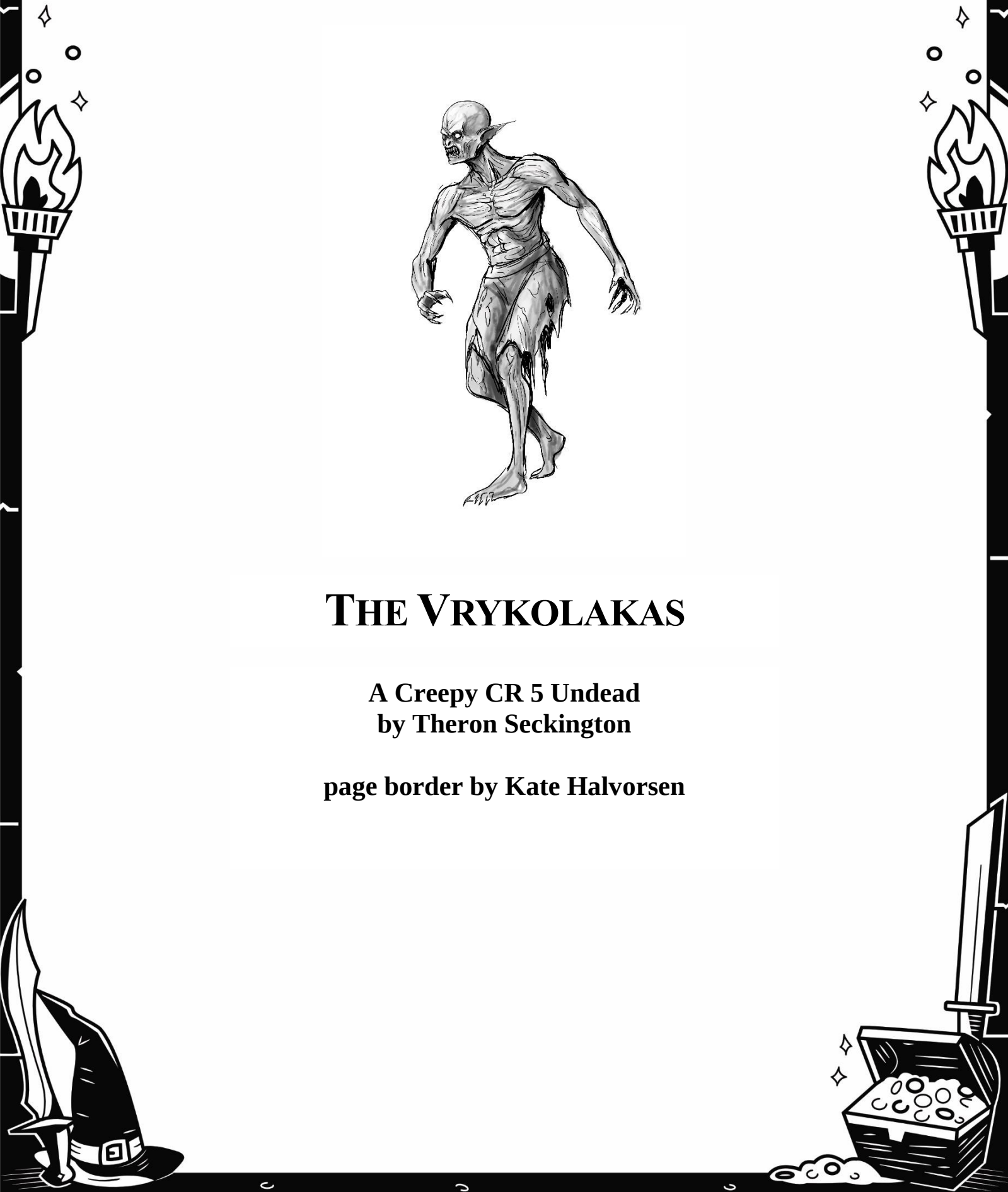




THE VRYKOLAKAS

A Creepy CR 5 Undead
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NEW FANG ON THE BLOCK

THE VRYKOLAKAS

My research for various campaigns over the years has turned up lots of resources for monsters I'll never use. One that stuck with my was the *vrykolakas*, which (sort of) translates to "werewolf" from the Greek – but their actions show much more in common with what we think of in the modern day as vampires.

Much of Bram Stoker's undead Count Dracula can be seen in the behavior of the *vrykolakas*. According to legends, the creature drank blood, appearing fresher and larger with each new victim, but unlike Dracula the *vrykolakas* can swell to inhuman proportions if not stopped. Additionally, this bloodsucker needed to be invited in to a home to invade it – though it treated merely answering the door as an invitation; peasants could avoid a *vrykolakas* by simply not answering a knock at the door after sundown.

The *vrykolakas* had several powers that sets it apart from vampires in "vanilla" D&D lore. First, it is a carrier of plagues, like many Slavic revenants. Also, the *vrykolakas* sometimes brings poltergeist-like activity to the villages it preys on.

I have endeavored to bring these things into the stat block at right. Hopefully, this creature will challenge your party, both in combat and outside as they work against their assumptions of what a vampire does.

Additional Complications

Unless properly disposed of, a *vrykolakas* may return. A simple stake through the heart is seldom sufficient. Rather, a *vrykolakas* must be tracked to its lair, the body must be destroyed through cremation or torn to part, and *then* silver or iron stakes must pin the remains to the earth. An exorcism just to be on the safe side isn't totally unwarranted either!

Character Levels

For an additional challenge, the *vrykolakas* may have memories of who it was in life. Some suggestions for how to incorporate character levels follow. In general, two character levels are sufficient to drastically change the timbre of the coming conflict.

Barbarian: A Barbarian *vrykolakas* is more feral and dangerous than its regular brethren. It delights in leaping into combat and rending as many foes as possible to cause terror.

Bard: With bard levels, the creature is content to choose a single target, research them for days from stealth, then drag them back to its lair. It may use Bardic Inspiration on itself only for attacking its chosen target.

Clerics and Paladins: Both versions of this *vrykolakas* typically wear ragged armor. Its Channel Divinity works on the living, rather than the undead.

Druids: A druid *vrykolakas* loses any animal companion it may have had, but uses its Wild Shape and spells such as *entangle* to improve its ambush abilities.

Fighter: *Vrykolakas* fighters are heavily armored and often wield weapons that give it advantages in battle, such as nets and polearms, though rarely ranged weapons. It typically uses its Action Surge early to ensure it grapples a target.

Monk: A *vrykolakas*' natural weapons are only further augmented by a monk's talents. Their lairs tend to be old places of study, rather than where they died.

Ranger: Change their favored terrain to wherever terrain they now live in. A former ranger *vrykolakas* will place physical traps and choose its battlegrounds very, very carefully.

Rogue: Cunning Action makes a Rogue *vrykolakas* a dangerous "hit and run" combatant.

Sorcerers, Warlocks, and Wizards: The *vrykolakas* will choose spells which enhance or complement its natural abilities, such as *sleep* or *charm person*.





Vrykolakas

Medium undead; CR: 5

AC: 14, **Speed:** 30 ft, 30 climb **HP:** 105 (10d12+40)

Statistics: STR 17 (+3), DEX 14 (+2), CON 19 (+4), INT 9 (-1), WIS 13 (+1), CHA 12 (+1)

Skills: Athletics +7, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Saves: STR +7, CON +8, CHA +5

Damage Immunities: Poison

Condition Immunities: Poisoned, Charmed

Blindsight: 30 feet

Embrace: The vrykolakas deals maximum damage to a creature it has grappled.

Human Shield: While it grapples a creature, the vrykolakas gains +2 AC. Additionally, creatures it grapples automatically fail saves against area-effect damage, such as against *burning hands* or a *fireball* spell.

Quick: The creature receives Advantage on Initiative rolls.

Spells: The vrykolakas can cast the following spells as spell-like effects without the need for components. Saves are against the creature's Charisma, DC 15.

1/day, each: fog cloud, stinking cloud, gust of wind

Spider Climb: The vrykolakas can climb on walls or ceilings as if under the effect of the *spider climb* spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack: The vrykolakas makes one claw attack and a bite attack, or two claw attacks.

Bite: Melee weapon attack, +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. A creature killed by this attack rises again as a vrykolakas the next night unless it is a holy day.

Claw: Melee weapon attack, +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 7 (2d4+3) slashing damage. If both attacks hit, the target is grappled.

The Lair

A vrykolakas builds a lair close to its hunting grounds, near where it was originally buried. While in its lair, the creature is much more powerful. The land around the vrykolakas' lair becomes increasingly isolated as chance accidents, natural disasters, and rockfalls block access in or out of the village it hunts in. Over several months, a pall of sickness, old superstitions, and despair descends on the unsuspecting population, further preventing them from leaving.

It's not all bad news for the adventurers: as mentioned above, the vrykolakas can be destroyed while in its lair as long as proper procedures are followed.

Additional Spells: The vrykolakas can cast *telekinesis* and *wind wall* 1/day in its lair, which is usually used to block exits and force a close combat, where it holds most of the cards.

Engorge: The first time a vrykolakas bites a creature in its lair, its size becomes Large, it gains 39 (6d12) temporary hit points, and its damage dice increase one step, changing its Bite attack to 14 (2d10+3) piercing and 5 (1d10) necrotic damage and its claw attack to 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Lair Actions

Wind Control: Each round with a 20 initiative, the vrykolakas may cast any of its available spells or lair spells.

Perturbed Spirit: Each round with a 10 initiative, the creature can cause a telekinetic storm (below) anywhere it can see within 60 feet.

Telekinetic Storm: Ranged spell attack, +4 to hit, range 60 feet, all targets in 5 foot radius. Hit: 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.



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