as humans, but a revenant's skin is ashen and the features are sunken. Eyes are most commonly solid black with a single point of red light burning within

IMAGINE YOUR FIRST EMOTION IS PAIN.  
THAT IS THE LENSE THROUGH WHICH A  
REVENANT VIEWS THE WORLD. ANY  
WONDER ALL THEY WANT IS A RETURN TO  
THE GRAVE.





them, but other eerie eye colors - including yellow, white, silver, and gold - are not uncommon. A revenant's face and skin are clearly different from other humans and their visage has a mask-like quality that can be disturbing to mortal beings. Dark scales appear on the flesh near the ends of a revenant's limbs and their extremities end in strong, black fingernails and toenails that resemble claws.

## MISTY MEMORIES

Most revenants remember only fragments of the life they lived before, as well as snatches of a peaceful darkness that immediately preceded their return to the world. Many don't remember their names and thus take new ones. What memories do come, often arrive through visions and flashes of insight, subtly guiding them towards their ultimate goal.

Some need time to come to grips with these fragmented memories and driving compulsions. Others take to their new existence easily and without too much analysis and soul searching. Many recall a woman's voice, soft and melodious, not unlike the gentle flutter of black-feathered wings, that follows them out of the shadows and back to the wakefulness of the natural world. The words are gentle but insistent, and often the source of any compulsion that a revenant experiences upon returning to life.

Although each revenant returns to the world in a different way, most recall words that drifted out of the darkness with them. "Arise, my champion", the voice demands of them. "There is work to do."

## SINGLE-MINDED PURPOSE

Every revenant approaches the return to life from a different angle. Some relish it and long to find a way back to the life they have lost and forgotten, others embrace their new existence with a fervor and passion that obliterates the fragments of the past that still haunt them. Whatever their reaction to their new state, all revenants know that the fastest way to return to the shadows and the ultimate peace of the grave is to complete whatever tasks have been set before them as quickly and efficiently as possible.

These tasks all lead to some final purpose that may or may not be obvious to a revenant from the moment they awaken. They may choose to doggedly pursue a resolution to their existence or rebel against their expected fate and try to avoid destiny, but each revenant ultimately comes to learn the reason they were brought back to the mortal coil. This purpose may involve many smaller tasks but the final goal always involves retribution to a being who brought





their original form to an untimely end. Once a revenant realizes this fact, all other reasons fade away and they feel a constant, sharp, burning desire to seek justice, even if they choose to ignore it.

## REVENANT NAMES

Every revenant that is reanimated rises with a hazy memory of their former selves. They quickly take on a name based on the region they are brought back to so as to appear native to the area. As fragments return, many decide to adopt their former names if only amongst close associates. Others decide to forgo their past identities altogether, taking up monikers that embody their new forms such as Vengeance, Retribution, Punishment or Judgment.

## REVENANT TRAITS

Your revenant character has certain characteristics in common with other revenants.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2 and either your Charisma or Constitution score increases by 1.

**Age.** A revenant appears to be anywhere between an adolescent and middle-aged human. They do not age.

**Alignment.** Revenants are animated for a specific purpose. This purpose may require questionable tactics and their memories are often jumbled, forcing them to develop independent strategies to uncover their past, all of which leans most revenants to have a chaotic bent.

**Size.** Revenants are brought back into unique, gaunt forms that are molded by the divine agency that reanimated them. This form is generally similar to humans but slightly taller, leading most to stand any from 5 to well over 7 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Darkvision.** Thanks to your undead nature, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Past Life.** You and your DM work together to decide a single racial trait from one other race that you have as part of your new form. This trait can not increase any of your ability scores. For purposes of meeting prerequisites for things such as feats and class archetypes, you are considered a member of the race or subrace, this trait belongs to.

**Relentless Nature.** Your DM assigns a goal to you - one related to your character's death. The goal must be a specific task you can complete, such as slaying an enemy or liberating an area and its people. Until you fulfill that goal, you gain the following benefits:

- If you die, roll a d20. On a roll of 11 or above, you return to life 24 hours after death. If your body is destroyed, you reform within 1 mile of the place of your death at a spot determined by the DM. If your equipment was also destroyed, you do not regain it. If you roll a 10 or lower, the agency that returned you to life has lost faith in your ability to accomplish your task and you remain deceased and cannot be restored to life by any means except a *wish* spell.
- You know the distance and direction between you and any creature involved in your goal, such as a person you seek vengeance against or someone you

pledged to defend. This awareness fails if the creature is on another plane of existence.

When your goal is complete, you finally find rest. You die and cannot be restored to life.

**Undead.** Raised from the dead, you count as an undead creature for all spells and abilities that affect the undead. In addition you do not need to eat or breath, but you can ingest food and drink if you wish.

Instead of sleep, you must enter an inactive state for 4 hours each day where flashes of your previous life mingle with the events of the last 24 hours as your mind attempts to piece together events of your past and present to aid you towards your ultimate goal. After being dormant in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write Common and one other language of your choice, determined by your past life.

## CLASSES

The twelve classes presented in the *Player's Handbook* are expanded upon and given an undeadly treatment in this section. The material describes additional class-feature options that incorporate undead themes.

## BARBARIAN

The rage inside a barbarian's heart can sometimes ignite fires from beyond the grave. To certain tribes, these flames burn from one generation to the next. At 3rd level, a barbarian gains the Primal Path feature. The following option is available to a barbarian, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Path of the Ancestors Wrath.

### PATH OF THE ANCESTOR'S WRATH

Some barbarians find themselves the last remaining members of a lost or forgotten tribe, one that was decimated by a history of subjugation and defeat. Banished into obscurity, these tribes hold intergenerational grudges against those beings and rivals who conquered their lands and destroyed their heritage. In anguish, these barbarians follow a path guided by an ancestor who promises vengeance and wrath upon those who stole their tribal destinies.

Barbarians who take up the mantle of their ancestor's wrath channel the dark energies of a terrible and rage-filled spirit who seeks retribution from beyond the grave. Where other barbarians rage in a lust for frenzied battle, these barbarians rage with powers of the unliving on those who wronged their tribe. As their descent into the powers of undeath accelerates, this circle of culprits widens to include any and all of a barbarian's enemies, real or imagined.

### PATH OF THE ANCESTOR'S WRATH FEATURES

| Barbarian Level | Feature             |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 3rd             | Brutal Atonement    |
| 6th             | Indefatigable Wrath |
| 10th            | Vengeful Sanctuary  |
| 14th            | Paralyzing Rend     |



## BRUTAL ATONEMENT

At 3rd level, while you're raging, once per round when you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack the target of the attack must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until your rage ends or ends prematurely if you drop to 0 hit points. A creature dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

## INDEFATIGABLE WRATH

At 6th level you can expend 1 use of one of your rages as a bonus action to remove 1 level of exhaustion. Once you use this ability, you must finish a long rest before using it again.

## VENGEFUL SANCTUARY

At 10th level you can cast the *antilife shell* spell. Once you use this ability, you must finish a long rest before using it again.

## PARALYZING REND

Starting at 14th level, while you are raging, your hands grow larger and you sprout massive claws able to disable your foes with a grazing touch. Once per round, when you make an unarmed attack while you are raging, any creature hit by your claws must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) or be paralyzed until the end of your next turn. Undead creatures are immune to this ability.



## BARD

Most bards bring levity to those who listen to their epics. A select few choose instead to deliver warnings and dire portents wrapped in bawdy tales meant to teach absolution and repentance. Encoded in these stories, the audience can find the strength to make the right choices when presented with the harsh truths of life, and death. At 3rd level, a bard gains the Bard College feature. The following option is available to a bard, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the College of the Banshee.

### COLLEGE OF THE BANSHEE

To those bards inured to the hidden truths that lurk just below the surface of your average folktale, the College of the Banshee holds an alluring attraction. These bards are fond of spinning well-known stories from the perspective of the more subversive characters found in the footnotes of many a common tale. They go to great lengths to uncover the experiences of the wronged and unavenged.

For this reason, bards of the College of the Banshee are drawn to tales involving undead and the oftentimes heart-wrenching circumstances that lead to their creation. With this focus on the obscure and the nonconforming, bards of the College of the Banshee are generally solitary travelers, relaying their alternative epics as warnings and dire portents in bursts of powerful and mournful orations that inspire others about the dangers of those who lack an appreciation for the smallest treasures of life.

#### COLLEGE OF THE BANSHEE FEATURES

| Bard Level | Feature                                     |
|------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 3rd        | Painful Reverberations, Bonus Proficiencies |
| 6th        | Horrific Visage                             |
| 14th       | Banshee Wail                                |

### PAINFUL REVERBERATIONS

Beginning when you choose this college at 3rd level, when you deal damage to one or more creatures with a bard cantrip, you can spend a Bardic Inspiration die as a bonus action to deal additional thunder damage to each creature equal to the amount rolled + your Charisma modifier.

Additionally, each creature affected by this feature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become deafened for 1 minute.

### BONUS PROFICIENCIES

When you join the College of Banshees at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the Perception skill if you do not already have it and gain advantage on Perception checks

For the cost of a few unscrupulous mercenaries, a small orc village can be turned into an excellent site for... research. Just be sure to research every member present. Even a single orc, possessed of her clans primitive notions on retribution can become ... worrisome.

- Alistair Lurcock



when attempting to perceive living creatures that have a heartbeat within 30 feet of you as long as you are not deafened.

## HORRIFIC VISAGE

Starting at 6th level, when you score a critical hit with a melee weapon you can spend a Bardic Inspiration die as a reaction to twist your face into a terrifying caricature of agony and pain. Each creature within 30 feet who can see you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you until the end of your next turn.

When you use this ability, you may designate a number of creatures up to your Charisma modifier who are immune to this effect.

## BANSHEE WAIL

At 14th level, you unlock the dreadful shriek of the undead creature your school is named after. You can expend one bardic die as an action and utter an ear-piercing shrill loud enough to tear a man to shreds. Each creature within a 30-foot radius must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is deafened for 1 minute and takes 8d6 thunder damage or half as much on a successful save.

## CLERIC

Many who revere the gods do so without any expectation of a reward. Others, see their devotion as a prerequisite to the power they crave, in this life and the ones beyond.

### DIVINE DOMAINS

At 1st level, a cleric gains the Divine Domain feature. The following domain options are available to a cleric, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: Spirit and Undeath.

### SPIRIT DOMAIN

Gods of the spirit hold sway over the very spark of life itself. While the primal elements infuse creation with substance, spirit deities are responsible for overseeing the animating and ethereal forces found in all living things that give the multiverses meaning. While some of these deities emphasize the need for compassion and respect of this inherent spark, others view this energy as a potent resource of soul-stuff that can be consumed and utilized at their leisure. Followers of such gods and goddesses thus take many forms, but all of them are capable of tapping into their own spiritual energies to produce astonishing and unsettling miracles.

#### SPIRIT DOMAIN FEATURES

| Cleric Level | Feature                                      |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1st          | Domain Spells, Ethereal Sight, Bonus Cantrip |
| 2nd          | Channel Divinity: Ghost Step                 |
| 6th          | Essence Drain                                |
| 8th          | Spirit Shroud                                |
| 17th         | Spirit Theft                                 |



BANSHEE BARDS SING OF DARK SECRETS AND DARKER DESIRES.

### DOMAIN SPELLS

You gain domain spells at the cleric levels listed in the Spirit Domain Spells table. See the Divine Domain class feature for how domain spells work.

#### SPIRIT DOMAIN SPELLS

| Cleric Level | Spells                                             |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1st          | <i>unseen servant</i> , <i>cause fear</i>          |
| 3rd          | <i>misty step</i> , <i>touch of the departed</i> * |
| 5th          | <i>bestow curse</i> , <i>banishment</i>            |
| 7th          | <i>true seeing</i> , <i>passwall</i>               |
| 9th          | <i>telepathy</i> , <i>maze</i>                     |

### BONUS CANTRIP

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain the *chill touch* cantrip if you don't already know it.

### ETHEREAL SIGHT

At 1st level, as an action, you can open your awareness to magically see into the Ethereal plane. For up to 1 minute, you can see 30 feet into the Ethereal Plane as long as you are on the Material Plane, or vice versa.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.



## CHANNEL DIVINITY: GHOST STEP

Starting at 2nd level, as an action, you can present your holy symbol and invoke the name of your deity. Until the end of your turn, you can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If you end your turn inside an object or creature, you immediately take a number of force damage equal to twice your cleric level and are expelled in a random direction outside of the object or creature.

## ESSENCE DRAIN

Starting at 6th level, when you deal a critical hit to a creature with a melee attack, that creature has their maximum hit points reduced by an amount equal to the amount of damage dealt. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. A creature affected by this ability can not be affected by this feature again until the first instance has worn off.

## SPIRIT SHROUD

Starting at 8th level, when you make an attack while you are invisible and the attack misses, your invisibility does not end.

## SPIRIT THEFT

At 17th level if you end your turn while under the effects of your Channel Divinity: Path of the Incorporeal feature inside a living humanoid creature, that creature must succeed on a DC Charisma saving throw equal to 8 + your

*I have encountered a fair number of the faithful who wish to achieve the grace of lichdom. They have a good deal of practical knowledge of the Art, and a fervent belief in their goal.*

*However, I could never understand the compulsion to kneel. That is afterall, one of the strongest reasons to choose unlife: never kneel and never fade.*

*One does not seek eternity only to be a pale shadow to a distant sun.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

proficiency bonus. On a failure, you disappear and the creature is incapacitated and loses control of its body. You now control the target's body but the target is not deprived of awareness. You can't be targeted by any attack, spell or other effects except ones that can affect creatures in the ethereal plane. You use the possessed target's statistics, but do not gain access to the target's knowledge, class features or proficiencies.

This possession lasts for up to 10 minutes, until the target drops to 0 hit points or until you decide to end this effect as a bonus action. When this possession ends, you reappear in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of your host. The target is immune to this feature for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after your possession of it ends.

Once you have possessed a creature using this ability, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.

## UNDEATH DOMAIN

Gods who hold sway over the undying and undead seek to upend the endless cycle of birth and death. As they themselves exist outside of this eternal struggle, their followers pursue similar achievements while in their mortal forms. Their connection to these unliving patrons slowly





transforms these followers into beings who rule over realms of unliving servitors, creating a terrestrial replica of the kingdoms lorded over by their divine patrons.

### SPIRIT DOMAIN FEATURES

| Cleric Level | Feature                                        |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1st          | Domain Spells, Undead Fortitude, Bonus Cantrip |
| 2nd          | Channel Divinity: Charm Undead                 |
| 6th          | Master of Undeath                              |
| 8th          | Life Leech                                     |
| 17th         | General of Undeath                             |

## DOMAIN SPELLS

You gain domain spells at the cleric levels listed in the Undeath Domain Spells table. See the Divine Domain class feature for how domain spells work.

### UNDEATH DOMAIN SPELLS

| Cleric Level | Spells                                    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1st          | <i>false life, animate lesser undead*</i> |
| 3rd          | <i>death armor*, boneblade*</i>           |
| 5th          | <i>animate dead, speak with dead</i>      |
| 7th          | <i>danse macabre, enervation</i>          |
| 9th          | <i>antilife shell, finger of death</i>    |

*\*Spell presented in this guide*

## UNDEAD FORTITUDE

At 1st level, if damage reduces you to 0 hit points, you can use your reaction to make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken. On a success, you drop to 1 hit point instead. An attack that deals radiant damage or was the result of a critical success is immune to this feature.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to one-half your cleric proficiency bonus. You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

## BONUS CANTRIP

When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain the *toll the dead* cantrip if you don't already know it.

## CHANNEL DIVINITY: CHARM UNDEAD

Starting at 2nd level, as an action, you can present your holy symbol and invoke the name of your deity. A number of undead creatures up to your proficiency bonus that can see you within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is charmed by you for 1 minute or until it takes damage.

While an undead creature is charmed by you, it is friendly to you and other creatures you designate. Intelligent undead are harder to charm in this way. If the target has an Intelligence of 8 or higher, it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails the saving throw and has an Intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns until it succeeds and breaks free of this effect.



## MASTER OF UNDEAD

Starting at 6th level, any undead you create using a spell from the school of necromancy or any undead currently under the effects of your Channel Divinity: Charm Undead feature gains a number of additional benefits, as follows:

The creature's hit point maximum is increased by an amount equal to your cleric level.

The creature adds your proficiency bonus to its resistance rolls against effects that turn and destroy undead.

## LIFE LEECH

Starting at 8th level, once on each of your turns, any hit points or temporary hit points that you gain through the effects of a spell you cast from the school of necromancy are increased by an additional amount equal to your cleric level.

## GENERAL OF UNDEATH

At 17th level, while undead creatures are charmed by your Charm Undead feature, you can take a bonus action on your turn to verbally command what a number of those creatures will do on each of their next turns. You may issue simple commands, such as "stay here", "go there", "attack that", or "guard this area". You may issue a command to a number of undead under your control up to your Wisdom modifier. Once given a command, undead will continue that course of action on their turns as long as they remain charmed by you and are within 30 feet of you. Undead must understand you in order to follow a command.

Why compete with the gods when the benefits of service are earned with minimal compliance for maximum effect?

- Alistair Lurcock





## DRUID

Amongst their own kind, druids who turn their back on the natural order are rarely spoken of. Yet much like the fallen paladin who channels their blasphemy into a source of strength, so too do druids who descend into the path of the Cyclebreaker find power in the reversal of life to death. At 2nd level, a druid gains the Druid Circle feature. The following option is available to a druid, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Cyclebreaker.

### CYCLEBREAKER

A cyclebreaker is a druid who has abandoned their devotion to the natural world and forsaken their duties to protect the pristine places of creation to pursue undeathly ambitions. Whatever respect for the natural order that once burned in the druid's heart has been eclipsed by their desire to gain control over the cycle of life, death and rebirth. Where before they were a beacon to plants and beast alike, their touch now has the potential to rob their former wards of every breath they take.

#### CYCLEBREAKER FEATURES

| Druid Level | Feature                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 2nd         | Circle Spells, Circle Forms |
| 6th         | Siphon Life to Unlife       |
| 10th        | Unliving Defiance           |
| 14th        | Escape the Coil             |

### CIRCLE SPELLS

At 2nd level, you learn the *toll the dead* cantrip. At 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level you gain access to the spells listed for that level in the Cyclebreaker Spells table.

Once you gain access to one of these spells, you always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. If you gain access to a spell that doesn't appear on the druid spell list, the spell is nonetheless a druid spell for you.

#### CYCLEBREAKER SPELLS

| Druid Level | Circle Spells                                      |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 3rd         | <i>animate lesser undead</i> *, <i>boneblade</i> * |
| 5th         | <i>animate dead</i> , <i>dance macabre</i>         |
| 7th         | <i>blight</i> , <i>harm</i>                        |
| 9th         | <i>echo skull</i> *, <i>create undead</i>          |

### CIRCLE FORMS

Starting at 2nd level, when you use your Wild Shape ability, your transformation results in the undead version of any beast you are able to become. This change grants you the following effects while you are in this unliving form:

- Your type changes to undead.
- You gain resistance to poison damage.
- You gain resistance to piercing damage from nonmagical attacks.
- You no longer require air, food, water or sleep.
- You gain darkvision out to a range of 30 feet. If your Wild Shape form already possesses darkvision, this range extends by an additional 30 feet.



### SIPHON LIFE TO UNLIFE

At 6th level, you can cast the spell *vampiric touch*. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

### UNLIVING DEFIANCE

At 10th level, while you are in your Wild Shape form, you gain resistance to necrotic damage. In addition, while you aren't incapacitated, any creature within 30 feet of you has disadvantage on saving throws to resist necrotic damage.

### ESCAPE THE COIL

At 14th level, you can cast the spell *magic jar*. When you cast this spell, you replace the material component listed with a single bone from a beast or humanoid creature weighing at least 1 pound to contain your soul for the duration of the spell. Once the spell ends, you can't cast it with this feature again until you finish a long rest.



## FIGHTER

Those who train in the arts of war have many disciplines to choose from. Some devote themselves to specific styles, others devote themselves to specific masters. At 3rd level, a fighter gains the Martial Archetype feature. The following option is available to a fighter, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Undead Champion.

### UNDEAD CHAMPION

Undead Champions are emissaries of undead overlords, acting as a vanguard to a powerful creature such as a reclusive vampire king or an ancient spirit who has retreated from the world. Grim and silent, they have sworn their arms in the service of their undead master. In exchange, these lords imbue their guardians with undeathly powers, turning them into minor reservoirs of necrotic energy.

A rare sight, Undead Champions often subscribe to a personal code of devotion, honor and ceaseless victory. Similar to arcane practitioners who see life as the eternal search for achievement, Undead Champions see service to the undead as a means of extending their life to gain complete mastery over martial expertise. When not performing a direct task for their masters, Undead Champions roam the lands, looking for challenging adversaries to test their skills against and for opportunities to increase the knowledge of the world for their unliving mentors. When in the company of others, an Undead Champion rarely reveals their affiliation.

While most Undead Champions choose service to undead lords for malicious reasons, many view their pledge as purely self-serving, glory-seeking opportunities. To defeat death, even while working for such abominations, and overcome the limitations of the mortal coil is the ultimate victory.

Regardless of their individual motivations, all Undead Champions hold honor in great reverence. An enemy who lacks such nobility, in their eyes, is deserving of only two punishments in defeat: death or subservience in undeath.

#### RESTRICTION: UNGOOD SERVITUDE

Undead Champions pledge their arms to a powerful undead master. Such a creature might be an authoritative lich, a recently constituted mummy or even an ancient vampire lord.

Due to the nature of their mentors, no matter how honorable they may be, Undead Champions are never good-aligned.

#### UNDEAD CHAMPION FEATURES

| Fighter Level | Feature          |
|---------------|------------------|
| 3rd           | Dreadful Roar    |
| 7th           | Undead Emissary  |
| 10th          | Deathshroud      |
| 15th          | Relentless Focus |
| 18th          | Deathweapon      |

### DREADFUL ROAR

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn how to issue a terrifying refrain laced with undeathly horror.

*I have blessed many a skilled champion with undeathly powers over the years. They have varied greatly in skill and temperament. The foolish have believed this service was only temporary. The truly mad are easily enough dispatched into more useful creatures.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

At 3rd level, when you either reduce a living creature to 0 hit points with a melee weapon attack, or score a critical hit against a living creature with a melee weapon, you can choose a number of living creatures up to your proficiency bonus within 60 feet of you that are able to see you. Each creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). On a failure, the affected creature suffers disadvantage on the next weapon attack roll they make before the end of their next turn. Bloodied creatures suffer disadvantage on this saving throw.

### UNDEAD EMISSARY

An Undead Champion serves as an emissary to a powerful undead lord. These responsibilities require interactions with the living, the dead and the undead.

At 7th level, you gain the ability to cast the *speak with dead* spell, without using material components. After you cast this spell in this way, you can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

Beginning at 7th level you also gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill. If you are already proficient with it, you



MASTERLESS CHAMPIONS CAN  
BECOME THE GREATEST BANE TO  
CREATURES THEY ONCE SERVED.







gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Athletics, History, Investigation or Religion.

Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses Intimidation. You receive this benefit regardless of the skill proficiency you gain from this feature.

## DEATHSHROUD

Undead Champions are able to summon forth a host of screaming souls gifted to them through a necrotic ritual cast by their undead master. These writhing phantoms appear as an aura of baleful flames shimmering just above their body.

Starting at 10th level, as a reaction or a bonus action, you can call forth a veil of icy blue flames that thrashes about you. These flames give you a +2 bonus to your AC and grant you resistance to necrotic damage. This bonus lasts for up to 1 hour, or until you use a bonus action to extinguish these flames. You must finish a short or long rest before you are able to use this feature again.

## RELENTLESS FOCUS

At 15th level you become immune to being frightened as your experience in service of an undead overlord has granted you unnatural resolve.

## DEATHWEAPON

At 18th level, even your weapon becomes impatient to increase the ranks of the unliving. During a short or long rest, you may choose a melee weapon you have proficiency in to imbue with a portion of negative energy. After the end of that rest, if you hit a creature with fewer than 20 hit points using this weapon, it must succeed on a DC Constitution saving throw equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier (minimum 1) or be slain instantly. Once a creature saves against the effect of the weapon, it is immune for 24 hours from its effects.

Undead creatures and constructs are immune to the effects of this feature. Only one of your weapons may be imbued with this property at a time. This feature of the imbued weapon only functions while you are wielding it.

## MONK

Through combat and self-denial, a monk seeks to achieve mastery of the body. For some, this virtuosity comes at the expense of others. At 3rd level, a monk gains the Monastic Tradition feature. The following option is available to a monk, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Way of the Life Draining Ki.

### WAY OF THE LIFE DRAINING KI

Monks of the Way of the Life Draining Ki learn to drain the life energy of their foes by infusing their attacks with negative and necrotic energies. They teach that life and death are a vicious cycle that can only be broken by conquering both in a single lifetime. They learn techniques to focus their ki in ways that disrupt the energies of those around them and absorb these siphoned life forces back into themselves.



LIFE DRAINING MONKS ARE MASTERS OF BREAKING DOWN A FOES RESOLVE.

### WAY OF THE LIFE DRAINING KI FEATURES

| Monk Level | Feature                      |
|------------|------------------------------|
| 3rd        | Life Draining Hand Technique |
| 6th        | Negative Energy Wave         |
| 11th       | Succumbing Darkness          |
| 17th       | Unliving Siphon              |

### LIFE DRAINING HAND TECHNIQUE

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you can drain your enemy's ki when you harness your own.

Whenever you hit a creature with one of the attacks granted by your Flurry of Blows, you can impose one of the following effects on the target:

- It must succeed on a Strength saving throw or its maximum hit points are reduced by the amount of damage dealt by your Flurry of Blows attack. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest.
- It must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or it suffers disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws until the end of its next turn.
- Until the end of its next turn it cannot regain hit points unless its current hit points are above half its maximum hit point value.

### NEGATIVE ENERGY WAVE

At 6th level, you gain the ability to channel your ki into a thunderous wave of necrotic energy. Immediately after you take the Attack action on your turn, you can spend 2 ki points to cast the *thunderwave* spell as a bonus action. If





you do so, the damage this spell deals to each target is considered necrotic instead of thunder.

You can spend additional ki points to cast *thunderwave* as a higher level spell. Each additional ki point you spend increases the spell's level by 1. The maximum number of ki points (2 plus any additional points) that you can spend on the spell equals half your monk level.

## SUCCUMBING DARKNESS

At 11th level, you gain the ability to create an aura of negative energy that radiates outward from you. As an action, you magically create a swirling vortex of shadows centered on you and extending 20-feet in all directions. All light sources in the area are immediately extinguished and each creature in this area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 2d4 necrotic damage. Additionally, any creature that fails this saving throw can not regain hit points until the start of your next turn.

You can increase the radius of this aura by spending ki points. Each point you spend, to a maximum of 3, increases the radius by 5 feet.

## UNLIVING SIPHON

At 17th level, you learn to draw strength from the wounds of your enemies. As an action, you attune your ki to the life force in the creatures around you. For the next minute, whenever any creature within 30 feet of you attempts to heal hit points, you can use your reaction to spend 3 ki points and have that creature immediately make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature only regains half of the amount of hit points it was going to heal. The remaining amount of hit points the creature would have gained, is instead regained by you.

## PALADIN

Taking a vow to a cause is not an easy life to live. Such an outcome may be the culmination of one's quest to find meaning, or be the result of horrific happenstance. In the face of supernatural might, the reasons may fall to the wayside in a quest that ceases to be about meaning and instead becomes about power. At 3rd level, a paladin gains the Sacred Oath feature. The following option is available to a paladin, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Oath of Blood.

### OATH OF BLOOD

The Red Knights, also known as the Order of the Vampyr is a group of cunning warriors who devote their lives in the pursuit of attaining vampiric powers. They revere the abilities possessed by these nefarious undead, even as they abhor the creatures themselves and continuously seek their destruction. The Order is said to have arose when one of these creatures attempted to corrupt a holy knight pledged to a deity of light and goodness. To the creatures folly, the corruption worked. But the knight proved unexpectedly even more cunning than anticipated. Hoping to enthrall the knight by addicting them to their potent blood, the knight slew their would-be master and imbibed of the rest of the creatures essence. And thus the Red Knights were born.

The Order of the Vampyr recruits from warriors and those who have encountered these fearsome undead creatures and survived. Disgraced clergy, skilled sellswords and unbound knights are those approached and offered a place in the Order. They are given a glimpse into the potency of the blood of these unliving monsters. Those who accept these visions of power are branded with a secretive mark upon their person; those who refuse are seldom heard from again.

We learn much from our Returned Brothers and Sisters. We learn the Gods do value justice. We learn that vengeance is a part of every tribe. And for those willing to focus their energies, we learn how to unleash darkness on our betrayers and turn their invigorating hopes into crushing despair.  
- Idowu Azikiwe of the Ebon Hood

Worship blood? How limiting.

- Alistair Lurecock



In their faith, the Order believes in consuming the blood of these undead creatures. Pursuing their vile adversaries to the ends of the earth, they nevertheless view them as cisterns of potent and intoxicating power. To them, this substance is called *Vitae*, and its consumption in conjunction with their oath grant them terrible abilities.

Red Knights will often hire themselves out to kingdoms where the creatures have nested, culling the monsters and their spawn to numbers that are largely unthreatening to the population of the realm, but thick enough to supply them with the Vitae they crave.

## TENENTS

A paladin who takes this oath has a pair of vampire fangs seared into their inner calf.

**Mastery over Servitude.** Vitae is a means to an end. The reservoirs of this resource would always seek your destruction. Therefore, these vessels must be hunted and harvested with skill, and thereafter quickly destroyed.

**Blood is Life.** Whenever possible, you attempt to bring your enemies down in as quick and bloodless a fashion as you can -- the potency of vitae is not to be needlessly spilt and wasted on the battlefield. One must always be honing this fighting form, even against enemies lacking vitae.

**Blood is Eternal.** Battles are temporary, wars are meant to be won. Approach each situation with a longevity of action as your guiding principal. Victorious enemies in this century, will taste the steal of your well crafted plans in the next; retreat is always a sensible option.

**Dominion.** Your enemies may be crushed or cowed, whichever outcome furthers your goals is the more advisable.

### OATH OF BLOOD FEATURES

| Paladin Level | Feature                       |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 3rd           | Oath Spells, Channel Divinity |
| 7th           | Aura of Frenzy                |
| 15th          | Unbeating Heart               |
| 20th          | Vampiric Lord                 |

## OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells as the paladin levels listed in the Oath of Blood Spells table. See the Sacred Oath class feature for how oath spells work.

### OATH OF BLOOD SPELLS

| Paladin Level | Spells                                           |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 3rd           | <i>charm person</i> , <i>misty step</i>          |
| 5th           | <i>vampiric touch</i> , <i>charm monster</i>     |
| 9th           | <i>dominate beast</i> , <i>gaseous form</i>      |
| 13th,         | <i>insect plague</i> , <i>conjure animals</i>    |
| 17th          | <i>dominate person</i> , <i>dominate monster</i> |

## CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

**Cloak of the Vitae.** As a bonus action you can call upon the vampiric blood that flows in your veins to gain a measure of protection from attacks. Choose one of the following damage types: bludgeoning, piercing or slashing. For the next hour, you have resistance to that type of damage from non-magical weapons.



**Command Beast.** As an action, you can target a beast or swarm that you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target must obey your commands for the next 24 hours, or until you use this Channel Divinity option again. A beast whose challenge rating is equal to or greater than your level is immune to this effect.

## AURA OF FRENZY

Starting at 7th level, when a creature within 5 feet of you is bloodied, they suffer critical hits from melee attacks on a roll of 19-20. At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 10 feet.

## UNBEATING HEART

At 15th level, you can use your action to end one effect on yourself that is causing you to be charmed or frightened.

## VAMPIRIC LORD

At 20th level, you take on the supernatural qualities of the undead creatures you hunt and consume. You can use your action to gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- At the start of each of your turns, you regain 20 hit points.
- You gain a climb speed equal to your base walking speed.
- You have advantage on Wisdom, Intelligence and Charisma saving throws.
- You gain resistance to necrotic damage.
- Once on each of your turns you can use your action to cast one of the following spells: *dominate person*, *dominate monster*, or *dominate beast*.

Once you use this feature you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.





## RANGER

Many believe that all living creatures feel the urge to hunt. For a ranger, these urges are embraced and personified. And for some, the spark of unlife holds the greatest challenge, released as it may be from its mortal and physical form. At 3rd level, a ranger gains the Ranger Archetype feature. The following option is available to a ranger, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Ghost Stalker.

### GHOST STALKER

Ghost Stalkers are expert hunters of the incorporeal dead. They seek out places rumored to be haunted and attempt to steal the ectoplasmic energies possessed by their formless foes. Where most folk faint at the sight of a ghost or poltergeist, a ghost stalker sees such an entity as an opportunity to gather more of the empyrean essence that fuels their hunting techniques.

Ghost stalkers have learned to harness this essence in potent and powerful ways, using their quarry's otherworldly properties to grant them means of hunting their foes that are versatile and highly effective. Against more traditional enemies, these abilities are even more devastating and their prey quickly learn that Ghost Stalkers have a well-earned reputation for relentlessness and overcoming any obstacle in their path.

#### GHOST STALKER FEATURES

| Ranger Level | Feature                             |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3rd          | Ethereal Sight, Ectoplasmic Coating |
| 7th          | Mental Endurance                    |
| 11th         | Ethereal Jaunt                      |
| 15th         | Displacement                        |

### ETHEREAL SIGHT

At 3rd level you can open your awareness to magically see into the Ethereal plane. As an action, you can pierce the veil between planes, enabling you to see 30 feet into the Ethereal Plane as long as you are on the Material Plane, and vice versa. This ability lasts until the end of your current turn.

### ECTOPLASMIC COATING

At 3rd level, as a bonus action, you can designate a weapon you are holding or a piece of ammunition in your possession as being magical for purposes of overcoming a creature's resistance to nonmagical weapons.

If you use this feature on a weapon or piece of ammunition that already has this property, the weapon or ammunition gains an additional benefit of your choice from one of the following:

- All damage dealt by this weapon or ammunition becomes psychic damage and the target takes an additional 1d4 psychic damage from the attack.
- All damage dealt by this weapon or ammunition becomes necrotic damage and the target takes an additional 1d4 necrotic damage from the attack.





- When you roll a 1 on an attack roll using this weapon or ammunition you can reroll the die and use the new roll. You may add your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) as a bonus to this new roll.

The weapon or piece of ammunition retains these features only while you are wielding the item and last only until the end of your current turn. At 11th level, the bonus damage from this feature increases to 1d8, and at 18th level, this bonus increases to 1d10.

## MENTAL ENDURANCE

At 7th level you learn to overcome the frightening aspects of the undead you encounter. You may use your action to end one effect on yourself that is causing you to be charmed or frightened.

## ETHEREAL JAUNT

At 11th level, you gain the ability to step through physical beings that halt your movement. You can move through other creatures as if they were difficult terrain. The first 5 feet of movement you make after moving through a creature using this ability does not provoke opportunity attacks. If you end your turn inside a creature you are immediately ejected to an adjacent unoccupied space and take force damage equal to 1d10 + your ranger level.

## DISPLACEMENT

At 15th level, you gain the ability to become incorporeal to avoid harm. As an action, you can become incapable of being targeted by any attack, spell or any other effect, except ones that turn undead or that deal force damage. While in this state, you do not require air, food, drink or sleep, yet you are still visible. Your speed drops to 0 and you gain a fly speed of 5 feet in this state but you can not take any other actions except to end this effect as a bonus action on your turn. If you take force damage while in this state or if an effect attempts to turn you, on a failed saving throw, this effect ends immediately and you may not use it again until 1 hour has passed. You can remain in this state for a consecutive or non-consecutive total of 10 minutes per hour.



GHOST STALKERS ARE OFTEN HIRED TO CLEANSE PAST 'MISTAKES'.

# SORCEROR

The manifestation of power that develops within a sorcerer can come from a variety of sources both benign and malevolent. Certain undead creatures carry the very essence of magic in their blood, a trait which can awaken an innate connection to the mystical weave that permeates throughout the multiverse. At first level, a sorcerer gains the Sorcerous Origin feature. The following option is available to a sorcerer, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: Vampiric Bloodline.

## VAMPIRIC BLOODLINE

Your innate magic comes from the power of the blood of a vampire who infected your bloodline. Some sorcerers can trace the origins of this magic to an ancient bargain made with a powerful vampire. Others may once have partaken of the blood of such a creature and experienced a sudden flush of arcane power. Whatever the case, the magic of the blood of these undead creatures is what permeates your being and drives your powers.

Vampiric sorcerers generally do not reveal the nature of their ancestry, since to do so is to invite the ire of a community and the possibility of destruction by hunters and others who despise their heritage. Some of these sorcerers however do choose to make known the source of their abilities, reveling in their terrible legacy in a quest to become true vampires as their powers grow in strength.

### VAMPIRIC BLOODLINE FEATURES

| Sorcerer Level | Feature                              |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1st            | Eyes of the Night, Unliving Strength |
| 6th            | Vampiric Charm                       |
| 14th           | Sanguine Regeneration                |
| 15th           | Unnatural Celerity                   |

## EYES OF THE NIGHT

The blood of the undead allows you to pierce even the darkest night. You gain darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. In addition you can spend 2 sorcery points to see through magical darkness as a bonus action.

## UNLIVING STRENGTH

The power of your blood strengthens your physical prowess. At 1st level, your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 damage and you may use Constitution for their attack and damage rolls.

Additionally, your hit point maximum increases by 1 and increases by 1 whenever you gain a level in this class.

## VAMPIRIC CHARM

Starting at 6th level, you begin to exude the vampires legendary aura of charm. When another creature you can see makes a saving throw against a spell from the Enchantment school you have targeted it with, you can use your reaction and spend a number of sorcery points equal to half the spell's level (rounded up) to impose disadvantage

Jervis was a good friend. Excellent with a bow. Unstoppable with a sword. And always popular in the tavernhall. Then came along that Hellspawn Dominic and his brood. Shame when friends become quarry, especially ones that know all your best tricks, then suddenly have a few new ones of their very own.

-Zorander





on the creature's roll. You can do so after the creature rolls but before any effects of the roll occur.

## SANGUINE REGENERATION

At 14th level, you gain a measure of the regenerative abilities of a vampire. At the start of each of your turns you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to half your Sorcerer level. This ability does not function while you are in direct sunlight or in running water.

## UNNATURAL CELERITY

At 18th level, once on each of your turns you can use a bonus action and spend 1 sorcery point to move up to your full speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

During this movement, you can spend an additional 2 sorcery points to make a melee attack against a single creature adjacent to you at any point during this movement. You may only make one melee attack in this way each time you use this feature.

*Those that deign to pierce the realm of shadows and manage to retain their sanity in the process often become beneficiaries to the powerfully dark energies from this netherworld.*

*Allegiances with these shadow masters are tenuous at best. They have means of countering a lich's most potent effects and making quick work of your living servitors. Luckily, they can usually be enticed with a Lich Formulae to satisfy their dark ambitions.*

*I find leaving out a few ingredients in the formula to be most effective at quelling these long-term threats.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

## WARLOCK

Warlocks seek answers to unlocking the secrets of the world all around them. The path this takes can be filled with harmonious insights or painful awakenings. Those that pursue the hidden and the obscure find that beings whose very existence are shrouded in mystery often hold the keys to the most potent enigmas. To the most reckless warlocks, many times the most dangerous path is the most seductive. At 1st level, a warlock gains the Otherworldly Patron feature. The following option is available to a warlock, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the Shadow.

### WARLOCK PATRON: THE SHADOW

Your patron is not a specific entity, but the energy that radiates from the Shadow Plane, a dark and dreary realm that despises all light. The Plane pulsates with pockets of intense negative energy that powers certain undead creatures like shadows, ghosts, and vampires. Your pact allows you to sheath yourself in a dark aura of this negative power that permeates even the brightest areas of the multiverse. While you are living, you must take care not to drink too deeply of this energy or be consumed by its raw and blistering power.

Being connected to this dark plane causes subtle changes in your behavior and beliefs. You are driven to stay away from brightly lit places and feel a strange serenity in the presence of undead creatures. You often find it difficult to travel during the day and darkness hold no mysteries to you.

### SHADOW FEATURES

| Warlock Level | Feature                                            |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1st           | Expanded Spell List, Boon of Shadows, Shadow Sight |
| 6th           | Shadow Fade                                        |
| 10th          | Shroud of Shadows                                  |
| 14th          | Shadow Thief                                       |

### EXPANDED SPELL LIST

The Shadow lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.



## SHADOW EXPANDED SPELLS

| Warlock Level | Spells                                         |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1st           | <i>dissonant whispers, ray of sickness</i>     |
| 2nd           | <i>darkvision, silence</i>                     |
| 3rd           | <i>beacon of false life, speak with dead</i>   |
| 4th           | <i>blight, phantasmal killer</i>               |
| 5th           | <i>negative energy flood, wall of shadows*</i> |

## SHADOW SIGHT

At 1st level, you gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

## BOON OF SHADOWS

At 1st level, you have a pool of d6s that you can spend to harm others when you strike from the shadows. The number of dice in the pool equals 1 + half your warlock level.

When you successfully attack a creature with a warlock spell that does damage while you are in an area of dim light or darkness you can use a reaction to spend dice from your pool. The maximum number of dice you can spend at once equals your Charisma modifier (minimum of one die). Roll the dice you spend, add them together, and deal that amount of damage in addition to the damage normally dealt by the spell. This additional damage is considered necrotic damage. If a spell does damage to multiple creatures, only one creature of your choice is affected by this ability.

Your pool regains all expended dice when you finish a long rest.

## SHADOW FADE

At 6th level, immediately after you take damage, you can use a reaction to magically teleport through your shadow up to 60 feet away to an area of shadow or darkness that you can see, including another creature's shadow. Once you use this ability, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

## SHROUD OF SHADOWS

Starting at 10th level, you have resistance to necrotic damage. When you are in an area of magical darkness, you also gain resistance to cold damage.

Additionally, as a bonus action, you can cause your shadow to writhe and contort in a frightening display for up to 1 minute. While your shadow is engaged in this performance, you gain a bonus to Charisma (Intimidate) checks equal to your Dexterity modifier (minimum 1). You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest. You can end this effect at any time as a free action.

## SHADOW THIEF

At 14th level, when a creature you can see within 60 feet of you drops to 0 hit points, you can use a reaction to cast the *animate shadow* spell without expending a spell slot or material components on the creature's shadows as long as they are casting a visible shadow. If you use this

feature to cast *animate shadow* on an evil-aligned creature and the spell fails, you immediately regain the use of this feature. You must finish a long rest before you can use this feature again after successfully using it.

## ELDRITCH INVOCATIONS

The following section presents new invocations for the warlock. These invocations follow the same rules as invocations found in the *Player's Handbook*.

### DEATH'S HERALD

You can cast *reaper's scythe* at will as a 1st-level spell, without expending a spell slot or material components.

### NECROTIC BLAST

*Prerequisite: 9th level, eldritch blast cantrip*

When you hit a creature with *eldritch blast* that is currently in an area of dim light or darkness, that creature can not regain hit points until the beginning of your next turn.





### SHADE FORM

*Prerequisite: 15th level*

You can cast the spell *gaseous form* at will, without expending a spell slot.

### SHADOW TONGUE

You can cast the *message* cantrip at will, without using somatic gestures and without expending material components.

### SPECTRAL FORM

*Prerequisite: 5th level, Pact of the Chain feature*

Your familiar gains the ability to become ghostly and incorporeal. As an action, you can cause your familiar to shift into incorporeal form allowing it to move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If your familiar ends its turn inside an object it is instantly dismissed to its pocket dimension and must be summoned again using an action. You can return your familiar to corporeal form at any time by spending another action.

### UNLIVING HEX

*Prerequisite: 5th level, hex spell or a warlock feature that curses*

As a bonus action, you can target a creature cursed by your hex spell or a warlock feature of yours, such as Hexblade's Curse or Sign of Ill Omen. That creature is considered undead for effects that turn undead creatures for 1 minute.

### UNLIVING SEED

*Prerequisite: 5th level, Pact of the Tome feature*

You can cast the spell *animate dead* once using a warlock spell slot. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

## WIZARD

A wizard knows secrets undreamt of by the ordinary man, secrets that have taken a lifetime to acquire through study and practice. It is almost a universal truth that the more difficult a secret is to acquire, the more power that secret holds. At 2nd level, a wizard gains the Arcane Tradition feature. The following option is available to a wizard, in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook*: the School of Reanimation.

### SCHOOL OF REANIMATION

Your focus on the study of undeath has led you down a path that combines arcane ritual with alchemical formulae. Through powerful concoctions and rigorous experimentation you have learned to rapidly deploy your creations to solve any problem that comes your way. Whether on the battlefield commanding freshly risen squads or raiding forbidden crypts in subterranean realms, your minions can break through exceedingly secure positions in pursuit of your most sought after goal.

#### REANIMATION FEATURES

| Wizard Level | Feature                                     |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 2nd          | Tools of the Reanimator, Alchemical Offense |
| 6th          | Hurried Creations                           |
| 10th         | Improved Formulae                           |
| 14th         | Masterful Creation                          |

### TOOLS OF THE REANIMATOR

At 2nd level, you gain proficiency with Alchemist's supplies and with Dissector's tools.







REANIMATORS BELIEVE NO BODY IS UNSALVAGEABLE.

## ALCHEMICAL OFFENSE

At 2nd level, you learn the *acid splash* cantrip. If you already know this cantrip, you learn a different wizard cantrip of your choice. The cantrip doesn't count against your number of cantrips known. When you cast *acid splash*, you can substitute the damage it deals from acid to poison. You can make this choice each time the spell damages a target.

## HURRIED CREATIONS

At 6th level, you add the *animate dead* spell to your spellbook if it is not there already. Whenever you cast the *animate dead* spell, you may use your reaction to reduce the time to cast it to 1 action. In order to do so, you must be adjacent to the corpse you wish to reanimate and have at least one free hand and access to a set of alchemist's supplies. Any undead creature you animate using this feature at a reduced time ceases to be under your control after 1 minute. To maintain control of a creature animated using this modified version of the spell for any additional time, you must cast the *animate dead* spell on the creature again. This use of the spell reasserts your control over up to

Emiong comes at night to collect the dead. He whispers a dark sentence in the magic tongue and sprinkles a few pinches of dust that make the bodies rise with unnatural quickness. One of the scoundrels was still alive once when Emiong came. He hid among the bodies of the other thieves, expecting to flee in the dark. His former companions made swift work of him. before Emiong raised him too.

- Idowu Azikiwe

four creatures using the normal rules of the *animate dead* spell you have animated, rather than animating a new one.

In addition, whenever you create an undead using a necromancy spell, it has additional benefits:

- The creature's speed is increased by an amount of feet equal to twice your wizard level.
- The creature adds half your proficiency bonus to its weapon attack rolls.

## IMPROVED FORMULAE

Beginning at 10th level, the gold and time you spend to create wondrous items of a liquid form that can be contained in a vial and that have the ability to do splash damage is halved. This feature can only be used on items with a maximum gold price up to 10 times your Wizard level.

## MASTERFUL CREATION

On reaching 14th level, you have learned to construct a potent blueprint for reanimating an indomitable servant. You may create a *Manual of Golems*, but only for Flesh golems. It takes you 1 week to produce this item. You may craft a golem from any Manual you create using this feature in half the time and for half the material component cost.

Each time you gain a level beyond 14th, if you do not have a **flesh golem** under your control or do not have a copy of a *Manual of Golems*, for Flesh golems, in your possession when you gain that level, you may produce a new *Manual of Golems: Flesh* in one 1 weeks time using this feature.

## FEATS

Dabblers and masters in the unliving arts oftentimes develop astounding and innate qualities through their workings with the undead. This section introduces a collection of special feats similar to the ones presented in chapter 6, "Customization Options," of the *Player's Handbook* and allow you to explore your character's connection to these arts further. The use of these feats is entirely up to your DM and the cause of their appearance should be developed between the DM and yourself beforehand.

### BLACK BLOOD

*Prerequisite:* Half-orc

Centuries of hidden undeath cults within certain orcish tribes have blessed, or cursed, a few members of these communities with an innate propensity for the unliving arts. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you roll necrotic damage for a spell you cast, you can reroll any roll of 1 on the necrotic damage dice, but you must use the new roll, even if it is another 1.
- Whenever you cast a spell that deals necrotic damage you cause shadows to grow and dance around you regardless of the ambient lighting that last until the



end of your next turn. These shadows don't harm you or your possessions, but they dim any light out to 30 feet, and any dim light within range becomes darkness. While these shadows are present, any creature other than yourself within 15 feet of you may not regain hit points by any means.

#### **FORTIFIED NERVES**

You have witnessed enough mysteries of undeath to become stoic against even your greatest fears. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Whenever you start your turn and you are charmed, you may use your action to make a saving throw to end the condition immediately.
- Whenever you start your turn and you are frightened, you may use your action to make a saving throw to end the condition immediately.

#### **MASTER ANATOMIST**

Thanks to extensive study, you know how to apply maximum force when one of your blows lands effectively, or to heal the wounded in times of crisis. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20
- You have advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) checks to stabilize a dying creature.
- When you score a critical hit with a melee weapon, you may add your Intelligence modifier to the damage roll. You may use the effect of this feat once per turn.

#### **NECROTIC ADAMIXTURE**

*Prerequisite: Non-good alignment and the ability to cast at least one spell*

You learn how to imbue your spells with a bit of necrotic energy. When you cast a spell that is not a cantrip that does damage, you may choose to expend another spell of that spell slot level or lower, to turn a portion of the spell's damage into necrotic damage. Select a number of dice from a spell's damage roll when you cast a spell, each of these dice rolls does necrotic damage to all targets of a spell instead of the normal damage type. You can choose a number of dice in a roll to convert in this way up to the expended spell slot used in connection with the original spell. If a spell does damage without the use of dice rolls, this feat has no effect on that spell and the expended spell is gone.

#### **NECROTIC BLOOD**

Your study of undeath has infected a large portion of your body, turning you more and more into an unliving creature whose structure and blood are inert and difficult to damage. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 2, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on saving throws against becoming poisoned.
- When you roll a death saving throw, you succeed on a roll of 13 or higher.

#### **NECROTIC FIRE**

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell, 11th level*

Your study of undeath has allowed you to infuse flames with a touch of negative energy. When you create magical fire, that fire becomes a necrotic form that is filled with the very essence of the Shadow Plane. Whenever you cast a spell that does fire damage, you may choose up to half of that fire damage to instead be considered necrotic damage. Creatures immune or resistant to fire damage take the full amount of necrotic damage from altered attacks using this feat. Creatures immune or resistant to necrotic damage take the full amount of fire damage from the altered attacks using this feat. Spells modified by this feat that damage multiple targets have damage dealt to all creatures of that spell altered.

#### **POTENT NECROMANCY**

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one cantrip*

Cantrips you cast ignore resistance to necrotic damage. In addition, when you roll damage for a cantrip you cast that deals necrotic damage, you can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2.

#### **SPECTRAL EYES**

*Prerequisite: Perception 13 or higher*

You have glimpsed enough incorporeal beings to be able to spot the subtleness of theirs and similar creatures' presence. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to notice hidden or invisible creatures within 30 feet of you.
- You can make either a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check whenever you attempt to notice if an object or creature is real or an illusion.

#### **TOMB RAIDER**

*Prerequisite: Intelligence 13 or higher*

Your experiences in the unliving arts has led you to explore many a gravesite and abandoned cemetery. Your familiarity with the dangers and features of these protected sanctuaries has sharpened your mind against the more common pitfalls to be found there. When you trigger a trap that requires a Dexterity saving throw, you may instead make an Intelligence saving throw to avoid the harmful effects of that trap.

#### **UNCHAINED THRALL**

You have served or worked alongside the pernicious mind of an undead master and have learned to resist the powerful influences of such domination.

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed or dominated.
- Whenever you start your turn and you are charmed, you may use your action to make a saving throw to end the condition immediately.



### UNDEAD COMMANDER

*Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher*

You have learned to subdue your undead servants and foes very effectively. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks against undead creatures.
- When an undead creature you can see within 30 feet succeeds on a saving throw against being charmed, dominated or frightened, you can spend your reaction to force that creature to immediately reroll the saving throw and use the second result.

### UNDEAD FAMILIAR

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell*

You have learned to infuse your tiniest creations with necrotic energy. When you cast the *find familiar* spell, you may summon an undead version of the animal form you choose. This option grants your familiar the following benefits:

- It's type changes to undead.
- It gains resistance to poison.
- It gains resistance to slashing and piercing damage from nonmagical weapons.
- It no longer requires air, food, water or sleep.
- It gains darkvision out to a range of 30 feet. If you possess darkvision, this range extends to 60 feet.

## OPTIONAL RULE: CHARACTER TALENTS (UNLIVING ARTS)

Talents are a unique set of rules introduced on the *DMSGuild* through the supplement *Character Options: Talents (5E)*. They represent extraordinary aspects of a character's ability, background, personality, physique, proficiencies or features and are similar but not as powerful as standard Feats. This section briefly describes this optional rule for characters looking to adopt talents followed by specific talents geared towards an undead theme. Player's and DMs are encouraged to check out the original supplement for further information on these optional rules.

At your DMs discretion, your character may begin with one talent from the following list at 1st level. At 3rd level and every three levels thereafter (6th, 9th, 12th, 15th and 18) you can gain another talent. Talents can only be taken once, unless specified otherwise in the talents description and some talents have prerequisites which your character must have in order to select that talent. Each time you are eligible to take a new Feat, you can opt to select two Talents instead.

### TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

The following talents are presented in alphabetical order.

### ALCHEMICAL DISCOVERY

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least 1 spell; proficiency with alchemist's supplies*

**Benefit:** Your maximum hit points are increased by 2 points. You may gain this Talent multiple times.

### ALCHEMICAL RESISTANCE

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least 1 spell; proficiency with alchemist's supplies*

**Benefit:** When you take damage from an attack or spell that deals poison damage, you may reduce that damage by 1 point.

### ALCHEMICAL SPITTLE

**Benefit:** Any bite attacks you make deal an additional 2 points of poison damage to the target of the attack.

### EYES OF THE GRAVE

*Prerequisite: You are trained in the Intimidate skill*

**Benefit:** When you roll a 4 or lower on an Intimidate check, you may choose to treat that roll as a 4.

### MASTER OF SACRIFICES

*Prerequisite: Intelligence or Dexterity 13 or higher; non-good alignment*

**Benefit:** When you damage a creature with a melee weapon attack that is charmed, fatigued, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, paralyzed, restrained, stunned or unconscious, you do an additional die of damage to the target of the attack.

### NECROTIC FLESH

*Prerequisite: Constitution 13 or higher*

**Benefit:** When you take damage from an attack or spell that deals necrotic damage, you may reduce that damage by 1 point.

### NECROTIC FOCUS

*Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least 1 spell from the school of necromancy*

**Benefit:** Choose one cantrip from the school of necromancy that you know that forces a creature to make a saving throw as part of that spell's effect. When you cast that spell, the DC to save against the spell's effects is increased by 1.

Necromancy is so much like any other pursuit. To be successful, you must dedicate yourself in total to your training, research and mental approach. Thereafter, the rewards are self-evident.

- Alistair Lurcock







### NECROTIC ADEPT

*Prerequisite: Intelligence, Charisma or Wisdom 12 or higher; the ability to cast at least 1 spell from the school of necromancy*

**Benefit:** You have a pool of Necrotic Potency points equal to your Intelligence, Charisma or Wisdom modifier. You must choose which modifier to use when you obtain this talent and this choice can not be changed once chosen. You may use your reaction when you deal necrotic damage to a creature through a spell attack to spend a number of Necrotic Potency points as part of that reaction. If you do, that spell does an additional amount of necrotic damage equal to the number of Necrotic Potency points you spent as part of that reaction to one creature you can see hit by that attack. You regain all your expended Necrotic Potency points when you finish a short or long rest.

### NECROTIC MASTER

*Prerequisite: Necrotic Adept Talent & 11th level*

**Benefit:** Your number of Necrotic Potency points is equal to twice the ability modifier choosen.

### NECROTIC RESISTANCE

*Prerequisite: Constitution 12 or higher*

**Benefit:** When you roll a 4 or lower on an saving throw to resist the effects of any poison you ingest, inhale or come in contact with, you may choose to treat that roll as a 4.

### POISON ADEPT

*Prerequisite: Intelligence, Charisma or Wisdom 12 or higher; proficiency with the poisoner's kit*

**Benefit:** You have a pool of Poison Potency points equal to your Intelligence, Charisma or Wisdom modifier. You must choose which modifier to use when you obtain this talent and this choice can not be changed once chosen. You may use your reaction when you deal poison damage to a creature through a spell attack to spend a number of Poison Potency points as part of that reaction. If you do, that spell does an additional amount of poison damage equal to the number of Poison Potency points you spent as part of that reaction to one creature you can see hit by that attack. You regain all your expended Poison Potency points when you finish a short or long rest.

### POISON MASTER

*Prerequisite: Poison Adept Talent & 11th level*

**Benefit:** Your number of Poison Potency points is equal to twice the ability modifier choosen.

### SCALPEL EXPERT

*Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher*

**Benefit:** When you score a critical hit using a dagger or sickle, you do an additional 2 points of damage against the target of the attack.

### SKELETON SLAYER

*Prerequisite: Strength 13 or higher*

**Benefit:** When you score a critical hit using a melee weapon that does bludgeoning damage, you do an additional 2 points of damage against the target of the attack.

### SURGEONS HANDS

*Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher*

**Benefit:** When you roll a 4 or lower on an Dexterity check to pick a lock or pick a creature's pocket, you may choose to treat that roll as a 4.

### TRIAGE EXPERT

*Prerequisite: You are trained in the Medicine skill*

**Benefit:** When you roll a 4 or lower on an Medicine check, you may choose to treat that roll as a 4.

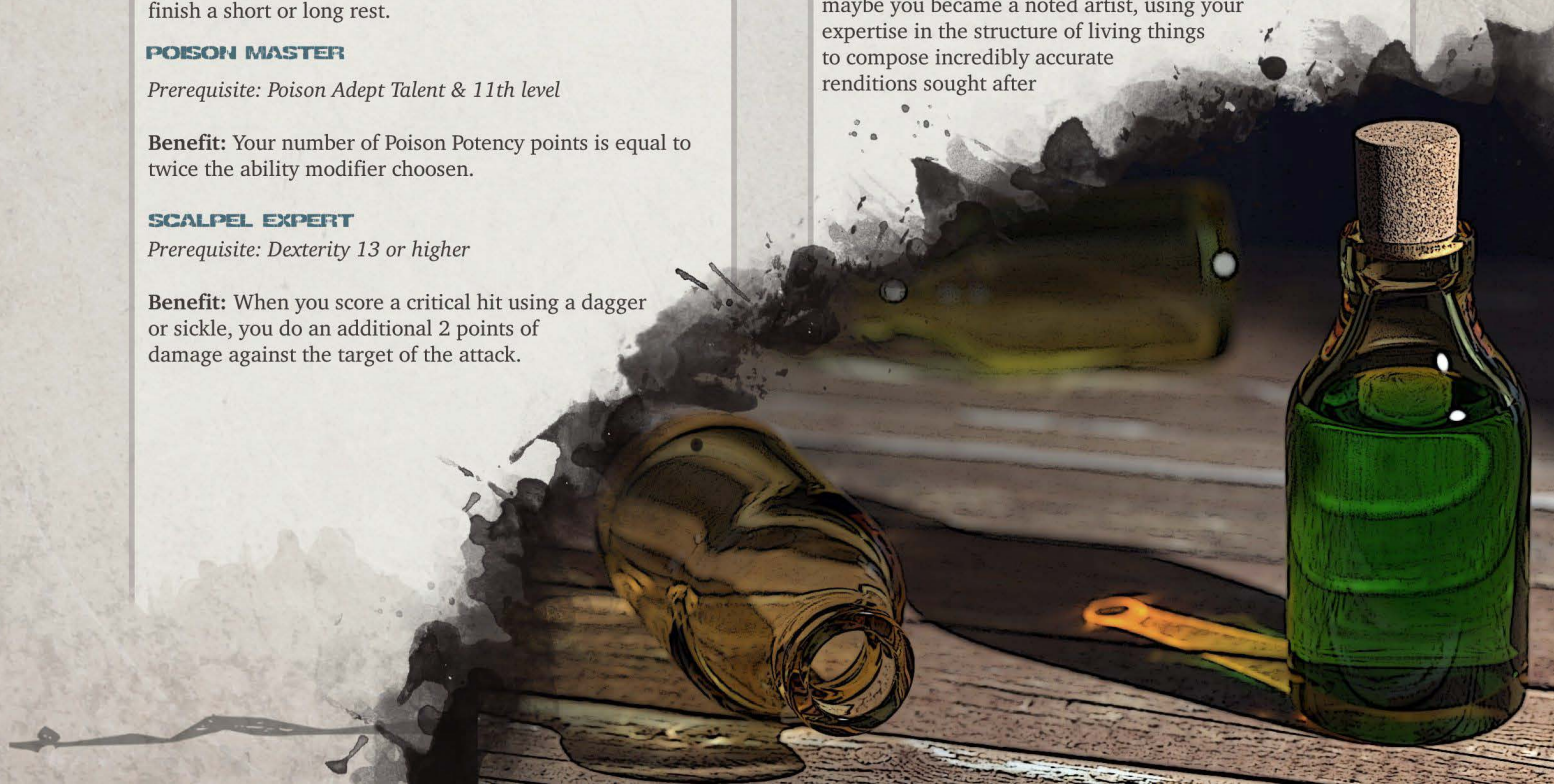
## BACKGROUNDS

The backgrounds described in the *Player's Handbook* are expanded here with two new backgrounds available to players during character creation at the discretion of their DM: the **Anatomist** and the **Occultist**.

## ANATOMIST

You have always been fascinated by the mortal form. This appreciation began when you were a child, as your peers pursued more leisurely activities, you directed your energies towards the study of physical differences of the various living creatures in your community, humanoid or other. It wasn't long before you discovered the joys of dissection and the painstakingly laborious, yet rewarding work of sketching and cataloguing. You gleamed many insights through even simple observations of the movements and musculatures of the peoples and creatures who lived all about you.

As you grew older, you turned this passion into a profession. Perhaps you pursued a medical career, putting your talents to use in repairing the broken and damaged. Or maybe you became a noted artist, using your expertise in the structure of living things to compose incredibly accurate renditions sought after





by professionals and laypersons alike. Or maybe you used your intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the body in a more nefarious occupation, as those with a working knowledge of a forms failings are potentially useful in enticing knowledge from those unwilling to part with it. Whichever path you chose, you have come to view the physical form as a device capable of manipulation, a feature that extends beyond the bounds of mere mortality and its obvious restraints.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Medicine, Perception

**Tool Proficiencies:** Dissector's Tools

**Equipment:** A journal containing sketches and annotations on the anatomies of various humanoid and non-humanoid beings that note areas of weakness and areas of incredible physical resistance, a bottle of black ink, a quill, a small scalpel, a set of sutures, a set of common clothes and a belt pouch containing 10 gp.

#### FEATURE: CURATIVE HOSPITALITY

Your pursuit of anatomy has led you to establishments where observations of the body can go uninterrupted. This has made you quite familiar with finding places where the sick go to receive healing and comfort. If a community has a healing center, or several, you can usually find one and gain amiable entry. If you use or demonstrate your knowledge in aiding or comforting the ill at the establishment, they will make an effort to accommodate you and provide you a place to rest and possibly grant you limited access to items of a therapeutic nature.

#### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the sage background in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as an anatomist.

Your ideal is likely tied to how you view the study of the mortal form either with an emphasis on the mastery of this knowledge or the approach to how you pursue that knowledge. Your bond is likely a reflection of how you view this knowledge you obtain and whether or not its acquisition is to be shared or hoarded.

## OCCULTIST

You have always wanted to communicate with the dead. Perhaps you lost a loved one early on in life whom you were never able to properly say goodbye to or perhaps your childhood bedtime stories consisted of heroic individuals you dreamt of meeting but for the fact that they were long since dead. However you developed this fascination, as you grew older you learned the means to be able to achieve your goal.

Perhaps you became noticed by a specific ghostly entity who haunted an area you discovered by chance or perhaps you simply acquired the proper spell-training that allowed you to communicate directly with the departed,

*The wish to hurt, the momentary intoxication with pain, is the doorway through which the questing acolyte finds the truths I have to offer.*

*Once through, these delights become a need, an appetite and indeed an accomplishment. These accomplishments should be rewarded. It is therefore always a necessity to have enough rewards on hand to properly gift these loyal servitors.*

*Should the need arise, ones careful and deliberate cultivation of a fearful and ignorant community make the best pickings for which to pluck these ripe and ready accolades.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*





whatever the case, you ultimately unlocked a way to converse with those who crossed the border between life and death. This ability left its mark on you and you ceased to be as afraid of the consequences of your own death as before. Or perhaps you became driven instead to ensure that this crossing was delayed as long as possible so as to truly understand the realms from which your contacts on the other side inhabited.

With this new gift, you have the ability to see what others miss and use this guide to your advantage. You are constantly on the hunt to increase your connection to the departed. If you are a solitary type, you pursue this goal in secret. If you are naturally outgoing, perhaps you offer your services as a soothsayer or fortune teller, advising clients through your communication with a knowledgeable connection on the other side.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Insight, Perception

**Languages:** Two of your choice

**Equipment:** A small handheld keepsake from a being that has passed on to the realms of the dead but who guides you in the world of the living, a book on a specific area, establishment or legend concerning a haunting or ghostly apparition and a pouch containing 5 gp

#### FEATURE: SPIRIT GUIDE

Your small trinket provides you with insight into the world around you through its connection to a departed and benign spirit. This connection provides you with very general answers to questions about your immediate goals in very simple terms. Once per day your character may ask the DM a simple question concerning where a specific being or item may be which yields an answer so long as the item or being is on the same plane as your character. If the item or being is on a different plane, your spirit guide, and the DM are silent on the matter. If the item or being is on the same plane, the DM indicates with a rough geographic location such as North, Northwest, Southwest or the like and an approximate distance, such as very close for items within a few feet, to close for a few hundred feet, far for miles, very far for hundreds of miles and impossibly far for objectives on the other side of the world. Your trinket is considered magical and if it is ever lost or destroyed, it magically appears in your possession the following dawn.

#### SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Use the tables for the hermit background that are found in the *Player's Handbook* as the basis for your traits and motivations, modifying the entries when appropriate to suit your identity as an occultist. Instead of a particular philosophical bent, you character is devoted towards your connection to the spirit that guides you.

Your ideal is likely tied to how you view your spirit guide and the knowledge they impart as your approach towards life. Your bond is how you likely view this knowledge in relation to the living world, as something to be shared, or kept a secret and your flaws indicate your devotion towards your guide and how it affects your interactions with the living.

There was a wise man named Mamad known by all the people in the land. The King knew about Mamad and one day he ordered his subjects to bring him to his palace. He looked at the wise man and asked: "Mamad, can you see the future?" Mamad answered, no. He said it was Bin'Koo who saw the future. The King asked, who is Bin'Koo? Mamad pulled out a tiny locket and introduced him.

- Idowu Azikiwe



## OPTIONAL RULE: UNLIVING EVENTS

The path towards the unliving arts is most often triggered by at least one signature event that left a profound impact on your character. These happenings and tragedies can help explain the reason your character has devoted themselves to the study of undeath. You may roll once on the *Unliving Events* table to flesh out the rationale for your characters unlikely obsession.

#### UNLIVING EVENTS D100 Event

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 - 10 | You died once and were brought back to life only moments later. You saw what waited for you in the afterlife and the experience terrified you. You resolved to uncover the secrets of unlife to avoid this fate for as long as possible. The event left a horrific scar somewhere on your person. |
| 11 - 20 | A loved one or close friend passed away. You resolved to master the unliving arts and ensure you could prevent anything like that from happening again. You have a keepsake from your companion you refuse to part with.                                                                          |



|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21 - 30  | You saw an undead creature once, such as a ghost, zombie or skeleton and became obsessed with such entities, eventually deciding that to become one was the only way to truly learn all their secrets.                                                                 |
| 31 - 40  | You spent time working in a field where death was ever present, for instance you worked as a grave-digger, mortician or practitioner of the healing arts and the experiences led you to seek out ways to triumph over the eventual demise of your own body.            |
| 41 - 50  | There is a certain bit of lore, a magical artifact or some other impossibly out of reach goal that you wish to conquer and believe one lifetime alone can not bring you success--hence you sought a path that would provide you with multiple ones.                    |
| 51 - 60  | You nearly died once and became obsessed with preventing this from ever happening again. You fear what awaits you after your death and decided you would never find out. The experience left you visibly scarred, causing you to lose an ear, 1d3 fingers or 1d4 toes. |
| 61 - 70  | You found a magical tome, item or booklet that explained the benefits of undeath and instantly became obsessed with the knowledge.                                                                                                                                     |
| 71 - 80  | You witnessed a victim under the control of an undead creature and were fascinated by the creatures dominating effects over its host and resolved to attain those powers for yourself by whatever means necessary.                                                     |
| 81 - 90  | You were betrayed once by someone close to you who escaped your vengeance through their own demise. You sought a way to return them to their corporeal form to enact your revenge and became obsessed with the unliving arts in the process.                           |
| 91 - 100 | You were captured by an undead being or a cult devoted to undeath and forced into their way of life in your distant past. Now, either with your own free will, or acting as their agent, you roam the lands, still under the spell of this undeath devotion.           |

## OPTIONAL RULE: UNLIVING QUIRKS

Those who study the unliving arts often develop strange and unsettling quirks. When you make your character you can roll once on the *Unliving Quirks* table to add unique and strange behaviors to aid in role-playing an undeadly themed personality.

### UNLIVING QUIRKS

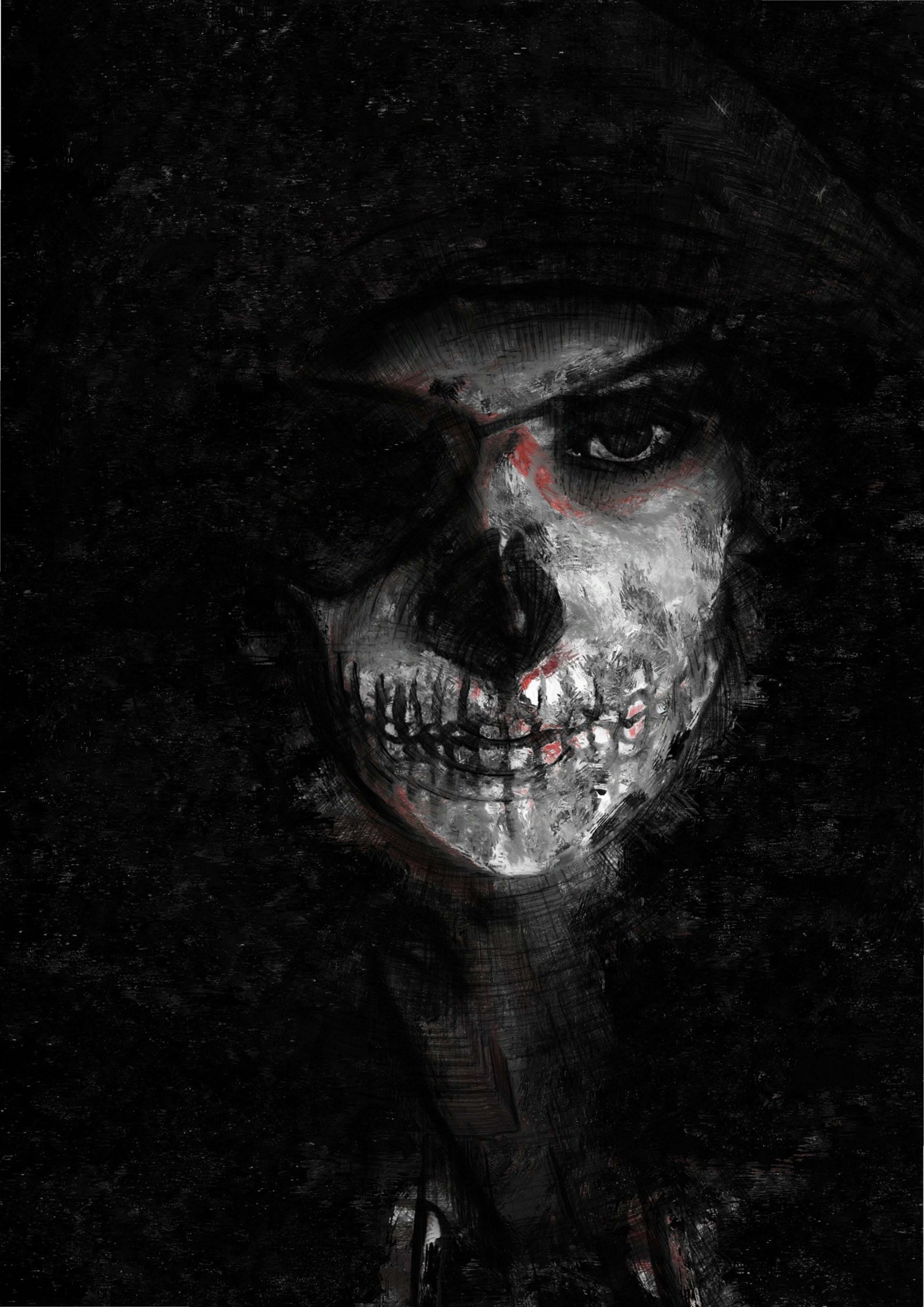
#### d12 Unliving Quirk

- 1 You are exceptionally sensitive to light and break out in rashes when exposed to direct sunlight.
- 2 You have daily visions of a dark and unsettling fate awaiting the end of your study into the arts.
- 3 Occasionally your reflection is muddled and hazy and appears as a dark shadowy form in mirrors and watery surfaces.
- 4 Plants wither at your touch and you have a scent of mold that hangs about you.
- 5 You are exceptionally difficult to rouse from sleep and always awaken with bloodshot eyes.
- 6 Your flesh does not heal normally and even the slightest of wounds leaves lasting and visible scars.
- 7 You have come to believe you are the reincarnation of a powerful spirit with a great and mysterious destiny.
- 8 You refuse to wear any clothing that hasn't been taken from the deceased.
- 9 You always carry around a vial of salt, believing that it protects you from spirits, sprinkling bits of it on any doorway you enter as a means of warding your passage.
- 10 You speak in tense poetic rhyme when in stressful situations that includes references to undead legends and tales.
- 11 You have lost a good deal of the ability to taste or smell most fragrances and flavors and everything has a bland, sickly aroma of rotten meat to your senses, no matter the actual substance.
- 12 You seem to attract the attention of insects no matter where you go, however they cause you no harm from this apparent affection.

Elvish wine, I miss that the most. Of course I didn't expect longevity to come without its share of penalties, but one can only stomach the strongest dwarven ale for so long before you begin to crave a finer brew.

-Zorander







## TRINKETS

When you make your character you can roll once on the trinket table presented in the *Player's Handbook* or choose from the optional table presented in this section which focuses on trinkets likely possessed by practitioners of the unliving arts.

### TRINKETS

#### d100 Trinket

- |    |                                                                                                                                              |    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | A raven's claw that always scratches any creature the first time they attempt to hold it, dealing 1 point of slashing damage in the process. | 19 | A tiny stone figurine of a carrion crawler that moves about when placed on any surface covered in blood.                                                             |
| 2  | A vial of ectoplasmic goo from a slain ghost that changes colors based on the owners mood.                                                   | 20 | A bloody handkerchief with the words, 'To my love-' stitched into its surface.                                                                                       |
| 3  | A tiny evil gnome skull that giggles maniacally whenever the owner takes damage.                                                             | 21 | A purse filled with tufts of hair from a deceased victim to a vampire's bite that is always warm to the touch.                                                       |
| 4  | A severed giants toe that magically sprouts inedible brown mold daily at dawn.                                                               | 22 | A small vial filled with a dark black substance that grows cold in the presence of ghosts.                                                                           |
| 5  | A petrified orcs nose that causes the owner to sneeze uncontrollably around elves.                                                           | 23 | A dark black feather from the wing of a fallen celestial angel.                                                                                                      |
| 6  | A bottle of unfermented grape juice that replenishes itself daily at dusk.                                                                   | 24 | A tiny bronze statue of a bone golem whose hands flail about when its sides are pressed.                                                                             |
| 7  | A piece of unleavened black bread that smells of charcoal.                                                                                   | 25 | A preserved crows foot.                                                                                                                                              |
| 8  | A tiny rat skeleton, carved with indecipherable runes that glow in the sunlight and render it incapable of being reanimated.                 | 26 | A bit of bark from an oak tree, with arcane symbols engraved across its surface.                                                                                     |
| 9  | A severed and still bloodied hand from a small child, wrapped in dark cloth.                                                                 | 27 | A bit of spider webbing.                                                                                                                                             |
| 10 | A length of gauze linen that served as the wrappings around a reanimated mummy.                                                              | 28 | A tiny kobold heart floating in a jar of formaldehyde.                                                                                                               |
| 11 | A vial of black lipstick that smells faintly of earth.                                                                                       | 29 | A carrion crawlers severed tentacle.                                                                                                                                 |
| 12 | A pair of indestructible cosmetic black eyelashes made from the wings of a fey creature.                                                     | 30 | An ornate hoop earring made of black iron and engraved with the words - "By the light of the moon".                                                                  |
| 13 | A vial of blood-red nail polish that has a strong coppery scent.                                                                             | 31 | A bill of goods for an order of 20 coffins, personalized with the stamp "B.S.".                                                                                      |
| 14 | A chapbook of dwarven poems for the dead written for comedic effect.                                                                         | 32 | A tiny copper bird cage that holds three canary skulls.                                                                                                              |
| 15 | A journal bound in leather with countless sketches of animal skeletons in various anatomical poses.                                          | 33 | A vial of blood from a condemned criminal.                                                                                                                           |
| 16 | A tiny rag doll punctured throughout with iron nails, that magically adopts the appearance of whomever is holding it.                        | 34 | A vial of blood from a celestial creature.                                                                                                                           |
| 17 | A hobgoblin's eye, preserved inside a glass jar filled with formaldehyde that follows whoever is watching it.                                | 35 | A vial of blood from a fiendish creature.                                                                                                                            |
| 18 | A poem written by a lovestruck halfling to a ghost lover that apparently paid him nightly visits.                                            | 36 | A hollow silver sphere hanging from a silver chain entwined with strips of inscribed parchment.                                                                      |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 37 | A copper ring bearing arcane inscriptions on the inside of the band that causes the bearers eyes to briefly glow a faint green when the inscription is spoken aloud. |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 38 | A severed paw to a dire wolf wrapped in a soft velvet handkerchief.                                                                                                  |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 39 | A hollow copper sphere inscribed with arcane symbols that causes the bearers skin to always feel cold to the touch.                                                  |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 40 | A sealed clay jar containing strips of inscribed parchment inside that are the portions of a forgotten spell.                                                        |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 41 | A crystal cube with magical phrases carved on all six sides.                                                                                                         |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 42 | A hollow brass circlet containing tiny runes on its surface.                                                                                                         |
|    |                                                                                                                                              | 43 | An iron flask containing a brackish green liquid that turns the imbibers tongue bright red when swallowed.                                                           |



- 44 A wooden stake blessed by an evil cleric.
- 45 A set of pipes made of bones.
- 46 A tiny stone gargoyle statue that flaps its wings in the light of a full moon.
- 47 A femur bone from an unidentifiable tiny humanoid creature.
- 48 A receipt for a personalized headstone that reads 'See you soon'.
- 49 A journal entitled "Book of the Warlord" that details the exploits of a particularly infamous bandit captain.
- 50 A key made of bone.
- 51 A vial of wyvern venom.
- 52 A tiny idol made of clay to an unrecognizable and long forgotten deity.
- 53 A set of bloody manacles.
- 54 A set of sealing wax and a quill.
- 55 A black candle.
- 56 A vial of dragon blood ink that withers away any nonmagical parchment it is written upon.
- 57 A bag of sulfur.
- 58 A bit of bark from a cedar tree.
- 59 A vial of jasmine oil.
- 60 A pouch filled with wormwood.
- 61 A preserved wing of an adult raven.
- 62 A tiny sharp pin stained with blood.
- 63 A handheld mirror, cracked in the lower right hand corner.
- 64 A deck of blank playing cards whose faces morph into a sketch of whoever holds a single card.
- 65 A piece of black cloth.
- 66 A rusted nail.
- 67 A coin from a far off land depicting a member of a royal family whose face has been defaced with a pair of horns.
- 68 A jar of vinegar.
- 69 A piece of burnt bark from a willow tree.
- 70 A jar of troll snot that bubbles uncontrollably.
- 71 A set of goblin eyes wrapped in bloody white gauze.
- 72 A jar filled with the sweat from a terrified gnome.
- 73 A jar filled with red moss.
- 74 A vial filled with the ashes from a newborn phoenix.
- 75 A vial of pixie blood.
- 76 A pair of red candles.
- 77 A round piece of clear blue glass.
- 78 A piece of black parchment that only allows blood to adhere to its surface.
- 79 A black feather from the wing of an aasimar.
- 80 A vial of graveyard dirt.

- 81 A jar of honey.
- 82 A copper box filled with 3 cloves of garlic.
- 83 A single black glove, stained in blood.
- 84 A tiny preserved scorpion that glows in the moonlight.
- 85 A funeral shroud wrapped and bound in black thread.
- 86 A tiny ceramic goblet shaped like a tiny skull that imbues all liquids drunk from it with a coppery taste.
- 87 A black cap stenciled with white thread.
- 88 A poster depicting an upcoming festival devoted to a departed patriarch to a wealthy regional family.
- 89 A tiny wing from a vampire bat.
- 90 A spring from a complex mechanical trap, stained with residue from a harmless poison.
- 91 A tiny ceramic bowl stenciled with images of dancing skeletons.
- 92 A copper locket that holds a strand of hair from a sea hag.
- 93 A giant's tooth.
- 94 A severed ear from drow priestess.
- 95 A book filled with recipes for various fermented drinks, written in an unknown language.
- 96 An illithid skull that whispers dark promises to its owner.
- 97 A pouch of cinnamon.
- 98 A jar filled with leeches.
- 99 A bar of red soap.
- 100 An ivory box bearing arcane sigils across all six sides that is surprisingly heavy.









## CHAPTER 3: DUNGEON MASTER'S TOOLS



AS A DUNGEON MASTER, YOU CAN CREATE all manner of new and optional rules to customize your campaign. This chapter presents a plethora of such options that focuses on the undead and undeathly. To begin, this chapter opens with new in-game topics and begins by providing new diseases, environmental hazards, equipment, poisons and traps. Following that, this chapter details new optional rules that allow players and

DMs to customize their undead creations and monsters. Finally the chapter concludes with new magical treasure and magical item enhancements that reward players with common and rarer abilities with an undeathly feel.

### DISEASES

The diseases illustrated in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* contain a variety of ways in which diseases can work in a game. The following diseases offer new penalties, symptoms and possibilities that work for an undeathly and undead-themed campaign or adventure.

#### CADAVEROUS RIGOR

*Muscles fuse, blood slows and the body becomes like death.*

This debilitating disease is typically transferred through the claws of the undead or in areas where they lair. It quickly withers away a creature's ability to perform even basic motor functions.

A beast or humanoid that is injured by the claws of a creature carrying this disease, typically a zombie or a carrion crawler, or when it comes into contact with filth or offal contaminated by the disease, must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected. In 1d4 minutes after infection, the creature's limbs start to become extremely rigid and difficult to move. The creature takes a -2 penalty to Dexterity attack rolls and Dexterity-based ability checks. At the end of every 24 hour period after the symptoms appear, the effects become more and more pronounced and this penalty worsens by 2. When it reaches -10, the victim becomes completely immobile until their mobility is restored by magic such as *lesser restoration* or *heal*. Their speed becomes 0 and they can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. Attack rolls against the creature have advantage and the creature's attack rolls have disadvantage. Finally, the creature has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature can make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the character's Dexterity penalty is lessened by 2 points and the DC for the next Constitution saving throw to resist the effects of this disease is reduced by 2. When the saving throw DC drops to 0, the creature recovers from the disease.

#### GHOUL FEVER

*Those who survive the initial onslaught may still fall victim later on to the assault of an undead horde.*

This terrible infection transforms its host into an undead creature that craves the flesh of the unliving. A humanoid

who is injured by the claws or teeth of a creature carrying this disease, typically a ghoul or ghastr, must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Symptoms manifest 1d4 hours after infection and include a fever, muscle stiffening, and painful abdominal spasms.

Every 4 hours after infection, the creature suffers 1 level of exhaustion. 24 hours after infection, the creature's hit points immediately drop to 0 and they die. If a creature dies while infected with this disease, they rise on the next midnight following their death as a ghoul under the control of the DM.

A creature infected with ghoul fever can only be cured by this disease through magic such as *remove disease* or by being subjected to a cleansing ritual performed by a cleric of a good deity. Such a ritual requires the performer succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Religion) check to expel the negative energy affecting the sufferer over the course of a long rest.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

This section expands on the examples of hazards presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* that adventurers might encounter in the wilderness and in dungeons. Some of these hazards can be identified with a successful Intelligence (Nature) check or by an Intelligence (Arcana) check. Use the guidelines in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to set an appropriate DC for any check made to spot or recognize a hazard.

#### BLOOD GRASS

*On the site of battlefields, the ground itself has memories of its gory past.*

Blood grass feeds on both the light of the sun and the blood of creatures unlucky enough to wander within its vicinity. Blood grass typically grows in areas that were once the site of many deaths and became tainted with arcane and necrotic energies. It feeds on animals that trespass onto its surface. The blades that make up blood grass have a reddish spiral pattern to them and typically cover a patch of ground dozens of feet in radius. When a creature comes in contact with blood grass it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) slashing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Bloodied creatures have disadvantage on this throw. Each round a creature starts its turn in contact with blood grass they must make a new saving throw against the effects of the grass.





#### HANGMAN'S TREE

*A twisted and spiteful plant that poisons the minds of creatures into feasting on its putrid fruit.*

When a humanoid is hung and murdered from a tree with exceptional malice, the soul of that creature can become bound within it and tied to the world of the living. The tree becomes a dark and twisted version of its former self, causing other humanoid creatures who look upon its branches with gluttonous hunger. Humanoid creatures that come within sight of a hangman's tree must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or perceive the tree as filled with succulent and delicious fruits and feel compelled to eat the tree's fruits which are in fact rotten and withered and that infect the creature with ennui and malaise. A creature that successfully saves against the effects of a hangman's tree are immune to its effects for 24 hours. Creatures that fail to save against the effects of a hangman's tree must partake of its fruit, after which they suffer disadvantage on Charisma skill checks and Charisma saving throws until they finish a long rest. A *calm emotions* spell cast on a creature affected by the tree's effects immediately removes these penalties.

#### PHANTOM POOL

*From deep within its nightmarish depths, a phantom pool's illusory image of terror lures potential victims to their doom.*

A phantom pool is typically the site of a drowning victim that has been given malicious sentience and can include small ponds, wells and other places contaminated with great evil. Passersby who peer into its depths must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or perceive the image of a loved one or close companion, drowning in the depths of the pool. A creature influenced by this vision

immediately leaps into the pool and begins swimming to the bottom. Any creature in the pool that is affected by its illusion, is considered to be drowning each round they remain in the pool. A creature that believes in this illusion can make a new save against this effect at the end of its turn. A *remove curse* spell cast on the pool or a 1 minute blessing ritual performed by a cleric of good alignment that culminates in dosing a vial of holy water into the pool transforms the phantom pool into a normal body of water.

#### ZOMBIE FOG

*In the dead of night, beneath a moonless sky, a creeping mist can bring terror back from beyond the grave.*

When cemeteries and other places containing the remains of humanoids are polluted with overwhelming evil, a heavy gray fog can arise from the landscape itself. Typically this happens when creatures of powerful evil take up residence in the location such as a bodak or a vampire. This fog blocks vision and has a typical radius of 1d6 x 50 feet that slowly creeps along with the wind. When the fog comes in contact with a corpse that corpse is instantly animated as a zombie and attacks any nearby living creatures as if under the effect of an *animate dead* spell. This animation lasts for 1d6 minutes or ends prematurely 1d4 rounds after a zombie leaves the fog. A strong wind can disperse the fog in 5 foot sections. A cleric may also attempt to disperse up to a 30 foot section of the fog centered on themselves, by performing a Channel Divinity: Turn Undead action.

Our studies invariably change the landscape. Often this makes our work easier, which in turn makes it easier to effect the landscape even more. I call this the noxious cycle. It's an astounding thing.

- Alistair Lurcock





## EQUIPMENT

The *Player's Handbook* includes a good deal of equipment available to players through various buyers and seller of many sorts. This section expands on these mundane and exotic goods that adventurers may find useful in their research into the unliving arts.

### EQUIPMENT

| Equipment                  | Cost     | Weight  | Properties                           |
|----------------------------|----------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Dissector's Tools          | 50 gp    | 2 lb.   | -                                    |
| Graverobbers Salve (flask) | 50 gp    | 1 lb.   | -                                    |
| Necromancer's Claw         | 1 sp     | ¼ lb.   | -                                    |
| Necromancer's Dagger       | 12 gp    | 1 lb.   | Finesse, light, thrown (range 20/60) |
| Necromancer's Lab          | 1,500 gp | Special | -                                    |
| Unholy water (flask)       | 50 gp    | 1 lb.   | -                                    |

### DISSECTOR'S TOOLS

Dissector's tools enable a character to determine a humanoid's cause of death and preserve body parts, vital organs and other bodily substances such as poisons and toxins from the dead and recently deceased.

**Components.** Dissector's tools include a set of scissors, a bone saw, a mallet, medical syringes for fluid aspiration, a head clamp to hold its position, and a jar of formaldehyde for organ preservation.

**Investigation.** When you inspect an area for clues, proficiency with dissector's tools grants additional insight into any organic material and substances that might still be remaining in the area.

**Medicine.** Proficiency with these tools grant additional insight into the cause of death, including death by poisoning, torture and disease of humanoid creatures.

**Perception.** You can spot wounds and small imperfections, including even incipient symptoms of disease on humanoid creatures due to your familiarity in examining the recently departed through extensive experience with these tools.

### DISSECTOR'S TOOLS

| Activity                                                             | DC |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Preserve a body part or an organ from the living, dead or the undead | 10 |
| Determine the cause of death of a humanoid creature                  | 15 |
| Identify the type and number of any wounds found on a humanoid body  | 15 |

### GRAVEROBBER'S SALVE

As an action, you can splash the contents of this flask onto an area of earth up to 10 feet cube. If the skeletal or corpse remains of a humanoid creature is located up to a distance of 20 feet below this cube, any dirt, soil or other earthen material dissolves away between the cube and the remains or any container the remains are located in, for instance a coffin. This process takes 1 minute and does not dissolve inorganic material or living creatures such as earthworms and the like.





### NECROMANCER'S LAB

The scent of death permeates this room and a dim light shines throughout, illuminating gurneys stacked with a sordid display of severed body parts still dripping with gore. An assortment of tables are thrust against the walls, each filled with grisly spell components, jars containing organ parts in a sickly green fluid, various beakers containing burning elixirs and blood-splattered books of arcane lore.

**Size Cost:** 1 room point

**Construction Cost:** 2,500 gp

**Construction Time:** 15 days

**Benefit:** All necromancy spells that raise or create dead that are cast within this room by the owners of this structure and their allies last for twice their normal duration and may be cast as rituals. In addition, alchemist's supplies, dissector's tools and a poisoner's kit are always considered to be present here, and within this room any checks with these tools are made with advantage by individuals who have proficiency with them.

This room follows the construction rules found in *Fortresses, Temples, & Strongholds*, a world-building option resource available on the DMSGuild.

**May Also Be Built As.** sepulchre, sacrificial room

### UNHOLY WATER

As an action, you can splash the contents of this flask onto a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, make a ranged attack against a target creature, treating the unholy water as an improvised weapon. If the target is either a celestial or a good-aligned creature who is a cleric or a paladin of a good deity, it takes 2d8 necrotic damage.

### SPECIAL WEAPONS

#### NECROMANCER'S CLAW

When you place this piece of metal shaped to fit around the knuckles over your fingers, four sharp protruding curved blades affixed to a crossbar enable your unarmed attacks to do 2 points of piercing damage instead of their normal damage. Additionally, as a free action, you can make a Dexterity (Stealth) check while wielding this weapon to conceal it from an observer.

#### NECROMANCER'S DAGGER

This simple looking weapon functions like a regular dagger but can also be used as a spell-casting focus by a cleric, paladin, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard who wields it as described in the *Player's Handbook*.



### POISONS

The following poisons are suitable for encounters with undead beings as well as necrotic energy, the Negative Planes and various contagions of the undying. They follow the rules for poisons as presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

#### POISONS

| Poison         | Type     | Price per Dose |
|----------------|----------|----------------|
| Madness Poison | Ingested | 1,200 gp       |
| Shadow Tears   | Inhaled  | 2,400 gp       |

#### MADNESS POISON (INGESTED)

A normal mind may find the mere sight of a shambling creature risen from the grave too much for their psyche to bear. Ingenious practitioners of the Dangerous Arts have learned to distill this effect and bottle it for discerning patrons.

A creature that ingests this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or immediately roll a d100 on the **Short-term Madness** table found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. After a character's madness ends, they are poisoned for 1d4 hours.

#### SHADOW TEARS (INHALED)

A creature that comes into contact with the Plane of Shadows can become infected by the darkness of that realm. The debilitating nature of its very landscape can be harvested and distilled to harmful effect.

This poison is harvested from the pools of shadow that coalesce on the Plane of Shadow, distilled and mixed with the crushed remains of certain plants found on the material



plane to form a dark powder. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure the creature's maximum hit points are reduced by 12 (4d6) points until they finish a long rest or half as many hit points on a successful one.

## TRAPS

Practitioners of the Dangerous Arts have developed deadly traps to confound intruders and ensure the safety of their private havens. The following traps follow the rules for traps found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### CORPSE TRAP

*Simple magic trap (level 5 - 10, dangerous threat)*

A favorite of necromancers who sprinkle their domains with enticing promises of treasure for would-be looters, a corpse trap is simply a corpse that is triggered to explode upon investigation. By infusing a corpse with enough necrotic energy the body becomes highly sensitive to the merest touch of a living being. This type of trap is most effect when placed near an area perceived as dangerous such as directly in front of a false and apparently already triggered trap like a disabled scything blade or at the bottom of an exposed pit trap. Shiny and expensive looking gear can further entice would-be investigators into triggering the corpse trap.

**Trigger.** Any creature who touches even a tiny amount of exposed flesh while interacting with the corpse.

**Effect.** The triggering creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw after interacting with the corpse. On a successful save the creature managed to not touch any of the corpse's exposed flesh while investigating the remains. On a failed save, a 10-foot cube of necrotic energy erupts outward from the corpse, destroying it in the process but leaving any metallic gear it may have had with it. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature rolls on the Putrescence table (found in this guide) until they acquire a Putrescence trait. On a success, a creature takes 9 (3d6) necrotic damage from the explosion.

**Countermeasures.** A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the exposed veins of the corpse are filled with an unnaturally black tint that pulsates every few seconds. A DC 15 Arcana check or *detect magic* spell also reveals that the corpse is engorged with lethal amounts of necrotic energy. A successful *dispel magic* cast on the corpse destroys the corpse, causing it to implode and wither into a harmless obsidian ichor.

### SPIRIT ENGINE

*Magic trap (level 11 - 16, deadly threat)*

Unlike most traps that are well hidden, this trap presents itself as a giant circular stone pattern with a radius of at least 30 feet, engraved into the floor, typically taking up the majority of a huge antechamber with two entrances. Necromancers are fond of placing such patterns in each chamber of their lair, imbuing only one with the magic necessary to turn it into this deadly trap.

In the center of the circular pattern is a simple looking dais topped with an elaborate crystal ball. Once a living creature steps on any portion of the pattern,



they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have their soul ripped from their body and thrust into the crystal ball in the center of the pattern. This effect happens each time a new living creature steps on the pattern until a soul is captured by the crystal ball.

Once activated, the pattern fills with strong gravitational energy and makes crossing its surface extremely difficult. Every space over the surface of the pattern counts as difficult terrain and requires twice normal movement to traverse. The energy of the pattern is so strong, objects are unable to be thrown more than 5 feet and flying or levitating creatures are immediately pulled to the ground on which the pattern is engraved. In addition, once activated, the entire pattern is considered to be under the effects of an antimagic field spell centered on, and being emitted in all directions by the orb.

Any creature, other than the creature whose soul is trapped within the crystal ball that moves across the pattern takes 15 points of force damage for every 5 feet of movement they make while walking across the pattern. In addition, any time this trap does damage to a creature moving across its surface, the trap also deals 15 points of force damage to the creature whose soul is trapped within the crystal ball.

The crystal ball can only be deactivated by the touch of a living creature which immediately returns the soul of the trapped creature to its body and ends the field of gravitational force and antimagic. If the crystal ball is destroyed while containing a soul, their soul is transported to a realm of the dead determined by the DM and the trap deactivates. Likewise, if a creature whose soul is trapped inside the crystal ball receives enough damage to their physical body to reduce them to 0 hit points, the crystal ball shatters, the trap deactivates and their soul is transported to a realm of the dead.

A creature that makes a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the pattern as a dormant rune trap that is activated by the touch of a living creature.

I generally despise unexpected guests. However, sometimes the work can get a bit tedious and a little entertainment is in order.

- Alistair Lurcock





## OPTIONAL RULE: UNDEAD HARVESTING

Some undead creatures are filled with so much necrotic energy that their various parts are incredibly powerful even after they have met the True Death. After defeating an undead creature a player can attempt to extract valuable organs, blood, flesh and other substances from the remains of the creatures corporeal or incorporeal body.

Each time a player wishes to harvest components from the remains of an undead creature they must roll a Wisdom (Survival) check against a DC 13. On a success, a character has harvested a number of components equal to their Dexterity modifier of whatever organ, flesh or component they were trying to harvest from the target creature. If a player fails by 5 or more, they have ruined the entire creatures corpse and no other materials of any type may be successfully harvested from it. On a 20 or above, a character manages to harvest as much material for a single component as the creature has to offer.

This section presents single use magical items that are the result of harvesting material from the undead. Harvested parts that are able to be implanted into a person's body, known as *grafts*, are listed in the magic items section of this chapter with the rest of the magic items. Those items may or may not be harvested using the rules presented in this section.

For even greater depth into undead harvesting, *Grom's Guide to Harvesting Monsters* available on the DMSGuild expands more fully on the concept.

### BLOOD OF A GHOUL

*Wondrous Item*

When you mix 1 pint of water with 1 pint of ghoul or ghastr blood the mixture creates enough for a single amount of *unholy water*. An average ghoul contains 4 pints of blood.

### BLOOD OF A REVENANT

*Wondrous Item*

When you mix 1 pound of crushed nightshade with 1 pint of revenant blood and allow the mixture to dry and crust, the substance created functions as a single amount of *malice* poison. An average revenant contains 3 pints of blood.

### BLOOD OF A VAMPIRE

*Wondrous Item*

When you consume at least a pint of this fluid, if your alignment is not good, you gain 1d6 + 4 temporary hit points. Otherwise, you suffer 1d6 points of damage. An average vampire or vampire spawn contains 5 pints of blood.

### BLOOD OF A WIGHT

*Wondrous Item*

When you mix 1 pint of *unholy water* with 1 pint of blood retrieved from the remains of an wight, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *assassin's blood*. An average wight contains 5 pints of blood.

The number one rule in undead harvesting is to go where the undead are. Cemeteries, plague-ridden towns and battlefields; these are my hunting grounds. Where they don't exist, then you have to see to their creation yourself.

-Zorander



### CLAWS OF A GHOUL

#### Wondrous Item

When you grind a minimum of 5 fingernails from a ghoul with a vial of unholy water, the mixture creates enough for a single amount of *assassin's blood* poison. A ghoul typically contains a total of 10 fingernails.

### FLESH OF AN ALHOON

#### Wondrous Item

When you wrap at least 5 square feet of this removed tissue around your chest, you gain cold and lightning resistance for the next 24 hours so long as this flesh remains covering your heart. An average alhoon contains 10 square feet of malleable flesh.

### FLESH OF A BODAK

#### Wondrous Item

When you wrap at least 5 square feet of this removed tissue around your chest, you reduce the first necrotic damage you take each round by 5 for the next 24 hours so long as this flesh remains covering your heart. An average bodak contains 10 square feet of malleable flesh.

### FLESH OF A DEATH KNIGHT

#### Wondrous Item

When you wrap at least 5 square feet of this removed tissue around your chest, you reduce the first poison damage you take each round by 5 for the next 24 hours so long as this flesh remains covering your heart. An average death knight contains 10 square feet of malleable flesh.

### FLESH OF A SPAWN OF KYUSS

#### Wondrous Item

When you wrap at least 5 square feet of this removed tissue around your chest, you gain poison resistance for the next 24 hours so long as this flesh remains covering your heart. An average spawn of kyuss contains 10 square feet of malleable flesh.

### HEART OF A DEATH KNIGHT

#### Wondrous Item

When you finish consuming this item, for the next 24 hours you become immune to poison and necrotic damage and from being frightened. An average death knight's heart withers to ash within 1 hour following its removal.

### HEART OF A NIGHTWALKER

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with the crushed remains of a heart of a nightwalker the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *madness* poison. An average nightwalker's heart withers to ash within 10 minutes following its removal.

### HEART OF A SWORD WRAITH

#### Wondrous Item

When you finish consuming this item, for the next 24 hours you can not become exhausted. An average sword wraith's heart withers to ash within 10 minutes following its removal.

### HORN OF A NIGHTWALKER

#### Wondrous Item

When you spend a long rest attuning to this horn while



R.SPEARS

hollowing it out with the use of a hammer and whetstone and then inscribing arcane runes along its surface, at the end of that rest, you can make an Arcana check against a DC 15. On a success, the horn becomes a modified silver *horn of valhalla*. The berserkers that the horn summons are considered undead creatures that do not require air, food, water or sleep and they have resistance to necrotic damage. Instead of Valhalla, the berserkers summoned are creatures of shadow that come from the plane of Shadow. An average nightwalker has two horns, although more terrifying versions of these creatures have been known to have many, many more.

### ICHOR OF AN ALLIP

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with 1 pint of ichor retrieved from the remains of an allip, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *madness* poison. An average allip contains 1d4 pints of salvageable ichor from its remains.

### ICHOR OF A GHOST

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with 1 pint of ichor retrieved from the remains of a ghost, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of potion that when drunk, turns the imbiber invisible for up to 1 minute or until they attack or cast a spell that causes a creature to make a saving throw. An average ghost contains 1d4 pints of salvageable ichor from its remains.



### ICHOR OF A SHADOW

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of water with 1 pint of ichor retrieved from the remains of a shadow, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *unholy water*. An average shadow contains 1 pint of salvageable ichor from its remains.

### ICHOR OF A SPECTRE

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with 1 pint of ichor retrieved from the remains of a spectre, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *assassin's blood*. An average spectre contains 1 pint of salvageable ichor from its remains.

### ICHOR OF A WRAITH

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with 1 pint of ichor retrieved from the remains of a wraith, the mixture creates enough for a single dose of *assassin's blood*. An average wraith contains 1 pint of salvageable ichor from its remains.

### OIL OF A CADAVER COLLECTOR

#### Wondrous Item

When you mix 1 pint of unholy water with 1 pint of oil retrieved from the remains of a cadaver collector, the mixture creates a single dose of *assassin's blood*. An average cadaver collector contains 2d12 pints of salvageable oil from its remains.

### SKULL OF A BONECLAW

#### Wondrous Item

While holding this severed skull, as an action, you can magically teleport up to 60 feet from an area of dim light or darkness to an area you can see that is also in dim light or darkness.

Each time you use this feature of the skull, roll a d20. On a roll of 1 your soul is rent from your body and banished into this skull for 1d4 minutes. Only a *wish* spell may retrieve your soul from this skull while it is trapped inside. While your soul inhabits the skull, you are aware of your surroundings as if you were in the skull's space. You can't move or use reactions.

If the skull is destroyed while your soul is trapped within, your soul immediately returns to your body. If the skull is targeted by an effect that turns undead while your soul is trapped within, the skull instantly shatters and your soul is transported to the Shadow plane and your body crumbles to dust.

## OPTIONAL RULE: PATCHWORK ZOMBIES

If you want to add customizable undead to your game, the following rules allow players to animate a patchwork humanoid zombie assembled from various corpses.

A patchwork zombie consists of three separate sections: a head, a torso (and legs) and a pair of arms. All patchwork zombies begin with a torso and legs from a specific humanoid, a process that requires 10 minutes of work and requires the corpse of a medium-sized humanoid.



### SOME ZOMBIES ARE MORE EQUAL

Some patchwork zombies are, thanks to their base forms, especially powerful - on purpose. Similar to magic items, the sections of a patchwork zombie should be considered in terms of rarity. While an elf corpse may be rather easy to obtain (depending on the setting), a jackalwere or troglodyte corpse is not likely to be a common resource in a typical campaign. DMs are encouraged to modify and adapt encounters in a campaign to provide players with opportunities to acquire rare and uncommon patchwork parts that make their undead creations more powerful and thus more enjoyable to the players. It is hoped that players will seek out encounters as a means to capture specific, and thereby animate, more powerful breeds of zombies.

Thereafter, a head and a pair of arms can be patched to this torso section from other humanoids. The process of attaching a head and a pair of arms to the initial torso and legs requires 10 minutes of work for each of these additional sections. Each section involved in a patchwork zombie requires its own corpse, even if a corpse contains all the sections desired in constructing a patchwork zombie: for instance a patchwork zombie that you wish to create having a goliath torso (and legs) and goliath arms, requires two goliath corpses.

Once a patchwork zombie has a head, a torso (and legs) and a pair of arms, any *animate dead* spell cast on the corpse can be used to augment the corpse into becoming a patchwork zombie containing specific traits inherent to its base forms. These inherent traits can be found listed on the **Patchwork Zombie Trait Table**. Other than these traits, patchwork zombies have the normal statistics for a zombie, found in the *Monster's Manual*.



Some of these traits involve two new actions available to patchwork zombies. These are the zombie bite and zombie claw attack actions, listed below:

**Zombie Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

**Zombie Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

*I have collected a great deal of wonderful specimen over the years.*

*Some were salvaged in their entirety, others had to be assembled, piece by piece - a powerfully built arm, an extraordinary leg, an eviscerating maw. The rarer the find, the more durable the creation.*

*There have been some decades, where it is only for the promise of these scarce acquisitions that I have been enticed into a brief sojourn from the safety of my impenetrable sanctuary.*

*- Nifsara Shadowmend*

#### PATCHWORK ZOMBIE TRAIT TABLE

| SECTION | HUMANOID            | TRAIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arms    | Aarakocra           | The zombie gains the following action:<br><b>Multiattack:</b> The zombie makes one slam or melee weapon attack and one zombie claw* attack.                                                                                  |
| Arms    | Bugbear             | The zombie's weapon and slam attacks do an extra 2 points of damage on a hit.                                                                                                                                                |
| Arms    | Dragonborn          | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Strength skill checks and Strength saving throws.                                                                                                                                             |
| Arms    | Gnoll               | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Strength skill checks and Strength saving throws.                                                                                                                                             |
| Arms    | Goliath             | The zombie's weapon and slam attacks do an extra 2 points of damage on a hit.                                                                                                                                                |
| Arms    | Half-orc            | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Strength skill checks and Strength saving throws.                                                                                                                                             |
| Arms    | Orc                 | The zombie's weapon and slam attacks do an extra 1 point of damage on a hit.                                                                                                                                                 |
| Arms    | Quaggoth            | The zombie gains the following action:<br><b>Multiattack:</b> The zombie makes one slam or melee weapon attack and one zombie claw* attack.                                                                                  |
| Arms    | Skulk               | The zombie gains the following action:<br><b>Multiattack:</b> The zombie makes one slam or melee weapon attack and one zombie claw* attack. Half of the damage from this zombie's claw attack is considered necrotic damage. |
| Arms    | Tabaxi              | The zombie gains the following action:<br><b>Multiattack:</b> The zombie makes one slam or melee weapon attack and one zombie claw* attack.                                                                                  |
| Arms    | Troglodyte          | The zombie gains the following action:<br><b>Multiattack:</b> The zombie makes one slam or melee weapon attack and one zombie claw* attack.                                                                                  |
| Head    | Bullywug            | The zombie gains the ability to make a zombie bite* attack as a bonus action.                                                                                                                                                |
| Head    | Elf (any subrace)   | The zombie's passive perception becomes 12 and it gains a +2 bonus on Perception skill checks when attempting to detect living creatures.                                                                                    |
| Head    | Gith                | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Strength skill checks and Strength saving throws.                                                                                                                                             |
| Head    | Gnome (any subrace) | The zombie can speak up to 5 specific words of your choice that it utters in a harsh guttural tone. Additionally, the zombie gains a +2 bonus on Intelligence saving throws.                                                 |
| Head    | Gnoll               | The zombie gains the ability to make a zombie bite* attack as a bonus action.                                                                                                                                                |
| Head    | Grimlock            | The zombie gains blindsight out to a range of 20 feet and is blind beyond this radius. Additionally the zombie's passive perception becomes 12.                                                                              |
| Head    | Lizardfolk          | The zombie gains the ability to make a zombie bite* attack as a bonus action.                                                                                                                                                |
| Head    | Kuo-toa             | The zombie gains the ability to make a zombie bite* attack as a bonus action.                                                                                                                                                |
| Head    | Troglodyte          | The zombie gains the ability to make a zombie bite* attack as a bonus action.                                                                                                                                                |







#### PATCHWORK ZOMBIE TRAIT TABLE - CONTINUED

| SECTION | HUMANOID       | TRAIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Torso   | Elf            | If the zombie starts its turn and it is charmed, it can use its action to make a save against the effect to end it immediately.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Torso   | Dragonborn     | The zombie gains resistance to one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire or lightning. This is determined randomly or based on the draconic ancestry of the corpse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Torso   | Firenewt       | The zombie gains resistance to fire damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Genasi (fire)  | The zombie gains resistance to fire damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Genasi (water) | The zombie gains resistance to cold damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Goliath        | The zombie's maximum hit points are increased by 6.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Torso   | Half-orc       | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Constitution saving throws.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Torso   | Jackalwere     | The zombie gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Torso   | Kuo-toa        | The zombie gains advantage on attempts to escape a grapple.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Orc            | The zombie gains a +2 bonus on Constitution saving throws.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Torso   | Sahuagin       | The zombie gains advantage on attempts to escape a grapple.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Thrikreen      | The zombie's AC becomes 12.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Tiefling       | The zombie gains resistance to fire damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Triton         | The zombie gains resistance to cold damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Torso   | Troglodyte     | The zombie gains the following trait:<br><b>Stench.</b> Any living creature other than a troglodyte that starts its turn within five feet of the zombie must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench of all troglodytes and zombies with this trait for 1 hour. |
| Torso   | Yuan-ti        | The zombie gains resistance to damage from spells.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### OPTIONAL RULE: UNDEAD DISCIPLINES

With a bit of coaching, even mindless zombies and skeletons can be trained to perform relatively complicated undertakings.

The following disciplines are an optional rule that allows character to train any corporeal humanoid undead creature currently under their control that has an Intelligent score of 8 or lower. Training an undead creature in a discipline may require that character to expend a spell slot. The level needed to train a creature is listed with each discipline's entry. A character can spend a spell slot equal to or above the one listed to train a single undead creature over a long rest in a particular discipline. Characters can spend multiple slots to train multiple creatures. A character

may train a number of undead creatures over a long rest up to their Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). Certain disciplines require no slots in order to train a creature in a specific discipline. For those disciplines, all that is required is a long rest in which a character has time to train the minion.

An undead creature may only be trained in one discipline at a time. If a character attempts to train an undead creature that already has a discipline, the creature loses that discipline and acquires the new one. Any undead under a character's control that is not trained during a long rest, loses any disciplines it currently has training in.

An undead creature trained with one of these disciplines can be ordered to perform that command as many times as they wish until the end of the next long rest, unless the discipline states otherwise.

The following disciplines are listed in alphabetical order.



## AID

*Spell slot cost: 2nd*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to Help a single creature within 10 feet of itself. The selected creature gains advantage on its next Strength or Constitution ability check to perform a task, or gains advantage on the next grapple attack it makes before the end of your next turn.

## BOMBARD

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to hurl an object it is holding at a space you designate that you can see. The undead creature makes a ranged attack against a space within 60 feet of itself against a DC 10. If the space is occupied by a creature, your undead creature instead makes an improvised ranged attack throw against the creature AC. If the undead creature holds multiple objects, it randomly decides which one to throw.

## COOK

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend the next 1 hour constructing a meal capable of sustaining a single living creature using available resources within 30 feet. At the end of this 1 hour, the undead creature makes a Survival check against a DC 5. On a success, it has created a single days ration. If resources within the area are of a type that may not obviously provide substance, the DC for this check is determined by the DM.

## DEFEND

*Spell slot cost: 3rd*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to intercept any creatures that seek to do you harm. Whenever a creature comes within 10 feet of you, as long as this undead creature is also within 10 feet of you, you may use your reaction to have that undead creature move up to its speed and make a grapple attack against the approaching creature as a free action.

## DELIVER

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to take an object it is currently holding and deliver it to a position or creature that you can see. It takes the shortest, most direct route it can and when it arrives at a point you decide, or adjacent to a creature you select, it either drops the object or gives it to the creature selected.

## DEMOLISH

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions attempting to destroy an object or structure you can see until it is commanded to stop. The creature moves and attempts to destroy this object or structure using its most basic means. If it is able to use weapons, this may entail their use.

## DETECT

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to

spend its actions attempting to detect any creature it is able to find, centered on a point you can see until it is commanded to stop. The creature makes a Wisdom (Perception) check to attempt to locate any creatures in a 30-foot radius around the point you choose. If it finds one or more creatures, it points to the creatures it finds and continues to do so as long as the creature remains in that radius.

## ENTERTAIN

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions for the next 1 hour attempting to perform a simple routine, learned during its training. This performance can involve body movements and minor vocalisations it is capable of making. Each round, the creature can make a Charisma (Performance) check to attempt to entertain any creature that can perceive it. The creature receives a bonus to this roll equal to your Charisma modifier.

Based on the audience and their desire to see an undead performer, this check may be made with advantage or disadvantage at the discretion of the DM.

## FETCH

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions attempting to fetch a specific object you point to that you can see and bring it back to you.

## FORTIFY

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions for the next 1 hour attempting to fortify a door, barricade, trench or similar structure you can see until it is commanded to stop. The creature attempts to reinforce this structure using the most basic objects within 30 feet that it can perceive, such as wooden planks, rocks, furniture and other easily carried objects and items.

## GET HELP

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions attempting to locate other intelligent creatures not currently in sight and bring them to your side in the event you fall unconscious. The undead creature brings the first creature it comes across that is capable of language and attempts to bring that creature back to the last position you were at when the creature perceives you became unconscious. This discipline continues to work on the undead creature under your control, even if it moves beyond a range where you would normally be able to command it to perform actions. If your undead creature encounters hostile creatures or receives damage before finding an intelligent creature to summon to your aid, it immediately returns to the last position you were at when you were still conscious. You may also indicate during training a specific creature that this undead must locate, to the exclusion of others, when attempting to seek out aid.



## GUARD

*Spell slot cost: None*

When you train an undead creature under your control over the course of a long rest with this discipline, you can thereafter command it to watch an area up to 60 feet in radius for signs of other creatures. If it perceives any creatures while guarding such an area, it immediately returns to the last position it was aware you were at, or a location of your choice and points in the direction of the guarded area. If you are unconscious when the creature returns to your side, it attempts to rouse you in as harmless a manner as possible. An undead creature given this command can make a single Wisdom (Perception) check each turn to attempt to notice creatures in the guarded area. This discipline continues to work on the undead creature under your control, even if you move beyond a range where you would normally be able to command it to perform actions.

## HORDE TACTICS

*Spell slot cost: 2nd*

When you train an undead creature under your control over the course of a long rest with this discipline you can teach it to attack as part of a cohesive horde. This creature gains advantage on melee attack rolls against adjacent creatures if at least one other undead creature you control is within 5 feet of a creature and the other undead isn't incapacitated.

## SHELTER

*Spell slot cost: None*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions for 1 hour constructing a simple shelter capable of withstanding simple environmental dangers such as rain and wind using available resources within 30 feet. At the end of this 1 hour, the undead creature has created a space inhabitable by up to 1 medium sized humanoid creature. If resources within the area are of a type that may not obviously provide shelter, the undead creature must make a Survival check to find suitable provisions for this shelter.

## SPELL DELIVERY

*Spell slot cost: 2nd*

When you train an undead creature under your control over the course of a long rest with this discipline you can empower that creature with a spell to have it deliver it at a later time. At the end of the long rest you use to train the undead with this discipline, you may expend a spell to imbue the creature with the spent spell if the spell has a range of Touch.

Until the end of your next long rest, that creature can thereafter deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. This undead creature must be within 120 feet of you when you wish to have it cast the spell, and you must use a reaction to have that creature deliver the spell on its turn. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your spell attack roll to deliver the spell. This spell remains with the creature until you finish a long rest or until it is cast by the creature.

## SPELL RESERVOIR

*Spell slot cost: None*

When you train an undead creature under your control over the course of a long rest with this discipline you can imbue that creature with a reservoir of necrotic energy that has

the potential to empower your spells and harm your enemies.

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to use its action assisting your arcane energies. It begins issuing profane snarls and grunts that chills the air around it.

Before the end of your next turn, if you cast a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw, you can expend your reaction to consume the necrotic energy possessed by your undead minion to force that creature to make that saving throw with disadvantage.

If you spent your reaction to impose disadvantage on a creature making a save against one of your spells with this command, the undead you commanded to perform this discipline must immediately roll a d20 as soon as you finish casting that spell. On a roll of 20, your minion is unaffected by this command, otherwise, your commanded undead creature immediately crumbles to dust.

## RESCUE

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to use its actions by attempting to drag its controller or another creature that the controller designates out of danger and to a safe place in the event that the controller or creature is incapacitated. If a creature that the undead creature is rescuing is rendered unconscious or is slain, the undead creature will continue to carry, drag, or otherwise move that creature out of danger until the controlling creatures control over it ends. A zombie's understanding of danger is exceptionally limited and includes only a space in which it itself is not taking damage and is more than 60 feet away.

## SEARCH

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions attempting to search the belongings of a creature you can see for objects it has on its person. On its turn, the creature makes a Wisdom (Perception) check to locate a random object located on an incapacitated creature you designate and place that item in its hands. Once a creature no longer has available hands to hold more objects, it uses its actions to return to your side.

## SUBDUE

*Spell slot cost: 1st*

An undead trained in this discipline can be commanded to spend its actions attempting to grapple a creature that the controller designates. The undead creature continues performing this action until commanded to stop.

## WARD

*Spell slot cost: None*

When you issue this command to an undead creature under your control, that undead creature spends the next 24 hours watching over a number of creatures you designate, up to your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) in an area or room up to 30 feet in radius. If it perceives any creatures under its ward attempting to leave that radius or room, it attempts to grapple that creature and prevent it from leaving the area. An undead creature given this command can make a single





Wisdom (Perception) check each turn to attempt to notice creatures in the warded area who are leaving. This discipline continues to work on the undead creature under your control, even if you move beyond a range where you would normally be able to command it to perform actions.

#### WEAPON TRAINING

*Spell slot cost: 3rd*

When you train an undead creature under your control over the course of a long rest with this discipline you can teach it to respond to verbal commands on how to wield a weapon during combat. To benefit from this training the undead creature must be able to make a melee weapon attack. On each of your turns, you may use your reaction to cause an undead creature trained with this discipline to gain a bonus on a single melee weapon attack roll. This bonus is equal to half your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1) or half your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1), your choice.

A creature that lacks a language, is deafened or is unable to hear your voice is immune to the benefits of this discipline.

### OPTIONAL RULE: MONSTER TALENTS

Undead talents are extraordinary aspects of a creature's abilities, background, personality, physique, proficiencies, and features. They offer DMs a means of improving on and customizing a creature's current abilities or equipping it with new capabilities. Undead talents are a subset of the rules first presented on the *DMSGuild* for Monster Talents in the supplement *DM Options: Monster Talents (5E)*. Talents are broken into passive **traits** that are always active for a creature such as innate spellcasting abilities, **actions** which allow the creature new attack and other abilities, and **reactions** which provide a creature with new reactions.

Undead monsters can have a number of talents determined by their Challenge Rating. A creature has a number of talents equal to **one third the creature's CR (minimum 1) plus one**, rounded up. For monsters with greater variety and difficulty, add plus two instead. Certain undead talents have prerequisites as listed in the description.

The following talents are listed in alphabetical order.



### MONSTER TALENTS

#### AURA OF UNDEATH

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 5

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

**Trait.** Any undead creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of this creature gains 1d4 + 3 temporary hit points.

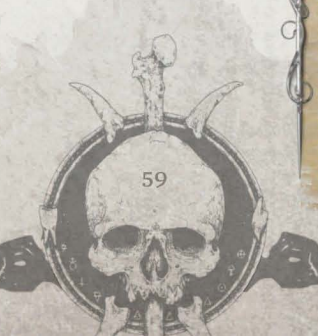
#### AURA OF FRENZY

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 6

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

**Trait.** Any undead creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of this creature has advantage on melee attack rolls against bloodied creatures.



Your average pack of stenchers is easy enough to deal with. I always expect a few when on the hunt for my true prey. The smart ones though, they learn to teach the stinkers a few tricks that can make putting them back in the ground a bit more of a challenge. Just makes the final rewards that much sweeter.

-Zorander



### AURA OF TURN RESISTANCE

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 5

*Prerequisites:* Souled Undead

**Trait.** Any undead creature within 30 feet of this creature has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

### BITE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 1

*Prerequisites:* Corporeal undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* 2 + Target Undead Creatures Strength Modifier to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4 + Target Undead Creatures Strength) piercing damage.

### BLESSED WITH UNDEATH

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 3

**Trait:** This creature has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

### DEATHLY DIRGE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 4

*Prerequisites:* Souled Undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Song.** As an action this creature begins to sing a mournful song. Every humanoid within 100 feet of the creature that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of this creature until the song ends. This creature may take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time as a free action. The song ends if the creature is incapacitated. A target can attempt to save against the frightened condition at the end of each of its turns. A target that successfully saves is immune to this creature's song for the next 24 hours.

### EVIL EYE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 3

This creature gains the following action:

**Death Gaze.** As an action, this creature forces any creature within 30 feet who can see it to make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 2d10 psychic damage. If the target fails the save by 5 or more, it falls unconscious.

### DEVIUS SOUL

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 1

*Prerequisites:* Souled undead

**Trait:** This creature gains a +4 bonus to Charisma (Intimidate) and Charisma (Deception) rolls.

### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 3

*Prerequisites:* Corporeal undead

**Trait:** This creature has an extra arm attached at its torso. When this creature uses an action to make a melee attack, it can perform a second attack against the same or different creature as part of that action.

### EXPERIMENTAL GENIUS

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 2

*Prerequisites:* Corporeal undead

**Trait:** This creature has an extra head attached at the neck. This creature has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

### EXPERIMENTAL ORIGINS

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 1

**Trait:** This creature gains resistance to lightning damage.

### GRAVE SHROUD

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 1

**Trait:** This creature gains resistance to cold damage.

### IMMORTAL FLESH

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 5

**Trait:** This creature gains 5 hit points at the start of each of its turns as long as it is not incapacitated or in direct sunlight.

### INFECTED FLESH

**Type:** Trait

**Talent cost:** 2

**Trait:** Any creature hit by one of this creature's melee attacks must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract filth fever.

### NECROTIC BITE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 2

*Prerequisites:* Corporeal undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* 2 + Target Undead Creatures Strength Modifier to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4 + Target Undead Creatures Strength) piercing damage + (1d4 + Target Undead Creatures Strength) necrotic damage.

### NECROTIC BREATH

**Type:** Action (Recharges 5-6)

**Talent Cost:** 4

This creature gains the following action:

**Exhale.** As an action, this creature exhales necrotic fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (3d6) fire damage + 9 (3d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This action recharges on a 5-6.

### NECROTIC SPITTLE

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 2

*Prerequisites:* Corporeal undead

**Trait:** Any bite attacks this creature makes deal an additional 2 points of necrotic damage to the target of the attack.



### POISONOUS BITE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 2

**Prerequisites:** Corporeal undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* 2 + Target Undead Creatures Strength Modifier to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d4 + Target Undead Creatures Strength) piercing damage + (1d4 + Target Undead Creatures Strength) poison damage.

### STEALTHY

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 1

**Trait.** The creature gains a +4 bonus on its Stealth rolls.

### SEDUCING EYE

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 3

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Enthrall.** As an action, this creature forces a creature within 30 feet who can see it to make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the creature. This effect lasts for 24 hours or ends prematurely if the creature damages the target of this effect or uses this ability on a new creature.

### SHADOW INFUSED

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 5

This creature gains the following action:

**Animate Dead.** As an action, this creature casts the spell *animate dead* on one corpse or pile of bones it can see which immediately rises as a skeleton or zombie under its control. Once used, this creature can not use this action again until 24 hours have passed

### SOUL FURY

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 5

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

**Trait.** Any living creature within 30 feet of this creature has disadvantage on saving throws against becoming frightened.

### SPIRIT ARMOR

**Type:** Trait

**Talent Cost:** 3

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

**Trait.** A ghostly shroud of souls protects this creature, granting it a +2 supernatural bonus to its AC.

### WOUNDED SOUL

**Type:** Action

**Talent Cost:** 3

**Prerequisites:** Souled Undead

This creature gains the following action:

**Forceful Memories.** As an action, this creature forces a creature within 30 feet that can see it to make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or take 3d10 psychic damage.

Abioye looked around him on the first dawn  
and thought the world was a good place. His  
brother Kayode looked around him and missed the  
night.  
And so he struggled against his brother and for  
every creature of light his brother created, Kayode  
created a creature of darkness.  
He taught his most precious creations the  
knowledge of how to do what he had done. And so we  
honor Kayode by continuing his legacy, and make  
the world a darker place, beast by beast.  
- Idowu Azikiwe







ARMOR OF INCENSE

CLOAK OF THE GRAVE



EXAMINER'S GLOVES



GHOUL CANDLE

## TREASURE

Adventurers in the thrall of the undead, by choice or by force, can wind up achieving tangible rewards from these experiences. This section presents both common and more rare magic items that follow the rules for magic items presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### COMMON MAGIC ITEMS (A-Z)

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* includes many items of every rarity. This section introduces more common items to the game suitable for characters with an inclination towards the unliving arts. These items seldom increase a character's power, but they are likely to terrify players and provide harrowing roleplaying opportunities.

The magic items are presented in alphabetical order.

#### ARMOR OF INCENSE

*Armor (any medium or light), common*

This armor masks unseemingly odors emanating from the wearer or their items, including the armor itself, such as the scent of blood or rotting flesh and similar unpleasant aromas.

#### BROOCH OF THE HUNGRY FLIES

*Wondrous item, common*

This silver piece of jewelry is crafted to look like a mass of writhing insects assembled in a rough sphere. Practitioners of the dangerous arts find this item useful for turning a potential zombie into a skeleton for reanimation.

While wearing this brooch you can use a bonus action to cause a cloud of flies to escape from it and descend upon a humanoid corpse you can see within 120 feet. The flies immediately begin to devour any remaining flesh and organs left on the corpse, turning it into a skeleton over the course of 1 minute. After the flies have finished, they return to the brooch and disappear.

#### CLOAK OF THE GRAVE

*Wondrous item, common*

This cloak begins to ruffle slightly in the presence of any freshly dug graves that are within 10 feet.

#### EXAMINER'S GLOVES

*Wondrous item, common*

These gloves are exceptionally resilient to the ravages of the body. They protect the wearer from any toxins, poisons or diseases when the character who dons them handles or touches a living or nonliving humanoid creature affected by such a harmful effect.

#### GHOUL CANDLE

*Wondrous item, common*

This candle burns a flame normal in every way except for the fact that undead are unable to perceive its emanation.



### HANGMAN'S COIN

*Wondrous item, common*

When this coin is flipped into the air by any creature wishing to use it in the determination of a random outcome, the face always lands on the worst possible outcome for the creature that flipped it.

### SKULL CAP

*Wondrous item, common*

This horrific looking helm causes you to speak in a grim tone and makes you exude harmless icy mist at the end of each sentence.

### STAFF OF TREMENS

*Wondrous item, common*

This staff made of chiseled bone and iron has 10 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 charge from the staff and cause the limb of an inanimate corpse or skeleton to briefly move. For instance, you can make an arm wave, a leg twitch or a mouth open. You can not cause a corpse to speak or sing, cause it grasp an object or a creature, or make its limbs move with enough force to harm another creature or break an object.

The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dusk. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff shatters into brittle shards of bone and is lost forever.

### STAFF OF DISGUISED UNDEATH

*Wondrous item, common*

This staff is topped with the skull of a minor devil. It has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 charge from the staff to cause an undead zombie creature that you have animated to appear as a skeleton. Conversely, you can expend 1 charge from the staff to cause an undead skeleton that you have animated to appear as a zombie. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until you use a bonus action to dispel the illusion. A creature can succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) roll to notice the illusion. A creature that has interacted with an undead creature affected by this staff has advantage on this saving throw.

The staff regains all its expended charges daily at dusk. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff explodes in a harmless cloud of bone powder and is lost forever.

### WAND OF FESTERING

*Wondrous item, common*

This wand has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and target a humanoid you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or a random wound they sustained within the past 3 days opens and begins to bleed harmlessly for 1 minute.

The wand regains all expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand dissolves into a clammy red paste and is destroyed.



SKULL CAP



STAFF OF DISGUISED UNDEATH



STAFF OF TREMENS



HANGMAN'S COIN

It is the little discomforts that can often bring about great change. A toss of a coin, a bothersome scab, a disagreeable meal - empires and fortunes have risen and fallen over such minor things. It is always good practice to invest in tools that promote their occurring.

- Alistair Lurecock



### WAND OF NECROPSY

Wondrous item, common

This wand has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and target a humanoid you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or their face instantly gains a sallow color and appears gaunt and sickly for 1 minute.

The wand regains all expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand dissolves into a viscous black ichor and is destroyed.

## MAGIC ITEMS (A-Z)

The undead and those that traffic in their destruction, or adoration, can possess items of astounding powers. The following magic items enhance characters with an interest in the unliving and dangerous arts. They are presented in alphabetical order. A magic item's description gives the item's name, its category, its rarity, and its magical properties.

### GRAFTS

Undead grafts function like normal magic items. They grant characters powerful abilities without the need to become attuned to them, however these powers come with terrible side effects. As these organs fuse with their wielders, the unnatural energies of undeath radically change their host's bodies in the process. DMs are encouraged to consider the effects of including these unique and powerful magic items in their game and discuss their possible ramifications with players beforehand. Of course, in the spirit of this guide, perhaps fair warning may not always make for the most interesting of sessions..

### CHATTEL COLLAR

Wondrous item, rare

This heavy iron collar is covered in white runes etched into its dark brown surface.

If you place this collar on an undead creature currently under your control, you may use an action to pair this collar to a *ring of the chattel lord* that you are currently wearing and attuned to. Thereafter, as long as you and the undead creature wearing this collar are linked and are both on the same plane, that creature is considered to be under your command as per the *animate dead* spell.

You may end this pairing at any time using an action, at which point the creature ceases to be under your command and becomes hostile or indifferent towards you and your allies, depending on its nature and your treatment of it during the time you commanded it. This pairing also ends if you are no longer attuned to the *ring of the chattel lord* that initiated this connection.

### EXECUTIONER'S CLOAK

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

Crafted from the final and bloodied clothes of dozens of executed criminals, this grisly cloak inspires terror in those who glimpse its motley veneer.

While wearing this cloak, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks made against living creatures.

## RUNE MAGIC

Wizards introduced the *Prestige Class: Rune Scribe* in an *Unearthed Arcana online supplement*. The following rune follows the rules presented in that article and provides for necromantic energies to be harnessed by these specialized casters.

### Shard of the Balfen Rune

Master rune, rare (requires attunement)

This rough chunk of basalt is about the size of a human skull. Practitioners often fasten the rune atop elaborate and hideous looking staves or hang them from belts alongside other, genuine trophies of similar ilk. The balfen rune -- the rune of necrotic energy -- pulsates along its surface as jet black crystalline veins. Grasping the shard sends a jolt of numbness throughout your body, causing you to exhale a breath of stale carrion air in response. The sensation, along with this involuntary spasm quickly passes, allowing the shard to be handled normally thereafter.

**Necrotic Shell (Simple Property).** While you are attuned to this rune, you have resistance to necrotic energy.

**Putrescent Soul (Simple Property).** While you are attuned to this rune, you cannot be frightened.

**Deteriorating Touch (Simple Property).** As an action, you scribe the balfen rune on the surface of an object. For the next minute, whenever a weapon or piece of ammunition hits this object, the hit is considered a critical hit.

**Enervating Brand (Complex Property).** Over the course of a short rest, you inscribe this rune using rotting materials such as plant mulch onto one weapon that deals bludgeoning damage. The weapon gains a dark pulsating aura and deals necrotic damage instead of bludgeoning damage.

In addition, you can expend a spell slot while using this property to grant the weapon a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls equal to the spell slot's level divided by three.

These effects last for 24 hours or until you use this property again.

**Withering Touch (Complex Property).** As an action, you inscribe this rune using dust and ash onto a creature within your reach as you expend a spell slot. The creature automatically takes 1d10 necrotic damage and the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength until the end of its next turn.

**Shattering Jolt (Complex Property).** While you are attuned to this rune, you can cast *shatter* as an action. You regain this ability after a short or long rest.

### FLESHREND CLOAK

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Crafted from the flayed skin of dozens of humanoids, this cloak allows the bearer to adopt all manner of disguises.

As an action, a creature can pull the hood of this cloak up to cast the *disguise self* spell. This spell ends if the cloak is removed, or if the hood is pulled down, which requires another action.

### GHOUL'S HAND

Wondrous item, graft, rare

This rotting hand must be harvested from an undead ghoul or ghastr. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this item to your body so that it magically replaces one of your hands which withers to a black ichor during the course of this process. If this item is ever severed from your



your arm, your original hand grows back in 1d3 days. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- You become incapable of grasping objects that have been blessed by a cleric of a good deity such as holy symbols, religious vestments or vials of holy water. This trait affects both your hands.
- You suffer disadvantage on Animal Handling (Wisdom) ability checks made when interacting with living beasts.
- You may insert your ghoulish hand into a poisonous liquid substance or hold an object that normally deals poisonous damage through touch for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1) without taking any damage from the substance. At the end of these rounds, you begin taking damage as normal.
- You gain the ability to add a paralyzing agent to your unarmed attacks. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike and your ghoulish hand is uncovered, you can force that creature to make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature is paralyzed until the beginning of its next turn.

Once this hand has been grafted to your arm, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is forcefully severed, it magically reattaches to your arm 1 round after it was removed. If the hand is destroyed while detached from your arm, it magically reforms 1 round after its destruction and immediately reattaches to your arm.

#### GRAVEFIEND ARMOR

Armor (leather or studded leather) very rare (requires attunement)

Crafted from the flesh of a powerful celestial, slain and buried in the grave of a known criminal, this armor is worn by those of undead and unholy ilk as trophy and protection.

If you are vulnerable to radiant damage you lose this trait while you wear this armor. Additionally, as an action you make yourself immune to any harmful effects you may suffer while in direct sunlight for 10 minutes or until you are no longer wearing the armor. Once this special action is used, it can't be used again until the next dusk.

#### HELM OF THE LICH GOD

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric or wizard)

This elaborate crown is made of bone and encrusted with dark gems that glow with a faint blue flame. There are a total of 2d12 black opals and 1d12 black diamonds inset on this crown. Any gem pried from the helm crumbles to dust. When all the gems are removed or destroyed, the helm loses its magic.

You gain the following benefits while wearing it:

- While wearing this helm, undead creatures under your control within 30 feet can not be charmed or dominated and they have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.
- As an action, you can target an undead creature you can see within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you for 24 hours.



GHOUL'S HAND



GRAVEFIEND ARMOR

HELM OF THE LICH GOD



- You can use an action to cast one of the following spells using one of the helm's gems of the specified type as a component: *animate lesser undead* (opal), *boneblade* (opal) *animate dead* (black diamond), *death armor* (black diamond) The gem is destroyed when the spell is cast and disappears from the helm.

#### LICH BRAIN

Wondrous item, graft, legendary

This brain must be harvested from an undead lich. Over the course of a long rest you can graft this brain to your head so that it magically drains through your skull and fuses with your own brain, creating a compound organ of living and undead tissue. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

I have started to wonder if the parts of me I was born with aren't somehow at war with the parts of me that are borrowed. I guess at this point, I'm not even sure which side I'd prefer to see who wins. Just so long as the game continues.

-Zorander





- In any conversation, you refuse to be called by your given name, instead you demand to be called by a strange and bizzare moniker such as the Bringer of Arcane and Mystical Knowledge or the Roving Knight of Nightly Justice. This moniker must be comprised of a minimum of at least 4 separate words.
- You become cold and distant to the affairs of most other creatures. You suffer disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Performance) skill checks. Additionally, when you fail a Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check by 5 or more, your composite brain lashes out mentally in anger at those around you, creating a negative psychic aura that extends in a radius of 10 feet outward from you in all directions. Creatures that attempt Charisma (Performance) skill checks suffer disadvantage while in this aura. This effect lasts until you finish a short or long rest.
- You immediately gain a bonus language of your choice that you can speak, read, write and understand when this compound brain is grafted to yours.
- As a bonus action, you may cast a single cantrip spell you know. Once you use this feature of the compound brain, you must finish a short or long rest before you may use it again.
- As an action, you may roll a d8 and regain a spell slot of that level or lower. If you have not spent a spell slot of that level or lower, nothing happens. Once you use this feature of the compound brain, you must finish a short or long rest before you may use it again.
- When you fail a saving throw, you may choose to succeed instead. Once you use this feature of the compound brain, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.

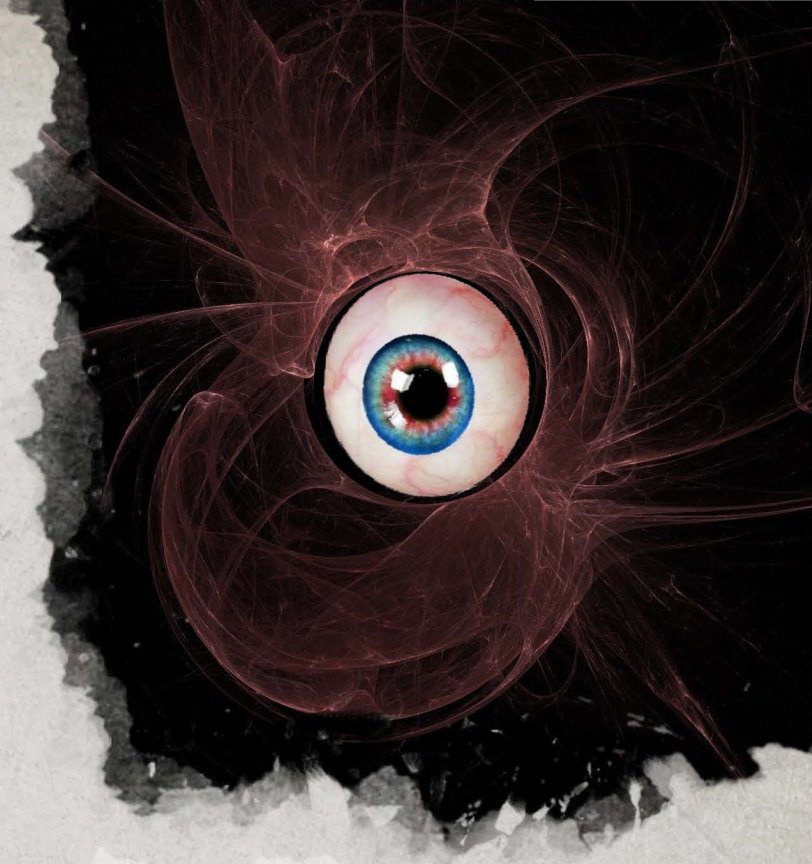
Once this brain has been fused with your own, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically appears in your skull 1 round after it was removed. If destroyed while detached it magically reappears 1 round after its destruction.

#### MUMMY'S EYE

*Wondrous item, graft, very rare*

This preserved orb must be harvested from an undead mummy. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this item so that it magically replaces one of your eyes, which withers to ash during the course of this process. If this item is ever permanently removed from your eye socket, the eye socket it was removed from regrows a new, normal eye, in 1d3 days. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- You lose your sense of smell. When an especially powerful emotion overcomes you, a strong odor of herbal plants and preserving oils fills your nostrils and lasts until these emotions subside. These are the only scents you ever detect.
- If this eye is exposed while it is grafted inside your eye socket, you suffer disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks made when interacting with living creatures. This effect can be negated by magical or nonmagical means such as an eyepatch or similar covering.



- You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.
- As an action, you may target one creature you can see within 60 feet. If the creature can see you it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you until the end of your next turn. If the creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more it is also paralyzed for the duration. Once a creature saves against this ability, that creature is immune to this ability for the next 24 hours.

Once this item has been grafted to your eye socket, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically appears in your eye socket 1 round after it was removed.

#### REVENANT'S HEART

*Wondrous item, graft, very rare*

This heart must be harvested from an undead revenant. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this heart to your torso so that it magically seeps into your chest and fuses with your own heart creating a compound organ of living and undead tissue. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- Whenever a creature defeats you in any type of contest or challenge, either privately or in front of spectators, or demonstrates superior knowledge in a subject you believe yourself proficient in, you become incapable of laughing or smiling in the presence of the creature that bested you. These effects last for 24 hours after the moment the creature outshined you.
- If you are reduced to 0 hit points by a creature's successful attack against you, if you fail to personally succeed on an attack that reduces that same creature to 0 hit points within 1 minute following the round you were reduced to 0 hit points by that creature, the





next time you take a long rest, you only gain the benefits of having taken a short rest as your anguish disturbs your ability to recover.

- When you become charmed from failing a saving throw, you may use your reaction to immediately end this condition. Once you use this feature of the heart, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.
- When you become frightened, paralyzed or stunned from failing a saving throw against one of these effects, you may immediately use your reaction to make a new saving throw. If you succeed on this new roll against the effect, the condition ends immediately. Once you use this feature of the compound heart, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.
- As a bonus action, you may immediately remove one level of exhaustion. Once you use this feature of the compound heart, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.

Once this heart has been fused with your own, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically appears in your chest 1 round after it was removed. If destroyed while detached it magically reappears 1 round after its destruction.

#### ROBE OF BONES

*Wondrous item, rare*

This unremarkable looking robe is dark black and adorned with small white threaded geometric patterns throughout its surface.

This robe has patches of various undead forms covering it that become visible only once the robe is worn. While wearing this robe, you can use an action to detach one of the patches, causing it to become a creature it represents. The creature that is created is not under the control of the wearer of the robe, but may be subsequently commanded, turned or destroyed. Once the last patch is removed, the robe becomes an ordinary garment.

The robe has two each of the following patches:

- A crawling claw
- A skeleton beast
- A skeleton
- A zombie beast
- A zombie

#### RING OF THE CHATTEL LORD

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This simple copper ring is smooth and topped by a tiny well-polished minature engraving of a skull.

While wearing this ring you may gain permanent command over an undead creature. As an action, while you are attuned to this ring, you may pair this ring to a *chatel collar* that an undead you can see, currently under your control, is wearing. Thereafter, as long as you and the undead creature wearing that collar are linked and are both on the same plane, that creature is considered to be under your command as per the *animate dead* spell.

You may end this pairing at any time using an action,

at which point the creature ceases to be under your command and becomes hostile or indifferent towards you and your allies, depending on its nature and your treatment of it during the time you commanded it. This pairing also ends if you are no longer attuned to this ring that initiated this connection.

#### RING OF VAMPIRE FANGS

*Ring, uncommon*

This bone ring has two small protruding points that glitter ominously in the moonlight. As long as you are wearing this ring, your incisors lengthen and become razor sharp.

While wearing this ring you gain a bite attack. You can use a bonus action to make a melee bite attack against a creature within 5 feet. This attack has a bonus equal to your Strength modifier plus your proficiency bonus. On a hit, this attack deals 1d4 points of piercing damage to the creature. This attack counts as being magical for purposes of overcoming a creatures resistance to nonmagical weapons.

#### SOUL BROOCH

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

This simple looking locket is crafted only by the most devout members of a celestial order and given to warriors tasked with infiltrating vile and heinous organizations of the multiverse to destroy them from within. Seekers of Undeath have found it incredibly useful in their own pursuits.

While wearing this brooch your alignment cannot be changed or detected except by divine means. Any actions you perform, either good or evil, have no effect on your alignment while you are attuned to this brooch.

If you are a living creature and are killed while wearing this brooch it vanishes into a pocket dimension and your soul remains on the plane you died for up to 7 days. If a spell or effect causes you to be raised from the dead or returns your soul to your own or a different body, this brooch immediately appears on your person. If you do not return to a new form within 7 days, your soul is instantly transported to the pocket dimension where this brooch vanished upon your death, and the dimension collapses in on itself, instantly destroying the brooch and your soul in the process. If this happens, nothing, not even a *wish* spell can bring your soul back into existence.



RING OF THE CHATTEL LORD



*Her Mistress must acknowledge that the price of a good apprentice is not cheap- what is one ring in a lair of hundreds?*

*- Edmund Gage, Shadowmend Disciple*



### SPECTRAL HAND

*Wondrous item, graft, rare*

This spectral hand must be harvested from a ghost, a shadow or similar undead, incorporeal creature. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this hand to your arm so that it magically replaces your own, which disintegrates into a foul-smelling dark colored sand. If this hand is ever permanently severed from your arm, your original hand regrows in 1d3 days. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- You become incapable of manipulating physical objects on the Material Plane with this hand. This includes wielding weapons and shields, opening doors, and grasping common items and utensils. If a magical glove is fitted over this spectral hand, the glove can be manipulated by your spectral hand, allowing it and the hand to interact with objects on the Material Plane normally. Creatures on the Ethereal plane can not target you with an attack or spell while they are on the Ethereal Plane nor can you affect items and creatures on the Ethereal Plane while you are on the Material Plane due to this spectral hand being grafted to your arm. This hand functions normally on the Ethereal plane.
- While this hand is exposed and uncovered, humanoids under the age of 10 and beasts who can see this hand immediately become frightened of you as long as this hand remains uncovered. You can use an action to make a Charisma (Persuasion) check against a DC 10 to attempt to soothe any frightened humanoids or beasts affected by this effect. On a success, the creature loses the frightened condition but refuses to move closer to you.
- As a bonus action, you can cause this hand to exude a soft glow. The hand emits a dim light within a 5 foot radius around you. When you create this glow, you can choose the light to be a soft white or dim grey. You can dismiss this light as a free action. This property of the hand does not function if it is fitted with a magical glove or similar covering.
- When you make an unarmed strike with this hand, your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to non-magical attacks and damage. In addition, the damage type from hits made with this hand changes to necrotic. Against living creatures, creatures hit by unarmed strikes with this spectral hand take an extra 1 point of cold damage. This damage to living creatures increases by 1 at 5th level (2), and again at 11th level (3). This property of the hand does not function if it is fitted with a magical glove or similar covering.
- When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with an unarmed strike made by this hand, you regain a number of hit points equal to the creatures hit dice. This property of the hand does not function if it is fitted with a magical glove or similar covering.

Once this hand has been grafted to your arm, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically reattaches to your arm 1 round after it was removed. If destroyed while detached it magically reappears 1 round after its destruction.

### SOULTHEFT SWORD



TOME OF PUTRESCENT STENCH

### SOULTHEFT SWORD

*Weapon (any sword with the finesse property), very rare (requires attunement)*

A powerful weapon that drains its foes of their lifeforce with each critical blow.

When this weapon scores a critical hit against a living creature, that creature's maximum hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a short or long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

### TOME OF PUTRESCENT STENCH

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or wizard)*

This tome contains information and incantations necessary to assist in the animation of nauseating undead creatures. As long as you are in possession of this tome, any undead skeleton or zombie you animate from the bodies of humanoids that is within 120 feet of you and is currently under your control gain the following trait:

**Sickening Stench.** This creature has the ability to exhale a stench of carrion death itself. On this creature's turn as a free action it may exude a stench that lasts until the beginning of its next turn. Any living creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of this creature while this stench is in effect must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, a creature is immune to this animated undead's stench for 24 hours. Once this creature exudes this stench, it cannot do so again until 1 hour has passed.



### TOME OF THE VAMPIRE'S APPETITE

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or wizard)*

This tome contains information and incantations necessary to assist in the animation of ravenous undead creatures. As long as you are in possession of this tome, any undead skeleton or zombie you animate from the bodies of humanoids that is within 120 feet of you and is currently under your control gains the following trait:

**Blood Frenzy.** When an adjacent creature becomes bloodied, this animated undead can use its reaction to make a bite attack against the triggering creature. This bite attack is made with a bonus equal to the animated undead's Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a hit, the animated undead deals 1d4 + its Strength modifier piercing damage to the target and regains 2 hit points.

### VAMPIRE FANGS

*Wondrous item, graft, legendary*

This pair of preserved incisors must be harvested from an undead vampire. Over the course of a long rest you can graft these incisors inside your mouth so that they replace your most prominent incisors, causing each tooth they replace to wither into a chalky white powder during the course of this process. If these incisors are ever permanently removed from your mouth, your original teeth regrow in 1d3 days. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- You are incapable of entering a creature's residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- If you end your turn in running water, you take an amount of acid damage equal to your level. This damage can not be reduced in any way.
- As a bonus action, you may target one creature that you are currently grappling or that is incapacitated or restrained. You can make a bite attack against this creature with an attack bonus equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier. On a hit, the creature takes 1d6 + your Strength modifier damage plus 1d4 necrotic damage. If the targeted creature is living, you regain a number of hit points equal to twice the number of necrotic damage the creature took from the attack. This bonus necrotic damage increases by 1d4 at 5th level (2d4), and again at 11th level (3d4). Once you use this feature of the fangs, you must finish a short or long rest before you may use it again.
- When you fail a saving throw, you may choose to succeed instead. Once you use this feature of the fangs, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.
- At the beginning of your turn, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier. This feature of the fangs does not work while you are in direct sunlight.

Once these fangs have been grafted to your gums, they can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If they are removed forcefully, they magically reattach to your gums 1 round after they were removed. If destroyed while detached they magically reappear 1 round after their destruction.

### WAND OF ECTOPLASM

*Wand, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

Crafted from a humanoid femur bone and inscribed along its surface with ghostly runes, this wand imbues weapons with the ability to harm undead creatures.

**Properties.** This wand has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges and press the tip of this wand against the surface of a melee weapon. For the next 10 minutes, this weapon is considered magical for purposes of overcoming a creature's resistance to nonmagical weapons. In addition, the extra damage from critical hits made by this weapon deals psychic damage instead of its normal damage type.

The wand regains all expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand dissolves into a viscous gray ichor and is destroyed.

### WAND OF SHADOWS

*Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

This obsidian wand has a reflective surface that grows smoky when one of its charges is expended.

**Properties.** This staff has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *darkness* spell or the *shadow restraint* spell.

The wand regains all expended charges daily at dusk. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand puffs into harmless black smoke and is destroyed.

### WIGHT'S TONGUE

*Wondrous item, graft, rare*

This severed tongue must be harvested from an undead wight. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this tongue to the inside of your mouth so that it replaces your own, which withers to a foul tasting mulch. If this tongue is ever permanently removed from your mouth, your original tongue regrows in 1d3 days. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- You become incapable of uttering prayers and religious hymns, except those that are directed towards gods and goddesses with a evil alignment.
- Magical potions that allow you to regain hit points instead do an amount of radiant damage to you equal to the amount rolled by the potion's effects. This damage can not be reduced in any way.
- You have disadvantage on Charisma (Performance) checks that involve an oral component such as singing or spoken poetry while you are in sunlight.
- You can use a bonus action on your turn to choose a friendly undead creature who can see or hear you. That creature can immediately use its reaction to make one melee attack, adding your Charisma modifier (minimum 1) to the attack's damage roll.

Once this tongue has been grafted inside your mouth, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically appears in your mouth 1 round after it was removed. If destroyed while detached it magically reappears 1 round after its destruction.



## ZOMBIE JAW

Wondrous item, graft, uncommon

This severed jaw must be harvested from an undead zombie. Over the course of a short or long rest you can graft this jaw over your own so that it replaces yours, which transforms into a mushy pulp and falls off during the course of this process. If this jaw is ever permanently removed from your head, your original jaw magically appears instantly after it is removed. Once grafted, this item grants you the following traits and benefits:

- Your body is always exceptionally cold and lethargic. In any region that has a normal temperature cooler than that typically found in a desert, tropical jungle or similar locale, you feel compelled to dress in heavy clothing similar to an outfit worn in a wintery environment. This most likely consists of furs and other, possibly wildly out of place clothing. You do not suffer any effects to your health because of this feature, but if you are not suitably clothed, you begin to shiver and your breathing exhales a faint mist of cold air.
- Your ability to speak and form complex sentences is severely limited. Normal conversations take you twice as long and you suffer disadvantage on any Charisma skill checks that only involve an oral component in order to succeed. This does not affect your verbal ability to cast spells.
- Each time you cast a spell from the school of Necromancy that is not a cantrip, the jaw becomes reinvigorated, infusing you with a small measure of its innate necrotic energy and you regain 2 hit points. When you reach 7th level you regain 4 hit points from this feature and when you reach 11th level, you regain 6 hit points from this feature. This effect is not triggered by the casting of spells you make through magical items and gear, only spells you have prepared or ones you can cast spontaneously.
- While this jaw is grafted to you, you may spend 10 minutes devouring the brain of a recently deceased humanoid whose body is still bloody. If you do so, at the end of those 10 minutes, you regain a number of hit points equal to twice the creature's hit dice. Any living creature that witnesses you doing this must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom save or be frightened of you for the duration of this act. A creature can attempt a new save against this effect at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours. Once you use this feature of the jaw, you must finish a long rest before you may use it again.

Once this jaw has been grafted to your skull, it can not be removed voluntarily, except by means such as *remove curse* or *lesser restoration*. If it is removed forcefully, it magically sprouts from your upper jaw 1 round after it was removed. If destroyed while detached it magically reappears 1 round after its destruction.

## ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are unique magic items of tremendous power, with their own origins and histories. Characters don't typically find artifacts, they find adventurers. The following artifact follows the rules for artifacts as presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### BOOK OF THE DEAD

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

What began as an ancient text on funerary rites and rituals for a long forgotten kingdom, the *Book of the Dead* has morphed into a foul manuscript containing the most hideous and putrid magics for animating, controlling and dominating the dead.

Contained within its pages are centuries of lore and experimentation to create beings of undeath. Formulae and potions that animate and manipulate living and unliving tissue are legion. The book itself is a disparate collection of a number of these individual texts whereby instructions are given alongside illustrations that detail incantations and spell components of magical and putrid power. In addition the book speaks of realms ruled over by undeadly beings, most notably powerful and vengeful mummies and liches who view the living as nothing more than chattel.

The dead do not remain dead for long while in the presence of the *Book of the Dead*. Corpses spontaneously rise as skeletons and zombies when the book remains in an area for more than 24 hours and begin to attack any living creature they can find, with the exception of a creature in possession of the book.

A creature attuned to this book must spend 80 hours reading and studying it to digest its contents and reap its benefits. The creature can freely modify the book's contents, provided that those modifications advance the lore and practice of undeath or necromancy.

Whenever a non-evil creature attunes to the *Book of the Dead*, that creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's alignment changes to neutral evil.



THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

As children, we were taught that books held power. And so as brothers and sisters, we strove to unlock this power.  
It took many years, and many trials, to learn that only certain books held power. Many held only lies. Only deceptions.  
But with time, I found books that opened worlds to me. Worlds of magic and manipulation. I learned to use books to change the world around me.  
Yet it took even more years to find books that changed the world within me. And in those, I found True Power.  
- Idowu Azikiwe



First, there were Necromancers,  
and then  
there was Zahira...

What more can one say?

-Nifsara Shadowmend

The *Book of the Dead* remains with you only as long as you strive to bring undeath to the world. If you fail to animate an undead creature every 7 days, the book disappears. If you die while attuned to the book, an entity of powerful command over undeath transforms you into a bodak, and if you are subsequently destroyed it claims your soul as a servitor on a plane filled with undead.

**Random Properties.** The *Book of the Dead* has the following random properties:

- 1 minor beneficial property
- 1 major beneficial property
- 1 minor detrimental property
- 2 major detrimental properties

**Unliving Lore.** You can reference the *Book of the Dead* whenever you make an Intelligence check to recall information about some aspect of undeath, including deities and specific rituals and customs. When you do so, double your proficiency bonus to that check.

**Mark of Undeath.** As a bonus action, while you are attuned to the book you may alter your form to take on the attributes of the undead. Your type changes to undead, which allows you to be affected by spells and abilities that target undead, for instance a cleric's ability to Turn Undead or the ability to utter the Dark Chant. Additionally, while you are considered undead, you do not require air, food, water or sleep and you cease to age. Other undead creatures perceive you as unliving and may not immediately attack you outright. As another bonus action you can return to your previous type, losing these undead qualities. Once you use this ability of the book, you may not use it again until the following dawn. If you remain in this form for more than an hour, at the end of that hour, you take 4d6 psychic damage, revert to your natural form and may not use this feature of the book again until 7 days have passed.

**Command Undead.** While you are attuned to the book and holding it, you can use an action to cast the *dominate monster* spell on an undead target (save DC 18). You can't use this property again until the next dawn.

**Create Lesser Undead.** As an action, you may tear a page out from this book and cast it to the ground. As soon as the page lands it becomes either a skeleton beast or a zombie beast, your choice. The creature is not friendly towards you but it may subsequently be charmed, dominated or otherwise controlled. Only once every 24 hours may a single page be torn from the book and cast to the ground in this manner. This is considered an act of creating an undead creature. Pages that are torn in this way have the lore contained upon them magically restored to another page and the book magically reinserts a new page every dusk if a page was removed using this feature of the book.

**Heightened Necromancy.** Once you've read and studied the book, any spell you cast that animates or creates an undead creature counts as a spell slot of one level higher.

**Destroying the Book.** The *Book of the Dead* allows its pages to be removed but any forbidden lore bubbles up in black ichor elsewhere on a different page.

It is said that a god or goddess of good alignment who attempts to turn the book may disintegrate its being into a pulpy mulch, however as long as undead creatures inhabit the multiverse the book will reform one hundred years after its apparent destruction.

### PENNANT OF ZAHIRA'S HORDE

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

When ancient humans first unlocked the secrets of necromancy, many wars were fought in an attempt to erase these alleged dark arts from the world of the living. In response, powerful and unforgiving masters of the tradition rose in defense of their secrets. Perhaps none were so mighty as Zahira the Doombringer.

Raising vast armies from ancient battlefields where humans and elves and orcs and all the other races clashed time and again, Zahira managed to amass a powerful and nearly unstoppable horde of undead. With each victory, her ranks swelled with the corpses of her enemies. Ironically, it was only due to a last-ditch and shaky alliance between all the races that she and her undead multitudes were finally defeated. Yet the memories of her ancient and terrible victories reverberate through the ages. One of the most potent images of these antediluvian stories is the hoisting of Zahira's victorious banner over each new kingdom she conquered and enslaved.

Zahira was rumored to bath this pennant made from the flesh of dozens of vampires in the blood of her defeated foes and infused it with stores of necrotic power she pulled from her very soul. Near the height of her reign, when she had managed to enslave or disperse almost a quarter of the world's peoples, it was rumored the pennant whispered dark secrets of immortality and godhead as it fluttered above its master on the battlefield. When Zahira was finally defeated, the pieces of her soul remained with the pennant and imbued it with a lasting malice that still empowers the undead whenever it is unfurled.

PENNANT OF  
ZAHIRA'S HORDE



We must remember the lesson of Zahira and  
seek more clandestine means to our goals.  
- Lilith Thornheart, Shadowmend Disciple



The pennant resembles a typical battle flag adorned with the image of a common undead soldier in Zahira's army. It is 6 feet high when fully unfurled and pinned upon its iron shaft. Unfurling the pennant requires an action, and a bonus action is required to plant the pennant in the ground where it remains stationary in an upright position. The pennant remains unfurled only as long as it is planted in the ground or is held by a creature. Holding the pennant unfurled requires two hands. Due to its magical nature, the pennant can be planted in any type of material including naturally occurring stone or even harder surfaces. Only a creature that is attuned to the pennant may unfurl or refurl it. A creature that attempts to unfurl or refurl the pennant and is not attuned to it must make a DC 17 Charisma check. On a failure, that creature gains a single random Short-Term Madness effect that lasts 1d10 minutes. Short-term Madnnesses can be found in the Madness Effects section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Whenever a creature unable to cast a single spell from the tradition of necromancy attempts to attune to the *Pennant*, that creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw the creature takes 6d6 necrotic damage.

A creature attuned to this pennant that destroys or turns an undead creature loses all the benefits granted by the pennant and its powers become dormant until a new claimant attempts to attune to it.

**Random Properties.** The Pennant has the following random properties:

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 3 minor detrimental properties
- 2 major detrimental properties

**Howl of the Dead.** While this pennant is unfurled, if you are attuned to it you may as an action command all friendly undead creatures within 60 feet of the pennant to utter a terrifying sound that strikes fear in the hearts of your living foes. If at least 3 undead creatures are within 60 feet of the pennant, all living creatures hostile to you within 120 feet of the pennant must make a Wisdom saving throw (save DC 13) or be frightened of the pennant for 1 minute. For every friendly undead creature within 60 feet of the pennant beyond 3, the DC of this save increases by 1. Once this feature of the pennant is used, it may not be used again until the following dawn.

**March of Undead.** While this pennant is unfurled, undead creatures within 60 feet of the pennant have their base walking speed increased by 10 feet.

**Promote.** As an action, if you are attuned to this pennant and within 60 feet of it, you may select an undead creature you can see. That undead creature gains the following trait while the pennant is unfurled:

**Turning Defiance.** This creature and any undead creatures within 15 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

This trait remains on the creature selected until you use this feature of the pennant on a new creature or you spend a bonus action to remove this effect from the undead creature targeted.

**Relentless Undeath.** While this pennant is unfurled, if damage reduces an undead creature within 30 feet of the pennant to 0 hit points, that creature must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage

taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the undead creature drops to 1 hit point instead. This trait happens after any similar effects already possessed by undead creatures occur within the pennant's radius.

**Unliving Siege.** While this pennant is unfurled, undead creatures within 60 feet of the pennant have advantage on attacks against buildings and similar structures if at least one other undead creature is within 10 feet and do critical damage on a hit.

**Vengeance of the Dead.** While this pennant is unfurled, undead creatures within 60 feet of the pennant add 2 points of damage to any melee damage rolls they do against living creatures.

**Destroying the Pennant.** The pennant is made from the flayed flesh of vampires and is not indestructible. However, it is difficult to destroy and is impervious to most damage. Only by completely submerging the pennant in a pool or similar basin filled with holy water for at least 1 minute can the pennant be destroyed.

## SUPERNATURAL GIFTS

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the 5th Edition of the world's greatest roleplaying game presents alternative rewards for players besides treasure. Supernatural gifts are examples of these special rewards that are bestowed upon adventurers by a being or force of great magical power. Undead creatures, such as ancient liches, powerful vampires and long-lived ghouls may also grace their servitors with blessings and charms that allow their minions to serve them with increased skill and abilities.

## CHARMS

The following charms are minor supernatural gifts that may be bestowed on characters through their uncovering of secret lore, service to an undead master or interaction with a deity whose portfolio includes undeath or the undead. Some can only be used once, others multiple times but all of the following charms can not be removed short of divine intervention or a *wish* spell and function like spells, meaning they can't be used in an area under the effect of an *antimagic* field or similar effect.

**Charm of Animation.** This charm allows you to cast the *animate dead* spell (3rd-level version) as an action, no components required. Once used twice, the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Blood Beat.** This charm allows you to spend an action and hear all beating hearts possessed by any living creature, including range and location, within a 30 foot radius centered on yourself. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Escape.** This charm allows you to cast *gaseous form* on yourself, no concentration required, no components required. Once used the charm vanishes from you.



**Charm of False Life.** This charm allows you to spend a bonus action and gain 1d12 temporary hit points. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of the Legion.** This charm allows you to cast the spell *danse macabre* (5th level version) as an action. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Loyalty.** This charm allows you to spend an action and remove one of the following conditions you are currently under: charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Servitor.** This charm allows you to cast *dominate monster* (save DC 17) on a single undead creature. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Shadow.** This charm allows you to cast the *investiture of shadow* spell as an action. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Terrible Tongues.** This charm allows you to speak in Dark Speech for up to 1 minute. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

**Charm of Transformation.** This charm allows you to polymorph into a bat or a wolf as per the *polymorph* spell for up to 1 hour, no concentration and no components required. Once used the charm vanishes from you.

## OPTIONAL RULE: TAINTED BY UNDEATH

Some encounters with the undead, or even the mere practice of certain necromantic pursuits can leave lasting effects on adventurers. While not as debilitating to a character's power as other more lasting traumas like diseases and madness, they are likely to intrigue players and foreshadow greater harm that can come to their characters should they continue down their current path.

As a DM, encounters with certain undead, adventurers that engage in heinous acts of necromancy, remain too long in undeadly locations or simply become possessed by malicious undead entities may gain one of the following minor lingering effects of such undeadly experiences.

### LINGERING UNDEADLY TRAIT TABLE

| d12 | Lingering Trait |
|-----|-----------------|
|-----|-----------------|

- |    |                                                                                                                                                        |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Your hair turns white. If you do not have hair, some other portion of your body turns white such as the scales about your head and neck or your snout. |
| 2  | Your flesh turns a sickly yellow color.                                                                                                                |
| 3  | Your flesh becomes unnaturally cold.                                                                                                                   |
| 4  | Your eyes turn purple or red.                                                                                                                          |
| 5  | A foul odor of rot constantly hangs about you.                                                                                                         |
| 6  | Your hands become permanently stained with a black color.                                                                                              |
| 7  | Animals find your touch repulsive.                                                                                                                     |
| 8  | Your blood becomes acidic; you are immune to this damage from your own blood.                                                                          |
| 9  | Your body breaks out in boils that ooze poison daily at dawn.                                                                                          |
| 10 | You find newborn creatures repulsive.                                                                                                                  |
| 11 | Your teeth become exceptionally brittle.                                                                                                               |
| 12 | You become incapable of identifying aromas arising from death, disease and rot.                                                                        |







## CHAPTER 4: SPELLS



THIS CHAPTER OFFERS NEW SPELLS FOR the classes in the *Player's Handbook*. These spells provide ways to harness various aspects of necromancy and shadow magic.

Your DM determines whether these spells are available at character creation or whether they are discovered in an ancient tomb, library or other storehouse of magical knowledge.

This chapter also includes alternative magic rules and includes two new tags: *formulae* and *putrescence*.

### OPTIONAL RULE: PUTRESCENCE MAGIC

Practitioners of the unliving arts who delve into necromantic magic have learned of exceedingly dark and twisted spells that, in exchange for quick and foul power, take a terrible toll on the caster. These spells are imbued with the very essence of undeath and corruption. These are spells filled with *putrescence*. Their numbers are few, but each contains baleful and vile applications of magic infused with reservoirs of dark and horrid design.

Certain spells included in this supplement have a special tag to denote the fact that they belong to this brand of foul magic: *putrescence*. Putrescent spells are not specific to any character class, any character capable of casting a spell of a certain spell level potentially has access to that putrescent spell. Your DM determines whether these spells are available at character creation, or more likely, if they are learned by your character through an encounter with some unspeakable tome, vile entity or harrowing experience that opens up the possibility of access to these foul spells.

Casting a spell with the putrescence tag is exactly like casting a normal spell, however, a character need not prepare or memorize a putrescence spell beforehand. All that is needed to cast a putrescence spell is for a character to expend a spell slot or a prepared spell as normal, replacing that slot or spell with a putrescence spell from an equal or higher spell slot level at the time of casting which substitutes the intended spell prepared or known.

For instance, a wizard with the 3rd-level spell *fly* prepared may decide to expend that spell slot and cast the 2nd-level putrescence spell *morph's tongue* or the 3rd-level putrescence spell *eyes of the zombie*.

A putrescent spell imparts undeathly traits upon the caster. Each time a character casts a putrescent spell, the spell determines the number of times that character must roll on the **Putrescence Trait Table**. If a player makes a roll using this table and already has the selected trait, they must continue to roll on the table until they acquire a Putrescent trait they do not currently have.

These traits manifest when the spell's duration expires and last until the caster finishes a long rest. If a caster is under the effects of multiple putrescent traits when they finish a long rest, only 1 putrescent trait expires. Which one of these putrescent traits expires is determined randomly by the DM. If at any time you are affected by every Putrescent trait listed on the table at least once, your body immediately disintegrates into a puddle of black ichor and you die.

Putrescent spells can not be made into potions (unless they are a specialized *formulae*) and cannot be infused into wands, staves or any other magical items except scrolls.

Putrescence spells can only be learned through spellbooks, scrolls or devious insight granted a spellcaster by some dark and undeathly power. Undead creatures are never affected by Putrescence Traits.

PUTRESCENCE TRAIT TABLE

| d12 | TRAIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <i>Scent of the Carrion</i> . You suffer disadvantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks. Additionally, beasts have advantage on attack rolls against you and Wisdom (Perception) ability checks that rely on scent to perceive you.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2   | <i>Rot of the Flesh</i> . Whenever you roll dice to regain hit points through any type of healing, whenever a die lands on its maximum face value you must reroll that die and use the second result no matter the outcome. This effect happens only once per die roll.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3   | <i>Pallor of the Vampire</i> . You suffer Disadvantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) ability checks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4   | <i>Weight of the Grave</i> . You immediately gain 1 level of exhaustion. You can be affected by this trait multiple times.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 5   | <i>Ken of Undeath</i> . You suffer disadvantage on Wisdom (Medicine) and Intelligence (Religion) ability checks. Additionally, you suffer disadvantage on Intelligence saving throws and saving throws against poisons.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6   | <i>Nebulousness of the Spectre</i> . Your maximum hit points are reduced by a number of points equal to 10 times the number of putrescence traits you are currently affected by. You can be affected by this trait multiple times. If your maximum hit points are reduced to 0 or lower because of this trait, you immediately perish and rise in 1d4 rounds as a Spectre under the DMs control.                                                                                                                          |
| 7   | <i>Effigy of the Undead</i> . You gain vulnerability to radiant damage and fire damage.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 8   | <i>Fortitude of the Unliving</i> . You gain resistance to bludgeoning damage from non-magical weapons. The next time you fail a death saving throw, the failure counts twice for purposes of your maximum death saves.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9   | <i>Lethargy of the Zombu</i> . Your speed is reduced by 10 feet. You can be affected by this trait multiple times. If your speed drops to 0 or lower because of this trait, you are incapable of moving without aid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 10  | <i>Thirst of the Envious</i> . When you are within 10 feet of a creature currently hostile to you or your allies, and that creature is bloodied, if you attempt to move more than 10 feet away from that creature, you must first succeed on a Wisdom saving throw. The DC to this roll is equal to 8 + 4 times the number of putrescence traits you are currently affected by. If you fail this roll, you may not attempt to move more than 10 feet away from that creature again until the beginning of your next turn. |
| 11  | <i>Resolve of the Unfeeling</i> . You can not be frightened. Additionally, you suffer disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) and Wisdom (Insight) ability checks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 12  | <i>Rigor of the Cadaver</i> . You suffer disadvantage when attempting to escape from grapples and you suffer disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |





## FORMULAE

Some putrescent spells are not only foul, but require very specific steps in order to ensure their proper casting.

Formulae spells create unique potions that must be imbibed immediately by either the caster or another creature or else the magic of the spell is lost. These spells are denoted by the tag *formulae* next to their school description. They represent the most complex and dangerous of spells and should be carefully considered by DMs before their inclusion in a game because of the powerful abilities they impart on a player's character.

## ALTERNATIVE RULE: ALTERNATIVE MAGICS

Undead and those who practice the Dangerous Arts have access to secrets and lore beyond the knowledge of mere spells and formulae. The following are mechanics that offer alternative means for necromancers, undead and those who seek True Undeath to gain temporal means of controlling the world about them through unnatural and supernatural sources of power. These options alter the way magic works or details wholly different magical abilities existing outside the normal teachings of arcane tradition.

### DARK CHANT

Undead who learn of certain forbidden scrolls and forgotten books become blessed with the knowledge of stringing together particularly foul necromantic words and phrases that are not spells in themselves but hold tremendous magical power. The source of this chant is said to be a derivative of *Dark Speech*, a language full of spite and malice and rumored to be the secret language of evil gods so foul and so potent that even demons and devils refrain from its use lest it consume them.

**Practice.** If at least two undead creatures with intelligence scores of 10 or above, intone a Dark Chant in unison, all undead within 120 feet, including the chanters themselves, gain advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Undead who wish to learn the secrets of the Dark Chant must do so by reading the works of a magic user who has made contact with an evil entity of tremendous power and inscribed their experience on some form of written work such as a scroll, book or parchment. Alternatively, direct contact with a being already possessing the ability to teach the Dark Chant is always a possibility. Only undead creatures have the makeup necessary in order to speak the Chant and grant the benefits of its intonation, however, living creatures may learn of the Chant, and impart its syncopation to their creations. Such training of undead creatures in the use of the Dark Chant may involve a process such as instruction through Undead Disciplines (described in Chapter 3 of this guide). This process would involve the expenditure of a 2nd Level spell to train the target creature over a long rest, and allows the undead creature thereafter to begin the Chant as a bonus action on their turns.

Neonates often ponder what our Lord's voice must sound like. A proper instructor would chide them for patience and to take care in what they wish for. Happily, I am not a proper instructor.

- Alistair Lurocock



## SHADOW MAGIC

Spellcasters affect the world around them through a fabric of magic known as the weave. This mystical thread of interacting with the raw magic that permeates every bit of matter and energy exists throughout the multiverse and powers arcane and divine magic alike. However, this magical weave is not without gaps. In the space between these empyreal strands of magical links are the shadowstuff of magic. This shadow weave feeds off the true one much the way darkness feeds off of light and can be used to strengthen spells that rely on shadows and illusions.

Necromancers who learn to safely traverse the Shadow Plane often come to learn of this paradoxical source of magical power, but other arcanists who delve into the darkest spheres of necromancy often uncover its existence as well. Those who learn to access this shadow weave come to be practitioners of shadow magic, a different form of magic that taps into the darkest spaces of the multiverse.

**Practice.** Necromancers who harness shadow magic cast spells slightly differently from normal spellcasters. They develop more potent forms of magic that focuses on shadows and illusions at the expense of more physical manifestations of arcane power. This means that many of their spells are more difficult to counter by normal magic users but other spells of theirs are easier to resist overall.

Necromancers who learn of the shadow weave must spend time researching the mechanics of this alternative source of magic. Once perfected, they are able to cast spells as a **shadow mage**. A shadow mage can be of any class and is a reference to the fact that their spells tap into the shadow weave instead of the normal weave.

Thereafter, a shadow mage's spells that are cast from the schools of *Enchantment*, *Illusion* and *Necromancy* gain a +1 bonus to their spell save DCs. Additionally, the DC to counter their spells cast from these schools is increased by 2 when countered by a creature that is not also trained in the use of shadow magic. If a shadow mage caster or their target are in an area of dim light or darkness when a spell is cast by the shadow mage the bonus to their save DC for these schools, instead increases by 2 and the DC to counter a spell from these schools is increased by 4. Finally, when a spell from these schools does damage through dice rolls, the shadow mage may reroll the lowest dice from such a roll and keep the new result. This effect happens only once per die roll.

Tapping into the shadow weave does not come without a price. Spells cast by a shadow mage that are from the schools of *Evocation* and *Transmutation* have their save DCs reduced by 2, and have their range and duration halved. Spells with a range of touch have their range unaffected. In addition, a shadow mage becomes incapable of casting any spell that produces any form of light. If a spell has multiple effects, only the light effect is negated, unless the additional effects are dependant on a spell's light effect to function, in which case all subsequent effects are negated.

Characters may learn shadow magic through uncovering of arcane lore in the possession of a powerful arcanist or through contact with powerful beings. Shadow magic may also be presented to players as a new Feat which may be gained through personal research at the DMs discretion.

## SOUL POWER

Souls are considered by many, the ultimate expression of existence itself. With such potency, they are used as currency on the Lower Planes and by fiendish creatures on the material worlds like hags and other nightmarish beings. For spells, souls can be used in place of components. They can also be used in expediting the crafting of magical items. To utilize a soul for magical purposes, it must be contained within a creature who is attempting to use its power, or stored in a proper receptacle such as a soul gem or similar device. Incorporeal undead, if properly imprisoned can likewise be used to power magical effects.

**Practice.** A creature may extinguish a soul that is currently trapped within their body or is imprisoned in a container currently in their physical possession as a free action that is also a part of another magical or arcane action they take. Extinguishing a soul in this way immediately destroys it and nothing, not even a *wish* spell can restore such a soul. Any time a creature casts a spell and uses a soul in place of that spells components, that spell needs no other components as part of its casting and the DC to resist the effects of that spell are increased by 2. In addition, if the spell has a duration other than instantaneous, that duration is doubled.

If a creature extinguishes a soul as part of the creation of an item, every soul extinguished reduces the cost of that item by 10% and reduces the time required to construct that item by 10% as well. Magic items created with souls are tainted with a lasting evil that imparts on any creature that is attuned to it a lingering undeathly trait as found on the **Lingering Undeathly Trait Table** presented in Chapter 3 of this guide.

Any creature that powers a spell or creates a magic item using a soul has their alignment immediately shift to evil.

## VONDOUN

Certain necromancers have the extraordinary ability to imprint a stolen copy of a creature's soul onto replicas that create a bond with their originators. The replicas act as a gateway that allows the spellcaster to target the creature directly with spells normally requiring physical touch. Typically possessed by shamans, witch doctors and other primal masters of the Unliving Arts, this ability is a closely guarded secret and highly sought after by less skilled but highly envious followers of the tradition.





Only those that possess this knowledge are able to teach it to another creature, and only those who have made compacts with entities of tremendous power are generally in possession of this rare form of necromancy in the first place. Warlocks and sorcerers are almost the exclusive knowledge holders of this form of necromancy and its unique effects.

**Practice.** When a necromancer trained in *vondoun* makes a successful melee spell attack against a creature, the spellcaster can immediately force the target of that attack to succeed on a Charisma saving throw equal to 8 + the spellcasters proficiency bonus + the spellcasters Charisma modifier. On a failure, the spellcaster is able to steal an imprint of the targets soul for a short duration.

If the necromancer constructs a clay replica of the target anytime within 1 hour following the theft of the target's copied soul, the necromancer gains the ability to affect the target through the replica they create. The process of creating such a replica takes 10 minutes and requires the following components which are consumed in the process: 1 pound of clay, a 1 pound sack of ash, a mandrake root and a ruby worth at least 2,000 gp. At the end of the 10 minutes the necromancer creates a miniature clay figurine replica of the target.

This figurine is an inanimate object of tiny size that has 4 'soul points' and 1 hit point. Any amount of damage done to this figurine immediately destroys it. It lasts for 7 days but can be destroyed sooner if it receives any type of damage and depending on the actions the necromancer takes with it.

As long as the necromancer is holding this figurine, any spell attack the necromancer casts that has a range of touch may target the figurine in place of the creature the figurine represents. On a successful attack, the creature the figurine represents receives the effects that the spell imparts, including damage, healing or condition effects. A target of such an action is still able to make saving throws and the necromancer must still succeed on any spell attack rolls against the target using its scores, however environmental effects such as concealment, invisibility and similar modifiers affecting the target are ignored. In addition, this ability to affect the target only functions while the necromancer and the target are on the same plane and only as long as the necromancer is able to see the creature. A spell that allows the necromancer to glimpse the creature from great distances such as a scrying spell allows the necromancer to target the creature through the use of the figurine created.

For each spell that successfully affects the target through this replica, reduce the number of soul points that this figurine has by 1. When there are no more soul points remaining on the replica, the figurine is immediately destroyed and the necromancer that created it takes 6d6 psychic damage. This damage can not be reduced in any way. A necromancer may have only one replicated figurine in existence at any one time. If a necromancer creates a new replica while one is already created, the first is immediately destroyed upon the creation of the second and the necromancer take 6d6 psychic damage. This damage can not be reduced in any way. If the target the replica represents dies while the figurine is still in existence, the figurine is immediately destroyed and the necromancer that created it takes 6d6 psychic damage. This damage can not be reduced in any way.

## SPELL LISTS

The following spell list shows which spells can be cast by characters of each class. A spell's school of magic is noted in parentheses. If a spell has a formulae, putrescence or ritual tag, the tag also appears within a parentheses.

### BARD SPELLS

#### CANTRIPS

*Ghostsong* (divination)

*Phantom memory* (illusion)

#### 2ND LEVEL

*Bone fiddle* (conjuration)

*Choke* (conjuration)

*Death rattle* (necromancy)

#### 3RD LEVEL

*Cacophony of the wounded* (illusion)

*Phantom loss* (illusion)

#### 6TH LEVEL

*Banshee's wail* (necromancy)

*Dirge of the dead* (evocation)

### CLERIC SPELLS

#### CANTRIP

*Lacerate* (necromancy)

*Preserve Organ* (necromancy)

*Unhallowed Consecration* (necromancy)

#### 1ST LEVEL

*Animate lesser undead* (necromancy)

*SpiritCleanse* (abjuration)

#### 2ND LEVEL

*Boneburst* (necromancy)

*Corpse burst* (necromancy)

*Hand of the grave* (necromancy)

*Shadow shell* (abjuration)

#### 3RD LEVEL

*Rigor* (necromancy)

*Touch of the departed* (necromancy)

*Unliving weapon* (necromancy)

*Undead pustules* (necromancy)

#### 4TH LEVEL

*Iron bones* (transmutation)

*Wall of bones* (conjuration)

#### 5TH LEVEL

*Wither limbs* (necromancy)

#### 6TH LEVEL

*Curse of rodent infestation* (necromancy)

*Ectoplasmic enhancement* (necromancy)



#### 8TH LEVEL

*Corpse portal (conjunction)*

#### DRUID SPELLS

##### 1ST LEVEL

*Spirit cleanse (abjuration)*

##### 5TH LEVEL

*Echo skull (divination)*

#### 8TH LEVEL

*Corpse portal (conjunction)*

#### PALADIN SPELLS

##### 1ST LEVEL

*Spirit cleanse (abjuration)*

##### 2ND LEVEL

*Boneburst (necromancy)*

*Shadow shell (abjuration)*

##### 3RD LEVEL

*Cacophony of the wounded (illusion)*

*Rigor (necromancy)*

*Touch of the departed (necromancy)*

##### 5TH LEVEL

*Wither limbs (necromancy)*

#### RANGER SPELLS

##### 1ST LEVEL

*Reaper's scythe (necromancy)*

*Spirit cleanse (abjuration)*

##### 2ND LEVEL

*Death rattle (necromancy)*

##### 3RD LEVEL

*Rigor (necromancy)*

#### SORCERER SPELLS

##### CANTRIP

*Lacerate (necromancy)*

*Phantom memory (illusion)*

##### 1ST LEVEL

*Black bag (conjunction)*

*Ghoul's touch (necromancy)*

*Reaper's scythe (necromancy)*

##### 2ND LEVEL

*Boneblade (necromancy)*

*Choke (conjunction)*

*Corpse burst (necromancy)*

*Death rattle (necromancy)*

*Disguise undead (illusion)*

*False zombie (enhancement)*

*Shadow restraint (conjunction)*





### 3RD LEVEL

*Beacon of false life (necromancy)*  
*Cacophony of the wounded (illusion)*  
*Rigor (necromancy)*

### 4TH LEVEL

*Iron bones (transmutation)*

### 5TH LEVEL

*Animate shadow (necromancy)*  
*Wall of shadows (conjunction)*

### 6TH LEVEL

*Banshee's wail (necromancy)*  
*Ectoplasmic enhancement (necromancy)*  
*Investiture of shadow (transmutation)*

## WARLOCK SPELLS

### CANTRIP

*Lacerate (necromancy)*  
*Phantom memory (illusion)*

### 1ST LEVEL

*Black bag (conjunction)*

### 2ND LEVEL

*Boneblade (necromancy)*  
*Corpse burst (necromancy)*  
*Death armor (necromancy)*  
*Disguise undead (illusion)*  
*Hand of the grave (necromancy)*  
*Shadow restraint (conjunction)*  
*Shadow shell (abjuration)*

### 3RD LEVEL

*Undead pustules (necromancy)*

### 5TH LEVEL

*Animate shadow (necromancy)*

### 6TH LEVEL

*Investiture of shadow (transmutation)*

### 8TH LEVEL

*Corpse portal (conjunction)*

## WIZARD SPELLS

### CANTRIP

*Lacerate (necromancy)*  
*Phantom memory (illusion)*  
*Preserve organ (necromancy)*  
*Unhallowed consecration (necromancy)*

### 1ST LEVEL

*Animate lesser undead (necromancy)*  
*Black bag (conjunction)*  
*Ghoul's touch (necromancy)*  
*Reaper's scythe (necromancy)*

### 2ND LEVEL

*Boneblade (necromancy)*  
*Choke (conjunction)*  
*Death armor (necromancy)*  
*Death rattle (necromancy)*  
*Disguise undead (illusion)*  
*False zombie (enhancement)*  
*Hand of the grave (necromancy)*  
*Shadow restraint (conjunction)*

### 3RD LEVEL

*Beacon of false life (necromancy)*  
*Phantom loss (illusion)*  
*Rigor (necromancy)*  
*Undead pustules (necromancy)*

### 4TH LEVEL

*Iron bones (transmutation)*  
*Wall of bones (conjunction)*

### 5TH LEVEL

*Animate shadow (necromancy)*  
*Wall of shadows (conjunction)*

### 6TH LEVEL

*Ectoplasmic enhancement (necromancy)*  
*Investiture of shadow (transmutation)*

### 8TH LEVEL

*Corpse portal (conjunction)*

## PUTRESCENCE SPELLS

### 1ST LEVEL

*Fangs of the blood lord (transmutation)*  
*Cloak of icy shadows (illusion)*

### 2ND LEVEL

*Absorb mind (necromancy)*  
*Absorb strength (necromancy)*  
*Aruspex (divination)*  
*Morgh's tongue (necromancy)*  
*Profane interdiction (abjuration)*

### 3RD LEVEL

*Eyes of the zombie (divination)*  
*Flesh armor (abjuration)*  
*Formulae of soul ingest (necromancy)(formulae)*  
*Formulae of the vampyr (necromancy)(formulae)*

### 5TH LEVEL

*Kiss of the vampire (transmutation)*  
*Formulae of the plague bearer (necromancy)*

### 6TH LEVEL

*Consume likeness (transmutation)*

### 9TH LEVEL

*Formulae of lichdom (necromancy)(formulae)*



## SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The spells are presented in alphabetical order.

### ABSORB MIND

*2nd-level necromancy (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a fresh or preserved *(still bloody)* 1-ounce portion of another creature's brain.)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You devour at least a portion of the brain of another creature's corpse. By doing so, you gain the creature's memories and knowledge to some degree, so that you have a 75% chance of recalling any important fact known to the creature—family history, recent events, the general layout of the creature's stomping grounds, details about the creature's death, important plans, passwords, magic item command words, and similar tidbits. Spells and other such arcane knowledge can be obtained for a brief period of time using this spell at a 15% chance and last until the end of this spell's duration. Your DM has final say over which of these advanced types of knowledge you are capable of acquiring through the use of this spell. Once you attempt a roll to determine whether you recall a fact or gain a magical ability, you cannot attempt to recall that fact or gain that power again. After the spell expires, you no longer have the ability to recall new facts and you lose the memory and capabilities of any abilities or features you gained from this spell.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### ABSORB STRENGTH

*2nd-level necromancy (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a fresh or preserved *(still bloody)* 1-ounce portion of another creature's flesh.)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You devour at least a portion of the flesh of a creature's corpse and afterwards your touch grants the target a boon to their physical prowess. The first creature you touch at the completion of this spell gains advantage on Strength ability checks and their carrying capacity quadruples. Additionally, the creature you touch at the completion of this spell gains a +2 bonus to their melee weapon damage rolls.

The damage bonus from this spell increases by 1 when you reach 5th level (+3), 11th level (+4), and 17th level (+5).

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### ANIMATE LESSER UNDEAD

*1st-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** 10 feet



**Components:** V, S, M (a pinch of guano, a petrified stick at least 6 inches in length and a drop of blood)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

This spell creates a temporary undead servant. You touch one pile of bones or the corpse of a Tiny beast that has a quadrupedal form. Your spell imbues the target with a foul mimicry of life, raising it as an undead creature under your control until the spell ends or the creature drops to 0 hit points. The target becomes a skeleton beast if you chose bones or a zombie beast if you chose a corpse (these creature's game statistics are presented in chapter five of this guide).

Once on each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any creature you made with this spell if the creature is within 60 feet of you (if you control multiple creatures, you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the creature will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as to guard a particular chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the creature only defends itself against hostile creatures. Once given an order, the creature continues to follow it until its task is complete.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you animate an additional undead creature for each slot level above 2nd. Each of the creatures must come from a different corpse or pile of bones.

### ANIMATE SHADOW

*5th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** 10 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a pinch of ash from a grave, a glass jar filled with smoke from a cremated body and the roots of a nightshade flower that was never exposed to sunlight)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You target a humanoid corpse within range currently casting a visible shadow and whose size is Medium or Small. That creature's shadow is rent from their body and becomes a shadow creature under your control. (The DM has game statistics for these creatures). A creature whose alignment

It is often said a mind is a terrible thing to waste-- occasionally I have wished this statement wasn't followed with such earnest by a select few among my brethren.

- Alistair Lurcock



as evil during their lifetime is immune to having their shadow pulled from them using this spell and causes the spell to be expended without any effect.

As a bonus action on each of your turns, you can mentally command any creature you animated with this spell if the creature is within 120 feet of you (if you control multiple creatures, you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the creature will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as to guard a particular chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the creature actively attacks the nearest living creature, excluding you. Once given an order, the creature continues to follow it until its task is complete.

The creature is under your control for 24 hours, after which it stops obeying any command you have given it. To maintain control of the creature for another 24 hours, you must cast this spell on the creature before the current 24-hour period ends. This use of the spell reasserts your control over up to three creatures you have animated with this spell, rather than animating new ones.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a 7th-level spell slot, you can animate or reassert control over two shadows. When you cast this spell using a 9th-level spell slot, you can animate or reassert control over three shadows. Each of the creatures must come from a different corpse.

#### ARUSPEX

*2nd-level divination (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute (ritual)

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a clay tablet inlaid with round pegs, a wooden mallet, and the still bloodied liver, stomach or intestines of a small or medium-sized beast whose market value was at least 50 gp while it was alive)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Your foul offering allows you the ability to gleam important knowledge from the severed entrails used in this spell, for a steep price. You utter the name of a single creature who you have interacted with at least once over the past 7 days and may ask up to 3 questions concerning this individual, including inquiries into their alignment, past experiences and ultimate motivations. The DM offers truthful replies for each question but one, which they decide in secret. These replies may be short phrases, cryptic rhymes, or elaborate omens.

Each time you cast this spell, for every question asked and answered, whether a truthful reply is given or not, you develop a dark and harmless black rash somewhere on your person that persists for the next 7 days. Each rash is tied to one of the questions asked over the course of this spell. If events occur that change the truthfulness (or deceptiveness) of the answers given through this spell, the rash quickly fades before the 7 days elapse.

You must roll thrice on the Putrescence table or until you gain three putrescent traits as soon as this spell's duration ends.

#### BANSHEE'S WAIL

*6th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 ft

**Components:** V, S, M (a strand of banshee hair)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You release a mournful wail that pierces into the mind of those that hear it. Each creature within range must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 4d8 psychic damage, and falls unconscious. On a success, it takes half damage and suffers no other effect. An unconscious creature wakes up if it takes any damage or if another creature uses its action to shake them awake. A deafened creature automatically succeeds on the save.

#### BEACON OF FALSE LIFE

*3rd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a bottle of alcohol)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Necromantic energy emanates from you in a 20-foot radius in all directions. Until the spell ends, the area moves with you, centered on you. While within the area, you and every undead creature under your control that you have animated, conjured, created, dominated or charmed gains 2d4 temporary hit points at the start of your turn. These temporary hit points remain until a creature leaves this area.

#### BLACK BAG

*1st-level conjuration (ritual)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a black bag made of leather)

**Duration:** 24 hours

This spell creates a bag full of knives, scalpels and other small torture implements. If the implements are removed from the bag by anyone other than you, or if they leave your possession, they disintegrate after 1 round. The bag and its magically created contents weigh only 1 pound. Each time you remove one of these magically created implements from the bag, all creatures that can see you and who are currently restrained must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute.

#### BONEBLADE

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a bone at least 6 inches long)

**Duration:** 1 minute

You change a bone into a longsword, shortsword or greatsword (your choice). This weapon is considered magical and has a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls. The blade also deals an extra 1d6 points of slashing damage to living creatures. This spell confers no proficiency with the blade, but the caster does not need to be the one wielding the blade for the spell to be effective.

The blade's attack and damage bonuses increases by 1 when you reach 11th level and deals an additional 1d6 points of slashing damage to living creatures when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).



### **BONEBURST**

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a bone at least 3 inches long)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You touch a creature that has a skeleton. The creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or a random bone within the creature breaks or cracks, causing intense pain. The caster cannot specify which bone. The creature suffers disadvantage on Constitution saves until they complete a short or long rest or until they receive any amount of magical healing.

### **BONE FIDDLE**

*2nd-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a knuckle bone and a bit of wire from a viola)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You rub your middle finger across your thumb like a bow against a fiddle while simultaneously humming a discordant tune under your breath. At a spot within range a spectral fiddle appears playing an ominous tune. Every creature within 30 feet of where the fiddle appears must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 2d4 psychic damage.

Any creature that starts their turn within 30 feet of the fiddle must make a saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 2d4 psychic damage. On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to move the fiddle up to 10 feet in any direction.

### **CACOPHONY OF THE WOUNDED**

*3rd-level illusion*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 120 feet

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You point your finger at a spot in range and a cacophonous din that sounds like hundreds of humanoids in the throes of death erupts in a 40-foot circular radius centered on the space you choose. The sound from this spell is as loud as a pitched battle and is audible far beyond the spell's area. Outside the spell's area, the sound is merely loud. Inside the spell's area, the sound is overwhelming. All creatures in the spell's area have Disadvantage on Perception checks that rely on sound and are unable to communicate below a level of shouting. Additionally, any creature must make a concentration check to maintain a spell they are concentrating on if they start their turn inside the spell's radius. The DC for this concentration check is equal to your spell save DC. On a failure, that creature's spell ends immediately.

### **CHOKER**

*2nd-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 ft.

**Components:** V, S, M (a clay carving of a closed fist)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause a pair of invisible hands made of pure force to spring into existence around a target's throat within range. Creatures without necks, such as beholders, and creatures that do not breathe such as constructs, oozes, plants and the like, cannot be affected by this spell. These hands cannot be attacked or damaged.

The target immediately takes 1d4 points of force damage. At the beginning of each of their turns the creature must succeed on a Dexterity save or take an additional 1d4 points of force damage. In addition, while a creature is affected by this spell, all Concentration checks they make to maintain a spell are made with disadvantage. On a successful save, the spell ends and the hands dissipate.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

### **CLOAK OF ICY SHADOWS**

*1st-level illusion (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 bonus action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause your shadow to swirl and flow around you, surging its way over your shoulders in a protective mantle of negative energy pulled from the Shadow Plane itself. Until the spell ends, you gain a +2 bonus to your AC and gain resistance to cold damage.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### **CONSUME LIKENESS**

*6th-level transmutation (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a fresh or preserved (still bloody) 1-pound portion of another creature's flesh.)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You gain the ability to take on the appearance and form—including clothing and equipment—of a corporeal humanoid that is freshly dead. This appearance is of a form of the creature as it looked when it lived. You must eat the flesh of the corpse whose form you wish to assume as you cast the spell.

Once the spell is complete, you can assume this new likeness thereafter at will as an action. By changing to this new form, your body can undergo a limited physical transmutation, including adding or subtracting one or two limbs, and your weight can be changed up to one-half your normal weight. If the form selected has wings, you gain the ability to fly in short bursts with a fly speed of 10 feet. If the form has gills, you gain the ability to breathe underwater for up to 10 minutes at a time. You cannot assume the likeness of a humanoid creature that is of a size category different than your own for instance a small creature can not assume the form of a medium-sized creature. While in this new





form, your attack bonuses, armor bonuses, and saves do not change. The spell does not confer special abilities, attack forms, defenses, ability scores, or mannerisms of the chosen form. If you die while in the consumed form, you automatically revert to your normal form. While in this assumed form you can use an action to revert to your original form. While in this assumed form you gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks when attempting to pass yourself off as the assumed creature.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as you finish casting this spell. Every 24 hours after the completion of this spell, you must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as long as you are under the effects of this spell. To completely remove yourself from the effects of this spell, along with the ability to assume the consumed form, you must become the target of a *lesser restoration*, *greater restoration* or *remove curse* spell.

### **CORPSE BURST**

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You cause the corpse of a creature to explode into a burst of necrotic energy. Choose a corpse within range. The creature and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, are reduced to black dust. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *reincarnate*, *true resurrection*, or a *wish* spell. Each creature within 5 feet of the target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d8 necrotic damage.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

### **CORPSE PORTAL**

*8th-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a corpse that still has bits of flesh about it and a funeral urn inlaid with precious gems worth at least 500 gp, which the spell consumes)

**Duration:** 24 hours

You touch a humanoid corpse within reach and create a magical connection between it and the remains of other humanoid creatures. For the duration of this spell you may use a reaction to touch any other corpse that is on the same plane as the corpse used during the casting of this spell. If you do so, you are instantly transported to within 5 feet of the original corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied. If the corpse used to power this spell is destroyed, reanimated or otherwise altered to a state fundamentally different from when the spell was cast, when you attempt to teleport back to its side you fail to do so and instead take 3d10 psychic damage.



### CURSE OF RODENT INFESTATION

*6th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a drop of blood from a lycanthrope, a rat pelt)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Your touch causes a creature to succumb to a terrible fate. Make a melee spell attack against a creature within your reach. On a hit, the target takes 9d8 + 20 necrotic damage. If a creature drops to 0 hit points from this attack it dies immediately and if it was a humanoid, at the start of your next turn 1d6 swarms of rats claw their way out of its body. The swarms do not attack you or your allies, but they might attack nearby living creatures. If no creatures are nearby, the swarms scurry away to feast on any creatures they can find.

### DEATH ARMOR

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a paste made of exotic herbs, ground bones, and onyx worth 50 gp, which is applied to your body when the spell is cast.)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You surround yourself with a crackling black aura that injures living creatures that contact it. Any creature that strikes you with its body or a melee weapon takes 1d4 points of necrotic damage. Undead and constructs are immune to this effect. The damage this spell deals increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4).

### DEATH RATTLE

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 120 ft

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause the skull of a deceased humanoid creature in range to make unintelligible noises. The sounds issue from the mouth of a skull that is either severed or still attached to a humanoid skeleton or corpse and consist solely of grunts, yelps and other eerie intonations. The noises persist until the spell ends.

### DIRGE OF THE DEAD

*6nd-level evocation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Your song draws death and destruction down upon your foes. Any enemy that starts their turn within 60 feet of you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws and ability checks until the beginning of their next turn.

### DISGUISE UNDEAD

*2nd-level illusion*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You make one undead- including clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment- look different. You can make it seem 1 foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot change the creature's body type. For example, a wight could look human, humanoid, or like any other generally human-shaped bipedal creature. An incorporeal creature can only adopt the appearance of incorporeal creatures and likewise for corporeal undead creatures. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You can also add or obscure a minor feature, such as a mole or a beard, or make it look like an entirely different creature.

This spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form. It does not alter the perceived tactile (touch) or audible (sound) properties of the undead or its equipment. A battleaxe made to look like a dagger still functions like a battleaxe.

### ECHO SKULL

*5th-level divination (ritual)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a dried animal skull)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You can see, hear, and speak through a specific animal skull at any distance. As long as you and the skull remain on the same plane, you can see and hear as if you were standing where it is, and during your turn you can switch your perception from its location to your own or back again as a free action.

If you desire, any spell you cast whose range is greater than touch (and which does not require a material component or focus) can originate from the skull instead of you. If the skull is destroyed, the spell ends.

### ECTOPLASMIC ENHANCEMENT

*6th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** 25 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a dried animal skull and a precious gem worth at least 1,000 gp)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 8 hours

You target a number of undead creatures up to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). Each undead targeted by this spell gains a +1 bonus to their armor class, a number of temporary hit points equal to half your level and +1 bonus to their attack and damage rolls.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of or higher, you can target an additional undead creature for each slot level above 6th.





### EYES OF THE ZOMBIE

3rd-level divination (putrescence)

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (the removed eyes of a zombie and a pint of water mixed with mandrake and ginger)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

Through a painful spell, you replace your eyes with the removed eyes of a zombie, allowing you to see through the zombie's eye sockets and control its actions directly. The zombie must be one that you have animated. The magic of this spell allows you to remove your eyes (dealing 1d6 points of damage to yourself from the pain, but leaving no permanent damage to your eyes which vanish for the spells duration into a pocket dimension of shadow) and absorb a zombie's eyes that you have removed and soaked in a special bath of brackish water. Your eyes are preserved by the spell while you control the zombie and perceive the world through it and you are able to cast any spell with a range of touch that does not require material components through the zombie. In addition, while the spell persists, your body remains motionless and is subject to harm normally. When the spell ends, your eyes reattach in a magical puff of smoke.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spells duration ends.

### FALSE ZOMBIE

2nd-level enchantment

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

Good or bad is a matter of perspective. I met a hermit once, who said that nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.  
To look at ones past without judgement requires great courage.  
To look at ones present requires clarity.  
To look at ones future requires unwavering vision. With practice, such vision does not always need eyes to tell one where they are going.  
- Idowu Azikiwe

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** S, M (a clay doll entwined with hair from the corpse of a convicted criminal)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a creature already incapacitated or paralyzed and create within them a clouded and confused state that does not allow the subject to think clearly or take actions on their own. The creature you touch loses these conditions but can not take actions on their own for the remainder of this spell. On their turn, they can be given simple commands such as stand or walk, and can perform simple, uncomplicated tasks like sweep the floor, open a door for people about to enter or file away a stack of scrolls. The creature can not be commanded to attack, defend itself or cause physical damage to itself or others, including objects. At the end of the spells duration, the creature has no memory of the tasks it performed while in this state.

### FANGS OF THE BLOOD LORD

1st-level transmutation (putrescence)

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** 1 minute

You grow long and sharp vampire-like fangs that sprout painfully from your gums. You gain the ability to make melee bite attacks with an attack bonus of 10 plus your Strength modifier. On a hit, a target takes 1d6 points of piercing damage and suffers disadvantage on Constitution and Strength saving throws until the beginning of your next turn. In addition, you regain hit points equal to half the damage dealt as part of the attack.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spells duration ends.

### FLESH ARMOR

3rd-level abjuration (putrescence)

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a bit of flesh torn from your own body and a humanoid body whose flesh is flayed through the process of the spell)

**Duration:** 1 hour

As part of the casting of this spell you must flay the skin from a humanoid creature whose size category is equal to your own which you lay upon your own flesh, wearing it like clothing or armor. Once you cast this spell your skin develops a resistance to blows, cuts, stabs and slashes. You gain resistance to piercing, bludgeoning and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. You also gain resistance to necrotic and poison damage.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spells duration ends.

### FORMULAE OF LICHDOM

9th-level necromancy (putrescence)(formulae)

**Casting Time:** Special



**Range:** Special  
**Components:** V, S, M (\*Special)  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You create a foul potion with this spell that confers upon the imbiber the unliving form of a lich. This is considered by most seekers of undeath to be the pinnacle achievement of the Dangerous Arts, however its successful casting is not guaranteed.

The material components required for this potion include a large list, some of which involve items gathered or created within a strict time frame. These materials, and their prerequisites are as follows:

- 2 drops of distilled arsenic
- 2 drops of distilled belladonna plant root extract
- 1 quart of blood from a dead pegasus foal killed by wyvern poison
- 1 quart of blood from a vampire or creature infected by vampirism
- the intact heart of a humanoid killed by a poison that has a mix of arsenic and belladonna
- 10 reproductive glands from 10 separate giant moths ground together into a fine powder within the past 10 days
- 1 pint of venom drawn from a phase spider within the last 30 days
- An object to contain the casters soul, a phylactery (this ingredient is not mixed with the others)

The ingredients must be combined into a mixture by the caster beneath the light of a full moon, a process that takes a minute and which afterwards becomes a sparkling black liquid that gleams with a bluish radiance. The potion must be drunk in its entirety within one minute by the caster after its creation. As soon as the caster finishes imbibing the potion they must roll on the **Lichdom Potion Effect Table** to determine the effects of the potion. If a creature other than the caster imbibes the potion, that creature is assumed to have rolled an 11 on the **Lichdom Potion Effect Table** for this spell.

d100 Lichdom Potion Effect Table

01 - 03 The imbiber dies instantly.

04 - 10 Imbibers hair falls out and they age 10 years. The potion is ineffective. Additionally, imbiber must roll once on the Putrescence table or until they acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as they imbibe the potion.

11 - 15 Imbiber instantly dies and rises the following round as a zombie under the DMs control.

16 - 19 Imbiber instantly crumbles to ashes that swirls in a small vortex. Their soul departs and becomes trapped in the body of a



random evil-aligned humanoid on the same plane as where they drank the potion and their physical form manifests itself as a **boneclaw** under the DMs control. The DM has the stats of a boneclaw and further description of what this outcome entails.

20 - 24 The imbiber becomes blind. Only a *wish* spell can remove this condition. The potion is ineffective.

25 - 29 The imbibers Intelligence becomes 10. Only a *wish* spell can restore or increase their Intelligence score. The potion is ineffective.

20 - 70 Imbiber instantly falls unconscious and can not be roused by any means including a *wish* spell for 1d4 + 1 days. Upon waking, the imbiber feels the necrotic energies of the spell indicates the potions success. The imbiber immediately rolls twice on the Putrescence table or until they acquire two putrescent traits. These traits remain with the character until they die. Thereafter, the next time the character dies, 24 hours later, as long as their phylactery is in existence, their soul travels to the closest, uninhabited and unconfined corpse nearest their phylactery, whether their phylactery is on the same plane as where their death occurred or not. Any container or area which would prevent a corpse from



moving beyond 1 mile from where its located without special means like a spell, for instance a coffin buried 6 feet underground, is not chosen as a suitable corpse by this spell upon the imbibers return. When the imbiber first rises through this potion, it does so without any putrescence traits it may have acquired before its death. After this first rising, the imbiber becomes a Lich and gains the traits for a Lich as described in the **Variant Rule: Player Characters As Undead** in the Lore Chapter of this Guide.

70 - 100 The imbiber immediately gains a level of exhaustion. This level remains on the character until they die and can only be removed with a *wish* spell. The imbiber immediately rolls twice on the Putrescence table or until they acquire two putrescent traits. These traits remain with the character until they die. Thereafter, the next time the character dies, 24 hours later, as long as their phylactery is in existence, their soul travels to the closest, uninhabited and unconfined corpse nearest their phylactery, whether their phylactery is on the same plane as where their death occurred or not. Any container or area which would prevent a corpse from moving beyond 1 mile from where its located without special means like a spell, for instance a coffin buried 6 feet underground, is not chosen as a suitable corpse by this spell upon the imbibers return. When the imbiber first rises through this potion, it does so without any putrescence traits it may have acquired before its death. After this first rising, the imbiber becomes a Lich and gains the traits for a Lich as described in the **Variant Rule: Player Characters As Undead** in the Lore Chapter of this Guide.

#### FORMULAE FOR DRACOLICH

The creation of a *dracolich* is a complex process that involves the same formulae used in making a regular lich with a few slight modifications. The potion must include additional ingredients consisting of a *potion of invulnerability* and a *potion of dominate monster*. Additionally, *phylactery* used in this formulae are gemstones worth no less than 2,000 gp.

Instead of humanoid corpses, reptilian corpses of at least a Large size or larger are used in place of the Lich Formulae regular corpses. Lastly, instead of the Lichdom Potion Effect Table, the following table is used by any dragon imbiber.

| Roll     | Result                                                                                                  |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 - 60  | Potion works as per a roll of 70 on the Lichdom Potion Effect Table.                                    |
| 61 - 70  | Potion does not work and the dragon dies. A <i>wish</i> spell is needed to restore the dragon to life.  |
| 71 - 90  | Potion does not work and the dragon suffers 6d6 points of damage and falls unconscious for 1d4 minutes. |
| 91 - 100 | Potion does not work and the dragon prematurely ages 100 years.                                         |

#### FORMULAE OF THE PLAGUE BEARER

5rd-level necromancy (putrescence) (formulae)

**Casting Time:** Special

**Range:** Special

**Components:** V, S, M (\*Special)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You create a foul potion with this spell that allows the imbiber the ability to spread contagion and death with every encounter.

The material components required for this potion include a specific list, some of which involve items gathered or created within a strict time frame. These materials, and their prerequisites are as follows:

- 1 quart of blood from the casters own body that is infected with and carries some type of infectious disease
- the intact heart of a humanoid creature killed within the past 10 days by the effects of an infectious disease
- 1 pound of rot grubs
- the intact tongue of a rot troll obtained within the past 30 days
- a dozen hearts from rats infected with sewer plague obtained within the past 30 days

These ingredients must be combined into a mixture by the caster, a process that takes a minute and which afterwards produces a thick green liquid that exudes a hideous smelling aroma. The potion must be drunk in its entirety within one minute after its creation.

Once the imbiber finishes drinking the potion they gain the ability to infect others with a hideous assortment of diseases. You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as you finish imbibing the potion created by this spell. This Putrescent Trait remains with you for the duration of the potions effects and can not be negated in any way. If a creature other than the caster imbibes the potion, that creature is immediately poisoned and must roll twice on the Putrescence table instead of once or until they acquire two





putrescent traits as soon as they finish imbibing the potion. These Putrescent Traits remain with imbiber for the duration of the potions effects and can not be negated in any way.

For the next 7 days after imbibing the potion, the imbiber gains the following benefits:

- You become immune to the effects of any disease you are infected with.
- As an action, you can cast the *contagion* spell. Once you use this effect of the potion, you must finish a short or long rest before using it again.
- You gain the ability to infect others with any disease you are currently infected with. You may make an unarmed strike attack against an adjacent creature with a bonus to the roll equal to your spell attack bonus, if you have one. On a hit, the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. On a failure, the target is infected with any single disease you are currently infected with. Once you infect a creature with a given disease, you are immediately cured of that disease.
- As an action, you can exhale noxious fumes that infect nearby creatures with the plague. Each creature in a 15 ft. cone in front of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. On a failure, the target is infected with sewer plague. Once you use this effect of the potion, you must finish a long rest before using it again.
- As an action, you may summon 1d4 swarms of rot grubs that appear in unoccupied spaces that you can see within 60 feet. The swarms are considered fiends and disappear when their individual hit points drop to 0 hit points or when you use a bonus action to dismiss any or all of them. The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has their own turn. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions. The DM has the creatures' Statistics. Once you use this effect of the potion, you must finish a long rest before using it again.

### FORMULAE OF SOUL INGEST

*3rd-level necromancy (putrescence)(formulae)*

**Casting Time:** Special

**Range:** Special

**Components:** V, S, M (\*Special)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You create a foul potion with this spell that allows the imbiber the terrifying ability to consume a creatures soul.

The material components required for this potion include a specific list, some of which involve items gathered or created within a strict time frame. These materials, and their prerequisites are as follows:

- 1 quart of blood from a fey creature or a part fey creature gathered within the last 10 days
- 1 pint of ichor from a ghost harvested within the past 30 days

- the intact heart of a night hag killed within the past 10 days
- the horn of a nightwalker obtained within the past 30 days

These ingredients must be combined into a mixture by the caster, a process that takes a minute and which afterwards produces a luminous silver liquid that gleams with a shimmering white radiance. The potion must be drunk in its entirety within one minute after its creation.

Once the imbiber finishes drinking the potion they gain the ability to consume the souls of their enemies and draw strength from this hideous theft in the process. You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as you finish imbibing the potion created by this spell. If a creature other than the caster imbibes the potion, that creature prematurely ages ten years and must roll twice on the Putrescence table instead of once or until they acquire two putrescent traits as soon as they finish imbibing the potion.

For the next 24 hours, each time you attack a creature that is restrained or incapacitated, you can attempt to extract their soul. You make an unarmed strike against such a creature with a bonus to the roll equal to your spell attack bonus if you have one. On a hit the target must succeed on a Constitution save using your spell save DC. If you do not have a spell save DC, the DC is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Constitution modifier (your choice). On a failure, the imbiber may rip the soul from the targets body which emerges as a small ball of blue light held in the imbibers hand. As a bonus action, the imbiber of the potion, and only the imbiber of the potion, may consume the soul of the target, gaining strength from the consumed soul in the process. If the soul remains in the imbibers hand at the start of the following turn it was removed from the targets body, the soul is instantly transported to a plane of the dead. If a creature chooses to consume a soul before it disperses, the following affects immediately occur on both the target and the devourer:

The target's soul becomes trapped in the devourers body and is only freed when the devourer dies or the devourer's material body is utterly destroyed.

The creature who consumed the soul regains a number of hit points equal to the targets hit dice.

The creature who consumed the soul may increase one of their ability scores by 2 points. This increase remains as long as the soul of the creature consumed remains within the devourer.

The creature who consumed the soul can cast the spell *magic missile* as a free action once before the next dawn at a spell level equal to one-third of the target's hit dice (minimum 1). This feature remains as long as the soul of the creature consumed remains within the devourer.

The creature who consumed the soul gains the ability to add a bonus to a single spell attack or single attack roll equal to half the targets hit die before the next dawn. This feature remains as long as the soul of the creature consumed remains within the devourer.

The creature who consumed the soul must roll once on the Putrescence table or until they acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as they finish consuming the soul. This Putrescent Trait remains with the devourer as long as

The best of followers are those that prove useful in life, unlife and on those periodic occasions when even greater sacrifice is required. Thankfully, my own faith requires less exemplary devotion.

- Alistair Lurcock





the soul of the creature consumed remains within the devourer and its effects can not be negated in any way so long as the target's soul remains trapped within the devourer's body.

If the creature who consumed the soul is of a good or neutral alignment, their alignment immediately shifts to evil.

Souls consumed through the use of this potion remain with the devourer even after the potion's duration expires. As an action, a creature containing any number of souls consumed from the effects of this potion may choose to expel any or all of the souls contained within their body. Once expelled, the souls are instantly transported to a plane of the dead and the imbiber gains a single level of exhaustion.

#### **FORMULAE OF THE VAMPYR**

*3rd-level necromancy (putrescence) (formulae)*

**Casting Time:** Special

**Range:** Special

**Components:** V, S, M (\*Special)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You create a foul potion with this spell that confers temporary agelessness on the imbiber along with other undeathly qualities inherent to vampires.

The material components required for this potion include a specific list, some of which involve items gathered or created within a strict time frame. These materials, and their prerequisites are as follows:

- 1 quart of blood from a dead giant bat killed by strangulation
- ¼ pound of ground garlic cloves
- 1 quart of blood from a vampire or creature infected by vampirism
- the intact heart of a feline creature killed by a poison containing a drop of wyvern venom within the past 10 days
- 6 salivary glands from 6 separate wolves infected with rabies from within the past 30 days

Additionally, a creature may mix a single item from the following list to gain an additional benefit from this potion:

- The reproductive gland of 4 dire wolves harvested within the last 30 days.
- The reproductive gland of a dryad harvested within the last 10 days.
- A quart of blood from a troll harvested within the last 10 days.
- The crushed legs of 6 giant spiders harvested within the last 30 days.

These ingredients must be combined into a mixture by the caster beneath the light of a full moon, a process that takes a minute and which afterwards produces a sparkling violet liquid that gleams with a crimson radiance. The potion must be drunk in its entirety within one minute by the caster after its creation. If a creature other than the caster imbibes the potion, that creature prematurely ages ten years and must roll twice on the Putrescence table or until they acquire two



putrescent traits as soon as they finish imbibing the potion.

Once the imbibor finishes drinking the potion they cease to age for the next 30 days and cannot be prematurely aged by any means before that time. Additionally, if an extra item was added to the base ingredients before drinking, the caster gains one of the following benefits, based on the ingredient added that lasts for the next 30 days following imbibing of the potion:

- The reproductive gland of a dire wolf: As an action you may summon 1d4 spirits from the Shadow plane that take the form of dire wolves that appear in unoccupied spaces you can see within 60 feet. The beasts are considered fiends and disappear when their individual hit points drop to 0 hit points or when you use a bonus action to dismiss any or all of them. The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which have their own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions. The DM has the creatures' Statistics. Once you use this effect of the potion, you must finish a long rest before using it again.
- The reproductive gland of a dryad: You may cast the spell *dominate monster*. Once you use this effect of the potion, you must finish a short or long rest before using it again. In addition, you may cast the *charm person* spell at will.
- A quart of blood from a troll: You regain 15 temporary hit points at the start of each of your turns.
- The crushed legs of 6 giant spiders: You gain a climb speed equal to your base walking speed. In addition you gain blindsight out to a range of 15 feet and gain poison resistance.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as you finish concocting the potion created by this spell.

### GHOSTSONG

*Divination cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a musical instrument)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You touch an instrument that magically replays a melody previously played in its vicinity. When the instrument is touched it replays the most recently played tune, starting with the beginning of the piece recalled. The tune repeats until you use a free action to command it to stop or until the spell's duration ends. Ghostsong does not replay conversations or oral components sung in accompaniment of the tune it replays nor can it reproduce any magical effects the instrument may have been imbued with at the time the previous piece was played.

### GHOUL'S TOUCH

*1st-level necromancy (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a bit of flesh from a ghoul)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

*So often the newest of my followers seek the most potent of formulae from the start.*

*But the True Undeath forestalls a host of intermediary pleasures reserved only for the living which, had I still breath, I would partake in earnest and with unabashed revelry.*

*I hesitate to admit the thought, but fantasies of such powers had I possessed them in my youth would have made for quite enjoyable experiences at a time when members of my blood yet lived.*

*-Nifsara Shadowmend*

You cause your nails to grow into razor sharp claws capable of delivering a powerful toxin. Make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target is paralyzed until the start of its next turn. At the beginning of its next turn, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw. On a failure it may only take a single action on its turn. On a success, it can perform actions on its turn as normal.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spells duration ends.

### HAND OF THE GRAVE

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a hand from a humanoid)

**Duration:** 24 hours

When you cast this spell, you bury a humanoid hand into a patch of loose earth at least 5 feet in diameter to conceal it. The area is nearly undisturbed and requires a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC to be found. The hand animates when a medium or smaller creature walks over the area of earth. You can further refine the trigger so the spell activates only under certain circumstances or according to physical characteristics (such as height or weight), creature kind (for example, the spell could be set to affect aberrations or drow), or alignment. You can also set conditions for creatures that don't trigger the spell, such as those who say a certain password as they pass over the patch. When the hand animates, it attempts to grab whatever creature triggered it. That creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage and become restrained as the hand grasps it with an inhumanly strong grip. The creature can use an action on its turn to make a Strength check against your spell save DC, freeing itself on a success. Once the hand has animated for 1 minute, the spell ends, and the hand returns to normal. If the creature dies while restrained, the hand pulls it underground, burying it.

### PROFANE INTERDICTION

*2nd-level abjuration (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

With a few blasphemous utterances you attempt to sever a rival followers connection to their deity and keep them from calling on one of their most potent divine powers. Negative energy emanates from you in a 30-foot radius in all



directions. Until the spell ends, the area moves with you, centered on you and any creature within the area is prevented from being turned or destroyed by divine abilities or features.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### INVESTITURE OF SHADOW

*6th-level transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Until the spell ends, shadows dance and swirl around you, and you gain the following benefits:

You are immune to necrotic damage and you have resistance to cold damage.

Once on each of your turns you can step into the shadow of a living creature and instantly reappear in the space of another living creature's shadow within 60 feet. This ability uses 5 feet of your movement for the round.

You can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet.

You can use your action to create a 15-foot cube of magical darkness centered on a point you can see within 60 feet of you. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. This cube lasts until the spell ends or until you use a bonus action to dispel it.

### IRON BONES

*4th-level transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a miniature skull replica made of iron)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You infuse arcane energies into a creature you touch that has a skeleton. That creature gains a +6 bonus to its AC.

### KISS OF THE VAMPIRE

*5th-level transmutation (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a bit of bat fur and a ruby worth at least 125 gp)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You draw upon the powers of unlife to give yourself abilities similar to those of a vampire. You become gaunt and pale and your eyes take on a crimson shade of red. You gain the following abilities:

Once on each of your turns you may make a melee spell attack against a creature within your reach. On a hit, the target takes 3d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt.

You may use your action to transform yourself, along with everything you are wearing and carrying, into a misty cloud that lasts until this spell ends or until you use a bonus action to end this effect prematurely. The effect ends if you

drop to 0 hit points. While in this form your only method of movement is a flying speed of 10 feet and you can enter and occupy the space of another creature. You also have resistance to nonmagical damage, and have advantage on Strength, Dexterity and Constitution saving throws. You can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks, though you treat liquids as though they were solid surfaces. You can't fall and you remain hovering in the air even when Stunned or otherwise Incapacitated. While in the form of a misty cloud, you can't talk or manipulate objects, and any objects you were carrying or holding can't be dropped, used, or otherwise interacted with. You can't attack or cast spells while in this form.

Once on each of your turns, as an action, you may attempt to charm a humanoid you can see within 30 feet. It must make a Wisdom saving throw against your saving throw DC. It has advantage if you or your companions are fighting it. If it fails, it is charmed by you until this spell ends, or until you or your companions do something harmful to it. When this spell ends, it knows it has been charmed.

You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

You become immune to spells that heal you and that allow you to regain hit points except those spells that are from the school of necromancy.

For purposes of spells and abilities that detect alignment, you are treated as non-good.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### LACERATE

*Necromancy cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 ft

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Two bolts of necrotic energy shoot from your fingertips towards a single creature within range. Make two ranged spell attacks against the target. If either bolt hits, the target takes 1d4 slashing damage. If both bolts hit the target, then the target takes an additional 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of its next turn.

The spell's initial and additional damage increases by 1d4 when you reach 5th level (2d4), 11th level (3d4), and 17th level (4d4).

### MORGH'S TONGUE

*2nd-level transmutation (putrescence)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your tongue lengthens and strengthens, allowing you to make grapple attacks as a bonus action with a reach of 15 feet and a +5 bonus to grapple attacks made with this tongue. Creatures who start their turn grappled by your tongue take 1d4 points of poison damage. You have



advantage on living creatures you attempt to grapple with your tongue.

You must roll once on the Putrescence table or until you acquire a single putrescent trait as soon as this spell's duration ends.

### PRESERVE ORGAN

*Necromancy cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a pinch of salt and a droplet of formaldehyde)

**Duration:** 8 hours

You preserve a single severed organ from a living or undead creature so that it does not rot or in the case of an undead organ, lose its magical properties. The organ is kept in the exact state it was in when the spell was cast for the duration of the spell. If a heart is still bloody, for example, it remains that way.

### PHANTOM LOSS

*3rd-level Illusion*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a piece of flesh and a doll made of linen entwined in thread)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

Choose a humanoid creature within range that you can see. It must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, you implant the belief in the target's mind that they have lost a particular limb at some point in their past.

If the target has arms, you may select one of its arms. If the target has legs, you may select one of its legs. If you select an arm, the target cannot use that arm to perform any actions in would choose to take with it until the spell ends, including wielding weapons, holding shields or utilizing spell components. The creature drops any item it was holding at the time this spell is cast and if it was grappling another creature, this grapple immediately ends. If you select a leg, the creature's walking speed is halved until the spell ends.

The spell creates a fully realized history in the target's mind about the events that led to their limb loss, including creating appropriate steps the target has since taken to mitigate this loss. For instance, a creature that believes they have lost an arm may suddenly also believe they don't normally use a shield in combat, while a person who believes they have lost a leg may perceive they are able to move relatively normally with an imagined wooden leg currently fitted to their body.

Any creature can attempt to persuade the target of this spell that the illusion is false. As an action, another creature can make the target of this spell roll a new Intelligence saving throw against your spell DC. On a success, the creature is once again aware of their limb and forgets the fantasies the spell created to accommodate its imagined loss.

### PHANTOM MEMORY

*Illusion cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** S, M (a lock of hair from a humanoid who has lost a loved one)

**Duration:** 1 round

Choose a humanoid creature within range that you can see. They must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, you implant the flickering image of a loved one they believe to be dead that is only perceivable to the target for 1 round. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

The image created is based on memories of how the creature remembers the departed when they were alive and appears as a static image that flashes for one round, somewhere in a realistic fashion, within 10 feet of the target. The image appears entirely in the affected creature's mind and only they are aware of what they saw. You can not choose what loved one the creature remembers, nor any type of information about the image that appears in their mind's eye. The spell has no other effects on the targeted creature and does not harm the creature in any way.

### RAIN OF BONES

*6th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a humanoid skull and a glass jar filled with water vapor)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You point your fingers to the heavens and a 30-foot area radius in range is pelted by human-sized skulls that rain down from the sky. A creature that starts its turn within the area or ends their turn within it, must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 6d6 points of bludgeoning damage. On a success the target takes half damage. Unattended objects in the area automatically fail this save and take damage at the start of each of your turns. Creatures attempting to move along the ground through the area while the spell is in effect move at half speed and automatically suffer 1d4 points of piercing damage as the skulls crack and splinter against the ground upon impact and ricochet into a creature's lowest portions as they walk over the shards. Creatures attempting to fly through the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw for every 5 feet of movement they wish to make through the area or else they are unable to move that distance.

### REAPER'S SCYTHE

*1st-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 bonus action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a portion of a scythe blade)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You conjure forth a scythe out of necrotic energy in your free hands. The scythe is a large weapon, requires both hands to wield, and lasts for the duration of the spell. If you let go of the scythe, it disappears, but you can conjure it again as a bonus action.

You can use your action to make a melee spell attack with the scythe. On a hit, the target takes 2d4 necrotic damage, and you gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage dealt.







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

### RIGOR

*3rd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a preserved muscle from the leg of a newborn calf)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your touch causes a creature to stiffen up as if gripped by the cold hands of death itself. Make a melee spell attack against a creature within your reach. On a hit, the target's walking speed is reduced by 10 feet until the spell ends.

Once on each of your turns, you can use an action to force a creature affected by this spell to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature's walking speed is further reduced by another 5 feet until the spell ends. On a success, the spell immediately ends.

If a creature's walking speed is reduced to 0 from this spell, it is incapable of moving on its own until the spell ends.

### SHADOW RESTRAINT

*2nd-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 60 feet

**Components:** V, S, M (a bit of rat fur and a glass jar filled with smoke)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You choose an area within range. Each creature within a 20-foot cube centered on the point you choose must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be restrained by their own shadow. A creature restrained by their shadow can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a success, it frees itself.

Until the spell ends, any creature that enters the area or starts their turn in the area must succeed on a Strength check or be restrained by their shadow.

### SHADOW SHELL

*2nd-level abjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a petrified root from a nightshade plant)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a willing creature and grant them resistance to radiant damage until the spell ends. Additionally, the creature gains advantage on Stealth checks as long as they are in an area of dim light or darkness.

### SPIRIT CLEANSE

*1st-level abjuration (ritual)*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You touch a creature and fill it with radiant energy

allowing it to make a saving throw against a disease or poison currently affecting it. If it succeeds, the condition ends immediately. Undead creatures and constructs are immune to the effects of this spell.

### TOUCH OF THE DEPARTED

*3rd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 bonus action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Your touch causes a creature to become susceptible to the negative energies of the shadow plane. Make a melee spell attack against a creature within your reach. On a hit, the target gains vulnerability to necrotic damage until the beginning of your next turn.

### UNDEAD PUSTULES

*3rd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a bit of diseased flesh from a dying humanoid)

**Duration:** 8 hours

This spell causes 3 large inflammatory and spongy welts to sprout along various patches of your skin. These welts are filled with a vile necromantic puss that is toxic to creatures. Whenever you are struck by a melee attack while under the effects of this spell, the attacking creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a single pustule bursts in a shower of necrotic gore causing the attacking creature to become poisoned for 1 minute and take 3d4 points of necrotic damage or half as much necrotic damage on a success and only become poisoned until the end of their next turn. Whenever a creature takes damage from a burst pustule, you immediately take 1d4 points of necrotic damage. This effect happens until there until there are no more pustules created through this spell.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage caused by each burst pustule increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 3rd (maximum 5d4), and the number of pustules created by this spell increases by 1 (maximum 5).

### UNHALLOWED CONSECRATION

*Necromancy cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** 1 round

You touch one creature, imbuing it with necrotic strength. If the target is undead, it gains a number of temporary hit points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier. The temporary hit points are lost when the spell ends.

Experience is a powerful advantage. These days, a few charms, a trusted blade and the watchful eye of a bowman at my back are all I need. So long as their mutterings don't grate my nerves, a mage and her newest apprentice can prove a valuable asset as well- even if their average spell is just as hideous as those I hunt.

-Zorander



### UNLIVING WEAPON

*3rd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Range:** Touch

**Components:** V, S, M (a drop of bile and a bit of sulfur)

**Duration:** Up to 8 hours

When you cast this spell you touch an undead creature currently under your control. This spell causes that creature to explode in a burst of powerful energy when struck by a weapon or damaged by a spell for at least 1 point of damage. Additionally, you may use a bonus action to cause the creature to explode prematurely as long as that creature is within sight. The explosion caused by this spell happens in a 10-foot cube. Each creature in the cube must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or suffer 4d6 points of necrotic damage. On a successful save, a target takes half damage from this explosion.

Skeletons or zombies with this spell cast upon them can be very dangerous to foes that would normally disregard them.

### WALL OF BONES

*4th-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 120 ft

**Components:** V, S, M (a femur bone)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A wall of writhing bones and skeletal remains springs into existence at a point you choose within range. The wall is 6 inches thick and is composed of three 10-foot-by-10-foot panels. Each panel must be contiguous with at least one other panel. If the wall cuts through a creature's space when it appears, the creature is pushed to one side of the wall (your choice).

Any creature that starts its turn next to a wall must make a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d8 bludgeoning damage and become restrained as skeletal arms reach out and grasp the creature, pinning them against the wall. The creature can make a Strength saving throw at the start of each of its turns, taking the same damage on a failure or freeing itself on a success. The wall is an object that can be

damaged and breached. Each panel has AC 10 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness. Reducing a panel to 0 hit points destroys it.

### WALL OF SHADOWS

*5th-level conjuration*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 120 ft

**Components:** V, S, M (an onyx pearl worth at least 50 gp)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A wall of shadows springs into existence at a point you choose within range. The wall appears in any orientation you choose, as a horizontal or vertical barrier or at an angle. It can be free floating or resting on a solid surface. You can form it into a hemispherical dome or a sphere with a radius of up to 10 feet, or you can shape a flat surface made up of three 10-foot-by-10-foot panels. Each panel must be contiguous with another panel. In any form, the wall is 1/4 inch thick. It lasts for the duration.

When the wall appears it extinguishes all nonmagical light sources within 30 feet and each creature in the area of the wall itself must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save a creature takes 4d8 necrotic damage. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage.

The wall blocks line of sight to all creatures except you, but creatures and objects can pass through it. Any creature that passes through the wall must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save a creature takes 4d8 necrotic damage. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage. As a reaction you can target a creature moving through the wall. That creature must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save the wall instantly disperses and that creature is banished to the Shadow Plane where they are incapacitated in a cage of shadows until the spell ends at which point the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied.

The wall is immune to all damage and can't be dispelled by *dispel magic*. A *daylight* spell cast upon any of its surfaces destroys the wall instantly. The wall also extends into the Shadow Plane, blocking travel through the Shadow Plane.







#### WAVES OF FATIGUE

*5th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 10 ft

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause a creature within range to be overcome by exhaustion. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains a level of exhaustion. On a successful save, the creature suffers no effect and the spell ends.

At the start of each of their turns, the creature must repeat the saving throw. It gains a level of exhaustion on a failed save, and the spell ends on a successful one. The spell ends early if the target's exhaustion level becomes 4 or greater.

#### WITHER LIMBS

*5th-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 20 ft

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You target a creature within range that has either arms or legs or both and force them to make a Constitution saving throw. If the target fails and you choose legs, the creature falls prone and is unable to stand upright for the duration of the spell. Their speed drops to 5 feet. If target fails and you choose arms, the target drops any items they are

holding and they are incapable of manipulating or using objects with their hands, including making somatic gestures or using spell components and wielding weapons and shields until the spell ends. At the conclusion of this spell, the affected creatures limbs return to normal.









## CHAPTER 5: BESTIARY



THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES NEW CREATURES for players to face as they run through your campaign, supplementing those found in the *Monster Manual*. This bestiary includes monsters themed around necromancy, undeath and the Shadow Plane.

The creatures in this chapter are organized alphabetically and can be added to your campaigns as you see fit.

### BLOOD GOLEM

Of all the creatures a practitioner of the Dangerous Arts has at their disposal none is perhaps more reviled as that of a blood golem. Siphoned from the blood of broken and twisted bodies of countless humanoids whose remains are used to create other just as nefarious undead minions, a blood golem often towers above its master, standing about 13 feet tall and weighing almost 1,000 pounds.

A blood golem appears roughly humanoid shaped made up of coagulated blood blocks and viscous sinew that leaves behind a dark maroon smear and pungent coppery scent wherever its path takes it. It has a hideous face and while not slow, it is not especially fast either.

**Rejuvenating Warmth.** Because of its makeup, a blood golem has the ability to absorb its foes into itself and regenerate during combat. Unlike other golems, a blood golem is actually quite warm, with the spirit of the elemental trapped inside its body acting like a small furnace that heats up the blood that makes up its form. While elementals retain none of their memories inside

a blood golem artifice, they seem to crave the ever present heat and develop a strong urge to seek out and acquire more of the material it is composed of from other living creatures so as to continually renew this source of comfort.

**Blind Obedience.** When its creator or possessor is on hand to command it, a blood golem performs flawlessly. If the golem is left without instructions or is incapacitated, it continues to follow its last orders to the best of its ability. When it can't fulfill its orders, a golem might react violently or stand and do nothing. A golem that has been given conflicting orders sometimes alternates between them. A blood golem is quite fond of the warmth it exists in and may occasionally disregard commands if an especially tempting source of blood presents itself to the golem. Alternatively, if this warmth is somehow disrupted, a blood golem becomes momentarily disoriented.

A blood golem can't think or act for itself. Though it understands its commands perfectly, it has no grasp of language beyond that understanding, and can't be reasoned with or tricked with words.

**Constructed Nature.** A golem doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

#### BLOOD GOLEM

*Large construct, neutral*

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 2 (-4) | 11 (+0) | 1 (-5) |

Damage Vulnerabilities cold

Damage Immunities fire, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800XP)

**Blood Craving.** If the blood golem starts its turn adjacent to a bloodied creature, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem can take no other actions on its turn other than to attack an adjacent bloodied creature.

**Cold Aversion.** Whenever the blood golem is struck by an attack that does cold damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

**Plague Carrier.** If the golem is infected by a disease and successfully attacks a creature with its slam attack, that creature must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become infected by a disease currently infecting the golem.

**Magic Resistance.** The blood golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The blood golem's weapon attacks are magical.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The blood golem makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the blood golem regains hit points equal to that amount. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Alter Form.** As an action, the blood golem can assume the approximate form and appearance of any large creature. While in this form, the golem retains its statistics and does not gain any special abilities, powers, traits or skills of its assumed form. Any equipment the golem is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Any such assumed form has the same appearance of being constructed of bloody ooze blocks with a tinged reddish color. As a bonus action, the blood golem can revert back to its true form. If the blood golem is slain, it reverts back to its true form.







## BRAIN IN A JAR

To practitioners of the Dangerous Arts, skilled organ harvesting can separate the novice from the expert. No better expression of one's talent in this proficiency is the removal and preservation of a brain in a jar. The origins of this grisly specimen of undeath are hotly debated. Many attribute its discovery to the notorious practices of the hideous illithids who preserve especially tasty cerebral morsels for weeks on end while others are convinced its beginnings can be traced to the texts of an ancient and especially mad arcanist. However it came about, these animated and disembodied creatures possess an astonishing amount of mental powers despite their confined enclosures. They are masterpieces of preservatives laced with necrotic energies and alchemical substrates.

**Powerful Mentalists.** The creation of a brain in a jar is a difficult task and carries with it a great amount of danger. This is because the powers of a brain in a jar, once fully developed, become frighteningly adept at controlling the thoughts and minds of other creatures, especially living creatures. It is not unheard of for a brain in a jar to take control over the necromancer who created it. This is the reason why most are spawned from unskilled and unremarkable people in the hopes that a necromancer can better manage the final creation. However, the process of constructing a brain in a jar can unlock psychic potential even within a common mind. These powers manifest in frightful ways that can dominate even the strongest willed

of creatures. Still, many necromancers utilize these creations to hone their own skills and as a means of controlling some of their own unruly minions.

**Puppeteers.** When given free reign either willingly or by taking control over the being that created it, a brain in the jar can often become a powerful force in a given area. Because of their limited mobility, these disembodied organs will often instruct the first few creatures they control to go out and capture more victims to bring back and enslave. It is not unheard of for entire thieves guilds and monster communities to be secretly controlled by a brain operating out of a carefully hidden laboratory or crypt. In combat, a brain in the jar employs this inability for direct confrontation through their powerful mind thrust power and the ability to influence the thoughts and actions of their enemies. Conversely, other creatures that attempt to employ similar tactics on a brain in the jar find their attacks rebuffed by the chaotic madness innate to a brain in the jars very being.

**Undead Nature.** A brain in a jar requires no air, food, drink or sleep. Because of their delicate composition, most are placed in hardened glass jars that are tempered to resist falls and accidental blows from clumsy undead servants.

### BRAIN IN A JAR

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

Armor Class 12 (hardened glass jar)

Hit Points 18 (3d12)

Speed Fly 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0 (-6) | 0 (-6) | 0 (-6) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

Skills Bluff +9, Perception +7, Persuasion +9

Damage Resistances necrotic

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100XP)

**Disruptive Telepathy.** If a creature has communicated telepathically within the past 24 hours with a brain in a jar, the brain can use its reaction when that creature makes a saving throw against a spell cast by the brain to give that creature disadvantage on that saving throw. Once a brain in a jar uses this ability on a creature, it can not impose disadvantage again on the same creature until 24 hours have passed.

**Turning Defiance.** The brain in the jar has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The brain in a jar's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no somatic, verbal or material components and any creature the brain in the jar can sense through its blindsight can be targeted by one of its spells:

At-will: *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *unseen servant*  
 3/day each: *charm person*, *hold person*, *invisibility (self only)*, *shield*, *suggestion*, *telekinesis*  
 1/day each: *dominate person*, *modify memory*, *mirror image*, *wall of force*

**Psychic Backlash.** Whenever the brain in a jar is subjected to psychic damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the psychic damage dealt and the source of the damage takes the full amount of damage that should have been dealt to the brain.

**Undead Command.** Any enchantment spell a brain in the jar casts can affect undead creatures.

### ACTIONS

**Mind Thrust.** The brain in a jar targets a creature within 60 feet that it can sense through its blindsight. That creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 2d10 points of psychic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a success. In addition, the target gains vulnerability to psychic damage until the end of its next turn.

I hear brains of certain lizard folk make docile specimen. Conversely, I have also heard that some of them produce incredibly bestial results.

A definite experiment for one of my unruly acolytes.

- Alistair Lurcock



## FORSAKEN SHELL

Often created by especially remorseless practitioners of undeath, forsaken shells are the empty skins of humanoid creatures purged of their bloody and visceral former contents. Despite their apparently slender forms, forsaken shells possess amazing strength and flexibility, allowing them to squeeze into narrow openings and lie in wait in impossibly cramped hiding spaces, craving the chance to strike mercilessly upon unsuspecting prey.

**Eternal Victims.** A forsaken shell is typically made from the skins of murdered victims by evil spellcasters and torture-prone monsters. The process of creating a forsaken may begin by skinning a victim while they are still alive, thereby instilling within the forsaken the constant memory of being born into an existence of pain. This terrible origin creates within these creatures an insatiable bloodlust to create more and more victims through the same means that led to its own creation.

**Hidden Hunters.** Forsaken shells will often venture far and wide in search of prey, typically under the cover of night and slithering their way into seemingly impregnable locations. Once a forsaken shell finds a suitable hunting ground it will situate itself in rarely traveled areas where it can envelop lone victims in a deathly embrace. A forsaken is not however some mindless killing machine. In fact it will go out of its way to hunt and embrace as long as possible. It will therefore often hide evidence of its prey in out-of-the-

way places such as rarely used closets or beneath piles of discarded supplies where the skinless bodies of its victims won't be found until weeks later, their dead eyes reflecting their last silent screams of horror.

**Undead Nature.** Despite the fact that a forsaken requires no air, food, drink or sleep, they are possessed by an insatiable hunger to envelop and spawn more forsaken shells.

### FORSAKEN SHELL

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 82 (15d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON    | INT     | WIS    | CHA    |
|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 9 (-1) | 11 (+0) | 8 (-1) | 3 (-4) |

**Skills** Stealth +8

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** none (understands Common)

**Challenge** 6 (2,300XP)

**Amorphous.** The forsaken shell can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Leech.** If the forsaken shell starts its turn with a creature engulfed by it, it regains 5 hit points. If the forsaken took lightning damage since the end of its last turn, it regains an additional 5 hit points.

**Shared Pain.** If the forsaken shell takes damage from a melee attack while it is engulfing a creature, the creature engulfed by it takes half as much of the damage dealt in the attack.

**Spider Climb.** The forsaken shell can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make ability checks.

**Skinspawn.** When the forsaken shell kills a medium or smaller sized living humanoid creature, at the start of the forsaken's next turn that creature's skin peels from its body and rises as a new forsaken shell.

### ACTIONS

**Skin slap.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled by the forsaken shell.

**Engulf.** The forsaken shell engulfs a Medium or Small creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the forsaken shell's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning and 13 (2d8 + 4) necrotic damage. If the forsaken moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The forsaken can have only one creature engulfed at a time.





## GAKNULAK VINDICATOR

Rare though it may be, there are some among the race of kobolds who possess uncanny intelligence and worship a deity other than the infamous chief of the kobold gods. Gaknulak, also known as the Trapmaster is the lawful evil kobold demigod of trickery, traps and protection.

Worshippers of Gaknulak are usually the main architects of traps and haven defenses of a kobold tribe. When a particularly devious and cruel kobold worshipper of the god falls victim to a wayward trap of their own design, Gaknulak may decide to grant that follower the gift of undeath, turning them into terrifyingly powerful wardens able to lace entire areas with fatal devices that claim both kobold and non-kobold lives alike with equal malice.

**Vengeful Spirit.** A vindicator is the spirit of a kobold who perished due to a faulty designed or unintentionally triggered trap set by its former living self. Because of its ironic demise, the kobold's spirit becomes overwhelmed with self-loathing but also a hatred for the imagined victims of the would-be trap. Gaknulak sees this opportunity to bless his followers with unrestricted time and energy to set as many deadly traps as they like, both against enemies of the race of kobolds, but also to remind others within the tribe that Gaknulak is indeed a deity not to be trifled with. A vindicator is not overly concerned with who ultimately triggers one of its traps, however it does go out of its way to see that intelligent humanoid eventually fall victim to one of its deadly creations. Vindicators appear as swirling forms of mist within which hover an odd assortment of glowing mechanical debris from innumerable traps topped off by the outline of a snarling kobold head.

**Tireless Trap-layer.** A vindicator exists only to set new traps and watch them ensnare hapless victims. Bodiless and silent, they glide through warrens and havens of kobold tribes creating new traps on the outskirts of a colony's defenses, occasionally setting a trap in a colony's unused areas. While a vindicator retains its memories and personality it had while alive, it is an even crueler and more evil version of its former self. Most vindicators will generally leave kobolds within their former tribe alone, choosing instead to ensnare outsiders and intruders but the longer a vindicator exists, the less choosy it becomes in its targets. To satisfy its unquenchable desire to see new victims fall prey to its traps, a vindicator will often lure outsiders to a hidden entrance or less travelled area of the colony by leaving treasure taken from the bodies of its prior victims on a deadly trail. The remains of these new victims will often guide would-be rescuers to their own demise, or at the very least, alert a community of a growing kobold lair.

**Undead Nature.** Vindicators require no air, food, drink or sleep.

### GAKNULAK VINDICATOR

*Small undead, chaotic evil*

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 24 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 0 ft., Fly 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 7 (-2) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 13 (+2) | 8 (-1) |

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Draconic

Challenge 2 (450XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The vindicator can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Trapsense.** The vindicator is always aware whenever any trap it has created or interacted with is triggered or disabled.

**Trap Fueled.** Each time a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by one of the vindicators traps, it heals 5 hit points and regains a daily use of either its *corpse burst* or *snare* spell.

**Painful snare.** Each time a creature fails a save against the vindicators *snare* spell, or fails a subsequent save to break free from that spell, that creature takes 1d6 slashing damage as the rope winds tighter around the victim.

**Spellcasting.** The vindicator is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following spells prepared requiring no verbal, somatic or material components:

At-will: *find traps*, *mage hand*, *mending*

3/day: *corpse burst*<sup>\*</sup>, *snare*

1/day: *glyph of warding*

### ACTIONS

**Withering Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 +2) necrotic damage.

**Spectral Caltrop.** As an action, the vindicator laces a 5-foot-square area with a nearly translucent and painful caltrop that remains in place for up to 1 hour. Any creature that enters the area must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity throw or stop moving and take 1 piercing damage. Until the creature regains at least 1 hit point, its walking speed is reduced by 10 feet. A creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make a saving throw. A creature can attempt to perceive the nearly invisible caltrop by making a Perception DC 13 check, otherwise the caltrop is invisible to anyone except the vindicator. The vindicator can lace up to three 5-foot-square areas with these invisible caltrops at any one time. As soon as a creature fails a saving throw against one of these caltrops, that caltrop immediately disappears. The vindicator can dismiss any or all of its caltrops as a bonus action.

Undead may be murderous, but your average kobold warren can be just as deadly. Then there are the colonies where you find the worst of both. Nothing like walking out of those to make you feel alive again. Literally.

-Zorander







## GHAST, ROT MAGE

When a ghast consumes the flesh of corpse belonging to an especially powerful and magical being such as an ancient dragon or the remains of an especially evil hag, the ghast may spontaneously transform into a terrifying new form known as a rot mage. Particularly evil masters of necromancy may also imbue a particularly intelligent ghast with enough necrotic energy to force this evolution as well.

**Skilled Infiltrators.** Like their lesser evolved brethren, rot mages crave the flesh and organs of the dead, however rot mages also have a strong desire to conquer the lands beyond their feeding grounds and first murder, then devour every living creature that lives within. To do this, rot mages infiltrate nearby communities, either acting alone or as the emissaries of the masters who created them, most often liches or powerful vampire mages. When left to its own devices a rot mage will typically unite tribes of ghouls lead by ghouls and slowly train them in hit and run tactics, first against solitary caravans or travelers. When a rot mage has created enough ghouls to overwhelm a settlements defenses they erupt from the night to empty an entire community in a raid that ends in a feast of hideous proportions.

**Sylvan Enemies.** Rot mages have a special hatred towards elves and will often infiltrate and target smaller communities of wood elves over much lightlier defended human settlements simply to be able to feed on the dead flesh of elven victims. This knowledge creates a constant paranoia amongst some communities of wood elves, to which the rot mages play to their advantage by sowing suspicion and doubt amongst a communities residents before overwhelming it with hordes of undead ghouls.

## GHAST, ROT MAGE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13  
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)  
Speed 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 17 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

Skills Deception +4, Stealth +4  
Damage Resistances necrotic  
Damage Immunities poison  
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned  
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11  
Languages Common  
Challenge 9 (5,000XP)

**Malleable Flesh.** When under the effects of the *disguise self* spell, the rot mage has advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks to pass itself off as a living humanoid and loses its stench.

**Stench.** Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the rot mage must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the rot mage's Stench for 24 hours.

**Turning Defiance.** The rot mage and any ghouls within 30 feet of it have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

**Undead Leader.** Any undead creature animated or created by a rot mage is always considered the rot mages ally.

**Demonic Ghosts.** When the rot mage casts the *create undead* spell, roll a d6. On a roll of 6, one of the ghouls created by the spell is raised as a *maurezhi* under the mage's control.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The rot mage's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has access to any putrescent spell of 6th level or lower that is not a formulae and can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *disguise self*, *lacerate*\*,  
2/day each: *fear*, *darkness*, *rigor*\*,  
1/day each: *animate dead*, *contagion*, *create undead*,  
*investiture of shadow*\*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The rot mage bites once and makes one claw attack.

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage and if the target creature is a living humanoid it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution or contract ghoul fever.

**Claws. Melee Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Because of their connection to demonic energies, rot mages have the potential to animate undead inhabited by the spirits of demons known as *maurezhi*. These demons follow the will of the rot mage without question and serve as elite soldiers and bodyguards.

**Undead Nature.** Ghast rot mages require no air, food, drink or sleep, but are nevertheless possessed by an insatiable hunger to consume the flesh of the dead. Even though they gain no nourishment from this activity, Rot Mages are driven to consume as much as possible and have a preference for flesh of the recently dead.



## GITH PSION ZOMBIE

At the end of the war with their usurperous thralls, the illithids fought with nearly every tactic and tool they could muster. As their ranks hemorrhaged losses, they attempted to turn whatever they had on hand into weapons of war against their former slaves. In areas where their dead and dying enemies outnumbered their own forces, a grim few mind-flayers sought to turn their fallen foes into cruel implements of vengeance. Focusing their alien minds towards long abandoned and hideously dark powers, a small cadre of depraved illithids managed to animate a force of gith as zombies not through necrotic means but through raw psionic power. Though these creatures never had a chance of saving the illithids once mighty empire as it collapsed, the secrets of these psionic powered zombies have been uncovered by a few mad and astral-touched necromancers since their creation.

**Psionic Animation.** Through a twisted and alien form of animus manipulation involving psionic power and dark ritual, the ancient illithids were able to animate the corpses of their fallen former slaves not through necrotic energies but by inundating their corpses with certain psionic magic that vibrated at a very specific frequency. Because of the innate psionic abilities of the race of the gith, the illithilids found that their animus could be driven not only by necrotic energy but by psychic energies as well. Though not true zombies, the animated corpses were highly potent reservoirs of psionic potential that were able to remain functional so long as a telepathic connection to their animators was maintained. Oddly enough, psychic zombies are more susceptible to rot and decay than ordinary zombies and do not last long, thus making poor long term servants.

**Linked Servitors.** In the last days of their struggle, the few illithids who learned of this powerful alternative used the bodies of their renegade servants as shock troops. They sent in wave after wave of these psionically linked zombies to lay waste to their gith enemies, causing chaos as they



## GITH PSION ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 9  
Hit Points 21 (3d8 + 9)  
Speed 15 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13 (+1) | 9 (-1) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Saving Throws Wis +0  
Damage Vulnerabilities necrotic  
Damage Immunities poison, psychic  
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, poisoned  
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10  
Languages Understands all languages it spoke in life but can't speak  
Challenge 2 (450XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is necrotic, radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Psychic Backlash.** Whenever the zombie is subjected to psychic damage, it takes no damage and instead the source of the damage takes the amount of damage equal to the psychic damage dealt.

**Psychic Immolation.** When the zombie is reduced to 0 hit points it releases a powerful psionic shockwave. Each living creature in a 30 foot radius centered on the zombie must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10) or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

**Psychic Interference.** The zombie constantly transmits a psychic noise that can be metnally heard by any creature in range. Each creature other than the creature whose telepathic bond is linked to the zombie that starts its turn within 20 feet of the zombie can hear this interference telepathically and must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw at the start of their turn if they are concentrating to maintain a spell or the spell ends immediately.

**Psionic Link.** A gith zombie is not a fully independent creature. Instead, it is a partially controlled animated corpse that requires a telepathic bond in order to function. A gith zombie only remains animated as long as the telepathic creature that created it is within 120 feet of it and that creature is not incapacitated or unconscious. If this bond is broken, the zombie immediately collapses into an inanimate corpse.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
**Hit:** (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage

**Mind Thrust.** The zombie targets one creature it can see within 30 ft. of it. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or take 1d8 psychic damage and gains vulnerability to psychic damage until the end of its next turn.

**Mental Drain (Recharge 5-6).** Each living creature in a 15 foot radius centered on the zombie must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 11) or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage on a failure or half as much on a success. For each creature that fails this saving throw, the zombie regains 5 hit points.

fought, and even more when they were brought down again, by gith whose desire for illithid blood only grew more rabid at the sight of the horrific transformation of their former friends and allies. The illithids found that they had to be in close proximity to their creations in order for them to function, however they were completely autonomous and could be commanded by telepathy when needed.

**Undead Nature.** Gith zombies require no air, food, drink or sleep. However, they must be in constant telepathic radius of their creators or their unliving forms immediately collapse.

Psychic zombies?  
How utterly intriguing an idea...

-Nifsara Shadowmend



## NIGHTGAUNT

Medium fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)  
Hit Points 72 (9d10 + 27)  
Speed 40 ft., Fly 60 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+2) | 17 (+3) | 14 (+3) | 14 (+3) | 13 (+2) | 14 (+2) |

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +5  
Skills Stealth +7  
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant  
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder;  
bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons  
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison  
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed,  
petrified, poisoned  
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12  
Languages telepathy 120 ft.  
Challenge 5 (1,800XP)

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, the nightgaunt has disadvantage on attack rolls and its blindsight trait functions out to a range of only 30 feet.

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, the nightgaunt can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Silent Movement.** A nightgaunt's movement produces no sound, regardless of the conditions of the environment.

**Heavy Lifter.** A nightgaunt can lift up to 1,000 pounds and still fly and move at its normal rate.

**Magic Weapons.** The nightgaunt's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The nightgaunt makes two paw attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is grappled by the nightgaunt.

**Paws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature.  
*Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Tail Tickle.** The nightgaunt targets a medium or smaller creature it is currently grappling. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 6 (2d6) psychic damage + 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and the target is incapacitated until the end of its next turn due to uncontrollable fits of painful laughter.

## NIGHTGAUNT

Fey who become obsessed with the power of the Shadow Plane have the potential to succumb to the realms all consuming negativity. Those who partake of food created or crafted in the Shadow Plane after a lengthy stay in the realm, can fall victim to such a fate and become twisted shadowy creatures who dwell in the deepest, darkest chasms of the realm. Their decent leaves them devoid of their own internal will to live and forces them to subsist on the pathos of other creatures.

Nightgaunts retain a vaguely humanoid shape of their elvish origin, but are thin, black, and faceless creatures. While most nightgaunts come from drow or elvish stock, gnomes, eladrin, dryads and others all have the potential to be transformed by the corrupting nature of the Shadow Plane. Once morphed, a nightgaunt's skin becomes thick and rubbery, they sprout a pair of inward-facing horns on their heads, and a long barbed tail emerges from their hindquarters. Their hands become prehensile paws which are used to torment their victims into submission. A pair of

membranous wings also develop, allowing them the ability to fly through the shadow plane and the material world alike. No matter the realm they travel through, a nightgaunt's passage leaves no sound.

**Emotional Vampires.** Nightgaunts feed on the emotions of their victims. While it is presumed a nightgaunt could sustain itself on emotions such as joy and love, they prefer despair, horror and nervous laughter. They exist almost solely to satiate this hunger and will seek out lone humanoids to abduct and carry away under moonless nights. Once they have a victim in their clutches, nightgaunts will forcefully tickle their prey in order to create a mix of emotions which the creature will feed on before dropping their victims from great heights, often into areas where other creatures can stalk and kill them.

Nightgaunts on the material plane typically gather in colonies on remote mountains or perch in reclusive and abandoned urban structures where they cavort and entertain each other by sharing their victims emotional states through telepathic retelling.

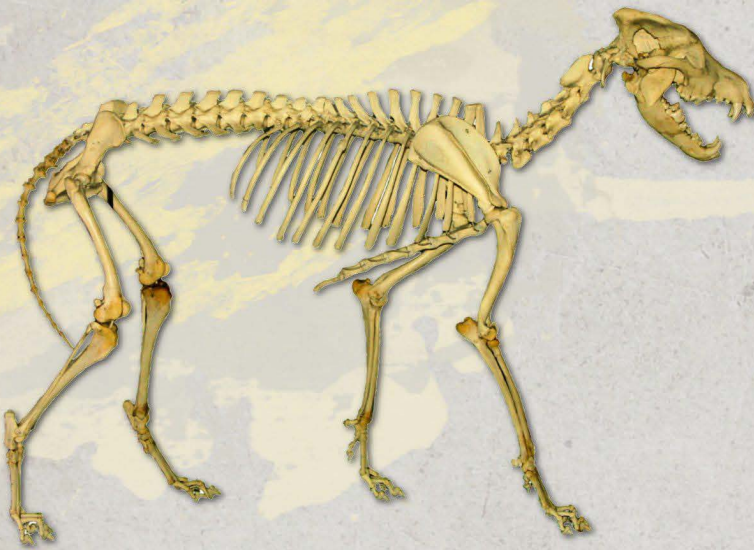
**Unreliable Servitors.** Nightgaunts generally keep to themselves but occasionally can be forced into servitude by more powerful creatures. These allegiances are often short lived and last only so long as their masters can provide the creatures with enough victims to sustain them. When nightgaunts are enlisted, they will often serve as guardians or transporters who carry their masters from place to place. Nightgaunts rarely engage in direct combat and will typically flee if an encounter even remotely appears to be unwinnable.

**Shadow Made.** A nightgaunt persists only on emotions and doesn't require air, food, drink or sleep. It does need to feed on a strong emotions from a living humanoid at least once every 24 hours or its hit points are reduced by one-quarter. If a nightgaunt's hit points are reduced to 0 from this effect, it immediately disintegrates into shadows.

Only once have I had the good fortune to come across one of these fabled monsters. Though faceless, it took one look at me and thereafter departed. After so many years, I think my disposition leaves little for such a creature to feed upon.

- Alistair Lurcock





Of all my creations, *Fander* remains my favorite. Loyal, by default of course, yet possessing a distinct personality that offers enough playful resistance to warrant my attention and pull me from my work when a particularly vexing problem fails to yield a quick solution.

There have been agents of mine over the centuries who have rarely elicited even a glimmer of thought as to their well-being similar to what my feline creation coaxes out from me.

-Nifsara Shadowmend

## SKELETON BEAST

The Dangerous Arts is a means to create a host of terrible, undead minions. The most rudimentary and obedient of these servants are skeletons who perform their tasks without question and without compunction. While humanoids make up the most common of these animated dead, even simpler beast forms are just as capable of rising of their own accord in places saturated with death and loss or becoming awakened by the arcane hands of unliving masters.

**Unnatural Critters.** Skeletal beasts often spontaneously animate from the bones of long since deceased creatures in areas laired by especially evil inhabitants. Cemeteries home to coterries of ghouls and ghosts, swamps stalked by the hideous catoblepas and subterranean labyrinths of lichs and undead tyrants are all places where the skeletal remains of rodents, bats, lizards and other tiny creatures can become awash in enough necrotic energy to cause their remains to animate in a twisted rebirth. Once gifted with this shadowy imitation of life, skeletal beasts will follow patterns similar to their living days: rats will hunt and nibble on food only to have it fall through their exposed rib cages, lizards will lie in wait for unsuspecting insects and birds will find the tallest perch to climb and attempt to utter a song.

**Fundamental Animations.** The tiny animus' remaining within bodies of small beasts offer the easiest way a mage can begin learning to manipulate the unliving. For budding necromancers, the skeletal and corpse remains of a tiny cat, a pesky rodent or even a felled bird can serve as a fundamental introduction into the reinvigoration of animus that eventually leads to larger and more deadlier creations. And despite their rough composition, many acolytes and even master arcanists come to find skeletal animals preferable over living and more temperamental beasts when the time comes to summon a reliable familiar.

**Undead Nature.** Skeleton beasts require no air, food, drink or sleep.

### SKELETON BEAST

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

Armor Class 10  
Hit Points 1 (1d4)  
Speed 20 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON    | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| 2 (-4) | 11 (+0) | 9 (-1) | 3 (-4) | 10 (+0) | 3 (-4) |

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10XP)

**Shattering Destruction.** If damage reduces the skeleton to 0 hit points, it explodes in a shower of bone shards, dealing 1 point of piercing damage to all creatures in a 5 foot radius.

**Boney Terrain.** If a creature attempts to move into a square occupied by the skeleton it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity save or take 1 point of piercing damage and have its movement reduced by 5 feet for the round.

#### ACTIONS

**Bite Melee Weapon Attack:** +0 to hit, reach 5ft., one target  
**Hit:** 1 piercing damage





## UNDEAD TREANT

In the darkest forests of the world, treants who succumb to the influence of wayward and cyclebreaker druids or who simply resist the approaching end of their own mortality can become corrupted by necromantic energies that slowly turn them undead through dark ritual and unrelenting magics. Once turned, these undead creatures hunger for blood and the extermination of all life.

An undead treant looks much like any other tree, though it has no leaves and has a lusterless, almost brittle look to its bark. Also like living treants, its face is hidden until it chooses to speak or make its presence known. When it stands amid a grove or copse or similar leafless trees, it is likely to go unnoticed by those passing near. However the approach of living creatures, especially sentient creatures will cause the treant to fly into rage, lashing out with its branches in an attempt to strike down the intruder and drain it of its life force. Undead treants who manage to be turned en masse or fall under the domain of a cyclebreaker druid will often form dark covenants with the evil denizens of a forest. Druids who revere undeath will view undead treants with great admiration while more powerful creatures find the bluntness of an undead treants abilities a great strength in subduing any potential problems in the area.

**Forest Dead Zones.** Undead treants tend to live in small copses of dead trees where a foul aura permeates the area around them. These zones are typically uninhabited by most creatures except those that feed on carrion such as fungus, insects and certain birds. Animals and beasts who live within a forest populated by undead treants learn to avoid the area at all costs and the creatures themselves are loathe to converse with the living.

**Foe of the Protectors.** Undead treants have a hatred for the living but hold a particular grudge against druids and forest defenders. Undead treants who coalesce in groups will often band together and seek out lone druids and attempt to subdue and drain them of their blood.

**Undead Nature.** An undead treant requires no air, food, drink or sleep, however they have an insatiable hunger for the blood of the living and will forego other actions when the opportunity to partake of the substance presents itself.

### UNDEAD TREANT

*Huge undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class 16 (natural armor)**

**Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)**

**Speed 30 ft.**

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 23 (+6) | 8 (-1) | 21 (+5) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills Intimidation +4, Stealth +2**

**Damage Vulnerabilities fire**

**Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing**

**Damage Immunities necrotic, poison**

**Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned**

**Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13**

**Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan**

**Challenge 11 (7,200XP)**

**False Appearance.** While the undead treant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

**Siege.** The treant deals double damage to objects and structures.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The treant makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 16), and is knocked prone.

**Slam. Melee Weapon Attack:** +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Rock. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +10 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. **Hit:** 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Poison Breath (Recharge 5-6).** The treant exhales a poisonous gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Poisonous Thorns. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +10 to hit, range 25/30 ft., one target. **Hit:** The target is poisoned until the end of its next turn.

**Blood Drain.** The treant targets a size Medium or smaller living creature currently grappled by it and begins to feed. The target takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and the treant gains half as many temporary hit points and becomes immobilized and can not move again until the end of its next turn.

*Sometimes, your enemies enemy can be your greatest weapon.*

*- Lilith Thornheart, Shadowmend Agent*





### ZOMBIE BEAST

*Tiny undead, neutral evil*

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 3 (1d4 + 1)

Speed 15 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS    | CHA    |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2 (-4) | 7 (-2) | 12 (+1) | 2 (-4) | 8 (-1) | 3 (-4) |

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages -

Challenge 0 (10XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Slimey Demise.** After the zombie fails its save from its undead fortitude trait, it collapses in a slippery puddle of gore, making the space it occupied difficult terrain for the next 1 minute.

#### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5ft., one target  
**Hit:** 1 bludgeoning damage

### TO ZOMBIE OR NOT-TO-BE

When a character casts the *animate dead* spell, the choice between raising a zombie or skeleton is usually determined by the available remains in a given area. However, in certain situations, a player may have options as to what type of creature they would like to raise. With the *animate lesser undead* spell introduced in this guide, the question of whether to animate skeletal or zombified animal minions is also raised.

As a DM, it may be helpful to inform players of a few of the differences between the two forms of undead so that they may determine which minion might be most advantageous in a given setting. For instance, while zombies are generally more durable, possessing greater hit points and a fortitude save to prevent their demise, a zombie's overall defenses are lower than those of a skeletons. Skeletons are also much more industrious when it comes to problem solving: where a zombie may jump off a cliff in pursuit of a fleeing foe, a skeleton will find a safe path down a precipitous incline.

In the zombie column, the advantage for them is that nearly any corpse can be turned into one whereas skeletons can only be created from creatures with skeletons and that are suitably aged enough so that only their bones remain. Another factor in favor of zombies, though it is ultimately up to the DMs discretion, may be the possibility for zombies who still possess enough natural flesh that may have allowed them to take flight while living, for instance kenkus and aarokocras, to remain, granting them a modicum of this flying ability in undeath: skeletons would never be able to do so. Lastly, with the adoption of *Patchwork Zombies* presented in this guide, zombies may have even more advantages in their favor over skeletons.

### ZOMBIE BEAST

Like skeletons, zombies are the most basic of undead minions a necromancer can create. Whereas skeletons may have a slight edge in cunning, zombies can be created from the corpse of nearly any creature a practitioner can find and are thus highly accessible no matter the environment. And despite their simple tactics, what zombies lack in brains, they make up for in sheer numbers.

**Overwhelming Force.** Zombie beasts are easily the most readily available undead option that a necromancer has at their disposal. Any sewer, alleyway or roadside is bound to provide a means to animate a useful minion for a short period of time. Because of their ubiquity, finesse and strategy with zombies beasts is generally unnecessary: whatever problem one may have, it can at the very least be hindered by the rotting bodies of a half dozen animated rodent corpses.

**Undead Nature.** Zombie beasts require no air, food, drink or sleep.

Some places of the world hold such terrible magic and dark power that even the lesser creatures return, as if fleeing a sinking boat. They do not last long, these ugly crawling, walking things of the night, but with a bit of control and a drop of the magic tongue, they can be turned with great shame upon a rival house. Or, if one has access to a pliable servant of that house, such creatures can be spawned from the former cherished remains of a favorite pet.

- Idoww Azikiwe



























# DANGEROUS ARTS

Few who encounter the undead come away from such an experience without a mix of spine-chilling fear and fascination. And then there is the rare soul who discovers more than mere emotion from these occurrences. For these curious few, true inspiration is found.

The *Guide to Undeath* is a valuable resource for Dungeon Masters and players alike. Within its pages is a comprehensive set of rules and options that detail the misunderstood tradition of Necromancy, undeath and the powers granted to those with an eternally inquisitive mind.

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For use with the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide*, this book provides the tools, character options and elements needed to participate in a D&D game anywhere the touch of undeath reaches from its icy grave to whisper promises of power and eternity to brave adventurers.



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