



# FOUR HORSEMEN PRESENT

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The Four Horsemen are dedicated to grinding every myriad imaginary universe into dust. That means both arming players with options and advice for playing evil characters or giving gamemasters tools to use in destroying their own creations. *Four Horsemen Present: Heralds of the Apocalypse* offers plenty of both. Whether you are a GM looking for a ghastly plot and powerful villain alternatives, or a player who gets to stray on the darker side of the alignment-spectrum, this book is for you.

## EVIL CHARACTERS

The majority of games feature good protagonists fighting against evil antagonists, potentially even thwarting an apocalyptic scheme. What if any of those ideas get turned around? Maybe the PCs are evil, but fighting a greater evil. Perhaps the PCs are evil, but face an ongoing apocalypse they can't truly stop. It is even possible, that the PCs themselves play the role as the villains, trying to bring some dark plot to fruition. Why aren't these concepts more common?

The simple answer is... they are really difficult to pull off with style. Playing an evil character, running an evil game, or telling compelling apocalyptic stories are all concepts that carry unfamiliar difficulties for the ill-prepared. Foremost, it is simply easier to run a game for good characters. The reasons are numerous, but the most challenging aspects might be motivation and teamwork.

A good character is likely to be self-sacrificing, loyal, and committed to helping people. With these traits, they make for a steadfast friend, and are easily drawn to saving the day... because it is the "right thing to do". However, evil characters are just as likely to be self-centered, unfriendly, and selfish. When running a game for one or more evil characters, or readying to play an evil character, it is vital to create reasons why the PC sticks to the plot and party. That way every week isn't spent wondering when they might murder everyone in their sleep for their magic items.

Once the player and gamemaster establishes motivations for the character and reasons for loyalty to the party, they *should* be able to work within the context of a neutral or good team. There might still be occasional hiccups, which is why playing an evil character should always be reserved for mature and

experienced players only. While playing an evil character can be a rewarding and fun experience, the second it ruins the game for anybody else is the moment it must be nixed.

## DEFINING EVIL

Saying that a character is "evil" is like saying a pet is a dog. There are hundreds if not thousands of different breeds of immorality. Evil comes in many shapes and colors, each carrying unique challenges to play or plan around. If you are reading this, you are probably not evil in real life. The average person is intrinsically altruistic, which makes it hard for us to think like an evil person. On top of that, many of the most objectively evil people in history didn't consider themselves evil. Thus, when making an evil character, it is all too easy for us to fall back on tropes, like the mustachioed cackling villain or murderous brute.

Evil people *can* do good things; they just need a good reason. Many clinically diagnosed sociopaths and psychopaths rarely break major laws, because they don't want to go to jail. They don't care about doing the "right thing" or harming other people, but they recognize the potential for unpleasant personal consequences. Likewise, people with these unfortunate mental disorders can be extremely charismatic and likeable with friends... because it is easier to manipulate people who like them.

Even the best GMs need to have sticks and carrots that they can employ in order to influence evil characters. Sticks are used to prevent them from getting too out of line and carrots help motivate them to stick to the plan. The player and GM need to work together to figure out what these things are, and how they tie into the story on a small (party-wide) and large (campaign) level. After all, it isn't enough for the evil PC to seek the ultimate badguy's defeat, they have to also want to work with the party, pursue sideplots, and not derail the campaign every week with mayhem.

Given the breadth and scope of the topic, it is only going to be explored from two directions: alignment and sins. Within each archetypical evil exists carrots and sticks that can be used to motivate the character. Once the character's flavors of evil are defined, it becomes easier for the GM and player to have an unspoken understanding of how the character can be influenced.

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## ALIGNMENTS

The alignment system is a useful abstraction, but not a perfect description of human behavior. A person who is lawful good with their family might be chaotic evil when dealing with a group they demonize. A good or neutral character can get away with being uncompromising or steadfast in alignment. An evil character often *needs* to have layers.

The first big step in defining an evil character is figuring out where on the law/chaos spectrum they generally fit in. Essentially, the more lawful the character, the less work is required to make them operate within the context of a story and party.

### LAWFUL EVIL

All things being equal, a lawful evil character is one of the easiest to motivate and control. They tend to have some sense of honor, respect, and decorum. This means that while they are willing to do evil things, they should generally be predictably evil. Even if they lack a true respect for law, they often at least make a *show* of sticking to the letter of rules and regulations.

Ambition, power, and control are all motivators for a lawful evil character. A lawful evil character might be a part of a hierarchy, whether military, aristocratic, or infernal. This helps shape both carrot and stick, with the allure of rising higher in the ranks, and the fear of losing all they've worked for. An evil character that does not belong to an established hierarchy might instead wish to exert control over others. This likewise becomes a motivator, as the character is drawn to any potential source of power, such as money, magic, or titles. Most lawful evil characters that wish to ascend and rule over non-evil groups often have to maintain a convincing façade, and fear of their sins becoming revealed can be a major drive.

### NEUTRAL EVIL

Neutral evil falls in the middle on the alignment difficulty spectrum. The primary defining characteristic of a neutral evil character is selfishness. A neutral evil character might blissfully watch the world burn... from a safe place. This makes for greater difficulty in speaking about them in broad generalities. GMs must to take greater care in defining the sins of the character in pursuit of carrots and sticks.

Survival, pleasure, and entertainment are usually prime motivators for a neutral evil character. Neutral evil characters are less likely to play well with

others than lawful evil, at least over a long-term perspective. A neutral evil character might betray their best friends... should a better offer come along. As a GM and a player, it is important to make sure that the best situation is always sticking to the team and story. Maybe something really terrible happens if the character doesn't remain loyal. Perhaps they make ten times as much adventuring than what any villain can ever afford to bribe them.

As a GM, try not to put a neutral evil PC into a situation when they have to make a hard choice, or at least always expect the choice to favor their personal survival and continued happiness. The upside to all of this is that the character is going to endlessly and fanatically pursue whatever sins they are drawn to (when survival isn't an issue). This makes it relatively easy to figure out what carrots are needed to keep the PC on track and ostensibly loyal.

### CHAOTIC EVIL

Chaotic evil is the most difficult type of alignment to play within the context of most games. This alignment pretty universally means psychotic, which makes them nearly impossible to control and motivate without a really heavy hand. GMs should cautiously approach this as even a possibility, and only with the most mature and experienced players.

The concept of carrots and sticks can break down with chaotic evil characters. Often punishment or drives must be so extreme that while they work for overarching storylines, they do little to keep the PC from murdering everyone in a bar. A chaotic evil character might have the same driving sins as a lawful or neutral character, but doesn't care as much about consistency. When predictability within the context of motivation is one of the sole tools the GM has, it makes things far worse. This takes an already difficult proposition (playing an evil character) and ratchets up the difficulty another step entirely.

For a chaotic evil character to actually work there has to be severe in-character consequences, constant oversight, and an almost continual compromising with everyone at the table. This might sound harsh and restrictive, but if as a player, the draw of chaotic evil is "doing whatever you want", then you probably shouldn't consider playing it in any serious game. Think hard about this option, and if there is any other avenue that might be worth pursuing. If a chaotic evil character is the only way to go, here are some possible options to make it a bit easier to handle.

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- *Antipaladin*: The dark fallen version of the paladins *must* be chaotic evil, but they are chaotic evil within (ironically) a defined context per their code of conduct. Because of the nature of the class, they must act in a certain predictable (albeit horrendous) manner in order to retain their abilities. By its nature, this provides a whole slew of carrots and sticks—from fiendish masters, to righteous enemies.
- *Overlord*: Similar in some ways to the antipaladin, the chaotic evil character might be wholly subservient to a dark master or fiendish overlord. This godlike being has ultimate control over the character. This allows the GM to provide motivation through the master, with their displeasure likewise being a driving factor.

- *Controlled*: The chaotic evil character might have one or more brutally harsh methods of control placed on their actions that GMs normally balk at when thinking about a character's playability. These could include defined spells and effects such as *geas/quest* or *dominate person*, or be more open-ended ideas like a god's direct oversight. The point is the character has a large portion of their free will and agency removed, with the magical equivalent of constant police surveillance and brutal consequences.

## SINS

There is no easy definition of evil, but here is one within the context of roleplaying games: an evil person pursues their desires over the needs and suffering of others. Whether they are drawn to money, power, or vengeance, an evil person is willing to do terrible actions in pursuit of their goals. This means that an important aspect of defining the evil character is figuring out what their desires actually are. This gives them a necessary predictability that allows the GM to control their actions without the railroad becoming painfully visible.

While this is not meant to be an exhaustive list of potential drives, it is meant to frame the correct thought process in a familiar narrative of sins. When thinking along these lines, try to not focus on a single sin for the character to embody. Instead, make them a layered creation touched by many failings both major and minor. This presents the GM with a toolbox they can employ to push or punish the character. However, some sins work better than others within this context.

## LUST

While often attributed to sexual desire, lust can just as easily be a part of love, or merely longing. It can be a factor of a general sort of desire for power or pleasure. As a sin of the flesh, it makes for less of a compelling motivator for an evil character. Many good characters can be lecherous, and many antiquated ideas regarding the sin of lust earn eye rolls from a modern perspective.

Without delving into mature and inappropriate topics, the best use can perhaps be the sort of love that puts the needs of the loved one(s) above all others. If given the hard choice between saving a

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loved one or a stranger, many good people would choose the loved one. However, what if hundreds, thousands, or millions must suffer or die? This can form the basis for a strong motivating element. Numerous other possibilities exist. Perhaps the character's heart is owned by a powerful NPC, who controls and guides their actions. Maybe they are in love/lust with a truly good person, and must playact being equally noble to maintain or pursue the relationship. The antagonist might even threaten the target of desire, whether directly or indirectly. And of course, even the most evil character can pursue righteous vengeance when a loved one is killed.

## MATURITY

Communication is key for an evil character or an evil game. Nobody should ever feel shocked and disgusted out of character, because someone crossed a line in character. It is important to be aware that many players have experienced terrible events in their past, and not being conscious of their feelings is rude. This goes for both the GM and each player of an evil character. Many evil actions are wisely handled "off-camera", or shouldn't be given an opportunity at all within the context of a game. Being evil should certainly not be seen as a license to sadistically torture in gruesome detail.

## GLUTTONY

The classical idea of gluttony is overindulgence and selfishness. Essentially, it is the evil of putting personal pleasures (such as food and drink) over the needs of others. It is the evil of richly feasting while others starve, but doesn't have to solely apply to food. Many characters can be gluttonous about something, whether it is drugs, books, or trophies. Unfortunately, gluttony by its nature makes for a soft motivation toward positive action. It *can* be exercised as a sole influencing factor, but often works best when layered with other motivations. For example, a glutton for magic might be tempted to explore an ancient ruin in order to gain and hoard power for themselves.

Gluttony works best when the evil character's comfortable excess is threatened. The pampered noble might be willing to murder a legion before eating gruel, and so must fight a coincidentally just cause to preserve a standard of living. It can also become an interesting factor in any truly apocalyptic

game. Gluttons can be prudent parasites... like an intelligent virus that knows enough to preserve the host. They often require a certain level of civilization to support bad habits. A glutton might work diligently and incidentally to build up and maintain society, if only so they can prosper.

## GREED

The allure of simple wealth is the easiest and most familiar driving motivator, so doesn't require a lot of explanation. Most fantasy-based games have used the allure of gold and magic items to influence PCs since the dawn of the hobby. This works all too well for evil characters, who might be perfectly willing to do whatever good deed the GM's NPCs want... for the right price. The trap here is that if it is commonly the *primary* motivating factor of an evil character. All that does is set the party up for internal conflict, which may even spill over to the players. Sadly, it is not unheard of for a player to want to make a greedy evil character just to have an excuse to steal the best loot, and cheat the other players.

Try not to make greed the evil character's primary sin. A character that is a hoarder of wealth for its own sake isn't interesting and doesn't provide faceted motivation. Money should be a tool, not a destination. The greed should ideally serve toward an end goal. Likewise, try to have other sins to give the GM more than one carrot to work with. A greedy character can likewise ideally focus their pursuit of wealth outward rather than inward to avoid resentment with other PCs. A simple solution is the character realizing how much money is to be made adventuring, and how hard it is to adventure alone. Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, and try to only screw over people who aren't on your team.

## SLOTH

If there is a cardinal sin for evil characters, sloth is decidedly it. A slothful character doesn't want to act, or acts to the bare minimum degree. It can be fun to roleplay with a bit of sloth in a character, such as the wizard who replaces physical actions with magic, or the noble that commands followers to do work for them. However, if taken to any serious degree, it just makes the character an annoyance. They'll likely end up complaining about being forced to do anything, or constantly opting out of any useful effort. Eventually, everyone is forced to wonder why they adventure at all.

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Sloth is also nearly worthless as a motivating factor. Urging a slothful character to action in order to return to a state of inaction becomes a frustrating exercise. Then, threats to the character's happy lack of effort serve only to get them to grudgingly go along.

## WRATH

Like greed, wrath is a common motivator. A great villain is one the whole party *hates*, so there is a satisfying emotional climax when they are eventually defeated. More than one paladin has fallen when taking justice just a little bit too far. However, like with greed, wrath can be a trap when making an evil character *because* it is so familiar and easily grasped. It can be tempting to just dial the wrath up to 200% and call it evil.

When wrath becomes the primary motivator, it either creates a character that reacts to every situation with violence, or one that pursues revenge with blinders on to everything else. A constantly wrathful character quickly becomes difficult to work with and annoying to other party members. They pick fights when it isn't necessary, often dangerously chain encounters, or overshadow the skill sets of teammates for the sake of conflict. Try to not make wrath the evil character's singular characteristic. A character can be wrathful, but understand that a hammer isn't always the best or only solution. A character can be brutal, violent, and ruthless, but *also* subtle. Some of the most fascinating villains from fiction are those that seem controlled, charming, and polite while it suits them, but then turn into terrifying monsters at the drop of a hat.

An utterly single-minded pursuit of vengeance is less preferable in most games. Unless it is a very narrow sort of campaign, there are going to be sideplots, distractions, and stories for other characters. If your character has zero interest in anything except revenge, then half the game becomes boring and tedious.

## ENVY

Envy can be a difficult and nuanced sin, but ultimately one of the most rewarding. An envious character wants what others have; whether it is wealth, love, status, or godhood. This might be some narrow or specific desire, or a broad general description of a character who can't ever be content. In either case, it can narratively be the gift that keeps on giving. It becomes a driving factor of the character that the

GM can dangle out ahead whenever things start to get off track. There is always some new person to be envious of, an interesting prize to gain, or the eventual grand goal seems just out of reach.

Like with greed, envy becomes a problem when it becomes focused inward at the party. If the character has a good or neutral alignment, topics like envy toward another PC can be compelling story fuel. That is because the character must war with their better nature against sin. However, with an evil character, there is less struggle. It is an inevitably disastrous path, with almost certain fracturing within the party. When making an envious evil character, take great care to not let your teammates become obstacles or targets.

## PRIDE

Pride can serve as the greatest of all the sins for an evil character... because it is so easy to wound. A truly prideful character might go to truly insane lengths because of a single offhand rumor the GM sends their way. An antagonist defeating them in battle can be enough fuel for an entire campaign's worth of grudgingly good behavior. Additionally, if the character's pride is wrapped up in the perception of their "noble" character, then they must at least put on a show in order to maintain appearances.

The only downside to pride is that it can be easy for the character to go too far. Like with wrath, it can cause a sort of tunnel vision. When making a prideful character, it is important to insert features of their worldview more important than personal pride. Alternately or additionally, pride can be tied to a group, ideal, or concept that is larger than a single person. This affords the advantages of a motivating tool, but doesn't carry the same sort of potentially dangerous chance of personal over-commitment.

## TEAMWORK

At its core, games like *Pathfinder* are about teamwork. Don't split the standard party— with tanks in the front, and spellcasters in the rear. An evil character *has* to be able to work in this context, at a bare minimum, if they are going to function well. Playing an evil character that isn't a team player... no matter how compelling the roleplay, is going to result in frustration for everyone. When creating an evil character, don't let that happen. Head it off well ahead of time by concocting one or more reasons why they are loyal and trustworthy, at least within the narrow context of close friends and allies.

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## LOVE, FAMILY, AND FRIENDSHIP

Evil does not mean indiscriminately evil. A character can be evil, but only to their enemies. To friends and family, they might be trustworthy and noble. Some of the worst monsters in history had people they admired and respected. Genocidal maniacs can be family men with loving wives and dogs. Barbaric conquerors can recognize worthy foes as potential allies. It is human nature to be able to show empathy to those you care for, but then regard enemies as sub-human. Many organized crime groups revolve around the idea of building iron bonds of trust and loyalty within the context of a family-structure. These people might torture someone to death, then go home and toss the ball around with their kid. They might hide the darkness from those they love, by compartmentalizing each aspect of their life. Alternately, they could believe they are somehow “protecting” loved ones by being a monster on their behalf.

From this perspective, an evil character might function really well within a party. Careful attention must be paid to ensure they have an unshakeable reason to remain loyal to the other characters. Perhaps the other PCs are a mixture of relations, childhood friends, close business associates, and paramours. The evil character might burn down innocent villages before betrayal, but they'd be lighting the fire while a nobler spirit refuses to compromise.

## MANIPULATED PAWNS

One option when playing an evil character is viewing the other PCs as either henchmen working toward the character's goals, or manipulated allies controlled through subtle influence. However, this sort of technique is unique in the sense that it requires an intrinsically comedic mindset, or else the buy-in and maturity of everyone at the table.

If the evil character is a goofy sort of deranged, believing the party to be “minions”, this can ironically be a fun tongue-in-cheek method of keeping the character controlled. The evil character isn't *really* calling the shots, and in literal truth is being manipulated by the supposed henchmen. However, they remain pacified, loyal, and blissfully unaware that their lessers are their equals (or betters).

The flipped side of that coin is having the character actually be manipulating the other party members. This edges close into true charismatic psychopath/sociopath territory, which makes it a dangerous route



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to take. The basic concept is that the evil character really is using the other PCs to accomplish their goals, and exercising master-level social engineering to make it happen. This is difficult for two reasons. First, the assumption of how the character works as a teammate *requires* them to ultimately be in charge. If this becomes questioned or threatened, things could quickly spiral out of control. Second, the character has no true bonds of loyalty to the other PCs. This means they can just as easily screw them, if something better comes along. A situation like this must be carefully managed by the GMs and all the players... ideally out in the open. If everyone at the table is in favor of the concept, it can be handled without hurt feelings. Furthermore, it requires the player of the evil character to *really* understand how manipulation and influence tactics work in the first place, so that they can convincingly roleplay this type of evil. In essence, they must make an effort to use the other character's carrots and sticks in a way similar to the GM. However, if the player quickly gets frustrated because the other PCs aren't obeying their Bluff/Diplomacy check... this was a bad idea.

## NECESSARY GOOD

As evil as a character might be, there is always a greater evil. Insane death cults, apocalyptic daemons, and ancient demiliches are all forces that might make an evil character seem good by comparison. After all, even if the PC is a manipulative jerk, they don't want the whole world destroyed. All of their stuff is here.

Making this sort of tactic work puts a lot more of the pressure on the GM. For one thing, it defines the campaign. To really motivate and keep an evil character focused, the villainous threat needs to be grand, ongoing, and ever-present. It likewise adds greater difficulty to sideplots and personal storylines with other PCs, since the evil character is going to see them largely as distractions. This can be a selfish route for the PC to take, if it is not done with the explicit say-so of the GM. Instead, this sort of technique tends to work better in an all-evil party, or when combined with other methods of promoting teamwork.

## NO CHOICE

Like with the chaotic evil alignment suggestions, the character might simply have no other choice than to play well with the party. This can be handled

from a story perspective, with mechanics, or by some combination of the two. The other PCs could have a "kill switch" for the evil PC... like a cranial bomb or contingent curse. If the evil teammate steps out of line (and gets caught): boom. Maybe at any point, any of them can wrest control of the evil PC's actions in a manner similar to *dominate person*. Perhaps every member of the party is just constantly aware of any action the evil PC takes, so they can't get away with anything.

This option is difficult, primarily because it robs the evil character of agency. However, the fun of the group is more important than the fun of any individual player. Ideally everyone should have maximum fun, but sometimes sacrifices must be made for the good of the game. A GM should never *force* this technique on a player's character. All that does is breed resentment between the player and GM, as it is a truly ham-handed method of promoting teamwork. Going this route requires the player's full and conscience buy-in; with the understanding it is the equivalent of having heavy chains placed on their autonomy. It can be a no less compelling roleplay opportunity, but they have to accept the severe cost associated.

## AN ALL EVIL TEAM

Throwing a bunch of evil characters together without each having defined motivations is a recipe for disaster. Expecting them to flawlessly pursue the plot hooks and accept the assumed motivations inherent to most adventures is inappropriate. An entirely evil party requires greater care and attention than a single evil character. It just becomes a greater challenge for the GM to juggle a dozen carrots and sticks in order to drive every evil character forward.

Like with a singular evil character, an entire party of morally dark lich-wannabes and antipaladins needs definitive reasons to operate within the context of an adventuring party. The temptation can be to let each player make their character in a vacuum or assume things are going to go according to plan. Don't do either. The characters need to have *uniting* reasons to operate as a team. It doesn't matter if they all signed an infernal contract, or seek vengeance on the same person. The point is, at the end of the day, they are all in a boat together. Even with something like that in place, the GM is going to need additional carrots and sticks just in case someone starts to stray.

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## EVIL BACKGROUNDS

If evil is a personal choice or an exercise of freewill, then it would be contradictory to blame one's evil actions on the influence of demons, insanity, or poor parenting. Still, evil often requires an underlying purpose or reason for committing evil actions. Below are a few basic ideas for creating backstories for evil characters.

*Bad Appletree:* You come from a family with truly questionable ideologies. As a child, you witnessed numerous evil acts and behaviors, which your family (or race) accepted as normal, skewing your perception of morality. Perhaps you come from a noble family whose lust for power overshadowed their morality where acts of treason and duplicity were commonplace. Perhaps you are from a society whose patron deity is evil and demanded human sacrifices. You may have grown up during a brutal war where the extreme treatment of others included acts of genocide and torture, or in an isolated xenophobic culture that partnered with demons or other evil forces as a means of survival.

*Cloven-hoofed Stepchild:* You were adopted or raised by someone other than your birth parents, whom your benefactors have always feared. You were never told anything about your parents but as far back as you can recall, there have always been those that hate you. Many were wary of some dark and mysterious influence that they felt might overcome your humanity. Perhaps your father was an infamous serial killer or a demon. Maybe your mother was burned as a witch, and swore upon her pyre that she would return in the guise of her child to take vengeance. Regardless, you lived up to your reputation and always felt like an outsider. As a result, you care as little for others as they have cared for you.

*Driven By Vengeance:* Something in the past caused you extreme physical or emotional trauma and you seek to repay the favor at every opportunity. Perhaps you were a victim of war, slavery, genocide, abandonment, or long-term abuse. The trauma has profoundly altered your adult perspective on rational punishment, and as a result you treat all who might oppose you severely.

*Natural Born Killer:* As far back as any can remember, you liked to hunt, maim, and torture.

It started with frogs, rats, and stray animals, but as you grew older you felt a strong desire to hunt more intelligent prey. You became a professional assassin or mercenary, but it was merely an excuse to disguise your delight of the slaughter. Not that the money wasn't good, but it was always secondary.

## CONCLUSION

It almost seems like everybody wants to run an evil character at some point. Perhaps humanity has an underlying fixation with evil and its pursuit. Maybe it's because evil represents a sort of freedom that most people don't have; the ability to do what they want, speak and pursue their desires freely, and shed feelings of guilt or caring about repercussions. For many, attaining this level of freedom, of fearlessness, represents one's individuality. But is the pursuit of those types of freedom truly what makes somebody evil?

When creating an evil character it is important to understand the motivations that character wants. Evil is about filling that void, and it's about the reasoning behind someone's actions. It isn't careless or thoughtless, even in its most chaotic or most destructive state. Thoughtlessness is different, because evil must have intent. Ironically, evil has plenty of constraints and repercussions. Moreover, those who are evil often have great regard and admiration for those in their company. Respect can be entirely different from empathy or affection.

The object of roleplaying games is to work with other people in order to have a fun time. Poorly crafted intent readily provides an explanation for why few gamers like playing with the stereotypical chaotic neutral PC. Some characters have no agenda except to be disruptive. A truly evil individual must be fun, and they have to make their evil enjoyable to everyone else. This means the evil person has their work cut out for them because they must convince the good people that they are necessary, they are important, or there is a reason for their existence.

An evil character is not there to be killed in the first game for being evil, nor are they there to mess up the game for everyone else and never get invited back. An evil character must be willing to sacrifice a difference of opinion when those stuck-up, pompous, and arrogant goody-two-shoe people never seem to be able to bend. In the end, evil is better about compromise.

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## CHARACTER TRAITS

The following traits are meant for evil characters, but may be taken by characters of any alignment with GM permission.

**Compartmentalization:** You live two completely separate lives, which gives you almost a split personality. Your behavior and reactions in some situations may not even resemble your attitude in others. Select a second alignment, which must be at least two steps different from your true alignment on the good/evil or chaos/law alignment axis. For example, a lawful evil character could select the lawful good or chaotic evil alignments. You may switch between these alignments, and are treated as the alignment selected for the purposes of all spells and effects. Switching between alignments requires a 10 minute personal ritual to alter your behavior. This could include dressing in certain ways, traveling to or from work, or spending time with different groups of people. A character with the true neutral alignment cannot take this trait and a character with this trait cannot select the true neutral alignment.

**Confidence Artist:** You are a master of covering a lie's discovery with bigger lies. If you fail to deceive someone, further attempts to deceive them are at a -5 penalty (instead of a -10 penalty). You must fail at least two attempts to deceive any individual before lying can potentially become impossible.

**Denial:** You believe you are a good person and doing the right thing, even if you are a despicable monster. Your alignment counts as neutral (and not evil) for the purposes of any harmful and beneficial spells or effects. If your alignment is or becomes evil, you still register as evil to divination spells and effects (such as the *detect evil* spell), but do so as a creature with 2 less Hit Dice or class levels.

**Devil's Charm:** Both charming and handsome, you possess a talent for attracting and manipulating lovers and engaging in illicit affairs. As a result, you have acquired a number of paramours who hold influential positions within one or more communities. You gain a number of illicit connections equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). These contacts may be within a single city or each within a different settlement. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus to any attempts to gather information or influence the attitudes of creatures within each city where you have at least one contact (per the Diplomacy skill).

If you have more than one contact within a single city, you gain an additional +1 bonus within only that city. If your Charisma modifier increases, you may gain new contacts within new settlements or a settlement with existing contacts.

**Evil Ideologist:** Your interest in all dark things provides you with obscure knowledge and insights concerning taboo topics most individuals associate with evil. You choose a specific area of expertise in which you specialize, such as assassination, torture, an evil religion, the culture of a specific evil race, a specific subtype of evil outsiders, or undead. You gain a +2 trait bonus to all Knowledge skill checks that concern your chosen evil subject matter or Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with an individual regarding your area of expertise.

**Leg-Breaker:** You are good at influencing action if a polite request comes after a little pain. You gain Intimidate as a class skill. You gain a +4 trait bonus to Intimidate checks against a target you have damaged within the last minute. The hit point damage dealt must equal or exceed the target's Hit Dice.

**Lone-Shark:** Once per month, you may invest some of your finances in one or more illegal schemes. You may invest up to 500 gp per character level, and may not have more money than this invested at any one time. After one month, you may attempt a Diplomacy or Intimidate skill check to collect on your investment with interest. The DC of the check is equal to 15 + 1 per 1% of interest you wish to collect beyond your initial investment. For example, a DC 25 check would net a 10% return. If you succeed, you collect your full investment plus interest. If you fail by 5 or more, you may collect your full investment without interest. If you fail by 10 or more, you do not regain your money, but may attempt to collect it again (with or without interest) after one month. If you fail by 15 or more, your money is completely lost due to theft or abysmal luck.

**The Cleaner:** You've performed cover-ups for politicians, lords, church officials, or equally important members of society. Now, whenever you find yourself in a predicament with the law, you miraculously manage to worm your way out of punishment. When you take this trait you must choose a number of settlements equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). Whenever you are within one of these selected settlements you can call upon your contacts to aid you. This lets you add a +2 bonus to the settlement's

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corruption and law for the purposes of your actions. Additionally, within these settlements, you are unlikely to be arrested by guards for petty crimes. If the trouble is of a more serious nature (such as murder or treason), your allies organize an attempt to break you out of jail. However, after gaining your freedom you permanently lose all benefits for that settlement. Instead, you may select a new settlement these benefits apply to. If your Charisma modifier increases, you may a new settlement to apply these benefits to.

**Suppress Aura:** You may attempt a Bluff check whenever a creature attempts to discern your alignment, opposed by the creature's Sense Motive check. If you succeed, your aura registers as a one step weaker. So, an evil creature with 5 Hit Dice or a 1st level antipaladin would seem to not have an evil aura to per *detect evil* spell. If you succeed by 5 or more, you do not appear to have an aura, no matter your Hit Dice or class levels.

## NEW FEATS

The following feats fit within the themes of an evil character or servant of dark powers, but may be taken by characters of any alignment with GM permission.

### ACUTE CRITICAL (COMBAT)

You are a master at striking the most vulnerable parts of your opponents.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +9, Critical Focus.

**Benefit:** Whenever you confirm a critical hit with a piercing or slashing weapon, you add your bonus damage from any class feature that deals precision damage (such as precise strike, sneak attack, or studied strike) to the damage for that attack (if it was not already included). This does not render your opponent flat-footed or otherwise vulnerable to precision damage for subsequent attacks. This feat has no effect on creatures that are immune to precision damage.

### BLOOD COMPONENT

You can call upon magical power with an offering of blood to unholy entities.

**Prerequisite:** Eschew Materials, caster level 1+.

**Benefit:** Whenever a spell requires a costly material component or focus, you may substitute or contribute the death of a creature you kill with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher to the spell's



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casting. The creature provides the equivalent of 100 gp worth of costly material components or foci for every Hit Die it possesses. Every creature sacrificed in this manner adds at least 1 round (or the time required to kill the creature) to the spell's casting time. The caster may provide any number of sacrifices, or any combination of costly components and sacrifices to meet the requirements of the spell.

## DEATH'S SACRIFICE

A dark destiny allows you to send others to the afterlife in your place.

**Prerequisite:** Diehard, Endurance.

**Benefit:** Once per day when you fail a saving throw that would result in you being reduced to negative hit points or cause your death, you may instead choose to automatically succeed on the saving throw. However, you must then be the direct cause of death for a creature with Hit Dice equal to or greater than half your character level within 24 hours. Should you fail to kill a creature meeting this requirement within this timeframe, you die.

## DEVOTEE OF DEATH

Your loyalty to death allows you to build up credit with the forces of entropy.

**Prerequisite:** Death's Sacrifice, Diehard, Endurance.

**Benefit:** You may create a pool of death points, with a maximum equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1). You may expend one point from your pool in order to gain the benefits of the Death's Sacrifice feat, and can gain the benefits of the feat more than once per day. You may only add points to your pool by being the direct cause of death of a creature with Hit Dice equal to or greater than your character level. When your pool of death points is equal to your Constitution modifier, you do not age and cannot be magically aged. If your pool of death points is equal to 0 for at least 24 consecutive hours, you die.

## DEVOTEE OF FAMINE

You have embraced your hunger, seeing all the world as food.

**Prerequisites:** Endurance, Famine's Hunger.

**Benefit:** You gain a bite attack as a primary natural attack that deals damage appropriate to your size. You deal damage as a creature one size category larger while engaged in a grapple, or two size categories larger if you possessed a natural bite attack before taking this feat. In addition, while you are affected by any ongoing poison, your bite attack inflicts that

poison on creatures damaged by your bite attack. The save DC for the poison becomes  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  your HD + your Constitution modifier. If you are immune to the poison, or successfully save so the poison no longer affects you, you continue to inflict the poison with your bite attacks for 1 round per character level.

## DEVOTEE OF PESTILENCE

You become a carrier for diseases you come into contact with.

**Prerequisite:** Endurance, Pestilent Immunity.

**Benefit:** Whenever you succeed on a saving throw against a disease, you become immune to that disease and can inflict it on other creatures. You can inflict that disease with any natural attacks you possess or if a living creature comes into contact with your blood. A creature automatically touches your blood by confirming a critical hit against you in melee combat, or by dealing hit point damage against you with natural attacks. You remain a carrier of the disease for one week unless exposed again. If exposed to a disease you are already immune to, you automatically become a carrier with no saving throw necessary. You may be a carrier a number of diseases at one time equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1). A *remove disease* spell or similar magic automatically removes any diseases you are the carrier of with no caster level check required.

## DEVOTEE OF WAR

You can single-handedly hold your ground against legions of weaklings.

**Prerequisite:** Cleave, Power Attack, War's Brutality.

**Benefit:** Creatures with Hit Dice equal to or less than half your character level do not gain a flanking bonus to attack against you, and do not automatically hit you on a roll of a natural "20" unless the attack also hits your armor class. Additionally, they cannot use the aid another action to either grant a bonus to attack rolls against you or a bonus to an ally's AC against your next attack, unless they succeed on an attack roll against your touch AC or 10 (whichever is higher).

## FAMINE'S HUNGER

Desperation has taught you the true meaning of famine, and how to eat anything in a time of need.

**Prerequisites:** Endurance.

**Benefit:** You do not gain the fatigued or exhausted conditions from starvation or thirst. You are immune to any ingested disease or poison. When grappling,

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you may inflict damage to the creature you are grappling equal to the bite damage for a creature of your size with a successful combat maneuver check. If you already possess a bite attack, this damage is for a creature one size category larger.

## GLOWERING GAZE

Your dark demeanor deflects attempts to manipulate you.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13, Intimidating Prowess.

**Benefit:** Whenever any creature attempts to target you with the Diplomacy or Intimidate skill, you may attempt an opposed Intimidate check. If you succeed, the creature's attempt fails. If you succeed by 5 or more, the creature gains the shaken condition for 1 round. The duration of the shaken condition increases by 1 round for every additional 5 by which you beat the creature in the opposed check.

## HUMILIATION

You are exceptionally good at ruining a target's good name with rumors and innuendo.

**Prerequisite:** Diplomacy 3 ranks, Deceitful.

**Benefit:** You may attempt to ruin a target's reputation by spreading truth or lies about them. This requires at least a DC 10 Diplomacy check and 1d4 hours, as if gathering information. You may retry a failed check every 24 hours. On a successful check, you spread embarrassing or ruinous rumors about the target within a single settlement. For 1 week per character level, the target takes a -1 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks. This penalty is increased by -1 for every 5 by which you beat the Diplomacy check DC, to a maximum equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum -1). The target may attempt to address and silence these rumors by succeeding on an opposed Diplomacy check (with a DC equal to your Diplomacy check result) with the penalty included. Penalties and duration of penalties from multiple uses of this feat are not cumulative, but may apply to multiple targets or within multiple settlements.

## PESTILENT IMMUNITY

You can gain immunity to diseases and poisons through exposure.

**Prerequisite:** Endurance.

**Benefit:** Whenever you successfully cure a disease or poison by making consecutive saving throws, you gain immunity to that specific disease or

poison. You do not gain this immunity if the disease or poison is magically cured, but can gain immunity if the Heal skill is used to grant you bonuses to your Fortitude save.

## RUTHLESS STRIKE (COMBAT)

Once you strike an opponent, you cannot but help letting your weapon linger just a little bit longer in the wound.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** As a swift action, when hitting a target during a full attack action, you may forgo the attack at your lowest attack bonus to deal additional damage. You must first hit with an attack that is not at your lowest attack bonus. You then deal additional damage with that attack equal to your Strength modifier plus any magical enhancement bonuses to damage of a weapon you are using (if any).

## TWIST THE KNIFE (COMBAT)

You aggravate fatal wounds to cause a foe to experience incredible pain.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +6, Vital Strike, sneak attack +2d6.

**Benefit:** Whenever you hit a creature with an attack where sneak attack damage is added, you may subtract any number of dice of sneak attack before damage is determined to instead inflict penalties to the creature's attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. The penalty is equal to -1 per die sacrificed and lasts for 1 round per die sacrificed. You must sacrifice at least one die of sneak attack for both penalties and the duration of those penalties (so a minimum of -1 for 1 round when sacrificing 2d6 sneak attack damage). These penalties and the duration are not cumulative. The creature loses this penalty if the damage is healed or it receives any magical healing. This is a pain effect. If the attack fails to damage the creature, it takes no penalties.

## WAR'S BRUTALITY

Fighting on innumerable battlefields has taught you to ruthlessly slaughter the weak and helpless.

**Prerequisite:** Cleave, Power Attack.

**Benefit:** You may perform a coup de grace as a standard action. If you reduce a creature with Hit Dice equal to or less than half your character level to negative hit points, the creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ your character level + your Intelligence modifier) or die.

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## NEW ARCHETYPES

The following new archetypes are appropriate for evil or dark characters, but some may be available to characters of any alignment with GM permission.

### ASCENDANT LICH (WIZARD)

For most liches, the creation of a phylactery and the investment of the soul represent a method of thwarting death before old age brings them low. For the ascendant lich, it is instead the journey of a lifetime spent with an eye toward eternity.

**Phylactery (Sp):** An ascendant lich must select a bonded object per the arcane bond wizard class feature. This bonded object is destined to become the wizard's phylactery, where his soul resides for eternity. He grows closer to his goal by continually sacrificing portions of his life and soul to the object. If an ascendant lich's phylactery is destroyed, his soul becomes scattered, but he can collect the pieces and replace them into a new bonded object. However, he cannot prepare spells or use any wizard (or archetype) class features until it is restored. At 20th level, the ascendant lich can no longer replace his bonded object in this manner. This modifies arcane bond.

**Arcane School:** While many ascendant liches are also necromancers, the only requirement is that they have some knowledge of necromancy. An ascendant lich may not select necromancy as an opposition school.

**Soul Investment (Ex):** At 1st level, the ascendant lich begins placing portions of his soul into his phylactery. He gains darkvision 60 feet, cold resistance 5, electricity resistance 5, and a +1 enhancement bonus to his natural armor. His enhancement bonus to natural armor improves by +1 at 5th level, and every five levels thereafter (to a maximum of +5 at 20th level). His cold and electricity resistance improve to 10 at 5th level, 15 at 10th level, 20 at 15th level, and immunity to cold and electricity at 20th level.

The ascendant lich becomes healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy, as if he were an undead creature. He can be turned or controlled by the Command Undead and Turn Undead feats as

an undead creature. He gains +1 channel resistance at 5th level, and every five levels thereafter (to a maximum of +4 at 20th level). He can likewise be affected by any harmful spell or effect as if he was an undead creature. This replaces Scribe Scroll.

**Splintered Soul (Ex):** While the path of an ascendant lich does not carry the same material costs and risks of death that most aspiring liches face, the process is not without a price. By slowly splintering his spirit, the ascendant lich mutilates his essence and continually warps his body, until he eventually becomes a soulless corpse. At 1st level, the ascendant lich takes a –1 penalty to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks (except Intimidate) when dealing with living creatures. This penalty increases by –1 at 5th level, and every five levels thereafter (to a maximum of –5 at 20th level).

**Lich's Touch (Su):** At 5th level, the ascendant lich can make a negative energy touch attack a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Intelligence modifier. This touch attack deals 1d8 points of damage to living creatures + 1 point of damage per 2 class levels. As negative energy, this damage can be used to heal undead creatures. An ascendant lich can take a full-round action to infuse himself with this energy, healing damage as if he had used this touch attack against itself. This replaces the bonus feat gained at 5th level.

**Fear Aura (Ex):** At 10th level, the ascendant lich gains a fear aura. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at him must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the wizard's class level + wizard's Charisma modifier) or become shaken for 1 round per class level. At 15th level, creatures with less than 5 HD must succeed at a Will save or be frightened, and creatures with less than 10 HD must succeed on a Will save or be shaken. At 20th level, creatures with 5 HD or more must succeed on a Will save or be shaken. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ascendant lich's aura for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. This replaces the bonus feat gained at 10th level.

**Paralyzing Touch (Su):** At 15th level, any living creature the ascendant lich hits with his negative energy touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude

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save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the wizard's class level + wizard's Charisma modifier) or become stunned for 1 round (until the end of the lich's next turn). If the ascendant lich touches a creature stunned by this ability, and they fail a second save, the creature becomes permanently paralyzed.

*Remove paralysis* or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim from the stun or paralysis conditions (see the *bestow curse* spell description, with a DC equal to the save DC). The effect cannot be dispelled.

Anyone paralyzed by an ascendant lich seems dead, though a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive. This replaces the bonus feat gained at 15th level.

**Rejuvenation (Su):** At 20th level, the ascendant lich's transformation is complete. His bonded object becomes a true phylactery. He can no longer replace the bonded object if it is destroyed or lost. His type changes to undead. Do not recalculate BAB, saves, or skill ranks. He loses his Constitution ability score, but uses his Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of Constitution) as normal for an undead creature. When the ascendant lich is destroyed, his bonded object immediately begins to rebuild his body nearby. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the phylactery merely starts the process anew. After this time passes, the ascendant lich wakens fully healed (albeit without any gear it left behind on its old body).



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## CHOIR MACABRE (BARD)

Bards of the choir macabre are taught to make music from tortured screams for the delight of dark patrons. Whether willing volunteers or brainwashed victims, each trains to entertain monsters with mortal suffering.

**Living Instruments (Su):** At 1st level, the choir macabre bard learns to harness the power of pain to fuel his music. Any round the bard deals damage to at least one living creature equal to or greater than twice his class level while maintaining a bardic performance does not count against his rounds of bardic performance per day. The creature must either be a humanoid or have an Intelligence ability score of 5 or higher. Alternately, the choir macabre bard can take damage equal to his class level as a free action while performing, instead of using a round of bardic performance. When this ability is used, the bardic performance must include audible components.

**Bardic Performance:** A choir macabre bard can use bardic performance a number of rounds per day equal to 2 + his Charisma modifier (minimum 3 rounds). At each level after 1st a choir macabre bard can use bardic performance for 1 additional round per day. This otherwise functions as bardic performance. A choir macabre bard gains the following bardic performances.

*Song of Despair (Su):* A 1st-level choir macabre bard can use his performance to inspire despair in his enemies with terrifying discordant songs. To be affected, an enemy must be able to perceive the bard's performance. Each foe within range receives a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the bard's level + the bard's Charisma modifier) to negate the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to affect the creature with this performance again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature suffers a -1 morale penalty on attack, damage, and saving throw rolls. At 5th level, and every six bard levels thereafter, this penalty increases by -1, to a maximum of -4 at 17th level. This is a mind-affecting emotion effect. Despair can use audible or visual components. The bard must choose which component to use when starting his performance. This ability replaces inspire courage.

*Torturer's Refrain (Su):* A choir macabre bard of 3rd level or higher can use his performance to tear at the body and souls of his enemies. The target must be within 30 feet and able to hear the bard. The creature takes 2d6 points of damage each round at the end of their turn as long the creature remains within range and continues to hear the bard's performance.

The creature receives a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ the bard's level + the bard's Charisma modifier) to halve the damage each round. The damage increases by +2d6 for every four levels the bard has attained beyond 3rd (4d6 at 7th, 6d6 at 11th, and so on). This is a sonic death effect. The use of this bardic performance does not count as damage dealt for the living instruments ability. This ability replaces inspire competence.

*Soul Scream (Su):* A choir macabre bard of 9th level or higher can use his foul songs to wound the spiritual essence of living creatures. For every three levels the bard attains beyond 9th, he can target an additional creature while using this performance (up to a maximum of four targets at 18th level). To be affected, an enemy must be able to hear the bard perform and be within 30 feet. Each enemy within range receives a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ the bard's level + the bard's Charisma modifier) each round to negate the effect. If the save succeeds, the creature is immune to this ability for 24 hours. If the save fails, the target takes 1 negative level that lasts for 1 hour. Negative levels gained from this ability stack. This ability replaces inspire greatness.

*Disturbing Chorus (Su):* A choir macabre bard of 12th level or higher can use his performance to worsen conditions already afflicting enemies within 30 feet (no save). All enemies suffering from fatigue are treated as exhausted, all enemies who are sickened are treated as nauseated, and all enemies who are shaken become frightened, or frightened enemies become panicked. The worsened condition or conditions continue for as long as the target remains within 30 feet, and relies on audible and visual components. Creatures no longer subject to this performance for any reason have the afflicting condition downgraded to the original condition suffered. This ability replaces soothing performance.

*Strip the Will (Su):* A 15th level or higher choir macabre bard's performance can tear away at defenses protecting a single creature's mind. The target must be within 30 feet and able to hear the bard. The target attempts a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the bard's level + the bard's Charisma modifier). On a failed save, any single effect can be dispelled (per the *dispel magic* spell) that grants a bonus to saves or immunity against fear or mind-affecting effects. The spell or effect is automatically dispelled with no caster level check required. If the target possesses multiple effects, the highest spell level effect is dispelled. This ability replaces inspire heroism.

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## DAEMON KNIGHT (ANTIPALADIN)

Some mortals swear allegiance to the Four Horsemen and Abaddon, working tirelessly toward the ending of the world. In return, they receive immortality, power, and the promise of survival when the inevitable apocalypse occurs.

**Dark Atonement (Sp):** At 1st level, a daemon knight may cast *atonement* as a spell-like ability, except the range is personal. To do so, the antipaladin must be the direct cause of death of a good-aligned living creature of his type (and any subtypes) with Hit Dice equal to or greater than his class level (minimum 1 HD). The daemon knight retains this ability even if he loses all other class features due to violating his code of conduct. This replaces detect good.

**Immortality (Su):** At 2nd level, a daemon knight gains a bonus equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  his Charisma modifier (minimum +1) on all saving throws. Additionally, he is immune to magical aging and cannot die from old age. Aging bonuses still accrue, but he does not ever gain aging penalties. This replaces unholy resilience.

**Horsemen's Boon (Su or Sp):** Upon reaching 5th level, the daemon knight antipaladin can swear allegiance to a single horseman, or choose to remain a servant of all four. A daemon knight choosing to remain relatively independent may select a fiendish boon as normal for an antipaladin. A daemon knight in service to one of the specific Four Horsemen instead gains one of the following boons.

*Death:* Once per week if the daemon knight is killed, he may automatically return from the dead (as the *raise dead* spell) 1 day later. This does not function if the antipaladin's body does not remain whole or the antipaladin is slain by a death effect. If the antipaladin dies a second time within a week of resurrection, he remains permanently dead. At 10th level, the antipaladin returns from the dead even if slain by a death effect. At 15th level, the antipaladin returns from the dead even if a small portion of his body still exists, and the effect acts as a *resurrection* spell. At 20th level, the antipaladin returns from the dead even if no portion of his body exists, and the effect acts as a *true resurrection* spell (the antipaladin returns to life in a safe location within 1 mile of where he was slain).

*Famine:* The daemon knight grows an all-consuming maw. He gains a bite natural attack which increases in damage as he improves in power, per the following table. At 10th level, the daemon knight gains the grab universal monster ability with his bite attack. At 15th level, the daemon knight gains the swallow whole universal monster ability with his bite attack. The AC of his interior is equal to  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  his class level and has hit points equal to  $\frac{1}{10}$  his total hit points. Damage dealt by a creature within the antipaladin's does not cause damage to the antipaladin. Creatures within the daemon knight's stomach take 1d6 damage per round per two class levels (to a maximum of 10d6 damage at 20th level). This damage is half acid and half bludgeoning. At 20th level, the daemon knight can grab and swallow whole creatures of any size, and may have any number of creatures swallowed whole at one time.

**TABLE: DAEMON KNIGHT BITE ATTACKS**

Antipaladin Level	Damage (Small)	Damage (Medium)	Damage (Large)
5th-7th	1d6	1d8	2d6
8th-11th	1d8	1d10	2d8
12-15th	1d10	2d6	3d6
16th-19th	2d6	2d8	3d8
20th	2d8	2d10	4d8

*Pestilence:* The daemon knight becomes a carrier for a variety of devastating diseases he can inflict on command. Additionally, any creature attacking the daemon knight with a natural or unarmed attack, or non-reach weapon is exposed to a disease of his choosing. The disease begins with the following effect, save, frequency, and cure, which improve as the daemon knight grows in power. The daemon knight can affect any ability score with his pestilent disease, and can alter the ability score the disease affects with a full-round action. An infected creature is then affected by the version of pestilence targeting that ability score. A creature cannot be infected by multiple types of pestilence affecting multiple ability scores, and the antipaladin cannot alter the ability score affected once a creature is infected.

**Pestilence**—contact; *save* Fort DC  $10 + \frac{1}{2}$  the antipaladin's level + antipaladin's Constitution modifier, *onset* 1 minute, *frequency* 1 day, *effect* 1d3 ability damage, *cure* 1 save.

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TABLE: DAEMON KNIGHT PESTILENCE

Antipaladin Level	Frequency	Duration	Effect	Cure
5th-9th	1 minute	1 day	1d3 ability damage	1 save
10th-14th	immediate	1 hour	1d4 ability damage	1 save
15-19th	immediate	1 minute	1d6 ability damage	2 saves
20th	immediate	1 minute	1d8 ability damage	3 saves



**War:** The daemon knight can rage (per the barbarian class feature) as a barbarian of his antipaladin level. Any levels in barbarian stack with levels in antipaladin for determining total number of rounds of rage per day. While in rage, the daemon knight cannot cast any spells, but can use any other antipaladin class features. The antipaladin gains the greater rage, tireless rage, and mighty rage barbarian abilities at 11th, 17th, and 20th level, respectively.

This replaces fiendish boon.

**Code of Conduct:** A daemon knight antipaladin must be of neutral evil alignment and loses all class features except proficiencies and the dark atonement ability if he willingly and altruistically commits good acts. This does not mean an antipaladin cannot take actions someone else might qualify as good, only that such actions must be in service of his own dark ends. A daemon knight's code requires that he never intentionally save a life or show mercy to an enemy, unless in so doing the creature or creatures saved are likely to cause greater death. Naturally, the daemon knight's own life is excluded from this. Additionally, he is to consistently work toward an eventual end to all life, although the specific means is variable and changeable.

**Associates:** While he may adventure with evil or neutral allies, a daemon knight avoids working with good characters or with anyone who consistently

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attempts to do good deeds. Under exceptional circumstances, an antipaladin can ally with good associates, but only to defeat them from within and bring ruin to their ranks. A daemon knight does not need an *atonement* spell during such an unusual alliance as long as his nefarious goals are met in the end. A daemon knight antipaladin may accept only henchmen, followers, or cohorts who are neutral evil.

## FLESHSMITH (ALCHEMIST)

A fleshsmith concentrates on twisting the bodies of other creatures into monstrous forms, while simultaneously enslaving their minds.

**Mutagen (Su):** At 1st level, a fleshsmith alchemist learns to control creature's minds and bodies through the careful application of tailor-made mutagens. It takes 1 hour to brew the mutagen, and once brewed it remains potent until used. An alchemist can only maintain one dose of mutagen at a time— if he brews a second dose, any existing mutagen becomes inert. As with an extract or bomb, a mutagen that is not in an alchemist's possession becomes inert until an alchemist picks it up again.

When an alchemist brews a mutagen, he selects one physical ability score— either Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. The mutagen must be fed to a helpless or willing living humanoid creature as a standard action. Upon being imbibed, the creature becomes twisted and monstrous in form, granting a +2 natural armor bonus and a +4 alchemical bonus to the selected ability score for 10 minutes per alchemist level. While the mutagen is in effect, the creature takes a –4 penalty to one of his mental ability scores. If the mutagen enhances his Strength, it applies a penalty to his Intelligence. If it enhances his Dexterity, it applies a penalty to his Wisdom. If it enhances his Constitution, it applies a penalty to his Charisma.

The mutagens carry mind-altering chemicals that influence the imbibing creature into regarding the fleshsmith alchemist as a friend and ally (as the *charm person* spell). When imbibing the mutagen, the creature receives a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the alchemist's level + the alchemist's Intelligence modifier) to resist a *charm person* effect (before penalties to mental ability scores are applied). The alchemist receives a bonus on any opposed Charisma checks to give orders equal to 1/2 his class level (minimum +1).

A fleshsmith alchemist that drinks his own mutagen must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ the alchemist's level + the alchemist's Intelligence modifier) or become nauseated for 1 hour. Whenever a creature drinks a mutagen, the effects of any previous mutagen immediately end. Discoveries that modify the mutagen ability apply to this ability as well. This ability modifies the mutagen ability.

**Discoveries:** The following modify existing discoveries or are new discoveries available to the fleshsmith alchemist.

**Control:** The fleshsmith alchemist gains greater control over creatures exposed to his mutagens. On a failed save, the creature becomes dominated (as the *dominate person* spell), except the alchemist cannot receive sensory input from the dominated creature and must give verbal rather than telepathic commands. A fleshsmith alchemist must be at least 10th level before selecting this discovery.

**Fleshwarp:** The fleshsmith alchemist gains control over or creates a fleshwarped<sup>B4</sup> servant, which is wholly and completely subservient to the alchemist. This acts as a monster cohort gained from the Leadership feat (the alchemist does not gain any followers), except the cohort must be a fleshwarped creature. The alchemist's leadership score is equal to his class level + his Intelligence modifier with no modifiers. Additional fleshwarped creatures may be available at GM's discretion. Any mutagens the fleshsmith alchemist creates can be used by the fleshwarped creature, regardless of its creature type. If the fleshwarped creature is killed or lost, the fleshsmith alchemist can replace it with a 24 hour alchemical ritual. A fleshsmith alchemist must be at least 8th level before selecting this discovery.

Monster	Effective Cohort Level
Drider	10
Ghonhatine	13
Grothlut	5
Halsora	9
Irnakurse	12

**Menagerie:** The fleshsmith alchemist broadens the range of creature types that can be affected by his mutagens. Select one additional creature type, that creature can now be affected by imbibing the alchemist's mutagens, and is subject to the

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alchemist's control (as a *charm monster* spell). If the alchemist has the control discovery, creatures of the selected type become dominated (as the *dominate monster* spell). This discovery may be taken multiple times, each time its effects apply to a new creature type.

**Mutagen Bomb:** The fleshsmith alchemist can throw a mutagen attached to a bomb, causing it to get into a target's bloodstream when it explodes. The bomb deals half the normal damage and no splash damage. If it causes damage to the target, the creature is exposed to the fleshsmith alchemist's mutagen ability. The fleshsmith alchemist may only use this ability if he has a dose of mutagen prepared, or a persistent mutagen created with the infuse mutagen discovery. A fleshsmith alchemist must be at least 6th level to select this discovery.

**Discoveries:** The following discoveries complement the fleshsmith alchemist archetype: alchemical simulacrum<sup>UM</sup>, alchemical zombie, doppelganger simulacrum<sup>UM</sup>, feral mutagen, infuse mutagen, grand mutagen, greater alchemical simulacrum<sup>UM</sup>, greater mutagen, mutagen<sup>UM</sup>, tentacle<sup>UM</sup>, tumor familiar<sup>UM</sup>, and vestigial arm<sup>UM</sup>.

## ORDER OF THE BROKEN (CAVALIER)

The broken crusaders were once an ancient and noble cavalier order opposing Abyssal agents. Defeated and fractured into dozens of sects by the demonic lords, their purpose has been corrupted by brutal generational control. While some raised in the order achieve a measure of independence under the haphazard scrutiny of the Abyss, few escape the spiritual and physical wounds of their upbringing.

**Fiendish Mount (Su):** The order of the broken cavalier may select any vermin companion (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic* for details) as a mount in addition to the normal options. The mount selected must be one size category smaller than the cavalier. The order of the broken cavalier's mount gains the fiendish simple creature template. The cavalier may summon his mount with a ritual that takes 1 minute to perform or banish his mount as a standard action. If the fiendish mount is killed or lost, the order of the broken cavalier can resummon it after 1 week. This modifies the cavalier's mount ability.

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## ANTIPALADIN LIGHT

Being an antipaladin can be an exercise in frustration, even while playing in an all evil party. Their code of conduct requires that they be chaotic evil, never willingly commit a good act, always place personal interests and desires above all else, impose tyranny, take advantage whenever possible, and punish the good and just. Such a harsh code adds additional difficulty to the sort of self-sacrifice that most teamwork depends on. The order of the broken cavalier archetype is meant to act as a half measure for players wishing to include antipaladin themes and concepts, without a full commitment to the code of conduct. While their edict and penalties are harsher than most cavaliers, it is not so restrictive as the antipaladin code of conduct. An order of the broken cavalier might even be non-chaotic or non-evil, but controlled and shaped by his upbringing.

**Order (Su):** The cavalier must belong to the order of the broken, with the following bonuses, class skills, and special abilities. If he violates the order's edicts, he loses his mount, the benefits of his order's challenge ability, and any supernatural or spell-like class features until an appropriately ranked antipaladin, demon, or order of the broken cavalier in service to his demon lord administers a fitting punishment. Either the demon must have a CR equal to or higher than his class levels, or the cavalier must have a higher class level. This modifies the order ability.

**Edicts:** The cavalier must obey the direct orders of higher ranking antipaladins, demons, or order of the broken cavaliers in service to his chosen demonic lord. However, he may obey the letter of an order rather than the spirit, and is expected to act with autonomy in the pursuit of his missions. He does not need to obey the commands of antipaladins, demons, or order of the broken cavaliers in service to any other demonic lord. Likewise, he cannot be issued an order by an antipaladin or cavalier with class levels equal to or less than his class level, or a demon with a CR less than his class levels. Note the order of the broken cavalier can issue orders to lower ranking cavaliers within his order. While the cavalier might cowl lesser antipaladins or demons into following him, they are under no particular obligation.

**Challenge:** Whenever an order of the broken cavalier issues a challenge, he receives a +1 dodge bonus to his AC against attacks made by the target of his challenge. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels the cavalier possesses.

**Skills:** An order of the broken cavalier adds Knowledge (arcana) (Int) and Knowledge (planes) (Int) to his list of class skills. In addition, when using the Intimidate skill to alter an allied creature's attitude or demoralize an enemy, he receives a bonus on the check equal to ½ his cavalier level (minimum +1).

**Feared (Ex):** At 2nd level, all allies of the cavalier within 30 feet receive a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against enchantment or fear spells and effects. As a standard action he may make an Intimidate check (DC 10 + the target's HD + the target's Wisdom modifier) against an allied creature within 30 feet affected by an enchantment or fear spell or effect. If successful, the creature is allowed another save to resist the spell or effect. Each additional attempt increases the DC by a cumulative +5.

**Tortuous Wound (Ex):** At 8th level, the cavalier learns to cause wounds that inflict the maximum amount of lingering agony as a standard action. If the cavalier successfully damages a living creature with the attack, the creature takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 minute, until the damage is healed, or until the creature is the target of any healing spell or effect. On a successful critical hit, the penalty increases to -4, and the effects last for up to 1 hour. This is a pain effect.

**Meat Shield (Ex):** At 15th level, the cavalier can throw disposable minions in the way of harm. When an ally (other than his mount) is adjacent to the cavalier, he receives a +2 shield bonus to his AC. In addition, as an immediate action, the cavalier can redirect an attack targeting him, as long as the creature making the attack is within the cavalier's reach. The attack is made against an allied creature's AC and defenses, even if the attacker could not normally reach or attack the allied creature. The allied creature loses any cover or concealment bonuses when subjected to the redirected attack. If the ally is not willing, the cavalier must succeed on a combat maneuver check against the ally's combat maneuver defense to successfully use this ability.

**Corruptions:** An order of the broken cavalier is exposed to Abyssal energies, dark rituals, and demonic tutors from birth. Dark mutations and implanted lessons manifest as they grow in power, influencing the cavalier's mind, body, and soul. The cavalier gains one corruption at 1st level, and an additional corruption at 3rd, 4th, 5th, 9th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 20th level (to a maximum of nine corruptions at 20th level). Unless otherwise noted, a corruption may be selected only once.

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*Aligned Weapons (Su):* Any natural weapons of the cavalier and his mount, as well as any weapons the cavalier wields, are treated as chaotic and evil for the purpose of resolving damage reduction.

*Ancestry (Ex):* The cavalier's family line has intermixed with demons, either resulting in tiefling-like traits, or a strengthening a tiefling cavalier's demonic blood. The cavalier and his mount gain acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5, or add 5 to any existing resistances. This corruption may be selected more than once. Any resistances increased over 30 become immunities.

*Banner (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 5th level to select this corruption.

*Bite (Ex):* The cavalier grows fangs, gaining a bite attack as a primary natural attack that deals damage based on the cavalier's size.

*Broken (Ex):* The cavalier has experienced so much horror he views terror and suffering as old friends. The cavalier and his mount gain immunity to fear and pain spells and effects. A cavalier must be at least 4th level to select this corruption.

*Claws (Ex):* The cavalier grows sharp claws or talons, gaining two claw attacks as primary natural attacks that deal damage based on the cavalier's size. A cavalier must be at least 5th level to select this corruption.

*Concealed (Su):* The cavalier becomes immune to divination spells and effects used to determine his alignment, as if affected by a constant *undetectable alignment* spell. A cavalier must be at least 4th to select this corruption.

*Darkvision (Ex):* The cavalier and his mount gain darkvision 60 feet, or add 30 feet to any existing darkvision.

*Demon Skin (Ex):* The cavalier's skin takes on demonic features such as scales or an exoskeleton. This grants either a +1 enhancement bonus to natural armor or DR 2/cold iron or good. This corruption may be selected multiple times, either adding a further +1 enhancement bonus to natural armor or 2 to the cavalier's damage reduction. The cavalier may select this corruption no more than once per four character levels (to a maximum of five times at 20th level).

*Entangle (Ex):* If the cavalier strikes a creature of one size category smaller than himself with a whip, he can immediately attempt a grapple check without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the check, he draws the foe into an adjacent square. The cavalier and target both gain the grappled condition. A cavalier must be at least 5th level and have the whip mastery corruption to select this corruption.

*Fungal Growths (Su):* Once per day, the cavalier may infect living creatures with fast-growing fungal spores as a melee touch attack. The creature takes 1d8 damage plus 1d4 points of damage for 1 round per class level. Although ugly, the vines are harmless and wither away in 1d4 days if not shaved off before then. The spores can be destroyed by casting *bleed* on the affected creatures or by sprinkling them with holy water. This attack can also be halted by effects that remove or provide immunity to disease. The cavalier can use this corruption an additional time per day at 5th level and every five levels thereafter (to a maximum of five times per day at 20th level). A cavalier must have the demonic skin corruption to select this corruption.

*Greater Banner (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 14th level and have the banner corruption to select this corruption.

*Greater Tactician (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the tactician corruption to select this corruption.

*Improved Entangle (Ex):* As the entangle corruption, except while the grabbed foe gains the grappled condition, the cavalier does not gain the grappled condition. Additionally, the cavalier can use entangle to affect creatures of his size category or less. A cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the entangle and whip mastery corruptions to select this corruption.

*Improved Slime (Su):* The cavalier's slime deals 2d6 acid damage. A creature striking the cavalier or his mount with a melee weapon must make a Reflex save or the weapon takes 2d6 points of acid damage; if this damage penetrates the weapon's hardness, the weapon gains the broken condition. Ammunition striking the cavalier is automatically

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destroyed. A cavalier must be at least 5th level and have the slime corruption to select this corruption.

*Improved Spell Resistance (Ex):* The cavalier's spell resistance improves to 11 + his class level. A cavalier must be at least 10th level and have the ancestry and spell resistance corruptions to select this corruption.

*Master Tactician (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 17th level and have the greater tactician corruption to select this corruption.

*Mighty Charge (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 11th level to select this corruption.

*Nausea (Ex):* The cavalier's fell noxious fluids heighten in potency. Each round a creature is grappled by the cavalier or his mount, the grappled creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the cavalier's class level + cavalier's Constitution modifier) or become nauseated for 1 round or until they are no longer grappled by the cavalier. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the cavalier's nausea for 24 hours. A cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the stench corruption to select this corruption.

*Poison Immunity (Ex):* The cavalier and his mount become immune to poison. A cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the ancestry corruption to select this corruption.

*Protected Thoughts (Su):* The cavalier is immune to any divination spell or effect used to read her thoughts or search her memories (such as *detect thoughts* or *seek thoughts*). If a magical effect is used against him that would detect lies or force him to speak the truth, the user of the effect must succeed on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) against a DC of 15 + his class level. Failure means the effect does not detect his lies or force him to speak only the truth. The cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the concealed corruption before selecting this corruption.

*Slime (Su):* The cavalier's skin is covered by a thin layer of acidic slime. This slime does not harm the cavalier's equipment. Any creature that strikes the cavalier or his mount with a natural attack or unarmed strike takes 1d6 points of acid damage if it fails a Reflex save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the cavalier's

level + cavalier's Constitution modifier). The cavalier may inflict 1d6 acid damage as a melee touch attack. A cavalier must have the demonic skin corruption to select this corruption.

*Soul Scar (Su):* Any creature killed by the cavalier or his mount is treated as if they died due to a death spell or effect.

*Spell Resistance (Ex):* The cavalier gains spell resistance equal to 5 + his class level. A cavalier must be at least 5th level and have the ancestry corruption to select this corruption.

*Stench (Ex):* The cavalier and his mount exude foul and unpleasant fluids that sicken creatures in close proximity. Creatures adjacent to the cavalier must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 +  $\frac{1}{2}$  the cavalier's class level + cavalier's Constitution modifier) or become sickened for 1 round per class level. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the cavalier's (and his mount's) stench for 24 hours.

*Summon Swarm (Su):* Once per day as a standard action, the cavalier can summon a swarm of spiders as the *summon swarm* spell with a caster level equal to his class level. The duration is 1 minute per class level, the effect does not require concentration, and the cavalier telepathically controls the swarm's actions. At 5th level, the cavalier can instead summon a swarm of wasps. At 9th level, the cavalier can instead summon a swarm of leeches. At 14th level, the cavalier can instead summon a swarm of army ants. The cavalier cannot summon a swarm while his mount is summoned, and vice versa. A cavalier must be at least 4th level and have the swarmborn corruption to select this corruption.

*Summoner (Su):* Once per day as a standard action, the cavalier can summon a fiendish creature or demon as the *summon monster* spell with a caster level equal to his class level, except the duration is 1 minute per class level. The spell level of the *summon monster* effect is equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the cavalier's class level (minimum *summon monster 1*). The cavalier cannot summon a fiendish creature or demon while his mount is summoned, and vice versa.

*Supreme Charge (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name. A cavalier must be at least 20th level and have the mighty charge corruption to select this corruption.

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*Swarmborn (Ex):* The cavalier feels at ease covered in wriggling or crawling creatures and they know instinctively to leave him alone. The cavalier and his mount are immune to the distraction ability of swarms and do not take damage from swarms with the vermin type. When the cavalier or his mount are within the area of a swarm, the cavalier does not need to make concentration checks for spellcasting, and can perform any act that requires skill and concentration.

*Tactician (Ex):* As the cavalier ability of the same name.

*Telepathy (Ex):* The cavalier gains telepathy with a range of 30 feet, however this telepathy is limited to targets who can speak Abyssal. This corruption may be selected a second time, granting telepathy out to a range of 100 feet that operates regardless of language. A cavalier must have the ancestry corruption to select this corruption.

*Teleport (Sp):* The cavalier can *dimension door* once per day as a spell-like ability using his class level as his caster level. He may only teleport himself, his mount, and 50 pounds of objects. This corruption may be selected multiple times, each time granting an additional use of *dimension door* per day. A cavalier must be at least 9th level and have the ancestry corruption to select this corruption.

*Vermin Empathy (Ex):* The cavalier can improve the attitude of vermin as a druid can with animals. This ability functions as the druid's wild empathy, save the cavalier can only use this ability on creatures with the vermin type and cannot affect magical beasts. Vermin have a starting attitude of unfriendly. If the vermin is mindless, this empathic communication imparts on them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing cavalier to train vermin and use them as guardians.

*Whip Mastery (Ex):* The cavalier treats a whip as a light weapon for the purposes of two-weapon fighting, and can inflict lethal damage on a foe regardless of the foe's armor.

This replaces tactician, cavalier's charge, expert trainer, banner, greater tactician, mighty charge, greater banner, master tactician, and supreme charge.

## PEERLESS (BRAWLER)

For most martial artists, training means bettering themselves through the art of combat. The peerless brawler becomes blinded by ambition and jealousy, seeking only to break and humiliate all potential rivals.

**Study Form (Ex)** The peerless brawler obsessively studies every martial art and fighting style for its stances and techniques, adjusting her own approach to mitigate an opponent's strengths. As a swift action, the peerless can choose an opponent and make a Sense Motive check against a DC equal to  $10 + \text{the target's base attack bonus} + \text{the target's Wisdom modifier}$ . If this check is successful, she gains knowledge of one combat, style, or teamwork feat her opponent knows. She gains knowledge of an additional feat for every 5 by which she beats the DC. If the target has more than one feat, the brawler learns about feats in order of the most to least demanding prerequisites. This is determined by evaluating base class levels, base attack bonus, ability score prerequisite, or other bonus feats, in that order. Additionally, whether or not the check is successful, the peerless brawler automatically gains knowledge of any combat, style, or teamwork feat she witnesses the target using for the next minute per class level.

**Peerless Style (Ex):** The peerless brawler can counter an opponent's training by adjusting her martial style as a move action. The peerless must be adjacent to the target and have identified at least one combat, style, or teamwork feat the target possesses by using the study form ability. For 1 minute per class level, the target cannot use the selected feat while remaining adjacent to the brawler, when attacking the brawler, or when attacking any adjacent allies. If the target moves away from the brawler or attacks non-adjacent allies, they may use the feat as normal. She may use this ability a number of times per day equal to  $3 + \frac{1}{2}$  her brawler level (minimum 4 times per day). The brawler may only negate the feat (or feats) of one target at a time, and selecting a new target negates this effect on the original target. The brawler may alter a target's feat negated as a move action during the duration without expending additional uses of this ability. If the brawler negates a feat that acts as a prerequisite for other feats, the

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target cannot employ those feats while this ability is active, and negating those feats does not count toward the brawler's daily uses of this ability. The brawler must identify a feat to be negated with the study form ability, and cannot target a prerequisite feat unless she identifies it first.

At 6th level, the peerless can use this ability to deny an opponent the use of up two feats at the same time. She may select one feat as a swift action, or two feats as a move action. Each feat she negates counts toward her daily use of this ability. As a swift or move action while this ability is active, the brawler may alter a target's feat negated without expending additional uses of this ability. She may negate an additional feat as a swift action or move action (up to two feats), but doing so expends an additional use of this ability.

At 10th level, the peerless can use this ability to deny an opponent the use of up three feats at the same time. She may select one feat as a free action, two feats as a swift action, or three feats as a move action. Each feat she negates counts toward her daily use of this ability. As a free action while this ability is active, the brawler may alter a target's feat negated without expending additional uses of this ability. She may negate an additional feat as a free action (up to three feats), but doing so expends an additional use of this ability.

At 12th level, the peerless can deny an opponent the use of one feat as an immediate action or three feats as a swift action, to a maximum of three feats per target. Each feat she negates counts toward her daily use of this ability. As an immediate or free action while this ability is active, the brawler may alter a target's feat negated without expending additional uses of this ability. She may negate an additional feat as an immediate or free action (up to three feats), but doing so expends an additional use of this ability.

At 20th level, the peerless can deny an opponent the use of any number of feats she is aware of as an immediate action. Each feat she negates counts toward her daily use of this ability.

This replaces martial flexibility.

**Steady Stance (Ex):** At 4th level, a peerless is resistant to attacks that immobilize her. She gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against effects that would fatigue, paralyze, slow, or stun her.

At 10th level, this bonus increases to +4. At 16th level, a peerless becomes immune to the fatigued, paralyzed, slowed, and stunned conditions. This replaces knockout.



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## RAVENOUS SOUL (DRUID)

Hunger and death drive the natural world in the dance of predator and prey. Some druids swear themselves to this dark aspect of creation, wielding each as a weapon while guiltlessly devouring the world around them.

**Famine Domain (Su):** The ravenous soul gains access to the Famine cleric domain (see new domains). This replaces nature's bond.

**Devouring Maw (Su):** At 4th level, the ravenous soul gains a bite attack as a primary natural attack. This attack deals damage appropriate for the druid's size (1d6 for Medium creatures, 1d4 for Small, etc.). At 6th level, and every two levels thereafter, the ravenous soul chooses one of the following abilities to modify her bite attack. Unless stated otherwise, a given ability cannot be chosen more than once.

*Disease (Su):* The ravenous soul becomes a carrier for a disease, delivered through her bite. The disease is a version of daemonic wasting<sup>B2</sup>, except that it has an immediate onset time and deals 1 point of Constitution and Charisma damage each day. The disease is cured after a bitten subject successfully makes one saving throw. The save DC is equal to 10 + ½ the druid's level + the druid's Constitution modifier.

*Enervating Bite (Su):* The ravenous soul drinks in life force when she damages an opponent. In addition to hit point damage and other effects, the ravenous soul's bite attack inflicts a negative level on a successful hit. This negative level is not multiplied on a critical hit. A druid must be at least 12th level to select this ability.

*Firm Jaw (Ex):* The ravenous soul's jaws hold fast to grappled victims. The ravenous soul gains the grab universal monster ability with her bite attack.

*Improved Piercing Bite (Su):* The ravenous soul's bite attack ignores 10 points of damage reduction or hardness. A druid must be at least 16th level and have the piercing bite ability to choose this ability.

*Improved Rapid Bite (Ex):* Whenever the ravenous soul takes a full attack action, she can make a third bite attack at a -10 penalty. A druid must be at least 16th level and have the rapid bite ability to select this ability.

*Jagged Tooth (Ex):* The ravenous soul's teeth tear her opponents to shreds. Whenever a living creature takes hit point damage from her bite attack, it bleeds for 1 hit point of damage each round at the beginning of its turn. This bleed damage increases to 2 hit points per round if the ravenous soul confirms a critical hit with her bite. Bleed damage from multiple bites do not stack.

*Monstrous Maw (Su):* The ravenous soul gains the swallow whole universal monster ability. The ravenous soul can swallow a creature up to one size categories smaller than herself. Her subject becomes trapped in an extradimensional space that appears as a dry, empty stomach. The swallowed subject can exit this space by escaping the grapple or dealing sufficient damage to the stomach walls with a light piercing weapon. The stomach wall is AC 10 + ½ the druid's class level and has hit points equal to twice the ravenous soul's druid level. Damage dealt to the stomach does not harm the druid, but if a creature cuts their way out the ravenous soul cannot use this ability for 1 hour. A druid must have the firm jaw ability to select this ability.

*Piercing Bite (Su):* The ravenous soul's bite attack ignores 5 points of damage reduction or hardness. A druid must be at least 10th level to select this ability.

*Poisoned Fangs (Su):* The ravenous soul delivers a supernatural poison that forces starvation and weakness on her enemies. A living creature that takes damage from her bite attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ the druid's level + the druid's Constitution modifier) or become fatigued and take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage from hunger pangs. This poison deals 2d6 points of nonlethal damage each round after the first save is failed until six rounds have passed or the poisoned creature successfully saves and ends the affliction.

*Powerful Bite (Ex):* The ravenous soul's bite attack deals damage as if she were one size category larger. Her mouth and teeth do not change in size, nor is her ability to speak hindered. She can select this ability once per five class levels (to a maximum of four times at 20th level).

*Rapid Bite (Ex):* The ravenous soul's jaws snap quickly to deliver more damage to her opponent. Whenever she takes a full attack action, she can make a second bite attack at a -5 penalty. A druid must be at least 8th level to select this ability.

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*Sharp Tooth (Ex):* The ravenous soul's teeth become longer and sharper during combat. The critical threat range of her bite attack increases to 19-20 or the critical multiplier increases to x3. She may select this ability twice, to increase both the threat range and critical multiplier of her bite attack. This ability does not stack with other effects that alter critical threats or multipliers. A druid must be at least 10th level to select this ability.

This replaces wild shape.

## RIVEN (WITCH)

Touched by evil forces or terrible trauma, the riven witch embraces a deep wellspring of painful emotions and fell power. Fueled by this force rather than a patron, she spreads her torment to the world around her.

**Skills:** Remove Heal and Knowledge (planes) from the riven's list of class skills. Replace them with Appraise and Sense Motive.

**Torment (Su):** The riven chooses one of the following torments, which come with a benefit as well as a hindrance. This choice is made at 1st level, and once made, it cannot be changed. The riven's torment is the source of her arcane power, and cannot be removed or healed by any means short of divine intervention. The riven witch's torment is based on her witch level plus one for every two levels or Hit Dice other than witch.

*Controlled:* A cult, sadist, or fiend attempted to beat you into obedience over a period of months or years. You are immune to any attempt to alter your attitude or demoralize you with the Intimidate skill. However, you cannot use the Diplomacy skill to alter a creature's attitude. At 5th level, when you alter a creature's attitude with the Intimidate skill, you force them to act friendly for 1d4 hours. You gain immunity to pain effects. At 10th level, you gain immunity to compulsion spells and effects. At 15th level, when you alter a creature's attitude with the Intimidate skill, you force them to permanently act friendly toward you.

*Damned:* You've committed unforgivable sins, and know your soul is bound for an eternity of torture. You cannot be resurrected by any spell or effect short of a *miracle* or *wish*. However, you are immune to any effect that target your soul (such as *soul bind* or *trap the soul*) and gain a +2 bonus on saves against death spells and effects. This bonus on saves increases to +4 at 10th level and +6 at 20th

level. At 5th level, you completely ignore the effects of any death spell or effect that allows a save for a partial effect if you succeed on the saving throw. At 10th level, you always receive a Fortitude save to negate any death spell or effect, even if the effect normally does not allow a save. At 15th level, you become immune to all death spells and effects, and cannot be possessed (such as by the *magic jar* spell or similar effects). While you still take negative levels (and can die from) negative levels, you do not ever suffer penalties from negative levels.

*Madness:* Some event or series of events shattered your sanity into a million pieces. Your Wisdom and Charisma ability scores are permanently reduced by 2, or one of the two ability scores is permanently reduced by 4 (whichever you prefer). You are immune to morale penalties. At 5th level, you gain immunity to the confused condition. At 10th level, you gain immunity to fear. At 15th level, you gain immunity to mind-affecting effects.

*Terrorized:* You were tortured by inhuman creatures that took joy in causing you fear. Select one of the following creature types: aberrations, fey, outsiders (evil), or undead. You gain the shaken condition when you are aware you are in the presence of a creature of this type. You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff, Knowledge, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks against creatures of your selected type. You gain the appropriate Knowledge skill for the creature type as a class skill, and can make untrained Knowledge checks regarding creatures of that type. Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus on weapon attack and damage rolls, and add +1 to the save DCs of your hexes against them. At 5th level, this bonus increases to +4 (+2 to hex save DCs). At 10th level, this bonus increases to +6 (+3 to hex save DCs). At 15th level, this bonus increases to +8 (+4 to hex save DCs).

This replaces the witch's familiar.

**Spells:** Instead of preparing spells, a riven witch draws the power to cast spells from her dark emotions— such as fear, hatred, and despair. A riven witch is a spontaneous spellcaster. She knows the same number of spells and receives the same number of spell slots per day as a sorcerer of her witch level. She selects her spells known from the witch spell list. She does not gain bonus spells from a patron, and does not require communing with a familiar to regain spells. She regains spells per day

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and may retrain spells (at 4th level and every even-numbered witch level after that) as a sorcerer. She gains bonus spells at the indicated levels based on her torment.

**Controlled:** *command* (3rd), *detect thoughts* (5th), *suggestion* (7th), *lesser geas* (9th), *dominate person* (11th), *mass suggestion* (13th), *joyful rapture*<sup>UM</sup> (15th), *demand* (17th), *dominate monster* (19th).

**Damned:** *deathwatch* (3rd), *death knell* (5th), *vampiric touch* (7th), *enervation* (9th), *blight* (11th), *circle of death* (13th), *finger of death* (15th), *trap the soul* (17th), *soul bind* (19th).

**Madness:** *lesser confusion* (3rd), *hideous laughter* (5th), *rage* (7th), *confusion* (9th), *feblemind* (11th), *geas/quest* (13th), *insanity* (15th), *symbol of insanity* (17th), *overwhelming presence*<sup>UM</sup> (19th).

**Terrorized:** *cause fear* (3rd), *scare* (5th), *deeper darkness* (7th), *fear* (9th), *nightmare* (11th), *symbol of fear* (13th), *greater shadow conjuration* (15th), *greater shadow evocation* (17th), *weird* (19th).

This alters the witch's spellcasting and replaces patron.

**Hexes:** A riven witch may select from the following hexes whenever she gains a new hex.

*Despair (Su):* A riven witch mystically imposes a deep depression on a target for 1 hour. She targets a subject within 30 feet, who must make a Will saving throw. If the roll is failed the subject cannot use or grant the benefits of the aid another action, or gain the benefits of any spells or abilities that grant a morale bonus. This is a curse effect. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be the target of this hex again for 1 day.

*Inflict Torment (Su):* The riven witch can inflict her torment on another creature within 30 feet. The creature gains the benefits and drawbacks of the witch's torment as if they were a riven witch with class levels equal to their character level or Hit Dice. A riven witch may only inflict her torment on another creature for a number of rounds per day equal to her class level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. An unwilling creature receives a save to negate this effect. This is a curse effect.

**Major Hexes:** A riven witch of 10th level or higher may select from the following major hexes.

*Break (Su):* Whenever a creature fails a Will save against one of the riven's mind-affecting

spells or effects, that creature additionally gains the shaken condition for as long as the spell or effect persists.

*Traumatize (Su):* The riven witch can permanently inflict the worst aspects of her torment onto another creature within 30 feet. The target receives a Will save to negate the effect. If the save is failed, the creature permanently gains only the negative or harmful effects of the riven witch's torment ability (as a 1st level witch), with none of the beneficial effects. For example, a riven witch with the damned torment would curse a creature to be unable to resurrect, but they would gain no immunity to possession or bonuses to saves against death effects. This is a curse effect, and can be removed by any effect that can remove *bestow curse* (using the witch's class level as her caster level). Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be the target of this hex again for 1 day.

**Hexes:** The following hexes complement the riven archetype: blight, evil eye, misfortune, scar.

**Major Hexes:** The following major hexes complement the riven archetype: agony, nightmares, retribution.

**Grand Hexes:** The following grand hexes complement the riven archetype: eternal slumber, natural disaster.

## WARLORD (BARBARIAN)

To hold a large force or nation of pillaging murderers together requires a cult of personality focused around an individual so ruthless and terrifying, they give serial killers nightmares.

**Hostile Mien (Ex):** At 2nd level, the warlord gains Intimidating Prowess as a bonus feat. At 5th level, she always counts as being larger than her enemies for the purposes of the Intimidate skill, and can attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize all foes within 30 feet as a full-round action. This replaces uncanny dodge and improved uncanny dodge.

**Trophies (Ex):** The warlord can proudly carry a trophy from the body of a murdered rival, monster, or enemy. When worn or displayed, this trophy grants her both power and respect, by reminding potential threats of those that passed before them. Additionally, the warlord's followers tend to mirror their leader's actions, making for a more

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fearsome army at her command. The warlord may select a trophy in place of any rage power. Many of the following trophies affect mass combat (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Campaign* for details). If a warlord's trophy is lost or destroyed, the warlord can replace the trophy after 1 week (or all lost or destroyed trophies after 1 month). Unless otherwise specified, each trophy may be selected only once.

**Banner:** The warlord carries a banner or crest torn from a fallen army's standard. The warlord gains a bonus boon that she may use when acting as a commander of an army in mass combat, or any army the warlord commands gains a bonus tactic. This trophy may be selected multiple times, each time granting a bonus boon or tactic when the warlord commands an army.

**Beast:** The warlord claims an iconic piece of some great monster as a trophy, such as a dragon's tooth or a basilisk's eyes. The warlord gains a +1 bonus on Will saves against fear. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels beyond 2nd. An army under the warlord's command gains the bravery special ability with a bonus on Morale checks against fear and routs equal to the warlord's bonus.

**Bones:** The warlord adorns herself in bones harvested from murdered champions. She gains a +1 enhancement bonus to natural armor. This trophy may be selected multiple times, up to once per four class levels. Each time it is selected, the warlord gains a cumulative +1 enhancement bonus to natural armor. Donning or removing the bones acts as light armor, and a warlord wearing the bones has a maximum Dexterity bonus to AC of +5 and no armor check penalty. The warlord may wear armor in addition to the bones. An army under the warlord's command gains the improved armor resource.

**Consume:** Instead of taking a physical trophy, the warlord eats the flesh or heart of her enemies to temporarily claim their strength. This functions as the *death knell* spell, except it requires the warlord to take at least 1 minute to eat a portion of the body, lasts for 1 hour per class level, and the benefits are non-magical. An army the warlord commands gains the cannibalize special ability. A warlord must be at least 6th level to select this trophy.

**Head:** The warlord severs and preserves an enemy's head, mounting it on a banner or merely letting it hang from her belt. The warlord selects a humanoid subtype. When fighting against humanoids of that subtype, the warlord gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage. This trophy may be selected multiple times, each time granting the bonus to attack and damage against a different humanoid subtype, or adding a cumulative +2 bonus to attack and damage against a humanoid subtype already selected. An army the warlord commands gains the favored enemy special ability against any humanoid subtype she has selected.

**Focus:** The warlord collects the holy symbol, spellbook, murdered familiar, or some other important magical focus of a spellcaster. The warlord gains the Disruptive feat as a bonus feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites. However, she must select whether the benefits of the feat apply to arcane or divine spellcasters. This trophy may be selected up to twice, to gain the benefits of the Disruptive feat against both arcane and divine spellcasters. An army the warlord commands increases its DV by 3 against armies with the spellcasting ability, but this benefit is not cumulative. A warlord must be at least 6th level to select this trophy.

**Improved Focus:** The warlord collects an iconic symbol of magic from a powerful spellcaster or magical creature, such as the broken staff of an archmagi or the whip of a balor. The warlord gains the Spellbreaker feat as a bonus feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites. However, the benefits of the feat apply to arcane or divine spellcasters, depending on which was selected for the focus trophy (or both if the focus trophy was selected twice). An army the warlord commands increases its DV by 6 against armies with the spellcasting ability. A warlord must be at least 10th level and have the focus trophy to select this trophy.

**Item:** The warlord claims a magical item from a foe fallen in battle. This magical item may have a maximum price equal to the barbarian's class level x 1,000 gp. This trophy may be selected multiple times, each time granting a new magical item.

**Skill:** The warlord gains a single skill as a class skill and the Skill Focus feat as a bonus feat for the selected skill. The form this trophy takes

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varies from skill to skill. A warlord who selects Disable Device might wear a rogue's severed hands, or one who selects Perception might wear a necklace of ears and eyes. This trophy may be selected multiple times, each time applying to a different skill.

**Undead:** The warlord claims some undead's symbol or a piece of one's body, such as a destroyed lich's broken phylactery or a vampire's flayed face. Animals do not willingly approach or attack the barbarian unless the animal's master succeeds on a Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check with a DC equal to 10 + the barbarian's ranks in Intimidation + the barbarian's Charisma modifier. Allied animals or animals regarding the warlord as their master do not need to make this check. Any army unit the warlord commands gains the unnatural aura special ability.

**Brutal Example (Ex):** At 3rd level, whenever the warlord kills a creature, he gains a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks against any creature with the same type (and any subtypes) for 1 round per class level. At 6th level, and every three levels thereafter, the warlord can increase the cumulative circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks by +1 by killing one additional creature, up to a maximum of a +6 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks at 18th level (after killing six creatures of the same type and subtype). This replaces trap sense.

**Rage Powers:** The following rage powers compliment the warlord archetype: animal fury, bleeding blow<sup>UC</sup>, body bludgeon<sup>UC</sup>, crippling blow<sup>UC</sup>, intimidating glare, powerful blow, strength surge, terrifying howl.

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## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items are suitable for evil characters and villains, or fit within apocalyptic themes.

### APOCALYPSE STAFF

**Aura** strong transmutation; **CL** 17th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 174,300 gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This staff appears to be several pieces of different wood harvested from extinct trees bound together with rusted iron bands. This staff functions as a +1 *quarterstaff*. If the wielder of the staff possesses a neutral evil alignment, she may dominate any daemon (as the *dominate monster* spell) with Hit Dice less than or equal to the wielder's Hit Dice by expending 1 charge. The daemon does not receive a save to negate. Additionally the *apocalypse staff* allows use of the following spells:

- *Crushing despair* (1 charge)
- *Locust storm*<sup>HA</sup> (2 charges)
- *Circle of death* (2 charges)
- *Plague storm*<sup>UM</sup> (3 charges)
- *Volcanic eruption*<sup>HA</sup> (4 charges)
- *Meteor swarm* (4 charges)

#### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Staff, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *circle of death*, *crushing despair*, *locust swarm*, *meteor swarm*, *planar ally*, *plague storm*, *volcanic eruption*, creator must be evil; **Cost** 87,300 gp

### DEATH'S BARGAIN

**Aura** strong necromancy; **CL** 15th  
**Slot** ring; **Price** 28,000 gp; **Weight** —

#### DESCRIPTION

This bone ring has a skull image crafted into its base, with small stones of black onyx representing the eye sockets and teeth. The wearer of the ring is both blessed and cursed by necromantic power. She does not become unconscious or staggered if reduced to negative hit points, or dead when her negative hit points equal or exceed her Constitution ability score. Instead, she acts normally until reduced to a number of negative hit points equal to twice her Constitution score, at which point she immediately dies.

If the wearer dies after having worn the ring for at least 24 hours, she cannot be returned to life by any means short of a *miracle*, *wish*, or *true resurrection* spell. Her spirit immediately rises from her body as a dread wraith (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary* for details). The dread wraith has fleeting recognition of her previous life, but is automatically hostile to all living creatures. This curse remains after the ring is no longer worn. A successful *break enchantment* or *remove curse* can end this effect if cast after the ring is removed.

#### REQUIREMENTS

Forge Ring, *bear's endurance*, *create greater undead*, *greater false life*; **Cost** 14,000 gp

### RETCHING FLAIL

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 8th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 47,315 gp; **Weight** 10 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This +2 *invigorating heavy flail* looks like a nicked and rusted aspergillum. The flail expels ash, dust, and insects from its jagged interior. Any living creature that begins its turn within the wielder's reach (with the flail) must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for one round. In addition, whenever the wielder confirms a critical hit with the flail, a living target takes damage normally and is sickened for one minute (no save).

#### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *good hope*, *stinking cloud*, *ray of sickness*; **Cost** 23,815 gp

### ROD OF CALAMITY

**Aura** strong transmutation; **CL** 17th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 102,305 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

#### DESCRIPTION

This two-foot shaft of obsidian maintains exceptionally sharp edges and functions as a +1 *light mace*. Several facets of the rod bear ancient symbols of elemental destruction and apocalyptic prophecy. The rod's wielder can use one of its powers per day on command. After a power has been used, the rod still functions as a +1 *light mace*, but its remaining powers become unavailable until the following midnight. The wielder can choose from the following abilities when activating the rod.

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- **Death:** The wielder becomes a master of undeath. Any undead she controls gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Charisma. Additionally, the wielder doubles the normal maximum number of HD of undead she can control. If this ability is not immediately re-chosen on the following midnight, the wielder loses control of excess undead, but may select which undead she loses control over.
- **Famine:** The wielder of the rod can summon a daemon to serve her for one day by feeding a living creature to it. She activates this ability by striking a killing blow as a standard action (or with a coup de grace action) against a living humanoid creature using the rod. The creature's corpse is consumed by the rod and she gains the service of a daemon with CR equal to the Hit Dice of the creature killed. The wielder does not need to offer additional payment for the outsider's services and it performs one task or service. The daemon serves the wielder until its task is complete or until the following midnight, at which point it returns to its home plane. A creature killed in this manner can only be resurrected by a *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish* spell.
- **Pestilence:** Any disease effect affecting any creature within 1 mile worsens. The creatures are permitted a Fortitude saving throw, with a save DC equal to the disease save DC. On a failed save, the target is immediately affected by the disease regardless of the normal onset time or frequency. A successful save does not count toward the curing of the disease. Additionally, until the following midnight, any creature damaged by the rod is subject to one of the following diseases: blinding sickness, bubonic plague, cackle fever, filth fever, leprosy, mindfire, red ache, shakes, or slimy doom (chosen when the rod is activated). The disease is contracted immediately (the onset period does not apply). Use the disease's listed frequency and save DC to determine further effects.
- **War:** The rod elongates, increasing its length to almost three feet and its weight to 10 pounds. It functions as a +4 *furious*<sup>UE</sup> *heavy flail of impact*<sup>UE</sup> until the following midnight.

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## REQUIREMENTS

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Craft Rod, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bleed*, *command undead*, *contagion*, *major creation*, *planar ally*; **Cost** 52,305 gp

## ROBE OF DEATH

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** robe; **Price** 42,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

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## DESCRIPTION

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When worn, this night black tattered robe completely conceals the flesh and face in shadow, but gives the impression of a skeletal body beneath the cloth. The wearer of the robe can sense when any living creature within 30 feet is suffering from any of the following conditions: bleeding, diseased, dying, energy drained, or poisoned. When a living creature is suffering from any of these conditions, the wearer may attempt to usher the creature closer to death with a melee touch attack. The creature receives a DC 17 Fortitude save to negate this effect. If the creature is at negative hit points, they die. If the creature is energy drained, they take 1d4 negative levels. If the creature is bleeding, diseased, or poisoned, they take 1d4 Constitution damage.

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## REQUIREMENTS

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Craft Wondrous Item, *deathwatch*, *slay living*; **Cost** 21,000 gp



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## SHAWL OF VERMIN

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** shoulders; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

This threadbare scarf displays vague haunting images of insects or skulls in its texture. Insects occasionally crawl or leap from its folds, even if shaken out before worn. The shawl causes portions of its wearer's body to separate into a mass of insects (usually beetles, flies, or locusts) to avoid deadly blows. Attacks of opportunity against her have a 20% miss chance, but this miss chance is not due to concealment. Once per day as an immediate action, the wearer can cause a critical threat to deal damage as a normal attack roll. The attacker does not roll to confirm the critical threat.

### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*, *summon swarm*;  
**Cost** 15,000 gp

## STAFF OF FAMINE

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 13th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 72,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

This staff is crafted from sun bleached bones held together by the crushed bodies of locusts. If the wielder of the staff possesses an evil alignment, she may consume a touched creature's corpse by expending 1 charge. The corpse is destroyed (as the *disintegrate* spell) and the wielder regains hit points equal to twice the corpse's Hit Dice. Additionally the *staff of famine* allows use of the following spells:

- *Feast of ashes* (1 charge)
- *Cup of dust* (1 charge)
- *Insect plague* (2 charges)
- *Locust storm*<sup>HA</sup> (3 charges)
- *Control weather* (3 charges)

### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Staff, *control weather*, *cup of dust*, *feast of ash*, *insect plague*, *locust swarm*, creator must be evil;  
**Cost** 36,000 gp

## STAFF OF PESTILENCE

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 13th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 72,000 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

This staff is crafted from the foul corpses of a dozen fossilized rats all melted into one another. If the wielder of the staff possesses an evil alignment, she gains immunity to all diseases and poisons. Any disease or poison effect the wielder is suffering from is suppressed while the staff is held. Any ability damage, drain, or secondary effects inflicted by a disease or poison is removed for as long as the staff is held. Additionally the *staff of pestilence* allows use of the following spells:

- *Feral tooth*<sup>HA</sup> (1 charge)
- *Stinking cloud* (1 charge)
- *Greater contagion* (2 charges)
- *Plague storm* (3 charges)
- *Epidemic* (3 charges)

### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Staff, *epidemic*, *feral tooth*, *greater contagion*, *plague storm*, *stinking cloud*, creator must be evil;  
**Cost** 36,000 gp

## WEAPON OF WAR

**Aura** moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 80,335 gp; **Weight** varies

### DESCRIPTION

The *weapon of war* can transform into any melee weapon the bearer is proficient in on command, however it always appears crafted of charred rusted steel. It otherwise functions as a +3 *vicious mighty cleaving* weapon. The *weapon of war* drives allied warriors into a blood frenzy when used by a worthy leader. When wielded by the commander of an army (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Campaign* for details), the commander grants the merciless boon, and the army unit gains the relentless brutality army tactic. Additionally, the army unit gains the ferocity special ability.

### REQUIREMENTS

Craft Arms and Armor, *divine power*, *enervation*, *rage*; **Cost** 40,335 gp

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## NEW SPELLS

The following spells represent dark concepts, but most may be used by non-evil characters at GM discretion. However, spells with the evil descriptor are subject to the normal limitations.

### BLACKBOLT

**School** necromancy; **Level** antipaladin 3, bloodrager 2, cleric 3, inquisitor 3, magus 3, occultist 3, psychic 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, spiritualist 3, witch 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** close (25 ft. plus 5 ft./2 levels)

**Effect** one or more rays of negative energy

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You fire a ray of negative energy as a ranged touch attack. You may fire one ray, plus one additional ray for every four levels beyond 4th (to a maximum of three rays at 12th level). Each ray requires a ranged touch attack to hit and deals 4d6 points of negative energy damage. A creature hit by a *blackbolt* gains a negative level unless it succeeds at a Fortitude saving throw. Negative levels from multiple *blackbolts* (including separate castings of *blackbolt*) do not stack. Undead struck by a *blackbolt* are healed for 4d6 points of damage.

### FERAL TOOTH

**School** transmutation; **Level** bloodrager 2, druid 2, occultist 2, ranger 2, shaman 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a rotten animal tooth)

**Range** medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)

**Target** up to 1 creature/level, no 2 of which can be more than 30 feet apart (see below)

**Duration** 1 minute/level

**Saving Throw** none (harmless); **Spell Resistance** no

When you cast this spell you choose one of the following diseases: bubonic plague, filth fever, red ache, or shakes. Each creature with a natural bite or claw attack becomes a carrier for the chosen disease. Whenever a creature affected by this spell hits with a bite or claw attack its opponent may contract the disease normally (using the attacker's statistics to determine any save DCs). Additionally, each creature affected by the spell becomes immune to the chosen disease.

### LOCUST STORM

**School** conjuration (summoning); **Level** cleric 6, druid 5, shaman 5, sorcerer/wizard 6, spiritualist 4, summoner 4, witch 6

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a desiccated locust husk)

**Area** a 10-ft./level radius cylinder, 5-ft./level high

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You summon an impressive mass of locusts to dominate a wide area. The population of locusts is so dense that the light level changes one degree toward darkness. Ranged attack rolls that begin inside the affected area suffer a -2 penalty. Each round, plant creatures, plants, and organic objects (objects made from wood, leaves, hides, etc) take hit point damage equal to your caster level (subtract any hardness it might possess). Attended objects can negate this damage with a successful Fortitude save.

*Locust storm* also summons one locust swarm<sup>B4</sup> per five caster levels you possess. The swarms appear anywhere in the spell's area and may move the turn you cast this spell. You control these swarms mentally but they cannot move outside the spell's area.

### MISERY

**School** necromancy; **Level** cleric 9, druid 9, shaman 9, sorcerer/wizard 9, witch 9

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a pinch of diseased grain and dead insects)

**Area** up to 1 living creature/level, no two of which can be more than 60 ft. apart

**Duration** 1 round/level (see below)

**Saving Throw** Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You destroy the health and strength of your targets, afflicting them with starvation, thirst, and illness. Each target must succeed on a Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per caster level (to a maximum of 20d6), 1 point of Constitution damage, and gain the exhausted condition. Success on the initial save negates the Constitution damage, halves the nonlethal damage, and reduces the exhausted condition to fatigued. Each affected creature makes a new save at the beginning of its turn or take an additional point of Constitution damage. Each affected creature must make a save against this spell each round until the duration expires, it succeeds on the saving throw for two consecutive rounds, or it

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dies. Though the physical manifestation of the spell mimics starvation, poison, and disease, creatures immune to one or more of those conditions are not immune to the spell's effects.

## SINSATION

**School** enchantment (compulsion, evil) [mind-affecting]; **Level** antipaladin 2, bard 2, bloodrager 2, cleric 3, inquisitor 3, mesmerist 2, psychic 3, shaman 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a bloodstained scrap of an undergarment)

**Range** medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)

**Target** one humanoid creature

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You cause your target to lose restraint and entertain thoughts of anger, lust, and tyranny. A good- or lawful-aligned character with a code of conduct counts as having violated his code of conduct and becomes an ex-member of any class that has rules for losing class features as a result of misbehavior. Because this separation is at least partially imaginary, spells or effects that prevent or restore the character's class features (such as *atonement*) don't function while this spell is active. The target regains any lost class features when this spell ends and does not require an *atonement* spell or effect. The target may war with these dark thoughts, attempting a new saving throw to end the effect as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

## SOLDIER'S CURSE

**School** necromancy [evil]; **Level** antipaladin 3, cleric 5, occultist 4, psychic 5, shaman 5, sorcerer/wizard 5, witch 5

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a single vertebra)

**Range** medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)

**Target** 1 living, corporeal creature

**Duration** 1 minute/level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You charge a target's physical form with an undying curse. If the subject dies during the spell's duration, its body immediately animates as

a zombie lord<sup>B4</sup> at the beginning of its next turn. The subject attacks your enemies to the best of its ability, but is not otherwise automatically under your control. When the spell's duration expires the subject dies again. A successful Will save (made at the time of casting) prevents this curse and negates the transformation.



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## SOLDIER'S CURSE, MASS

**School** necromancy [evil]; **Level** cleric 8, occultist 6, psychic 8, shaman 8, sorcerer/wizard 8, witch 8

**Components** V, S, M (a creature's spine)

**Target** 1 living, corporeal creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart

**Duration** 10 minutes/level (D)

This spell works like *soldier's curse*, except as noted above. The targets must be within the spell's range when the spell is cast, but they are cursed individually. They become undead soldiers regardless of where they die.

## VOLCANIC ERUPTION

**School** evocation (fire); **Level** cleric 8, druid 8, psychic 8, shaman 8, sorcerer/wizard 8

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a sliver of obsidian or )

**Range** long (400 ft. plus 40 ft./level)

**Area** a 10-ft.-radius burst

**Duration** 4 rounds (see below)

**Saving Throw** Reflex partial; **Spell Resistance** no

You cause the ground to erupt in the affected area, knocking prone any creature in the area and dealing 1d8 points of fire damage (maximum 20d8) as they are caught in the upward rush of lava. A Reflex save halves this damage and allows an affected creature to remain on its feet. The lava fills the spell's area and expands outward 10 feet in all directions each round for three rounds. Creatures within the spell's area at the beginning of each of your turns must succeed on another Reflex save or take half the damage from the previous round and be rooted in place by hardening magma. A floating or flying creature can avoid future saves by leaving the ground after a successful save.

The cooling magma forms unevenly, with brittle patches among the hard stone. The area of the spell (including squares filled by magma in subsequent rounds) is difficult ground for 1 day per level after the spell is cast.

## WICKED WIND

**School** evocation [evil]; **Level** antipaladin 2, bard 3, cleric 4, inquisitor 2, medium 3, occultist 3, psychic 4, shaman 4, spiritualist 3, summoner 3, witch 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a pinch of ground bone from a humanoid)

**Range** personal

**Area** a 60-ft.-radius circle centered on you

**Duration** concentration plus 1 round/2 levels

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

A slight shadow and chilling wind blows continuously through the affected area, bolstering evil creatures and hindering non-evil creatures. Evil creatures gain a +1 profane bonus on attack and damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and caster level. Non-evil creatures take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage each round. At 13th caster level, and again at 20th, the profane bonus increases by +1 and the nonlethal damage increases by +1d6 each round. *Wicked wind* counts as a moderate wind.

## WITHER

**School** necromancy [curse]; **Level** antipaladin 4, cleric 6, druid 6, inquisitor 5, psychic 6, shaman 6, sorcerer/wizard 6, spiritualist 6, witch 6

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a mummified finger)

**Range** medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)

**Target** 1 living creature

**Duration** permanent (D)

**Saving Throw** Fortitude partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You choose one of your target's limbs, causing it to shrivel and atrophy. If you choose to wither a leg, your target takes a -8 penalty to Acrobatics checks and its burrow or land speed is reduced by half. If you wither an arm, your target cannot make attacks or defend itself with that arm, including natural attacks or holding two-handed weapons, second weapons, or shields. If you wither a wing, your target becomes unable to fly naturally and falls (it can still fly if its flight is magical). If the target succeeds on a Fortitude save, the atrophied limb returns to normal after 1 round.

## NEW DOMAINS

The following domains represent apocalyptic power beyond death and war. A cleric in service to fiendish forces, dark gods, or the Four Horsemen may select these domains with GM approval.

### FAMINE DOMAIN

**Granted Powers:** You wield power over consumption and deprivation, and deny them power over you. You gain Endurance as a bonus feat.

*Sated State (Su):* You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe. You become immune to magical effects that compel consumption or which manifest inconvenience related to eating and breathing.

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You may still gain any beneficial effects of consumable items or spells.

*Hunger (Su):* At 8th level, whenever you cast a necromancy spell, you can force the pangs of starvation onto your target or targets as a swift action. Each creature affected by the spell takes nonlethal damage equal to the spell's level. If the spell doesn't allow a save, the creature additionally gains the fatigued condition. If the spell allows a save, the creature gains the fatigued condition on a failed save. You can use this ability a total number of times each day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

**Domain Spells:** 1st—*ray of enfeeblement*, 2nd—*feast of ashes*<sup>APG</sup>, 3rd—*cup of dust*<sup>APG</sup>, 4th—*fleshworm infestation*<sup>UM</sup>, 5th—*locust storm*<sup>HA</sup>, 6th—*dust form*<sup>UC</sup>, 7th—*control weather*, 8th—*horrid wilting*, 9th—*misery*<sup>HA</sup>.

## PESTILENCE DOMAIN

**Granted Powers:** You spread plague wherever you go, making all nearby diseases more deadly.

*Virulence (Su):* You gain immunity to all diseases (including supernatural diseases) and radiate an invisible toxic aura that alters magical and natural diseases within 30 feet of you. Each disease within this range transmits through all vectors (contact, ingestion, inhalation, or injury). Unless a disease is originally contracted through inhalation, a creature can only inhale a disease if it begins its turn within your aura and adjacent to a creature that spreads the disease. Creatures only need to make their initial save from each source of disease once, regardless of the number of available vectors.

*Defensive Disease (Su):* At 8th level, you can manifest a disease in response to an opponent's attacks. As an immediate action you become a carrier for one of the following diseases: blinding sickness, bubonic plague, cackle fever, dementia dust, demon fever, devil chills, filth fever, leprosy, mindfire, red ache, shakes, or slimy doom. You transfer this disease to the next creature to deal damage to you with a natural or unarmed attack or non-reach melee weapon. The creature makes a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + ½ your HD + your Constitution modifier) or contracts the disease (and takes its ability damage)

immediately. Saves made during the disease's frequency are made at the disease's normal save DC. You remain a carrier for the chosen disease until the beginning of your next turn or until you transfer it to an attacking creature. You can use this ability a number of times each day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

**Domain Spells:** 1st—*diagnose disease*<sup>UM</sup>, 2nd—*feral tooth*<sup>HA</sup>, 3rd—*contagion*, 4th—*absorb toxicity*<sup>UC</sup>, 5th—*greater contagion*<sup>UM</sup>, 6th—*epidemic*<sup>UM</sup>, 7th—*plague storm*<sup>UM</sup>, 8th—*mass inflict pain*<sup>OA</sup>, 9th—*misery*<sup>HA</sup>.

## APOCALYPTIC PLOTS

Whether running an evil game or a grim campaign where good characters must take immoral actions, apocalyptic plotlines are a useful avenue to consider. An apocalypse is a threat truly evil people likely find worthy of opposition, even if they simply wish to preserve their own selfish interests. World-shattering events are grand enough on an existential level they can promote long-term cooperation among the normally uncooperative. Even paladins can work with evil characters when opposing an exceptional threat of this magnitude.

Usually an apocalypse is more of an abstract danger, instead of something that *actually* occurs. The baseline assumption is that the PCs are going to defeat the antagonist before he sets the wheels in motion. Failure isn't really planned for, especially if the world-ending revolves around the climax of a campaign. In general, there are three primary ways an apocalypse can occur. It can be the result of the PC's (often unexpected) failure at that climax, part of the setting's backstory, or something the campaign focuses on.

The following section is for GMs looking for examples of terrifying apocalyptic events. Apocalyptic events work best when they are unique, and so the Horsemen recommend letting a few of us team-up in each case. This helps things be a bit more novel than a world war, or everyone just falling over dead. However, out of death, famine, pestilence, and war... pestilence acts as the best "carrier" for the other three. A good plague can be both be inspired by and cause plenty of famine, death, and war. It likewise simultaneously hits on both a grand and personal scale.

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Unfortunately, disease mechanics tend to earn eye-rolls and yawns. Most diseases take a while to come into effect, don't do a whole lot, and are easily fixed (even ignoring *remove disease*). The idea that a single plague could endanger civilization is a realistic threat to a modern and historical viewpoint, but not one likely to be taken seriously within the mechanical context of most fantasy games. The following apocalyptic diseases throw that assumption out the window. Each is powerful enough to threaten entire civilizations, and versatile enough to use in a variety of stories. Also included are a number of plot options and hooks for incorporating different apocalyptic aspects into a game.

## WHAT MAKES A PLAGUE APOCALYPTIC?

A real apocalypse has to involve (at the least) a massive breakdown of civilization. It often goes hand in hand with death and destruction on an epic scale. For a plague to be apocalyptic, the disease has to be contagious, deadly, relatively slow, and hard to fix. A plague that is not easily spread isn't going to infect a large spread-out population. If a person is infected for days or weeks, they can infect other people. If they die in minutes, it is easily contained. If people can quarantine the disease, then it is unlikely to get out of control. If clerics can easily remove it with magic, it is possible divine power can simply solve it. Finally, making it a slow build provides plenty of opportunities for foreshadowing and setting the stage.

## WHAT MAKES AN APOCALYPTIC PLAGUE INTERESTING?

An apocalypse is interesting in general because it causes personal desperation, shatters many fantasy-genre assumptions, and provides sweeping inspiration. An apocalyptic plague can't just be ability damage. It has to threaten PCs, but not be impossible to handle. Any boring disease can give penalties, and it gets old quick. If the PCs aren't threatened directly, it undermines the disease's fear. If they have no hope of fighting against it, it undermines the player's fun. Ideally a good plague has somewhat variable effects and gives lots of ways to use it over the course of multiple adventures.

## BLACK BREATH (PESTILENCE)

*Symptoms appear similar to an extremely infectious, slow, and deadly form of the black plague: fever, malaise, cramps, and enlarged painful glands.*

*Magical divination has long since established vermin as vectors for the plague, but similar spells indicate the "black breath" being spread only by breathing while near the infected. I recommend the most stringent and ruthless methods taken in efforts to contain this disease, as a single roaming carrier might unintentionally murder thousands.*

—Doctor Emel Brookshadow, PhD.

The bubonic plague has historically claimed millions of lives. When left untreated, more than half of the infected can die. The plague left an unforgettable mark on many cultures, and is almost always one of the first thoughts springing to mind from a long list of terrible diseases. However, it is far from the most terrifying disease imaginable.

A worse disease would be airborne, have an even higher untreated death rate, and... most importantly, wouldn't have obvious symptoms showing for a longer length of time. By the time a creature becomes plainly symptomatic, they might spread the disease to many others, who infect more in turn. Ignorant carriers desperate for a cure become dangerous ticking time bombs. Even in a world with modern medical capabilities, or magic to treat disease, such a plague would quickly tax resources to the breaking point. Society starts to crumble as more and more get sick. Paranoia, superstition, and panic become as deadly as the disease itself.

## EVOLVED BUBONIC PLAGUE

**Type** disease, contact or inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 19

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### ONSET

1 day; **Frequency** 1/week

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### EFFECT

1d6 Con damage and 1 Cha damage and target is fatigued. Any creature within 30 feet of a creature that has taken ability damage from the evolved bubonic plague must save each round they remain within the radius of infection from inhalation. A creature can hold its breath to prevent exposure due to inhalation, but may still become infected from contact.

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### CURE

3 consecutive saves.

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## EXAMPLE STORIES

**Death:** The PCs return from months adventuring on other planets or planes to find everything ravaged by disease. Society has disintegrated, and survivors huddle cloistered away in fear of infection. Old friends and allies are either dead, dying, or view the PCs with distrust. Can they help pull the pieces of civilization together or is all life headed toward extinction?

**Death:** The evolved bubonic plague can represent a truly apocalyptic threat. Society breaks down at the roots, with the disease burning through the population. It is unlikely everyone showing symptoms avoids any human contact. It only takes a single roaming infected to spread the black breath to an entire city. The vast majority die once exposed, with perhaps only 1 in 100 surviving without magical intervention. Divine magic can only stretch so far, with the most pious clerics becoming infected themselves. The PCs must decide if they'd rather risk their lives to help, or retreat in order to save what they care about most.

**Pestilence:** The PCs might realize the scope and breadth of the disease early on, before it has a chance to spread uncontrollably. Quarantine allows for containment, however, the infected are scared and do not understand the danger they pose. When some infected escape, the PCs must hunt down frightened suffering innocents that unintentionally threaten an entire city, or even the world.

**Pestilence:** The PCs come into contact with the black breath in an isolated area ravaged by the disease. Now they are infected. Can they recognize the threat and find a cure before it is too late?

## BLOOD MADNESS (WAR)

*Symptoms begin with a sense of bold euphoria similar to a drug-induced high, often causing widespread infection to friends and paramours. Over a period of weeks or months the victim experiences memory loss, personality shifts, and painful bone and muscle growths. Tumors, exterior skeletal protrusions, and other deformities rapidly develop. The final stages are madness combined with violent tendencies.*

—Doctor Emel Brookshadow, PhD.

Diseases can represent threats beyond bacteria or viruses. These are modern ideas, and most fantasy settings do not address a difference. Most alchemists or healers when confronted with “Blood Madness” would be duly baffled, as



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it is no true disease. It is instead miniscule worms that can crawl beneath the skin and swim through the bloodstream. The parasites lodge themselves in the victim's brain, hijacking certain body functions while feeding and multiplying.

Any living creature coming into contact with infected blood is at risk of infection. The slow spread of the disease, resulting elation, and lowered impulse control increase the host's tendency to infect other creatures. The infected only become more likely to expose their blood to others as bone spurs cut through skin and they scratch emerging tumors. With the body in a state of rapid out-of-control growth and brain degradation, victims can become horrible instinct-driven monsters, whose only purpose is to carry and spread the parasites.

## BLOOD PARASITES

Type disease, contact or injury; Save DC 16

### ONSET

1 day; Frequency 1/week

### EFFECT

Blood parasites are spread through injury by natural weapons or contact with an infected creature that has been injured with slashing or piercing damage. Deals 1d4 Int and 1d4 Cha damage. Creatures gain an equivalent bonus to Str and Con (respectively) as long as the ability damage persists. As soon as either the creature's Int or Cha damage equals or exceeds the respective ability score, the creature becomes mindless (not comatose or unconscious) and stops taking any further ability damage, although they remain infected. While mindless, the creature remains violent and subject to mind-affecting effects. A creature that takes 4 or more points of Int or Cha damage gains a bite attack with damage appropriate for a creature of their size. A creature that takes 6 or more points of Int or Cha damage gains two claw attacks with damage appropriate for a creature of their size. A creature that takes 8 or more points of Int or Cha damage gains the giant creature simple template. Some creatures may possess strange or unique mutations at GM discretion.

### CURE

Blood parasites are only cured after all ability damage is removed or healed. Spells that only cure or remove disease are ineffective against blood parasites.

## EXAMPLE STORIES

**Death:** The effects of blood parasites are somewhat similar to an alchemist's mutagen and this may not be coincidence. Perhaps some foolhardy surgeon experimenting with diseases exposed a simpler parasite to mutagen, sparking a strange change in the miniscule creature. The key to the parasites might still reside in the alchemist's laboratory, guarded by the disease's terrifying maker... and first victim. However, in killing the first host, the PCs might doom the only hope of a cure. Can they take him alive, or in death does he doom them all?

**Famine:** A stupid and greedy drug dealer begins pushing vials of "Red Revel", a cheap narcotic said to cause a week-long high. The alchemical nature of the drug keeps the parasites at bay... as long as the addicted maintain a steady supply. Rebellious young aristocrats and lifelong addicts alike jump on the opportunity. The infected spread the parasites among both the highest and lowest echelons of the city. Unfortunately, when the supply starts to dry up, everyone turns into desperate insane monsters. By the time the worst symptoms set in, the dealer's already moved on to the next town. However, finding or making more of the alchemical drug is just a stalling tactic, and there isn't nearly enough to go around.

**War:** People infected with blood parasites spread the plague to most of a town over a course of a few weeks. Everyone decays into mutation and madness together. By the time word gets out, the plague already threatens to spread. When roaming hordes of giant mutated hosts begin mindlessly moving toward other inhabited areas, can the disease be contained? What happens if animals that fly or swim begin acting as hosts? What if it spreads to magical or otherworldly monsters?

**War:** Perhaps the blood parasites are a precursor to something worse. It might not be coincidence that victims become mentally pliable giants, and it could be an intentional biological weapon. Infected creatures might make the perfect slave race for otherworldly aliens, mind-controlling aboleths, or an inventive worm that walks. Such an invader or conqueror would transform any captured resistance into more monstrous soldiers in their growing army.

## SOUL ROT (FAMINE)

*I am out of my depth. This appears to be no sickness of the body... but one of the mind and spirit. Symptoms are depression, madness, anti-social behavior, and*

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*irrational actions. Most infected eventually enter a comatose state, from which there is no return. I am told by clerical associates that no amount of divine magic can return to life someone dying after the disease reaches its final stages. I've also heard dark rumors circulating that the plague's effects on mortals looks like a head cold next to what it does to extraplanar beings.*

—Doctor Emel Brookshadow, PhD.

In most fantasy settings, death is not always a final end. The explicit existence of an immortal soul means a person survives nearly any death, to dwell in whatever afterlife they earn. The power of gods is real, and everlasting, leading any apocalypse to either likely be the result of divine action... or at least inaction. If almost any disease is solved with mere mortal magic, what possible plague could threaten heaven and hell?

Soul rot is a spiritual malady, infecting the immortal essence that hides within mortals and wholly forms both gods and devils. Most beings are creatures rooted in the physical, and so might be able to fight the disease off. However, outsiders are woefully unprepared to face a decay of their defining nature. It is terrible enough that mortals risk the destruction of the soul, but how might eternal creatures view a swift and inevitable death?

## SOUL ROT

**Type** curse, disease, contact; **Save** Will DC 20

### ONSET

1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

### EFFECT

1d4 Wis drain or 1d4 Con drain (if the creature is an outsider); if a creature's Wisdom drain equals or exceeds its actual Wisdom score, the creature's spirit or soul is destroyed. The creature's body can be kept alive, but it remains in a permanent coma until death. Once the creature's soul is destroyed, the Wisdom drain cannot be healed by any means short of a *wish* or *miracle*. If a creature dies while suffering Wisdom drain, it can only be resurrected by a *miracle* or *wish* spell. If the creature has the outsider type, no known means can resurrect it should the Constitution drain equal or exceed the creature's Constitution score. Soul rot can affect creatures normally immune to disease, but not mindless creatures or creatures immune to ability drain.

### CURE

2 consecutive saves for non-outsiders. An outsider with the native subtype can only be cured by successfully casting both *remove curse* and *remove disease* within 1 minute of each other. Any other creatures with the outsider type cannot cure soul rot by any known natural or magical means.

### WEAK SHALL INHERIT

The more spiritually potent the outsider, the more terrible the effects of soul rot. An infected balor or solar might fight off the decay for weeks or months, but demon lords and archangels could succumb in days. A minor god or demigod infected could burn away in hours, with the greatest surviving mere minutes. Their only hope for the deities is containment, preventative measures, and quarantine. This turns normal assumptions regarding strength and power around, with the mightiest being the most vulnerable. Note, there are not defined mechanics for how the disease affects gods and other extremely powerful outsiders differently, and the disease should be used as more of a plot device in these cases.

## EXAMPLE STORIES

**Death:** The goddess of death has watched the divine and mortal planes for untold eons. She has seen souls bartered like cheap goods, tortured into terrible forms, and claimed like prizes in some pointless contest. Mortal's lives have little meaning to the mighty immortals, which have no true respect for death. She has had enough, and the soul rot is her solution. In crafting and releasing the spiritual plague, she hopes to live only long enough to watch mortals enter an age where they dictate their own destiny. However, she requires help to shelter the weak as best she can from the last mad plots of her fellow gods.

**Famine:** The afterlife is dying. This secret is known only to the greatest clerics, who feel their divine might weaken as the gods die or retreat to solitary bastions. The impact is felt on the mortal world as prayers go unanswered, but the churches do everything possible to keep the truth secret. Divine magic becomes less potent, and increasingly rare. Populations, aristocrats, and adventurers accustomed to an endless supply of divine magic find it hard to come by. Priests begin going to terrible

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lengths to prevent a loss of power and influence, and work to maintain a growing conspiracy. Soon, true desperation sets in, and some begin turning to dark ancient forces to regain a taste of magic.

**Pestilence:** As the plague spreads in the afterlife, anyone found to be infected is banished to the mortal plane. This results in a flood of infected outsiders. Some merely seek sanctuary or help; others wish to wreak havoc before the death. Unfortunately, every single one of the invaders (regardless of intentions) is a carrier for the soul rot.

**War:** The heavens rejoice! The Lord of Hell is overthrown at last, and contained within an unbreakable prison. Unfortunately, the devil-god has one final trick up his sleeve. If he can't rule the cosmos, no one can. Hell is the first to fall, but fleeing devils and occupying angels spread the soul rot everywhere. Gods lock themselves away for fear of decay, and must rely on mortals to act on their behalf more than ever before. Someone must attempt to negotiate with the devil god who believes the eternal war is far from over. If he cannot be dealt with, it is likely that the dying outsiders tear the cosmos apart with their fevered lasts breaths.

## UNDYING PLAGUE (DEATH)

*Symptoms begin with light fever, headache, and other signs common to myriad diseases. I suspect the plague must be magical in nature, for it seems explicitly designed to kill powerful healthy people and resists curative spells. Similar to ghoul fever, death from infection leads to undeath. However, reports indicate the species of undead varies by some unknown variable.*

—Doctor Emel Brookshadow, PhD.

Disease causing undeath is a common idea. From a zombie's bite, to a ghoul's fever, it is a well-explored trope. However, these threats pose little danger to powerful adventurers. Most would be content to let the disease run its course, or wait to throw some easily prepared curative magic at it.

Necromantic fever insidiously plays on this hubris, as the disease has worse effects based on the host's own power. Additionally, the disease is far harder to heal, leading many sufferers to delay treatment until it is too late. Most plagues cut through the vulnerable portions of civilization: the weak, old, and young, but necromantic fever targets the strong. With the greatest clerics, wisest wizards, and strongest fighters turned into mighty infectious undead, what hope do the rest have?

## NECROMANTIC FEVER

Type curse, disease, injury; Save varies

### ONSET

1 minute; Frequency 1/day

### EFFECT

Necromantic fever has varying effects and Fortitude save DCs based on how powerful the infected humanoid is (see table). It acts as ghoul fever on non-humanoids. A humanoid dying from necromantic fever rises as an undead creature at the next midnight (the type of undead varies based on the creature's Hit Dice). A humanoid becoming undead in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other undead, but is a carrier for the necromantic fever with any natural attacks and desires to spread it to living creatures.

### CURE

Necromantic fever can only be cured by successfully casting both *remove curse* and *remove disease* within 1 minute of each other.

**Note:** Necromantic fever is commonly confused for ghoul fever, due to its similarities in transmission and symptoms. A DC 15 or lower Knowledge (religion) or Heal check incorrectly identifies it as such. Succeeding on a DC 16 or higher check reveals it is something altogether different. A DC 25 or higher check is necessary to guess at the diseases true ramifications.

## EXAMPLE STORIES

**Death:** The disease is the carefully crafted masterpiece of an ancient necromantic cult. Believing undeath to be the highest state of being, the fanatics quietly infect dozens of cities in the hope of converting the world in one fell swoop. Knowing that the mightiest heroes remain the biggest threat to success, they design the fever to take advantage of mortal hubris. With every great adventurer turned, the chance of the world offering true resistance fades.

**Pestilence:** One of the PC's mentors goes missing after noting a minor illness gained from a recent epic adventure. They aren't alone as powerful heroes, retired adventurers, and knowledgeable sages disappear one by one. A frightening pattern emerges, as it becomes clear that some invisible hand works to infect and turn the mighty. It is only a matter of time before the PCs become a target as well.

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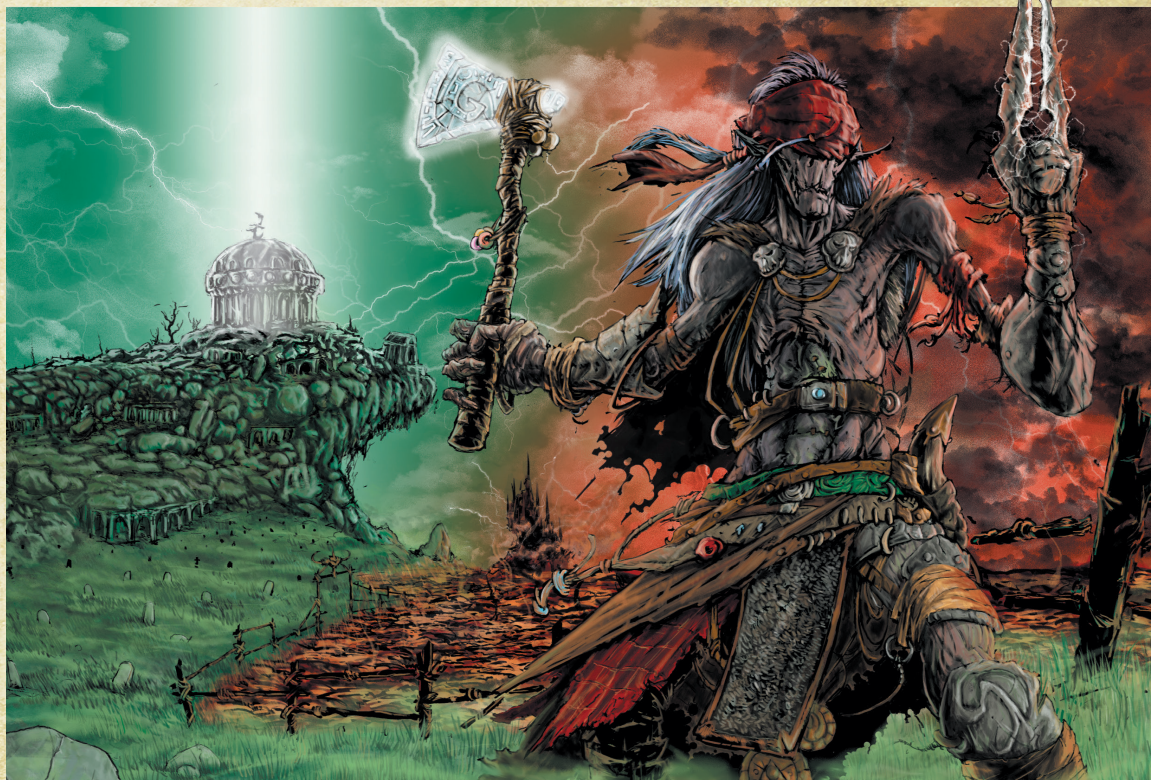
**TABLE: NECROMANTIC FEVER EFFECTS**

Humanoid Hit Dice	Ability Damage	Fortitude Save DC	Undead Created
1-3	1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex	13	ghoul
4-6	1d4 Con and 1d4 Dex	14	ghast
7-8	1d6 Con and 1d6 Dex	15	wight
9-10	2d3 Con and 2d3 Dex	16	zuvembie <sup>B3</sup>
11-12	1d8 Con and 1d8 Dex	17	revenant <sup>B2</sup>
13-14	2d4 Con and 2d4 Dex	18	gaki <sup>B4</sup> or manananggal <sup>B3</sup>
15-16	2d6 Con and 2d6 Dex	19	gucubu <sup>B3</sup> or mohrg
17-18	2d8 Con and 2d8 Dex	20	bodak <sup>B2</sup> or baykok <sup>B3</sup>
19+	2d10 Con and 2d10 Dex	21	banshee or devourer

**War:** A great horde of undead is rumored to be massing from dozens of fallen towns and villages. Churches, kingdoms, and arcane guilds send legendary heroes to put down the relatively weak monsters. To the world's horror, the near-mythical figures fall to sickness and now lead the ever-growing army. What hope do common foot soldiers have against such a threat?

**War:** Necromantic fever is no simple disease, magical or otherwise. It is the living soul of an ancient demilich finally free of physical bindings. The plague

represents his spreading influence and each undead created bears a small shard of his soul. As more join him in death, and greater souls come under his sway, he begins regaining consciousness. As his awareness grows, his agents begin acting to further the cause of their undead master with organized precision. If the spread isn't halted, the burgeoning deity may truly ascend to the ranks of godhood and use the many manifestations of his soul to take control of creation.



# FOUR HORSEMEN PRESENT

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## Section 15s.

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