

# Guide to Undead

One day alive – Next day – *Undead*

by  
Lenard Lakofka

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## Introduction

The Classic Undead, as listed in the **Player's Handbook Table 61: Turning Undead**, are the subject of this article. There are other creatures that are Undead-like or, that though they maybe Undead, I have chosen to ignore as not being mainstream.

The Undead do have things in common. The challenge is to group them together by usable common traits. I have chosen to center this discussion on four major groups.

- First are the Animated Dead; Skeletons and Zombies. They are mindless, they truly died and their life essence or Life Force is gone from their remains. They cannot, of their own power, make more of their kind.
- Second are the corporeal Undead who can "procreate" <sup>(1)</sup>. I use procreate hereinafter as the ability to cause more of their kind to come into being. They truly died but some of their Life Force remains with the body, bound there by contact with the Positive and Negative Planes of Existence. Some portion of the person's brain and sensory organs are left intact and usable. The senses may be augmented in some way or diminished in others. These are the Ghoul, Ghast, Wight, and Vampire.
- Third are the non-corporeal Undead who can procreate. They truly died but some of their Life Force remains with the shell that is their existence. That Life Force is bound in a shell of Positive and Negative Plane energy. Their senses are all artificial. Their brains are gone but some portion of their intelligence remains also bound in this shell. These are the Shadow, Wraith, and Spectre.

- A Fourth group is the collection of Classic Undead that cannot procreate but are intelligent. They are the Mummy, the Ghost, and the Lich. Their creation is via magic, the use of created substances (oils, potions, salves etc.) and/or the intervention of a powerful being. I will touch on them lightly for each is unique and not part of the major group.

<sup>(1)</sup> Many feel that "procreate" is a bad term here. They feel procreate = birth and using it for the Undead does not ring true. I can see that argument but as long as it is clear what it is meant then the semantics of it can be sidetracked. You will note that in my opinion many of the new Undead have gone from Life directly to Undead and have not totally lost all of their Life Force. Many opinions of the Undead is that they are just animated dead — I do not hold that view except for Skeletons and Zombies.

All of the Undead have truly known death. They have gone to zero hit points or lower (depending on how the DM plays the rules of death) and have died — if but for a moment. They then have the first and most important division. Does their Life Force leave the remains or not? If yes they can only become Animated Undead at some point in time. If no then some portion of the Life Force remains coupled with energies and forces from the Positive and Negative material planes. The majority of the Life Force does leave the body and goes to the Upper or Lower plane of the deity whom the person worshipped in life (the Lich is an exception).

The Animated Undead may have lain unburied or buried for days, weeks, months and years before their remains are animated. All connection with their Life Force has been severed. Only a Resurrection Spell by an appropriate High Priest can call the Life Force back to the remains and produce a live individual. These Undead could be animated chairs for all the life they contain. They have *no will* whatsoever.

The Procreation Undead now fall into two major groups. The first remain tied to their physical body, the second leaves the body behind. In either case, however, some portion of the id, the ego and the intelligence of the figure remains bound by Negative and Positive forces from the appropriate plane of existence. A portion, however small, of the person's Life Force is still present in the remains. The undead exists in a corporeal form or they could be in an energy shell of some type.

The final group are created by their own hand with the help of magic or outside intervention. They were not created by others of their kind. Two still have corporeal remains and other does not. A significant piece of the Life Force is still bound to the remains or summoned back to the remains.

## The Undead Bill of Rights

What do the Undead share in common? I see two obvious common items. One is that they can be turned or controlled by the good or evil clergy of a deity. The second is that they have many common immunities or resistances. The Monstrous Compendium lists many immunities but each Undead, it appears to me, was written separately, perhaps even by a separate individual editor, and therefore all of the possible common immunities are not tabulated into one set. I will call these common immunities the Undead Bill of Rights.

This is my list of Undead immunities. I suspect there may be some I have missed and some may cause discussion as to correctness. Illusions and what the Undead can "sense" will be discussed later in some detail.

Sleep, Charm Person or Monster, Suggestion, Color Spray, Hypnotism, Blindness (the illusion), ESP, Forget, Ray of Enfeeblement, Scare, Weakness (opposite of Strength), Hold Person or Monster, Infravision (seen by), Feign Death, Vampiric Touch, Confusion, Emotion, Fear, Fire Charm Cloudkill, Magic Jar, Death Fog, Death Spell, Mass Suggestion, Reincarnation, Enthral, Slay the Living, Poison Touch, Cause any Wound, Harm, Cause Disease, Cause Blindness, Fear Touch, Sanctuary, Finger of Death, Mass Charm, Trap the Soul, any poison, any paralysis.

Cold has various mixed effects but most are immune to cold.

Fire has various effects but all are subject to magical flame.

I have included each magical or mundane effect above based on the limited immunities in the Monstrous Compendium. Most Undead list Sleep, Charm, Hold, Cold, Poison, and Paralysis specifically but it follows logically that a monster, corporeal or not, who is *not alive*, is not subject to many of the magics that affect the living. The Undead do not breathe, they might 'eat' but is out of Life Force hunger, not the need for sustenance.

Any Undead can go on for a century with no victims and still exist. The longer an undead goes without taking in some Life Force it would follow that 'metabolism' will slow even more and the smell of death and decay would be even stronger. Could an undead go for two hundred years without taking in any Life Force? Perhaps not and finding

"disabled" undead, e.g. a ghoul who has been created centuries ago and finally is discovered. It may well be missing a leg if not both and one arm may have fallen off. In this form it is not much threat — just pathetic. The chance of the Undead being 'disabled' then might be as follows:

$$\text{Disability \%} = [ \text{Age without Life Force} - (100 \times \text{HD}) ] / \text{HD}$$

Therefore a 340 year old ghoul would have a  $[ 340 - (100 \times 2) ] / \text{HD} = 70\%$  chance of some "disability" which the DM could roll up randomly. If, after all, the Ghoul has lost an arm its number of attacks would only be two, instead of three.

Many illusions and other spells are separate issues. At the end of the article I would like to discuss Fear, Polymorphing, Illusions and other spells and spell-like effects as caused by, or the effect upon, the Undead as a whole and the experience points awarded for each.

What happens to the body after it dies and then becomes Undead? Let's do the corporeal Undead first since they are easier.

## Corporeal Undead

### Skeletons and Zombies

Skeletons and Zombies have are made from bodies that have had a chance to decay. That decay may have lasted for years before the remains are Animated by a magical spell. That Spell imparts motion, the ability to follow commands of a Controller (the Controller can be the caster of the spell, another powerful Undead, or an evil priest who took over command), and the ability to detect at a distance. Skeletons and Zombies cannot use any of the senses they had in life except a crude form of feeling. All of the ability that they have now to sense their environment comes from the detection spells laid upon them as part of the Animate Dead spell. Can they 'see' or 'hear' or 'smell' or 'taste'? No. They can instead do one or more detection spells. I have chosen three.

You, as DM, may select others. I will not repeat this from now on. These are my opinions on the Undead, you can do whatever you like as long (I caution) you rule the same way each time.

Skeletons and Zombies can Detect Life Force, Detect Motion and Detect Solid Objects. Without these the Undead could not obey simple commands much less move in their environment without banging into everything. They must be able to sense objects to avoid or interface with them. The degree of this detection is open to debate.

Could a Skeleton pick out the green bottle from four in a row? No, it cannot see color.

Could it be commanded to pick up a mace instead of a sword? Yes.

Could it thread a needle? No, due to inability to see the hole in the needle as well as the complexity of the task as a whole.

Could it wait until Sir Gilbert enters the room and attack only him? I'd say *no* — too complex, even if this skeleton "knew" Sir Gilbert in life. Detection of Life Force tells cannot pick out a specific individual by name or by description.

Without Detect Life Force the Skeleton might whack the chair standing nearby for no reason at all. Life Force could include the Life Force in a plant but the animation could differentiate between a blade of grass and a halfling.

From where do these Detections emerge and what is their range? I'd say from a point between the eye sockets in a cone that extends out 60 feet and covers a base that is 60 feet in diameter at that point. Therefore the Skeleton and Zombie is oblivious to someone or something behind it. If it could "detect" for 360 degrees it would be unsurprising unless range is the factor. The Skeleton or Zombie would become the perfect guard of any location since it could, 100% of time, detect Life Force within 60 feet. (Naturally this range and cone subject to the DM. The DM might make the Zombie a little more and less sensitive to range.) However their programming, if you will, would have them turn their head from time to time to take in the surroundings especially if melee or some Life Force has registered on their detection spell. This makes them operate similar to a seeing individual.

The commands given to a Skeleton or Zombie has to be simplistic and brief. I'd set a parameter of 15 common words in a simple straightforward sentence. The mindless Undead, while not hearing his master's voice, nonetheless will obey it! It is like a Wand of Magic Missiles replying to a command word to activate at that point. Control can be gained by a

powerful Undead or an evil cleric and a new "program" put into place. The Controller could impart new commands at a range of 60 feet. Part of the Animate Undead spell is the simple ability to walk and use the hands to carry, to fight or to use a weapon as in life. The remains 'remember' these things that it did in life over and over and over again.

The Skeleton or Zombie will not attack its current Controller but the henchmen or minions of that controller are another matter. Keeping a henchman safe from being attacked would be possible if no enemy is also nearby. However in close contact, like melee, guarding one's henchmen from the attacks of Skeletons and Zombies would be virtually impossible.

Any item(s) that is present during the Animate Dead spell casting could be used to differentiate "friends" from "enemies". Anyone wearing or *not* wearing this object is subject to attack or not being attacked depending on how the Caster = Controller magics the item(s).

Example: Ebo the 10th level Necromancer has eight coins with him. He segregates the coins into two groups of three and five. Now he stands in the middle of the graveyard and casts the Animate Dead Spell. This takes five rounds per the Player's Handbook. On the last of those rounds, when the Undead have responded, he points to the two piles of specific coins. Pile one, of three coins, will be given to Ebo's henchmen. Those who hold those coins, even in a pocket but not buried deep in a backpack, inside something lined with any metal, under metal armor etc. would not be attacked by this band of Skeletons or Zombies. These coins as part of the magic of animation can be detected at 60 feet as if they had a "friendly" Life Force around them. The second pile of five coins would be exactly the opposite. If these five coins are detected at 60 feet the person holding one will be attacked at once. (I.e. he will try to plant these coins on people he wants his animations to attack at some later time.) The coins would radiate magic but not evil and the two piles would not be different to most detections. Identify could tell the two coins apart.

This set of rulings make it easier for players to circumvent and fight Skeletons and Zombies. But only if you tell the players. If you operate the Undead to these rules they will have to discover them or go to a powerful NPC to tell them that Skeletons and Zombies operate this way. You can set your own range for the detection. You might have Skeletons be different from Zombies. You might have the range and cone shape change depending on the level of the original caster of the Animation spell.

Next we come to the Undead who can create their own kind but still have a body to cling to; the Ghoul, Ghast, Wight and Vampire. In each of these cases there is a specific ritual that had to happen at death for the body to rise again as a new Undead of the same type. The body cannot be missing key parts like the head or heart nor can it be fantastically damaged.

## Intelligent Corporeal Procreating Undead

### Ghouls and Ghosts

If a Ghoul or Ghast feeds on a person, after he or she goes to zero or below, it will be a function of how much 'eating' occurs as to whether another Ghoul or Ghast arises. This brings us to the reason why a Ghoul or Ghast would create more of its kind instead of devouring the corpse. The Ghoul or Ghast who is "wounded" or who has not fed on a Life Force for a long period (let's say 1 full month) will feed on a victim to regain lost hit points and/or because the hunger for Life Force is so great. While Undead will not cease to exist if it does not feed it either can no longer rationalize that concept or the hunger is simply overpowering. Therefore, in a melee situation the Ghoul or Ghast will attempt to take down an opponent to zero hit points or below. If unopposed further, if no other victims are close by, it will stop to feed on the waning Life Force of the downed victim.

Feeding can "cure" a wounded Ghoul or Ghast. If it devours a victim it gets Life Force that acts like a cure. That cure is not instantaneous. The Ghoul or Ghast must absorb the life energy (hit points) and then convert them. Why will this work? Ghouls and Ghosts transform when they are killed, as stated in the Monstrous Compendium. Their body changes. This implies that dead does not equal total shut down or total decay. If it did transformation could not occur. Their connection to the Negative Material Plane keeps them alive in airless conditions or in conditions where Life Force (food) is not available but they continue to exist on the Prime Material as well with a tiny portion of their own Life Force still in the body. This being the case metabolism must slow to virtually nothing but it is still ongoing. If the Ghoul or Ghast is sent to zero hit points or below the last of the Life Force leaves and connection to the Negative Material is severed as well. If you agree with this argument then it follows that feeding on hit points or the Life Force leaving a victim has curing powers. I would convert hp on a 1 to 2 basis for Ghosts and 1 to 4 for Ghouls. A Ghast who drains 4 hp gets 1 hp back itself. A Life Force passing through them is a major cure and would act a burst of curing, let's say 4d8 points come back from experiencing the Life Force drain away. This means the Ghoul or Ghast must be over the corpse at the moment the Life Force leaves. If it knocks a fighter down to -2 and the fighter later dies because his wounds were

not attended and he goes down to say -10 hit points and then dies the Ghoul or Ghast must be over the body at the moment the -10 is registered. Otherwise the Life Force leaves and the Ghoul or Ghast does not benefit from it. HP conversion is more immediate and must come from a *bite* only. I have ruled for years that only the claw can cause paralysis. Now I would add that only the bite can be the conduit for curing. Finally I would not let curing occur during or in daylight hours. The Ghoul or Ghast metabolism is so very very slow that a full day would need to go by. Therefore the next sunset would be the time for the curing hit points to come back.

This entire argument then says that a well fed Ghoul or Ghast is the one that will allow a fallen victim to lie and rise as a Ghoul or Ghast itself. If the Ghoul or Ghast does not feel a need to feed, a hunger if you will, it will ignore the dead body. It ignores the body into becoming another Ghoul or Ghast. The transformation is *not* purposeful on the Ghoul or Ghast's part. The Monstrous Compendium states that the Ghoul and Ghast have their mind attacked and diminished, it uses the word deranged. Therefore the cogent rational thought of the living being escapes these Undead. It has hunger, it has need, it can perform Ghoulish or Ghastly attacks but it does not plan a raid on a human town, even if it haunts the nearby graveyard, just to create more of its kind.

Ghouls and Ghasts transform, as we have noted from the Monstrous Compendium. They *retain* the ability to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears. They likely gain, with time, let's say 3 days, *infravision* as well. They rarely speak but probably can. Whether they taste is not material. They can, I believe, also radiate an automatic Detect Life. It probably has the same 60 foot range of the Skeleton or Zombie and could radiate from between the eye sockets in a cone as well. I add this detection because Undead cannot be fooled by my illusions like invisibility. They cannot see the invisible person but they can "see" his/her/its Life Force and can act on that. Invisibility to Undead cuts the Detection of Life off. This is implied by the spell text of Invisibility to Undead. Sanctuary does not hedge from the Undead but Invisibility to Undead does.

When a Ghoul or Ghast is stuck by Raise Dead what will happen? I would think that spell is sovereign against them but could affect only one of them at a time. Raise Dead does have a 90 foot range and could be so employed. I would allow the Ghoul or Ghast a save as a 2HD or 4HD creature but if it failed the Life Force still in the body would be released and the corpse would fall over *dead*. A Ghoul or Ghast that is killed but the body remains intact can be raised if a Bless is first cast. The Monstrous Compendium says Resurrect but I think Raise Dead would work as well. If you could somehow Bless the active Ghoul or Ghast and then hit with Raise Dead the change could occur at once! If a cleric threw a Raise Dead to "kill" the Ghoul or Ghast (release the Life Force that is left) and then Bless and Raises again I would consider a bonus to the chance of the Raise working. It has been subject to two Raise Dead spells after all. I would treat the remains' constitution as if it were one full point higher in this one circumstance.

A raised victim of Ghouldom or Ghastdom would still look like a Ghoul or Ghast! However, time would heal and the old features would return in perhaps a month. Ghasts, the ones who have the carrion stench, must have something actually rot and remain in a putrid condition. Without being morbid let's just call that a layer of outer flesh and leave it at that. The living figure would shed that layer, and stench of it as well, over time.

It is argumentative that the Ghoul and Ghast still have a very low metabolism and a little bit of Life Force left in them. It is, however, the only thing that makes sense to me. The Raise Dead would also cure the mind and snap it back to the old intelligence score. The DM might rule that some intelligence is lost in the process. A series of system shocks could be used per intelligence point and every fail would be loss of a point to the raised individual.

Ghouldom and Ghastdom have fixed intelligence ranges of 5 to 7 and 11 to 12 per the Monstrous Compendium. Naturally if that would be an *increase* from the living figure it would not occur. If a living figure were sans an eye or two, a leg etc. Ghouldom or Ghastdom certainly does not give that function or missing body part back. The Ghoul and Ghast remain frozen in Undead status due to the touch with the Negative Material Plane. The touch is minor but it allows for their existence, their sense of life detection, their infravision and their ability to live without air or food for days, weeks and months.

## Wights

The Wight kills his victim and then opens a channel to the Negative Material Plane. It wants this Lesser Wight to exist under its dominance. Let's look at the classic interpretation of killing by a Wight to create a lesser Wight. The Wight does two things when it hits. It causes 1-4 points of damage subtracted from the victim's hit points. It causes one life level to drain away. What is a Life Level? Zero level humans, even an infant, has one life level that it retains as it grows. AD&D adventurer characters add to this live additional life levels which we call levels of experience. Those levels add hit points to the character as well as the chance of new saves, the potential for more abilities (like spell casting capacity), etc. When an Undead who is strongly in touch with the Negative Material touches a person it drains away one of those levels.

A 5th level thief becomes a 4th level thief and saves, capacity, % chance to perform acts, etc. are reduced at once. The *potential* hit points of this 4th level thief change too. Example. This thief, who we will say did not have exceptional constitution, rolls 4,3,4,2 and 4 for hit points on a 6 sided die as he is promoted from 1st to 5th level. The best result would be to say that his Hit Point total at his new visit to 4th level would be 4+3+4+2. I.e. he would remember the 4 he rolled to get here and that is the new level he can possibly attain. But what if the Undead hits for only one point of damage? HP goes from 17 to 16 but, in theory, his new max. at 4th level is only 13. Does he lose three more point at once? I would say NO. I would leave him with the three points, but once he loses it, no matter how, his new max. is only 14. This puts the onus on player or the DM to keep track of the hp rolled each promotion. However, any other method is not fair to the player. If there is no record then the only choice the DM and player have is to *unbuild* the character roll by roll to come to a new total. Not great but there really is no other choice. If this thief gets hit again for 4 damage he would go to 12. His new max. is now 11 so he could climb above 11 if he survives and remains 3rd level.

When would this thief become a Wight? If the attack continues for 4 3 and 3 points of damage the thief goes from 13 to 9 to 6 to 3 and his levels from 3 to 2 to 1 to zero. The victim is now zero level and he has 3 hp left. One more hit is necessary for a final result. If he gets hit again for 1 his hp go to 2 (*not* dead) but his level goes to -1. His life energy has been drained and he will fall over in a heap. If he is left alone at this point he will rise as a 2+1HD Wight at the next sunset under the control of the master Wight who slew him. If his hit points had gone to -2 and his level was still 1 and then the attack stops, for whatever reason, and the victim dies (perhaps no one binds his wounds or the DM rules that -2 = death). The victim in this case is *just dead*. He had a life level left. If, however, the Wight could remain with the victim at this point he could assure the lesser Wight's creation but touching him two more times and sending his level to -1.

The whole process of losing an entire level to any creature has made level draining Undead feared, and hated by players. I have seen players tear up their character sheets and vow never to play again after their 12th lord gets smacked a few times by a level draining Undead and a 6th level fighter is left standing when it is all over. Level drainers are almost the ultimate opponents. They can take away weeks of player experience in the roll of a few dice. I have played many variations of level draining to try to help the situation. I will quickly list them in case another DM would like to experiment.

The DM can allow the player a save vs. the drain. A small hope. The victim would take damage but not lose a level if he makes the save. This weakens the Undead but that might not be all bad. A second alternative is to do a partial drain. Every time an Undead drains a level the DM looks to see what that means in xp. I.e. what did it take to go from 5th to 6th? Let's say 16000 xp. The Undead then will drain a percent of that 16000. If the d% = 100 then there goes the whole 16000, but if it is only a few percent then that one hit has very minor draining only a little experience and the level of the victim might not actually change. A third alternative is drain the level but give the player a break on regaining the level(s) lost. This can be done by giving him a bonus to his earned experience while he relearns what he knew before to become the same level again. This bonus could be 100% and be fair to the game rules. A final alternative — and I am sure there could be many more — is to have the effect diminish the character at once with each touch. I.e. 7th level to 6th level, lose spell capacity, % chance to perform an action, etc. however lose no experience at all. Then it takes considerable time for the experience to return after the encounter. One week per level might be used as an example. During the week the player gains no new experience from any source. If the victim were totally level-drained then a lesser Undead would still be created.

The Wight, also goes through a body transformation upon becoming a lesser Wight. His flesh "mummifies" and his bones must warp in some way. This again hints at the fact that some metabolism is still in place. Like the Ghoul or Ghast a tiny piece of life energy is still inside this body. The eyes still function, as do the ears, nose and speaking voice if the Wight chooses to speak. A Wight's mind becomes "average", an intelligence score of 8 to 10. That might mean a mental change and it might not. If the victim's intelligence were only 5 to begin with I'd leave the rating at 5. If, however, it were 15, I'd drop it to the 8 to 10 range and then realize that mental damage has occurred. Infravision would come to the lesser Wight after a few days. It would also be able to Detect Life Force the way other Undead do because of its contact with the Negative Material Plane.

We also know from the Monstrous Compendium that Raise Dead will "slay" a Wight at once, "utterly annihilating it". That does not leave a lot to bring back to actual life unless Resurrection would be used. A Wight that goes to Negative hit points has its connection to the Negative Material severed. Those remains could be brought back to life by Resurrection. If the Wight had only been in that form for a few days then Raise Dead applied to the remains might work. The Monstrous Compendium calls for a special Quest but I do not see what that Quest might be. I'd simply allow Raise Dead to function as if the victim's constitution were 3 points lower and call it quits. If it works you get back a 1st level person who is alive. His Life Force is drawn back from the outer or lower plane where it traveled to. That Life Force can help restore the body and mind but it would be no guarantee of full restoration to either. The body could be twisted and marked by Wightdom and the mind might never fully recover. An injured mind might surely result, one that is affected by mental illness of one type or another.

Finally we should discuss the Lesser Wight. 2+1 HD would be half strength. Armor class also would be about half as good at 8 instead of 5. Infravision might only extend to 45 feet instead of 90. Silver weapons would hit the Lesser Wight but so might ordinary ones. Perhaps if the Lesser Wight made a save of 12 or better ordinary weapons would not affect it but only magic ones would hit. The Lesser Wight would do 1-4 damage but the level drain might not be certain. Here would be a good place to take a percentage of the level being lost in experience points. The simple method would be one half. Allowing the victim a save vs. Death or not lose any experience might also be quite fair for the Lesser Wight. The domination of the Lesser Wight by its Master is quite strong. The Master could force the Lesser to fight while it escapes to safety. The Lesser Wight would have spell immunity as a Master Wight since there is a connection to the Negative Material Plane.

## Vampires

The Vampire is created by life level draining the way the Wight produces a Lesser Wight. The Lesser Vampire is not mentioned in the *Monstrous Compendium* but it follows that they exist. A 4+1 HD lesser Vampire under the sway of the master. When undergoing the transformation from living being to lesser Vampire the body goes through the fewest outward physical changes. Per this discussion the lesser Vampire still holds some life force in his body. Metabolism is virtually nonexistent but decay does not occur either. It could be argued that some sort of Preserve spell is in force but the discussion of increased senses; eyesight — plus infravision, hearing and smell are all enhanced to the levels of a canine. The Vampire can detect Life Force at 120 feet. All of these powers are in full force at the first rising of the lesser Vampire. The lesser Vampire will arise for the first time at the next sunset. Burial does not seem necessary and precaution like Blessing the dead body does not seem sufficient.

Aside — AD&DII does not allow the polymorph to wolf form but I certainly would add it. The ability to take on wolf form is in many of the Vampire writings and many of the movies that have been made about the Vampire. Add to this the ability to summon and control bats and wolves adds ammunition to the notion that a wolf polymorph should also be allowed. The wolf form could run quickly and tirelessly, its bite would be awful, at least 2-7, but I would not let it drain any life levels. Its armor class would be 1 like the Vampire and if slain in this form Gaseous Form would occur.

The Vampire drains two full life levels in addition to the hit that does 5-10 points of damage. The lesser Vampire would only drain one life level but its hit would do the 5-10 points of damage since full transformation occurs the very next day. The Vampire and lesser Vampire have strong ties to the Negative Plane of Existence. The Vampire can control the touch if it desires to. Thus making posing as a living figure much more likely.

Does a Raise Dead affect a Vampire? I do not believe it would destroy the Vampire or sever the tie to the Negative plane but it could cause damage and perhaps lessens the Vampire's draining ability for a period of time. Let's define that as 6d6 damage but allow a save for 3d6. The affected Vampire could only drain one life level until it regenerated the points lost from the Raise Dead thrown against it. A lesser Vampire would take similar damage and if it survived it might so weak that it could not drain life levels at all until it regenerates. Lesser Undead would regenerate at 3 points per round like full Vampires. Holy water and Lawful Good Holy Symbols each do 2-7 points of damage if they touch the Vampire or lesser Vampire.

The Vampire, to me, is so alike to a living being, the most alike of all of the Undead, that even more powers and additional experience as well, might be allowed to Vampires. A Vampire who was a leveled adventurer in life could regain some of those powers with just a little practice and study. To become the lesser Vampire in the first place all of its levels were drained away but relearning could occur quite quickly and without a teacher to offer guidance. Only a master Vampire could regain some of its living levels and the powers that go along. The two most likely professions would be the mage and a cleric who prayed to an evil deity in the first place. These two classes could gain a level after each decade of being a master Vampire. The work would not benefit from killing and no experience could be gained by "adventuring". The limit of this regrowth would be limited absolutely to its level in life. It could *not* use items that only function on a living body like magical Rings, or Wands so many items listed for Mages or Clerics only might still be usable by the Vampire-Mage or the Vampire-Cleric. Naturally a Vampire that could cast spells would be worth more experience too. Regardless of the spheres of influence of the deity or the school of magic of the mage the DM would likely rule against many spells like Cure Light Wounds or Continual Light. It is also possible that 9th level might be the limit of such growth. This would give the Vampire Mage or the Vampire High Priest access to 5th level magic and no higher.

Also see "Good Evening" DRAGON #30 Oct. 1979 or Best of the DRAGON Vol. II 1981.

## Intelligent Noncorporeal Procreating Undead

## Shadows

The body of the Shadow is destroyed at the time of its creation. It is the first of the three noncorporeal procreating Undead that leaves a shell of Positive and Negative Material energy left behind coupled with some remains of the victim's Life Force. Since the body no longer exists it is clear that seeing and hearing cannot be the same. Instead the Shadow has a series of Detection-like spells to take its place. Detect Life Force is the first. It should radiate in a very wide arc from 180 degrees to perhaps 270 degrees. The range would likely be 120 feet at least.

The next detection would be of gradation of heat. This sensitivity would allow for better movement and existence in their environment. A range for this sensitivity could also be 120 feet with the mere difference of 1 degree being sensed close up at 10 feet or so and maxing at perhaps 5 degrees at 120 feet. This detection could then be fouled by artificial heat or cold.

Finally detection of aromas is a good choice. The air is passing through the shell of the Shadow and could thus be sensed at that time. A scent on the breeze might be noted downwind for a mile or more but upwind the range would be very little, perhaps only a few feet in a stiff wind.

The Shadow does touch the prime material to a small degree. Otherwise it would not be able to throw items into a cave or well to hide them. This contact is such that they can pick up objects in their pseudo hands. Something large or heavy might be too much for them. Thus a maximum weight of 50 pounds per Shadow could be invoked. The Shadow is virtually unsurpiseable by the living.

The Shadow's touch does 2-5 points of damage and drains a point of physical strength. This is a small piece of physical life energy. Those humans and demihumans brought to zero strength will become a Shadow at the next sunset. The Shadow avoids light, especially strong light which makes them easy to see. Otherwise in near darkness they are 90% invisible.

A Raise Dead thrown on a Shadow's shell could break the connection to the Negative material plane and thus destroy the Undead. I would allow a save of 13 to the Shadow to only take 3-18 points of damage instead of total destruction.

Holy water would hit them. For the purpose of this 'to hit' Holy Water is a magic weapon though there is not bonus to hit for magic. The shell of the Shadow would stop and break the vial of Holy Water, if it is thrown accurately, and it would break doing 2-8 points of damage. A miss might well shatter many feet away and thus there would be no damage to the Shadow.

Causing a Shadow to again be a living being appears to need a full Wish and a Heal! Each point of strength drained by a wounded Shadow would heal the Shadow one hit point on the round after absorbing the strength point. Otherwise they cannot be "cured" save by something like a Limited Wish thrown in their behalf. Like other Noncorporeal Undead they cannot hear so speech and magic based on sound would not affect them. To talk to them a Speak with Dead would be required. They can communicate with each other using the Negative material plane.

## Wraiths

The Wraith is similar to the Shadow but its shell is much more elastic and has no connection to the prime material. A Wraith could not pick up anything by physical means. It can Detect Life Force at 180 feet, Detect motion at 360 feet and Detect Heat differences at 240 feet. It has partial access to the ethereal plane as well. The body of the Wraith is not connected to the shell so destruction of the physical remains do not harm the Wraith in any way. Those drained to -1 level become lesser Wraiths, 3+1 HD, AC 4, 1-6 damage and their touch drains half of a level of experience in xp. The Wraith's Detections sweep through a 270 degree arc making surprising one very difficult.

Raise dead will destroy a Wraith but it is allowed a saving throw. Holy water can hit in the same way a Shadow can be hit. While Shadows shun the light, especially sunlight, Wraiths are totally powerless in sunlight. They best they could do is flee at top speed.

Because they have virtually no prime material existence they can seep and pour through small holes and cracks to flee or to come to the attack. A Wraith can be spoken to with Speak with Dead.

## Spectres



The Spectre and Wraith are similar in their abilities. However the Spectre leaves an image that looked like his real body. It is still non-corporeal and could seep into a crack or under a door if necessary. The Spectre drains two life energy levels when it touches a victim instead of just one.

Spectres may have bands of lesser. When it creates a lesser its maximum hit points for two of its hit dice not already at 8 points become 8 points. Thus a master Spectre who has four created four servants (all four do not need to still exist) will have 59 hit points.

## Intelligent Non-Procreating Undead

### Mummies

The AD&D Mummy has some good abilities and characteristics. But, to be honest, I always loved the Boris Karlov Mummy and I would like to see the monster have the ability to have some extraordinary abilities, over and above those listed in the text.

The Mummy comes into being by taking a corpse and embalming him or her with potion-like oils and fluids and by casting an appropriate spell as well. Since the *Monstrous Compendium* leaves this door ajar I will give a possible solution. The spell of choice is one of two, Curse or Mummify.

The Curse spell, while fourth level, will need a seventh or higher level cleric to be involved in the process. To not allow the Life Force to remain on a higher or lower plane, but to be forced back into the prepared body, is an act that cannot be called good. The priest is likely evil, therefore, but a case could be argued for a chaotic neutral. The resultant Mummy would become evil, its mind twisted and shaped by the horror of being called back to a body ravaged by death and by the concoctions that have been used to "clean" the body both inside and out. The corpse is then disemboweled. The lower internal organs are removed and some may remove the heart and upper digestive organs as well. A radical preparation would leave the entire torso devoid of any internal organs. In this scenario the person dies and his Life Force leaves the body. The spell and the timely preparation (let's say a week to a month) allow the Life Force to be partially called back and bound within a Negative and Positive Plane Energy shell or web. The Mummy produced in this way is nearly mindless, hence the intelligence range of 5 to 7. It wants more Life Force and must seek it constantly. It seeks its own Life Force but this is beyond its abilities. The powers of this Mummy are those listed in *Monstrous Compendium*.

The Mummified Mummy, however, has a major change. The Mummification spell preserves the mind INTACT and allows the Mummy to have its entire mental facilities. It can see both normally and with Infravision, hear, speak, and even taste. The disembowelment may still have occurred! The body preparation can be identical BUT a living figure could be given the appropriate oils and balms and then have the spell cast over it! A living figure cannot be made into a Mummy via a Curse spell [unless — you might allow even this if the caster High Priest were 14th or higher level. Mummify would be a fifth level clerical spell so only a High Priest could cast it.

The Mummified Mummy would have its intelligence as in life. As such it could retain powers it had in life like the ability to cast spells. Mages and Clerics would be ideal choices for the Mummification spell but high level Assassins, Thieves or even Fighters might gain. The Mummy is a very physically powerful figure, somewhat like the Vampire, and a roll for extraordinary strength for fighters (in life) would be appropriate. The Mummified Mummy would retain most of its statistics but Dexterity would suffer by 1-4 points and never be above 14 in any case. Charisma would also suffer by 2-8 points *except* for those already devoted to the person being so mummified — his henchmen or fellow clergy might be perfect choices. They would be affected as if the Mummy's charisma actually went UP by 1-4 points.

The Mummified Mummy would have all of the abilities of the Curse created Mummy. This Mummified Mummy, if a High Priest, could create more of its own kind but that is not "procreation" as I have used the word in this article.

The Curse created Mummy very much looks the part of the "Undead". It moves slowly, even staggering or showing some other manifestation of having been dead for a period of time before the preserving magic is cast on the corpse. Very seldom would such a monster take the precaution of disguising its appearance or origin or using tools or items it used in life. The Mummified Mummy might well be the opposite. He might try to merge into society and live among others to accomplish some long term or specific goal probably involved with his arcane or religious convictions.

Taking the Mummy and forcing into to live in a tomb or catacomb might be okay for the Curse created Mummy but it would not do for the Mummified Mummy. He might not consider his tomb in any special way and could easily abandon it to go on with a meaningful existence elsewhere. Finally the Mummified Mummy could hold back its powers at will,

its touch would *not* have to cause *rot* unless it desired this effect to occur. The only prohibition I see for the Mummified Mummy spell caster is that some spells delivered by touch or that involve curing might not be possible or might not be granted by the Mummy's deity. The DM might want to look at the spell casting Mummy's spell lists or Spheres of Influence and rule on what might and might not be possible for the Mummy.

## Ghosts

The method of making a Ghost is, at best, unclear. The vague creation rules in the Monstrous Compendium leave me a wanting more. Creation of a 10 HD monster should have some rhyme or reason to it since the vague method would leave the world littered with Ghosts. Any common man could rise in this way and its continued motivation and existence would be suspect or unclear. Therefore I think we need to begin by quantifying the monster's creation and then its purpose and limitations.

Haunting is a common Ghost trait and the place to begin the creation process. When the human dies he must be murdered or commit suicide. Death from disease or 'natural causes' will not yield a Ghost. The specific place cannot be Blessed or otherwise be Hallowed Ground. The person must be the victim of great betrayal, deception or rejection that produces great remorse or emptiness. Though anger, revenge or other emotions may accompany the death hopelessness must be the primary feeling at the instant of death. The unaware victim — one assassinated from behind for example — who does not know of his betrayal, for example, will not become a Ghost.

Hopelessness at the moment of death can open a doorway to the planes near the prime material — the ethereal, the Negative or the Positive. This chance should be quantifiable at 6% per level of experience (in life) maximizing at 66% (11th level or above). To then rise as a Ghost the victim would have to roll that number or less three times, one to open each doorway. If all three opened at once a shell is created and a portion, a tiny portion, of the victim Life Force remains behind in the shell in the form of a Ghost. Since the chance of this occurring is a product of the chances the zero level person never becomes a ghost. A first level victim has a  $6\% \times 6\% \times 6\% = .216\%$  chance, i.e. virtually nil. By 6th level the formula is  $36\% \times 36\% \times 36\% = 4.67\%$ , possible but unlikely. At 11th level  $66\% \times 66\% \times 66\% = 28.75\%$  — this could happen but certainly not always.

Once creation is defined the rest of the rulings can be made. The Ghost's primary existence is on the Ethereal Plane. Their it can be fought at a armor class of 8. The Ghost can control it semi-material form and thus it can choose to never appear in sunlight. A Sun brightness spell would do a "fireball's" damage  $1d6 \times$  the level of the caster topping at 11th level. Holy water can hit the semi-material form but a hit vs. AC 0 would have to occur.

The Ghost ages its victim by  $d4 \times 10$  years when it touches. Recall that such aging also requires a System Shock so aging can *kill* even if the victim's Life Expectancy is not reached. Life Expectancy must be rolled before the encounter with the Ghost. This roll is up to the DM but should allow for a ripe old age as a possibility. Begin with 65 for humans as a minimum and then go from there. That number, once rolled, may or may not be the final drop dead of old age number of the character. However, for this encounter, if that number is achieved then death will occur at once. Recall that even an elf does not wish to waste its life so no race will be eager to rush out and fight a Ghost just because its life expectancy is greater. Certainly the henchmen, if demi-human, do not race out to fight the Ghost while the boss waits in the background.

A Raise Dead spell can undo a Ghost. The Raise has to be thrown on the *remains* not on the Ghost itself. The remains would have to be within the correct number of days to be raised (days vs. level of the High Priest) for there to be any hope of a result. Once the body has lain too long Raise Dead on the remains has no effect whatsoever. Resurrection on the remains will undo the Ghost as well.

## Liches

The Lich is a spell caster who is cheating death. Instead of taking the longer (normal) life route he is using magic to prolong existence on the Prime Material Plane (or another Plane(s) for that matter. The Lich has many many tricks to protect itself not the least of which is use of magic, be in Illusion, or Alteration, etc. to cover its slowly rotting remains. At 18th or higher level the Lich will be sure to have acquired spells of protection and disguise. It is not unknown for many a Lich to appear alive due to a Shapechange for example.

(Aside: Can you Polymorph an Undead to something else? The Undead are not immune to polymorph but on the other hand a Skeleton or a ghoul cannot become a living horse or a flea or a dragon. Undead is Undead when it comes to polymorphing. Another form might emerge but the size change would be very small and the result would be a monster that certainly looks "mostly dead" — not meaning to step on the movie The Princess Bride. I suggest that "mostly dead" means almost totally devoid of life — I believe a little bit of Life Force is in most of the Undead.

The Lich has created himself, probably with the 'blessing' of his deity. He has been taught the spells of *lichdom*, the potions to craft etc. I wrote an article on this once for the DRAGON titled "Blueprint for a Lich" under the column title *Leomund's Tiny Hut*. Either the DRAGON #26 June 1979 or Best of the DRAGON Vol. II 1981.

Basically you can begin with many spells and many potions and still screw it up! If a deity was your partner before you begin the end result of *lichdom* is assured.

In line with this article his senses are those in life, plus improved Infravision and Ultravision, Detect Life at 120 feet, Detect Motion, Detect Heat and Detect Aroma. Sunlight, even direct would not affect a Lich other than to annoy it. Raise Dead would have no effect but Holy Water would do 2-8 points of damage.

## Limits on the Lesser Undead

A number of Undead can create Lesser Undead under their direct control. That list includes the Wight, Wraith, Specter and Vampire. The others, either cannot create Lessers (Skeletons, Zombies, Ghosts, Mummies, Liches) or the Undead created are just part of the pack (Ghouls, Ghasts and Shadows). To keep the world from being overrun by Master and Lesser Undead there must be a limit to their number. The limit could be their Hit Dice, thus a Wight could have four Lessers, a Wraith five, a Specter seven and a Vampire eight. Each of the Lessers must remain within as many miles of the Master as the Master has Hit Dice. To go beyond this limit is impossible for the Lesser but the Master could always leave the Lesser behind. If the Master does this, however, he could not be gone for more full days than he has Hit Dice or control is lost. If he returns within the time limit the Lesser would automatically be controlled again.

## Fear and the Undead

All Undead should have some chance to cause a fear-like effect of victims, especially at the initial sighting. In the chart on the Undead I have added a line in Special Attacks for fear effects. Minor Undead, like a Skeleton might only affect Men at Arms and zero level humans but as the Undead become more powerful than 1st and 2nd level characters might also have to check vs. fear to see if they would stay to face them. Rallying could of course be used and higher level figures immune to the Undead's first appearance fear might augment the save the lesser human has to make to stand and fight.

Knowledge is paramount to how the Undead are fought. The lower level figure is hit fairly easily by Undead and if a level draining Undead is faced low level humans should run at once! Lesser humans who realize that their weapons have no effect upon the Undead might also flee or at least assume no more than a support role in battle or melee.

## Experience awards and the Undead

The new Monstrous Compendium just does not award enough experience for some of the Undead. To call a Vampire, Wraith, Spectre and mummy all equal at 3000 xp is understating their potential. Start the Wraith at 3000, but a Spectre, who can drain 2 levels of experience, should be worth 4500 to 5000 xp. The Vampire with its additional powers and hit dice should be up to 7000 to 8000 xp. I must admit I liked the AD&D I method of giving experience. Base xp plus xp/hp. A Vampire with 11 hit points is not as terrible as one with 67 hit points! On monsters over 1000 xp I strongly urge the *old* method to fairly award xp for them. That would mean taking the table 31 and 32 of the DMG and modifying it so that some xp could also be awarded for the monster's hp. The easiest method would be to calculate the AD&DII experience award. Then define that as equaling a monster who has average hp, precisely 4 1/2 hp per hit dice. Those above or below that number would be worth more or less xp.

## Illusion and the Undead

Can you fool the Undead with an illusion of the senses? The answer must involve the senses the Undead has. Those that have eyes left or ears (that function) left could see or hear an illusion. The Detect Object or Detect Life ability could see through that illusion however. If an Undead cannot see in any case then Invisibility is a meaningless concept. Illusions that actually create a partial creature are only semi-illusions and the created figure/monster could still operate.

## The Deathmaster

The Undead can also be created by specialists in Necromancy. This person is called a Deathmaster and he is outlined in The DRAGON #76, August 1983, or Best of The DRAGON Vol. IV May 1985.

## The Positive and Negative Material

AD&D's Monster Manual referred to the Negative Plane and the Undead. Only the Mummy listed the Positive Material Plane if memory serves correctly. AD&DII's Monstrous Compendium takes a different view and assigns energy from both the Positive and the Negative Material Planes to the Undead. I have always dimly associated the Negative with evil and the Positive with good so having some sort of balance between the two in an Undead did not seem to make sense. If, however, you assume that the Positive is the conduit between the Life Force that remains in the body and the Life Force that has moved to Upper or Lower Plane of the Deity of the deceased then there can be an explanation. The Negative force gives the pseudo-life to the Undead, their Detection powers, their abilities. There is a spell to protect from Negative Plane Undead but not from the Positive so it holds true that the Negative is the "evil" side of Material Planes. The text of Negative Plane Protection almost contradicts the "fact" of Positive Material Plane connection and the Undead. If the Undead are already connected to the Positive Material then more exposure harming them, per the text of the spell, does not really follow unless the Positive connection as a Life Force connector is very limited and for a specific purpose only. It is the Positive energy that inhibits the decay of the Undead that still have bodies. It is the Positive energy that allows Level Draining, Strength Draining and "feeding" to produce repair of the Undead's body or shell. "Curing" if you will is a Positive Plane attribute even though the Negative Plane provides the force the Positive must direct it. Otherwise the two opposing forces should cancel out in an explosive manner. I think the energy from the two planes adds to the arguments for 'curing' and the presence of Life Force in the Undead per this article.

## Glyph of Warding — Undead

This is a particular variation of the Glyph of Warding spell available to High Priests, 9th level, and above. The Glyph will ward all types of Undead keeping them at bay or containing / controlling them depending of the application. The cleric casts the Glyph which must be anchored by a large gem, 250 gp or better (which could be on a piece of jewelry, in a wax seal, etc.). The anchor then forms the center of the Glyph or it can be on its surface.

The priest produces an elastic sphere of 20 feet in diameter. The Sphere cannot penetrate a solid object of any kind but can conform to tiny spaces or holes like the space under and around a door, the breaks between a coffin and the bier hold it, passing through a portal if the Glyph is centered on the gem and the priest is wearing it, etc. This elastic nature has almost no limits but it could not, at any one point, be more than 40 feet away from any other point.

Thus the Glyph could be placed on a door using a wax seal on the door lock and the actual sphere would go under and around the door and cover an area in the room beyond! The Undead is thus unable to escape from the sphere. If the Glyph is centered on the cleric, on some other person, or is made mobile in some way (carried by animal, swinging on the end of chain, etc.) the Undead could not penetrate the sphere.

To an Undead the sphere is not elastic at all, but hard as rock. If the Undead is in contact with it for one full minute the Undead will take a point of damage. The Sphere cannot keep out anything but undead so missiles, spells, a Vampire's Charm are not hedged. The Undead can only be forced so far by a mobile Ward. If an Undead is pinned and harmed by the Ward, using in like a weapon, there is a 10% chance per round that the Ward will break harming the person at the center of the Sphere for 2d6 damage.

The Ward can hedge out as many Hit Dice of Undead as the priest has levels. If too many undead attack the ward or are imprisoned inside it then the Ward will break with a 10% chance per excess Hit Die of the Undead being Warding. However, if the Ward is holding one or more Undead who are at or under the Hit Die Limit the Ward will not break regardless of what the Undead does.

Note: A spell casting undead cannot dispel magic on this Ward.