

PLAGUE & SHADOW

WERERATS

A rules supplement for *Labyrinth Lord*
and other old school fantasy
role-playing games

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Labyrinth Lord
Compatible Product

Introduction



Lycanthropes in traditional fantasy are creatures of primal destruction. The werewolf stalks the woods, devouring wayward travelers for the sake of blood and slaughter. Wereboars are driven by bloodlust and rage, seeking only to slaughter. The weretiger is a cold, efficient hunter who lives for the joy of the kills. Yet all of them dwell beyond the confines of the cities, villages and castles and ply their horror in the wilds of the world. It is only the wererat who dwells amongst men, elves and the other races of the world. It lives in the shadows and alleys. Bearing disease and death, it gnaws away at the very fabric of civilization with a patience and subtlety not found in other lycanthropes.

In fact, rats are regarded as a common vermin in cities and villages across the world. Typically they are simple pests to be ignored and at worst they are vermin who are driven back into the shadows and sewers of the cities. This means they are ever present. They are always watching.

They are always listening. They are always planning. With their dark cunning and evil hearts they are able to patiently plan the long slow collapse of the world of all that is good and light in the world.

It is this patience and subtlety that makes them more than simple introductory monsters. They are arguably the most dangerous of all lycanthropes because they live in countless numbers beside the world unchecked and unchallenged. They wouldn't have it any other way.

Plague and Shadow: Wererats is a short supplement for use with *Labyrinth Lord* and other old-school fantasy role-playing games. In these pages you will find rules and options to turn the weakest of lycanthropes into diverse, organized creatures able to serve as foes to even the most experienced party of adventurers.

Origin and History

No one knows exactly when the first wererat came into being. Some say they were sent as bearers of blight to plague and cull mankind by Orcus or some other demon lord. Others tell stories of an ancient cult of men from a great age of darkness who worshiped rats as the great survivors. By offering up their souls, they bound themselves in unholy union with the first vermin of the world. The truth is that no one truly knows the origin of the wererat. The only certainty is that they are infested with a great many diseases and they seek to spread their plague to all civilized corners of the world.

Wererats typically enter a city or village like any other rat. Often they arrive along with a collection of other normal rats. They masquerade as these mundane creatures until they can establish a lair

of some sort that will allow them to begin thwarting the growth of their community with the spread of disease.

They are brought by ships, trading caravans or simple traveling merchants and make their home in the foul corners of these dwellings. Most often these are nearby caves or marshes, though as the city or village grows and prospers they will often make their homes in the most degenerate residential neighborhoods where their rapid growth can go on for a very long time without being noticed. Often they will allow a town to grow larger and larger, eventually taking up residence in the sewers that criss cross beneath the very feet of unsuspecting townsfolk.

Once they have established a lair, which they typically call a "Den," they will begin slowly

infecting the local populous and establish a hierarchy. Wererat dens are lead by a great and terrible beast known simply as the Rat King. The Rat King rules through fear and cunning, often murdering and consuming other wererats to establish his own position of power. The Rat King will typically select two or more wererats to act as holy men and advisers to the Rat King. These Blight Speakers believe that in the end, all the world shall fall to plague. Their zealotry is so deep that they are able to tap into unholy magic to further their agenda. If the Blight Speakers are the voice of the wererat, then the Shadow Whisperers

are the eyes. While all wererats are stealthy and deceptive by nature, the Shadow Whisperers excel beyond their kin. They find entrance into the most secure, the most holy, and the richest parts of their cities. There they gather information, secretly infect sleeping villagers, and sow paranoid

in the most protected parts of the city.

Making their homes in urban environments, wererats typically begin their infiltration of society by masquerading or infecting members of the local thief's guild. Particularly enterprising wererats will often attempt to start a thief's guild and recruit downtrodden individuals into their organization and then infecting them. From a position of power in the thief's guild, they can gain power and influence in almost all areas of the city.

Another, less common option, is for a Blight Speaker to masquerade as a cleric in the service of a chaotic-aligned holy order. From their flock, they spread darkness and plague – often to willing servants who would gladly see the destruction of all that is pure in the world.



Wererats Breeds

This section details several new breeds of wererat to add diversity and depth to your *Labyrinth Lord* campaign. Both the general traits of lycanthrope and the stats for the standard wererat are listed for easy reference.

Lycanthrope Traits

All lycanthropes are humans cursed with the disease lycanthropy. They are able to take the form of one kind of animal, and are able to summon the aid of 1 to 2 of this same kind of animal, which will appear in 1d4 rounds. Lycanthropes never wear armor, since this would hinder the shape-changing process. Wolfsbane is an effective ward against all lycanthropes, and if one is touched with it (whether thrown at it or otherwise hit with it) the lycanthrope must succeed in a saving throw versus poison or flee out of fear. When killed, a lycanthrope takes his human form. Horses and sometimes other animals can sense lycanthropes when they are near, and will act restless or bolt.

Lycanthrope Forms

When a lycanthrope is in the human form, it may have subtle secondary characteristics in common with the animal type it is capable of transforming into. Examples could include extra body hair, striped or larger ears. When a lycanthrope is in its animal form, it may only communicate with other animals of its type, but may not speak any humanoid language. In addition, when in the animal form lycanthropes are immune to all attacks from normal weapons, but are harmed by spells, silver, and enchanted weapons.

The Disease

The horrid disease of lycanthropy is transmitted when the victim of a lycanthrope suffers a loss of hit points equal to or more than 50% of his maximum number. The victim will become a lycanthrope of the type that wounded him in 2d6 days, but several days before the disease has fully taken hold the victim will show signs and begin to take on

some of the secondary characteristics mentioned above. Only humans may become a lycanthrope. Demi-humans and other non-humans do contract the disease, but they die after 2d6 days rather than become a lycanthrope. Lycanthropy may also be inherited. If one parent is a lycanthrope, there is a 50% chance that the child will become a lycanthrope at puberty. If both parents are lycanthropes, the child has a 100% chance of becoming a lycanthrope (in the rare event that the parents are not the same kind of lycanthrope, the type is determined randomly between the parental types). Contracted lycanthropy may be cured with the cleric spell cure disease, but the cleric must be of 11th level or greater.

Wererats

No Enc.:	1d8 (2d6)
Alignment:	Chaotic
Movement:	120' (40')
Swim	60' (20')
Armor Class:	7 (9)
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1 (bite or weapon)
Damage:	1d4 or by weapon
Save:	F3
Morale:	8
Hoard Class:	XX
XP:	95

These highly intelligent, sly lycanthropes are capable of humanoid speech when in animal form. They are very stealthy, and will surprise opponents on a surprise check roll of 1-4 on 1d6. Wererats often use weapons, even in animal form, and any damage from a weapon must be noted and not considered when estimating damage that may cause lycanthropy.

Rat King



No Enc.: 1 (1)
Alignment: Chaotic
Movement: 120' (40')
Swim: 60' (20')
Armor Class: 5 (7)
Hit Dice: 6
Attacks: 4 (2 Claws, 1 Bite, 1 Tail Whip),
or 6 (6 bites), or 1 (by weapon)
Damage: 1d4/1d4/1d6/1d3 or
1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4
or by weapon
Save: F6
Morale: 10
Hoard Class: XX
XP: 1070

A Rat King is the ruler of a den of wererats. He is larger, stronger, and more terrifying than all other wererats. In human form he appears as a tall, lean-muscled human with sunken eyes and a sharp nose. However, they rarely appear in human form and feel that that humanity is weak and flawed. In hybrid form they appear as a towering eight foot tall anthropomorphic black rat with fully opposable digits that end in curved and wicked talons. From the base of their spine springs a twenty foot tail covered in bone spurs that they can use with as much proficiency as any other limb. In combat they fight with amazing ferocity to disable their foes by pulling their legs out from under them with these tails and then ripping them apart with

claws and fangs.

Yet the most horrifying form they take is in their rat form. Instead of appearing as a single large black rat, they instead appear as six bloated red-eyed vermin bound together at the tail in a great knot. This allows them to see all side around them at once and attack with a flurry of vicious bites. Their 360 degree vision, ability to see perfectly even in magical darkness and keen sense of smell means they are only be surprised on the roll of a 1 on 1d6.

In hybrid form their tail lash does 1d3 points of damage. Any opponent struck with this attack must make a successful breath weapon saving throw or be knocked prone. While prone they lose their Dexterity bonus to their armor class and all attacks made against them receive a +2 to hit. In addition, if they want to rise to a standing position on their next action they may not attack that round. Typically once the rat king has rendered a target prone they will shift into rat form and attack with a series of bites in hopes of infecting their foe.

As lords among both lycanthropes and normal rats, the Rat King's summoning abilities are greater than the normal wererat. When he summons rats to his aid, he summons 2d4 rats and they arrive after one only round.

Finally, the rat king retains immunity to normal weapons even when he is not in his normal animal form. Regardless of what form the Rat King chooses to take, he is only armed by silver weapons, magical weapons or spells.

Blight Speaker



No Enc.: 1d4 (1d6)

Alignment: Chaotic

Movement: 120' (40')

Swim: 60' (20')

Armor Class: 7 (9)

Hit Dice: 4

Attacks: 1 (bite, or by weapon)

Damage: 1d4 or by weapon

Save: C5

Morale: 9

Hoard Class: XX

XP: 460

Acting as priests to other wererats and vizier to their Rat Kings, the Blight Speakers bring plague and darkness to the world through unholy magic. They possess all the abilities and traits of a normal wererat as well as several other dark gifts. All Blight Speakers can cast *Cause Disease* once per day, *Putrefy Food & Water* twice per day, and *Darkness* three times per day. Finally, Blight Speakers are able to summon 1d8 plague rats to their aid once per day. These creatures will serve unto death, arriving 1d4 rounds after they are called by the Blight Speaker. If the Blight Speaker is slain, then its summoned plague rats will attack the one who killed it until either they or it is dead.

Shadow Whisperer



No Enc.: 1 (1)

Alignment: Chaotic

Movement: 120' (40')

Swim: 60' (20')

Armor Class: 5 (7)

Hit Dice: 3

Attacks: 1 (bite or by weapon)

Damage: 1d4 or by weapon

Save: T3

Morale: 9

Hoard Class: XX

XP: 170

Spies, scouts and thieves, the Shadow Whisperers possess all the gifts of deception and stealth of normal wererats. However, they have mastered the art of invisibility and assassination. Shadow Whisperers possess the thief abilities *Hide in Shadows* and *Move Silently* at 75%. In addition, they can *Climb Walls* with 95% ability and *Hear Noise* on 1-4 on a d6. Their ability to remain near-invisible allows them to surprise foes on 1-5 on a d6. Finally, they may use the backstab ability, just like a thief.

Plague Rats

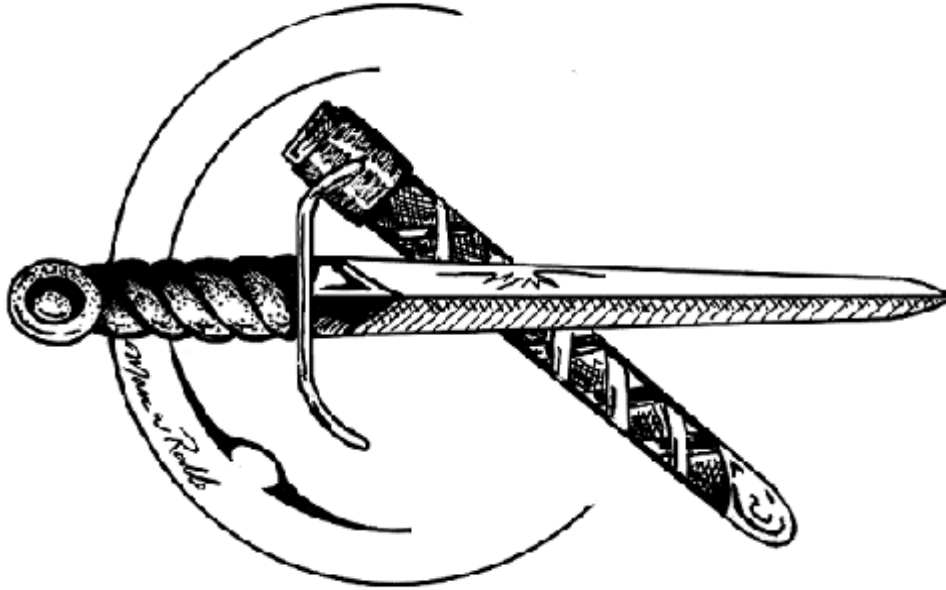


Upon casual examination, plague rats appear to be emaciated, dying giant rats. A second glance reveals hollow black eyes, bones and blood pushing through manged fur and vicious black teeth. Plague rats are created by special rituals known only to Blight Speakers. Instead of carrying simple diseases, they carry a dormant form of lycanthrope that only infects humanoids. Each time they attack with a bite, there is a 5% chance that the target will contract lycanthropy. Those infected will undergo the slow and painful process of becoming a wererat as shown above and on page 86 of the *Labyrinth Lord* core rules. They are also loyal servants to wererats and when they fight beside them they receive a +2 bonus to their morale.

No Enc.: 3d6 (3d10)
Alignment: Chaotic
Movement: 120' (40')
 Swim: 60' (20')
Armor Class: 7
Hit Dice: 1d4 hit points
Attacks: 1 (bite)
Damage: 1d3, lycanthrope
Save: F1
Morale: 8
Hoard Class: XX
XP: 15



Part IV: New Magic Items



Censer of Blight: This unholy item is used by Blight Speakers to spread lycanthrope to those they are unable to infect through a bite. Once per week any Blight Speaker or cleric of chaotic alignment may concentrate for one round, causing the cloud to bellow forth. The cloud is 20' in diameter, centered on the censure. Each round that an individual spends in the cloud they must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or become infected with lycanthrope and find themselves doomed to turn into a wererat.

Mantle of the Rat: This cloak appears to be crudely sewn from countless rat pelts. It is a mangled and ragged patchwork thing. However, when worn by an individual who is not a wererat they may *polymorph* once per day into a rat. In addition, they appear to all magical inquiry to actually be infected with lycanthrope. The mantle is not without its dangers. Each time the wearer makes use of the cloak's magical transformation there is a 5% chance that they will genuinely become infected with lycanthrope. This process occurs instantly instead of the normal slow corruption of this magical disease.

Plague Blade: This unholy blade is coveted by wererats for its deadly abilities. It functions as a *Short Sword +3* in the hands of any creature except a wererat. When wielded by a wererat in combat, each time they deal damage with the blade in combat their target may become infected from the wound. There is a 2% chance of infection per point of damage done by the blade. Also, the blade glows with a sick yellow light whenever a wererat (other than the wielder) is within 30' of it. This blade radiates evil and is detected as such by any *Detect Evil* spells.

Ring of Deceptive Purity: This simple silver ring appears to have no magical effect unless worn by a lycanthrope. When worn by a lycanthrope, that creature appears to be uninfected to all mundane and magical investigation.

Silver Scabbard: This scabbard of boiled leather is inlaid with holy symbols of etched silver. Each scabbard is designed to carry a single type of bladed weapon ranging in size from daggers to two-handed swords. Any single weapon that is sheathed in the Silver Scabbard continuously for twelve hours or more is considered to be silver for purposes of damaging lycanthropes.

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