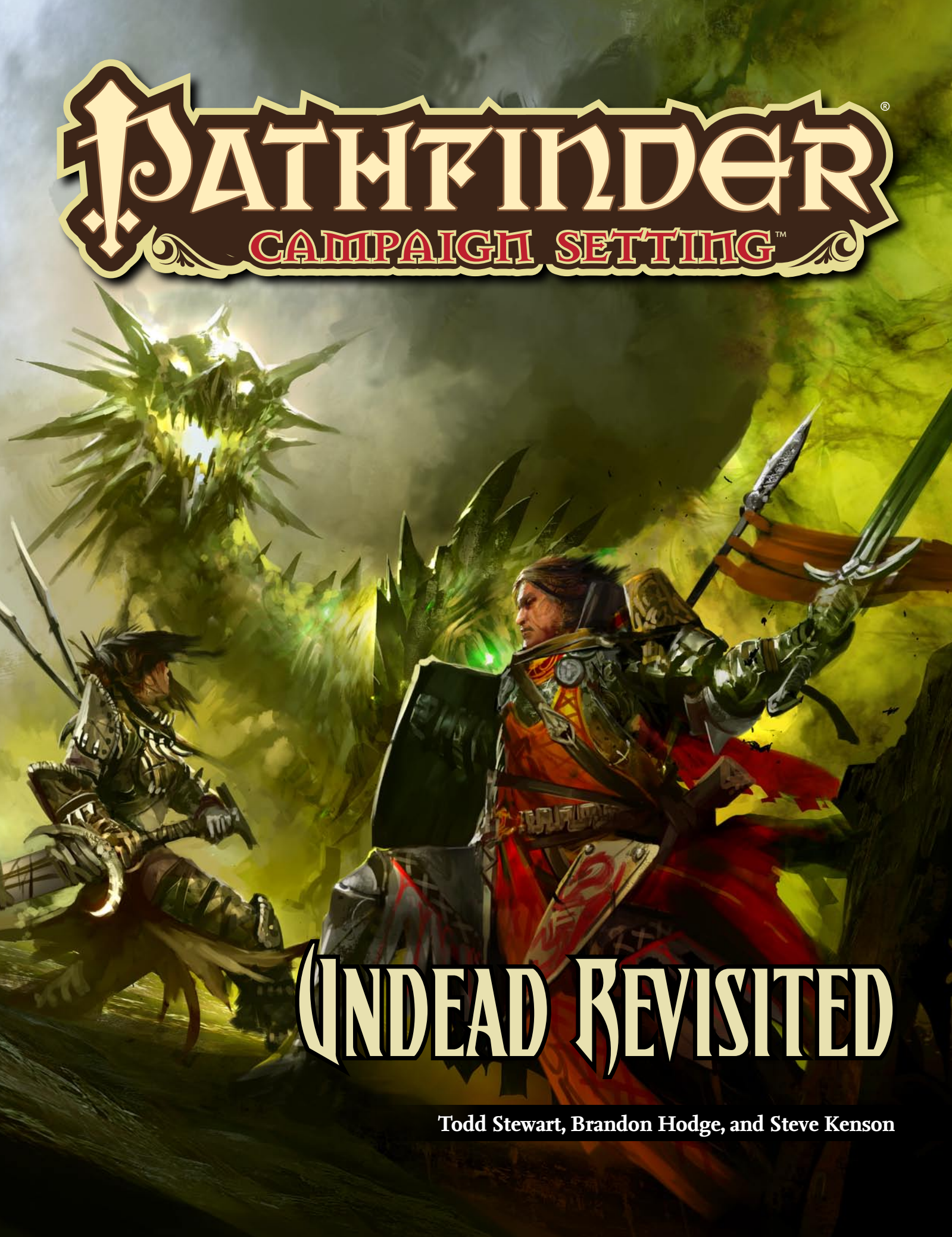

Pathfinder®
Campaign Setting™
Undead Revisited
Todd Stewart, Brandon Hodge, and Steve Kenson

Faces of the Dead



Bodak

Unfortunate creatures who witness acts of unspeakable planar evil and have their bodies destroyed and remade by the experience, returning as hungry shells.



Nightshade

Colossi formed in the lightless spaces where the Shadow Plane and Negative Energy Plane meet, eager to blot out the stars and spread ruin across the multiverse.



Devourer

Twisted spirits who return from beyond the planes as skeletal giants capable of imprisoning souls in their chests and using soul energy to power their magic.



Ravener

Undead dragons wrapped in the screaming soul-stuff of those people they devour, who must constantly feed on the innocent to sustain their parodies of life.



Graveknight

Battlefield champions of ultimate cruelty whose depraved acts bind them to their armor for all eternity, unable to die and hungry for ever-greater atrocities.



Shadow

Greedy spirits whose own mean-spirited miserliness shrinks their souls, bringing them back after death as some of the most despicable undead monstrosities.



Lich

Powerful spellcasters who bind their souls into valuable artifacts called phylacteries so that they may live forever, continuing their evil machinations.



Spectral Dead

Ghostly apparitions forced to exist without bodies, including the forlorn banshees, insane allips, dark-souled wraiths, and wrathful yet intelligent spectres.



Mohrg

The spirits of serial killers and those who exult in the taking of life, brought back as intestine-wrapped skeletons to once more walk the streets and thin the herd.



Wight

Broken corpses hungry for the souls of the living, doomed to their lonely existences through a wide variety of tragedies, malevolence, or unwilling possession.

Undead Revisited

A Pathfinder Campaign Setting Supplement

This book works best with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Although it is suitable for play in any fantasy world, it is optimized for use in the Pathfinder campaign setting.

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The Dead Will Rise

When we set out to make *Classic Horrors Revisited*, we quickly discovered that we had a problem. No matter how we tried to divide things up, there were simply too many monsters lurking beyond the lights of our campfires. Eventually, we decided to let that book focus on the so-called "gothic" monsters, the creatures of classic horror films and stories. Yet we knew that we weren't finished with horror. Not by a long shot.

Though that book contained entries on the classic skeletons, ghosts, and zombies of horror history, the book you hold is more specific. Inside this moldering, grave-rotted tome, you'll find nothing but undead, those tragic souls transformed by evil from beyond the mortal world or cursed by their actions in life to rise again after death. The hideous creatures presented here are not simply the easily named bogeymen of children's tales, but the darker denizens of roleplaying history, the familiar festering faces that have plagued players of fantasy games for decades.



Unsealing the Tomb

Presented here is a brief overview of the undead covered in this book. Though each is explored here in depth, the basic statistics for these monsters can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* (devourer, lich, mohrg, shadow, spectre, wight, wraith), *Bestiary 2* (banshee, bodak, nightshades, ravener), *Bonus Bestiary* (allip), and *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #26 (graveknight). Both the allip and the graveknight will also be available in the forthcoming *Bestiary 3*.

Bodak: When mortals venture to the utmost depths of unforgiving planes, they sometimes come across knowledge so terrible or witness events so horrifying that their very souls are consumed, killing them and then reanimating them as the weird, smoke-eyed creations called bodaks. Eric Cagle presents us with an in-depth look at the nature, habits, and horrifying origins of these planar terrors.

Devourer: Only the bravest and most powerful adventurers dare step beyond the boundaries of the known planes, into whatever darkness lies beyond. Most who do so never return—yet some, especially the evil ones, come back changed and twisted. Todd Stewart introduces us to the dread devourers, insane emissaries of the dark who draw their powers from the trapped souls of mortals.

Graveknight: Some warriors are too arrogant to die. Hal Maclean presents the terrifying graveknight, for whom death is no barrier to the lust for battle and conquest. Trapped within the armor they wore in life, graveknights are nigh-unkillable masters of warfare, the battlefield's answer to the craftier and more conniving lich.

Lich: The classic undead masterminds, liches are spellcasters who bind their souls into special receptacles called phylacteries, thus making themselves effectively immortal. Though their flesh may rot and stiffen, leaving them skeletal horrors, their spirits live on, allowing them to continue their foul research and machinations. Colin McComb takes us inside the formidable brains of the deathless magic-users, exploring both how and why they seek their bizarre existences.

Mohrg: Those who exult in the needless taking of life sometimes return to the world after death as mohrgs, skeletal monstrosities wrapped with freakish, animated intestines. Brian Cortijo reveals the inner lives (or lack thereof) of the undead who hunt the streets, creating and guiding their lesser spawn.

Nightshade: Where the Shadow Plane meets the Negative Energy Plane, evil and darkness hold sway in vast and lightless gulfs. When a fiend succumbs to the ravages of this environment, the ensuing death can be the catalyst for creating one of the most powerful undead. Todd Stewart details the existence of the undead behemoths called nightshades, monsters whose greatest goal is nothing less than the destruction of all life.

Ravener: Unwilling to yield even to death itself, some dragons seek immortality in a horrible transformation into undead. Wrapped with the soul-energy of all those they devour, these evil draconic tyrants must constantly feed on life to keep their own existence and powers at their peak. Russ Taylor explores the strengths and weaknesses of the dreaded draconic raveners.

Shadow: Not even the grave can stop the greed of some people. Driven by envy and covetousness, those misers and thieves led to evil by their avaricious natures sometimes fade away or return after death as shadows, dark reflections of their former selves. Steve Kenson brings us the truths surrounding these undead silhouettes.

Spectral Dead: Not a single creature, but rather a whole family encompassing allips, banshees, spectres, and wraiths, these incorporeal undead may no longer have physical bodies, but they can kill you all the same. Brandon Hodge explains the differences between all four, from the means by which they're formed to the crazed obsessions and emotions that drive them even after death.

Wight: Hungry for the spirits of the living, wights resemble lesser undead such as zombies and skeletons—but don't let their rotting flesh fool you, for behind their burning eyes rests a grim intelligence. Jason Nelson reveals the varied origins and motives of the sinister wight, and how they can be turned to a crafty GM's advantage.

Creating Undead

The spells *animate dead*, *create undead*, and *create greater undead* account for methods by which spellcasters can create a wide range of undead creatures—but the options granted by these spells are limited. With the GM's permission, these can be adjusted to allow for the creation of additional types of undead. Doing so requires additional material components and spells (additional spells are cast as part of the casting time of the undead creation spell, but do not extend that spell's casting time).

Note that some undead can never be created by *create undead* or *create greater undead*. The methods by which these undead can be created are given in their specific monster write-ups. In the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* and *Bestiary 2*, such undead include the following: ghost, lich, nightshade (all), poltergeist, ravener, revenant, skaveling, vampire, void zombie, and winterwight.

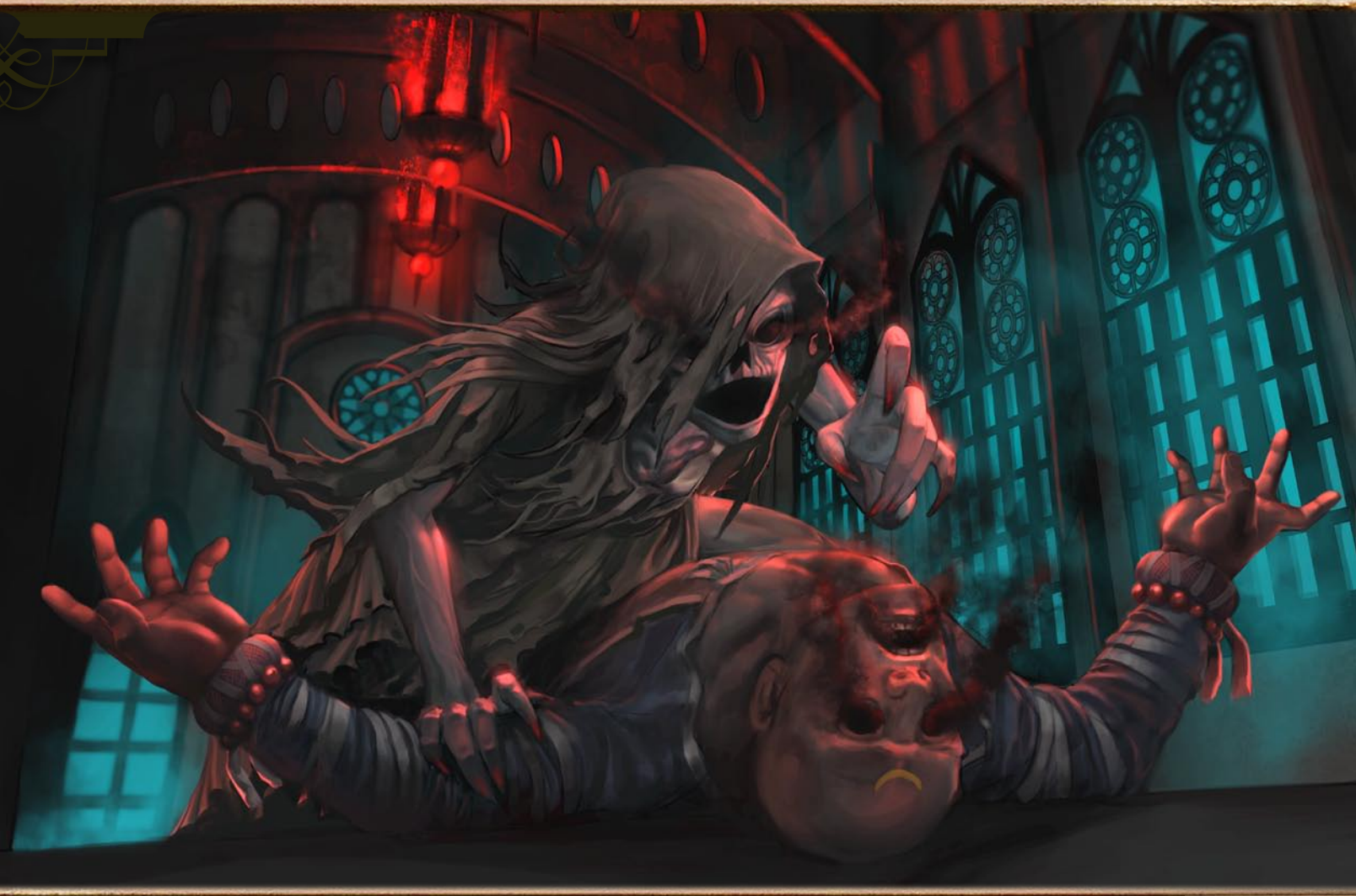
The following table summarizes what spells, minimum caster levels, and additional material components are needed to create other undead with *animate dead*, *create undead*, or *create greater undead*.

Creating Undead

Undead Creature	Spell to Create	Min. CL	Additional Requirements
Allip*	*create greater undead*	15th	*insanity*
Attic Whisperer	*create undead*	13th	*crushing despair*, *fear*, corpse of a humanoid child
Banshee	*create greater undead*	20th	*fear*, *wail of the banshee*, corpse of a female elf
Bodak	*create greater undead*	20th	must be cast in the Abyss
Crawling Hand	*create undead*	11th	severed hand of a Medium or smaller humanoid
Crawling Hand (giant)	*create undead*	14th	*enlarge person*, severed hand of a Large or larger humanoid
Crypt Thing	*create undead*	16th	*teleport*
Draugr	*create undead*	12th	—
Dullahan	*create undead*	17th	decapitated humanoid corpse
Greater Shadow	*create greater undead*	19th	*shadow walk*
Huecuva*	*create undead*	11th	corpse of a cleric (preferably an evil cleric)
Juju Zombie	*create undead*	11th**	*enervation* or *energy drain*
Skeletal Champion	*create undead*	11th**	*enervation* or *energy drain*
Totenmaske	*create greater undead*	18th	caster must be a cleric
Wight	*create undead*	14th	*enervation*
Witchfire	*create greater undead*	19th	corpse of a hag

* This creature is detailed in the *Bonus Bestiary* and the upcoming *Pathfinder Bestiary 3*.

** You must have a caster level greater than the HD of the undead to be created.



Bodak

"We did our best to ignore the screams emanating from the tower attached to the baron's home, and wept silent tears for loved ones he sent on 'grand journeys,' never to return. At least, almost never.

"The one who did return, well... Gray Tom, the closest thing we have to a lawkeeper around these parts, swore that he saw someone emerge from the manor, just past moonrise. Screamed it, in fact, for the whole two days it took him to wear himself out. He doesn't speak much now, and insists on wearing a blindfold everywhere he goes. Most folks think he's crazy, but if so, I ask you this: how come nobody's seen the baron since?"

—Sabrina Telmach, midwife of Stannish Corner

The world is filled with evil and unspeakable things. Dark clerics pray to vile gods, and wizards seeking unbridled power make pacts with foul demons, all of which allow sinister things to take root among the living. Yet evil is not merely a supernatural phenomenon—man's own inhumanity to man also brings with it a pall of evil and malevolence. Terrible wars and genocide spawn untold numbers of personal tragedies and events that scar the minds and souls of those unlucky enough to witness them. Torture victims endure days, weeks, or years of horrible, mind-bending pain and misery. Those lucky (or unlucky) enough to survive these horrors are forever changed.

Yet for some, bearing witness to true horror and supernatural evil does more than twist their minds—it ravages their souls to such a degree that they are themselves transformed. Requiring evil far beyond that normally found among mortals, this rare transformation occurs when unprepared mortals venture deep into those extraplanar spaces where humanity was not meant to tread—the deepest hiding holes of the evil planes. In these repositories of unholy knowledge, things are seen that cannot be unseen, and which indelibly stain the souls of the foolish. The creatures that emerge from these places are mortal no longer. Rather they are bodaks—misanthropic husks whose very eyes smoke with the horror of all they've seen, destined to wander the planes and bring their terrible visions to the living.

The transformation into a bodak is as physically painful as it is spiritually damning. As the images of the horror are replayed over and over in the victim's mind, his body is wracked with pain, causing him to thrash about in debilitating seizures. The victim's eyelids clamp shut in a nearly unbreakable bond—nothing short of prying or cutting the eyelids apart will force them open. Those who witness this transformation and live to tell of it say that the victim's eyes seem to migrate about the face, growing and shrinking in size as if trying to escape from the person's head. Shortly thereafter, the rest of the body undergoes a change as well, with the limbs elongating, hair falling off, and skin drying out on the bones, giving the victim an emaciated, androgynous frame.

Within 24 hours, the conversion is complete and the victim has become a bodak. Only then do its eyes open once more, though now they are blank orbs set deep in cavernous sockets, constantly weeping foul, smoky vapors. The conversion seriously damages the muscles, giving the bodak a slow, shambling gait. The intellect of the victim also dwindles to pure, base instincts—yet strangely, it does not lose the ability to speak. When a bodak speaks, its words are full of venom, gibberish, and horrific threats and insults, reflecting its extreme anger and desire to inflict its own terrible fate on others. The purifying touch of sunlight also becomes intolerable to the bodak. Even a tiny sliver of sunlight damages and burns the creature, enraging it and forcing it to flee. For this reason, bodaks on the Material Plane only come out at night and must find a secluded place to hide during the day.

The eyes of the bodak serve as a conduit to the horrors that spawned its transformation. The shimmering, milky orbs briefly mesmerize anyone unlucky enough to catch a direct glimpse of them. If a victim lacks the will to break the gaze, he is quickly overwhelmed by its power and dies shortly thereafter—the transformation into another bodak begins immediately. Survivors of the bodak's deadly gaze speak of a flood of bizarre memories, flashes and snippets of the event that caused the bodak's transformation. Although a person lucky enough to resist the gaze is unharmed, these memories of the darkest reaches of the planes may haunt the survivor periodically for the rest of his life.

Bodaks are tortured creatures, driven by endless sorrow, terrible longing, and an extreme bitterness and jealousy toward the living. Bodaks lack even the malevolent joy that fiends seem to feel when tormenting and killing mortal creatures. Only by forcing living creatures to gaze into their eyes and perish do they find anything resembling relief, although that too is very short lived, forcing the bodak to find even more victims in an endless

Bodak Apocalypse?

Because of their ability to propagate through their deadly gaze attack, bodaks can spread through an area in a frighteningly short period of time. GMs could set up a scenario where local people speak of people being turned into the undead at an alarming rate, with those attacked by the creatures turning into undead as well. Most players would immediately presume that the town or area was under assault by zombies or some other relatively weak undead that spread quickly. This is a perfect setup for fooling the adventurers into thinking that they can walk into the area and easily clean up the mess.

Over time, a village or other lightly populated area may turn into a literal graveyard, as the entire population is transformed into a small army of potent undead. Adventurers that expect to clean out a low-level undead infestation will find themselves in for quite a shock upon discovering high-CR bodaks running amok, so bodaks make perfect candidates for bringing the classic "zombie apocalypse" adventure to higher-level characters. And of course, the original bodak in the town had to come from somewhere, and adventurers may also have to deal with a powerful cleric, wizard, or demon, making the situation even more perilous.

cycle. Some bodaks are so overwhelmed by their desire to turn the living into more of their kind that they drag off victims of their deadly gazes to secluded places in order to watch over the transformation and make sure nothing interrupts it. Once the new bodak arises, however, its creator typically loses interest, leaving the spawn on its own. In rare instances, however, bodaks band together in small units called gangs. This does not seem to reflect any true sense of companionship, but is most common when a bodak kills either a former loved one or the person who led it to the point of its original transformation—the bond between them is now twisted together into hate and loathing, but still unbreakable.

Though inclined to wander the planes when given their freedom, the slow-witted bodaks are rarely seen outside the evil-aligned planes, and especially the Abyss, where powerful demons find them useful minions. On that plane, they often serve as guardians, assassins, or thralls, particularly for nabasu demons or liches (both of which are immune to its gaze). Extremely skilled necromancers are able to use powerful magic, notably *create greater undead*, to create bodaks, but only if the spellcaster is located on one of the evil Outer Planes. Mortal spellcasters who dare to summon a bodak must protect themselves with other magic to keep its deadly gaze at bay.

Ecology

Scholars and theologians have long debated the exact nature of these strange undead, positing that it's the very act that creates a bodak—witnessing some evil and hideous occurrence beyond all mortal capacity for understanding—that gives unholy life and purpose to these creatures. In some sense, the bodak is the very manifestation of such an act, a curse upon the living, its life force scarred to such a degree that only causing others to gaze into its eyes and share its agony gives it some sort of relief. Most researchers believe that mundane evil is not enough, arguing that only traumatic deaths in the darkest pits of the planes are pure enough to form a bodak, with the creature's animating energy being drawn from the evil Outer Planes where it met its fate. Yet others insist that it's not the place that causes the transformation, but rather the purity of the evil and horror involved, thus making it possible for an ordinary human (or, more likely, a summoned demon) to spark the transformation, provided the horrors it shows to the victim are heinous enough. Regardless, such quibbles are academic and unimportant in the face of the dangerous creatures themselves.

Bodaks exist only to find the living and damn their souls to a similar fate. In many ways, bodaks found on the Outer Planes are worse off than those on the Material Plane, if only for the distinct lack of living humanoids upon which to inflict their particular method of torment. The longing of Abyssal bodaks is akin to an eternal, insatiable hunger, which is perhaps mirrored in the bodak's emaciated form, and helps to explain their slow-witted willingness to serve demons who provide them with living fodder from time to time. No bodak has ever been witnessed feasting on the meat of its victims, but some have been seen to enter into a violent frenzy after having killed a living creature with its deadly gaze.

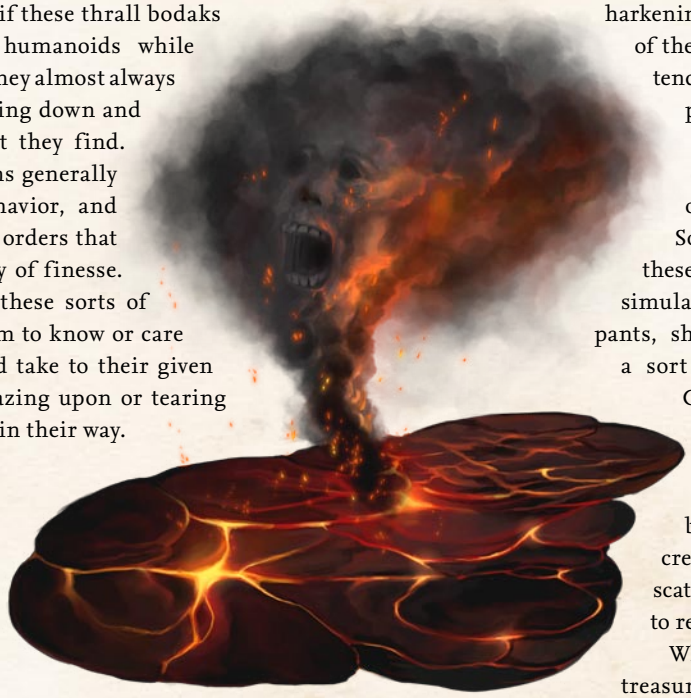
Habitat & Society

Driven by their insatiable urge to bring misery and death to the living, most bodaks are solitary creatures. For the most part, they wander the planes, stumbling through portals and occasionally succumbing to the wills of powerful fiends and evildoers. When brought to the Material Plane as individuals, they wander the world on their own, seeking out population centers in which to bring the destruction they desire. If applicable, a freshly created bodak typically attempts to bring its gaze to bear upon the person or people responsible for the transformation—the wizard who cast it into the Abyss, the party members who accompanied it on the doomed planar adventure, the demonic cultist who offered it up to another bodak as sacrifice, and so on.

When given the opportunity, many bodaks return to the places that once brought them comfort and joy in their mortal lives, following their fragmented memories to destroy their loved ones and acquaintances with their deadly gazes. Astute investigators can sometimes deduce the former identity of a bodak based on the trail of dead and missing persons, especially if the bodak is the spawn of an attack rather than the result of unholy visions. Yet ultimately, a bodak wanders with little control over where it ends up, and those who succumb far from home rarely make it back, simply taking what victims they can find.

If a bodak is created on Golarion, it is condemned to conduct its shambling hunts eternally until it is brought low by adventurers or becomes caught outside during the day and withers away to dust in the sunlight. Its time is spent meandering the nighttime countryside in search of sentient, living creatures to torment, and hiding in secluded dens, abandoned buildings, or caves during the day. Although rather dim-witted, bodaks possess both a low cunning and animalistic instincts that let them know when daylight approaches or living creatures are nearby. A bodak is savvy enough to know when it is outnumbered or facing more powerful foes, at which point it switches from direct assault to silent stalking, waiting for the right moment to attack individuals away from the protection of the group. Some have been known to wield weapons, but most prefer to rely solely on their gaze, as merely killing a creature is nothing compared to sharing its horrible gift.

In the Abyss, bodaks sometimes unite in small gangs, roaming the chaotic terrain in an often-fruitless search for living creatures. Considering the scarcity of mortal beings in the Abyss, most bodaks make do with recently arrived souls. Other demons sometimes round up bodaks, individually or in small bands, for use as mindless shock troops—though demons and other outsiders cannot be transformed into new bodaks, many of these can still be killed by the creatures' attacks. Bodaks are smart enough to follow basic orders, which they do to the best of their abilities. Unfortunately, if these thrall bodaks ever encounter living humanoids while undertaking a mission, they almost always become distracted, hunting down and killing any mortals that they find. Bodak-wrangling demons generally expect this sort of behavior, and rarely give the creatures orders that require much in the way of finesse. Bodaks that enter into these sorts of relationships do not seem to know or care they are being used, and take to their given role with great gusto, gazing upon or tearing apart anything that gets in their way.



Campaign Role

Bodaks are the physical manifestation of a metaphysical event—what happens when a mortal being is exposed to pure supernatural horror. In this way, bodaks are a great way to introduce themes of innocence lost or illustrate for players the price of unbridled curiosity into the dark arts. Bodaks are perfect wandering monsters for adventures that take place on the Outer Planes (especially the evil ones), as well as creatures that evoke both pity and horror—particularly if the bodak used to be a friendly NPC.

Bodaks work well as bogeymen, waiting patiently in the shadows until they find lone victims to ambush and transform into others of their kind. If a bodak fails to kill a victim with its gaze, it may still tear him apart with its claws, leaving behind bloody gobbets and few clues as to the true nature of the killer. Adventurers who make it to the Abyss itself may find themselves hunted by bodaks almost immediately, drawn by the presence of living creatures in their infernal realm.

As relatively slow monsters, bodaks are better ambush predators than outright combatants, as most PCs who survive the initial meeting can quickly distance themselves and run for safety. This shortcoming can be mitigated by having the PCs encounter the bodaks in confined areas, or can be played up for greater effect, with the PCs fleeing but knowing that the bodak is still behind them, following slowly, tirelessly, and utterly without mercy.

Treasure

Fueled only by the urge to destroy the living, bodaks rarely hoard treasure or coins on purpose. Those rare individuals that remain in one place, however, may acquire a small stash of incidental treasure from their victims. Perhaps harkening back to hazy memories of their living life, these bodaks tend to collect clothes and other personal items worn by the living, while ignoring coins, gems, scrolls, and other "impersonal" items. Some bodaks even arrange these items inside their lairs to simulate a living person, using pants, shirts, and boots to create a sort of scarecrow humanoid. Given the rage that bubbles inside them, however, these effigies commonly become the target of the bodak's wrath, with the creature tearing them up and scattering them in anger, only to reassemble them again later. While such spoils are not treasure per se, bodaks have also been known to pluck the eyes out of victims they kill but do not transform with their deadly gaze attack. Bodaks that stick to a general location adorn their lairs with these "prizes," dangling them from trees or neatly lining them up on cave shelves, but otherwise shun collecting valuable items.

Bodaks that roam the Abyss never seek out or collect treasure of any kind—victims are too far and few between to hoard prizes, and the scant few mortals found roaming the plane are killed and transformed without thought to the gear they carry.

Variants

Most bodaks begin as normal humanoids that fall prey to another bodak's gaze or a scene of mind-bending, incomprehensible planar evil, yet on extremely rare occasions, other creatures may fall prey to these effects as well. The unique natures of these transformations create bodaks with some unusual twists to their forms and abilities. Even among ordinary humans, a few manage to retain enough shreds of their former lives to retain some

of their class levels and abilities—ironically making them even more dangerous to their former allies.

Larger Bodaks: A giant that falls prey to a bodak's deadly gaze retains its larger size, as well as its natural armor bonus if that bonus is larger than the bodak's normal natural armor bonus. To generate statistics for a giant bodak, adjust its statistics as necessary for its larger size and advance its undead racial Hit Dice to match the total number of humanoid racial Hit Dice the giant possessed while it lived. If the giant had 10 or fewer racial Hit Dice, then no change to the standard bodak (apart from size) is necessary. The bodak's CR should be adjusted upward to account for its greater size and HD—as a general rule, every 2 HD added should increase the bodak's CR by +1.

Smaller Bodaks: Small humanoids that become bodaks have all the appropriate bonuses and penalties for dropping from Medium to Small size (–4 Str, +2 Dex, +1 size bonus on attack rolls and to AC, reduced natural attack damage, etc.). A Small bodak's CR does not change—it remains a CR 8 monster.

Multiple Heads: A bodak created from a creature with multiple heads, such as an ettin, becomes deadlier because it has more eyes with which to project its horrific stare. The save DC against a multi-headed bodak's death gaze increases by +2.

Bodaks on Golarion

Bodaks are extremely rare on Golarion, because of the bizarre factors that must be present in their spontaneous creation somewhere on a distant plane. When they do make an appearance on the Material Plane, however, they can appear almost anywhere, stumbling through planar portals or summoned by evil diabolists, necromancers, and tyrants in search of the perfect weapon to use against their enemies. Most of those who seek the services of a bodak prefer to summon it or find and cage it rather than attempting to make a new one, as the conditions involved are highly dangerous, and even those capable of casting the proper spells can only do so on evil-aligned planes. Needless to say, both methods are deadly to all but the most committed and skilled, yet only obtaining the first bodak is difficult. After that, it's simply a matter of providing the captured bodak with living humanoids to transform, turning one bodak into an undead army.

Thanks to its Abyssal taint, the Worldwound hosts the largest population of bodaks in the Inner Sea region. Moreover, the Abyssal nature of the land itself makes it one of the few places—perhaps the only place—on Golarion where bodaks can form spontaneously in the same way they do on the Abyss, as the result of witnessing horrible extraplanar evil and depredations beyond mortal ken. While more likely to roam free than their Abyssal kin, these bodaks are also sometimes rounded up by demons and driven toward the front lines of the battle against the Mendevian crusaders, where their death gazes are terribly effective. Most crusaders who've faced down a bodak find it even more terrifying than confronting a demon, as being torn apart by the latter is relatively merciful compared to an eternity of insanity and murder.

The undead kingdom of Geb sometimes plays host to bodaks, which may run wild through the land or be retained by liches, vampires, and other powerful undead creatures. "Servant" bodaks are used as shock troops and bodyguards for the elite members of Gebbite society, though their utility is often less important to their masters than the status having such a powerful minion brings. As actual retainers, bodaks are relatively frustrating to deal with, even for the undead rulers of the nation, as the bodaks' tendency to turn important humanoid guests into bodaks with a simple glance is both inconvenient and difficult to prevent. As creatures robbed of their sanity and animated by the evil of the planes, bodaks are looked down on by other, more "traditional" undead, who see them as pathetic brutes, closer to fiends than proper examples of undeath.

Sitting alongside Geb, the Mana Wastes and, to a lesser extent, Nex boast their own populations of bodaks—a holdover from the many wars and battles in their age-old conflict. Most originate in the Mana Wastes, with the occasional individual wandering into Nex's inhabited territories. Fortunately, centuries of practice allow the soldiers and wizards of Nex to keep these incursions to a minimum, although sometimes with heavy casualties.

The diabolists favored by the aristocracy of Cheliax require large numbers of unwitting victims to perform their rites. While most of their dungeons and torture rooms are mundane, filled with wretched prisoners who bear witness to unspeakable things on a nearly daily basis, some of these spellcasters prefer to take victims to Hell itself, making their offerings to the plane in person. Few of these victims (and not all of the diabolists) survive these offerings, but a tiny fraction end up exposed to greater horrors than initially expected, with either the master or prisoner undergoing the transformation into a bodak. Diabolists powerful and lucky enough to avoid being slain by the creatures they helped create find them extremely useful as weapons of terror, keeping them locked away until their services are necessary.

The strange religions found in the Mwangi Expanse sometimes demand sacrifices and dark rituals. Explorers and adventurers unlucky enough to be caught by these more sinister tribes, particularly the zealots of Angazhan living in the ape city of Usaro, are sometimes transformed by bizarre and terrifying demonic rites. These bodaks roam the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse, terrorizing the inhabitants and sometimes transforming entire villages into their own kind.

Sample Bodak

This hairless creature wears tatters of armor over an emaciated frame. Trails of smoke seep from its cavernous eye sockets.

Taker of Eyes **CR 16**

XP 76,800

Male bodak antipaladin 8 (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 48, *Advanced Player's Guide* 118)

CE Medium undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.)

Defense

AC 30, touch 11, flat-footed 29 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +8 natural, +5 shield)

hp 241 (18 HD; 10d8+8d10+152)

Fort +23, **Ref** +13, **Will** +23

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** electricity, undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

Offense

Speed 15 ft.

Melee +2 *longsword* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+5/17–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 21, 4d6), cruelty (staggered, sickened), death gaze (DC 22), smite good 3/day (+7 attack and AC, +8 damage), touch of corruption 11/day (4d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +15)
At will—*detect good*

Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +12)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19)
1st—*command* (DC 18), *death knell* (2, DC 18)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 29

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Intimidate +18, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +14

Languages Common

SQ fiendish boon (weapon), plague bringer, unholy resilience

Gear broken *+3 full plate*, *+3 heavy steel shield*, *+2 longsword*



The bodak known as the Taker of Eyes began as Sir Amshel Veraine, a knight of Lastwall who sought to take the battle against evil to the Abyss itself. All throughout his career, he sought knowledge of the Outer Planes, until finally he felt he was ready to crusade beyond the battlefields of his homeland. Although his superiors knew his plans were suicidal, Veraine's zeal (along with considerable family influence) was enough to persuade them. Together with a team of similarly minded zealots, Veraine exchanged a lifetime of battlefield treasures for a portal to the Abyss, through which he boldly charged, vowing to contact his superiors once a beachhead had been established.

It was a massacre. Out of their depth, with little concept of how to navigate the Abyss, Sir Veraine's forces were slaughtered. As his warriors fell around him, Veraine realized the error of his ways, but with the spellcasters in his party already fallen, there was no way for him to evacuate his troops or call for aid. Instead, he did the only think a knight of Lastwall could do: he charged. Pressing ever deeper into the suppurating vaults, Veraine sought to reach a leader among the demons, someone whose destruction would give his own death worth. Down he plunged, seeking something he couldn't name. And then, with the last of his troops lying broken at his heels, he found it.

What Veraine discovered in that final amphitheater—what trials he endured at the hands of the demons—remains unknown, even to him. Yet what emerged from that vault was not a man, but a broken thing whose eyes continually beheld atrocities beyond its understanding. Overjoyed, the demons responsible sent the newly birthed bodak back to Lastwall.

Upon its arrival, the bodak that was Veraine terrorized the countryside. The locals quickly named it the Taker of Eyes for its habit of hanging the eyes of its victims on trees or rocks. The Taker of Eyes seems drawn to both the knights of Veraine's former order and their families, stalking and killing them with amazing stealth and patience. None of the knights realize that the bodak they seek used to be one of their own, but as the bodaks continue to multiply in spite of the crusaders' best efforts, some have begun to fear that the gods have turned against them.



Devourer

"Soul-eaters are considered anathema by many, yet daemons aren't the only ones who cherish the taste of a succulent mortal soul. The undead known as devourers—ravenous beings perpetually staving off their own oblivion with yours—are likewise members of that exclusive cadre. Devourers are twisted and damaged creatures from beyond the known faces of the planes, and always seem fixated upon bizarre, alien notions, obsessing over them with religious intensity. Needless to say, they're terrible company. And as for the things that made them, and who or what they are—well, that would be telling..."

—Tegresin the Laughing Fiend

Devourers are unholy abominations, gaunt giants who have seen beyond the trappings of mundane reality, and who have had some part of themselves twisted by the knowledge. Though skeletal and decayed, a devourer is no mere zombie, and goes about pursuing its alien goals while carrying a struggling, wailing soul in its hollow and cavernous rib cage, slowly consuming the captured spirit's essence and condemning it to a fate worse than any hell.

While the Outer Planes are unimaginably vast, and in many ways can be considered to be infinite, there have long been questions about what lies beyond them. This is not merely the darkness and strange voids between distant stars on the Material Plane, but something fundamentally different—a *beyond* for the Great Beyond. Information about this otherness is almost completely unavailable, with even the gods seemingly deaf to most questions, yet there are always a few who to decide to see for themselves. When powerful fiends and evil spellcasters undertake this quest, some come back and report nothing but vast expanses of... well, nothing. Others don't return at all. Yet some—the foulest ones, or those who become lost beyond the multiverse's reaches—find something out there that changes them. These return with twisted, emaciated bodies and alien consciousnesses totally different from their original personalities, and bear an overwhelming hunger for soul energies, which they use to fuel their magical abilities. Though these maddened beings possess genius-level intellects, a strange ability to ignore many spells, and significant necromantic powers, most stories and legends ignore these aspects to focus instead on the wriggling, doomed spirits trapped and being digested within the devourers' chests—the source of both their name and their infamy.

Devourers can cause devastating damage with a touch, and those foes killed in this fashion find their souls forcibly drawn out and trapped inside the devourer's body, where their essence is leeched away and used for spellcasting. Devourers can only consume a single soul at a time, absorbing it piece by piece as they utilize their magical abilities, and must finish off or relinquish one soul in order to consume and utilize another. For a trapped soul, the only real hope is that someone will target its captor with one of the eclectic collection of spells that can cause a devourer to momentarily lose control of the spirit, allowing the imprisoned soul to escape. Upon occasion, those wishing to obtain the release of a captive soul have attempted to bargain with the devourer, offering it a more powerful soul in exchange, but in these situations a devourer often simply burns up the last of its current soul energy in capturing the new morsel. Those souls that are successfully released and resurrected come back weaker and drained—and those destroyed completely by the devourer's consumption cannot be brought back by anything less than the most powerful mortal magic.

Those rare few who peaceably encounter devourers—generally other powerful evil entities, or necromancers who call devourers into being through magic—all describe similar, disturbing traits. Though extremely intelligent and knowledgeable, devourers have a tendency to speak in weird riddles and half-sentences, babble in unknown languages, or respond to bizarre questions that no one had asked. Though devourers never discuss just who or what they're talking to, many suspect their madness rises from a lingering connection to whatever sinister, alien entity or force made them what they are, and the devourers themselves sometimes let apparent titles slip, with appellations like the Dire Shepherd or the Wanderer Upon the Stair.

For all their madness, and despite their capacity for soul-annihilation, devourers are not creatures of mindless hunger, rampaging across the land. Instead they wander the planes, taking up new souls as needed but generally paying little attention to most other creatures, simply because their minds are elsewhere, occupied with more important things. The exception to this arises when devourers run across those individuals who, for one reason or another, play into their alien goals. Should they turn out to be foes, devourers show no mercy and leave nothing in their wake, not even the whispers of the dead.

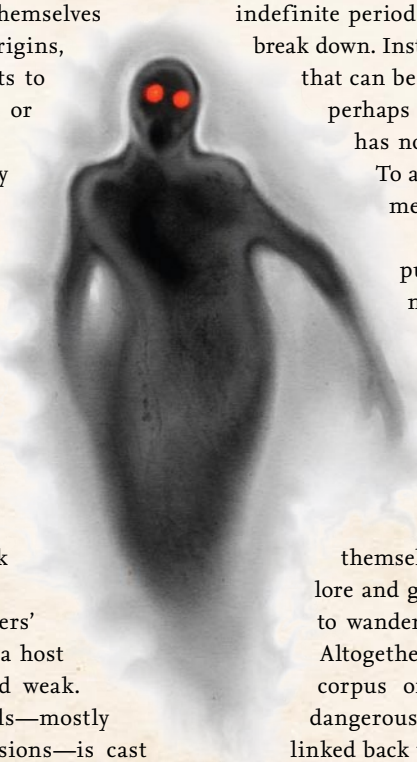
Ultimately, devourers' role in the cosmos remains a mystery, revealed individually and on a timescale not rushed by mortality. The whispers of places beyond the planes play across their atrophied synapses, calling them forth from the darkness—and it is to these places that they owe their only allegiance. Mortal necromancers and more powerful creatures may command devourers, but only the foolish claim to understand them.

Ecology

Devourers' origins are shrouded in mystery. While spellcasters may create them through the usage of *create greater undead* spells, exactly what occurs during these rituals is unclear, and it's possible that devourers are more called into being than physically created—certainly it's more than just a simple matter of animating a corpse.

Unlike many other forms of undead, devourers do not form spontaneously, nor do they breed or spawn. Rather, they begin as either one of two creatures: a terribly evil mortal spellcaster or an actual fiend. Those of either category who find themselves lost in the hinterlands of the cosmos sometimes return as devourers, their forms stretched and twisted into almost unrecognizable 10-foot-tall behemoths. They do not find their rebirth, their unholy transfiguration, in a specific place or plane. Rather, far beyond the knowledge and sight of mortals

or outsiders, they experience some sort of transformative gnosis, realizing some infectious idea that simultaneously destroys and recreates them with a new form and a new hunger. Whether or not there might be something out there that actively calls to them, compulsively drawing them to its presence and making them into what they are, is anyone's guess, yet it would explain why only evil outsiders and spellcasters seem to be susceptible, and also potentially why the strange mannerisms of the devourers who return to the planes seem more than simple madness. It's even possible that some devourers themselves might not be aware of their precise origins, and their obsessions could be attempts to find their way back and discover who or what made them.



Those devourers created (or potentially called from elsewhere) by magic share all the traits and madness of their transformed kin, a fact that has confused spellcasters for generations. Some scholars have pointed out that specific details of these magical rituals have certain traits in common across all schools of magic and faith, leading some to believe that the ability to create devourers may have been introduced long ago as a single spell, perhaps provided by whatever malign forces lurk beyond the planes.

Another unusual facet of devourers' existence is their strange response to a host of different spells, both powerful and weak. When one of these particular spells—mostly banishments or charms and compulsions—is cast on a devourer, there's a chance that it instead causes the devourer to lose its hold on whatever spirit it has trapped in its chest, allowing the captive to escape off to its designated afterlife. No one is entirely sure why this is; perhaps the mind-affecting effects interact strangely with whatever madness or alien compulsions already drive the devourers, or the banishments can't figure out where to send a creature that is effectively from beyond the planes. What is known, however, is that on those rare occasions when devourers have been cast back out to the space beyond reality, they have always found their way back with shocking ease.

Habitat & Society

Like a black stain upon the proper flow of souls in the cosmos, devourers face revulsion from most other beings. They forsake their own spiritual evolution for undeath, and opportunistically feed upon other souls. A devourer's hunger heavily colors its interaction with other races, and even those more powerful creatures who command devourers, or the lesser creatures who serve devourers, may find themselves under attack when a devourer grows tired of them or feels they've outlived their usefulness. Devourers are pragmatic to the extreme and highly secretive, but willing to serve greater masters should it serve their needs and offer a way to advance their current fixation.

Without occasionally feeding, devourers lose the use of their magical abilities, though in reality, the fact that a devourer can survive without a trapped soul for indefinite periods of time makes the "feeding" analogy break down. Instead, souls are simply capsules of energy that can be stored and used up, like batteries. It is perhaps for this reason that a devourer feeding has no orgiastic or sacramental aspect to it. To a devourer, consuming souls is simply a means to an end.

Devourers spend their undead existence pursuing bizarre and alien notions that make little to no sense to anyone else. Intensely fixated on certain things both philosophical and more concrete, their soul-hunting often seems to be of secondary importance to these less concrete goals. As a race born from planar explorers but denied such interplanar transportation magic themselves, devourers are obsessed with planar lore and gates, and seek ever more efficient ways to wander the cosmos on their strange errands. Altogether, their interests encompass an alien corpus of irrational, often blasphemous and dangerous knowledge, much of it presumably linked back to the mysterious force that led to their creation and which might continue to influence them.

Whether a devourer remembers its previous life or not, what it was prior to becoming a devourer may have some influence upon its undeath. Former clerics may sometimes arrange small, meaningless shrines or perform incomprehensible prayers, while former wizards may continue to collect bits of obscure lore or perform experiments to advance their knowledge. Each clue to their past, however, is invariably juxtaposed with other collections of bizarre ephemera, books written in the obsessive detail of hypergraphia, and even corpses left to rot next to others that were hung, carefully preserved, and painted with freakish, meaningless patterns.

In addition to being extremely rare, devourers almost always avoid each other, though it's unclear whether this is simply a natural aversion to others of their kind or a necessary factor in fulfilling their arcane and far-reaching agendas. Perhaps it's that devourers are heralds of their unknown creators, preparing to deliver the

planes to their masters, and thus having more than one in a given area is unnecessary. Whatever the case, those who encounter even the most seemingly civilized and sane of devourers should remember that these soul-hungry undead appear to have been sent back not just as predators, but as direct agents of otherness.

Campaign Role

Among the most powerful undead that clerics and necromancers can create on their own, devourers encountered by adventurers on the Material Plane have generally been created or bound as servitors by more powerful masters. Of course, devourers may also function as villains in their own right, as their wanderings across the planes can take them just about anywhere, and both their soul-consuming abilities and vast intellects make them dangerous and unpredictable opponents.

Devourers rank among those few creatures who threaten their enemies not only with death, but with the very real potential for utter obliteration. In addition to their soul-devouring touch, however, they also feature a wide range of lesser level- and energy-draining attacks that can be utilized at a distance via *spectral hand*, as well as abilities such as *bestow curse* and *suggestion*. Though almost never found in the company of their own kind, they frequently team up with plane-shifting creatures such as cauchemar nightmares, which share their alignment and assist them in traveling across the planes.

Treasure

Devourers empower themselves via the consumption of souls, and those souls need not be acquired by random chance or opportunity. A devourer who expects to travel in regions where living creatures are scarce frequently maintains a small pantry of captured creatures to be consumed as needed, and those entrapped in such a manner have little chance of escaping a creature that never sleeps, is far smarter than most humans, and kills with a touch or from a distance. A devourer's lair typically contains a stash of such entrapped individuals, and some devourers even go so far as to chain or impale Small creatures onto their massive bodies, hauling the feebly struggling individuals around with them in case of emergencies.

Though it's believed to be possible for devourers to consume souls that have already been separated from their bodies, those disembodied souls found in devourer lairs always seem to be more a part of strange experiments than a backup food supply. Perhaps this is simply unnecessary; as a creature with the ability to devour the soul of any living creature it encounters, the devourer has little incentive to buy disembodied souls from night hags or risk destruction by poaching from the River of Souls flowing from the Material Plane to the afterlife.

What all devourers covet even more than souls—which are relatively common—are magical items that allow them to shift between planes, such as *amulets of the planes* or *wells of many worlds*. Once planar travelers with a desperate desire to see what lies beyond the reaches of reality, devourers are understandably frustrated by the limited scope of their undead wanderings, and relish anything that allows them to readily leap from plane to plane—even if such travel is uncontrolled and unpredictable.

Variants

When a devourer manifests, it undergoes a dramatic transformation—one more invasive and overwhelming than those most undead transformations involve. The devourer's body and mind are reshaped and reformed by the alien influences that created it, and what remains of the source is often so fragmentary so as to constitute little more than a characteristic turn of phrase or a dreamlike memory of a life spent elsewhere.

Sometimes, however, a devourer retains a bit more of its previous personality—when this occurs, the remnants often take the form of unusual spell-like abilities. This might be a single ability—a trade of *contagion* for *bestow curse*, for example—but if the original creature was a powerful devil, daemon, or demon, these variant spell-like abilities can be quite different.

Former Devils: A devourer formed from a powerful devil sometimes has a suite of spell-like abilities that focuses more on the deception and control of living creatures. These devourers are always lawful evil. Replace the standard devourer spell-like abilities with the following at-will spell-like abilities: *alter self, beast shape I, charm monster, charm person, detect thoughts, invisibility, lesser geas, lesser planar ally, mass suggestion, scrying, secret page, suggestion*, and *summon monster VII*.

Former Daemons: A devourer formed from a powerful daemon sometimes has a suite of spell-like abilities that focuses more on the destruction of living creatures and spreading fear and horror. These devourers are always neutral evil. Replace the standard devourer spell-like abilities with the following at-will spell-like abilities: *animate dead, contagion, crushing despair, death knell, desecrate, destruction, doom, fear, harm, inflict serious wounds, phantasmal killer, spectral hand*, and *vampiric touch*.

Former Demons: A devourer formed from a powerful demon sometimes has a suite of spell-like abilities that focuses more on destruction and devastation. These devourers are always chaotic evil. Replace the standard devourer spell-like abilities with the following at-will spell-like abilities: *acid arrow, black tentacles, chaos hammer, disintegrate, earthquake, fireball, ice storm, lightning bolt, magic missile, phantasmal killer, scorching ray, shatter*, and *vampiric touch*.

Devourers on Golarion

Transformed devourers are extremely rare on the planes of the Pathfinder campaign setting, as only the most powerful of fiends or spellcasters have the ability to break free of the normal constraints of the Great Beyond and see what lies outside it. Far more common are created devourers, yet even these are few and far between; they frequently break away from their creators to wander the planes on unknown and unspeakable errands.

Although extremely powerful undead, devourers have a strained relationship with Urgathoa. As undead who neither create spawn nor form spontaneously, they are almost totally unconnected to the Pallid Princess's goals and views. Their allegiance to forces outside of the usual pantheon of evil gods also wins them little love from her, nor does she appreciate their total destruction of the souls they consume, for despite her evil and fostering of undeath, she remains a major god and a fundamental part of the progression of souls, which the devourers disrupt on behalf of their unknown masters.

All the good and neutral gods naturally abhor devourers, especially Pharasma, as it's her domain they desecrate the most by destroying souls. Of the evil faiths, most view the creatures as dangerous but potentially useful tools, and worshipers are cautioned never to let down their guard or place too much trust in even the most seemingly well-heeled devourer. Only Zon-Kuthon remains steadfastly silent on anything related to the subject of devourers, and sometimes refuses to indulge his clerics' attempts to summon them or, more rarely, grants such boons to clerics not normally powerful enough. Perhaps, as the only god who has himself ventured into the darkness beyond the planes and come back changed, he knows something the rest of the deities do not.

Devourers can be found on almost any of the evil planes, and occasionally on the neutral ones, provided they keep to their best behavior—though this clemency never extends to the Boneyard, where Pharasma's agents go to any necessary lengths to destroy the abominations. On Golarion proper, devourers rarely dwell in the open, and those unfortunates who learn devourers' names (when they bother to have them) rarely survive to tell the tale. Most devourers are content to remain anonymous, servitors created by powerful necromancers and then summarily destroyed or banished once their usefulness has run its course. A few, however, have remained long enough to gain followings of their own.

Though little known in Avistan, an exceptionally powerful devourer, Rudrakavala, dwells in an isolated, desolate mountain valley on the eastern fringe of Vudra's Narhari Desert. There, a fanatical cult of emaciated worshipers venerate him as an avatar of a Vudrani god of destruction (believed by some to be an aspect of Rovagug). The creature—said to have not moved in centuries—sits atop a black iron platform in perpetual contemplation, bleached white as stone by the sun and exposure to the elements. He is surrounded on all sides by a field of weathered bones covering almost a square mile of ground. His cultists drag victims to him and forcibly thrust them into the bone cavern of his chest. Once they witness the extraction of the spirit, they haul the corpse off to rot amid the bone field. Not even his cultists, however, know just what magic Rudrakavala uses the consumed spirits for, since he neither moves nor outwardly displays a devourer's normal abilities.

Sample Devourer

This towering form strides forth over the inky waters as if on solid land, its frame dripping with icy fluid and its chest writhing with tormented ghosts that appear to have drowned.

Barasthaga **CR 20**

XP 307,200

Male devourer oracle 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

NE Large undead (extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +34

Defense

AC 36, touch 15, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, –1 size)

hp 420 (28d8+294)

Fort +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +21

Defensive Abilities spell deflection; **DR** 5/piercing; **Immune** undead traits; **SR** 22

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +32 (1d8+13/19–20 plus energy drain)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks devour soul, energy drain (1 level, DC 26)

At will—*animate dead*, *contagion* (DC 23), *crushing despair* (DC 23), *death knell* (DC 21), *desecrate*, *destruction* (DC 26), *doom* (DC 20), *fear* (DC 23), *harm* (DC 25), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 22), *phantasmal killer* (DC 23), *spectral hand*, *vampiric touch*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 14th; concentration +23)

7th (4/day)—*destruction* (DC 26), *mass inflict serious wounds* (DC 26), *reverse gravity*, *vortex** (DC 26)

6th (6/day)—*antilife shell*, *fluid form**, *harm* (DC 25), *mass inflict moderate wounds* (DC 25)

5th (8/day)—*dispel good*, *geyser** (DC 24), *mass inflict light wounds* (DC 24), *plane shift* (DC 24), *slay living* (DC 24), *telekinesis* (DC 24)

4th (8/day)—*control water*, *dismissal* (DC 23), *freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 23), *unholy blight* (DC 23), *wall of ice* (DC 23)

3rd (8/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *contagion* (DC 22), *dispel magic*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 22), *protection from*

energy, water breathing

2nd (8/day)—*desecrate, hold person* (DC 21), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 21), *levitate, minor image* (DC 21), *shatter* (DC 21), *silence* (DC 21), *slipstream**, *spiritual weapon*

1st (9/day)—*command* (DC 20), *divine favor, inflict light wounds* (DC 20), *obscuring mist, sanctuary* (DC 20), *shield of faith, touch of the sea*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 19), *create water, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 19), *guidance, light, mage hand, mending, read magic, resistance, virtue*

Mystery waves

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 46

Feats Dodge, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Spring Attack, Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +42, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Knowledge (planes) +34, Knowledge (religion) +34, Perception +34, Stealth +32, Swim +40

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (fluid nature, fluid travel, ice armor, water sight)

Combat Gear *rod of quicken metamagic*; **Other Gear** *amulet of mighty fists +4*

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

In the Drowning Court of Abaddon, Thanatessim the Ash-Tongued misjudged his power, both personal and political, and challenged a more powerful rival for position among the ranks of greater thanadaemons. He failed, and rather than face obliteration at the hands of his enemy or the Horseman of Death, he fled, knowing even as he did so that no plane or world would be distant enough. And so he gathered all of his strength, everything he'd learned from an eternity of service to the Boatman, and fled somewhere beyond either.

The thanadaemon that fled never returned. Yet after a time, something else did. Calling itself Barasthaga the Blessed Minion—though never specifying precisely who or what it was a minion of—the devourer that contained some portion of the Ash-Tongued's essence came to its former home on Abaddon, only to be driven away by the combined effort of its former compatriots. Seemingly unperturbed, Barasthaga left them and began its long, rambling walk through the planes, beginning by following the banks of the River Styx. In the millennia that it has wandered, feeding as chance allows and seemingly communing with unheard voices, the devourer has touched Golarion several times, each time disappearing into the safety of the planes when confronted by more powerful adversaries. Although its daemonic heritage has afforded it the variant spell-like abilities such legacies sometimes grant, Barasthaga has become even more unusual over the eons, slowly growing in power as an oracle of waves. Though no sane creatures can be said to have ever allied with Barasthaga, on several seemingly random occasions it has chosen to merely whisper incomprehensible secrets to a potential victim and then release the creature to walk free—a practice that it explains only as "walking the path that's yet to come."





Graveknight

"The dead thing was bored. An entire village drowned in wells, nailed to doorways, burnt inside the church. As the days went on and the peasants still refused to turn over the rebels, he got creative. Mothers fought each other with hammers to see whose child would live. The tortured priest broke and picked who would take his place on the rack. And still the townsfolk would not give in.

"I understood obedience. I understood that the rebels threatened the stability represented by our lord. Yet that dead thing in the armor cared nothing for the war we were preventing. It simply watched, trying to remember the taste of life by stealing it from others."

—From the confession of Talisan Breys

The lust for battle and sheer will to win allow some truly evil and vile warriors to shrug off their final defeat. Through methods that remain poorly understood, the vengeful spirit of such a fearsome combatant sometimes forms a bond with its armor that permits it to simply refuse death, its spirit lingering long past when it should have gone on to its eternal punishment in the afterlife. Similar in many ways to a lich's phylactery, this armor rebuilds the undead knight's body whenever it is beaten in combat. Only by utterly destroying the armor, by annihilating it rather than just breaking it into pieces, can an opponent truly end the existence of the despicable creatures known as graveknights.

Unlike liches, graveknights almost never plan this return from their last battle. It happens, seemingly spontaneously and at random, to people totally unprepared for an undead existence. Wedded to the physical world but deprived of all sensual pleasure by their deathless state, graveknights deal with their transformation in a variety of ways. Some take up or resume the service of dark gods or more powerful evil creatures in the hope that their patrons will eventually deign to lift their curse, while others simply resume where they left off, seeking dominion over mortals and the exhilaration of crushing their enemies. Still others spend their days careening between futile attempts to recapture the heady exhilaration of battle and wrestling with the tedium of their actual existence. Acting in part out of habit, these latter warriors recreate the horrors and atrocities that once excited them, but taste nothing but ash for their trouble. Unable to accept that they will never again feel a surge of adrenaline or the heady thrill of triumph, they wade ever deeper into the carnage, blood, and misery that defined their mortal lives.

Graveknights do not feed on pain or death, nor do they need to kill in order to continue their existence. Though some slaughter mortals out of anger, for revenge, or simply to continue proving their battle prowess in much the same way they did in life, others do so merely out of reflex, with no more thought to the lives they cut short than someone swatting a fly. In some ways, this behavior makes them even worse than those undead who must prey upon the living in order to survive. The manner and attitude with which a graveknight approaches violence depends entirely on the mortal warrior it once was, yet ultimately, all are incarnate killers, and as the centuries of slaughter wind on, many lose what little shreds of humanity still cling to them, defining themselves solely through battle and conquest.

The circumstances of their lives, and especially their deaths, define many physical aspects of graveknights as well. All of them have the ability to channel one particular sort of energy. This energy is typically determined by the moments when they crossed the threshold between life and death and began their new existence. A general burned at the stake for his war crimes, for instance, might return as a graveknight with an affinity for fire energy, while one who finally succumbed to her wounds in a bloodstained snowfield might have an affinity for cold.

Warriors and leaders of troops in life, graveknights ape this practice in death. Though unable to create undead themselves, they have the power to compel those they encounter to march under their banner. Though some continue to lead living soldiers as well, especially if serving as the commander for some dark god's or patron's mortal forces, this ability to control undead makes them that much more cavalier about the people they kill or the rebukes they dispense to their own soldiers, as every death bolsters the army's strength once one of their clerical lieutenants animates the fallen.

People near a graveknight feel a soul-rending sensation of isolation and loss which many describe as feeling as if the gods themselves had suddenly turned away from them. Indeed, this impression is more than simply a feeling, as prayers and uses of positive energy regularly fizzle and fail near a graveknight. Graveknights capitalize on the sense of abandonment caused by their sacrilegious aura. Though in truth it does more to bolster them and other undead, they also like to play on the fear and uncertainty it invokes. By claiming that anyone slain by their hand dies out of sight of the gods, they sometimes cause opponents to hesitate and falter. Of course, only those who worship the gods of the light sense this in their souls. Servants of darker powers instead experience a bleak confidence.

Though they often appear to despise their existence, graveknights seem incapable of suicide. While perfectly willing to fight right up to the destruction of their bodies, they never slacken their attacks in the hope of defeat. Whether this is a part of their curse or simply a natural result of the sorts of ragingly egomaniacal personalities that become graveknights is unclear, but when possible, graveknights look for ways to cause their armor to teleport to a safe location if they get beaten. No graveknight would ever willingly reveal its secret weakness—that a foe must destroy its armor to truly end it.

For complete information on the graveknight template, see pages 84 and 85 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #26: "The Sixfold Trial" or the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*.

Ecology

Graveknights are born of defeat, and it is their rage at such an end that allows them to return, attempting to erase their failure through greater triumphs and atrocities. Unfortunately for them, while they remember many aspects of mortal life, they can never truly experience them again. Graveknights cannot physically enjoy sleep, food, sex, or other such pleasures, though some may go through the motions in pursuit of those emotions they are

Parasitic Armor

Anyone who treats a graveknight's armor as simply battle spoils risks both body and soul. Graveknights rejuvenate when destroyed. Their bodies literally grow back, with tendrils of undead flesh coiling out from recesses in their armor like gruesome creepers, unless opponents take pains to also obliterate the armor. These unholy strands have no objection to infesting a living host instead of producing a new body for their master.

People who claim a graveknight's armor rarely recognize the threat until too late, as part of the magic of the rejuvenation makes wearers oblivious to the invasion of their own bodies. When they take the armor off to sleep, they overlook the puncture marks and deep fissures upon their skin. Some sinister instinct also causes them to conceal these wounds from their companions. Only the particularly observant (and a DC 25 Perception check) perceive the peril in time help their friend cast aside the armor.

Once the rejuvenation period ends 1d10 days later, the wearer must make a Will save (DC equal to 10 + 1/2 the graveknight's HD + the graveknight's Cha modifier) each day to avoid transforming into the original graveknight. This transformation consumes mind as well as body, immediately slaying the victim and utterly destroying the body.

To wear graveknight armor safely, its new owner must cleanse it of evil and forever sever its connection to its undead master. This cleansing requires the casting of three different spells in rapid succession. Two are always *break enchantment* and *holy word*. The third varies with each graveknight and relates back to the unique circumstances surrounding its first death and return. Figuring out the correct spell usually entails a great deal of research and careful thought. And of course, while this detective work is happening, the armor continues to steadily regenerate the graveknight.

still allowed: triumph, victory, and the grim satisfaction of absolute dominance. Even these may lose their luster over time, however—the longer a graveknight exists, the greater the conquest it must wallow in to achieve satisfaction.

Though unable to experience terror, pain, or grief themselves, graveknights still remember these feelings and know how to produce them in others. The best the living can hope for when they encounter a graveknight is a quick death, for graveknights burn both forests and towns with equal aplomb, killing innocents and champions for sport or simply to cow their opponents. Graveknights rarely restrain their violent impulses unless these urges interfere with some greater plan—and even then, they sometimes slip and kill without a second thought.

A graveknight's body exists as a desiccated husk of bone and flesh within its armor, but these constantly rejuvenated remains are of no particular significance or function. Rather, it's the armor of a graveknight that is its true flesh, the lifeline and cage that shackles it to the material world. Similarly, the glowing eyes that can be seen through the creature's helmet are not its actual eyes, but rather twin points of light manifested by the raging spirit itself.

Habitat & Society

Graveknights usually begin their new existence by picking up where they left off at the moment of death. Most spent their first few months hunting down enemies or reclaiming lost territory. All too soon, however, such amusements begin to pale. Their inability to recapture the sensations that once defined their lives soon causes them to lose interest in earlier pursuits, instead embracing the single motivation left to them: arrogance. For though lesser goals like revenge may consume them for a while, most graveknights eventually come to understand their immortal state as an acknowledgment of their inherent superiority over lesser beings—even over death itself. Even those who regard their existence as a curse see it this way; in their decaying minds, this unholy gift was granted to them because they were the most capable, the most driven, the most fearsome, and the most deserving of rule. With each century of slaughter that goes by, each army that fails to stand against their undead battle prowess, this sense of elitism and entitlement grows, until it eventually becomes the graveknight's defining characteristic. The graveknight kills and conquers because it can, and because every victory strengthens its own idea of itself and its purpose.

For this reason, graveknights generally regard each other as rivals and inferiors, and almost never associate unless compelled to by necessity (or by someone stronger). When they are encountered in groups, the group is invariably led by the most powerful of them, who holds the lesser graveknights in check through sheer power and force of will. Such pecking orders are maintained only until the leader is destroyed, at which the point the subservient graveknights jockey for position until a clear victor is again recognized, and the cycle repeats.

When graveknights serve other powerful creatures or beings, this service should not be confused with love or fealty. A graveknight serving a master does not in any way feel less arrogant or sure of its own mastery. It might see their arrangement in terms of defined roles, with itself as the master of physical combat and its associate the master of magic, which the graveknight regards as inferior. Other graveknights see their alliances as a matter of convenience, the most effective way to advance their own ends. Regardless, in the long run, every graveknight expects to come out on top, and in due time the graveknight challenges its ally or master, or even its patron god—though that time may be measured in centuries.

Campaign Role

While perfectly capable of acting as villains in their own right, graveknights often work well as enforcers or field commanders for antagonists less suited to melee. Such a master not only gives them direction and purpose, but also serves as a restraint for their more destructive impulses.

As a foe that's likely to return again and again—for anyone who defeats a graveknight without completely destroying it immediately becomes the focus of all the graveknight's attentions—it's important to play up a graveknight's significance. A graveknight should never be a random encounter, and when possible, it's often good to build up the graveknight by first showing the destruction and carnage it leaves in its wake. When a graveknight actually does enter battle, it should be with flair. The screaming soldiers and dying horses in a battle might fall silent as the graveknight takes the field, its aura of sacrilege seeming to darken the day. Its weapons crackle with energy, and its eyes glow from beneath its helmet. To make a fight with a graveknight anything less momentous is to rob the monster of much of its utility.



As with liches, for which graveknights are essentially the combat-oriented equivalent, graveknights should only be used sparingly and with deliberate purpose, as the first encounter is likely to send the PCs haring off on a new quest to destroy the undead's armor once and for all, or else introduce a villain that's likely to be a focus of the campaign for some time.

Treasure

Graveknights form an unbreakable connection with the armor they wore in life. In many senses, they actually *are* their armor, as it's only through this bond that their soul remains trapped and the dried-out husk of their body constantly rejuvenates. Though risky to wear until cleansed (see the sidebar on page 18), this armor usually has magical properties. Professional warriors in life, graveknights also tend to have the best and most magical weapons they can acquire in death. However, aside from a few trophies, graveknights have little interest in baubles or trinkets, generally passing them on to their minions. In fact, some graveknights make a practice of actively destroying valuables they cannot use simply to see how much grief they can cause by ripping up a captive's spellbook or snapping a staff over a knee.

Variants

While most graveknights arise spontaneously from the armor of sadistic warlords and fallen champions, there are methods by which evil men and women can deliberately transform themselves into these powerful undead lords, in much the same way some spellcasters seek to become liches. The process by which a hopeful graveknight makes the deliberate transformation is neither simple nor cheap. The character must first live and lead a life of wanton cruelty, winning great glory and power over the course of several violent conflicts (and achieving a minimum of 9th level in any character class, with an evil alignment for all 9 levels). When he achieves this goal, he may craft the suit of armor that will serve him in his afterlife as his graveknight armor—this must be heavy armor, although its exact type is irrelevant. The creator must also be proficient in the armor's use. The armor itself must be of exceptional quality and crafting, requiring the finest of materials and artisans. Even the forge upon which the armor is to be crafted must be of exceptional quality. The overall cost of these components is 25,000 gp—this amount is over and above any additional costs incurred in making the armor magical. An existing suit of armor (including magic armor) can serve as the base suit upon which these 25,000 gp of enhancements are built.

Once the armor is complete, the hopeful graveknight must don the armor and then seek out a powerful evil patron to sponsor his cruelties—this patron can be a mortal tyrant, a hateful monster, a demonic god, or similar power. Once the graveknight-to-be secures a patron, he must engage upon a crusade in that patron's name. This crusade must last long enough for the graveknight to achieve two additional levels of experience, during which he must wear his armor whenever possible.

Upon completing this final stage of his quest for undeath (and a minimum character level of 11th), the sadist has finally neared the end of his long path to eternal undeath. The last stage in becoming a graveknight is to construct a pool, pit, or other large concavity, into which the graveknight must place 13 helpless, good-aligned creatures of his own race, who must be sacrificed by the graveknight or his patron using acid, cold, electricity, or

fire. The graveknight must wear his armor during these sacrifices, and within a minute of the last sacrifice, the graveknight must take his own life using the same form of energy, after which his body and armor must be destroyed by that form of energy. The pit within which the entire ritual took place must then be filled with soil taken from graves that have spawned undead creatures.

Once this final step is taken, the graveknight-to-be has a 75% chance of rising as a graveknight. This chance rises by 1% per point of Charisma possessed by the graveknight-to-be at the time of his death. Additional factors can increase this chance as well, at the GM's discretion.

Graveknights on Golarion

Graveknights are rare, yet arise in every culture and society on Golarion. Whenever sufficiently evil warriors or similar sorts of beings die at the hands of a foe, there is a chance that they might return as graveknights. Folklore often confuses graveknights with other sorts of undead; especially those arising simply to take revenge on their slayer. This uncertainty, and their relative rarity, helps to explain why so many graveknights manage to survive multiple defeats, since few opponents realize they must destroy a graveknight's armor in order to rid themselves of the threat.

Heavily armored warriors are most likely to arise as graveknights, perhaps because the complete shell of metal or other materials assists in trapping the soul. As a result, graveknights are more common in regions that use knights, cavalry, and other such heavily armored warriors, such as Taldor, Cheliax, Nidal, and Molthune, while being less common in desert regions or places like the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, where warriors rely more on speed and prowess than armor plating. Geb, being a land of the undead, is an even more natural place for graveknights to arise and find employment at the heads of armies, though the undead rulers of that land are more familiar with the phenomenon and don't hesitate to finish off such an undead general if it sets its sights too high. Since graveknights generally arise from pitched battles rather than murder or back-alley skirmishes, places like the Hold of Belkzen, the River Kingdoms, and the Shackles are all prime candidates for graveknight birthing as well. The order of lawkeepers known as Hellknights is particularly susceptible, as its members' battle prowess; disdain for good and evil; and almost inhuman adherence to their creeds, codes, and goals makes them perfect candidates for transformation.

Regardless of where they arise, graveknights tend to drift toward the parts of the world most tempting for conquest or hospitable to their kind. In addition to Geb, several of the darker governments of Avistan, such as Cheliax, Nidal, and Irrisen, have at some point commissioned and sanctioned graveknights as military leaders, provided they agree to serve the government's interest, yet in most cases these arrangements turn out poorly for the governing officials. Only Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, had the power and hubris to maintain numerous graveknight commanders. With his imprisonment, many were destroyed, while others retreated into the shadows to guard their master's assets until he comes again.

Urgathoa claims graveknights as her children just as she does all undead. Her priests and other high servants maintain that she is the mysterious agency that actually calls them back from the grave, while the goddess herself gives more confusing and potentially contradictory answers. Despite that, many graveknights serve the cult in hopes of gaining her favor and achieving either release or their own blood-soaked apotheosis. They also note that mortals who displease her often lose the ability to savor food and other sorts of delights, and thus wonder if she might have the power to restore to them what they have lost. This simple possibility sometimes causes them to stay their hand, or even offer assistance, when dealing with her followers.

Sample Graveknight

This sinister figure is completely encased in black, devil-themed armor, with only its glowing eyes visible beneath its helm.

Lictor Shokneir **CR 16**

XP 76,800

Male human graveknight fighter 5/Hellknight 10 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 278)

LE Medium undead (human)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +24

Aura sacrilegious aura (DC 25, 30 ft.),

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 11, flat-footed 27 (+13 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 177 (15 HD; 5d10+10d10+95)

Fort +18, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, channel resistance +4, force of will (+6 vs. figment, +4 vs. glamer, +2 vs. charm), rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, undead traits, **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 *unholy heavy flail* +27/+22/+17 (1d10+16/17–20 plus 3d6 fire) or
slam +22 (1d4+7)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8/×3 plus 3d6 fire)

Special Attacks channel destruction, devastating blast, Hell's knight 1/day (grants the unholy weapon quality), lawbringer (all attacks are considered to be lawful for purposes of damage reduction), smite chaos 4/day, undead mastery, weapon training (flails +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +20)
At will—*detect chaos*

8/day—*discern lies*
3/day—*summon monster VII* (1 bone devil or 1d3 erinyes or 1d4+1 bearded devils)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20
Base Atk +15; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 33
Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Staggering Critical, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail)
Skills Intimidate +31, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +24, Ride +26; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride
Languages Common, Infernal
SQ disciplines 3/day (fearsomeness, summon devil, wrack), Hellknight armor 3, infernal armor, phantom mount, armor training 1
Gear +4 *Hellknight plate*, +3 *heavy flail*, +1 *composite longbow* with 20 arrows, *belt of giant strength* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Channel Destruction (Su) Any weapon Lictor Shokneir wields deals an additional +3d6 points of damage on a successful hit.
Devastating Blast (Su) Three times per day, Lictor Shokneir may unleash a 30-foot cone of destructive force. This blast deals 10d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 22 half).
Phantom Mount (Su) Once per hour, Lictor Shokneir can summon a skeletal horse similar to a *phantom steed* (CL 15th). This mount is more real than a typical *phantom steed*, and can carry one additional rider. If the mount is destroyed, it can be summoned again with full hit points 1 hour later.
Rejuvenation (Su) One day after Lictor Shokneir is destroyed, his armor begins to rebuild his body. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the armor merely starts the process anew. After this time has elapsed, Lictor Shokneir wakens fully healed.
Sacrilegious Aura (Su) Lictor Shokneir constantly exudes an aura of intense evil and negative energy in a 30-foot radius. This aura functions as *desecrate*, which the graveknight constantly gains the benefits of (these benefits are included in the stats above). In addition, this miasma of fell energies hinders the channeling of positive energy. Any creature that attempts to use positive energy in this area—such as through a cleric's channel energy ability, a paladin's lay on hands, or any spell with the healing descriptor—must make a DC 25 caster level check or the attempt to use positive energy fails.
Undead Mastery (Su) As a standard action, Lictor Shokneir can attempt to bend any undead creature within 50 feet to its will. The targeted undead must make a DC 22 Will save or fall under the graveknight's control. This control is permanent for unintelligent undead. An undead with an Intelligence score is allowed an additional save every day to break free from Lictor Shokneir's control. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by Lictor Shokneir's undead mastery for 24 hours. Lictor Shokneir can control up to 75 Hit Dice worth of undead creatures at a time. If he exceeds this number, he loses control over some of his minions, as per the spell *animate dead*.



During the Chelish civil war, several bands of mercenaries were dubbed Hellknights by the besieged Chelish royalty, but many of these "lesser" and unsanctioned orders refused to disband after the war was over. One of these was the Order of the Crux. Hunted down and destroyed by the Order of the Scourge in 4663 AR, the butchers of the Crux were wiped out, and their fortress of Citadel Gheisteno put to the torch. Yet 25 years later, three graveknights clad in scarred Hellknight armor rose from the ruin. They gathered together lesser undead under the banner of the Crux, and now seemingly bide their time in the shadows of their fallen citadel.

As he was in life, so is Lictor Shokneir the leader of his band in death. Always a grim and merciless man, Shokneir's rebirth as a graveknight has only strengthened his certainty that his is the only valid interpretation of the law, and that those who question it are best put to the sword. Though his two subordinates may not share his wisdom, he sees them for what they are: competent minions sent to help him on his quest.



Lich

We confronted the Jester of Years in his hidden lair and held up the phylactery we'd spent ten months hunting for, shouting something heroic about ridding the world of his evil.

"With that?" he replied. "I think not." Then he stretched out one bony hand, and the gem crumbled to dust in our fingers.

"Now do your best to destroy this body," he hissed. "Make it amusing this time." We rained down fire and acid, sword and holy power, and as he crumbled beneath our assault, he only laughed and said, "Come back next month with something better."

We've been killing him for years now—we're running out of ideas.

—Last letter from Maris Jonachsen, priest of Iomedae

Though the lure of immortality is strong in all who fear death, few creatures can avoid life's natural end. Bodies become frail, minds crumble before the onslaught of age, and all the structures one has built come tumbling down, leaving one's name in ruin, forgotten in the dust of history.

Those who would follow the path of the lich seek to halt life's inevitable conclusion. Drawing on the powers of their faith or dark knowledge, the greatest spellcasters of the world transcend the boundaries of life through mysterious techniques unknown to the living.

One does not become a lich by accident or stumble into this form of undeath through misadventure. A lich is not a puppet, a blood-mad monster, or an accident of rage or despair. The lich is instead a creature of design and ultimate will, carefully and rationally planning its transition from life into undead immortality. Of all the undead, the lich is perhaps the most terrifying precisely because it chooses its own fate. The lich is a dangerous opponent: cagey, prepared, ambitious enough to want to tear its soul from its body, and smart enough to figure out how to do it.

It is not merely force of will that propels one to lichdom, nor is it the simple desire to avoid death, though these are certainly factors in the mindset of the would-be lich. Instead, those who would follow the path of the undying mind must seek out tomes of forbidden magic and lost lore. Though the initiates might not be evil when they begin, the process under which they become liches drives them slowly into the arms of corruption—the focus they must develop drives out all other concerns, including the civilized needs of friendship and love.

The final and most important aspect of a lich's transformation involves creating a new home for its soul called a phylactery—this is often something strong and impressive, such as a gem or box of unparalleled quality, though almost any object can serve. Once the soul has been safely transferred over, the phylactery is then hidden through means cunning and wise. A lich can never be destroyed as long as its phylactery remains intact. Though its bones might be crushed to dust and scattered to the winds, the lich returns as strong as ever a few days later, burning with vengeance and marshaling its might to bring utter ruin to its enemies.

The magic (whether divine or arcane) that powers a lich's unlife keeps its mind sharp and spirits fresh. Indeed, those liches who still deign to share their thoughts with others have often noted clarity unlike any they experienced in life. They never require sleep, and can devote their fullest attentions to their labors. Yet for most, these pleasures eventually begin to pale. Though they may start out simply seeking more time in which to continue their work, with no true predilection toward evil, in the end, all liches inevitably cycle down into madness or a paranoia that mortals seek to annihilate them—the latter, of course, often being true. Through the endless centuries, the cycle of time speeds ever faster, and the faces of those lesser beings still trapped in death's plan become a blur, nameless and forgettable, with the lich remembering only those who seek to destroy it. Is it any wonder then that most liches grow to nurture a generalized hatred for life, or that they surround themselves with horrific magic to destroy interlopers? Liches often build fabulous fortresses, filled with traps and deadly devices to eliminate intruders. Choking gases, bottomless pits, intricate magics that draw upon unknowable reservoirs of power and devoted solely to the horrors of the living—these are but a fraction of the destruction liches rain upon those who seek to disturb their great works.

Sometimes, however, liches roam. They grow weary of their self-imposed confinement and travel in disguise to see what new delights the world holds. Perhaps they need to find the particulars of long-lost details recorded on scrolls in ancient cities buried under the dust of centuries, or maybe they must gather precious and rare ingredients under the moon's light in a stinking bog far from their home. But whenever they leave the safety of their homes, they travel with the security of their own tremendous magical might.

Liches in History

The word *lich* is derived from the Old English word *lic*, meaning "corpse" (as it was later used by Jack Vance in his widely influential tales of the Dying Earth, where he describes the earth as being covered by "lich-mold"). The town of Lichfield in Great Britain was long claimed to be named after a great martyrdom of 999 Christian faithful by the Roman Emperor Diocletian (wrongly, as it turns out; the English name for the place evolved from Welsh or another Celtic language, rather than Old English). At that point, the corpses did not walk.

More recently, the lich appeared as a revenant bent on revenge in Ambrose Bierce's "The Death of Halpin Frayser." From there, the word took root in countless fantasy stories, denoting sorcerers and wizards who sought to cheat death through magic and appearing in the works of such authors as Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, and Gardner Fox.

Koschei the Deathless from Slavic folklore is one of the most famous denizens of mythology to hide his soul away in a proto-phylactery. The word "phylactery" derives from the Greek *phylassein*, meaning "to guard"; a number of traditions suggest that one's spirit can be severed from the body and hidden away, the effect of such a severing being the loss of humanity and empathy.

Some of their kind return to the mortal world to serve as rulers, often wielding their magics to drive slave populations in the creation of some vast work or arcane experiment. Liches are timeless and often patient in a way few mortals can understand, playing to the long term and thinking nothing of laying plans—often of vengeance—that take several human generations to come to fruition. Some of them seek divinity (and perhaps some even find it, after a fashion), but most are so wrapped in their visions that they care little for accumulating the worship of mortals. Their work is more personal and more introspective, a great becoming.

Ecology

Whether a wizard, a cleric, or another who has deliberately achieved undeath through one means or another, the lich is a creature held together by powerful magic. The magic of the lich staves off the effects of death and prevents the rotting of its flesh, but does little to protect the flesh from desiccation. Once the lich forsakes the pleasures of food and drink, its body loses the nourishment necessary to keep skin strong and supple, and soon the skin and muscles contract, snap, and wither. Fortunately, the lich does not need these to move; its flesh is mere decoration. Even when dealt a blow that would cripple a mortal, the lich has no fear of immobility, for its magical state keeps it fully ambulatory even on broken bones, as if its skeletal structure were held within a frame of invisible forces.



Most liches have little direct and natural impact on their surroundings, as they nourish themselves solely through the strength of the magic that turned them. Their impact comes through the indirect results of their actions: the castoff creatures of their experiments, the strange and eerie transformations that begin to occur around the weight of so much concentrated power, or the undead that spill from their control. Likewise, the fortresses they build to protect themselves from the intrusions of the living may represent either great threats or great temptations to the rest of the world, throwing off unmistakable scents of evil and power. Their lairs might be mazes built within hidden valleys, tangled in the roots of mighty forests, held aloft in the clouds and invisible to mortal eye, or constructed in the dreams of sleeping giants. Their abodes are places of catastrophe to uninvited guests, and their reach extends far beyond what mortals might ken. Those who enter a lich's domain may not realize it at first, but wise adventurers know that everything in that zone is already or becoming a servant to the lich's desire.

Habitat & Society

Liches are by their nature unique and solitary creatures. The egomania necessary to seek eternal life through lichdom means that, outside of rare treatises and tomes, many liches see little value in exploring the lives led by others of their kind, recognizing that each of them must walk the road of immortality alone. The longer they live, the more different they become. Occasionally liches may work at cross-purposes, potentially drawing adventurers or nations into their conflicts as they pull strings that rulers never knew existed (and might still not realize even as they marshal their armies). Mountains may fall from the skies, blood may bubble up from the ground, and strange doors may open in trees to disgorge unearthly warriors. Or perhaps it is a cold war waged across centuries, fought on mental and arcane planes that resonate only slightly in the minds of mortals, a slow game of one-upmanship. These insidious wars are more common, for the way of the lich is to cultivate patience, and their struggles are epics not normally told in the histories of humanity.

Rarely, a lich may work with its fellows. Perhaps they each have information the other desires, or have discovered a stratagem to move toward some unknown next stage in their development, but require additional power. Perhaps they were ancient allies or enemies who have set aside their feuds (for who knows you better than someone who's tried to kill you for a hundred years?), or maybe they have simply become lonely. Because liches are paranoid by nature, these alliances never last for long (at least as liches reckon time), but when they occur, the results can be devastating: should liches choose to meddle with it, the natural order can be turned on its head.

Even more disturbing are ancient cabals of liches. Some liches, particularly those that were divinely created, have a common ground and common goals that are about more than personal enlightenment; others of their kind might simply choose to while away a century or two by indulging

in these pursuits. For a time, they meddle in the affairs of mortals, perhaps walking among them in disguise or conducting experiments upon them as if the people were mayflies, building ever greater stores of knowledge on the ways of other humanoids (and ever greater disinterest in their fates). For liches, no matter how beneficent they may have been before their change, eventually lose the ability to care for individuals. Though a lich might cultivate servitors, these servants fall to dust all too quickly, leaving the lich alone in the dream of life and death.

Though they are individual creatures, many liches follow similar paths and dreams as they progress deeper into the mysteries of their fates. They begin with small goals, perhaps of magical exploration or the rule of nations. After centuries, they become bored and begin experimenting with the world around them on a grand scale, perhaps delving into its histories or its creatures, making alliances with dragons and elder giants. When they tire of this, and their original plans begin to seem slight and naive, they often choose to venture onto the planes, summoning devils, demons, and angels—and when they discover mastery over these creatures as well, they voyage still further, tied only tenuously to the world of mortals.

And then one day this fragile tie breaks. Of those liches who don't meet their end on an adventurer's blade, many simply lose interest in the world and disappear altogether into the Great Beyond, never again to be seen on the world of their birth.

Campaign Role

Liches make poor wandering monsters, and once introduced into a campaign, they are likely to remain a fixture. If the party encounters a lich and tries to fight it, it's likely to retreat while sacrificing its servants, then bend its prodigious intellect and power toward finding out everything it can about its newest enemies. From there, it will try to destroy them—once threatened, a lich cannot afford to ignore its enemies, lest they track down and destroy its soul.

Liches are best used as the centerpieces of campaigns, the hidden villains responsible for the PCs' woes. Their power often draws legions of weaker servitors to them (helping to populate dungeons or execute elaborate plans), and their plots are long-running and intricate, as liches prepare for eventualities like no other. The party may not even recognize when they have stumbled into such plans until several adventures into a campaign, when they suddenly realize that disparate problems or storylines are all connected in an elaborate web.

Conversely, a lich might become a mentor for the PCs (though again concealing its true nature, for good-aligned PCs). After all, who better to seek out strange magics and rumors than adventurers? Too often, adventurers are precisely the type of people who don't look closely at who pays them, or for what. The party might help further a lich's plans tremendously before uncovering the truth about their employer—who has, of course, laid contingency plans for exactly this situation, and knows the nature of each member's biggest weakness.

Treasure

Over the course of their lives, liches find and create vast amounts of magical treasure. Some of them concentrate their power in a single location, while others scatter their items in prepared caches around their domains. They frequently carry items worth many thousands of gold pieces on their person—wealth means nothing to liches, except insofar as it is a reflection of their power. Many of them have moved beyond such petty expressions of might, but most still maintain vast storerooms of coin in case they need to buy a politician or pacify townsfolk. As the primary trading tool of the lesser races, treasure comes in handy, much as humans use honey and sugar to attract ants. Additionally, with money stashed away in banking houses and merchant consortiums across the world, most liches never want for the materials they need to move their schemes forward.

Liches are most effective when used as major villains in campaigns, and as such you should consider giving lich NPCs gear equivalent to PCs of their level, rather than treating them as NPCs. Keep in mind that equipping a lich with this amount of gear can drastically increase its power, and results in a +1 increase to the undead's final CR. Many of the most powerful liches also own powerful artifacts—items like a *staff of the magi* or a *book of infinite spells*. These items do not count against the lich's wealth, but you should take care when giving a powerful lich too many artifacts—not only because overloading a lich with powerful magic can make it too dangerous, but because when the lich is defeated, its gear goes to the PCs. Still, gaining a powerful artifact as a reward for defeating a creature as dangerous as a lich can make the encounter all the more memorable for players.

Variants

The motivations of those who seek the way of the lich vary, but the end result is the same: an undying spellcasters of enormous power and talent, capable of existing forever and growing more powerful as the centuries melt by. Yet eternal unlife brings with it a subtle but very real danger—the threat of ennui. A lich that doesn't keep itself engaged in the pursuit of new magic, constant conflicts with foes both living and dead, or other activities finds itself with increasing periods of lassitude and overindulgence in theoretical research or thought, and runs the risk of becoming a floating skull known as a demilich.

The transformation from lich to demilich can actually increase the danger a less-powerful lich presents, for these mostly decayed undead are deadly in their own right. The more powerful the lich becomes, though, the greater its fall from glory should it succumb to boredom and apathy—a vicious cycle, since the greater the lich, the more likely it is to find itself isolated in a vast tomb of its own insidious design. Liches that maintain long conflicts with enemies can stave off the threat of decay into a demilich indefinitely—this may be in and of itself the primary reason why so many liches enter the annals of history as notorious villains: subconsciously or otherwise, they're attempting to stave off the ravages of time even after achieving immortality.

Demiliches are complex creatures, and an in-depth exploration of their powers is beyond the scope of this book—they are detailed in full in the upcoming *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*.

Liches on Golarion

The most famous lich in Golarion's history is Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. Cast down by Aroden and brought back by overwhelming force of will, the Whispering Tyrant nearly brought all of the Inner Sea region under his heel. Even now, the seals of the forces of good hold the Whispering Tyrant's spirit at bay, but remain unable to destroy him utterly.

Because of this history, any mention of liches in the northern parts of the Inner Sea is enough to bring curses to lips and hands to hilts. Should word of a lich reach the ears of Iomedae's crusaders or Sarenrae's holy champions, they will undoubtedly equip themselves for hunting and war, and track down the lich's phylactery to destroy it utterly.

The Harlot Queen of Geb—once Aroden's herald Arazni, before her forced corruption by the Whispering Tyrant—is another famous lich, though not nearly as powerful now as she was as a goddess. Still, she has the ghost-king's power behind her to help keep the scheming and independent-minded populace at bay. There are known to be a number of liches who live openly in Geb—these seem to enjoy the novelty of living in plain sight, as well as the long game of politics with each other in this undead state.

Though these are the most visible, the Inner Sea has seen several other powerful liches, their names and deeds etched into the hearts of the suffering across the world. The undead pharaoh An-Hepsu XI (sometimes known as the Incorruptible Pharaoh) ruled the ancient nation of Osirion for many years before finally being sealed away in a secret prison-tomb, while Socorro, the Butcher of Carrion Hill, served the Whispering Tyrant and took that town in Ustalav as his fiefdom. Yet certainly many more lurk in the shadows, unwilling to reveal themselves to the world. Conspiracy lovers often suggest that liches have their bony fingers in every major government, control the criminal underworld, or are responsible for such tragedies as the ongoing violence in Galt. Whether or not these claims have any merit—and who can say what might serve a lich's goals?—these rumors speak to the very real influence liches exert across the Inner Sea and beyond.

The Whispering Way holds liches to be among the purest of undead, for they were once mortals and came willingly to undeath. While this is also true for some vampires, not all of them embrace their condition; though vampires have the advantage of sometimes retaining their living appearance, liches wave this aside as trivial, as those able to overcome death via magic should find changing their appearance a minor trick. In the worship of Urgathoa, the lich again holds a special place, as pursuing the joys of undeath demonstrates a special perspective, and followers of Urgathoa offer the highest honors to liches and their followers.

Sample Lich

This gaunt figure wears spiked armor and wields a skull-headed mace. Cold light flickers in her empty eye sockets.

Phaegia **CR 12**

XP 19,200

Female old human lich cleric of Orcus 11

CE Medium undead (human)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +29

Aura fear (60-ft. radius, DC 19)

Defense

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +5 natural)

hp 119 (11d8+66)

Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *spell storing heavy mace* +8/+3 (1d8), touch +2 (1d8+5 plus paralyzing touch)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 9/day (DC 19, 6d6), paralyzing touch (DC 19), scythe of evil (5 rounds, 1/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +18) 10/day—bleeding touch (5 rounds), touch of evil (5 rounds)

Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +18)

6th—*create undead*[D], *harm* (DC 23), *word of recall*

5th—*flame strike* (DC 22), *greater command* (DC 22), *slay living*[D] (DC 22), *spell resistance*

4th—*air walk*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, extended *magic vestment*, *unholy blight*[D] (DC 21)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 20), *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against good*[D], *wind wall*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *death knell*[D] (DC 19), *hold person*

(DC 19), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*command* (2, DC 18), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 18), *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*[D], *sanctuary* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Death, Evil

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Extra Channel, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perception +29, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +19; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Common, Necril

SQ death's embrace

Gear +2 *spiked breastplate*, +1 *spell storing heavy mace* (contains *contagion*), *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, spell component pouch, unholy symbol of Orcus

Not all liches arise from arcane casters—many of them were divine spellcasters in life, particularly among cults that involve undeath, such as the faiths of Urgathoa, Kabriri, Orcus, or Zyphus. The lich presented here is one such example of a priestly lich—her stats may be used for any undead cleric, although changes to her choice of domains as befits differing religions might require you to make a few minor adjustments to the stats before play.

Once an influential priest of Aroden, Phaegia turned to the worship of the demon lord Orcus as she felt her life slipping away with her advancing years, and made the grueling transformation into a lich so she could continue to "live" forever. Phaegia now believes that she is coming closer to understanding the many mysteries of death, consulting with necromancers both arcane and divine, seeking consultation with the gods, and speaking with devils she conjures in her crumbled fastness. She welcomes evil clerics to her home, for she loves to debate theology and uncover secrets in ever-evolving death rituals. Should any of these guests fail to excite her intellect, she gives them to her ravening undead. Despite her endless curiosity, Phaegia retains the knowledge that her undeath is a gift from Orcus, and is careful to regularly advance the demon lord's goals, lest he decide to revoke her immortality.

Her current fortress is a ruined temple of Aroden hidden deep in a forested valley, with all signs of the former deity scratched away and replaced with symbols of Orcus. Phaegia's lieutenant is an old vampire named Arishkov Wolfstongue, whom the lich sometimes controls via *command undead* to keep him honest, but who otherwise has free rein to carry out Phaegia's research—primarily seeking ghost- and wraith-haunted places which Phaegia can visit to speak with the dead spirits.

Phaegia's phylactery, a startling blue sapphire hidden within a rotting tree trunk, is buried 50 feet beneath a small bog near her temple. Though she might have chosen somewhere a bit more secure or glorious, this hiding spot was designated in a vision from Orcus himself, and Phaegia understands that this is a subtle reminder of her own weakness: every time she dies, she must heave herself through the muck to return home. With every breathless rebirth and filthy slog through the mire, she is made to remember that she is ultimately a creature of the grave, and though her final rest may have been postponed, it is only by the demon lord's grace.





Mohrg

"Being held in place, unable to move, while you watch your companions die, unable to scream because some *thing* has frozen their throats shut... you think you can begin to understand? Imagine a writhing, purple tongue that used to be some murderer's guts snaking up the back of your throat until it tastes your brain. I can still feel it. But you know what the worst part was? Watching those empty eye sockets stare and then turn away, letting me know it could come back at any time—that when it wanted me, it would take me, and there was nothing anyone could do about it.

"Sometimes, being allowed to live isn't a gift at all."

—Unnamed survivor of a mohrg attack

Unrepentant killers in life, mohrgs retain an intense hatred for all living creatures, in particular sentient beings that can experience a fear of impending death. Some mohrgs were bloodthirsty warriors who slew as many as they could on the battlefield, others cold and calculating murders who selected their victims with delicate care, but nearly all mohrgs lived and died as mortal humanoids who delighted in the deaths of their fellow beings. A few mohrgs, however, are created from the remains of innocents by spellcasters (using the *create undead* spell), who are driven mad by being deprived of a peaceful death and then watching the transformation and slow decay of their own bodies. Those traumas, coupled with the loss of memories that tied them to the living world—to family, friends, and lovers—festers within these newly created mohrg, eventually resulting in the same hatred for the living that resides in the unbeating hearts of "naturally occurring" mohrgs. Regardless of a particular mohrg's means of animation and how much the creature remembers of its former life, the need to snuff out life like an unwanted candle is the primary desire of each mohrg. A mohrg exists merely to kill, and when it is not killing, it broods angrily, plotting the best means to spread death further.

Mohrg attacks often catch smaller communities unawares. The few survivors of such attacks are often dismissed as unfortunate souls turned mad by some other trauma, and unless a town under attack is blessed with the presence of powerful adventurers or a benevolent spellcaster, it may be wiped out by the mohrg's wave of lesser undead long before the townspeople realize the true nature of the threat.

Despite their almost compulsive need to kill—which for many mohrgs began while they were still alive, and fueled their undead transformation—mohrgs are not mindless. As intelligent undead, they are fully aware of their actions, and experience a perverse joy when killing, particularly when they slay other intelligent beings. This psychological joy is accompanied by a physical sensation of pleasure when negative energy rushes into a mohrg's body to mark the raising of its latest victim as a zombie, an addictive feeling the mohrg seeks to replicate whenever possible.

Even more than their formidable combat abilities, mohrgs' intelligence, and the fact that they may remember a significant portion of their previous lives, make them fatally dangerous predators. They have knowledge of human society and behavior, can navigate streets and cities (or avoid them, if necessary), and—if they can find a means to disguise their nature—are fully capable of recruiting living agents into their perverse quests. A mohrg can show inhuman patience when pursuing a plan, killing off a populace in slow handfuls until it has an army of waiting zombies prepared to rise up and destroy a settlement, and its desire for death far exceeds that of any sociopath. In rising as mohrgs, those with murderous urges in life are stripped of all mitigating factors, leaving only the unholy core of their bloodlust.

Mohrgs tend to show a preference for the killing styles they employed in life, creating eerie echoes of their former crimes. A murderer who slit open the throats of his victims might claw the flesh from the necks of its prey, or even employ a knife on helpless victims, while a thug who killed innocents and took their coins might still seek to lure new victims down dark alleys rather than simply striking to kill. The most dangerous of mohrgs are those who remember their mortal lives entirely, and still feel no remorse for their actions; taking a dark satisfaction in each and every kill, these mohrgs seek to best the murderous exploits they committed while still mortal. Whether it was in cruelty or in sheer numbers, a mohrg attempting to outdo the mortal killer it once was is a frightening and sickening creature, anathema to life itself.

Hunting for Sport

Without any need to feed on flesh, blood, or even life force, it might seem odd that mohrgs hunt so deliberately, or even need to kill at all. And yet they continue to do so, driven by a twisted desire to rob others of the life they no longer enjoy.

The means by which mohrgs hunt, kill, and draw enjoyment from their activities can be likened to a perverse sort of game. Although many mohrgs keep trophies of their kills (see the Treasure section), the thrill that mohrgs get from hunting, tormenting, and killing their prey is derived from the same visceral love of power that drove them in life. As undead, they have also seen a glimpse of the grave, and thus have a deep understanding of the terror that mortals experience when paralyzed and faced with the promise of certain death.

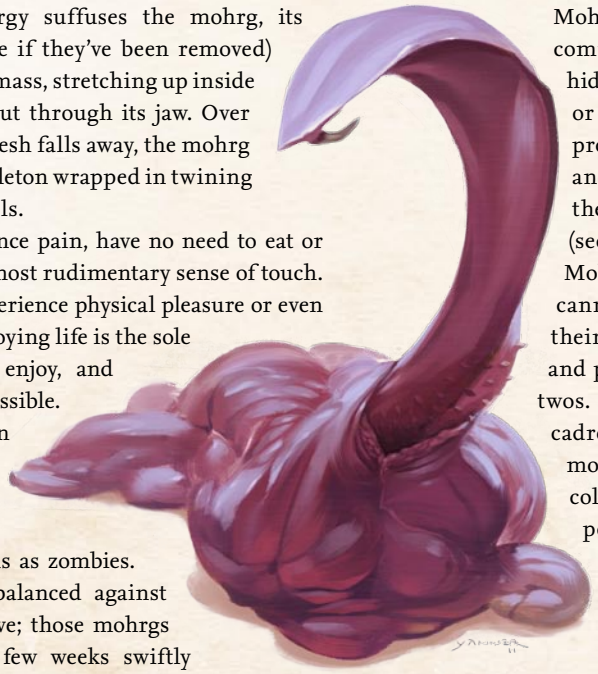
ECOLOGY

There are two means of becoming a mohrg: by spell or by deed. A dead creature subject to a *create undead* spell might find herself transformed into a mohrg. Likewise, a humanoid who has killed many over the course of his life—or even just a few, if he is particularly unrepentant about the lives he's taken—could awaken to discover that he has not yet passed to the afterlife, but arisen to undeath. Regardless of the means by which the state is achieved, all mohrgs experience a similar passage from life into existence as a mohrg.

Although some mohrgs' appearances may vary with respect to other details, nearly all specimens can be described as humanoid skeletons with grotesque, purple

loops of intestine growing within their torsos and winding up and out of their mouths like twisting, clawed tongues. Occupying the space where the digestive system once resided, these innards occasionally pulse with a hunger for nearby life, but otherwise serve no function. A mohrg may look as though some oddly shaped purple creature has animated a skeleton as a means of locomotion, but the mohrg's limbs and organs are all integral to its unlife.

Mohrgs do not begin their undeath in the forms they come to possess. At the time of its initial animation, a mohrg has whatever flesh remains on its corpse, which continues to rot and disintegrate from its form as time passes. As negative energy suffuses the mohrg, its entrails (which regenerate if they've been removed) become a bloated, purple mass, stretching up inside its body and extending out through its jaw. Over time, as the once-living flesh falls away, the mohrg is left as nothing but a skeleton wrapped in twining and swollen purple tendrils.



Mohrgs do not experience pain, have no need to eat or drink, and have only the most rudimentary sense of touch. Without the means to experience physical pleasure or even satisfy their hunger, destroying life is the sole fulfillment mohrgs can enjoy, and they do so whenever possible. Mohrgs experience an almost narcotic reaction to the rush of negative energy that follows the animation of their victims as zombies. This pleasure must be balanced against mohrgs' instinct to survive; those mohrgs that last longer than a few weeks swiftly learn to control their appetites, or at least manage the spawn that result to avoid immediate exposure. Once a mohrg has learned to temper its desire to destroy every living thing within reach of its limbs, it focuses on studying the environs it finds itself in, and learning how best to kill given the prey at hand.

Habitat & Society

Lacking the need to eat, drink, or sleep, mohrgs have little desire for large or elaborate dwellings. A lone mohrg maintains a small, usually lightless cave or room (if living in a building or dungeon), with just enough space for its collection of trophies. Some mohrgs even pursue academic studies, and keep books on anatomy or necromantic magic in their homes, but mohrg lairs are otherwise sparse, uninviting places without seating or a place to sleep. These are not, after all, creatures known for their hospitality.

Small groups of mohrgs sometimes gather together for protection, strength, and better access to killing opportunities; while one mohrg might fall to a lucky guard or a group of adventurers, a gang or mob of mohrgs has more of a chance to disable and slay armed warriors than a lone specimen. Mohrgs understand their common drive to kill, and can sometimes make elaborate plans to set up the perfect situation in which to do their work, but they almost never discuss tactics in combat. Rather, the most powerful mohrg (either physically strongest or the oldest) seeks out a target, and other mohrgs in the group choose their own prey. Mohrgs do not generally fight over kills, except when driven mad by their lust for the resulting rush of negative energy.

Mohrgs that find themselves in large communities do their best to blend in, hiding in sewers, catacombs, dungeons, or abandoned buildings. Some even prowl the streets dressed in cloaks and concealing clothing, especially if they have not yet lost all of their flesh (see fleshwalker mohrgs in Variant Mohrgs on the facing page). Those that cannot conceal their natures choose their targets carefully, hunting at night and picking off weaker prey in ones and twos. Once they have established a small cadre of zombies, more resourceful mohrgs are happy to have their servants collect victims for them, dragging the poor mortals back to be slain by the mohrg itself.

Generally speaking, mohrgs have indifferent relations with other undead. They view mindless creatures like skeletons and zombies as humans might view household tools or furniture—as objects to be amassed and used when necessary but which are otherwise ignored. Although intelligent undead, they have little concern for the souls of the bodies that are animated by their killings, as they have no more empathy for their victims now than they did as mortal murderers.

With regard to other intelligent undead, mohrgs have varied opinions. They resent powerful liches, mummies, and vampires, who all seem to have better recollections of their previous lives or to have gained greater powers in their transformations. They are also jealous of dullahans (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 111), whose gift of unlife seems, at least to mohrgs, to be more joyful.

Interestingly, a great number of ghosts and revenants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 235) owe their undead existence to the depredations of mortal killers who later became mohrgs, and it's not unheard of for a revenant to hunt a mohrg, or for a ghost to assist adventurers in tracking down the unholy reanimation of its killer.

Campaign Role

Mohrgs work well in a number of different campaign roles. A mohrg might be the source of continual waves of zombies that plague the ever-dwindling population of a remote town, the cause of the disappearance of folk in poorer sections of a city, or a servitor to a more powerful undead or to a powerful spellcaster fond of creating undead minions.

Although mohrgs are fine combatants, it's best to play up the terror a populace feels at the presence of a mohrg or group of mohrgs before introducing the monsters directly. A village whose people keep vanishing, only to reappear days later as mindless, walking dead, can be a far more compelling setting for part of your campaign than a simple cave filled with undead enemies. Likewise, the killing off of the poor of a dock district or the sudden disappearance of beggars from the street near a palace might indicate that a once-wealthy or noble mortal has been transformed into a mohrg, and is cleaning his city of the two-legged vermin. Whatever the case, it's important to remember that mohrgs are smart, and should be played accordingly in combat—they know when to stand their ground and when to run, and do their best to strike when their enemies are weakest, exploiting observed flaws in the PCs' tactics.

A mohrg's paralysis attack makes it dangerous well into the upper levels of the game. An advanced mohrg, or one with class levels, poses an even greater threat to players, and could potentially become a recurring villain. While mohrgs rarely plot and scheme the way a lich or vampire might, their relatively high CR as even baseline mohrgs means that low-level PCs who are equipped to deal with a mohrg's wave of zombies may still need to recruit help, find a magic item, uncover secrets from the mohrg's past, or embark on other quests before they're ready to take on the mohrg directly.

Treasure

Mohrgs do not generally accumulate magical treasure of any great utility, preferring to rely on their unnatural abilities. They are, however, fond of collecting trinkets or trophies that remind them of their former lives; a mohrg that was once a vicious warrior might claim armor clasps or small weapons from its victims, while a former murderer who preyed on the upper classes might collect signet rings. Some mohrgs engage in this behavior without any real recollection of their lives, and amass a random assortment of possessions as a sort of compulsive behavior they cannot explain. A mohrg that does remember its mortal life often gathers items that remind it of its former profession or family, mementos of lost loves, or baubles that remind it of past glories—particularly its murderous exploits.

An Addiction to Death

Mohrgs gain no satisfaction from bodily comforts and sensations. They do, however, possess two overwhelming drives, even when they have no memories of their mortal lives: the desire to survive and the lust to kill. This second need is heightened by the sole physical pleasure a mohrg can experience—the quickening rush of negative energy gained when a victim rises as a zombie. This sudden surge not only heals the mohrg and hastens it for a short time, but is also a reminder of what it was once like to live.

Those who have studied mohrgs during this quickening liken the effect on the mohrg's speech and behavior to that of an individual under the effects of a powerful drug, but describe the increased aggression that follows the rush of negative energy as a desire to heighten the feeling before it disappears. Some reports also include horribly vivid descriptions of changes in the mohrg's purple flesh, but this may be a reaction to the negative energy with the once-living tissue, and not a reaction to the feeling of elation experienced by the creature.

If a mohrg possesses class levels, it sometimes seeks out items that augment its class abilities. Alternatively, it may eschew such items altogether, and instead focus on hunting down particular forms of prey—this is especially true of mohrgs created by spellcasters. These undead often turn on their creators at the first opportunity, but although they may keep their former masters' spellbooks or magic items, they typically only keep such items around as mementos of their rebellion. Mohrgs rarely have any use for coins, gems, or other material wealth, subconsciously preferring to gather items that connect them to individuals in the living world rather than ones that might be useful for trade.

Variant Mohrgs

A mohrg is as much a product of the method of its execution as it is an undead manifestation of one who, in life, was a murderous criminal or warmonger. At times, unusual methods of execution can trigger equally unusual mohrgs. The extreme nature of these executions are such that these variant mohrgs are only rarely created by accident—more often, they are deliberate creations by officials who themselves dabble in necromancy and may in fact be as vile as those they put to death.

Desert Mohrg (+0 CR): A desert mohrg rises from a violent criminal who has been executed via torturous means in arid, hot environments, typically methods designed to kill through exposure and draw out the criminal's expiration. Being affixed to a rock, tree, or other object and being buried up to the neck and left to

bake in the sun are both methods that can result in the creation of desert mohrgs. A desert mohrg looks leathery and dry, not moist, but has the same statistics as a typical mohrg. Spawn created by a desert mohrg rise as burning skeletons rather than fast zombies.

Fleshwalker Mohrg (+0 CR): When a criminal is executed through methods that leave no physical mark upon the body (such as by poison or a death effect), and then the corpse is preserved via a *gentle repose* spell, a fleshwalker mohrg is the result. While these mohrgs function as normal mohrgs, their flesh does not decay—further castings of *gentle repose* are unnecessary. Only upon close inspection (whereupon one might notice a faint underlying charnel stench, or might note the lack of breathing with a DC 30 Perception check) or in combat (when the creature's hideous tongue extrudes from its mouth) is the truth apparent.

Frost Mohrg (+1 CR): Distinctive for the icy sheen over the blue flesh of its innards and tendrils, a frost mohrg's genesis is similar to that of a desert mohrg—a violent criminal that is executed via lingering exposure to the elements, only in this case, in a cold environment. Frost mohrgs look partially frozen and retain much of their flesh, albeit flesh blackened by frostbite. A frost mohrg has the advanced creature simple template, and its attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of cold damage on a hit.

Mohrg-mother (+1 CR): Perhaps among the most perverse category of mohrg arises when the executed murderer is also pregnant with child. The unborn, undead infants of these nightmarish monsters cling to the exposed entrails of the mohrg, but do not grant any additional powers. All mohrg-mothers always have the advanced creature simple template. Once per day, a mohrg-mother can choose to animate a recently slain victim as another mohrg instead of as a fast zombie.

Mohrgs on Golarion

Sages' opinions differ on the origins of mohrgs, and on the specific conditions that result in the existence of individual specimens of their undead type. One prevailing theory among those who study the unliving maintains that Urgathoa selects a number of the darkest souls awaiting sorting and judgment by Pharasma and takes them as her due, corrupting them with a touch and returning them to the world to spread the seed of undeath in an inexorable plague over the Material Plane. While some claim that the souls that become mohrgs are so abhorrent that the Lady of Graves actually rejects them, wiser heads understand that such is not the nature of Pharasma's judgment, and suspect that it's either the work of the Pallid Princess or some terrible process that occurs before the souls ever leave their corpses (as is the case with many other forms of undead).

As beings possessed of both intelligence and souls, twisted and damned though they may be, mohrgs sometimes turn to religion as a means of understanding their place in the world. Most faithful mohrgs follow Urgathoa—as goddess of undeath and rumored cause of mohrgs' existence, she is the most natural fit for these creatures. Occasionally, a particularly vicious mohrg—such as one that enjoys torturing its still-living victims and drawing out their deaths—might instead seek solace in communion with Shax, demon lord of lies and murder. Among these faiths, mohrgs are viewed as blessed emissaries of their respective deities; followers of Shax in particular seek to emulate the behavior of mohrgs that they encounter, occasionally even going so far as to create their own mohrgs from the bodies of murderers, treating the resulting undead as something between servants and blessed creatures.

A small number of mohrgs turn to Zura—generally mohrgs that were cannibals in life, or that have developed a desire to consume the flesh of their victims. These creatures are shunned even by other mohrgs, which have no desire to associate with them. Curiously, almost no one associates mohrgs with Orcus, the demon prince of the undead. Most believe that Orcus calls most strongly to those who choose undeath willingly. As all mohrgs have been cursed into their condition—either by the gods or by a spellcaster—none are known to have turned to Orcus in their unlife.

Mohrgs are not especially common anywhere on Golarion, but the inhabitants of some regions are more familiar with these undead menaces than are others. In northern lands, folk sometimes leave hollowed-out gourds, sometimes carved with elaborate designs or inscribed with prayers to Pharasma, at the corners of their lands in the hope that the gods will protect them from the depredations of mohrgs—or at the very least, prevent their dead from being raised as zombies afterward. Many different lands have established elaborate execution rituals to help keep their worst criminals from rising again; these practices include drawing and quartering, burning alive, and other methods designed to scatter the guilty person's remains as far as possible or thoroughly destroy them, all relatively reliable (though not foolproof) methods of protecting against the remains rising again as mohrgs.

Perhaps most curious is the status of mohrgs in the nation of Geb. Although mohrgs bound to the service of a spellcaster are tolerated as chattel by that nation's laws, free-roaming mohrgs are not. Their unrestrained need to kill all they encounter is too much of a danger to both individual property and to nationwide diplomacy; free mohrgs are therefore destroyed or ushered beyond Geb's borders as soon as their existence is discovered.

Sample Mohrg

This bat-winged monstrosity looms nearly ten feet in height, its skeletal, dripping body a tangle of bones and writhing entrails.

Demonic Mohrg **CR 12**

XP 19,200

CE Medium undead (extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 17, flat-footed 19 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural)

hp 171 (18d8+90)

Fort +10, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

DR 10/magic; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee 2 slams +21 (2d8+8/19–20), bite +21 (1d6+8), tongue +16 (paralysis)

Special Attacks create spawn, paralysis (1d4 minutes, DC 25), possession, smite good 1/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +22)

3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 18), *unholy aura* (DC 22)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 21), *contagion* (DC 18), *desecrate*, *horrid wilting* (DC 22), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 23, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 38

Feats Ability Focus (paralysis), Dodge, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +24, Bluff +22, Fly +31, Intimidate +25, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +27

Languages Abyssal, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Possession (Su) A demonic mohrg's fiendish spirit can attempt to leap into another host when it is destroyed. At this point, the demonic mohrg can attempt to possess any one creature within 30 feet to which it has line of sight as an immediate action. The targeted creature can resist being possessed if it makes a DC 23 Will save. If it fails, the demonic mohrg possesses that target as if via *magic jar*, but with no duration for the effect and without the need for a receptacle. Typically, the demonic spirit lies low if it successfully possesses a new host, waiting until the right moment to seize control of the host and start a new chain of horrific murders. In this way, a demonic spirit can jump from host to host, for each time its host is executed, it rises anew as a demonic mohrg. The possessing spirit can be driven from a living host with a successful *dispel chaos* or *dispel evil* spell, instantly destroying the spirit and ending the cycle, but such tactics have no effect on the creature after it has animated an executed body as a demonic mohrg. The save DC is Charisma-based.

In a few tragic cases, a mass murderer or serial killer pursues his vile compulsions not due to psychological reasons, but because he is possessed by a demonic spirit that forces him into the role of a killer. Disembodied demonic spirits like these are fond of using mortals as hosts in this way, for if the host is captured and publicly executed while still being possessed by the demon, it can arise from beyond the grave as something more than a mere mohrg—these creatures return as demonic mohrgs, and once returned from the dead, they quickly renew their murderous goals, their fiendish nature apparent in undeath in the form of batlike wings and distorted, fiendish skulls.

Note that, although the variant mohrg presented here is called a demonic mohrg, you can use these stats for a mohrg that was possessed by a devil, daemon, or any other form of evil spirit at the moment of its execution—just change the mohrg's alignment as appropriate.





Nightshade

"Nightshades are creatures beyond categorization, things made from darkness and malice, yet not truly natives of either the Shadow Plane or the Void. Born of a corruption of both planes in the lightless reaches where the planar boundaries break down, they are twisted and warped by evil. Their species comprises four iterations of abomination, all of them massive, ravenous, and drawing the unliving to them like flies to a corpse.

"My best advice when facing such a creature? Be bigger than it. While suitable for me, this is unfortunately not an option for most of you."

—Argrinyxia, the Shifting Lady of Ebon Scales

Not a single class of creature but a multitude, nightshades encompass four distinct subtypes: the nightwalker, nightcrawler, nightwave, and nightwing. Each form fits a distinct ecological niche within its own inhospitable plane of origin, granting it virtual mastery of that domain, with each type uniquely adapted for conquest, and the race as a whole capable of ravaging worlds and leaving nothing intact. The nightwalkers stride across the land at the head of armies of undead, nightcrawlers burrow beneath the earth to rot it from below, and nightwings prowl the clouds and spread both shriek and shadow across the land. The greatest of nightshades, the nightwaves, reign as undead leviathans in the sea's crushing depths, and should they choose to leave their favored domain, they swim through air just as well as any liquid.

In many ways, the nightshades stand at the apex of undeath, yet they are not conventional undead creatures. Whereas most undead began as living beings that were animated after death, arose again spontaneously after death because of some great emotion or unfinished business, or, while still living, willingly embraced undeath to stave off the looming hand of oblivion, nightshades deviate from this rubric in a major way. More akin to outsiders, they are composed of a warped mixture of shadow and evil, empowered by negative energy in the same way as normal undead. They form from the twisted souls of those fiends and outsiders who, seeking greater mastery over negative energy and the dreaming gulfs of darkness where the Shadow Plane and Negative Energy Plane meet, are themselves overcome and twisted beyond recognition, turned into servants of the planes' own nihilistic ends.

From their bizarre composition arises the nightshades' greatest and perhaps only true weakness: a gross aversion to bright light, and an even more severe reaction to natural sunlight. While this vulnerability is not as severe as the death sentence that sunlight pronounces upon vampires, a nightshade's shadowy essence causes it to retreat from offending light. Such is their painful aversion that during the day they hide below ground, sheltered in any structure they can find, or in the ocean's deepest chasms below the sun's reach.

Beyond their personal abilities for destruction, each variety of nightshade channels negative energy with a ferocious power, and each can summon specific types of undead. As a result, nightshades gather undead servitors like moths to a flame; these thralls act almost like heralds to the nightshade's presence, encountered well prior to their masters. In addition to those undead under the nightshade's control, intelligent undead often willingly follow nightshades' commands, either for their own shared aims, or simply to scavenge off of the spoils of the nightshade's conquests.

Given their nature, the nightshades' urges and disposition come not from a hunger borne of negative energy—mindless and unwilling like the hunger of zombies—or from a hatred of the living resulting from agonizing loss during life or the painful transition into undeath. Their antipathy toward the living, other undead creatures, and even the natives of the planes of Shadow and Negative Energy derives from something more callous and less prone to rationalization: they despise and destroy because they are physical embodiments of darkness and entropy. For all the evil of liches and vampires, these undead creatures still retain desires, needs, and motivations understandable by mortals, while nightshades in many ways hew closer to their fiendish roots, being as much abstracts as creatures.

Thankfully, most nightshades remain in the depths of the Negative Energy Plane and its borders with the Shadow Plane, hunting and scheming in the dark trenches that spawned them, but they're not confined there by any means. Nightshades possess an innate ability to plane shift, though thankfully most of their kind are so repulsed by the light of other planes that they're more often encountered as a result of being summoned than because they were crusading far from their native shores.

Nightshades see themselves as the enemies of all light and life, and they seek to destroy the living and their worlds at every opportunity. Each nightshade harbors in its heart the desire to snuff out the sun and all that bear the spark of life, turning the Material Plane into a cold land of ash and ice. Eventually even their undead servitors and onetime allies fall into the eternal silence of death, leaving them alone. Understandably this outlook leaves nightshades in an isolated position even with respect to many intelligent undead and the other inhabitants of their native planes. As such, they seek few allies and no friends, believing that all other creatures are merely tools to be commanded, destroyed, or flung screaming into the same pits that spawned the nightshades, in the hope that they will eventually be reborn as more of the nightshade kind.

Ecology

Nightshades are born when one or more outsiders—typically fiends—are lost or cast down into the adumbral depths where the Shadow Plane and Negative Energy Plane become a void like the darkest ocean trench, one of the places where reality ends. The death of the immortal becomes a catalyst for a reaction in which the planes seem not to twist the original creature so much as birth a new entity in its place. The newborn nightshade is complete from the moment of its awakening, retaining none of the memories of the creature that spawned it—only a full knowledge of its abilities and an inescapable desire

to destroy all things that are touched by positive energy, from mortal souls to the stars themselves, and to send more outsiders to the dark reaches of the nightshades' birth. Though nightshades often cast mortal souls into the depths as well, these weaker souls merely form new minor undead—the creation of something as powerful and dire as a nightshade requires the spirit of an immortal being.

Although four primary types of nightshades are known to exist, some sages speculate that they might all be the same species of creature in different life stages. Other scholars instead hold that they are distinct subtypes of the same creature, formed in the same manner but differing according to the specific component fiends from which they were created. According to this theory, the older and more powerful the fiend or fiends were—their exact species or alignment does not appear to matter—the more powerful the form of nightshade produced, though the combined deaths of multiple fiends produce a nightshade of a type otherwise reserved for the death of a much more powerful one on its own. Even the proponents of this theory, however, have no idea of the exact formulae involved, and the few casters capable of controlling a nightshade are generally more concerned with maintaining their tenuous hold over the undead juggernauts than with such unpragmatic musings.



Habitat & Society

Nightshades most commonly dwell on the planes of Shadow and Negative Energy, and are found in the highest concentrations along those two planes' night-black border. Nightshades encountered on the Material Plane seek out lairs protected from sunlight during the day, emerging only at night. Ruins, mine shafts, deepwater trenches, conquered strongholds, and natural caves and caverns suffice for most nightshades, and at especially high or low latitudes, the long polar night allows them to hunt with impunity for months on end. Cold, pitch black, and often disorganized, nightshade lairs fill with a mixture of rubble, bizarre accumulations of treasure, and half-rotting remains. These remains may spontaneously animate for brief periods, exhibiting reflexive, unthinking movement due to their long-term perfusion by the nightshade's negative-tainted aura. Though these lairs are often disconcerting to any living masters or followers the nightshades may have garnered, such aesthetic questions are of little concern to the nightshades, and if their skull-cluttered lairs make necromancers who would impose upon them think twice about disturbing the nightshades, so much the better.

Despite nightshades' origins as any number or type of outsiders, they all speak the same languages by default: Abyssal, Infernal, and Common. Scholars suspect that in some unknown, morbid fashion, the first nightshades' creation set down certain rules for all subsequent ones. Speaking the major fiendish tongues only further distinguishes them from other undead and natives of the Negative Energy Plane.

No true kinship exists between nightshades and other undead, only the dynamic of the powerful and the weak. The sole grace that nightshades grant to other undead is that they don't immediately destroy their lesser cousins like they do the living. Rather, nightshades view undead with uncaring pragmatism, and by virtue of their own ability to channel negative energy, utilize them as servitors, from valued advisors and lieutenants to the lowest form of disposable chattel and shock troops. Only in the presence of the most powerful liches, elder vampires, and devourers does this dynamic reverse itself. Often nightshades simply avoid such creatures rather than obey a more powerful (but in their conception lesser) being.

This latter power dynamic reflects the way that nightshades behave with respect to one another: bearing mutual distrust, rivalry, and an innate inability to view another as an equal or greater. This rivalry arises because of their origins from so many different types of fiendish souls, and the varied, subtle influence that these beginnings impart upon a mature nightshades' goals and habits. Nightshades inherently distrust one another, and cooperation is rare unless forced by a more powerful commander. Of the major

nightshade types, only the weaker nightwings readily tolerate each other's presence, sometimes acting like flocks of savage raptors, attacking in a dark cloud of undeath. Most nightshades see themselves as natural generals, leading their deadly pogroms against the living from the center of a shambling mass of lesser undead.

When nightshades do cooperate, the results are the stuff of nightmares. Refugees from the sites of such atrocities tell of entire worlds scoured clean of the living and awash in the undead, skies blanketed by ashes or magical darkness, and the barren earth gnawed through by nightcrawlers to the long-cooled core like a worm-eaten rotten apple.

Campaign Role

Nightshades sometimes appear as powerful servitors to even more powerful masters. Given their ability to summon, control, and significantly bolster lesser undead—acting like necromantic field marshals—nightshades are the servitors of choice for such beings as liches, evil clerics, necromancers, and more powerful planar beings. Nightshades serve such creatures as potent lieutenants, though the precise relationship between master and servitor varies depending on the nature of the particular master, its power over the nightshade, and the manner in which it exercises that power. (And more than one fiend that thought itself the master of a nightshade has found itself cast into the void of the Negative Energy Plane as soon as it let its guard down.)

Nightshades found in the service of such beings are an exception, however. More often nightshades exist on their own, prowling the dark places of the world as solitary menaces or the leaders of undead hosts, bringing about the end sought after by the forces responsible for their creation. Nightcrawlers and nightwaves especially have spawned legends and terrified people for generations after they moved on. Many who come into contact with nightshades view them as manifestations of death—a label that doesn't quite fit, as death and the progression of souls are a natural part of the life cycle that nightshades seek to annihilate. More accurate are those who see them as harbingers of doom and destruction. Some groups even worship nightshades as lesser divinities in the hope of propitiating them and keeping them but the stuff of legend rather than violent fact, yet in the end nightshades have little use for living worshipers, even the most devout.

Treasure

Nightshades normally have little use for treasure, which makes sense given that those dwelling in the depths of the Negative Energy Plane live in an environment corrosive to normal material. As such, only powerful objects remain intact—those resistant or immune to the nightshade's callously destructive nature and the natural forces present in their lairs. While nightshades care little for the treasures' monetary value—for trade is never a nightshade's concern—they are often fascinated by objects capable of withstanding their crusades, and may use their considerable intellects to employ magic items to their benefit. Many also keep trophies from their greatest conquests, or mementos of those hubristic creatures that sought to control them—many nightwalkers, for instance, carry the skulls of mortal casters who attempted to summon and bind them.

Variants

Beyond the familiar quartet of nightwing, nightwalker, nightcrawler, and nightwave, other types of nightshades are believed to exist, but because of their dire nature and because their typical environment lies in the uncharted depths of inhospitable planes, the deadliness of such encounters rarely allows survivors to carry their tales and warnings far afield. One such variant, the powerful and spiderlike nightskitter, is presented at the end of this chapter. Also rumored to exist are entities even more powerful than the dreaded nightwave—nightshades whose abilities and capacity for devastation may well rival the power wielded by some demigods. The possibility of nightshade deities—or of some unimaginably vast nightshade power akin to a god—is enough to bring nightmares to even the bravest of heroes, even if no one has yet encountered such a horror. Given the nightshades' hunger and hatred for life, though, no one can say for certain that such powerful nightshades haven't truly been encountered—there may simply have been no survivors of such a brush with anti-life.

Nightshades on Golarion

Nightshades appear on Golarion itself only rarely, usually at the behest of powerful clerics or necromancers, and rarely linger on past the time of their calling, instead finding themselves banished back to wherever they came from by summoners who would rather rule the world than destroy it completely. Those that don't return to their plane of origin are often destroyed in the dire circumstances that necessitate their summoning. Still, they occasionally remain orphaned and left to their own devices. Even more rarely, a confluence of natural events might allow them to seep into the Material World through a planar breach or naturally occurring portal.

The Pathfinders' records note several locations across Golarion where nightshades have been known to roam: the Ustalavic region of Virlych, the Mana Wastes, Nidal, and Geb. Virlych formed in the aftermath of the Whispering

Tyrant's rise and subsequent fall, and remnants of Tar-Baphon's armies—including nightshades—linger on in that haunted land, awaiting his escape from Gallowspire. They remain relatively secretive, unwilling to jeopardize their future utility to their former master. Thus most of them exist in torpor below the earth, lairing in whatever lightless ruins they find. In Nidal, nightshades are occasionally summoned by the dark wizards and clerics of Zon-Kuthon who rule the nation; they are aided in their dangerous bindings by the power of the Midnight Lord, who of all the gods may have the greatest power over creatures of shadow and evil.

Similar to the Whispering Tyrant's use of nightshades, the necromancer Geb shackled a number of them in service to his armies during his wars with Nex. Upon the wizard-king's descent into undeath and withdrawal from public life, most of his nightshades shed their bonds and returned to their native plane, or else left to roam the Mana Wastes freely. But not all have departed. The Gebbite city of Yled houses several necromantic academies and much of the nation's undead military near its border with the Mana Wastes, yet that's not all it contains. Deep beneath its foundations, within a magically drained aquifer a mile below the Mortuarium's spires, the necromancers charged with the city's defense and the potential of renewed war with Nex harbor a carefully managed secret. The city rests upon a trio of nightwalkers held in magical stasis, and one much larger nightshade of unknown type called simply the Bound One. Entrapped or bargained into servitude by Geb himself, the creature serves as a pool of necromantic energy, tapped by its handlers like one would bleed a horse in times of famine.

Beyond Golarion, nightshades dwell in small numbers upon the dead world of Eox, the sixth planet from Golarion's sun, drawn there by the necromantic power of whatever holocaust ruined it for conventional life. Beyond the Material Plane, nightshades dwell on the Shadow Plane and the Negative Energy Plane, heavily populating places such as the shadow double of Geb's capital Mechitar. A flock of nightwings roosts in Shadow Absalom's heights, though they remain low-key; it is whispered that they are in the service of the city's autocrat, the great wyrm Argrinyxia, the Ebon Lady of Shifting Scales. The largest nightshades dwell in the Negative Energy Plane itself, in such places as Fallen Duromak, a planet dragged into the void eons ago. In that realm, even creatures as powerful as nightshades may become prey. Drawing the undead like moths to a deadly flame, Eternity's Doorstep is a planet-sized sphere of black glass that traps and seemingly devours the undead in its unknown depths.

Despite their undead status, nightshades possess a complex relationship with Urgathoa, goddess of undeath. At times they serve as summoned allies to her clergy, but they serve mortals only so long as they can be controlled, bribed, or cowed by the threat of deific intervention. Despite their nature, nightshades only rarely interact with mortal cultists of Abyssal lords or archdaemons of similar mien, such as Nocticula, Orcus, Charon, and Trelmarixian. This fact owes more to the rarity of interactions between nightshades and fiends in general—despite nightshades' own fiendish origins—as they are relatively isolated from the Abyss and Abbadon, and prey on those planes' residents as willingly as on those of the Material Plane.

Sample Nightshade

This umbral mass unfolds a tangle of spidery legs and horrible mandibles, rising up to a monstrous height to bring its cluster of glowing red eyes to bear.

Nightskitter **CR 12**

XP 19,200

CE Huge undead (extraplanar, nightshade)

Init +5; **Senses** darksense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, detect magic; Perception +22

Aura desecrating aura (30 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural, –2 size)

hp 157 (15d8+90)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

DR 15/good and silver; **Immune** cold, undead traits; **SR** 23

Weaknesses light aversion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +21 (4d8+16/19–20 plus 4d6 cold and poison)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks channel negative energy 9/day (DC 26, 6d6), umbral web

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—*detect magic*, *magic fang*

At will—*deeper darkness*, *unholy blight* (DC 18)

3/day—*contagion* (DC 18), *greater dispel magic*, *invisibility*

1/day—*air walk*, *cone of cold* (DC 19), *haste*, *hold monster* (DC 19), *plane shift* (DC 21), summon (level 5, 1 greater shadow)

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 38 (50 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Command Undead, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +20, Climb +35, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +22, Spellcraft +21 (+29 in dim light and darkness), Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Spellcraft in dim light and darkness

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Negative Energy Plane)
Organization solitary, pair, or nest (3–8)
Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Nightshade Traits All nightshades radiate a 30-foot *desecrate* aura (as per the spell), can channel energy, possess *true seeing* and *deathwatch* in areas of dim light or darkness, and are effectively sickened in areas of bright light (double penalty in sunlight). Full details on nightshade traits can be found on page 308 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*.

Poison (Su) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 23; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Charisma damage and 2d6 cold damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Umbral Web (Su) A nightskitter can weave semisolid webs out of shadowstuff. These webs are not strong enough to bear any but the lightest weight. A nightskitter can use these umbral webs in two different ways, as detailed below.

Attacking: Up to eight times per day, a nightskitter can hurl a mass of umbral webs at a target. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 100 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the nightskitter. An entangled creature gains 1d4 temporary negative levels while entangled, and can attempt to escape with a successful DC 28 Escape Artist check, or may try to burst the web with a DC 28 Strength check. The negative levels granted by an umbral web vanish as soon as the entangled character escapes from the web. Multiple umbral webs can entangle a single foe—the DCs to escape do not increase, but the temporary negative levels they cause stack. A creature that gains a total number of negative levels equal to its Hit Dice is immediately slain.

Warding: By encasing all surfaces of an enclosed area, such as a cavern or a room, with thick layers of umbral webs, a nightskitter can infuse that area with necromantic energy. A chamber warded by umbral webs is treated as if under the effects of an *unhallow* spell with a *deeper darkness* spell fixed to the effect. A single nightskitter can maintain one such infused area at a time, to a maximum size of one 20-foot cube per Hit Die possessed by the nightskitter. Maintaining an umbral web ward does not limit its use of these webs to attack.





Ravener

Not flesh but bone and searing mane
the ancient one will come again
to drink the soul, consume the pain
that waits beyond the clearing's end.

The souls of heroes form his shield
the ancients' cries, the whips he'll wield
and with creation's truth revealed
the Ravener shall know the end.

—Song of the Ravener

Of all the creatures of the world, few inspire fear or awe like dragons. Possessed of physical might and prodigious magical talent, and growing more powerful with each passing century, dragons seem far above the concerns of those petty humanoids who war and die at their feat. Yet in truth, even dragons age, moving steadily toward their final rest. As even the good-aligned dragons tend to be arrogant and prideful (if not necessarily wrong in their high esteem for their own abilities), few are truly comfortable with the idea of their own inevitable end. Some especially proud dragons go so far as to attempt to break the bonds of mortality, seeking by forbidden lore and vile pacts to transcend the weakness inherent even in draconic flesh. Of the few who attempt this dark transformation, a handful rise from the ashes of their own mortality as the dread undead dragons known as raveners.

This immortality is not without a terrible price. The arcane void within a ravener's heart leaves her consumed by a maddening craving, a hunger that can only be sated by the life-essence of other beings. Each soul devoured temporarily restores a precious sliver of the draconic magic sacrificed to overcome the ravener's mortality. But all too soon, the need to feast returns.

All raveners are skeletal, though the precise appearance of a ravener's skeleton depends on the type of dragon she was in life. Some raveners use magic to alter their appearances, either to disguise themselves or simply to make themselves that much more threatening, while others simply modify their skeletons physically, such as a white dragon ravener who encases her bones in flesh-shaped ice or a black dragon ravener who covers her form in clinging acid. Others are visibly wreathed in their auras, such as the red dragon ravener whose very bones exude heat and flame. Yet each possesses a soul ward, a field of stolen soul energy that wreathes the ravener's bones and protects her from harm.

As undead creatures, raveners' ability to experience sensations is irrevocably dulled. Their hearing and vision may be matchless, but becoming a ravener demands the sacrifice of the nuances of taste, scent, and even touch, along with countless other pleasures of life. As a result, the ravener thrives on horrific excesses of emotion, for only in the heat of battle and wanton destruction or the gluttonous consumption of souls does the ravener again come close to the glorious sensations of being a living dragon.

The circumstances that give rise to a ravener are as unique as their appearances. Some barter their very sanity to the madness beyond the Dark Tapestry, others forge bargains with demon lords or the Horsemen of Abaddon, and still others beseech malevolent gods. (Strangely, even lawful dragons make pacts with the lords of Hell only rarely—perhaps raveners find the strings attached to diabolical contracts too convoluted and numerous for comfort.) Yet not all raveners seek aid from more powerful creatures—in fact, doing so often conflicts with the same arrogance that leads dragons to become raveners in the first place. This second group instead finds immortality in much the same way liches do, researching rare and forbidden necromantic spells to create rituals of transformation unique to each dragon. As for why raveners don't become true liches and create phylacteries, the answer remains unclear, save perhaps that hiding their souls would seem an admission of cowardice and inevitable defeat to the proud raveners.

Ravener Pacts

While some raveners achieve their status through arcane study and necromantic power, others are born of a combination of blasphemous rituals and the malign influence of dark powers. Raveners of this latter group must each seek out an evil patron to feed his or her necromantic rebirth. Each patron requires sacrifices and tribute pleasing to its debased desires. The aspiring ravener must first further the patron's schemes upon her home world and perhaps others. The dragon might be sent against the patron's foes, tasked with obtaining lost relics, or made a general among the patron's mortal followers. In addition, the dragon must show the depth of her resolve. For some dragons, this means slaying their parents, mates, or children; the sacrifice of their most prized treasures; the annihilation of their life's work; or some other show of commitment. Finally, the ravener must amass sufficient eldritch power to shatter natural laws or the barriers between planes and become the conduit for her patron's might. Should the dragon falter in her tasks or prove an unworthy vessel for the power of her patron, what remains of her shattered soul languishes in servitude to her patron until the end of days.

ECOLOGY

Raveners are self-made undead, not created or generated spontaneously in the fashion of weaker undead. As such, their nature reflects the circumstances of their transformation. Careless adventurers may well mistake a ravener for a mere draconic skeleton or zombie, an error few survive. All known raveners were dragons of at least ancient status, though it is unclear whether this is because a lesser dragon cannot master (or survive) the dark rituals of undeath, or simply because no younger dragon has the same incentive to take such an insane risk. Once reborn, raveners are effectively immortal, dying only from mishap or the powerful alliances that sometimes rise up to destroy them.

Even the most successful ravener transformation comes with a terrible price, as all of the living dragon's natural

magical abilities are burned away in an instant in the explosion of necromantic energies. In its place, negative energy floods in to infuse and enhance the ravener's breath weapon, fuel her magical powers, and even sustain the creature's ability to fly on skeletal wings. This magic cannot be generated or replaced as it would be for a normal, living dragons—instead, to wield magic the ravener must reap the life-energy of living victims. Raveners bind this life-energy into their soul wards, the coronas of negative energy that surround these undead dragons. The more powerful the soul, the more energy is claimed by the ravener.

No two raveners manifest their soul wards in quite the same way. Some soul wards infuse the ravener with a shadowy aura, others with the screaming spirits of the dead. Some raveners lack a visible soul ward entirely, making that part of themselves invisible to deny their opponents a complete understanding of their defenses. The energy contained within the soul ward fuels the ravener's arcane power, guards the ravener from harm, and sustains her unliving existence. A ravener deprived of the ability to refresh her soul ward must carefully hoard her magical energy, and should she be denied victims, she slowly deteriorates and grows vulnerable, eventually crumbling to dust—though few come close to that point, with the all-consuming hunger of the empty ward driving them to death in battle long before soul starvation sets in.



Habitat & Society

Inherently solitary, raveners do not seek out the company of other dragons, least of all that of other raveners. They do not appreciate reminders of what was surrendered in their quest for immortality, nor do they allow others near the secrets of their power. Raveners with overlapping territories rarely fall into direct conflict, being all too aware that few other creatures are so capable of ending their near-immortal existences. Instead, they negotiate, posture, and scheme, each seeking to drive the other away to safer grounds. On the rare occasions when raveners do work or lair together, they were most often acquainted or mated in their mortal lives.

Raveners view most other undead with contempt, and believe them to be useful only as base servants. Even so, they have a curious affinity with the spectral dead, often creating or recruiting spectres, wraiths, and allips as spies or guardians. The fell nightshades are among the few entities raveners treat as near-equals, and at times as particularly deadly allies. Living servants are rarer still, though some canny raveners imprison live prey, the better to keep their soul wards at full strength.

Their burning hatred of life and their perpetual need for souls lead raveners to hunt far more often than their mortal kin. Within a short span of years, raveners can deplete their hunting grounds of all palatable life, forcing them to change lairs more frequently than all but the most capricious living dragons.

If anything, ravener lairs are even more inaccessible than those of most dragons, as raveners thrive in environments inimical to living creatures. Many raveners favor lairs contaminated by toxic gases, beneath the surfaces of swamps or stagnant lakes, or at altitudes where the thin air imperils breathing creatures. Some even collapse the entrances to their lairs and rely on teleportation, *gaseous form*, or polymorph spells for passage in and out.

Campaign Role

Raveners work best in high-level campaigns, as creatures powerful enough to challenge an entire party, yet do not necessarily need to be the focus of entire campaigns. While raveners can certainly be "big bad end villains," their never-ending search for new hunting grounds also makes them ideal "event monsters"—newly arrived threats to the party's territory or the loved ones they left behind. Securing the means to combat a ravener and run her to ground in her lair can be the work of a few sessions, or a major arc within a greater campaign.

Possessed of both the instinct to hoard and an even longer lifespan than true dragons, raveners make ideal guardians for key treasures within a campaign. Nearly any magic item coveted by adventurers might be found within a ravener's hoard, though claiming such treasures presents no mean task. For a twist, the campaign's villain could be the one seeking to pillage the ravener, manipulating the adventurers as a distraction so that she might claim the treasure for her own.

The quest of an aged and evil dragon to become a ravener could also make for a compelling campaign arc. Throughout the campaign, the adventurers might come in conflict with a dragon's lesser servants as she schemes to complete her pact with blasphemous powers or locate the proper components for her final ritual of transformation.

Perhaps they even encounter the dragon herself at some point, making it that much more shocking when, at the very end of the campaign, they witness her final triumphant transformation and have to face down not just the mortal dragon they expected, but a newly reborn ravener.

Treasure

No less covetous than any other dragon, raveners' lust for wealth is significantly impacted by their regular need to change lairs. Most raveners spurn the massive coin-beds frequently associated with dragonkind, favoring more portable wealth such as gems, jewelry, and objects d'art. Raveners prize magic items quite highly, particularly those they can make use of in their current undead forms. Those capable of changing form seek out items suitable for humanoids as well. When relocating to a new lair, raveners often collect items such as *bags of holding*, *portable holes*, or even *ring gates* that will aid them in their move. Yet even then, it's not uncommon for a ravener changing lairs to take what she feels is worth carrying and then seal the rest in her old lair, blocking off any entrances and leaving magical wards and devoted guardians to protect what's left. These hoards are natural bonanzas for adventurers, yet raveners' tendency to drop by their various caches at random intervals makes ransacking them almost as dangerous as infiltrating a ravener's current lair.

Raveners particularly value magic items that heal the undead, including potions, scrolls, and wands of inflict spells. Some even employ fabulous treasures like *amulets of the planes* or *cubic gates* that allow them to bask in the healing energies of the Negative Energy Plane, or else scour the world for other items of benefit to the undead, such as *darkskulls* and *talismans of ultimate evil*.

Variants

The process by which a dragon becomes a ravener typically involves recruiting dark powers and undertaking necromantic rituals. Some of these rituals incorporate unusual stages that can alter the resulting ravener's powers. Two example alternative rituals are presented below—others might well exist in forbidden texts.

Nightmare Ravener (+0 CR): Driven by fear of death in life, this ravener feeds upon the fear of others in death. The ritual to become a nightmare ravener requires bargaining with powerful entities from the nightmare dimension of Leng or with deities of nightmares like Lamashtu. Unlike normal raveners, nightmare raveners do not inflict negative levels on a critical hit, though they keep their increased threat range. Nightmare raveners instead gain the deadly terror special attack.

Deadly Terror (Su): Whenever a nightmare ravener scores a hit with a natural weapon against a cowering, frightened, panicked, or shaken creature, she deals an additional 2d6 points of negative energy damage. For each such hit, she also adds 1 point to her soul ward ability even if the creature struck is immune to negative energy damage. This extra damage is not increased on a critical hit.

Thassilonian Ravener (+0 CR): The runelords of Thassilon, particularly the necromancer Zutha, often traded their powerful magical secrets to dragons in return for a period of servitude while the dragons lived. When this period ended, the runelord would aid the dragons in making the transition from living to undead. The methods for these rituals still exist in certain Thassilonian ruins, and are invariably guarded by the raveners who used the rituals to transcend their own mortality.

A Thassilonian ravener's bones are etched with numerous runes of power. These runes alter the link between the ravener's magic and her soul ward. A Thassilonian ravener lacks the soul magic ability of most raveners—she casts her spells as normal for a dragon, using spell slots. Each time a Thassilonian ravener casts a spell, she heals damage equal to twice the level of the spell cast. If her soul ward is damaged, any "healing" the ravener gains from casting spells applies first to restoring hit points to her soul ward. If a ravener casts a spell while both her soul ward and her body are at full hit points, she becomes hasted for 1 round.

Raveners on Golarion

Since most dragons know better than to invite such dangerous and evil powers into their bodies, raveners are far rarer than normal dragons. They are attracted to forbidding places that are simultaneously difficult enough to reach that they won't be bothered by foolhardy crusaders, yet still near enough to large populations that the raveners won't have to work hard to find sustenance. The Tusk and Kodar Mountains of the north, the Shattered Range of the south, and the endless marshes of the Sodden Lands are all prime examples of regions where raveners might find suitable lairs. Raveners sometimes dwell openly in darker nations like Nidal, demanding regular tribute to stay their depredations, though these arrangements rarely last for long, as the other powers that be eventually rise up against the raveners or the undead dragons' own appetite gets the better of them.

Raveners are anathema to all but the most depraved of living dragons. Both chromatic and metallic dragons are quick to drive them from their territories when possible, and mount attacks on other dragons who seek to make the transition.

One might suppose that raveners would hold Urgathoa in high esteem, yet the undead dragons often have little use for her despite her power. They share her rejection of Pharasma's plan, but scant few seek out Urgathoa's grace either during mortal life or in undeath. Scholars

theorize that would-be raveners reject the obligations that Urgathoa would place upon their undead existence, opting instead for pacts that require only sacrifice in life, not service beyond. Urgathoa herself disdains the raveners' destructive impulses, behavior more suited to a near-mindless corpse than to undead who rank themselves among the mightiest in all Golarion.

Though few named raveners still exist (primarily because those close enough to the action to learn a ravener's name either destroy the abomination or are themselves consumed), a noteworthy specimen named Arantaros calls the Barrier Wall his home. Pleased with his service, the demon lord Haagenti provided the blue dragon scholar Arantaros with the tainted gift of immortality, that the ravener might continue his devious studies into the esoteric arts of necromancy and alchemy, and it's whispered in parts of Thuvia that the ravener may be secretly researching the legendary *sun orchid elixir*, in the hope of reversing his condition and living forever without the aid of his demonic patron.

Another ravener whose name has been lost to history haunts the broken reaches of Virlych in Ustalav, consuming those who brave the twisted land. Once a principal servant of the Whispering Tyrant, this ravener now feeds and bides his time, guarding the region around Gallowspire and waiting for Tar-Baphon to rise once more and complete his conquest.

Sample Ravener

The polished bones of this draconic skeleton shimmer with an unsettling green light as she slithers into unholy life.

Vashkiyan **CR 19**

XP 204,800

Female ancient green dragon ravener (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 97, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 230)

LE Gargantuan undead (air)

Init –1; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 240 ft., dragon senses; Perception +41

Aura frightful presence (300 ft., DC 29)

DEFENSE

AC 40, touch 9, flat-footed 40 (+4 deflection, –1 Dex, +31 natural, –4 size)

hp 287 (23d8+184)

Fort +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +20

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, soul ward; **DR** 15/good; **Immune** acid, paralysis, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy), swim 40 ft.

Melee bite +35 (4d6+16/19–20), 2 claws +35 (2d8+16/19–20), tail slap +30 (2d8+9/19–20), 2 wings +30 (2d6+9/19–20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, DC 31, 20d6 acid plus 2 negative levels), cowering fear, crush (Medium creatures, DC 29, 4d6+21), energy drain (DC 29), miasma, soul consumption, soul magic, tail sweep

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 23th; concentration +31)

At will—*charm person* (DC 19), *dominate person* (DC 23), *entangle* (DC 19), *plant growth*, *suggestion* (DC 21)

Spells Known (CL 16th; concentration +24)

8th—*horrid wilting* (DC 26)

7th—*limited wish*, *prismatic spray* (DC 25)

6th—*analyze dweomer*, *chain lightning* (DC 24), *true seeing*

5th—*feeblemind* (DC 23), *polymorph*, *secret chest*, *teleport*

4th—*enervation*, *fear* (DC 22), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 21), *haste*, *shrink item*

2nd—*alter self*, *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *eagle's splendor*, *mirror image*, *resist energy*

1st—*grease* (DC 19), *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

0—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** 24, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +23; **CMB** +41; **CMD** 54 (58 vs. trip)

Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Arcane Strike, Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Greater Vital Strike, Hover, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Appraise +33, Bluff +34, Fly +11, Intimidate +42, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (planes) +33, Knowledge (religion) +33, Perception +41, Sense Motive +33, Spellcraft +33, Stealth +21, Swim +48, Use Magic Device +34

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Sylvan

SQ camouflage, trackless step, water breathing, woodland stride

Gear *ring of evasion*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *unholy amulet of mighty fists* +2, 14,000 gp in additional treasure

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cowering Fear (Su) Any creature shaken by the ravener's frightful presence is also cowering instead of shaken for the first round of the effect, and shaken for the rest of the duration. Any creature frightened by the frightful presence is instead cowering for the duration.

Energy Drain (Su) On a successful critical hit, a ravener's natural attacks inflict 1 negative level. It's a DC 29 Fortitude save to recover from this negative level.

Soul Consumption (Su) When a living creature within 30 feet of a ravener dies, that creature's soul is torn from its body and pulled into the ravener's maw if the creature fails a Will save (DC equals the save DC of the ravener's breath weapon). This adds a number of hit points to the ravener's soul ward equal to the dead creature's Hit Dice. Creatures that have their souls consumed in this way can only be brought back to life through *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish*.

Soul Magic (Sp) A ravener retains the spellcasting capability of the base creature, adding three levels to the dragon's caster level. This increases the number of spells known by the ravener, but the ravener loses all spell slots. Instead, whenever the ravener wishes to cast any one of her spells known, she consumes a number of hit points from her soul ward equal to the spell slot level necessary to cast the spell (including increased levels for metamagic feats and so on). If the soul ward has insufficient hit points, the ravener cannot cast that spell. Casting a spell that reduces her soul ward to exactly 0 hit points does not harm the ravener (though most are not comfortable without this buffer of soul-energy and try to replenish it quickly).

Soul Ward (Su) An intangible field of siphoned soul energy protects a ravener from destruction. This ward has a maximum number of hit points equal to twice the ravener's Hit Dice, but starts at half this amount. Whenever a ravener would fall below 1 hit point, all damage in excess of that which would reduce her to 1 hit point is instead dealt to her soul ward. If this damage reduces the soul ward to fewer than 0 hit points, the ravener is destroyed. Each time a ravener uses her breath weapon, she adds 1 hit point to her soul ward for each negative level bestowed. Each time a frightful ravener strikes a cowering, frightened, panicked, or shaken creature with a natural weapon, she adds 1 hit point to her soul ward.

With each year, the green dragon Vashkiyan's prized intellect declined, victim of a wasting disease that no spell could manage to cure. Death she could face, but the loss of her faculties filled her with unreasoning terror. As even her inborn magic began to fail, Vashkiyan turned toward planar evils rather than resign herself to death. One by one, she severed her ties with her mortal life to please Charon, the Horseman of Death. At the last she hunted down and slew her 15 living descendants, vivisecting each and feasting upon their organs. The archdaemon was pleased, and guided Vashkiyan through a ritual that saw her die in writhing agony, only to arise as a frightful ravener.

Vashkiyan was an ancient green dragon in life. See page 96 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* for rules on her camouflage, miasma, trackless step, water breathing, and woodland stride powers.





Shadow

"The light of our torches flickered in the musty tomb, many days' trek into the Osirion desert. The flames seemed to make the shadows dance on the ancient stone walls, carved with timeworn hieroglyphs. The illusion began to get to all of us, making us terse and snappish. Even Orus, the normally even-tempered wizard, started to feel it. At last he cried 'Enough!' and brought a globe of magical light into being, its steady glow allowing us to snuff our torches.

"Yet still the shadows danced. As we looked on in horror, our own shadows began to move, encircling us. And in that horrible instant, we knew our instincts had been right all along..."

—Joyanna Daso of Daso's Salvage Company (Retired)

Long, dark fingers stretch out across the wall, reaching toward light, life, and all that they do not have, but long to possess. The shadows move and hunger, for their very essence is gluttony and greed.

Rampant covetousness and grasping greed lead some people down the dark path of evil and betrayal, eventually ending in a reprehensible death scene or a lonely expiration. While most such petty and despicable souls travel on to their final rewards the same way everyone else does, in some cases gluttons, misers, and thieves waste away into nothing but shadows—undead things that reach and grab, but cannot hold. Over time, spellcasters have discovered that these avaricious souls make perfect servants and guardians, immortal creatures doomed to watch over "their" treasure for all eternity.

Shadows are incorporeal undead, distorted like their namesakes and able to float or slide silently along surfaces, blending in among the true shadows there. This allows them to approach unnoticed, and those trespassers not caught completely by surprise rarely get more than a glimpse out of the corner of an eye—a flicker of movement and the sense of something out of place—before they strike.

In addition to guarding the haunted ruins they lay claim to or serving more powerful undead capable of cowing them, shadows devote themselves to attacking any living creatures they encounter, draining their victims of all vitality with their chilling touch. Victims become weaker and weaker until they finally perish, but their suffering is only beginning. For as the victim of a shadow's touch expires, its own shadow detaches from the corpse, taking on the same half-life as its killer, hungry for the essence of the living and operating under its killer's command.

Like all undead, shadows are timeless creatures. As they have lost all concept of their previous life in the transition to undeath, the passage of centuries means almost nothing to them, and no one can say what shadows may do or think in the long wait between victims. However, unlike lesser undead, shadows do appear to "grow" over time. A shadow that has fed on the lives of many victims, or that dwells long enough in a place suffused with sufficient negative energies, may grow in power, becoming a greater shadow. These "shadow lords" often command swarms of their lesser kin, typically spawn of their own making. Rarely is more than one greater shadow found in a particular place, as the creatures compete fiercely for prey. Some believe that in especially fallow times, shadows even consume their own, but this is almost certainly false, as consuming other undead would grant a shadow neither the energy it seeks nor a new spawn, and gangs of shadows have been found that survived sealed into lost tombs together for millennia.

What awaits powerful shadows is a question even the sages can only speculate about. Some believe shadow lords may eventually become shadow demons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 67), drawn down into the Abyss by the weight of their sins to drown in the eternal darkness. Torn apart by the forces of chaos, they emerge as malevolent monsters of pure envy and avarice. Others claim shadow lords steal the vitality of the living to become more corporeal, eventually transforming into other undead creatures or half-real shades.

Shadowy Superstitions

Like all unnatural creatures, shadows spawn more than their share of old wives' tales and campfire stories intended to frighten children. Adventurers may take a keen interest in these stories because they often talk about ways to survive a shadow attack—such as the boy who took shelter within a large clay pot inside an old temple, protected by being in total darkness—or ways to fight or destroy shadows, from attacking with the shadow of a weapon to "storing" the pure light of the sun in holy water. Unfortunately for those selfsame adventurers, folktales are often contradictory, unclear, or just plain wrong, and there is no easy way to tell truth from fiction without hard-won experience.

Game Masters may wish to come up with some local legends about shadows, particularly among people who have dwelled near them for any length of time. Take a look at the Variants section for some possibilities. Such tall tavern tales can add a fun element to your adventure, and may provide the players with a valuable clue (or a dangerous falsehood) they can use later on.

Ecology

On their own, shadows arise from the souls of greedy but lackluster evildoers—those whose crimes are heinous, but who lack the rage of a spectre or the exultation in evil often found in wraiths. The bandit who unemotionally slits her victims' throats because it's convenient, the petty diplomat who orders a witch burning to cover up his adulterous affair, and the miserly headmaster who lets orphans starve to save a few coppers all make good candidates for becoming shadows. Yet while such spontaneous transformations do occur, the vast majority of shadows are instead created by magic. Necromancers have long seen the value of relatively weak, pliable, and unambitious undead servants—especially incorporeal ones—and most shadows currently in existence were originally called to undeath by the spell *create undead* (or else by the life-draining attacks of other shadows created in this manner).

Shadows sap strength from the living in an effort to feed their dark hunger and satisfy their eternal desire to touch the world once again. Because death at the hands of a shadow means becoming one, places plagued by the creatures are either already desolate ruins, or else quickly

Sample Lairs

Shadows live in all sorts of abandoned places. Presented below are a few sample lairs.

The Bandit-King's Cave: The bandit-king Alzar Kagir and his brigands were rumored to have accumulated a great treasure trove over the years, hidden in a secret cave deep in the hills, where even the local militia hesitated to follow. Rather than the law, justice found the bandit-king in the form of betrayal at the hands of his gang, who poisoned him and sealed him in his cave of treasures. They thought to unseal the cave some time later and divide the spoils, but did not reckon on the potency of their former leader's greed or thirst for revenge. One by one, they perished as Alzar Kagir's shadow moved among them, creating a new gang to safeguard his precious treasures for all time.

The Lost Souls Haven: Years ago, a young noblewoman lost in the woodlands beheld a holy vision on a hilltop and founded a small abbey there, whose sisterhood cared for all lost souls who came to its doors. Their kindness proved their undoing when a lost mercenary unit took advantage of their hospitality, only to rob and set fire to the abbey's great hall with the sisters trapped inside. But the shadows that danced in the hellish light of the flames visited upon the soldiers all of the pain they had inflicted, and left none alive. Now the Lost Souls Haven is a haunted place, avoided by all sensible folk. Some claim that innocent women can still find shelter there, but others say the shadows wreak their vengeance on all.

Silvershadow Mine: Once this mine produced plentiful silver for the dwarves who dug in its depths. Exactly what changed depends on who you ask: perhaps the dwarves dug too deeply, or were betrayed by the human communities they traded with. Whatever the case, miners began to disappear. Bad air and accidents were blamed at first, but it soon became clear that Silvershadow Mine was infested. Shadows that should not have been there moved in the torchlight, and the final cries of the lost miners echoed in the tunnels. The dwarves sealed the mine and abandoned it, and the few lone prospectors and treasure-seekers who have gone looking for it have vanished into the shadows of the mountains, never to be seen again.

The Shadow-Puppet Theater: The theater once resounded with the laughter of children. Marallin's Magical Lantern Shows amused and amazed them with shadows that moved, danced, talked, and sang. But in the hard years, fewer and fewer came to Marallin's shows, and her only company was the shadows of the Magical Lanterns—shadows that did her bidding. So it was that the first children disappeared, and stories were told of their voices echoing in the old, abandoned building. Today their shadows can still be seen moving and capering on the stage, but with no trace of them—or old Marallin—anywhere else.

become so once enough shadows have infested the area. Newly created shadows seek out and drain the life from others, creating yet more shadows, until all living creatures have either fled or joined their ranks. This leaves shadow-haunted places isolated as word of the danger spreads, and ensures that the shadows there are ravenous when the next living beings appear.

Fortunately for the living, shadows rarely spread far from where they first appear. Creatures of twilight, they can withstand the sun's rays far better than some of their incorporeal cousins (such as wraiths and spectres), though they are much less comfortable out in direct sunlight or wide open places where it's harder for them to sneak up on their prey. As such, a place consumed by shadows might lie only a few miles from a living settlement, with the shadows not bothering to cross the miles of open country, instead preferring to subsist off lone travelers and those unaware of their presence or the threat they pose. Their tendency to hole up in dark places also gives adventurers a much-needed advantage, as although the shadows are incorporeal, they cannot pass directly through walls thicker than they are, meaning that sealing a shadow-haunted tomb with enough rock can effectively bottle the spirits up for eternity—or at least until the next foolhardy treasure-hunter ignores the warnings and opens the tomb up.

Also fortunate for the living is that although shadows can and sometimes do drain energy from animals or even vermin found in their lairs, only humanoid creatures that fall victim to their touch become shadows themselves. This is because of the nature of the humanoid spirit or soul and the magical similarity between the shadow and its prey. Consequently, unless truly bored and starved for energy and entertainment, shadows rarely bother to feed on livestock or mounts, reserving their hunger for humanoid prey.

Although their theft of strength is often called "feeding," shadows do not "starve" and often continue to exist for decades or even centuries without prey. No longer living creatures, they have no physical needs, and are not even touched by some of the harsh environments that can rot or wear corporeal undead to dust. The only environments that harm them are ones with an abundance of positive energy, such as consecrated graveyards, undefiled churches, or other holy ground.

Habitat & Society

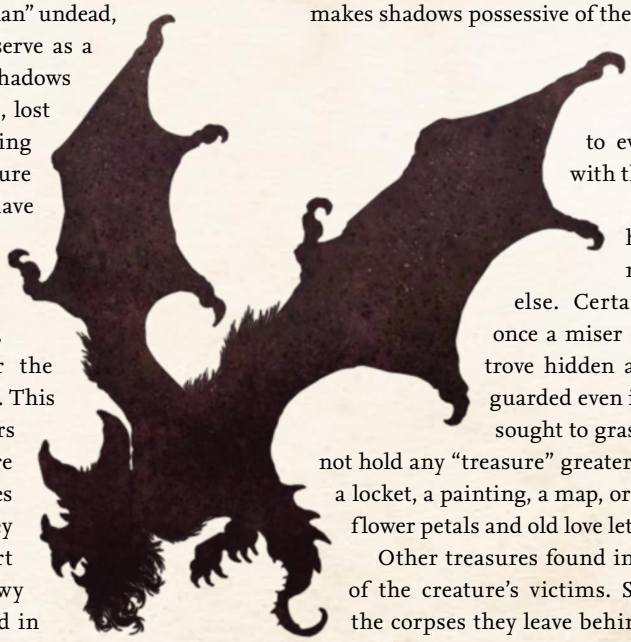
As most shadows are barely intelligent, they have little in the way of society beyond a simple hierarchy: the more powerful shadows dominate and control the weaker ones (often their spawn), who in turn control their own spawn, and so forth, with the most powerful shadow at the summit of a swarm of lesser underlings.

The conditions that create shadows may also influence their spread. Shadows created by a curse, for example, are

often tied to a particular place, unable to leave it. They may haunt a house or bandit lair, or remain in a specific tomb, graveyard, or ruin. As creatures of avarice, shadows are possessive about their lairs, and often choose to stay there in order to guard something, even though their time is long since passed. A shadow might watch over the tomb of a forgotten loved one, liege-lord, or enemy, or might remain bound to some treasure from life.

Campaign Role

Shadows are easily used as "guardian" undead, tied to a particular location to serve as a threat for anyone going there. Shadows may haunt an abandoned village, lost mine, or long-buried tomb, waiting for a group of explorers to venture into their domain. Shadows have the advantage of existing in their environment without interacting with it; they need nothing, not even air or water, and leave few traces save for the remains of their previous victims. This makes them effective monsters for "closed" environments where you wouldn't find living creatures (such as a sealed dungeon). They can, however, show up in any sort of environment—while a shadowy undead figure might be expected in a spooky graveyard, an encounter can that much scarier if it occurs in an unexpected place, such as underwater in the hull of a sunken ship.



Shadows effectively enhance the environments they inhabit: they are frightening, difficult to spot, and good for putting adventurers (and their players) a bit on edge. Creatures of twilight, shadows are unaffected by most sources of light, and indeed often use the light shed by torches, lanterns, and sunrods to their advantage, mixing with and hiding among the other shadows. Just the knowledge that shadows exist can be enough to get adventurers literally jumping at every flickering shadow, provided it's described to the players in the right way. Lots of otherwise harmless things, including real shadows, might be mistaken for undead shadows—and of course, just when the heroes get complacent, it's time for them to run into the real thing.

Unless following a more powerful undead creature or obeying specific instructions, shadows tend to be unimaginative, and stay in one place until something comes along to stir them up. If shadows do happen to move into a town, their quick reproduction rate—it takes less than 30 seconds for someone killed by a shadow to rise as one of them—makes them extraordinarily difficult to root out, yet it's also not uncommon for a nest of shadows to take over a given building and ignore those right next to it. Of course, this is little comfort to PCs who unintentionally release a nest of shadows from their hidden tomb, or who realize as the sun is setting that the shadows are moving of their own accord, and have the party surrounded...

Treasure

Shadows have two sorts of treasures: ones they held in life, and those they acquired as undead. Their greedy nature makes shadows possessive of their goods, even though they are long since past being able to appreciate or use most of them, and unable to even grab and move them with their incorporeal limbs.

The "treasures" a shadow held in life may or may not be valuable to anyone else. Certainly a shadow that was once a miser or a thief may have a rich trove hidden away somewhere, jealously guarded even in death. Yet a shadow that sought to grasp other things in life may not hold any "treasure" greater than a keepsake: perhaps a locket, a painting, a map, or a chest of faded and dried flower petals and old love letters.

Other treasures found in a shadow's lair are those of the creature's victims. Shadows care nothing for the corpses they leave behind, even their own former bodies. The bodies and any items they wore or carried are usually left to rot where they fell, since the shadows are incapable of moving them, even if they wanted to do so. In some of the dry tombs where shadows are found, the bodies may mummify. In others, they draw the attentions of scavengers. Thus, shadows and flesh-eating vermin coexist quite well.

Variants

While most shadows steal strength from their victims, rare variants may drain different aspects of a target's vitality. A variant shadow's chilling touch may induce paralysis and numbness (Dexterity damage) or a kind of slow decay of the flesh (Constitution damage). The mere touch of a shadow can cause idiocy (Intelligence damage), madness (Wisdom damage), or an unnerving deadening of the victim's personality (Charisma damage). Any or all of these could also be preludes to the shadow's true theft of Strength, further weakening a target and making it easy prey. Other variants include the following.

Distorted Shadow (CR +1): Not bound by the limitations of physical creatures, some shadows can flicker and distort like their namesakes, stretching out to touch victims

over much greater distances. These shadows possess the Advanced creature simple template, but instead of gaining a bonus to natural armor, increase their reach with their incorporeal touch by 10 feet.

Hidden One (CR +1): While all shadows are stealthy, some are especially effective at concealing themselves in areas of dim and shifting light. Rather than making Stealth skill checks, these shadows simply have partial or even total concealment among normal shadows, adding a 20% miss chance to their already formidable ability to shrug off many mundane sources of damage.

Plague Shadow (CR +1): Plague shadows appear as Medium-sized shadows of animals associated with disease—typically rats or bats. Rather than simply draining a victim's Strength on a hit, plague shadows also inflict a dreaded curse known as shadow blight. Victims of this supernatural disease quickly weaken and die, at which point they spawn new plague shadows to further spread the contagion. A plague shadow has the Advanced creature simple template, but does not gain a natural armor bonus to its AC.

Shadow blight: curse and disease; *save* Fortitude DC 16; *onset* 1 minute; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d8 Strength damage, upon death, the victim becomes a plague shadow; *cure* successfully casting both *remove curse* and *remove disease* within 1 minute of each other.

Shadetouch Shadow (CR +0): Shadetouch shadows are infused with partially real shadowstuff from the Shadow Plane. They treat the Shadow Plane as their home plane (and thus gain the "extraplanar" subtype on the Material Plane). A shadetouch shadow lacks the typical shadow's incorporeal touch—instead, it possesses two claw attacks that each deal 1d8 points of damage on a hit, in addition to the normal amount of Strength damage shadows inflict.

Vanishing Shadow (CR +1): Shadows dwelling in a place of strong negative energy or with a connection to the Shadow Plane can develop the ability to shadow slip (see page 51) through the Shadow Plane, vanishing into the darkness and reappearing some distance away. These shadows have the Advanced creature simple template—while they do not gain the bonus to natural armor that this template typically imparts, vanishing shadows possess *blink* as a constant spell-like ability.

Shadows on Golarion

Shadows have a long history on Golarion, predating all but the oldest legends and tales, and many have origins shrouded in myth and mystery.

Historically, it's known that the runelords of ancient Thassilon sometimes employed shadows, taking those traitors or servants who displeased the runelords and ripping their shadows away, killing these mortal subjects and turning their shadows into phantasmal servitors and spies capable of serving for eternity. These shadows subsisted on the life force of their victims, in turn stealing the victims' shadows to create new servitors for their vile masters. While the records are unclear about which runelord was the first to harness the undead in this manor, various reports cite Zutha (Runelord of Gluttony, and a powerful necromancer), Belimarius (Runelord of Envy), and Karzoug (Runelord of Greed), and many of the lesser necromancers in the empire embraced the practice as well. When Thassilon eventually fell, their captive shadows were loosed upon Golarion. These shadows flourished during the Age of Darkness, infesting many of the ruins of the world, retreating only at the dawn of the Age of Anguish, when the peoples of Golarion began to reclaim the shards of their broken world once more.

Shadows were well known in ancient Osirion as well—drawings and hieroglyphs concerning them decorate ancient tombs buried in the desert. Many of those same tombs are haunted by hungry shadows, awaiting tomb-robbers and explorers. Some of these shadows are guardians and protectors against those who would defile the dead, who owe their horrible existences to decadent nobles who commanded that their retinues be entombed alive with them. In other tombs, however, the resident shadows are the soul-shells of greedy and grasping pharaohs and viziers, unable to let go of what they held in life and determined to guard it forever after death. Either way, the result is the same for unfortunate tomb-raiders and archaeologists.

While undead in general are the work of Urgathoa, shadows are often also associated with Norgorber, the god of greed, secrecy, and murder. Indeed, some worshipers of Norgorber refer to shadows as "emissaries of the Gray Master" or "Blackfinger's claws," and believe the god takes the shadows of the faithful after death and makes them his proxies in the mortal world, infused with a measure of his killing power. Some clerics of Norgorber know the secrets of summoning shadows to safeguard their midnight places of meeting and worship, and shadowdancers favored by the Reaper of Reputation are said to make shadows move and murder at their command. Shadows that are tied to Urgathoa are more commonly the plague shadows known to haunt tombs in Osirion and Katapesh, as well as grave mounds in the Mwangi Expanse.

Thanks to the tireless work of champions of light, shadows in modern Golarion are found primarily in forgotten, out-of-the-way places: tombs, ruins, abandoned and rotting slums, and the like, where they have often laired for centuries, hidden from the light. When they appear among any large concentration of people, shadows are virtually always summoned or created by some outside force. Necromancers, illusionists, and shadowdancers are known to command them, although they are careful to keep their shadows on a tight leash, lest they find themselves quickly outnumbered.

Sample Shadow

This dire creature bears the shape of a clawed, lunging dragon.

The Risen Lord **CR 21**

XP 409,600

Male dread shadow ancient red dragon (*Advanced Bestiary* 88, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 98)

CE Gargantuan undead (augmented dragon, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., dragon senses, smoke vision; Perception +34

Aura fire (10 ft., 2d6 fire damage), frightful presence (300 ft., DC 27)

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+6 deflection, +1 Dex, –4 size)

hp 287 (25d8+175)

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +22

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +3, incorporeal; **DR** 15/magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep, undead traits; **SR** 30

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed fly 250 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +15 (1d8 Strength drain), 2 claws +15 (1d8 Strength drain), tail slap +13 (1d8 Strength drain), 2 wings +13 (1d8 Strength drain)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, DC 28, 20d10 fire), command shadows, create spawn, manipulate flames, melt stone, tail sweep (1d8 Strength drain)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +31)

At will—*detect magic*, *find the path*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 19), *wall of fire*

3/day—quickened *suggestion* (DC 18), quickened *wall of fire*

Spells Known (CL 15th; concentration +18)

7th (4)—*control undead* (DC 20), *finger of death* (DC 20)

6th (7)—*disintegrate* (DC 19), *repulsion* (DC 19), *shadow walk*

5th (7)—*dominate person* (DC 18), *telekinesis*, *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th (7)—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (DC 17), *greater invisibility*, *resilient sphere* (DC 17)

3rd (7)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (8)—*cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor*, *false life*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand*

1st (8)—*alarm*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *shield*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 53 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*suggestion*, *wall of fire*), Silent Spell, Toughness

Skills Bluff +31, Fly +31, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +34, Stealth +17

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc

SQ shadow slip

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Command Shadows (Su) The Risen Lord can automatically command all normal shadows within 30 feet as a free action. Shadows never attack the Risen Lord unless compelled.

Create Spawn (Su) Any creature that is drained to 0 Strength by the Risen Lord dies. One round later, the creature's body spawns a shadow (if the creature had 8 or fewer Hit Dice) or a greater shadow (if the creature had 9 Hit Dice or more).

Shadow Slip (Su) At will as a move action, the Risen Lord may shadow slip—this functions identically to the spell *dimension door*, save that the starting point and destination must lie in darkness or dim light.

Accidentally transformed into a shadow when an attempt to change into a ravener failed, the undead dragon now known as the Risen Lord remembers nothing of his life but a sense of loss and a terrible rage.





Spectral Dead

We entered the crypts below Duke Winwood's estate in search of the missing duchess. Ignoring the warning cries of the duke's hounds, we continued, and so were unprepared for the onslaught that followed. We had scarcely pierced the mausoleum's cloying darkness when howling shapes of ghostly aether poured forth from the walls. Our lantern-bearer fell immediately, the life draining from his body as his jaws contorted in a silent scream. My prayers met only silence as my faith faltered in the presence of the cursed creatures. Yet nothing I might have done could have saved us—or so I tell my coward's heart.

—From the planchette spirit-writings of Valana Totrevsky

Driven by all-encompassing hunger and murderous intent, spectral dead are corrupted souls that refuse to release their hold on the mortal world. No one knows what plants the seeds of darkness and decay that utterly corrupt the souls of mortals. Some speculate that the prenatal soul, like fruit left too long to ripen on the vine, can sour to malignancy long before its binding to a mortal shell, dooming the creature from birth to a troubled life of anger and deceit and, eventually, to undeath. Others theorize that mortal action alone allows this malignancy to take root, and lives spent unwisely in the service of dark powers corrupt the intangible sparks of divinity that rest in mortal hearts. Still others note that despair and madness—afflictions capable of bringing even the most pious and good-natured people to their knees, through no fault of their own—can lead to the unnatural shackling of a spirit to the mortal world. Regardless of the root cause, however, this form of undeath transforms the victim into a disembodied spirit without a true physical form, only a spectral echo of its former self. Once this metaphorical disease has festered within a soul, it becomes contagious, and some undead are able to pass their despicable gift on to the living, regardless of their victim's former valor. While the positive energy of mortal humanoids can fight off the curse of undeath while they are still living, those slain by these powerful spirits sometimes have their souls instantaneously consumed by darkness, their corrupted spirits sloughing off their mortal shells to rise as the ghostly spawn of their slayers.

There are many different types of incorporeal undead. Allips are the undead souls of those who took their own lives out of madness and insanity, cursed to wander the dark halls they knew in life, babbling incomprehensible gibberish that drives the living similarly insane. Violently taking some misguided revenge on the living, allips flitter about in a cloudy, oily miasma of profane babbling and muttering, without consistent form but with glimpses of spectral bone, amorphous gnashings of sharp teeth and claws, silver flashes of bloody razors, or the frayed knots of nooses. Scholars debate whether allips are even sane enough to comprehend their own undead state, and some speculate that the creatures know only a personal hell filled with violent, mind-numbing hallucinations with which they interact. This theory is bolstered by the testimony of those who have used magic to commune with the insane essence of the creatures; the casters themselves are quickly reduced to a gibbering state of insanity from which few recover.

In the rare cases when an elf's bright soul suffers the malignancy of undeath, the tragedy results in one of the most powerful forms of incorporeal dead. Whether created through vile misdeeds in her last moments, a terrible and torturous demise, or some wretched betrayal by her loved ones, a banshee is the vengeful undead spirit of an elven female that seeks only to destroy all those who still tread the mortal realm. Blinded by rage and driven to insanity by their grief, banshees are guided only by their need for revenge against all who trespass in their realms, giving vent to keening wails that can strike mortals dead in their tracks. For all the curses surrounding them, banshees are ironically blessed with powerful abilities and keen senses, detecting even the heartbeats of mortals, which betray their trespasses into the realms of the undead maidens.

Spectres are creatures of insatiable anger, their undeath the result of evil lives and a rage too great to allow them to let go of the mortal world. Arrogant egomaniacs enraged by the insult of their own deaths and murder victims seeking revenge on their captors are prime candidates for transformation into spectres, though such transformations is far more common if the mortals were actively evil. Appearing as vague and shadowy reflections of their former selves, even the eldest of spectres remember much of their former lives, and as such are sought after by necromancers and liches for knowledge and secrets they may possess from centuries of existence. Spectres less old

Equipping the Spectral Dead

Though it's simple enough to make the spectral dead larger or more dangerous, it's sometimes fun to advance spectral dead via class levels. However, this creates the problem of equipping a spirit's incorporeal form, as unlike ghosts, these disembodied creatures have no means of manipulating and benefiting from solid objects such as treasure.

As a result, if you advance spectral dead by class levels, you should consider giving them ghostly versions of the equipment they owned in life—use the rules for ghostly equipment detailed in the ghost template on page 144 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*. Of course, you can also outfit a spectral dead with *ghost touch* armor and weapons, but this tends to break verisimilitude. Why would someone own so much *ghost touch* equipment before they died? You might use this strategy once to equip the party for a ghost-heavy game, but subsequent uses may feel forced.

Finally, you could just leave things as they are—stat up your classed spectral dead without giving it any gear. This will result in a less powerful character, of course, especially if the lack of equipment prevents the spectral dead from using many of its class abilities (remember, spell components can't normally be manipulated by incorporeal creatures). In such cases, your best bet is to simply advance the spectral dead by increasing its Hit Dice, or use the ghost template instead.

are still keenly intelligent creatures, and few domiciles are immune to their incorporeal intrusion, making these dangerous spirits powerful scouts and subtle spies, though their rage and insane hatred of living things can sometimes get in the way of such pursuits.

Wraiths, much like spectres, arise from souls tainted by evil lives. These spirits aren't quite as powerful as spectres, and lose most semblance of self and memory of their former lives in the transition from mortal to spirit, stalking living prey in order to satisfy the undying hunger that swells within their insubstantial bodies. Appearing as vaguely humanoid figures composed of the black-on-black static of negative energy, wraiths are alternately blessed and cursed with the ability to sense the blinding light of positive energy within creatures. This sight both angers and provokes them, consumed as they are with the absorption and negation of life energy. Whether the light of the living enrages them out of spite or envy, or by causing them some pain or discomfort, is unknown, but this keen sense makes them unparalleled hunters. While spectres make fine spies and scouts, the inherent rage within wraiths makes them unreliable in such roles, and the more powerful undead they often serve quickly learn that wraiths work best as assassins and guards.



Ecology

Spectral dead are an abomination to nature's order and contribute nothing to the natural world, leaving only useless carrion in their wake, tainted flesh that even buzzards hesitate to eat. Most animals, in fact, recognize the presence of the creatures, and panic in the presence of many types of unquiet dead. The physical world, on the other hand, ignores them entirely; few barriers resist the passage of the creatures, composed as they are of ectoplasmic residue and ethereal miasma. While this incorporeal nature is the greatest asset of spectral dead, and that which strikes fear and hopelessness into the hearts of those mortals who encounter them, it is also the source of their one overriding fear and weakness—the warmth of the sun's rays renders the spectral dead powerless, assuring mortals some daytime respite from their depredations.

Habitat & Society

By day, all spectral dead lurk in the dark of ruins or deep underground, fearful as they are of the light of day. As the shadows deepen and night arrives, the creatures emerge to stalk the living, sating their hungers or desires for vengeance by drinking the positive life force of humanoids. This thirst is never quenched, and thus the spirits hunt eternally. Some never leave the presence of their mummified bodies or deserted graves. Others wander the land warily before seeking shelter at dawn, or roam in dangerous packs of ethereal undead, feasting ravenously on any living creatures they might encounter.

Allips are perhaps the most urban of the spectral dead, inhabiting abandoned asylums, bridges, high-raftered basements, prisons, and dark alleys beneath tall cathedrals—anywhere ripe for suicide. Many allips never escape those areas where they took their own lives, the bloody evidence of their violent end staining the rusted bars of prison cells or padded chambers. Burned-out and abandoned ruins, old bridges spanning rivers, and causeways stretching over chasms tend to harbor allips within their structures, the creatures emerging at night to attack unwary travelers, their addled, undead minds unable to comprehend anything beyond spreading their insanity to living intruders. Some allips, particularly those within shells of asylums or prisons, seem to manage cooperation with others of their kind, assembling in groups called haunts, although ghost hunters who survive encounters with these groups of muttering spirits sometimes refer to them as "choirs."

Unlike the comparatively sociable allips, banshees are exclusively solitary, being born as they are from singular events both personal and tragic to the elven women who rise as undead. Banshees haunt fog-shrouded moors, standing stones marking old elf gates, and ancient elven ruins deserted by their people. Although banshees are powerless while the sun shines, their presence creates a pervasive gloom around such sites even by day, with rotten fungus sprouting in mockery of playful fairy circles, or a cloying fog settling among standing stones and refusing to lift. These conditions only worsen after sunset, yet only the most experienced undead slayers notice these subtle shifts in atmosphere and scenery before the keening of the spectral maidens begins.

Among the spectral dead, spectres identify most strongly with their former selves, and are therefore

most likely to inhabit sites such as forgotten towers or crumbling estates that reflect their own feelings of loss and rage. Many spectres dwell near to or among the living, with scholars speculating that mortal memories drive them to seek humanoid populations, rather than simply a desire for warm bodies on which to feed. As the creatures must hide from the light of day, unvisited crypts and mausoleums in these inhabited areas make natural hideouts for spectres, giving rise to the mistaken belief that these incorporeal undead are forced to haunt the scenes of their own deaths or guard their own graves in the afterlife.

Wraiths, on the other hand, retain little to no memory of their former lives, and are more nebulous in their ambitions. Harnessed to their new forms and hungers by their evil in life, these spirits are most common near specific points of evil and tragedy where negative energy pervades—such as scenes of slaughter or occult rituals, and areas of atrocious societal decadence—or the decaying presence of stronger-willed undead such as spectres, liches, and vampires, whom they serve.

Campaign Role

The spectral dead make exciting foils for adventuring groups, and encounters with them are especially tense due to the creatures' debilitating powers. Spectral dead seek to destroy the living and, sometimes, to convert victims' souls into spawned minions. Their incorporeal nature makes them impossible to damage with purely physical weapons, and their spectral bodies allow them to take refuge inside objects or slash through armor with ease. To most adventurers, the creatures' energy-draining attacks are more fearsome than any physical wound, and at low levels even a single allip or wraith can be a terrifying encounter, either on its own or as a servant of some necromancer or more powerful undead. At later levels, GMs can challenge adventurers with groups of these creatures in foul gibbering swarms or health-draining wraith packs, while spectres can serve as tough encounters or even intriguing NPCs with information vital to the completion of an adventure (although few are likely to resist the temptation of a living feast without extreme cause). Banshees are understandably rare and exceptionally tragic, and their use should be given careful consideration, for their keen is deadly, and the ancient sites that they haunt are rife with foul magics and ancient, perilous mysteries.

Treasure

Their mortal forms long since discarded, the spectral dead have little need for the treasures so valued by the living. Indeed, few items are of use to the incorporeal creatures in any case, as their ghostly hands simply pass through ordinary objects. Wraiths are the least likely among these spirits to guard anything of value, utterly consumed as they are by the gnawing hunger for life that drives them. Spectres typically do not covet treasure, but as many of their kind haunt their death sites, though searches of the area can often turn up an unquiet grave or moldering corpse of some slain adventurer that may possess valuable items. Particularly ancient spectres may know the whereabouts of unplundered troves, although their instructions may be filled with deceit or treachery. The haunts of banshees are more reliable for experienced treasure hunters, as the nature of the spirit's creation means that elven ruins or significant sylvan sites are most likely nearby, and many an elven blade of legendary stature or suit of shining magical mail has been recovered after fending off the keening spirits. The protection of small personal fortunes stashed away in haunted lairs motivates some allips, who babble greedily about their treasures, and attack all who come too near.

Variant Spectral Dead

Ghost hunters and slayers of the undead report many disturbing varieties of spectral dead encountered in ruined towers and crumbling ancestral estates. In addition to the powerful dread wraiths described on page 281 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, many of the basic categories of spectral dead also include stranger, more exceptional specimens, which can present even greater challenges to those who would put them to rest.

Corpulent Spectre (+1 CR): Ancient spectres that are able to satisfy their all-consuming rage by engaging in perpetual, gluttonous feasts upon the living undergo a startling transformation, growing in size and strength as their incorporeal bulk oozes and writhes around them in miasmal folds, appearing as an obese, ghostly humanoid. A corpulent spectre gains the advanced creature simple template, and while it doesn't gain the bonus to natural armor that template normally grants, its Large size grants it greater reach. Although its size category doesn't change, its reach with its melee attacks increases by 5 feet.

Scribbling Allip (+1 CR): Reports from reputable ghost hunters claim that some rare allips have developed the ability to physically manifest their babbled words into tangible, ectoplasmic script, expectorating their mutterings corporeally like tangled webs that drape across dungeon corridors and haunted hallways. This ability manifests as the web special attack. Adventurers attempting to read these web-like words must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be fascinated for 2d4 rounds, just as if they were subject to the allip's babble ability.

White Wraith (+1 CR): Created by fiends from the distilled and corrupted souls of holy crusading knights who succumbed to temptation and died as sinners and

blasphemers, white wraiths are composed of blinding white light rather than darkness. These tortured souls deal 2d6 points of cold damage and 1d8 Dexterity drain with their incorporeal touch. Furthermore, white wraiths do not suffer from powerlessness in sunlight, as do their lesser cousins, and in fact exude an aura of light that causes all creatures within 20 feet to become dazzled as long as they remain within this area of bright illumination. Creatures slain by white wraiths rise as normal wraith spawn in 1d4 rounds.

Spectral Dead on Golarion

Few are the regions of Golarion that do not suffer the curse of the spectral dead. Every dark hall, abandoned grave, or scorched ruin has the potential to host the violent reanimated souls that wander the lands of the living. While some areas, such as Geb, Nex, and Ustalav, are obvious haunts of these incorporeal predators, perhaps more frightening are those areas where the creatures thrive unnoticed by their mortal neighbors, emerging in darkness to feed.

Allips are disturbingly common in Mendev, where the shattered minds of deceased crusaders give rise to the creatures, and the forests near Falcon's Hollow are lousy with wraiths that drain the warmth of life from unwary loggers or travelers. Few outsiders realize that banshees and swarms of tiny spectral fey haunt the forested acres of Sevenarches in the River Kingdoms, built as it is on the ruins of an ancient elven settlement, and reports of spectres in the Mushfens and the Sodden Lands are not uncommon. Ruins in the cursed Tanglebriar are rumored to be rife with spectral dead, as are the frozen marshes and desolate moors of Irrisen.

While rarer than those arising from more mundane insanity, some allips in Golarion start out in life as priests of the Old Cults who delve too deeply into the maddening secrets of their faith, taking their own lives when mysteries better left unrevealed spark a consuming darkness in their souls. The corrupting demon Sifkesh revels in driving mortals toward insanity and eventual suicide, and regions harboring her cults often have significant populations of the babbling spirits. The city of Westcrown, in particular, owes its high concentration of allips to the demon, particularly during the period known as the White Plague. The city's elite had made something of a game of corrupting souls and driving them toward madness, and the militant order known as the Hellknights was formed to put an end to their murder spree and combat the plague of allips that resulted from it.

Similar outbreaks of banshees are a perpetual problem in Kyonin, particularly as the elves there seek to reclaim more of their ancestral holdings. Banshees occasionally take lives on the outskirts of the racially integrated settlement of Greengold, where human farmers inadvertently disturb old haunted ruins or elven cemeteries, disrupting the unquiet rest of the cursed maidens long ago abandoned by their people. While the elves are quick to respond to such occurrences, the fact that the spirits are obviously elven and often destroy entire families tends to upset the already tenuous peace between the humans of Greengold and their elven hosts. In the Darklands, the perpetual betrayals of drow society typically lack the sympathetic tragedy required to create banshees, although a new breed of exceptionally clever young noble daughters have learned to intricately manipulate their treacheries to give rise to the creatures, whether born from the betrayal of a matron mother, the mutiny of a favored daughter, or the gradual winning and then dashing of an underling's trust. In each such case, those responsible for a banshee's creation then carefully turn the undead's ire against their rivals.

Areas infested with the foul followers of Zyphus are often prime locations for spectres, as the cultists' souls tend to linger on the mortal plane after death, rewarded with undeath and allowed to continue their dark deeds on Golarion. Other gods also command the respect of these undead, however, and the creatures' spawning ability means spectral clerics in the service of Urgathoa quickly rise within her clergy, the dark spirits' endless hunger for life force and control of an army of spawn a fitting homage to the Pallid Princess. Geb's ruling class contains several powerful spectres, some of which host decadent, energy-draining banquets in their unhallowed halls, feasting on buffets of sentient souls, with the victims rising as spawn to expand the nation's legions of incorporeal spies and infiltrators.

While wraiths serve a similar role to that of spectres in Geb's undead hierarchy, the haunted hills of Ustalav claim Golarion's most significant populations. Though other countries tend to think of Ustalav as a place of vampires and werewolves, those who call the Immortal Principality home know that the more common threats after sunset are silent, roving packs of wraiths that sweep down from the fog-shrouded foothills of the Hungry Mountains, giving that range its name. Even now, in the relatively peaceful years following the Shining Crusade, investigators still occasionally find entire villages consumed, with whole families found dead in their beds, faces frozen in fear and drained of all life, their souls now wandering the hills as wraiths themselves. As such, most people living on the nation's misty moors and craggy ridges have learned to listen for the frightened whinnying of horses or growls of dogs, using the slight warning to seek the shelter of holy ground.

Sample Allip

This writhing, monstrous shape coils and wriggles as a mass of thick black smoke, its face a gibbering skull.

Carak, Blade of Zyphus **CR 6**

XP 2,400

Male unique allip (*Pathfinder Bonus Bestiary* 4)
CE Medium undead (incorporeal)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13
Aura babble (60 ft. DC 19)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 76 (8d8+40)
Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Melee incorporeal touch +9 (1d4 Wisdom damage)
Special Attacks create spawn, touch of insanity

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 20
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 25
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Fly +22, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +13, Stealth +14
Languages Common
SQ madness

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Babble (Su) Carak constantly mutters and whines to himself, creating a hypnotic effect. All sane creatures within 60 feet of Carak must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be fascinated for 2d4 rounds. While a target is fascinated, the allip can approach without breaking the effect, but an attack by the allip breaks the effect. This is a sonic, mind-affecting compulsion effect. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by Carak's babble for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Create Spawn (Su) If the Wisdom damage caused by Carak's touch of insanity ever meets or exceeds a creature's actual Wisdom score, that creature immediately drops dead—this is an exception to the normal rules for Wisdom damage. In 1d4 rounds, a regular allip emerges from the victim's body—this allip spawn takes a –2 penalty on all d20 rolls and receives –2 hp per HD. It is under Carak's command and remains so enslaved until his destruction, at which point the allip spawn loses its spawn penalties and becomes a fully-fledged and free-willed allip.

Madness (Su) Anyone targeting Carak with thought detection, mind control, or telepathy immediately takes 1d4 points of Wisdom damage resulting from contact with the insane undead's tortured mind.

Touch of Insanity (Su) Carak deals 1d4 Wisdom damage with a touch. A successful critical hit deals this damage and an additional 1 point of Wisdom drain (instead of merely dealing double Wisdom damage). On each successful attack, Carak gains 5 temporary hit points.

In life, Carak was a deadly assassin-priest of Zyphus. Upon his suicide, the assassin's faith brought him back as an allip, eager to continue his dark work. Calling himself the Blade of Zyphus, he wanders the back roads of Golarion, harvesting powerful souls by tormenting them until they commit suicide, only to rise again as allips under his control.





Wight

So cold. Fog—not just clinging but crawling inside my skin, swallowing every sound. My heart was pounding, but I couldn't hear a sound, except for the rasp of cold steel and the rattle of dying breaths, echoing from everywhere and nowhere. Then, floating in the fog, I could see their eyes, burning like tiny stars in a frozen sky. They were coming. My fallen friends had already joined their ranks. Death could have been an escape, but too cowardly to take even the coward's path, I knew I would join them soon. They were coming...

—Bran Stalwart,
Wanderlust: True Stories for Brave Lads and Lasses

Wights are animate corpses, infused with a dire spirit of unlife and a hunger for the souls of the living. At first glance, they may seem no different from withered zombies or even slightly fleshy skeletons, save for the glowing pinpoints of light that burn within their vacant sockets. Many wights are partially dismembered, desiccated, withered, and horrible to behold. They sometimes prowl in the midst of lesser undead, emulating the lurching gait common to such creatures so those facing them may never realize the true danger until it is too late, as the wight's very touch saps their life force.

When wights hunt in groups of their own kind, however, they are far more dangerous. Their awkward lurching disappears as they creep, prowl, and lurk with a deadly cunning and terrifying stealth. Hunting singly or in packs, they slink through the shadows to ambush their prey, sometimes engaging in hit-and-run battles to inspire terror in their enemies and drain their resources even as they drain the living spirits of those facing them, slowly leaching the will to fight from their enemies until their prey are all consumed and absorbed into the pack.

As undead, wights no longer need to breathe, and indeed can exist in vacuum or on the ocean floor without a problem. Yet for unknown reasons, some wights still retain small habits and physical affectations from their lives, of which going through the motions of breathing is the most common. For some wights, the sound is like the gurgling croak of a man with his throat slit, drowning in his own blood. For others, it is the dry, rattling wheeze of a timorous lung collapsing. In all cases, however, the fresh air they draw in is exhaled again as a befouled, tainted effluvium—wisps of thin, tainted mist that drift out from their nostrils, mouth, and any gaping wounds on their tattered torsos. Those who have survived close contact with a wight describe these exhalations as the stink of death, air that has been stolen from the living and now fit only for the dead, musty like a long-sealed crypt or layered with the cold loamy, scent of a fresh-turned grave—all smells that some undead hunters have collectively labeled "the Black Breath." Sadly for the undead's victims, the stench of a wight's decayed body and misty breath rarely betrays its presence prematurely, as it can prevent its rotted lungs from exhaling as long as it wishes, releasing its foul reek only when it is ready to make its presence known.

The same is true of the lambent glow of a wight's gaze. The power of unlife burns within wights as a darkling fire, and the eyes of a wight mirror this unholy energy within. These glowing pinpoints of light are a telltale clue distinguishing wights from simple shambling corpses, but wights can suppress their glow when seeking stealth. When a wight attacks, however, its deathless rage and hatred cannot be extinguished, and the sallow radiance returns to their eyes once more.

Wights in History

The word *wight* dates to Middle English, wherein it referred to a living human, and was used by Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton in their writings. However, the word and its Old English and Old High German antecedents descend from the Old Norse *vaettir*, which referred to a type of nature spirit or a supernatural being; for example, the *landvaettir* were guardian spirits of the land.

The most famous wights of fantasy are the barrow-wights of J. R. R. Tolkien, evil spirits bound by greater dark powers to the barrow-downs of a fallen kingdom to ensure it did not rise again. Their capture of the hobbits and attempt to corrupt them into wights themselves make for a horrifyingly iconic scene. The RPG genre has further instantiated the nature of wights as following Tolkien's style, both in pen-and-paper and computer RPGs and in novels based on them. Some fictional wights vary from this tradition, such as the cavewights of Stephen R. Donaldson's Thomas Covenant books, which are more akin to orcs than the living dead. Others hew very close to it: the Others of George R. R. Martin's Song of Ice and Fire series fit the bill admirably, being the tragic spirits of the fallen, bound to a greater evil but perhaps remembering a dim shadow of what they once were and compelled to pass on their curse.

Some sages theorize that those wights who still draw breath do so because they linger nearer to life than most of the undead, and that it is this very nearness to life that feeds their rage and hunger for life. The necromantic energies that empower them scour their bound spirits and compel them to inflict their torment on others in the hope that, in consuming others' lives and souls, their own hunger can be slaked. Could they but sup deeply enough from the trough of others' life force, they might rekindle their own, and their endless frustration in this quest only enrages them further and redoubles their obsessive quest for life. If the theft and consumption of a dozen souls is not enough, then perhaps a score would suffice. If not a score, then perhaps a hundred or a thousand. Yet it is never enough. Their existence is thus one of unending frustration and bitterness, as even when gorged on the lives of the fallen, their hunger is never satisfied for more than a moment.

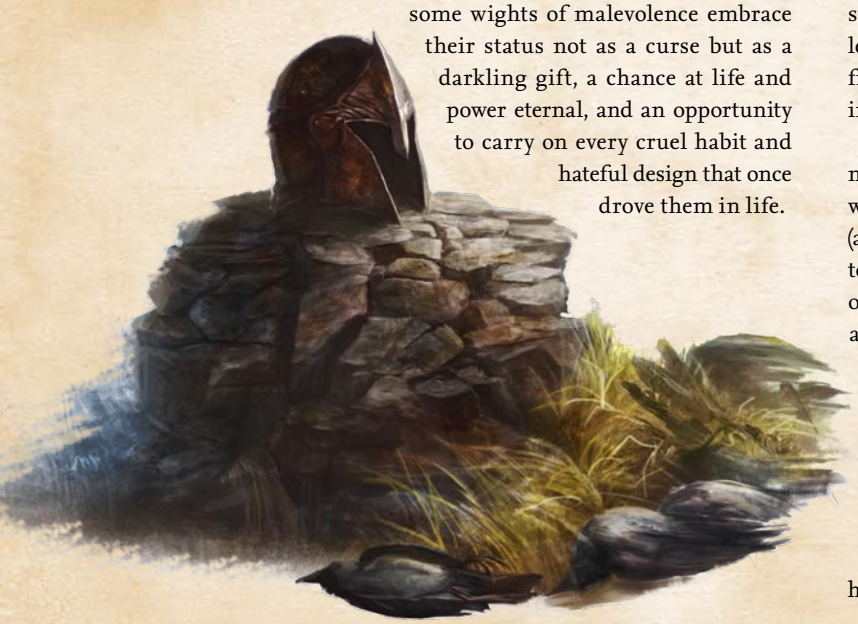
Ecology

The origins of wights are highly varied. Some are created through obscure necromantic rites (usually *create undead*—see page 3) and bound to the service of necromancers or evil priests. More commonly, wights are simply the unfortunate victims of other wights, the light of their lives turned to a corrupted mockery by the undead's touch. Typically, wights' hatred for themselves is as strong as their

hate for the living. Wights seek to recover enough stolen life force to reignite the fires of their souls or, failing that, to slake the bitterness in their hearts by creating a legion of minions who share and spread their anguish and pain. It is well known that the bitter chill of a wight's touch draws forth a portion of the living soul of its victim; less well known, however, is that at the same time a portion of the wight's undead spirit flows back into the victim, replacing the victim's living essence with the raw stuff of death. Every touch draws the target farther from life and deeper into death, until the last of its life force ebbs and the target is transformed in an instant into a dreadful thing of suffering and hate, leavened with a tormented enslavement to the will of its creator.

More tragically, wights can also arise spontaneously. Scholars of the undead use the term "wights of anguish" to describe those whose birth into unlife occurred following a horrible trauma, often both mental and physical, that leaves their bodies broken, their psyches shattered, and their spirits consumed with hate and revenge. The depth of their suffering and the lingering shock are so intense that these unfortunates become enthralled to their own pain, clinging to it with every fiber of their being, crucifying themselves across the threshold of death's door, unable to truly live but unwilling to truly die.

More sinister are "wights of malevolence," those who through the depravity of their own benighted souls have earned an eternity of roaming the world, cursed with an eternal hunger that can never be slaked and a ragged weariness unable to ever find rest. Popular legend says those sentenced to such an existence are the truly damned, so vile that Hell itself spat them up rather than take them to its bosom. Most are driven mad by their torments, their minds a degenerate stew of wrath and malice, but some wights of malevolence embrace their status not as a curse but as a darkling gift, a chance at life and power eternal, and an opportunity to carry on every cruel habit and hateful design that once drove them in life.



But perhaps most frightening are those known as "wights of possession." These are wights created when an evil undead spirit bonds with a corpse in order to animate it, often choosing its host based on convenience or strength of body. Though the original spirits of these bodies may have long since fled to their just rewards, few things are more horrible for their grieving friends than to see their loved ones' corpses suddenly come to life and begin slaughtering the mourners.

Habitat & Society

Wights can survive in virtually any environment and can be found from equatorial deserts and jungles to frozen mountains and tundra. Wherever humanoids die in utter anguish or are entombed in infamy (or even buried alive as punishment), wights may arise, and once they establish a foothold, they begin to spawn and proliferate. Wights can multiply as long as humanoid prey is available; however, they are no mindless beasts, and often react intelligently to changes in the available supply of prey. A pack of wights, whether full-strength wights or a pack of spawn under the control of their creator, often establishes an orderly pattern of attacks and migration to follow humanoid prey on the move, to make their numbers appear greater by attacking in different locations, and to evade reprisals against former bases of operation. This is not to say that wights are entirely nomadic, only that packs of wights are not tied to specific locations in the way some other undead are. They may return often to a defensible location, particularly a ruined fortification, city, battlefield, or barrow-down, and some wights may be bound to guard specific locations or objects or may be imprisoned within a tomb or necropolis, but most wights are cunning enough to move about as their tactical and strategic situation demands. As a result, the popular legends of ghost ships, crewed by the undead, that rise from the sea bottom or emerge from the fog at regular intervals, almost certainly refer to wights.

Wights are most famously associated with burial mounds called barrows; such wights, known as cairn wights, are a variant created to fulfill the role of faithful (and merciless) guardians of tombs and burial sites. Akin to mummies, wights are rarely formed from the remains of the tomb's primary resident, instead being interred alongside the tomb's occupant to ward the chamber and its contents. Those slain by a guardian wight become new defenders of its charge, assisting in the protection of the warded area and the punishment of interlopers. Wight guardians are no more tolerant of undead interlopers than they are of other trespassers; all must be dealt with swiftly, finally, and with brutal efficiency.

Not all entombed wights are simple guardians, however, as wights of malevolence sometimes arise from

the unquiet remains of the exceptionally evil. Warlords of unspeakable cruelty may be sealed within barrows in the hope that, should their evil linger and stir even in death, they will be trapped and contained. Still, the great and mighty, however despicable, are often buried with great wealth, and in time their legends fade to ghost stories and fireside tales, but the lure of gold remains. Eventually, the greedy and the foolish may decide that surely the dead lie at peace, and would hardly begrudge the living a bit of scratch, learning only too late that they have broken into a place better left undisturbed. The lucky ones may grab a bit of dusty treasure and flee before the fell spirits within fully awaken, but even that reprieve is a temporary thing. Whatever the root of their evil in life, all wights of malevolence share an insatiable greed and possessiveness of the trappings of their mortal lives, however insignificant. Those who steal the tiniest portion of a wight's wealth are hunted relentlessly, their steps harrowed day and night until the last coin is recovered and the wight's terrible vengeance on the thief has been executed.

Old legends suggest that the treasures of a wight of malevolence are themselves tainted with the wight's foulness, causing a darkening of spirit and a growing psychosis, leading to murderous paranoia that consumes the victims, and causes them to become wights themselves. Depending on the legend, this fate can be averted by freely giving the wight's treasures away to others; having them blessed by one of the fey (at whatever price the fey demands); or scattering them in the sunlight for 3 days, allowing anyone to take a portion, and then collecting whatever fate has decreed will remain. Only by breaking the cycle of greed can the wight's treasure be safely recovered. Of course, legends frequently twist the truth, and those who steal from the undead had best be prepared to deal with the consequences.

Campaign Role

Wights are a transitional kind of undead, a step up from the mindless walking dead and the grotesque corpse eaters of low levels, but a clear step down from the sinister, deathless masterminds PCs may encounter later in their careers, those with class levels and a host of supernatural abilities. Wights' powers are straightforward enough to make them simple to run as adversaries, yet chilling enough to strike fear into players who have had time to grow attached to their characters but are not yet fully confident in the panoply of their own abilities. As such, they can be used to supply a sinister surprise in the midst of what might otherwise seem a mundane encounter.

Wights are often miscast as solo opponents for PC parties, as an ordinary wight is simply not stout enough to do more than perhaps leave one or two characters with a temporary handicap in the form of a negative level. Lesser wights should be used in numbers, either in a group attack or using their Stealth to set up a series of repeated ambushes that don't give the PCs time to fully recover from the lingering effects of the last attack before the next one strikes. Especially in combination with darkness or fog, this can help set up the kind of fear wights should engender.

Accursed Treasure

A wight's treasure can become infused with its dark spirit, creating a gnawing, obsessive greed that saps the spirit and life of any creature that claims it. A character that possesses accursed wight treasure gains a number of negative levels equal to the total gp value of the stolen treasure divided by 10,000 (minimum of one negative level). These negative levels remain as long as the creature retains ownership of the treasure (even if this treasure is not carried)—they disappear as soon as the stolen treasure is destroyed, stolen, freely given away, or returned to the wight's lair. If the treasure is merely sold, the negative levels become permanent negative levels that can then be removed via means like *restoration*.

A creature whose negative levels equal its Hit Dice perishes and rises as a wight. If the wight whose treasure it stole still exists, it becomes a wight spawn bound to that wight. If not, it becomes a free-willed wight. Removing these negative levels does not end the curse, but *remove curse* or *break enchantment* does, with a caster level check against a DC equal to the wight's energy drain save DC. A wight's treasure does not confer negative levels while in the area of a *hallow* spell.

Treasure

The reputed curse of a wight's treasure and its murderous vengeance upon those who would rob it dissuades many would-be treasure hunters, but the truly bold will gladly risk all for fortune and glory. Common wights (and their spawn) and wights of anguish often have just tattered rags, or perhaps a few tokens or mementos from life, though the bodies of their victims may hold treasures long since forgotten. Wights born of necromancy are often equipped by their masters to better fulfill their intended missions. Wights of malevolence, on the other hand, retain much more of their intellect and memory from life and garb themselves in the trappings of the living. Warrior wights favor the same arms and armor they did in life, while usurious merchants may opt for fine clothing and jewels, though their resplendent accoutrements are mocked by their withered flesh and hateful, glowing gazes. Wights who were spellcasters in life may wear priestly vestments or sorcerous robes, carrying the tokens of their lost magical

craft even as they flail hatefully at the living, seeking to enslave tormented souls in a vain attempt to reclaim some vestige of their lost power.

Variants

Wights arise in many ways, and their particular origins often influence the abilities they possess. Several variant wights (the brute wight, the cairn wight, and the frost wight) are detailed on page 276 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*—two more are presented below.

Dust Wight (+1 CR): Just as wights that rise from the dead in frozen environments can become infused with the dangerous qualities of their harsh environs, dust wights carry in their desiccated, crumbling frames the scorching punishment of the searing desert. These wights are typically found in desert tombs or ruins, and have fiery orange eyes and very little flesh save for leathery scraps clinging to their bones. A dust wight gains DR 5/bludgeoning, and when it hits a foe with its slam attack, causes the creature struck to become dehydrated if this victim fails a Fortitude save (same DC as the wight's energy drain attack). A dehydrated foe becomes fatigued (or exhausted if already fatigued).

Mist Wight (+1 CR): A mist wight can exhale black breath at will as a standard action, creating a 10-foot cube of thick mist that acts as *obscuring mist*. This tainted air causes living creatures to become fatigued as long as they remain within the mist and for 1 round thereafter. The cloud of mist remains in place for 1 round per HD possessed by the mist wight. Once per day, a mist wight can infuse its breath with the choking stench of the grave, creating an effect identical to a *stinking cloud* (Fortitude DC 14 negates; the save DC is Charisma-based). Mist wights can sense the subtle intake of breath in creatures around them, and they gain blindsense 60 feet against living creatures who aren't holding their breath.

Wights on Golarion

Wights can be found nearly anywhere on Golarion, though they are encountered most frequently in areas that have seen a long history of war and strife, especially in and around the battlegrounds and burial grounds of fallen empires. Places like the River Kingdoms and western Iobaria with their innumerable failed settlements and petty battlefields are fertile breeding grounds for wights, as are war-torn frontiers like those between Taldor and Qadira, and lands tainted with prolonged suffering like Galt and Nidal. Wights are most associated with humans, but evil dwarves have a long tradition of creating loyal tomb guardians to ward their mausoleums, while the ancient exodus of the elves (and the terrible fates suffered by those who remained) make wights a recurring plague in reclaimed elven holdings. And of course, like most undead, they're more common in areas where cults of Urgathoa operate.

Wights are less common in Garund than elsewhere, as the funerary practices and necromantic traditions there have long favored mummification for the preservation of the honored dead and for guardianship of tombs. Wights are prevalent, however, in the flooded ruins and innumerable shipwrecks of the Sodden Lands, the Shackles, and the rain-lashed coasts around the Eye of Abendego. These desperate wights sometimes live in a perverse mockery of life, seeing themselves as the last survivors of their villages (or voyages), not realizing that they are truly dead.

Far to the east, the cruel rakshasas of Jalmeray exult in the temptation and corruption of the unwary into the kind of unspeakable vileness that leads these unfortunates to become wights in death, serving the rakshasas as loyal bodyguards and assassins.

Packs of wights are a long-standing menace at the triune borderland of Ustalav, Lastwall, and the Hold of Belkzen. The Virlych dead lands surrounding the ruins of Gallowspire, steeped in horror, are haunted by the tormented remnants of those harrowed an age ago by the Whispering Tyrant's magics, bodies shredded and spirits flensed until nothing but pain and deathless rage remained. Patrols from Vigil exterminate these wights whenever they are found, but on more than one occasion a patrol has simply disappeared, until a later patrol suffered a tragic encounter with the corrupted remains of the righteous fallen.

Across the border in Belkzen, honor is for the living, and wherever the warriors fall is where they rot. On rare occasions, notable leaders are buried in lone cairns, but more often when burial is required (such as when an army dies on land the victors wish to inhabit), all of the fallen from a single battle are interred in a mass barrow with their leader. These funerary rites often awaken one or more wights that embrace the charge of leading the dead. Unusually powerful orc priests, shamans, or witches may also travel at times through the Hold visiting the various tribes to create guardian wights or take control of those that arise spontaneously.

Of all these lands, however, the ones most associated with wights are the cold Kellid and Hallit lands of the north, from long-lost Sarkoris in the east to the Lands of the Linnorm Kings in the west. No strangers to suffering and misery, nor to war and cruelty, these realms are liberally scattered with barrows, dolmens, and cairns. Some are haunted by wights of their own, but legend tells of the White Legion, an army of frost wights gathered beyond the Crown of the World, culled from the lost and the dead of all the cold lands. Their purpose is a mystery, but enemies of Irrisen fear they may be in league with Baba Yaga and her witch daughters.

Sample Wight

This nearly skeletal figure wears the ancient armor of a long-dead king, and carries itself with a sort of regal pride.

Wight Lord **CR 9**

XP 6,400

LE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 115 (11d8+66)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. without armor)

Melee +1 *falchion* +17/+12 (2d4+11/15–20 plus energy drain) or slam +15 (1d6+1 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +15)

At will—*deathwatch*

3/day—*air walk*, *greater command* (DC 21)

1/day—*haste*

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Climb +15, Intimidate +20, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +9

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or platoon (1 wight lord plus 4–6 advanced wights)

Treasure NPC gear (full plate, +1 *falchion*, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid creature that is slain by a wight lord becomes a wight itself in only 1d4 rounds. Although spawn so created are less powerful than wight lords, they are more powerful than typical wights, and are treated as wights with the advanced simple template. Spawn are under the command of the wight lord that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they become full-fledged, free-willed advanced wights. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

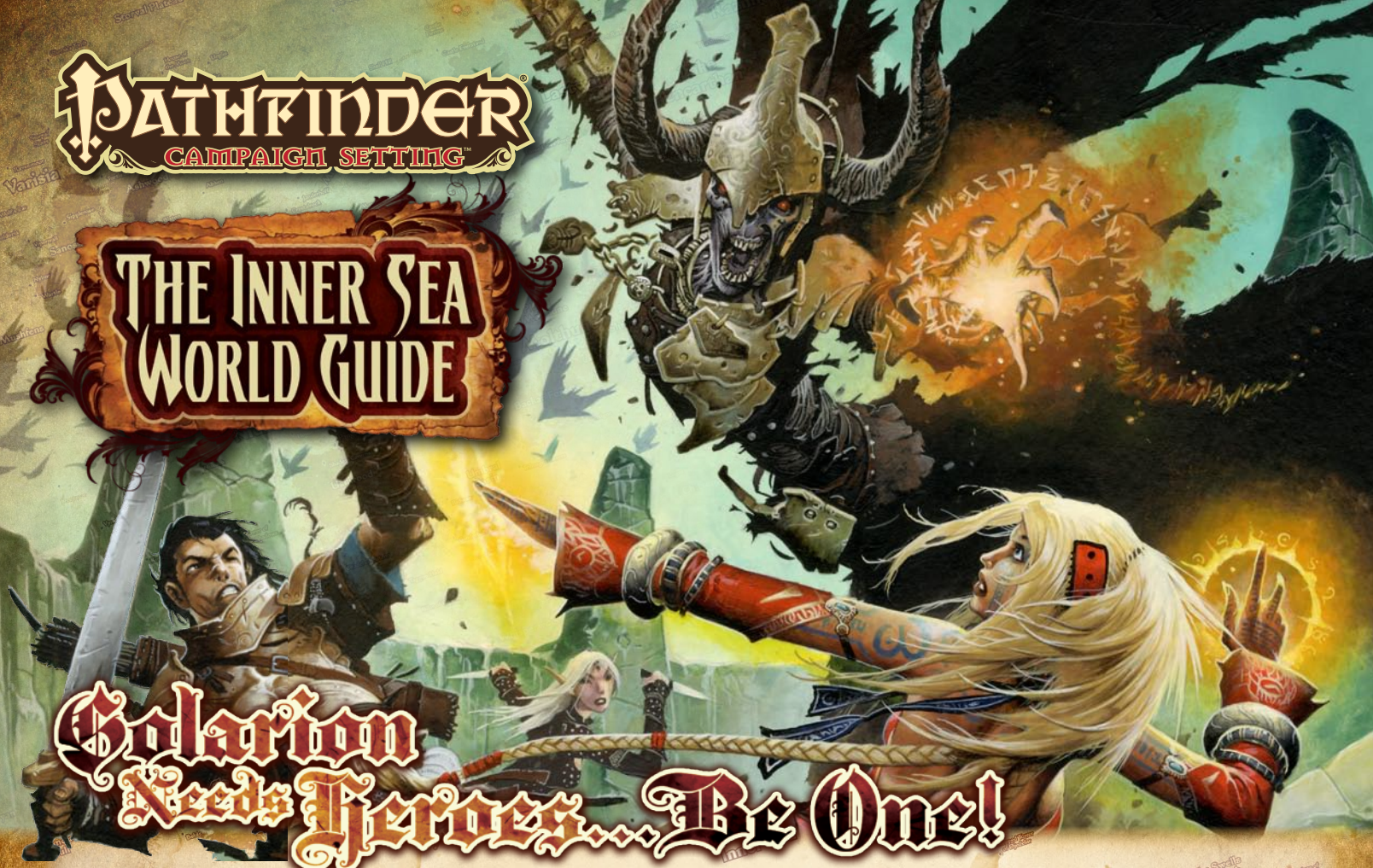
Energy Drain (Su) A wight lord inflicts a negative level each time it hits a foe with a slam attack. Like cairn wights, a wight lord can channel this negative energy through any weapon it wields, inflicting a negative level with each successful hit with the weapon.

Resurrection Vulnerability (Su) While a wight lord is vulnerable to resurrection magic, it isn't quite as vulnerable as a typical wight. A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on a wight lord staggers it for 1d6+1 rounds if it fails a Will save, but does not destroy the wight. Using the spell in this way does not require a material component.



Dark princes and warlords of old, wight lords are undead monarchs. Where typical wights rise from a wide variety of individuals, wight lords rise from the bodies of despotic rulers or ruthless generals. Wight lords haunt the same ancient burial grounds and battlefields their lesser kin dwell in, but wight lords aren't satisfied by simply guarding their haunts against the living. They continue their reign as tyrants in death, ruling over undead armies and often compelling their unliving minions to wage war upon nearby towns or cities, sometimes even at the behest of bold and powerful necromancers.

The statistics that are presented above represent the minimum power level of a wight lord. A wight lord can rise from the remains of any cruel or sadistic leader, but those who were higher than 11th level when they perished retain some of their previous life's knowledge—although not all of it. When this occurs, subtract 11 from the creature's previous number of class levels to determine the total number of class levels the wight lord possesses. Assign these class levels to the wight lord in a logical way—if it was a single-classed NPC in life, simply add more levels of that class to the wight lord. Multiclassed characters and those who possessed levels in prestige classes require more creativity in applying the class levels. The goal for building such a wight lord should be to approximate the themes and general abilities the creature had in life.



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THE DEAD WILL RISE



For most people, death is a release, a passage into the just rewards of the afterlife. Yet not everyone who dies rests easy. Legends and campfire tales tell of those individuals too evil to die, or too twisted by pride or occult knowledge to cross over to the other side. These lost souls become the undead, plaguing the dark crypts or silent streets of cities and farm towns alike, feasting on the innocent or spreading their immortal contagion like a plague.

Undead Revisited explores 10 different undead monsters—or entire breeds of monsters—from both real-world history and the time-honored traditions of fantasy roleplaying. Each monster entry explores the undead creature's formation and ecology, its interactions with its victims and other undead, tips and tricks regarding its role in a campaign, variant versions for added gaming utility, and more. In addition, each entry comes with a unique sample monster, complete with full statistics for the Pathfinder RPG and ready to be dropped into any game.

Inside this book, you'll find:

- Liches, the twisted spellcasters who lock away their souls so death may never claim them.
- Devourers, who form from the spirits of powerful spellcasters and fiends that venture into the darkness beyond the planes and come back forever tainted.
- Raveners, the undead dragons wrapped in the soul energy of those they destroy.
- Spectral dead, those formless spirits such as the wailing and betrayed banshees, the insane allips, the furious spectres, and the supremely evil wraiths.
- Shadows, those souls too covetous and miserly to relinquish their grasp on life.
- Bodaks, the eyeless horrors twisted by sights no one was meant to see.
- Graveknights, whose lust for battle knows no end—not even in death.
- Nightshades, the planar juggernauts who seek to snuff all life from the cosmos.
- Mohrgs, the undead murders who rise after death to stalk the streets.
- Wights, with their insatiable hunger for the souls of the living.

Undead Revisited is intended for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and Pathfinder campaign setting, but can easily be used in any fantasy game setting.

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