5E COMPATIBLE

UNDEAD & UNDEAD



sample file

Dive into a world of Undead statblocks, necrotic lairs, ancient magic items, fearsome Undead variants, unique traits, and more!

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Undead & Undead is a comprehensive manual dedicated to one of fantasy’s most enduring and unsettling archetypes: the creatures that refuse to stay dead. From shambling corpses and tormented spirits to necromantic kings and cursed horrors, the undead offer a blend of horror, tragedy, and power that few monster types can match. Over years of storytelling, I’ve explored dozens of variations - some faithful to tradition, others twisted into new forms. This book gathers them all into a single, definitive volume for your campaigns.

What makes the undead so compelling is not just their grotesque forms or unnatural resilience, but the stories they tell simply by existing. They can be tragic remnants or malevolent forces, ancient guardians or apocalyptic harbingers. Some remember who they were. Others are shadows, acting out remnants of old pain. They might be cursed to repeat their end, bound to a task that no longer matters, or raised to serve a cruel master.

Inside these pages, you’ll find a wide spectrum of undead creatures, each with evocative lore, flexible mechanics, and optional traits that allow for full customization. Many entries include variants and narrative hooks to help shape them into unique threats, recurring villains, or haunting encounters.

You’ll also find a scalable lair system that adapts to your party’s level, making it easy to design thematic strongholds for undead of all kinds - from crypts and catacombs to haunted cities and cursed battlegrounds.

In addition to monsters, this manual includes powerful necromantic magic items, thematic d20 and d100 tables for curses, visions, and encounters, and tools to create custom undead with unique origins and behaviors. Whether you’re crafting a single, mournful ghost or a world teetering on the brink of death’s dominion, this book is built to inspire.

Undead are more than just enemies to be defeated - they are echoes, anomalies, and symbols. They are what remains. And through them, even death can become a story worth telling.

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Sample file

Puppets of Death's Stage

Wondrous items, uncommon (requires attunement)

These three grotesque puppets are carved from stiffened fabric, waxy wood, and black-threaded seams. Their expressions are uncanny - smiling too wide, standing too still. Each carries the scent of mothballs, old velvet, and something long buried. Once used in funerary theatre or necromantic rites of binding, these puppets now carry minor enchantments of their own.

Each puppet must be attuned to separately. While attuned, each grants a unique magical benefit:

- **Hooklimb** (the tall, pale puppet with metal hooks for hands) grants you advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks against Undead. Additionally, once per minute, when you deal necrotic damage with a spell or ability, you can deal an extra 1d8 piercing damage as ghostly hooks lash out in sync with your attack.
- **Threadgirl** (the red-haired doll with button eyes and needle legs) allows you to cast *thaumaturgy* at will. Additionally, once per minute, when you deal necrotic damage with a spell or ability, you can deal an extra 1d8 psychic damage as the target hears the shrill, puppetlike giggle of something that shouldn't speak.
- **Grinjack** (the squat puppet with exaggerated limbs and stitched grin) causes invisible strings to tug at your joints. You have advantage on saving throws against being knocked prone, restrained, or paralyzed. Additionally, once per minute, when you deal necrotic damage with a spell or ability, you can deal an extra 1d8 bludgeoning damage as unseen limbs strike with unnatural force.

Set Bonus: Death's Stage. If you are attuned to all three puppets at once, you can use an action to summon spectral puppet strings from above for 1 minute. While the strings remain:

- You cannot be knocked prone while you have 2 or more hit points.
- You gain resistance to bludgeoning, necrotic, piercing, and psychic damage.
- Once during the effect, when you would be reduced to 0 hit points, you instead fall limp and stabilize at 1 hit point. Until the start of your next turn, you appear dead - your breathing ceases, and your body is motionless and cold.

Once this feature has been used, it cannot be used again until the next dawn. The strings vanish in a sudden snap the moment their magic fades.

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Ossuary Medallion

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This heavy silver medallion bears the symbol of a death god, ringed by engraved bone patterns. Inside the locket is a pinch of blessed ashes.

While wearing the medallion, you gain resistance to necrotic damage from undead sources.

Additionally, once per day, when an undead creature targets you with an attack, ability, or spell, you can use your reaction to flare the medallion. The attacker must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be unable to target you with that action. If it fails, the attack misses, the spell fizzles, or the ability is wasted - the creature still expends the resource, spell slot, or action used to activate it.

Mask of the Pale Choir

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

A porcelain funerary mask, blank-eyed and painted with a thin line where the mouth should be. Wearing it distorts your voice into an eerie choral hum.

While wearing the mask, you can cast *bane* (DC 13) twice per day as an action. When you cast *bane* using this feature, undead creatures and creatures that have witnessed a death within the past 24 hours have disadvantage on their saving throws against the spell.

Additionally, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation and Performance) checks made while speaking or singing through the mask.

Sample Text

Crookfang

Weapon (exotic blade, counts as a scimitar), rare (requires attunement)

This weapon bears the unmistakable curve of a ceremonial execution blade, carved from hardened bone and dark copper. Its edge is uneven, bearing chips and ritual notches, and the handle is wrapped in stiff leather cord stained a deep rust-red. The weapon is heavier than it appears, and when it swings, it leaves behind a faint whisper of voices long dead.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Crookfang deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage on a hit.

When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with this weapon, you can use your reaction to siphon the final breath of its soul. You gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus (total minimum of 2).

Soulhook. When you score a critical hit with Crookfang, you can force the target to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is wracked by spectral agony and becomes paralyzed until the end of its next turn. Spectral hands briefly claw at its soul before fading. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until one hour has passed.

Ghoulbane Tether

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A cracked manacle with a long chain ending in a sharpened bone hook. The chain coils on command.

While attuned, you can use a bonus action to cause the tether to lash out at a creature within 20 feet. Make a ranged weapon attack using your Dexterity or Strength; on a hit, the creature takes 1d6 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pulled 10 feet toward you. Undead creatures that fail the saving throw also take 1d6 radiant damage.

Gravepowder Vial

Wondrous item, rare

This black-glass vial contains a fine gray powder made from consecrated bone ash, dried grave moss, and the crushed remnants of funerary wards. It clings unnaturally to surfaces and glows faintly in moonlight, hissing softly when exposed to undeath.

Once per day, as an action, you can uncork and throw the content of the vial at a point within 30 feet. All undead in a 10-foot radius must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

The vial refills at dawn.



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Boneweaver Armor

Armor (chain shirt or scale mail), rare (requires attunement)

This armor is crafted from woven bone splints and funerary bindings, reinforced with sinew. It shifts like it remembers movement.

While attuned, undead creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls made against you. Additionally, once per turn, when an undead creature misses you with an attack, it takes 1d4 force damage as the armor's bones flare with ancestral wrath.

Urn of Bound Ashes

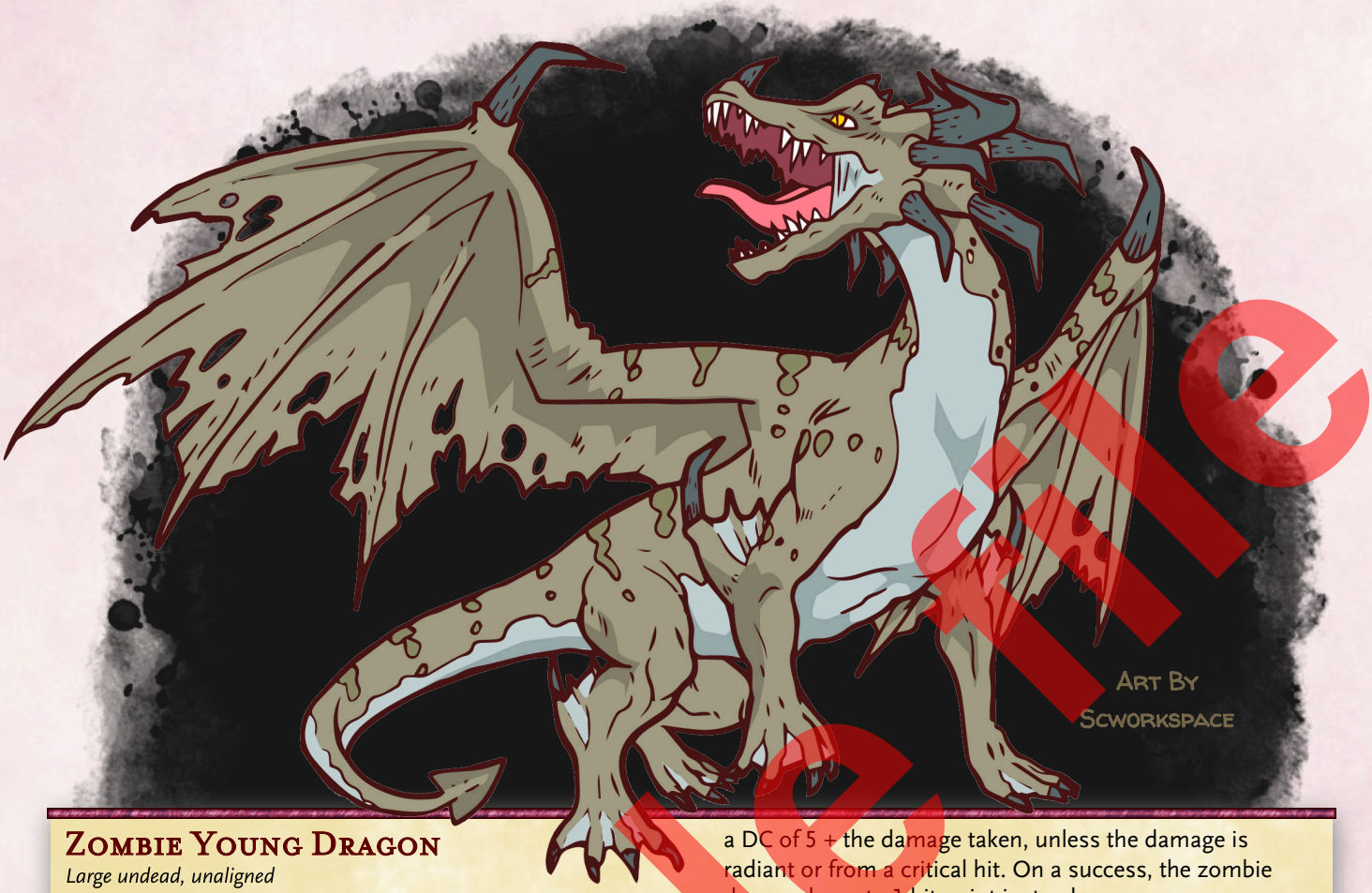
Wondrous item, rare

A sealed funerary urn containing the ashes of a necromancer bound by divine rite. The seal cannot be broken by mundane means.

While carrying the urn, you can cast *gentle repose* once per day.

Additionally, once per week, you can invoke the spirit bound within the urn by speaking a command word while holding it. For 1 minute, you can speak with the dead spirit inside it as if under the effects of the *speak with dead* spell. The spirit answers in a raspy, detached voice and possesses deep knowledge of matters related to death, undeath, or necromantic lore. Once this effect ends, the urn seals itself for seven days.

Sample file



Zombie Young Dragon

Large undead, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 60)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +3
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands Draconic but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Corpse Stench. A creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the zombie dragon must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn.

Foul Vitality. The zombie dragon has advantage on Constitution saving throws.

Gravetouched. The zombie dragon's breath and melee attacks are considered magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks.

Soul Glutton (1/Day). When the zombie dragon uses its Rotting Soul Breath, it can choose to regain hit points equal to half the total necrotic damage dealt by the breath.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie dragon to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie dragon drops to 1 hit point instead.

Undead Nature. The zombie dragon does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The zombie dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Putrid Breath (Recharge 5-6). The zombie dragon exhales a wave of necrotic decay in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Rotting Soul Breath (Recharge 6). The zombie dragon exhales a wave of black mist in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. A creature that fails the save also has its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. If this reduces a creature's hit point maximum to 0, it dies instantly and rises one round later at the end of the zombie dragon's next turn as a zombie, unless the body is burned or blessed (at the GM's discretion) before then. This reduction to maximum hit points lasts until the creature finishes a long rest or until the *greater restoration* spell is cast on it.

Sample File

Crypt Goblin

Crypt Goblins are a grotesque offshoot of goblin-kind, formed when goblins die in cursed barrows, are buried in tainted ground, or are exposed to necromantic energy over generations. They are not created through deliberate rituals, but rather born from the ambient magic of death, rising from shallow graves or crawling from crypt cracks with a spark of cunning still intact.

Unlike most undead, Crypt Goblins are not mindless. These pallid, sharp-eyed creatures are obsessive scavengers, hoarding bones, trinkets, teeth, rusted jewelry, and corpse fragments they lovingly refer to as *"grave-goods"*. Anything dragged from the dirt or death is treasure in their eyes - especially if it's old, rotten, or glistening with decay.

Though aggressive and unsettling, they are motivated by greed more than malice. Some can be reasoned with, distracted, or even hired - if one knows how to appeal to their love of loot. They speak in raspy whispers, chuckle at the smell of rot, and occasionally barter with necromancers or graverobbers, offering secrets in exchange for bones or buried artifacts.

Beware their stashes: to a Crypt Goblin, disturbing a hoard is a grave offense - and they will gleefully remove your fingers as compensation.



Art By Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

Crypt Goblin

Small undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Investigation +2, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances necrotic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Corpse Camouflage. When the Crypt Goblin is prone and motionless in a graveyard, crypt, or battlefield, it is indistinguishable from a corpse unless a creature succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Grave Scavenger. The Crypt Goblin has advantage on ability checks to find or retrieve buried objects, hidden corpses, or underground trinkets.

Greedy but Clever. The Crypt Goblin has advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Charisma (Deception) checks involving items it considers "loot".

Undead Barterer. When the Crypt Goblin is reduced to less than half its hit points, it may attempt to parley instead of fleeing or fighting. It offers information or a minor item in exchange for being spared, but will still try to gain something in return - such as a trinket, bone, or shiny object - if the opportunity allows.

Undead Nature. The Crypt Goblin does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The Crypt Goblin makes two attacks with its shovel.

Bone Shovel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. Once per turn, on a hit, if the target is a creature it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or the Crypt Goblin steals one trinket or item from the target's belt or pouch (GM's discretion).

Corpse Toss (3/Day). The Crypt Goblin hurls a decayed limb, fossil, or cursed bone at a creature within 20 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and have disadvantage on its next saving throw before the end of the Crypt Goblin's next turn.

Sample file



Wraith Necromancer

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (17 with mage armor)
Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +8, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +9, Intimidation +10, Religion +9
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the Wraith Necromancer fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. The Wraith Necromancer is a 13th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no material components. It has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mage hand, minor illusion*
1st level (4 slots): *command, mage armor, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, mirror image, silence*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, dispel magic*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, greater invisibility*
5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill, wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the Wraith Necromancer has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Tethered Horror (3/Day). If the Wraith Necromancer is reduced to 0 hit points, it can choose to sacrifice a specter under its control within 90 feet, regaining 20 hit points.

Undead Nature. The Wraith Necromancer does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Wither Flesh. The Wraith Necromancer's abilities and spells ignore resistance to necrotic damage.

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 36 (8d8) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 1 minute later as a specter under the wraith's control. The wraith can control up to ten specters at a time.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter under the wraith's control, appearing in the space of the corpse or the nearest unoccupied space. The wraith can control up to ten specters at a time.

Necrotic Pulse (Recharge 5-6). The Wraith Necromancer releases a wave of death in a 30-foot radius. Each creature of its choice in the area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. Any undead allies in the area regain 15 hit points.

Art By Dean Spencer

Sample file

Helmwalker

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +5
Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +6, Perception +8
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 90 ft., truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Aura of Tyranny. Creatures of the Helmwalker's choice within 10 feet have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Cursed Helm. The Helmwalker is bound to its helm. If reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses - but the helm remains intact. If placed on the head of another humanoid corpse, the helm fuses over 1 minute, restoring the Helmwalker to full hit points with a new body. This ability can only occur once every 24 hours.

Relentless Pursuit. The first time the Helmwalker takes damage on a turn, it can move up to half its speed toward the attacker without provoking opportunity attacks.

Undead Nature. The Helmwalker does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Actions

Multiattack. The Helmwalker makes two weapon attacks.

Cursed Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn.

Helmbound Stare (Recharge 6). The Helmwalker targets one creature it can see within 90 feet. That creature must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute as visions of conquest and death fill its mind. A paralyzed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Reactions

Vengeful Rebound (3/Day). When the Helmwalker takes damage while at half its hit points or less, it makes one melee weapon attack against a creature within range.

Helmwalker

The Helmwalker is a revenant-like undead warrior, revived not by necromantic rites but by the will of a singular, cursed artifact: the Helm. The creature is not truly reanimated of its own volition - its soul is gone or suppressed. Instead, the helm itself walks the world through whichever body it binds to.

The first of these cursed helms was said to appear atop a battlefield, fused to the head of a fallen warlord whose soul screamed from within. None know where it came from. It is whispered that the helm was forged by a god of conquest, or stolen from a celestial vault by a mortal who defied death itself. Whatever its origin, the Helmwalker is bound eternally to battle - silent, relentless, and nearly impossible to sway.

According to legend, after a Helmwalker is slain, the helm remains inert... for a time. Brave warriors, kings, and arcane collectors have tried to seal, bury, or destroy it. And yet, it always vanishes - lost to history, only to resurface decades or centuries later atop a new corpse. Some say the helm chooses those who die in rage or betrayal; others believe it actively hunts a worthy vessel.

Wherever it appears, blood follows.



Sample file

Pinhead

Stitched from flesh, death, and blasphemy, the creature known as a Pinhead is likely the product of a deranged necromancer or cult that sought to merge pain, undeath, and control. Its entire body is a lattice of torn muscle and unnatural reinforcement, held together with crude magic and dozens of rusted metal pins hammered directly into the skull and limbs. Its gaze is dead and expressionless, but it twitches at the scent of life. The creature's brain has been heavily tampered with - whether by the ritual that animated it, or as a result of incomplete mental restoration. Though it lacks complex reasoning, the Pinhead follows commands with brutal loyalty. When unbound, it reverts to a single directive: destroy anything that is not already dead.



Art By Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

Pinhead

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8, Wis +6
Skills Athletics +12, Perception +6
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Bound to Pain. When the Pinhead takes more than 10 damage from a single attack or spell, it has advantage on its next attack roll before the end of its next turn.

Undead Nature. The Pinhead does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Unrelenting Obedience. The Pinhead follows the last command of its creator until the command becomes impossible. If it has no orders, it becomes hostile toward all living creatures it perceives, except undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The pinhead makes three Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Pin-Laced Grasp. The Pinhead attempts to grab a creature with barbed fingers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (5d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled. Escaping this grapple follows the normal rules, using a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by the Pinhead's Strength (Athletics) check. While grappled in this way, the target is also restrained and takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The Pinhead can grapple only one creature with this attack at a time; targeting another creature with Pin-Laced Grasp immediately ends the grapple on the current target.

Reactions

Necrotic Backlash (Recharge 5-6). When the Pinhead is struck by a melee attack, it causes necrotic energy to erupt from its wounds. Creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Sample file