

Taint the Blood

Necromancy

Level: Dkn 1, Nec 1
Components: S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Effect: Target touched suffers tainted blood
Duration: 3 rounds
Saving Throw: Fort negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You taint the blood and chill the bones of the target creature, causing sweat and shivers simultaneously. The victim suffers a –2 penalty to all attack, damage, and saving throw rolls for the duration of the spell. The victim also temporarily loses any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

Arcane Material Component: A bit of horse dung and an amanita mushroom.

Temple Pact

Necromancy [Dark Pact]

Level: Nec 5
Components: V
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Concentration

You visit the plane most likely to be your home in the afterlife (determined by alignment), and there can seek to strike bargains with dark powers. Usually you speak with a death angel (q.v.) or other servant of the God of Death.

To execute a *temple pact*, you must offer to build or expand a temple of the God of Death, recruit its priests and servants, endow it with funds for sacrifices and ornament, and swears to protect it against its enemies (minimum cost 200,000 gp). The priests are not your servants; if anything, the reverse is true, as you must maintain good faith with the temple's high priest or priestess.

In exchange, you gain access to a domain of divine spells and its granted power, choosing one from among the following: Death, Earth, Evil, or Healing. You may prepare and cast these domain spells as if they were spells on the necromancer spell list. If the temple is ever abandoned, destroyed, or desecrated, you immediately and permanently lose access to all divine domains.

In no case must the God of Death or his agents accept any pact. It is impossible for the caster to compel these arrangements, but the successful use of Diplomacy skill against a DC of 20 should grant the caster some leeway. And, as always, the DM must approve any bargain struck.

Undead Warding

Necromancy, Abjuration

Level: Clr 3, Dkn 2, Nec 2
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 100 square feet/level

Effect: Barrier against undead
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

By placing carefully carved bone wands, you can bar passage into an area for any and all undead. On a failed save undead creatures, even incorporeal ones, cannot enter an area thus warded under their own volition. If forced to enter, they can take no action other than attempting to leave the area by the fastest available means.

These wards last for the full spell duration, so long as the bone wands remain in place. No undead creature can deliberately harm or move them (except the caster, if undead), but if a living creature disturbs them the spell ends immediately. The wards and wands shatter entirely if an undead creature of more Hit Dice than the caster's level succeeds on its Will save (DC 10 + your caster level) and forces passage across the barrier.

Arcane Focus: Dragon bones carved with protective runes.

Vampiric Dream

Necromancy

Level: Nec 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: 1 mile/level
Effect: Sends evil dream to victim
Duration: Until victim wakes
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You gain the ability to haunt the dreams of a sleeping creature, exhausting him. By casting the spell, you project your consciousness into that of the target, disrupting his normal sleep with your thoughts, speech, and mental images. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, you are thrown out of his sleeping mind and cannot return for the rest of the night. If the victim succeeds on a second, opposed, Will save succeeds he recognizes your face, voice, or image as the source of the *vampiric dream*.

If the target's first saving throw fails, you may linger in his dreams until he wakes up. This sleep provides no rest for the victim; hit points are not recovered, spells are not regained, and psionic energies are not restored. If the same victim loses sleep for more than one night, consult the following table for effects:

Table 2-3: Sleep Deprivation

Sleepless Nights	Penalty
1	No hit points or spells regained
2-3	–1 Wisdom, –1 Dexterity, –1 Charisma
4-5	–1 Wisdom, –1 Intelligence
6-7	–2 Wisdom, –1 Constitution, –1 Charisma
8+	–3 Wisdom, –1 Intelligence, –1 Constitution

All effects are cumulative; if a victim has no sleep for four nights, he suffers –2 Wisdom, –1 Dexterity, –1 Charisma, and –1 Intelligence, as well as regaining no spells or hit points.

Note that this spell does not remove the caster's own need for sleep.

Material Component: Sand, ashes, and incubus blood.

Skull, Blood and Bone: On the Construction of Base Matter

This is the touchstone of all necromantic work on animation, sculpting, and design of necromantic constructs.

History: The origin of this work is obscure, but is thought that the book was first offered up to the academic world as a scholarly work. It is said to have been published by a university press under the authorship of “Wilhelm Brintzenhoff, Doctor of Natural Philosophy, University of Altdorph”. However, this edition is little known because it was immediately banned by church authorities and all known copies were burnt. Subsequent copies have been hand-copied, annotated, and expanded in a number of versions.

Appearance: The original edition was said to be printed on parchment, bound in quarto size, and covered in green tooled leather, with watered silk endpapers and a set of color plates tipped into the binding, to show various niceties of anatomy and craftsmanship. These drawings have been copied in the various underground reproductions circulated since that time, but many of the etchings and woodblocks are substandard, especially compared to the marvelous technical draughtmanship and design of the originals.

Twist: The book is not only banned but often the source of its unwary owner’s death. Creatures created with it have a chance of escaping their owner’s control, and then seeking out the owner of the book and rending him limb from limb. When the book is taken by force, all the creations of the previous owner descend on the new owner, seeking to kill him or her and thus free themselves from any necromantic control.



Content: The majority of the book contains descriptions of the craft of sculpting flesh and bone into appropriate forms, as well as how to obtain materials and even a short section on the mechanics of muscle movement. However, most of the work deals with the infusion of what the author refers to as “the spark” (life energies or negative energies) into once-living tissues. The spells included are *bone armor*, *bone golem*, *bone hand*, *bone machine*, *clone**, *flesh golem*, *grave claws*, *lightning bolt**, *partial animation*, *puppet master*, *repair minor damage†*, *repair light damage†*, *repair moderate damage†*, *repair serious damage†*, *repair critical damage†*, *rot golem*, *shocking grasp**, *spark*, and *wall of bones‡*.

*PH †T&B ‡OA

Wormatia

Notorious even among necromancers, this volume is an unholy work that deals exclusively with the creation, control, and mastery of the undead.

History: It is not clear that the author of the *Wormatia* is human or even necessarily humanoid; the book itself was clearly written over a very long span of time. Its authorship is usually attributed to Entaimo of the New Moon, a dark-elven necromancer of near-legendary status in the regions beneath the earth. His work on the mastery of the undead is said to have taken more than 300 years, and the book certainly reflects the growth of a minor apprentice into a lord of the undead. According to the text, the author became the ruler of a great underground kingdom of undead, and this realm survives even today as a great kingdom of ghouls. The author abandoned this creation in search of ever deeper arcane knowledge, and eventually achieved it.

Appearance: The cover is made of very well-tanned and treated human skin, dyed red and tooled with spider patterns and edged in tarnished silver at the spine and corners. The pages are vellum of various types; goblin-skin, deep-gnome, dwarven, etc. The ink is made of a uniform red, brighter even than fresh blood—roughly the color of henna or faded poppies. The pages at the front are of much older working than those at the very end; it seems that decades if not centuries separate the start and conclusion of the work. The volume runs to a total of 404 pages.

Twist: Most of the book is written in dark elven, and the spells themselves are all written in *ghost writing* between the lines of the elven text. Thus, it appears to be nothing more than a work of praise for the God of Death and Undeath, with long passages describing (in flowery and often allegorical terms) how the state of undeath is superior to that of living creatures. Its hints about this may help a necromancer pass from life into lich status.

Content: The spells included are *cannibalize*, *command undead†*, *control undead**, *corpse candle†*, *create greater undead**, *create undead**, *death knell**, *detect undead**, *disguise undead†*, *drain life*, *dust*, *false life†*, *ghost writing*, *ghoul touch**, *halt undead**, *hand of glory*, *hands of death*, *infuse dead flesh*, *legion of ghouls*, *legion of shadows*, *legion of mummies*, *legion of skeletons*, *legion of wraiths*, *legion of zombies*, *lich*, *maggots*, *mend corpse*, *undead warding*, and *undeath to death†*.

*PH †T&B

Friends in High Places

A few lords and ladies of the upper classes are also members of the Secret College. While some of these are honorary—powerful nobles having no necromantic talents but being allowed to indulge their interests as a special consideration by the College—a few are practicing members. These few take great pains to keep their true identities hidden, even from their fellow necromancers. They have much further to fall should their activities ever be exposed. They are also among the most powerful members of the College and have great influence over the activities of all the members.

Punishments

So far the descriptions of the Secret College may make them seem like some pleasantly fraternal country club. This view overlooks the real power and potential malevolence of the organization. The Secret College is composed of necromancers, and necromancers deal in death. Many of its members are nothing less than a collection of evil, death-loving, murderous wizards. They shun the traditional reverence for the dead and think nothing of committing blasphemous deeds for their own profit, amusement, or curiosity. If faced with a shortage of materials, many of them will harvest their own. They inflict pain, drain energy, and create horrors—it is their nature, their need. A few of its members are neither evil nor destructive, but even they are dangerous to a high degree because of the forces they meddle with as part of their researches.

Consequently, although necromancers are tolerated in the City, there is no love for them. There are punishments for necromancy, Secret College or no Secret College. The punishments include all the following types.



Dissolution

The necromancer is cast into the Positive Energy Plane, where her body is dissolved into particles and spread throughout the plane. The juxtaposition of life energy and the accumulated death aura of the necromancer generally makes resurrection an impossibility (although it may just be the difficulty in gathering sufficient mortal remains to raise). This is generally the worst possible punishment, reserved for only the most egregious offenders.

Imprisonment

Killing necromancers can be a dicey thing, since this may only activate a *clone* spell or some other contingency. Therefore it is sometimes better to trap them alive for eternity, or at least a very long time. In severe cases a wizard may be called upon to cast *imprisonment* on the necromancer and hold her trapped, while the court destroys all records that contain the information necessary for her release (see *PH* page 217).

Execution and soul bind

A quick solution sometimes used by the Secret College against treasonous members is a simple execution or murder followed by the almost immediate casting of *soul bind*. The gem containing the necromancer's soul is then often sent to another (random) plane, making its recovery extremely difficult. Of course, the executioners are gambling that the victim does not have some other means of restoration or revenge in place (see *PH* page 254).

Binding

A *geas* or *quest* is placed upon the necromancer to refrain from the practice, study, or pursuit of the art of necromancy. So long as the necromancer abides by the terms, no harm comes to her. However, if she attempts to learn necromantic spells, cast those spells, or use a necromantic item, she suffers the effects of the *geas*. This is generally considered a temporary punishment, since a *geas* can be undone (though not easily). Sometimes a second *geas* is placed on the first that restricts the necromancer from seeking release from the first *geas*. This punishment is often used when the necromancer has sufficient influence to avoid the death penalty, perhaps being the daughter of an important lord or wealthy merchant.

Branding

The prisoner may be branded with a gothic **N** on the cheek or forehead. The brand is then treated with a magical salve against transformation to prevent the mark from being hidden by magical means (such as *change self*). This punishment is usually reserved for lesser necromancers and lesser crimes.

Maiming

Though painful and grim, this punishment is meant as a deterrent and is considered relatively mild. Sometimes only a finger is removed, occasionally every other finger (the index and fourth from one hand and the thumb, middle, and little fingers from the other), sometimes a hand, and rarely both eyes are gouged out. It is well known that the lost limbs can be restored, but it is hoped that the pain of the process will convince the necromancer to change her ways in the future. Besides, the crowd loves it.



Ancient Times (and Before)

The first reanimation of dead flesh occurred in a time before memory, in the prehistory when the power of magic was first harnessed. Some scholars believe necromancy was the first school mastered, predating even divination. The first ones—be they elves, humans, or some older, long-lost race—gathered around their fires and in the darkness. There were some who sought out spells of beauty and wonder, and then there were others who sought to know forbidden lore. Perhaps it was a bereaved mother willing to do anything to revive her dead child. Perhaps an ancient shaman, denied by the spirits, set out on his own to delay his passing by mastering the secrets of life and death. Perhaps a people now lost to history, their god slain, who turned to dark necromancy to fill the void and seek to recall him. Curiously enough, the most common legends for necromancy's origin all place the blame soundly on humans. The other races point out that the majority of the undead are human in origin. Ergo, the argument goes, humans must have some special affinity to the dark art and have been the first to dabble in necromancy.

Against the Natural Order

Whatever the cause, noble or vile, the manipulation of death defied the natural order and could not avoid being viewed as evil by those who accepted the cycle of life and death. Necromancy was an affront to the power of the gods, the sanctity of life, the souls of the dead. Thus even from the dimmest past, necromancy carried associations of impiety that over time grew to be a mantle of evil and corruption, something best unspoken of, pretended not to exist.

But wizards and their thirsts for knowledge were not to be denied, no matter what dark paths that knowledge took them down. Antediluvian texts, spells, items, and artifacts carry with

them the names of some of these necromancers, the signs of their deeds, accomplishments, and terrors.

The Empire of Ashes

The most infamous of these was a wizard known only as The Ghoul. What he was and his true name are unknown: he is only called The Ghoul in the histories that come down to us from that era. There it is said The Ghoul—despite his name, a living man, at least to appearances—came out of the desert, promising armies and power to one Duke Hamur. Ambitious and fearful of his rivals, the Duke accepted. That night a great spell flowed out from the palace, and the dead walked. The buried clawed their way up out of the graveyards, the drowned rose from the lakes, and silently they stumbled back to their homes to embrace their families and take them into the land of death. When the dawn came, the Duke had his armies—legions of undead created from the slaughter of his own people. Furious at the betrayal, the Duke attacked The Ghoul himself—to no avail. Before that day ended, the Duke joined his own armies as another mindless soldier.

The Ghoul Marches

With his new legions, The Ghoul struck at neighboring baronies, counties, and duchies. As soldiers went, his undead were poor warriors: uncreative, inflexible, and slow. But they did not flee and for every man they killed a new creature joined their ranks. Every land they conquered was harvested for more bodies to mindlessly serve. The Ghoul's armies had no concerns for casualties, food, disease, or comforts.

The Ghoul had other powers, too. In the wake of his armies came a night blackness that clung to the land and swallowed out the sun. The cold eyes of the stars looked down day and night. Plants weakened and grew pallid, light-strangled into ghastly forms. The most sinister night creatures stalked the land, freed