

THE BLACK LIBRAM OF NARTARUS

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SPECIAL THANKS: To my art students, from whom I have derived so much inspiration for this book.

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THE BLACK LIBRAM OF NARTARUS

Know you mortal that the secrets contained between these obsidian plaques are not for the faint of heart. The mysteries revealed herein may blast your very mind and burn your thrice cursed eyes from their sockets! Low, for this is a book of pure evil! Manifested upon this blood inked parchment are the words and rituals of the damned and the depraved! Turn back now should the Gods of Good still bless your prayers! Leave off this study of the arcane if you value your immortal soul, for the knowledge writ by the Lord of the Walking Dead is the wisdom of the cursed void!

However, should you choose to trek these dark paths as I have. Should you deem yourself mighty enough or foolish enough to ensconce yourself in the dark knowledge contained upon these leaves of un-living flesh, know that the power contained here is mighty. The Lore of the Lord of the Restless Death is infinite and all consuming. For those few who would wield the might of evil against itself, this tome may prove a weapon with which to smite thy enemies with hell fire! So too may the dreaded necromancer call forth legions from beyond the skein of life to slay on his behalf, should he dare to pray the price for such abominable knowledge. Tread lightly seeker, and know that they who dwell beyond the blackened stars are always watching, always waiting. Know too that their hunger is insatiable.

--Frosk Demonskin

INTRODUCTION

The Black Libram of Nartarus is a unique new installment to the Castles & Crusades fantasy role playing game. It is a book of wicked secrets, intended not as a supplement for the player characters to use for their own devices, but instead as a tool for the Castle Keeper to unleash new levels of magic, monsters and mayhem upon her jaded and unsuspecting players. The spells and items contained within this book are all of a decidedly wicked and evil nature.

Use of such secrets by player characters would have an undoubtedly wicked and damning effect. In order to use this dark knowledge the characters would most undoubtedly have to be evil, or be forced by circumstances to have the need or desire to seek the knowledge contained upon these pages.

The Black Libram of Nartarus has its genesis in the Haunted Highlands campaign setting. The deities, items, rituals, and villains mentioned upon these pages are decidedly referenced from that setting. The magical lore found here is suitable for any mature themed campaign setting, played in by players mature enough to understand and accept its decidedly dark themes.

Beyond Castles & Crusades, the magic items and spells within this Libram may be of use in any fantasy role playing game with little work on the part of the game master.

2 CASTLES & CRUSADES

ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS

The Black Libram of Nartarus is divided into five chapters. The first chapter offers Crusaders and Castle Keepers' alike a serious look at the most penumbral and wicked of all character archetypes: The Necromancer.

Chapter two features new magical spells for use by villains and necromancers of every stripe. The Black Libram of Nartarus contains 33 brand new spells including a few Castles & Crusades variations of 4 classic SRD spells.

The third chapter of this dark tome offers alternative rules for ritual and blood sacrifice magic. The mechanics of these wicked practices are included purely to add to the level of intensity in your Castles & Crusades campaign, and insure that your villains are truly as evil as they should be!

Chapter four contains a storehouse of new magical items to enhance your game with new items and relics to reap fresh horrors on an unsuspecting campaign!

Chapter five brings all new monstrous horrors to your Castles and Crusades Campaign with 23 undead minions worthy of the God of the Walking Dead himself!

CHAPTER 1: NECROMANCER, AGENT OF UNDEATH

Ilurach's brows furrowed as an inhuman crooning escaped his tortured throat. Waiving his crooked fingers above the stiffened cadaver within the confines of his dank and fetid lair, Ilurach grinned and licked his scabrous lips. Eyes rolling back in his head as the trance took effect, he felt the eternal gulf between the land of the living and the realm of the dead compress within his mind.

His guttural call growled forth across the Æther to that dark place where the wicked spirits waited. Here he selected the spirit of his choice. Malevolent, malicious, violent, ignorant and malleable to his will. Drawing it to his transcendent presence with fresh droplets of his own blood and accursed pledges to the black god he bound the thing. The cost was cheap, all told and there were many more corpses in his benighted laboratory who would receive a similar entity... in time.

The whites of his eyes clouded black as he completed his bargain with the dark lord, Ilurach drew himself back. Like the shadow which withdraws from the sun he felt himself hurtling back with his bonded charge in tow. Even as his eyes began to clear, he stared down at the putrid flesh already twitching with new vigor.

"Rise Zombye", he cooed, slavering drool already wetting his chin. "Rise and do the bidding of thy new master!"

The zombie nodded in understanding, as Ilurach pointed it to the door. "Go now and guard my lair from all intruders!" Ilurach sibilantly commanded as his eyes narrowed once again to the work at hand. Taking a deep lungful of the violet incense smoke that wafted through his chambers, his eyes turned to the pale, bluish hued maiden whom he had encountered near the outer wall of the city mere hours before.

"And now my lovely, tis your turn to serve as my eternal concubine... until you bore me that is. You should have taken my offer willingly, for certainly the lord of the walking dead will grant me your very own tortured soul for the work I have done him thus far!"

She had been a true beauty in life, beneath the makeup and harlots tresses. No doubt she would be even more lovely in un-death.

Grave-robber. Ghoul master. Occultist. Beldame. Juju Man. Witch Doctor. Such are the names of those whose lust for power extends to power over the benighted world of the living dead. The necromancer as an arch-type exists through many cultures and many ages. Popularized in fantasy fiction by such classic authors as H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and Robert Howard, the fantasy necromancer has evolved into a dealer in deadly magic, and keeper of undead cohorts.

In the Haunted Highlands setting, the necromancer is an integral and iconic sub-discipline of other spellcasting classes. Access to the vast tome of necromantic knowledge, powers, and magic is open to all spellcaster, be they druid, cleric, wizard, or illusionist. Certainly access to the magical knowledge hidden in pages of the Black Libram of Nartarus and other occult tomes is useful, but is not the be all and end all of a Castle Keeper's options when introducing the materials from this tome into their game.

Most important of all to play a necromancer in a Castles and Crusades game is Role Play.

If the character is of a twisted and evil bent, and fascinated with power and control over the undead, they more or less "fit" the criteria!

For example, A druidic necromancer could create undead from animals of the forest, or be focused on the death cults of nature vs. those which exemplify the tree of life. Undead animal minions and beasts of the forest could be unleashed on the world outside the druids lair, spreading his vision of nature on unsuspecting lands. Importantly, it is about flavor vs. flash, substance over statistics!

An Illusionist who chooses the path of the necromancer, may be focused on horror. Arcane and ghostly projections from the nether and twisted images reflected from the psyche of the recently dead serve as fuel to their creative and twisted illusions. Power over the life and death merely adds another dimension to their spellcasting repertoire.

Clerics may be in league with cults of the living dead, or perhaps are priests of Nartarus himself. Perhaps their cults hide in cellars and cemeteries on the fringes of civilization where their grave robbing and twisted worship of corpses remains hidden. Possibly they come from a culture that venerates death as its prevalent norm. In such societies, the clerical necromancer may take orders from an eternal Lich King who has ruled for thousands of years over both the living and the dead.

Wizards have perhaps the most tantalizing interest in the seductive sorceries of the necromancer. For wizards, knowledge is power, and knowledge over every sort of magic, of course leads most quickly to the prestigious robes of the Archmagi. Yet there are those so deeply seduced in the lore of the dead, that they remain within its clutches, falling deeper and deeper into its worm ridden embrace.

THE EMBRACE OF THE DEAD: AT WHAT COST?

Powers of necromancy do not come cheaply. In the Haunted Highlands setting, they are earned with experience points. These points are expended in addition to experience needed to acquire a new class level. The desire to take on a necromantic power must be stated at the beginning of a level by the character, so that the Castle Keeper may assume a certain amount of time in studies for their standard class are also expended in studying the dark arts.

Necromancers may acquire the following powers in pursuit of their studies. Some of these such as turning or commanding undead may already be available to a character class due to its core powers. Others may only be acquired through persistent study and intense training.

TAINT OF DEATH

The path of the necromancer does however offer its own costs. Constant interaction with the undead, and corpses of which they are formed leave their mark in time. This dark mark leaves an indelible impression on those who encounter the necromancer.

Necromancer powers are listed with a penalty to reaction (charisma checks) when dealing with those not involved in the necromancer's cult, secret society, or sharing of their particular alignment.

NECROMANTIC MAGIC

Necromancers gain access to necromancer spells. The cost for this power is paid in experience points. If a spellcaster seeks to learn a level of Necromancer spells, they must first declare their intention at the start of the level prior to the one in which they would be able to cast spells of that level. For example, a caster who would be able to cast 3rd level spells at their 5th level of experience must declare their intention to study necromantic arts prior to reaching 5th level. The additional experience required to learn the necromancer spells is added to the experience points needed to reach 5th level. Clear as mud right? Great!

Listed below is the experience point cost of learning necromancer spells by Necromancer Spell Level.

NECROMANCER SPELL LEVEL	REQUIRED CLASS LEVEL	XP COST	CHARISMA PENALTY*
1 st Level Necromancer Spells	2 nd	100 xp	None
2 nd Level Necromancer Spells	3 rd	300 xp	None
3 rd Level Necromancer Spells	5 th	500xp	None
4 th Level Necromancer Spells	7 th	700 xp	-1
5 th Level Necromancer Spells	9 th	900 xp	-1
6 th Level Necromancer Spells	11 th	1100 xp	-1
7 th Level Necromancer Spells	13 th	1300xp	-1
8 th Level Necromancer Spells	15 th	1500 xp	-1
9 th Level Necromancer Spells	17 th	1700 xp	-1

Blessed of Nartarus 500 xp Reaction Penalty -2

Those who take this blessing of Nartarus gain a +1 to saves for every 4 levels vs. the special attacks and abilities of the Undead creatures. This power reflects the constant contact with undead that is the stock of a Necromancer's trade.

Command Undead 800 xp Reaction Penalty -1

Clerics who worship Nartarus gain this power for free. Otherwise this ability is the same as an evil cleric's power to control undead as part of the turn ability detailed in the Castles and Crusades Players Handbooks.

Flesh of the Undead 500 xp Reaction Penalty -1

Those chosen of Nartarus who wish to gain this advantage pay an experience points cost of 500 xp. In exchange for their sacrifice, the necromancers flesh becomes toughened not unlike that of a withered corpse. Through this blessing the Necromancer gains a +1 to their natural armor class. The advantage may be purchased multiple times up to a natural armor class bonus of +5. At such a point as the Necromancer achieves the maximum armor class bonus, they are virtually indistinguishable from an undead being.



CHAPTER 2: THE BLACKEST MAGIC

The following spells are rooted in evil intention or the willingness to commit evil upon others. Their use is a definite tick in the direction of damnation for those who follow the paths of good and righteous purity.

ATAXUS' LASH, Level 5 Wizard, Or Cleric of Ataxus 5

CT 1 standard action **R Personal** **D 1 round/level**
SV Wisdom **SR Yes** **Comp (V, S)**

When this spell is cast, the caster creates a cat-o-nine tails composed of swirling chaotic energies that she can wield in battle. The lash strikes as a melee weapon and deals 1d4+1 point of damage/level (1d4+9 at level 9, 1d4+10 at level 10, etc.). In addition, each person struck must make a Wisdom save or suffer the effects of a confusion spell for 1d4 rounds.

BLADES OF SHAMBERE, Level 2 Cleric of Shambere or Necromancer

CT 1 action **R Self** **D 1 round per level**
SV None; or Constitution **SR No** **Comp (V, S)**

Shadowy knives spring forth from the hands of the caster. The caster gains an extra attack with their off hand suffers only a -2 attack penalty with no penalty to the primary hand. The blades deal 1d6 points of damage. If the caster scores a natural 20 on their attack roll, the victim must make a Constitution save or also suffer 1d4 points of strength damage. Likewise any attack taken from behind or against a defenseless opponent dealt with the Blades of Shambere deals double damage.

BOUNCING ICE BLAST, Level 4 Necromancer

CT, 1 action **AoE 40 ft. radius around caster**
D, instantaneous **SV, None** **SR, No** **Comp (V, S, F)**

This spell summons a bouncing blast of icy mist that leaps and bounces through the area in a seemingly random pattern. Use of the spell shows a complete disregard for the lives of all around the caster as it randomly targets each creature in a 40 ft. radius around the caster. There is a 50% chance that any creature in this area is struck by the freezing mist suffering 1d4 points of cold damage per caster level.

The focus for this spell is a small quartz sphere costing 100 gp to create.

CT, 1 minute **R, See text** **D, Special**
SV, None **SR, No** **Comp (V, S, F)**

A powerful enough necromancer can even recruit free-willed undead creatures, if they are careful enough. This spell gates a vampire (8 HD) to the caster. The caster must negotiate with the vampire to convince it to perform a task, it might ask for a victim or for a large amount of money depending upon the task requested. The gated vampire refuses any task that would be considered suicidal and is instantly returned if the caster attempts to attack it in any way. The vampire will serve until the agreed upon task is completed or 1 day/caster level passes. During the duration of the spell the vampire cannot attack the caster, but after that period is over it may well decide to hunt down the necromancer if it feels able to.

This spell automatically fails if the caster casts it in an area of daylight or running water.

The focus of this spell is a pair of preserved vampire fangs.

CALL LICH, Level 9 Necromancer

CT, 10 minutes **R, See Text** **D, Special**
SV, None **SR, No** **Comp (V, S)**

In the battle to control the world around her, any necromancer can use a powerful ally. This spell gates a lich (18 HD) to the caster who must then attempt to convince it to perform a specific task. Depending upon the task, the lich might demand particular spell books or scrolls, or demand a large payment up front. The lich never agrees to anything suicidal or to anything that might threaten its own hidden phylactery. The lich can return to its home at any time, whether the service is performed or not, and can decide not to perform a task at the last minute. This spell is particularly dangerous for the unprepared necromancer as the lich cannot be directly controlled and this spell provides no protection against being attacked by the lich.

CLAWS FROM THE GRAVE, Level 2 Necromancer

CT 1 action **R 50 ft** **D 1 round/level**
SV Dex Avoids **SR Yes** **Comp (V, S, M, DF)**

This spell calls into being a horde of skeletal hands that reach up from the ground clawing at any target in a 10 ft. +10 ft. per 2 levels of the spell caster. The claws deal 1d4 points of damage +1 per level of the spell caster. A successful Dexterity saving throw avoids the ripping claws and allows movement through their area without penalty. Failed saves suffer damage and find their movement rate reduced by 15 ft. per round. The skeletal claws have an armor class of 15 and 2 Hp each, though they suffer only half damage from slashing and piercing weapons.

CIRCLE OF DEATH Level 6 Necromancer

CT 1 action **R: 100 ft. +10 ft./level** **D instantaneous**
SV, Con negates **SR, yes** **Comp (V, S, M)**

Upon uttering the words and making the sacrifices and gestures necessary for performing this spell, the necromancer calls forth the power of death itself to cut short the skein of life of his victims.

A wave of death emanates forth in a 40 ft. radius burst from the necromancer's assigned target, slaying from the inside out a number of hit dice worth of creatures equal to 1d4 HD per level of the caster (max 20d4 hd). Creatures with 9 or more HD are immune to the effects of this spell.

The caster must sacrifice 1d4 hps and a black gemstone worth at least 500 gp in order to unleash this wicked power.

COMMAND UNDEAD, Level 3 Necromancer

CT 1 action **R 25ft+5ft./2 levels** **D one day/level**
SV, Wisdom Negates **SR, Yes** **Comp (V, S, M)**

Through making dark pacts with the dead, the caster is granted a degree of control over one undead creature. The caster may command an intelligent undead being that can perceive its words and actions. The undead do not attack the caster for the duration of the spell, and may follow given orders so long as the caster makes a successful Charisma check vs. the undead creature it

wishes to command. Intelligent undead creatures accept no order that would be harmful to it, or lead to its destruction.

Non-intelligent undead get no saving through vs. this spell. Instead they follow any orders without question so long as the orders are simple commands as one would give to a dog. Sit, fetch, follow, play dead, and the like are examples of the sorts of commands an unintelligent undead being may be given.

The commands given are not telepathic, and the undead must be able to hear the caster in order to follow orders.

The material component for this spell is a droplet of blood or piece of raw flesh and a sliver of bone from the type of creature that the being was in life. For example, to command an undead Halfling, the caster need have a piece of Halfling bone handy.

CURSED ROT OF MEDJEDU, 4th Necromancer

CT 1 action R Touch
D until successfully discharged or dismissed
SV Con SR Yes Comp V, S, M

The Cursed Rot of Medjedu is believed to be the final cursed gift of a wicked pharaoh to his loyal priesthood. Born from dark secrets revealed to the Pharaoh in dank subterranean tombs, the spell grants the caster the ability to inflict mummy rot upon his enemies with a touch. The caster must make a successful touch attack against a flesh and blood living creature for the power of this spell to take effect. Upon a successful strike, the victim must make a Constitution save or contract Mummy Rot as if they had been touched struck by a mummy. Victims who contract mummy rot may gain no more healing from magic until a remove disease spell is cast. Furthermore, natural healing and effects such as regeneration are 1/10th their normal rate. Victims take 2 points of Charisma damage every month as their flesh rots and decays in leprous fashion. At zero charisma the victim's body turns to dust and the victim is dead.

The material spell component is a piece of linen wrapping from a moldering mummy, entombed for at least 100 years.

DARK GNOSIS, Cleric 3

CT 1 action Range 150 ft. D 1 round
SV Wisdom SR Yes Comp (V, S, DF)

The cleric chooses a target within range to experience a direct connection with the majesty of his patron deity. The brief gnosis is overwhelming for the target, and they must make a successful Wisdom save or be stunned and helpless from the experience for a number of rounds equal to 1d4 + 1/5 levels of the casting cleric (1d4 + 1 at 5th level, 1d4 + 2 at 10th level, 1d4 + 3 at 15th level etc.). The cleric's holy symbol is the focus for this spell.

DOMINATE GOLEM, Level 8 Wizard

CT, 1 action R, 30 ft. D, 1 round/level
SV, strength negates SR, No Comp (V, S, F)

Golems are powerful, deadly guardians whose strength lies in their immunity to most magic. This spell allows the caster to temporarily seize control of a golem for a short period of time and force it to do their will. If the golem fails a strength save it loyally serves its new

master for the duration of the spell. A caster must remain cautious, at the end of the spell's duration, or if the golem succeeds at its saving throw, the golem attacks the caster in a berserk rage gaining +2 to attack and damage rolls. A caster can only control one golem at a time and cannot control a golem with more HD than she has levels.

The focus for this spell is a bit of the material the golem being dominated is made of, for example a piece of clay if a clay golem is going to be dominated.

DISSOLVE FLESH, Level 5 Necromancer

CT 1 action R 50 ft. AoE 1 Target D Instantaneous
SV Con Negates SR Yes Comp (S)

Drawing wicked sigils of death in the air the Necromancer lets loose a ray of ultra violet death upon his foes which deals 1d6 + 1 point per 3 caster levels worth of constitution damage to their foe. On a successful save the opponent suffers 1/2 damage. Flesh struck with this spell is melted away, starting with the skin, and working its way to muscle, sinew and tendon until naught is left but bone. The damage done by this spell may only be healed through greater restoration a heal spell or limited wish.

EBON BANDS OF BINDING, Level 2 Necromancer

CT 1 action R 50 ft. D 1 round/level
SV Dexterity SR Yes Comp (V, S)

An ebon ray fires forth from the caster's hand striking the target he points at. The ray becomes a series of ebon bands that entwine about the foe entangling him. The target must make a successful to avoid becoming entangled. If the target is entangled, he is held still for the duration of the spell, unable to swing a weapon or make somatic components, but may move at normal speed. However, each round the target is entangled, he loses one point of strength, which lasts for 1 round per level of the caster after the spell ends. Each round a target is held, he may attempt to break free by making a strength check at the same CL as the initial Dexterity save. A successful strength check indicated the target has broken free and may act normally the next round. Breaking the ebon bonds in this way ends the spell.

ENFEEBLING BLAST, Level 7 Necromancer

CT, 1 action AoE, 60 ft. radius around caster
D, 1 round/level SV, constitution half
SR, Yes Comp (V, S, M)

Never loved, and often hunted, necromancers often turn toward this potent spell to protect them from misguided assault. With a few simple words and gestures the necromancer sends out a hazy brown blast of negative energy centered on himself. All living creatures struck lose 1d4 + 1 per caster level points of strength (max 1d4 + 10), while undead in the area gain 1d4 + 1 per caster level hitpoints. A successful constitution saving throw halves the damage and no target can have their strength score reduced below 1. With this single spell, a necromancer can both strengthen his undead allies and weaken his enemies.

The material component for this dark spell is powdered ogre bone which is thrown outward away from the caster.