Weekly Wonders

The Lich Master

Ale: Riggs, Joshua Zaback



Necromancers of the Northwest



Designers

Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback

Editor

Rosa Gibbons



Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC 8123 236th St SW, Unit 102 Edmonds, WA, 98026 www.necromancers-online.com

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Lich Master

A well-known, if poorly-understood, route to immortality, the profane ritual used to transform into a lich is not for everyone, and not all such rituals are the same, nor are all liches quite identical in their abilities. One particular path to lichdom, though it requires great dedication and extensive training, can provide rewards far greater than those afforded to "common" liches. Those who successfully undertake this transformation are known as lich masters.

Spellcasters of all kinds can benefit from becoming lich masters, and the mastery that these individuals gain over death, the undead, and even souls themselves is staggering, in addition to the potent and famous phylacteries that can preserve them—potentially—forever.

Role: A lich master gains numerous defensive abilities, as well as offensive melee abilities, and so makes a better melee combatant than most spellcasting classes, but they are still primarily spellcasters, and will fulfill largely the same role that they filled before entering the class.

Alignment: All lich masters are evil, as one effect of the ritual to become a lich is that it indelibly blackens the soul of the one who performs it. While it is all but unheard of, and certainly beyond the reach of mortal magic, such as *atonement*, whispered rumors of lich masters who have managed to atone in some fashion for their sins do persist, and it is possible that true contrition, followed by acts great enough to warrant divine intervention, or alternatively the passage of centuries, may be sufficient for a lich master to cease being evil (at the GM's discretion). Should this occur, it has no effect on any of the lich master's class features, nor is he prohibited from continuing to gain levels in the class.

Requirements

To qualify to become a lich master, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, Spellcraft 4 ranks.

Spells: Ability to cast lesser astral projection^{UM}, magic jar, or possession^{OA}.

Special: The character must complete a profane ritual to transfer his soul into a specially-prepared phylactery, which can take any form he likes, but must be between 1 cubic inch and 2 cubic feet in volume, must be worth at least 1,000 gp, and must be in his possession at the time the ritual is performed. Though the ritual to become a lich master is easy to perform, it is difficult to learn, and a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) and DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check is required to learn it. Manuscripts describing this ritual can sometimes be found selling for around 5,000 gp.

Class Skills

The lich master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Ranks at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the lich master.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Lich masters gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Darkvision (Ex): At 1st level, a lich master gains darkvision 60 feet. If he already possessed darkvision, its range increases by 60 feet, instead.

Touch of the Grave (Su): At 1st level, a lich master gains the ability to channel negative energy through his touch. This is treated as a primary natural weapon, and a melee touch attack is required to successfully touch an opponent. Each touch inflicts an amount of damage equal to 1d8 + 1 point per class level to living creatures. The touch can also be used to heal undead creatures, but the lich master cannot use this ability to heal himself, even once he becomes undead.

Defenses of the Damned: At 2nd level, a lich master begins to gain some of the potent defensive abilities of the lich. He may choose to gain one of the following: damage reduction, energy resistance, natural armor, or spell resistance. At 4th level, and every two levels thereafter, the lich master can choose to either enhance a previously chosen defense gained in this way, or to gain another defense from the list. The different defenses, and the benefits of choosing them multiple times, are outlined below.

Damage Reduction (Ex): The first time that this defense is chosen, the lich master gains DR 5/magic. The second time, it becomes DR 10/magic. The third time it is chosen, it becomes DR 10/bludgeoning and magic. The fourth time, it becomes DR 15/bludgeoning and magic. The fifth time, it becomes DR 15/bludgeoning, good and magic.

Energy Resistance (Ex): The first time that this defense is chosen, the lich master chooses one of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or positive energy (such as that used in *cure light wounds*, or a good cleric's channel energy class feature). He gains resist 10 for the chosen energy type. Each subsequent time that this defense is chosen, the lich master can either choose a new energy type that he has not chosen previously, or increase his resistance to a previously chosen energy type by 10. If this would increase the lich master's resistance to a given energy type to 30, he instead becomes immune to that energy type.

Natural Armor (Ex): The first time that this defense is chosen, the lich master's natural armor bonus to AC increases by +2. For each time that it is chosen after that, the lich master's natural armor bonus to AC increases by a further +1.

Table: The Lich Master

	Base					Contraction of the second s
	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will		
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special	Spells per Day
ıst	+0	+0	+0	+1	Darkvision, touch of the grave	THE PARTY
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Defenses of the damned	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Corpselike, lesser phylactery	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+2	Defenses of the damned, necropotence	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+2	+2	+2	+3	Undead apotheosis	
6th	+3	+2	+2	+3	Defenses of the damned, phylactery	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+4	Lord of the undead, soul harvest	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
8th	+4	+3	+3	+4	Defenses of the damned	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+5	Aura of undeath. greater phylactery	
ıoth	+5	+3	+3	+5	Defenses of the damned, soul glutton	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

Spell Resistance (Su): The first time that this defense is chosen, the lich master gains spell resistance equal to 5 + his class level. For each time that it is chosen after that, the spell resistance increases by 5, to a maximum of 20 + his class level.

Corpselike (Ex): At 3rd level, a lich master's skin becomes pale and waxen, and he takes on a corpselike appearance. He gains a +4 racial bonus on saving throws made to resist ability damage, ability drain, bleed effects, death effects, disease, energy drain effects, exhaustion, fatigue, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning.

Lesser Phylactery (Su): At 3rd level, a lich master learns to harness the power of his phylactery, which contains a portion of his soul. If the lich master dies (or, after 5th level, when the lich master becomes undead, if he is destroyed) the lesser phylactery can be used to restore him to life (or undeath). In order to function, the lesser phylactery must be held by the lich master, or worn on his person, but it need not be in his possession at the time of his death, provided that he has a trusted servant or ally who can be counted on to place it in his possession while he is incapacitated. The rejuvenation process takes 1d10 days. If the lich master's body is not further damaged during this time, and the lesser phylactery is not removed from his possession, he is restored to full hit points. If he had any prepared spells or unused spell slots at the time that he died, there is a 50% chance per spell or spell slot that it is still usable when he is rejuvenated. Otherwise, it is lost until the next time he rests and regains spells.

Necropotence: At 4th level, a lich master gains a greater mastery over necromantic energies. The exact benefit that he gains depends on whether the spellcasting class that he used to qualify to join this prestige class was an arcane, divine, or psychic spellcasting class. Each of the potential benefits is outlined below.

Channel Negative Energy (Su): If the lich master is a divine spellcaster, he gains the ability to channel negative energy. If the lich master can already channel negative energy from another source, the amount of damage healed or inflicted by his channeled energy increases by 1d6 at 4th level and each class level thereafter, and his lich master levels count as levels in his previous class for the purposes of determining the DC of his channel energy. If the lich master does not already have the ability to channel energy, he gains the ability to do so.

This functions as the cleric class feature, except that the amount of damage healed or inflicted by his channeled energy is equal to 2d6, plus an additional 1d6 for every class level beyond 4th, the saving throw DC is equal to 10 + his class level + his primary spellcasting ability modifier, and he can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1/2 his class level. The lich master's effective cleric level for this ability is equal to twice his class level for the purposes of feats such as Command Undead, should he choose to take them.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): If the lich master is an arcane spellcaster, then whenever he hits a living creature with his touch attack, he may force that creature to succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the lich master's class level + the lich master's primary spellcasting ability score modifier) or be paralyzed for 1 hour. A creature paralyzed in this way appears to be dead, though a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive. The lich master can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1/2 his class level, and he must declare that he is using this ability before the attack roll is made. If the attack misses, the attempt is wasted.

Project Spirit (Sp): If the lich master is a psychic spellcaster, then he gains the ability to project his soul into another creature, living or dead. If the target of this ability is willing, unconscious, or mindless, this functions as possession^{OA}. Otherwise, it functions as riding possession^{OA}. In either case, the saving throw DC is 10 + the lich master's class level + the lich master's primary spellcasting ability score modifier. The lich master can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1/2his class level. By expending one use of this ability while already affecting a creature, he can extend the duration of the effect by an additional 1 hour per caster level. The creature is entitled to a new saving throw to end the effect when the lich master does this, but he does not need to return to his body, even for a moment. The lich master's caster level for this effect is equal to his caster level for the class he used to qualify for the lich master prestige class.

Undead Apotheosis (Ex): At 5th level, a lich master completes the transformation to an undead creature. His type changes to undead, and he gains all benefits of the undead type. His Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saving throws, and skill ranks remain unaltered.

Phylactery (Su): At 6th level, the lich master's connection to his phylactery improves. If his phylactery is currently worn or in his possession when he is destroyed, it functions as outlined in the lesser phylactery class feature, except that it takes only 1d4 days for him to be rejuvenated, and he retains all unused spell slots and prepared spells. If the phylactery is not currently worn or in his possession when he is destroyed, it creates a new body for him at whatever location it is currently in. This process takes 1d10 days. If the new body is destroyed before that time passes, the phylactery merely starts the process anew. After this time passes, the lich master wakens fully healed (albeit without any gear it left behind on its old body). Finally, the lich master becomes immune to any effect which specifically affects a creature's soul (such as *trap the soul*, or the abilities of certain monsters).

Lord of the Undead (Su): Beginning at 7th level, a lich master is able to influence undead just as easily as he can influence the living. His mind-affecting spells can affect undead creatures as though they were not immune to mindaffecting effects. Additionally, the number of Hit Dice of undead creatures that he can control with *animate dead* at any given time is doubled, as does the number of Hit Dice of undead creatures that he can control with Command Dead, if he possesses that feat.

Soul Harvest (Su): Beginning at 7th level, a lich master can sever the souls of others from their bodies, much in the same way that he has placed his own soul in a phylactery, although the fates of those he victimizes in this way are much less kind. Whenever the lich master kills a living creature with a spell with the death descriptor, or by inflicting negative energy damage (including negative energy damage from the touch of the grave or channel negative energy abilities), he may absorb the soul of that creature as a move action. He must do so within 1 minute of the creature's death. This otherwise functions as the spell *soul bind*, except that instead of storing the soul in a gem, it is absorbed by the lich master, and the saving throw DC is equal to 10 + the lich master's class level + the lich master's primary spellcasting ability score modifier.

The lich master gains 1 soul point for every 5 Hit Dice the creature possessed, and can have a total number of soul points at any one time equal to his class level. As an immediate action, the lich master can expend one soul point in order to accomplish any of the following: gain 5 temporary hit points, increase the caster level of a spell he is casting by 2, or grant himself a +1 profane bonus on attack and damage rolls for 1 minute.

Creatures whose souls are consumed by this ability cannot be resurrected by any means as long as at least 1 soul point that they contributed to the lich master remains in his soul point pool. Once all of these soul points are consumed, the creature's soul can be restored with a *wish* or *miracle* spell, at which point the creature can be resurrected normally. If the lich master would gain soul points in excess of the maximum amount that he can store, the new soul is not absorbed, and the creature can be resurrected normally. Soul points are consumed in the order in which they were gained. If the lich is destroyed while it still has soul points, those soul points are lost, and the souls are freed (allowing the creatures to which they belonged to be resurrected).

Aura of Undeath: At 9th level, a lich master gains the ability to project a fearsome aura, which demonstrates his dark power and mastery over life and death. This aura can take different forms. The lich master must choose which type of aura he will project when he gains this ability. It cannot later be changed. The different options are listed below. The saving throw DCs for these abilities is equal to 10 + the lich master's class level + the lich master's primary spellcasting ability score modifier.

Aura of Hopelessness (Su): The lich master's mere presence causes his foes to despair, and want to give up. Creatures within 60 feet must succeed on a Will save or suffer a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for as long as they remain within 60 feet of the lich master, and for 1d4 rounds thereafter.

Fear Aura (Su): The lich master's terrible majesty strikes fear into the hearts of those who behold him. Creatures within 60 feet with at least 5 fewer Hit Dice than the lich master must succeed on a Will save or cower for as long as they remain within 60 feet of the lich master, and for 1d10 minutes thereafter, and even if they succeed on their saving throw, they are shaken. Creatures within 60 feet with 1-4 fewer Hit Dice than the lich master must succeed on a Will save or become frightened if they fail their Will save, instead, but are not shaken on a successful save. Creatures within 60 feet whose Hit Dice are equal to or greater than the lich master's Hit Dice must succeed on a Will save or be shaken for as long as they remain within 60 feet of the lich master. The lich master can use this ability or a total number of minutes per day equal to his primary spellcasting ability score modifier, and this time must be spent in 1-minute increments.

Necromantic Aura (Sp): The lich master is constantly surrounded by a *desecrate* effect, which is centered on him and moves with him. Unlike a normal *desecrate*, the range of this effect is 60 feet. The lich master counts as an altar, shrine, or other fixture devoted to his deity or aligned higher power, and so the modifiers granted by the spell are doubled. The lich master himself does not gain the profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws, nor does he gain bonus hit points, but the DC to resist his channeled negative energy (if any) increases by +6, as normal.

Greater Phylactery (Su): Beginning at 9th level, the lich master's connection to his phylactery becomes superb. If his phylactery is currently worn or in his possession when he is destroyed, it functions as outlined in the lesser phylactery class feature, except that it takes only 8 hours for him to be rejuvenated. If a new body is created for him, instead, it takes only 1d4 days for his body to be created, and as soon as the lich master awakens, he can immediately teleport to himself each item that he had in his possession the last time his body was destroyed. This functions as though those objects had



been affected by *instant summons*, although no arcane mark or expensive material component is required. The lich master may choose not to affect some or all of these items in this way.

Soul Glutton (Su): Beginning at 10th level, the lich master can have up to 20 soul points at any one time. Additionally, whenever he spends soul points, he can spend twice the normal amount in order to do so as a free action that can be made even during another creature's turn, rather than doing so as an immediate action.

Feats

The following feats are presented in alphabetical order.

Expanded Aura of Undeath You can project multiple auras of undeath. **Prerequisite:** Lich master level 9. **Benefit:** Choose one of the two abilities listed for the aura of undeath class feature that you did not gain. You gain that ability. At any given time, you can only project one of these auras. You can switch between different auras as a swift action.

Expanded Necropotence You have mastered an additional secret of lichdom. **Prerequisite:** Lich master level 6. **Benefit:** Choose one of the two abilities listed for the necropotence class feature that you did not gain. You gain that ability, in addition to the necropotence ability you already possess.

Extra Defense of the Damned

You gain additional defenses from being a lich. **Prerequisite:** Lich master level 3. **Benefit:** Choose one of the benefits listed for the defenses of the damned class feature. You gain that benefit, as though you had selected it as part of your normal class features. **Special:** You can take this feat up to three times. See the defenses of the damned class feature to learn the benefits of selecting the same benefit multiple times.

Improved Touch of the Grave

Your touch drains life more quickly.

Prerequisite: Lich master level 5.

Benefit: The touch attack granted by your touch of the grave class feature deals 3d8 points of damage + 1 point per class level, instead of the normal amount.

Soul Specialist

You can gain more benefit from souls you consume. **Prerequisite:** Lich master level 7.

Benefit: Whenever you spend a soul point to gain temporary hit points, you gain 10 hit points instead of 5. Whenever you spend a soul point to increase the caster level of a spell by 2, you also increase the spell's saving throw DC by 1. Whenever you spend a soul point to gain a profane bonus to attack and damage rolls, that bonus increases to +2.

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Be the Best Bel You Can Be!

For nearly as long as liches have existed in tabletop roleplaying games, players have wanted to have the chance to be one. The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary has a template for liches, but it isn't designed with players in mind, and so many GMs are forced to tackle questions like: what do I need to do to become a lich? Is a CR +2 adjustment the same as two levels? Does that mean I have to skip leveling up and "save up" an extra level, or do I have to lose levels to become a lich? Gven if the GM has the answer to all of these questions, he or she may be besitant to allow players to take a template that lets them heal themselves infinitely, and which can permanently paralyze foes all day long, and while these abilities are powerful, they're not very fun at the table.

This book presents the lich master prestige class, a ten level prestige class that not only makes being a lich more accessible, by presenting it in prestige class form, but also provides abilities that are more player oriented. Far more than just divoying up the abilities in the template, this prestige class greatly expands the idea of what a lich can do, and makes liches more customizable. Not only do lich masters gain phylacteries, potent defenses, and deliver negative energy with a touch, they can also channel negative energy or project their soul into other creatures, easily control undead minions, sever the souls of his victims from their bodies and use them for his own dark ends, and far more. Finally, the book includes five feats intended for members of the class, which allows players to even further customize their lich.

Whether you are a player who's always dreamed of playing a lich, or a GM who wants a way to make a lich character more exciting and dynamic, this book brings these undead spelleasters to unlife in a whole new way.



Necromancers of the Northwest

