



Necrophages of the Dying Earth

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Introduction

Necrophages are abominations amongst abominations. By simple understanding, a necrophage is a sentient being who devours carrion - typically the remains of other sentient beings, often of their own species. By more studious definition a necrophage is also an entity that traffics with dark powers, often incorporating its repulsive dining habits into its religious or sorcerous practices. In the Earth's latter days, the broad term 'necrophage' is commonly used to refer to more than one heinous assemblage of beings. In this article we cover two types: the demonist necrophage (described in small detail in 'Demons of the Dying Earth' and expanded here), and the bestial necrophage (a particularly intelligent species of half-man¹ that haunts ruins and sparsely populated regions. Fortunately neither type is common, so do not mistake the wealth of detail in this article to indicate such to be true. Rather we provide this information in order to allow GMs to add rare and terrifying loathsome foes to their campaign at appropriate intervals.

Bestial Necrophages

"Sniff! I smell a sweet mind close by, rich and fragrant with the heady spice of life."

"I am Quisarus of the 14th Dynasty - bow down before me!"

Many empires have flourished and diminished on the Dying Earth - the very dirt of the Earth is the compacted detritus of a thousand kingdoms, the soil a compost of a million bones. One of the greatest kingdoms of the 18th Aeon was that of the Avalotti, ruled by the cruel witch-queens and their decadent consorts. Throughout the aeon these powerful thaumaturges sought the powers of the upper spheres to guide their people, and they summoned many emissaries of the Overworld to their fractured land. One of their greatest queens, Mhirania, found little use in the beings of the higher realms - perceiving them as too rigid in their codes and actions to accommodate her many desires. Instead, she sought the forbidden creatures of the netherworlds for her companions and summoned many such entities to her side.

¹ Or perhaps a particularly degenerate type of human depending upon your scholarly perspective.



Unknown to all, until she called forth an avatar of the dark god known as Krann, for many years Mhirania practiced her magics in secret. Strange gifts it gave her and many secrets it taught; such that her power grew to an extent where she could claim Avalotti as her own. One secret that Krann taught her was the process whereby the minds of others might be distilled into liquor. Drinking the broth allowed the user to taste the thoughts of the victim and savor their ideas and memories. Delighted with this knowledge, Mhirania and her followers used the technique to gain many repulsive powers. Unfortunately, as with all gifts of the dark, there was a price to pay. Slowly it became clear that imbibers of this foul brew lost their sense of connection to the world about them. Food lost flavor, colors appeared drab and lifeless and any simple delight in living was lost. Eventually it seemed to the user that they were only truly vital when regularly drinking the slick black distillate.



Mhirania and her followers, finding they could not enjoy life without the help of the distillate, ranged far and wide in search of fresh minds. From this position it was but a small step into cannibalism, and as Mhirania's subjects were devoured the beautiful empire of Avalotti crumbled. The only relics of this age still extant are the bestial necrophages, foul descendants of Mhirania and her kind. Mere shadows of the men they once were, these degraded beings are worshippers of the dark deity Krann and other unclean powers. Typically they live in the ancient underground vaults beneath cities that have otherwise left little trace but crumbled ruins. Beware their power, for it is spawned from the tainted knowledge of ancient days.

From Mael Lel Laio's 'Necrotic Beings and their Origins':

Bestial necrophages – called by some 'barrow ghouls'² or 'death wights' – are believed by some scholars to be true half-men, and certainly their cannibalistic instincts would support this theory. However those rare few that have met such necrophages and survived the encounter comment that they display a more subtle and intellectual cunning than the brute animalistic drive to satiate hunger expressed by the deodand or the hoon. Much debate rages in scholarly circles, but all can agree that these beings inhabit tombs, mausoleums and burial mounds in the hope of securing the deceased human flesh they are famous for consuming with such passion. They are found in a variety of locales but especially amongst the ruined cities and mausoleums hidden in the forbidding depths of the Great Erm. It is less well-known that unlike other half-men there seems to be a further purpose to these actions other than the satiation of gluttony.

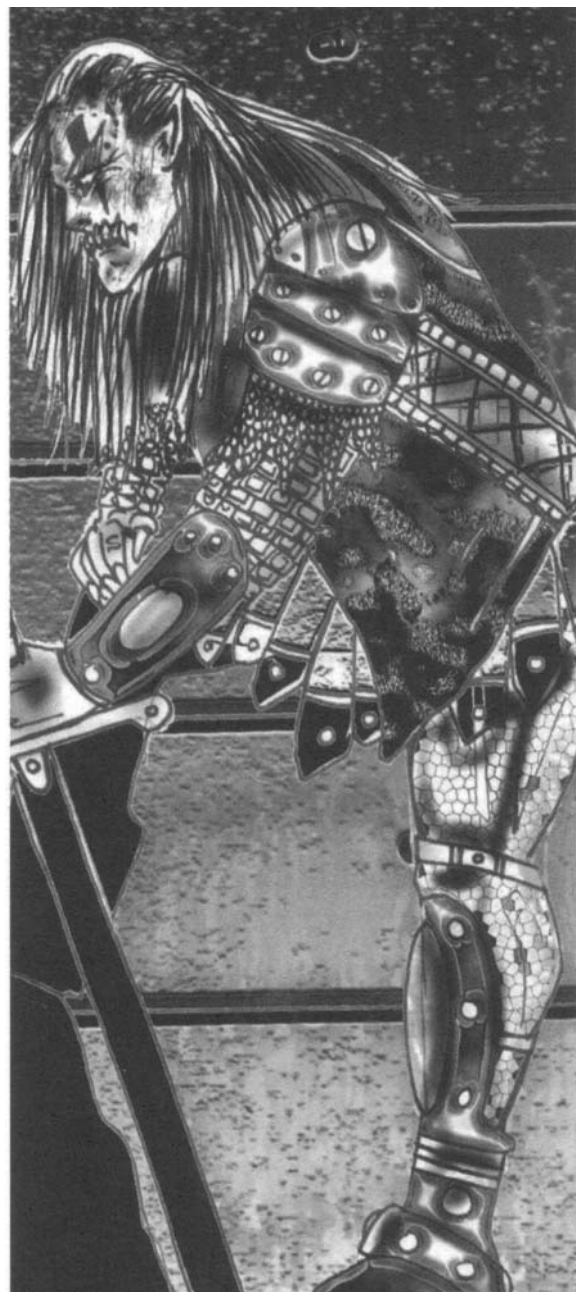
Unlike the necrophagic human sorcerers who generally possess a cold black intellect, and wield many twisted spells and charms, bestial necrophages - as their name suggests - are far cruder beings. Their need for the distillate is so strong within their blackened minds that without it they can barely function with intelligence. Should one encounter these creatures in the dark vaults of the earth not under the influence of the Distillate, they will appear as little more than sickening half-man incapable of civilized communication, though perhaps wearing rotten rags and other soiled accoutrements in a gross parody of human grandeur. However, should a bestial necrophage be encountered whilst under the influence of their precious black distillate however, they may appear human, if a little archaic in expression and manner. It is during these

² Not to be confused with the common ghoul, or the demon-tainted sentient ghoul.



moments of temporal lucidity that bestial necrophages are to be most feared – this is when they hunt victims with the greatest ferocity, because this is the time at which they fully appreciate the depths of their need. The only complex action that bestial necrophages seem capable of performing at all times is the preparation of distillate.

Humerlus, a noted traveler and explorer of the early 21st Aeon, was once beset by foul creatures in the ruins of the sunken city of O'bb'alan which had become unearthed during seismic convulsion of the earth (one of its many expirational twitches). As the evil beings stripped Humerus of his sword and held him tight, licking their thin lips all the while, one brought forth an intricate mechanical device constructed from a bizarre array of bottles, pipes and tubes. Humerus questioned his captors as to the purpose of the device. This information the senior necrophage was most willing to surrender, assuming Humerus would benefit little from the knowledge - except perhaps in a further sphere of existence bearing no immediate relevance. It transpired that the creatures claimed to distil the essence of the minds of their captives into a sweet broth. Imbibing the liquid they explained granted them the knowledge and experiences of their victim and allowed them to savor the bittersweet experience of human life. As further evidence of this unusual behavior, it came to light during the exchange that the necrophage handling the equipment truly believed himself to be Fazarad Gilmesh, third Grand Priam of the Restless Kingdom, and was prone to litter his rasping conversation with words and phrases characteristic of that dynasty. Luckily for Humerus and all scholars of the unnatural world, a second spasm rising from the earth's core dislodged some masonry upon the distillation equipment, and during the frightful wailing and gnashing of teeth that ensued Humerus scrambled to the light and eventually reached safety.



Bestial necrophages typically operate in packs of up to five, with the dominant member being the one who owns and operates the distillation equipment. They are usually found in places where the dead abide, scrabbling amongst the dirt, seeking 'fresh' supplies. Despite their horrid ways, their appearance is not totally inhuman; they generally resemble tall, thin men with pale skin, lank hair and deep dark eyes. Their long fingernails and abhorrence of the red sun indicates their preference for gloom and darkness, and their teeth are generally all overlong incisors capable of tearing flesh. Those pursued by these creatures in unlit burrows are best advised to make for the upper surfaces of the world and red sun - at least until nightfall, when the scent of a good mind will draw necrophages into the open. Their voices are dry and rasping and scrape upon the nerves.



These beings have a single drive - the consumption of distillate. Only through this foul black brew can they savor the feelings of life that they once enjoyed. Correspondingly the protection of their distillation equipment is of prime importance and the creatures have been known to throw themselves into a blind fury of rage should the apparatus be threatened.

Consuming the distillate grants the necrophages some of the powers of the individual who once owned the mind, though the process is far from perfect. Typically the creature will gain access to some or all of the victim's knowledge and experiences allowing the necrophage pedantry rolls to recall facts relating to the victim's life and times. Furthermore, any spells embedded in the victim's mind will become available, though the necrophage will only be able to cast such a spell once. (No copy is available and they lack the intellect to encompass spells in the normal fashion, though normal rules regarding the number of spells that may be forced into the brain apply.) Time tends to 'mature' the brains of victims, removing more of the trash of everyday life and concentrating the more pertinent facts within the shriveled husk of gray matter. However, the brain must be preserved from decomposition by special treatment.

Secrets tend to concentrate in the mind and so the distillate is an excellent means of finding them out. A side-effect of the distillate is that memories of the victim tend to merge with the necrophage, leading to confusing situations and schizophrenic behavior. Many such necrophages suffer lasting schizoid side effects due to their ceaseless consumption³. Typically if a bestial necrophage has not consumed distillate for some time, it will seek the richer flavors of the matured mind to satiate the hunger. But if the creature is reveling in the breath of life bestowed by the distillate a fresh mind and the charms it may hold may be next upon the agenda. It is also during these times that necrophages have been known to declare themselves as rulers of long dead empires and rotting cities, plotting nonsensical schemes to destroy enemies long since reduced to dust. Usually it is only during periods just after distillate consumption that a bestial necrophage gains sufficient control of its lust to lure living victims to their doom. Typically, lures are simple and based upon spreading the promise of buried wealth – something many an adventurer cannot resist. (Of course, such semblances of civility are lost once the captive is secured, when the necrophages revert to the slaving desperation and gross hunger that marks their preparations and foul consumptions.)

Necrotic Rites

Unlike Necrophagic Warlocks, who worship no beings as their masters and coerce the nefarious denizens of the subworlds to their will, bestial necrophages are known to venerate a multitude of daihaki in some manner of pestilent and abominable pantheon. Many beings are encompassed by their foul rites and draw their worship, but the dark god Krann, their creator and ultimately their tormentor, figures strongly in all their rituals. Gathering in the dark places of the Earth, the tombs, mausoleums and rotting cities that litter the land, bestial necrophages give thanks to Krann for the gift of Cerebral Distillation. They forget that the rudiments of life that the distillate grants - and which they seek so desperately - are but shadows of the lives they once enjoyed. For its part Krann has been thought to occasionally reveal itself to its worshippers, reveling in the degeneration its 'gifts' have wrought, and casting further taints. In all of these infernal practices, the consumption of Distillate is key, such that as the lives of victims sluice through their necrotic minds, the worship of the bestial necrophages can become mingled with bizarre parodies of ancient religious rites. These sights are truly terrifying, and needless to say these vile ceremonies are not to be witnessed by the weak-hearted. As well as Krann, those who have delved into the degenerate Avelotti, hint at the worship of other foul beings such as insane Shug, the half-demon Sal-Belomb and the putrescent Witch-hag Calkofax and her putrid spawn. None of these names are considered safe to utter – any who study the ways of necrophages would be wise not to mention them.

³ Though the difficulty of discerning such psychological disturbances from amidst their many other crazed behaviors makes this observation largely moot.



Encounters

Bestial necrophages have also occasionally been known to carry magical items dug from the depths of the earth or pilfered from the tombs of the ancient world. However, it is more often the Necrophagic Warlocks who make use of potent magical items (of the kind that the more ambitious player-characters might covet). Nearly all of the bestial necrophages will have access to the Distillation apparatus, the gift of their dark master, Krann and the center of the necrotic world. The Distillatory equipment does not have a points cost, as only the most degraded individual would consider adding such a device to their collection and risk the demonic taint that inevitably follows (see *Demons of the Dying Earth* for details of the taint). Note that bestial necrophages may occasionally be in possession of any of the magical items listed in the DERPG, *Cugel's Compendium* or *Turjan's Tome* - robbed from some grave casket of the ancient dead.

[As noted in 'Demons of the Dying Earth', necrophages should not normally be available as characters to be controlled by the players. Such availability instills in players a false and unwholesome sense of familiarity with the entities of evil – which detracts from the valuable in-game otherness. Nonetheless, we supply sufficient detail here for GMs to create detailed foes for the unfortunate adventurers.]

Typical Bestial Necrophage:

Attack (Ferocity) 2~, Defense (Dodge) 2~, Health 1.5~, Athletics ~, Concealment 5, Perception 6, Stealth 5, Tracking 10, Magic (Innate) 6*.

Under the influence of Distillate these statistics change to represent the semblance of intelligent thought gained by the creature and typically become:

Persuade (Obfuscatory) ~, Rebuff (Lawyerly) ~, Attack (Cunning) ~, Defense (Misdirection) 2~, Health 2~, Athletics 2~, Concealment 10, Perception 7, Stealth 7, Tracking 10, Magic (Innate) 6*.



Although not magicians as such, the gift of Krann was such that all bestial necrophages have magic pool – they may use this pool only to resist the effect of magic (the demonic taint has hardened them) and in the preparation of Distillate (see later). Details of the cerebral Distillatory apparatus, the Black distillate produced and the process involved are given in the section on Necrophagic Demonologists below, who are the true masters of this foul procedure.

Cerebral Distillation

This magical process is known by both bestial necrophages and some of the more degenerate necrophagic demonologists. It allows the use of the magic pool in the preparation of Black Distillate – in fact bestial necrophages may not use their magic pool for any other purpose than the preparation of distillate and resisting magic. The use of this skill is outlined below. As accomplished sorcerers, Necrophagic demonologists may also take the Magical Specialization 'Cerebral Distillation', which grants many other foul abilities.

The Cerebral Distillatory Apparatus

This strange concoction of tubes, vessels and pipes is used by necrophages to prepare distillations of human minds. The art of their construction is lost with the great minds of the land of Avalotti. A bulky piece of equipment and easily damaged, the owners tend to set up the distillation apparatus in a well-guarded lair. The preparation of distillate requires a brain, approximately one day of intense operation and a Magic pool roll, the outcome of the roll determining the quality of the distillate produced (see the table below).



The Black Distillate

The distillate itself is a thick black sludge that would gag any fool mad enough to consume it. The effects of consumption are as varied as the minds of the victims themselves and are also dependent on the skill of the necrophagic operator of the distillatory apparatus. Distillate allows a necrophage to make Pedantry tests regarding the life and times of the donor, typically obscure facts regarding an ancient empire from a long-lost Aeon. When making Pedantry tests regarding the life and times of the donor, the quality of the final production roll indicates the effective Pedantry pool of the imbiber, as outlined in the table below. A side-effect of poorly produced Distillate is that the necrophage will find difficulty in separating its own memories and ideals from those of the donor brain – this manifests as a levy on any tests that the GM decides require intense concentration (such as persuasion). Any who observe the drinker failing a test in which a levy was imposed will notice that the individual is behaving oddly – the greater the failure, the odder the behavior.

The effect of the distillate slowly fades with time, typically lasting a few days to a few weeks, though of course any spells are lost immediately they are cast. The quality of the Distillate cannot be assessed without consumption. Unsurprisingly, characters with more than a shred of sanity would not⁴ consider consuming liquor produced from the human cerebral cortex. Should a player insist upon this course of action, the GM should feel justified in allotting considerable negative sympathy points as well as a point of demonic taint per serving consumed, indicating the warping of the natural mind resulting from this foul deed (DDE, p9). Non-demonists that succumb to the Demonic Taint begin a slow transformation into a bestial necrophage.

The black distillate comes in two forms, that prepared from ancient minds dug from the rotten depths of the earth and that produced from the minds of fresh victims harvested by the necrophage. Both forms have their merits. Age tends to concentrate the thoughts of a brain, producing a richer, more intense and longer lasting parody of life. In some cases if the mummified victim had suffered an untimely death the shriveled brain may also hold ancient charms lost to the world. On the other hand, fresh brains may be carefully harvested from unwilling victims, and can have the benefit of containing spells and charms that the victim did not manage to unleash before his death.

To produce the distillate, the necrophage makes a roll using its magic pool. The final outcome of the roll indicates the quality of the distillate as outlined on this table:

Final Production	Effective Pedantry pool	Quality
IS	6 (full memory)	The necrophage remembers the life of the donor with total clarity and is also able to clearly separate reality from memory.
PS	4	The necrophage remembers the life of the donor with some clarity but also experiences occasional small lapses between reality and memory (such as occasionally mixing the names of companions with those of long dead emperors).
HBS	2	The necrophage remembers portions of the life of the donor but also experiences frequent lapses between reality and memory (such as carrying out conversations in long-lost tongues).
EF	1 (flashes of memory)	The necrophage remembers flashes of the memory of the donor but has difficulty separating these from reality – the levy to actions requiring concentration is 1.
QF	0	The necrophage remembers nothing interesting of life of the donor but finds the reality soured by ghostly memories - the levy to actions requiring concentration is 2.
DF	0	The chaotic nature of the brain patterns have a severe affect on the necrophage – they gabble and gibber incoherently in lost tongues but retains no useful knowledge - the levy to actions requiring concentration is 3.

At the GM's discretion, a Dismal failure could also indicate that by some happenstance the wrong brain was selected for distillation, with the donor perhaps only sharing a passing semblance to the human ideal.

⁴ Unless faced with literally no other option to recover a vital piece of information from a deceased mind – as a repulsive requirement of a particularly twisted scenario.



Magical Specialization - Cerebral Distillation

As neophytes of the black arts, necrophagic demonologists have perfected the necrotic magics of Krann, and mastered the revolting science of reducing by distillation deceased gray-matter into an essential oil. Consuming this distillate the necrophage can experience the lives of long-dead peoples and glean secrets from beyond the grave. The necrophage must have access to the Cerebral Distillatory Apparatus to have this specialization.

A Necrophagic demonologist who has this Specialization is not as strongly affected by the black distillate as his bestial brethren. With the greater mastery of the art that the Specialization indicates the Necrophagic demonologist can control and subdue the memories of the victim's life and so does not suffer from the levy relating to poor distillate production (see table above).



Some distillation processes involve the forced wearing of a demonic helm.

In the Workroom

With this specialization the necrophagic demonologist may use points from the CD specialization on re-rolls. The final outcome of the roll determines the quality of the distillate produced (see table above).

The necrophagic demonologist may attempt to capture spells in the Distillate by spending points from its Specialization pool. For every point spent before the roll to determine the quality of the Distillate, one straightforward spell is captured in the liquid matrix. Capturing complex spells requires the expenditure of two points. Of course the GM in her infinite wisdom may state that when alive the donor knew no spells in which case the points are wasted.

Using the Distillatory equipment the necrophagic demonologist may also spend specialization points in an attempt to duplicate an existing sample of Distillate, transferring the matrix to a fresh sample. This process requires a fresh brain and one week. Specialization points can then be spent to produce the copy of the original distillate as per the normal process except rolls are at a levy of two.

Outside the workroom

The fleeting knowledge of the necrophagic demonologist victims thoughts that remains long after the effects of the distillate have faded allow the necrophagic demonologist to spend magical Specialization points on Pedantry tests relating to knowledge from past aeons.



Necrophagic Demonologists

"Come closer and I shall eviscerate you with a charm of the 18th Aeon"

"I am accustomed to the finer things in life – the swell of your temples indicates I shall not be disappointed"

Necrophagic demonists are mentioned in the publication 'Demons of the Dying Earth' (DDE, p78), where the main body of demonic spells and other details on witches and demonists are located. These unpleasant folk are first and foremost witches and warlocks, and meddle with the dead as an adjunct to these primary professions. Thus, we need not present much detail of their standard sorcerous ways here - instead refer yourself to the details on witches, warlocks, and undead in that worthy tome. Necrophagic demonists typically wield spells which relate to their primary goals of seeking and utilizing the dead. The inventive GM should feel free to grant a necrophagic demonologist many strange invocations unknown in the 21st Aeon, including many of the imperfect spells from *Turjan's Tome*. Below are listed a small selection of spells that a necrophage may wield on a more permanent basis. Note that these spells would be regarded as 'imperfect' and therefore not listed by Phandaal (see *Turjan's Tome*). However, we do include several new spells and other unpleasant magics to expand this subclass of black magician even further.



Necrophagic Spells

Necrophagic demonists are typically powerful sorcerers who may have access to a wide range of magics. There follows some examples of specialist charms known only to these foul beings. GMs should note that should a foolhardy character wish to cast one of these invocations, they run the risk of succumbing to Demonic Taint.

Shades of the Ancient World

Range: 10 feet

Duration: Concentration

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Devious

Summary: Conjures phantasms from the past

Upon uttering the harsh pervulsions, the necrophage becomes surrounded in wispy shapes and figures that seem to flit between faint physical form and brooding emptiness. These are the remains of the beings the necrophage has controlled for this or other purposes, the last tatters of their wills made physical by the incantation. They will move about the being of their own free will, carrying out unknown tasks that reflect their original purpose in life. Any who encounter these shades of the past must make a Wherewithal roll to avoid running in panic, and any attacks or physical actions carried out within ten feet of the necrophage suffer a levy of one through the distraction caused by the unquiet dead.

Spell Failure: The shades of past victims temporarily overpower the caster – the battle from control of the body leaves the caster paralyzed for five minutes.



Hand of Accumulative Generations

Range: Touch

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Forceful.

This spell is employed by necrophages in the preparation of brains for distillation. Once the charm is uttered up to 10 pounds of flesh touched by the caster is aged the equivalent of one hundred years. The spell can be used on living or dead tissue but does not affect bone. Although most often employed to age brains and therefore concentrate the knowledge therein, the spell can also be used to age living tissue. Flesh thus affected remains alive but appears to all as that of an ancient man or woman with effects on the actions of the cursed individual as deemed appropriate by the GM. Reversing the effects of the charm requires powerful and rare magic such as Phandaal's Secondary Dissolution (DDE, p36).

Spell Failure: Instead of aging the target, the caster himself ages by a proportion equal to the ratio of 10 pounds of flesh to his body weight, typically 5 years.

Vapourous Cloud of Unlight

Range: Self

Duration: Concentration

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Devious

The spell weaves about the caster a cloud of unlight 20 feet in diameter of the caster that refuses to be dispelled by mundane sources of illumination. If cast in the presence of a bright source of light the edges of the cloud will be clearly visible, if uttered in the dark of a tomb the cloud is indiscernible in the inky blackness. Of course, within the cloud the caster cannot see with any clarity, but as long as he remains concentrating he can move at a cautious pace. Necrophages cast this charm in the depths of crypts in order to disguise their advance toward unsportingly sprightly victims.

Spell Failure: the unfortunately mixed pervulsions create a flash of blinding light, rendering the caster and all those within eyesight blind for five minutes.



Shul's Blade of Netherworldly Might

Range: Self

Duration: Feat.

Difficulty: Straightforward

Style Affinity: Forceful

This dark charm allows the Necrophage to line the blade of a weapon with a shimmering line of darklight, a concentration of energy blacker than any night. During combat anyone so unfortunate as to be struck by the blade becomes dazed and confused as the darklight arcs from the blade to engulf the brain. This effect manifests itself as a levy of 2 to all actions for approximately five minutes. Once the invocation is uttered the blade must strike on the first attempt – if it is parried or strikes armor the darkness is dissipated.

Spell Failure: the attempt to line pure darkness along the blade edge backfires, resulting in a similar effect as the spell but directed toward the caster.



Necrophagic Magical Items

The Chattering Skull

This device is a relic of the last days of Avelotti, when the empire teetered on the edge of ruin. Resembling a human skull mounted on a thin three-foot black rod of dark-stained wood, the chattering skull is indestructible by mundane means. To use the device, the owner merely places his hand upon the skull when preparing to talk. As long as the owner concentrates upon the device his own voice will be disguised, instead from his mouth will issue the tones of the original owner of the skull. Necrophages often use the device to help them remain hidden in the company of others; their rasping voices are somewhat obvious. A drawback of the skull is that the user will tend to adopt the mannerisms of the time in which the skull was living. This can prove very embarrassing in polite society (who may well take offence at someone bearing a staff with a human skull ornament in any case). This is represented by a levy of one on Persuade rolls against those sensitive to the current social mores.

Death Trees

Some necrophages have discovered a means to bind demonic energies into living trees. This is a complex and energy-consuming process, so rarely are more than a handful of such trees present in any one area. The ceremony involves pouring the blood of victims into a deep gouge made into the side of a tree, and burying at least one fresh corpse between its roots. We say no more, as such things are too loathsome to contemplate.

These redoubtable guardians at first resemble regular trees (although no birds or small creatures will ever linger in their vicinity and even larger creatures will tend only to pass quickly by them). However, when they are approached, the trees will attack any intruders that do not utter the codeword. The trees cannot move from the spot where they are rooted, but can swing their branches as clubs, and grapple with their more supple limbs. All associated foliage also becomes mobile – thus vines growing across a tree are also drawn into its unnatural arsenal.

Kanta's Vampiric Rune

Carved onto any convenient smallish stone, the Vampiric Rune is left in some location where the intended victim will accidentally come into contact with it. Once grasped in one's hand (an action that is reflexive even if the stone is only touched) a Magic contest begins against the stone's rating. The victim loses one Health point on each EF and two points on each QF or DF (regardless of the state of their pool). Only when the stone's pool is emptied can the victim break free (or if some spell is used by a rescuer to halt its effect).

Lorav's Wand of Dark

This slim wooden wand projects a beam of darklight (over a maximum range of ten yards) that burns living human tissue. Fortunately for every 3 Health points scorched away one point of the user's Magic pool is spent.

Zing's Abominable Charm of False Life

This Unholy Symbol appears as a bent circle twisted with living vines of flesh (all constructed of tarnished silver). Its owner (typically a necrophagic sorcerer) may use it once only in any day to instantly control and animate any human corpse that has been slain within the last day. This creation has double the Health of a typical recently animated corpse (see *Demons of the Dying Earth*) and will obey quite complex commands (though only has limited effective actions).





Encounters with Necrophages

There follows brief outlines of several adventure hooks involving necrophages that could be employed by the GM as starting point for a Turjan-level series or be woven into an existing series. Although aimed at Turjan level, the crafty GM could adapt these hooks to the more profane Cugel level.

The Last Duke of Cel Catrelopar

A rumor comes to an acquaintance of the characters that through ceaseless digging a pack of bestial necrophages have broken into the lost mausoleums of Amportaru, last Crystalline Duke of Cel Catrelopar. This gloried kingdom of the 19th Aeon was known to wield many wonders, including a startling array of magic items and scientific adjuncts now lost to mankind. However, the location of the grand city of Cel Catrelopar has been lost for Aeons despite many attempts to locate it. Assuming the necrophages will prepare their distillate from the long-dead lord of Cel Catrelopar, it is possible that the secret location of the city could be revealed. Perhaps the characters could questioning one sufficiently deluded by the unctuous fluid. Surely then the rich of Cel Catrelopar are for the taking? Of course, the characters are not the only people to draw this conclusion.

The characters could become involved in this adventure in many ways. Perhaps they know of Cel Catrelopar and hear the rumor themselves. They could be acquaintances of a powerful magician who seeks the secret of the city for himself or even agents of Kandive the Golden who is seeking to enrich his sorcerous knowledge at minimal personal risk. In any case, however they are drawn into the adventure they will find themselves opposed by a number of other parties, not least the necrophages themselves who are unwilling to divulge their ill-gotten information.

The Manse Pertello

As luck would have it, powerful magician, Allaine, has fallen foul of a crazed demonist necrophage who meddles with the dangerous distillate. Allaine's manse, Pertello, a beautiful construction of silver and brass set on top a nearby mountain, remains unoccupied but is known to be filled with a variety of wondrous artifacts and devices. To gain access to the manse requires the keyword that unarms the defenses, a phrase known only to the unfortunate Allaine. The necrophage in question is now travelling toward the manse with the phrase at hand ready to reoccupy 'his' home. The characters encounter the madman on route, dressed in the finery of a powerful magician. Do the characters join the foul creature at serious risk of loosing their minds? Or do they perhaps lead the beast on ready to plunder Pertello at their leisure. And what exactly is hidden in the mysterious manse?

The Crone

The characters are relaxing at their manse, or some such place of repose, when a mysterious lady approaches. Veiled and hidden, she tells them her name is Hess and reveals that a necrophage has done her a terrible evil, and aged her face beyond the count of years. She begs the characters to aid her, offering her wealth and herself in recompense. A local magician, Severak, knows a charm for undoing the necrophage's evil deed but requires the creature itself before the spell can be completed. Will the characters help the unfortunate victim (and what will this entail); and if so, will she keep her promise? And what would Severak wish for in return?