

VATHAK TERRORS

# Horrors of Halsburg

A SUPPLEMENT FOR THE COLONIES

Shadows  
over  
**Vathak**

A Campaign Setting Book of Lovecraftian Survival Horror

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**Shadows over Vathak Setting**

# **Vathak Terrors: Horrors of Halsburg**

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## Introduction

An ancient evil turns its eyes to the future in the necromantic mecca of Halsburg, where the servants of Ivar von Houlsmann seek to perfect the already formidable vampire race. Steep is the price of progress, however, and the discarded results of the town's vile experiments plague its gloomy streets: Parasitic poxiva lurk in alleyways, scurrying out of the shadows to prey on unsuspecting passersby; watery vaquires haunt canals and waterways, eager to drown and possess any who tread too close; and awesome nightsuns, feared by the living and idolized by the undead, bathe their surroundings in deadly grayscale light.





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### POXIVUM

*This one-foot diameter reddish-brown bulb looks and smells like an amalgamation of a massive onion and a diseased human heart. It scurries awkwardly about on several artery-like roots.*

#### POXIVUM

CR 1

XP 400

N Tiny plant

Init +1; Senses blindsense 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

Aura stench (20 ft., DC 14, 10 rounds)

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +2 size)

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity; Immune plant traits

Weaknesses positive energy anathema

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee touch +7 (attach) Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks parasitize, vampire repellent

#### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 19, Con 16, Int -, Wis 13, Cha 4

Base Atk +1; CMB +0 (+8 grapple when attached); CMD 14 (22 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +9, Stealth +13

#### ECOLOGY

Environment any urban (Halsburg)

Organization solitary, clove (2-4), or crop (5-12)

Treasure see below

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Agile Roots (Ex)** A poxivum adds its Dex bonus when making melee touch attacks.

**Attach (Ex)** When a poxivum hits with a melee touch attack, its roots latch onto the target, anchoring it in place. An attached poxivum is effectively grappling its prey. A poxivum has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached poxivum can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself-if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the poxivum is removed.

**Parasitize (Ex)** A poxivum that ends its turn attached to a living creature feeds on its vital fluids, inflicting 1 point of Constitution damage. A poxivum gains regeneration 1 (fire or positive energy) for 6 hours per point of Constitution damage inflicted using this ability. A single poxivum can only absorb enough fluids to deal 4 points of Constitution damage per day, for a maximum result of regeneration 4 (fire or positive energy) for 24 hours, but it remains attached to its victim once it has reached this limit. As long as a creature is hosting a fully sated poxivum, the host is sickened (no save) and cannot recover Constitution damage caused by this ability. Any effect that would normally cause the host to become sickened (including the poxivum's stench) causes it to become nauseated instead.

**Positive Energy Anathema (Ex)** A poxivum that is exposed to a *cure* spell or positive energy channeled to harm undead must make a Will save (DC equals the spell's or channel energy DC) or immediately release its hold on any creature to which it is attached, lose any regeneration gained from its parasitize ability, and flee for 1 minute. This resets the maximum amount of Constitution damage the poxivum can deal that day.





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**Vampire Repellent (Ex)** Vampires cannot willingly enter the area of a poxivum's stench. If a poxivum or a creature hosting a poxivum forces a vampire into its stench radius by approaching it, the vampire must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be sickened for as long as it remains in the area; those that successfully save are sickened instead. This ability ceases functioning when the poxivum dies. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The grotesque poxivum (plural "poxiva") is the byproduct of a disastrous attempt to immunize vampires to garlic. Living disciples of von Houlsmann tried mixing cloves of garlic with vampire blood and various alchemical reagents, hoping to create a concoction that would bolster the undead's tolerance for the pungent herb. Most of these mixtures simply failed, but one created a synthetic plant that was the worst of both worlds: equally repelling to vampires but also ambulatory, parasitic, and hostile to living creatures. The unexpectedly aggressive experiment startled its creators and escaped into the streets, where it has since fed and multiplied.

Poxiva have since become one of the foremost pests in Halsburg, a nuisance to mortal and vampire alike. Most pedestrians smell the vile plant before they see it, and try to flee before the nasty creature can wrap its roots around their ankles. While the plants are universally disliked, some desperate vampire hunters have begun willingly hosting and cultivating the creatures as an effective, albeit physically costly, measure of defense against the powerful undead.

**Poxivum Treasure:** While poxiva are unintelligent and do not collect valuables, some potent alchemical resources can be harvested

from a poxivum's corpse. A DC 10 Survival check harvests some of the poxivum's most intact pieces, which functions as a string of garlic for the next 24 hours when used to repel vampires. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) or DC 20 Survival check salvages a single vial of poxivum fluids, which can be applied to a weapon or piece of ammunition like a poison. A weapon treated with poxivum fluids inflicts an additional 1d6 points of acid damage against vampires with its next attack and causes the vampire to be sickened for 1 round. A vial of poxivum fluids can also be used as an alchemical spell component; any vampire affected by a spell using poxivum fluids as a bonus material component is sickened for 1 round per spell level if it fails its save against the spell's effect (spells that normally do not require a save sicken the vampire if it fails a DC 15 Fortitude save). A vial of poxivum fluids can be bought for 30 gp on the market.





## VQUIRE

*This vaguely humanoid creature is made of churning water, with a dark spirit swirling inside like a drop of black dye.*

### VAQUIRE

CR 7

XP 3,200

CE Medium undead (water)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +16

### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+4 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 natural,)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +10

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, liquid form; DR 10/magic and silver; Immune undead traits; Resist cold 10, fire 10

Weaknesses light blindness

### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee 2 slams +13 (1d8+6 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks drowning possession, energy drain (DC 19, 2 levels), vortex (DC 21, 10-30 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14)

3/day-hydraulic torrent<sup>APG</sup>

1/day-control water

### STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 17, Con -, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 19

Base Atk +7; CMB +13 (+15 grapple);

CMD 26 (cannot be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Grapple<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Perception +16, Stealth +16, Swim +27

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ compression

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### ECOLOGY

Environment any aquatic (Halsburg)

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3-6)

Treasure standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Drowning Possession (Su)** Any creature pinned by a vaquire or caught in its vortex must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or begin drowning, as the vaquire forces its liquid form into the creature's mouth and lungs. If the vaquire kills its victim using this ability, it inhabits the creature's corpse as a free action. This effect is identical to a *magic jar* spell (CL 10th), except that the original creature remains dead when the vaquire leaves its body, and the vaquire emerges in the creature's square when its host body is destroyed. Any negative levels caused by the vaquire's energy drain do not apply to a body it possesses. The vaquire can only maintain this ability for a maximum of 10 hours per body since its watery form rapidly disintegrates the corpse from the inside. If the target is killed by the vaquire's energy drain before it is drowned, this ability has no effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Energy Drain (Su)** A creature hit by a vaquire's slam gains two negative levels. This ability only triggers once per round, regardless of the number of attacks a vaquire makes. At any time, the vaquire may choose not to inflict negative levels with its attacks (typically when using its drowning possession ability). A vaquire's natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Liquid Form (Su)** A vaquire's partially insubstantial form grants it a deflection bonus to





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AC equal to its Charisma modifier. Furthermore, a vaquire that is completely submerged in water gains fast healing 5 and becomes immune to critical hits, precision damage, and nonmagical attack forms. Magical attacks and spells affect a submerged vaquire normally. A submerged vaquire can choose to inflict its energy drain on another submerged creature as a melee touch attack.

**Vortex (Su)** A vaquire can create a whirlpool as a standard action, at will. This ability functions identically to the whirlwind special attack, but can only form underwater and cannot leave the water. A vaquire can choose to inflict its energy drain as part of the damage caused by this ability.

In an effort to further advance the vampire race, Ivar von Houlsmann recently conducted several experiments designed to prevent vampires that were submerged in running water from being destroyed. Some of von Houlsmann's more successful trials involved exposing his spawn to a cocktail of alchemical reagents and spells before casting them into a river: they still dissolved, but the chemical reaction preserved their undead spirits, merging them with the water that had disintegrated their bodies and devastated their minds. This result was not von Houlsmann's ultimate objective, however, so he abandoned each of the watery undead once they were created. Thus, the first vaquires were born.

Vampiric spirits trapped in watery bodies, vaquires lead lonely existences, desperate to return to vampire society but shunned by their former comrades.

Although they are bound to the water, vaquires can still feel their

former physical forms being dissolved in the current, so they viciously drown passing humanoids in order to inhabit their corpses and remember the sensation of having an actual body. These corpses cannot hold the vaquire's watery form for long, however, and the vaquire finds itself back where it started when its vessel inevitably dissolves, driving it to claim another life and repeat the futile cycle.





## NIGHTSUN

A massive orb of colorless plasma hovers in place, like a miniature grayscale sun. It sheds monochromatic light on its surroundings, a light that feels like slow-acting acid.

### NIGHTSUN

CR 13

XP 25,600

NE Huge aberration

Init +9; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

Aura deadlight (40 ft.)

### DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+4 deflection, +11 natural, +5 Dex, -2 size)

hp 180 (19d8+95)

Fort +15, Ref +15, Will +16

Defensive Abilities *fire shield* (warm), negative energy affinity; DR 10/magical; Immune fire, mind-affecting effects, possession; SR 25 (vs. good)

Weaknesses water vulnerability

### OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee touch +18 (2d12 fire plus 2d12 negative energy)

Ranged ray +18 ranged touch (spell effect)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks channel negative energy (11/day, 6d6, DC 22)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +15)

Constant-*fire shield* (warm), *fly*, *freedom of movement*, *unholy aura* (self only; DC 21)

At will-*enervation*, *heat metal* (DC 15), *scorching ray*, *telekinesis*

3/day-quicken *blindness* (DC 15), empowered *enervation*, quickened *heat metal* (DC 15), quickened *scorching ray*

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1/day-*sunbeam* (DC 20), *sunburst* (DC 21)

### STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 20, Con 21, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 17

Base Atk +14; CMB +16; CMD 21 (cannot be tripped)

Feats Empower Spell-Like Ability (*enervation*), Extra Channel, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*blindness*, *heat metal*, *scorching ray*), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (ray, touch)

Skills Fly +27, Perception +23, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +22

Languages Common (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SQ unnatural sunlight

### ECOLOGY

Environment any (Halsburg)

Organization solitary or congregation (1 plus various undead)

Treasure none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Channel Negative Energy (Su)** A nightsun channels negative energy like a 12th-level cleric.

**Deadlight Aura (Su)** A nightsun exudes colorless light infused with negative energy. The area within 40 feet of a nightsun is always illuminated with normal light, and is treated as both desecrated (as per the *desecrate* spell, CL 12th) and a minor negative-dominant plane (see the "Planar Adventures" section in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Mastery Guide*). A nightsun is not healed by its own deadlight aura, but it does gain 1 point of fast healing per undead creature in the area (max 10). Furthermore, undead that are harmed or weakened by natural sunlight suffer no such penalties while within a nightsun's deadlight aura, even





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if it overlaps with an area of natural sunlight.

Undead that exit a nightsun's deadlight aura, whether deliberately or due to the nightsun's death, must make a DC 22 Fortitude save each round or take 1 point of Charisma damage. This effect can be ended with either three consecutive successful saves, or a *remove curse* spell or similar magic (dispel DC 22). The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Unnatural Sunlight (Su)** A nightsun's *sunbeam* and *sunburst* spell-like abilities affect living creatures as though they were undead, and vice versa. Additionally, a nightsun's *unholy aura* inflicts blindness against offending attackers (as per the *blindness* spell) instead of Strength damage.

**Water Vulnerability (Ex)** Water-based attacks, including holy water, spells with the water descriptor, and the natural attacks of creatures with the water subtype, inflict an additional 50% damage to a nightsun. Water spells that normally deal no damage inflict 1d6 points of damage per spell level (minimum 1d6). Nonmagical water affects a nightsun identically to acid (see the "Environmental Rules" section of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

One of Ivar von Houlsmann's most ambitious projects was his endeavor to eliminate vampires' vulnerability to sunlight. The project proved frustrating and futile for many years, but one of von Houlsmann's personal breakthroughs led to the creation of the awe-inspiring nightsun—a synthetic, sentient mini-star connected to the Negative Energy Plane, whose light was beneficial to undead rather than harmful. The discovery

was a rousing success, until the nasty creatures proved more difficult to control than von Houlsmann anticipated, a problem compounded by the fact that their auras of deadlight proved unexpectedly addictive to undead. The citizens of Halsburg swiftly imprisoned or drove out the rogue experiments and returned to the drawing board.

Nightsuns are evil mockeries of the real sun, fueled by negative energy and deluded by god-like self-importance. They attract congregations of undead worshippers, cowed by the nightsun's protection from true sunlight and awesome magical powers; the undead's adoration of the nightsun nourishes both its body and ego.

Most nightsuns have a 14 to 16 foot diameter and weight approximately 24,000 pounds.





# Supplement to the Colonies

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