

UNEARTHED ARCANA 2026

VILLAINOUS OPTIONS

This playtest document is part of a series of *Unearthed Arcana* articles that present material designed for upcoming products. The material here uses the rules in the *Player's Handbook*.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This document presents four new subclasses:

- Cleric (Pestilence Domain)
- Druid (Circle of the Titan)
- Fighter (Hell Knight)
- Sorcerer (Demonic Sorcery)

This document also includes paths of villainy: groups of feats that provide characters a path toward thematic archetypes. The two paths of villainy in this document are the Path of the Death Knight and the Path of the Lich.

CONTENT WARNING

This material contains descriptions of body horror, disease, and insects that some readers might find disturbing.

THIS IS PLAYTEST MATERIAL

This article is presented for playtesting and feedback. The options here are experimental and in draft form. They aren't officially part of the game. Your feedback will help determine whether we adopt it as official.

How to Playtest This UA. We invite you to try out this material in play. To play with this material, you may either incorporate it into your campaign or run one or more special playtest sessions. For such a session, you may create an adventure of your own or use a short adventure from a source like *Dragon Delves*.

Power Level. The character options you read here might be more or less powerful than options in the *Player's Handbook*. If a design survives playtesting, we adjust its power to the desirable level before publication. This means an option could be more or less powerful in its final form.

Feedback. The best way for you to give us feedback on this material is in the survey we'll release on D&D Beyond. If we make this material official, it will be refined based on your feedback, and then it will appear in a D&D book.

Providing feedback on this document is one way you can help shape the future of D&D!

SUBCLASSES

This section presents the following subclasses: Pestilence Domain, Circle of the Titan, Hell Knight, and Demonic Sorcery.

PESTILENCE DOMAIN (CLERIC)

Foment Plague and Rot

Clerics of the Pestilence Domain harness supernatural plague and decay to erode their enemies' vitality. Though common folk often regard pestilence as a force of rampant destruction, Clerics of this domain wield it with surgical precision.

The Pestilence Domain is associated with gods of poison, disease, famine, and rot. These deities use blighted crops, magical outbreaks, and swarms of insects and vermin to motivate or punish mortals in accordance with their doctrines. Their followers include apothecaries, doctors, poisoners, and royal tasters. Other followers might devote themselves to a god of pestilence to spare their communities or loved ones from plague.

LEVEL 3: BLIGHT WEAVER

You gain the following benefits.

Inoculated Soul. You have Resistance to Necrotic and Poison damage, and you can't be infected by magical contagions.

Rot and Fester. Damage from your Cleric spells and Cleric features ignores Resistance to Necrotic and Poison damage. Additionally, when you cast a Cleric spell or use a Cleric feature that deals either Necrotic or Poison damage, you can change that damage to the other type.

LEVEL 3: PESTILENCE DOMAIN SPELLS

Your connection to this divine domain ensures you always have certain spells ready. When you reach a Cleric level specified in the Pestilence Domain Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

PESTILENCE DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Prepared Spells
3	<i>Detect Poison and Disease, Protection from Poison, Ray of Enfeeblement, Ray of Sickness</i>
5	<i>Stinking Cloud, Vampiric Touch</i>
7	<i>Blight, Giant Insect</i>
9	<i>Contagion, Insect Plague</i>

LEVEL 3: PLAGUE BLESSING

As a Magic action, you can present your Holy Symbol and expend a use of Channel Divinity to manifest a 5-foot Emanation of withering plague that surrounds you or one willing creature you touch for 1 minute. It ends early if you dismiss it (no action required), manifest it again, or have the Incapacitated condition.

Each creature of your choice that starts its turn in the Emanation must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or gain 1 Exhaustion level. This feature can't increase a creature's Exhaustion level higher than a level equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1 Exhaustion level). For example, if you have a Wisdom score of 16, this feature can't increase a creature's Exhaustion level higher than 3.

The plague spread by this feature manifests with a specific symptom. Choose it from the Plague Symptoms table or determine it randomly.

PLAGUE SYMPTOMS

1d6 While Infected, a Creature ...

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|---|--|
| 1 | Is drained of all color, appearing in monochromatic grays. |
| 2 | Sheds metallic, rust-hued flakes and creaks while moving. |
| 3 | Secretes foul-smelling mucus. |
| 4 | Is surrounded by a cloud of buzzing insects. |
| 5 | Sprouts fungi or other foliage from its flesh. |
| 6 | Is covered in glowing pustules. |

LEVEL 6: VIRULENT BURST

When an enemy within 60 feet of you is reduced to 0 Hit Points, you can take a Reaction to cause plague to burst from that creature, spreading pestilence in a 10-foot Emanation originating from the enemy; if the enemy had at least 1 Exhaustion level, the size of the Emanation increases to 20 feet.

Each creature of your choice in the Emanation makes a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, a target suffers one of the following effects:

Putrid Shock. The target has the Incapacitated condition until the end of its next turn. While Incapacitated, the target's Speed is 0.

Toxic Infection. The target takes 3d6 Necrotic or Poison damage (your choice).

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

LEVEL 17: VERMIN FORM

As a Bonus Action, you can shape-shift into a Medium swarm of Tiny pests, such as cockroaches, maggots, or rats. While you're in this form, you retain your general shape, personality, memories, and the ability to speak; any equipment you're wearing or carrying doesn't transform with you, but you can continue using that equipment while in this form. Your game statistics remain the same, apart from the following changes:

Condition Immunities. You have Immunity to the Grappled, Paralyzed, Prone, and Restrained conditions.

Damage Resistances. You have Resistance to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage.

Movement. You can enter and occupy another creature's space and vice versa. Additionally, you have a Climb Speed equal to your Speed, and you can climb difficult surfaces—including along ceilings—without needing to make an ability check.

Plague Bites. Whenever you enter an enemy's space, that creature takes damage equal to your Wisdom modifier; the damage is Necrotic, Piercing, or Poison (your choice). A creature also takes this damage when it enters your space or ends its turn there. A creature takes this damage only once per turn.

You revert to your true form after 10 minutes, if you choose to end the transformation (no action required), if you have the Incapacitated condition, or if you die.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a level 5+ spell slot (no action required) to restore your use of it.

CIRCLE OF THE TITAN (DRUID)

Wreak Colossal Havoc

When civilization violates the natural world—by deforesting ancient groves, polluting sacred waters, or hunting wildlife to the brink of extinction—Druids of the Circle of the Titan intervene. Druids of this order believe that for nature to thrive, society must sometimes fall. To this end, they assume towering, monstrous forms to mete out cataclysmic retribution and forcibly restore the natural order.

LEVEL 3: CIRCLE OF THE TITAN SPELLS

When you reach a Druid level specified in the Circle of the Titan Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

In addition, you can cast the spells from this feature while you're in your Titan Form.

CIRCLE OF THE TITAN SPELLS

Druid Level	Prepared Spells
3	<i>Cure Wounds, Longstrider, Thaumaturgy</i>
5	<i>Fear</i>
7	<i>Stoneskin</i>
9	<i>Destructive Wave</i>

LEVEL 3: TITAN FORM

When you use Wild Shape, you can adopt a Titan Form, choosing from the **Behemoth**, **Leviathan**, and **Insectoid** stat blocks presented later in this subclass's description.

You determine what your Titan Form looks like. Roll on or choose from the Titan Appearance table to inspire aspects of your form's appearance.

TITAN APPEARANCE

1d4	Behemoth	Leviathan	Insectoid
1	Reflective scales	Many-tentacled	Iridescent wings
2	Multiple heads	Translucent and bloblike	Compound eyes
3	Reptilian tail	Lamprey-like mouth	Chitinous horns
4	Woolly and simian	Serpentine body	Bioluminescent exoskeleton

LEVEL 6: DIRE IMPACT

Your Titan Form brings greater devastation. You gain the following benefits.

Elemental Rend. Whenever you hit with your Titan Form's Rend attack, you can cause it to deal your choice of Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder damage rather than its normal damage type.

Shock Wave. Your transformation upheaves your surroundings. Immediately after you assume a Titan Form or by taking a Bonus Action to expend a level 1+ spell slot while in your Titan Form, you can create a shock wave in a 15-foot Emanation originating from you. Each creature in the Emanation must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or have the Prone condition.

LEVEL 10: PRIMAL HAVOC

The unbridled power of nature surges within you, granting you the following benefits.

Improved Titan Form. You can choose to become Huge when assuming your Titan Form. Each Titan Form also gains an additional benefit, as noted in its respective stat block.

Above It All. While you are Huge or larger in your Titan Form, Difficult Terrain caused by heavy snow, ice, rubble, or undergrowth doesn't cost you extra movement.

LEVEL 14: MONSTROUS APPETITE

Your transformation embodies the vast size and terror of nature's titans. You gain the following benefits.

Gargantuan Size. You can choose to become Gargantuan when assuming your Titan Form.

Grappling Rend. Once per turn when you are Huge or larger and hit a creature with your Rend attack of your Titan Form, you can give the target the Grappled condition (escape DC equals your spell save DC). You can have only one target grappled in this way at a time.

Swallow. As a Bonus Action while you are Gargantuan, choose one Large or smaller creature Grappled by you. The target makes a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failure, you swallow the target, and the Grappled condition ends on it. A swallowed creature has the Blinded and Restrained conditions, has Total Cover against attacks and other effects outside of your stomach, and takes 2d8 Acid damage at the start of each of your turns.

The number of creatures you can have swallowed at a time equals your Wisdom modifier (minimum of one creature). You must maintain Concentration to hold swallowed creatures in your stomach. If you lose Concentration or leave your Titan Form, you regurgitate all swallowed creatures, each of which falls in a space within 10 feet of you and has the Prone condition.

BEHEMOTH

Large, Huge (Requires Druid Level 10+), or Gargantuan (Requires Druid Level 14+) Monstrosity; Your Alignment Doesn't Change

AC 11 + your Wisdom Modifier

Temp HP 2 times your Druid level

Speed 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

Str., Dex. Your Strength and Dexterity scores are equal to your Wisdom score in this form.

Con., Int., Wis., Cha. Your Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma don't change.

Senses Darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Your languages don't change.

CR — (PB is your Proficiency Bonus)

TRAITS

Rampager (Requires Druid Level 10+). When you enter the space of an enemy that is at least one size smaller than you for the first time on a turn, that creature is subjected to the following effect. *Strength Saving Throw:* DC equals your spell save DC. *Failure:* The target has the Prone condition. If the target already has the Prone condition, it instead takes 2d6 Bludgeoning damage.

Siege Monster. You deal double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Requires Druid Level 5+). You make two Rend attacks.

Rend. Melee Attack Roll: Bonus equals your spell attack modifier, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 1d8 plus your Wisdom modifier Slashing damage.

Incandescent Breath. You expend a level 1+ spell slot. *Dexterity Saving Throw:* DC equals your spell save DC, each creature in a 5-foot-wide, 60-foot-long Line. *Failure:* 2d8 Radiant damage per level of the spell slot expended plus your Wisdom modifier. *Success:* Half damage.

LEVIATHAN

Large, Huge (Requires Druid Level 10+), or Gargantuan (Requires Druid Level 14+) Monstrosity; Your Alignment Doesn't Change

AC 10 + your Wisdom Modifier

Temp HP 2 times your Druid level

Speed 40 ft., Swim 40 ft.

Str., Dex. Your Strength and Dexterity scores are equal to your Wisdom score in this form.

Con., Int., Wis., Cha. Your Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma don't change.

Senses Darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Your languages don't change.

CR — (PB is your Proficiency Bonus)

TRAITS

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water.

Toxic Stench (Requires Druid Level 10+). *Constitution Saving Throw:* DC equals your spell save DC, each creature of your choice that starts its turn in a 10-foot Emanation originating from you. *Failure:* 2d4 Poison damage, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Requires Druid Level 5+). You make two Rend attacks.

Rend. Melee Attack Roll: Bonus equals your spell attack modifier, reach 10 ft. *Hit:* 1d8 plus your Wisdom modifier Bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Ink Cloud. Trigger: You take damage. *Response:* You expend a level 1+ spell slot and release an inky cloud that fills a 15-foot-radius Cube centered on yourself, and you move up to your Speed. The Cube is Heavily Obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong current or wind (such as one created by *Gust of Wind*) disperses it.

INSECTOID

Large, Huge (Requires Druid Level 10+), or Gargantuan (Requires Druid Level 14+) Monstrosity; Your Alignment Doesn't Change

AC 8 + your Wisdom Modifier

Temp HP 2 times your Druid level

Speed 40 ft., Fly 40 ft.

Str., Dex. Your Strength and Dexterity scores are equal to your Wisdom score in this form.

Con., Int., Wis., Cha. Your Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma don't change.

Senses Darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Your languages don't change.

CR — (PB is your Proficiency Bonus)

TRAITS

Flyby. You don't provoke an Opportunity Attack when you fly out of an enemy's reach.

Hive Mind (Requires Druid Level 10+). When you assume this form, you forge a telepathic link with a number of creatures of your choice you can see and that can communicate in at least one language; the maximum number of creatures is equal to your Druid level. You and the chosen creatures can communicate telepathically with each other whether or not you share a language as long as you are on the same plane.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Requires Level 5+). You make two Rend attacks.

Rend. Melee Attack Roll: Bonus equals your spell attack modifier, reach 10 ft. **Hit:** 1d8 plus your Wisdom modifier Piercing damage.

Energizing Pollen. You expend a level 1+ spell slot and emit a cloud of healing pollen that can restore a number of Hit Points equal to 2d8 plus five times the expended spell slot's level. Choose any number of creatures within 15 feet of yourself, and divide those Hit Points among them.

HELL KNIGHT (FIGHTER)

Inflict Hellish Wounds and Damn Enemies

Hell Knights are the champions of archdevils and other high-ranking fiends of the Nine Hells, such as cambions and night hags. Armed with the techniques of the Nine Hells' fiercest warriors, Hell Knights inflict infernal wounds and fight with the tenacity of a devil.

Devils and other sinister figures employ Hell Knights to enact their will across the multiverse. A Hell Knight might serve as a soldier on the front lines of the Blood War, while another might be tasked with punishing creatures that violate infernal contracts or flee their consequences. Others act as interplanar bounty hunters, hastening the journey of wicked souls to the River Styx.

A Hell Knight's relationship with the Nine Hells is transactional. Archdevils see Hell Knights as an investment, and Hell Knights benefit in turn. The Hell Knight Pursuits table lists reasons why a Fighter might become a Hell Knight.

HELL KNIGHT PURSUITS

1d6 You Became a Hell Knight Because You ...

- 1 Desired treasures only the Nine Hells could grant you.
- 2 Hungered for power beyond mortal bounds.
- 3 Made a wager with a devil—and lost.
- 4 Sacrificed your soul to spare someone else's.
- 5 Sought vengeance on an adversary who wronged you deeply.
- 6 Were fooled by fine print in an infernal contract.

LEVEL 3: DIABOLICAL GIFT

As a soldier for the agents of the Nine Hells, you've been given fiendish powers. You gain the following benefits.

Devil's Sight. You can see normally in Dim Light and Darkness—both magical and nonmagical—within 120 feet of yourself.

Devil's Tongue. You know Infernal, the language of devils. If you already know Infernal, you learn another language of your choice.

LEVEL 3: HELLFIRE WEAPON

When you take the Attack action, you can imbue one weapon that you are holding with hellfire, transforming it into a Hellfire Weapon. It remains transformed in this way for 10 minutes or until you use this feature again, you die, or the weapon is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 minute or more. You can also end this effect early (no action required).

While transformed into a Hellfire Weapon, a weapon emits Dim Light in a 5-foot Emanation, and whenever you deal damage with the weapon, it can deal your choice of Fire damage or its normal damage type.

LEVEL 3: INFERNAL WOUND

Your Hellfire Weapon can inflict infernal wounds.

Infernal Wound Die. You have one Infernal Wound Die, which is a d6.

Inflicting Infernal Wounds. Once per turn when you hit a creature with your Hellfire Weapon, you can deal extra Fire damage equal to one roll of your Infernal Wound Die and give the target an infernal wound.

While wounded in this way, the target takes Fire damage equal to one roll of your Infernal Wound Die at the start of each of its turns. This effect lasts for 1 minute, until the target regains Hit Points, or until the target or a creature within 5 feet of the target takes an action to stanch the wound. A target can be affected by only one instance of this feature at a time.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a Short or Long Rest.

LEVEL 7: ADVANCED WOUNDS

When you roll your Infernal Wound Die and roll a 6, you can apply one of the following effects.

Purulence of Minauros. Caustic pus erupts from the wound. Each creature in a 5-foot Emanation originating from the target takes Acid damage equal to your Constitution modifier, and the target has the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn.

Rupture of Cania. The wound ruptures with a spurt of arcane energy. The target takes Force damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Stygian Gangrene. Infernal rime spreads out from the wound. The target takes Cold damage equal to your Constitution modifier, and it can't take Reactions until the start of its next turn.

LEVEL 7: HELL-FORGED EQUIPMENT

Your armor and weapons embody infernal armaments forged in the fires of Avernus, granting you the following benefits.

Fire Resistance. While wearing armor or wielding a Shield, you have Resistance to Fire damage.

Unholy Fire. Damage from your weapon attacks and Fighter features ignores Resistance to Fire damage.

LEVEL 10: HELLFIRE SURGE

When you use your Action Surge while wearing armor or wielding a Shield, you can superheat your equipment, causing it to erupt with hellfire in a 10-foot Emanation originating from you. Each creature of your choice in the Emanation must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw (DC equals 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, a target takes Fire damage equal to one roll of your Infernal Wound Die and is burning. On a successful save, a target takes half as much damage only.

LEVEL 15: BLISTER OF AVERNUS

Your hellfire leaves painful, boiling blisters. When you roll a 6 on your Infernal Wound Die, you can roll another d6 and add it to the damage. The maximum number of d6s you can add to the Infernal Wound's damage on a turn is three.

LEVEL 18: HELLFIRE CONDEMNATION

Whenever damage from your Hellfire Weapon or Infernal Wound reduces a creature to 0 Hit Points, the creature dies, and its soul rises from the River Styx as a **Lemure** in a layer of the Nine Hells of your choice in 1d4 hours. If the creature isn't revived before then, only a *Wish* spell can return the creature to life.

LEVEL 18: INFERNAL BARGAIN

When you roll your Infernal Wound Die, you can treat a roll of 1 as a 6.

DEMONIC SORCERY (SORCERER)

Summon the Powers of the Abyss

The corruptive magic of demons courses through you, making you a conduit for the infinite layers of the Abyss and their horrors. Your gift might stem from a distant demonic ancestry, a fated encounter with a demon that cursed you, or a brush with the dark hunger of the Abyss.

The Abyss is a plane of wickedness and disorder, and this chaos echoes in your innate magic. Abyssal energy erupts from you, warping your body and surroundings in tandem with your sorcery.

These Abyssal eruptions manifest in strange and gruesome ways. Roll on or choose from the Abyssal Manifestations table to inspire how your connection to the Abyss might manifest when you channel your demonic power.

ABYSSAL MANIFESTATIONS

1d6 Manifestation

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| 1 | Abyssal fissures mar your flesh, revealing windows into a vast demonic realm. |
| 2 | Insects writhe beneath your skin and escape from your mouth, nose, and ears. |
| 3 | Sheets of scorched skin peel from your body. |
| 4 | Your flesh bubbles and froths like a toxic bog. |
| 5 | Your fingers or other extremities discolor as if frostbitten. |
| 6 | You grow a second head. (This has no impact on your game statistics.) |

LEVEL 3: ABYSSAL RUPTURE

When you spend at least 1 Sorcery Point as part of a Magic action or a Bonus Action on your turn, you can unleash one of the following magical effects of your choice. You can do so only once per turn.

Demonic Lash. One creature you can see within 20 feet of you takes 1d4 Slashing damage, and if it is Large or smaller, you can pull it up to 10 feet closer to you.

Fiendish Carapace. Until the start of your next turn, attack rolls against you have Disadvantage.

LEVEL 3: DEMONIC SPELLS

When you reach a Sorcerer level specified in the Demonic Spells table, you thereafter always have the listed spells prepared.

DEMONIC SPELLS

Sorcerer	
Level	Spells
3	<i>Detect Magic, Entangle, Misty Step, Spider Climb</i>
5	<i>Dispel Magic, Gaseous Form</i>
7	<i>Confusion, Hallucinatory Terrain</i>
9	<i>Contact Other Plane, Hallow</i>

LEVEL 6: ABYSSAL AURA

When you use Innate Sorcery, you can infuse the chaos of the Abyss into your surroundings. While this use of Innate Sorcery is active, reality warps in a 10-foot Emanation originating from you, filling the area with a demonic effect. Roll on the Abyssal Effects table to determine the effect. If an effect requires a saving throw, the DC equals your spell save DC.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest. You can also restore your use of it by spending 2 Sorcery Points (no action required).

ABYSSAL EFFECTS

1d6	Effect
1	Sticky Webs. Thick webs fill the Emanation, making it Difficult Terrain for your enemies. Each enemy that starts its turn in the Emanation must succeed on a Strength saving throw or have the Restrained condition. A creature Restrained by the webs can take an action to make a Strength (Athletics) check against your spell save DC, ending the effect on itself with a successful check.
2	Caustic Ooze. Slick, oily gunk covers the ground in the Emanation, making it Difficult Terrain for your enemies. Each enemy that starts its turn on the ground in the Emanation takes 1d6 Acid damage and must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or have the Prone condition. This damage increases by 1d6 when you reach Sorcerer levels 11 (2d6) and 16 (3d6).
3	Terrifying Screams. Each enemy that starts its turn in the Emanation takes 1d6 Psychic damage and must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Frightened condition until the start of its next turn. This damage increases by 1d6 when you reach Sorcerer levels 11 (2d6) and 16 (3d6).

4 **Enthralling Spores.** Intoxicating spores fill the Emanation, which is Heavily Obscured for creatures of your choice. When you reach Sorcerer level 11, each enemy that starts its turn in the Emanation must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or have the Charmed condition until the start of its next turn.

5 **Poisonous Foliage.** The Emanation is Lightly Obscured by demonic flora. Each enemy that starts its turn in the Emanation takes 1d6 Poison damage and must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or have the Poisoned condition until the start of its next turn. This damage increases by 1d6 when you reach Sorcerer levels 11 (2d6) and 16 (3d6).

6 **Enervating Bones.** Spectral limbs erupt from the ground, reaching to sap the life around them. Each enemy that starts its turn in the Emanation takes 1d10 Necrotic damage and can't regain Hit Points until the start of its next turn. The Necrotic damage increases by 1d10 when you reach Sorcerer levels 11 (2d10) and 16 (3d10).

LEVEL 14: ABYSSAL CONDUIT

Your Abyssal powers reach their full potential. You gain the following benefits.

Aura Expansion. Your Abyssal Aura is now a 20-foot Emanation.

Controlled Chaos. Whenever you would roll on the Abyssal Effects table, you can roll twice and choose which of the two effects to use. If you roll the same number on both dice, you can instead choose any effect on the table.

LEVEL 18: FIENDISH SERVANT

You can cast *Summon Fiend* without a Material component. You can also cast it once without a spell slot, and you regain the ability to cast it in this way when you finish a Long Rest. When you cast it in this way, you must choose Demon for the summoned Fiend's type.

PATHS OF VILLAINY

This section includes two paths: the Path of the Death Knight and the Path of the Lich. Each path presents a selection of feats that represent a character's transformation into one of these two villainous archetypes.

PATH OF THE DEATH KNIGHT

Death knights are dastards, deserters, and disgraced champions, undead warriors who march toward perdition to fulfill selfish desires and slake their bloodthirst. A death knight's martial prowess is inextricably tied to their evil nature, but their heinous deeds extend far beyond the battlefield.

DEATH KNIGHT JOURNEYS

While each death knight is unique, every death knight's descent into villainy begins with a significant and dishonorable act—a deliberate wrongdoing or shameful mistake that marks their disgrace. You can roll on or choose from the Death Knight Journeys table to determine why your character has chosen to walk this path.

DEATH KNIGHT JOURNEYS

1d6 You Fell from Grace When You ...

- 1 Abandoned your companions in battle.
- 2 Betrayed a loved one.
- 3 Intentionally harmed an innocent.
- 4 Made a pact with a malevolent entity such as a demon lord.
- 5 Offended a benevolent god.
- 6 Violated a sworn oath.

DEATH KNIGHTS ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE

The death knights of D&D are dramatic figures whose tragic fates result from equally tragic sins. On many worlds, death knights' misdeeds spell doom not just for themselves and their companions but for entire kingdoms.

Notable death knights across the multiverse include the following:

Lord Soth, Knight of the Black Rose and ruler of Dargaard Keep on the world of Krynn

Olanthius, former general of the angel Zariel who became a death knight after Zariel's fall from grace

Saint Kargoth, favored servant of the demon lord Demogorgon and Greyhawk's first death knight

While most death knights refuse to atone for the acts that made them, it's possible for a death knight to repent and end their curse. Such was the fate of Lord

Vanrak Moonstar of Waterdeep, who repented to Selûne for betraying her in favor of her nemesis, Shar.
For more on death knights, see the *Monster Manual*.

PATH OF THE DEATH KNIGHT FEATS

The following feats represent one path a character can take to become a death knight. To complete the Path of the Death Knight, begin by taking the Death Knight Initiate feat, followed by any other Path of the Death Knight feat you choose. Finally, when you reach level 12 or higher, take the Death Knight Ascension feat.

DEATH KNIGHT INITIATE

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Level 4+, Weapon Mastery Feature)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Death Points. Your dedication to the path of the Death Knight gives you access to profane powers of undeath. Your ability to use such powers is represented by Death Points. You have a number of Death Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus. You regain all expended Death Points when you finish a Long Rest.

You can expend Death Points to use certain Path of the Death Knight benefits. This feat gives you one such benefit: Dread Strike.

Dread Strike. You always have the *Wrathful Smite* spell prepared. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You can cast it without expending a spell slot by expending 1 Death Point. When you expend Death Points to cast *Wrathful Smite*, the target has Disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws to avoid or end the spell's effect. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

DREAD AUTHORITY

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Death Knight Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Constitution or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Dread Command. You always have the *Command* spell prepared. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You can cast it without expending a spell slot by expending 1 Death Point. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have. When you expend Death Points to cast *Command*, Undead targeted by it have Disadvantage on the saving throw against the spell.

HARBINGER OF DOOM

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Death Knight Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength, Constitution, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Ill Omen. You always have the *Bane* spell prepared. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You can cast it without expending a spell slot by expending 1 Death Point. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have. When you expend Death Points to cast *Bane*, affected targets subtract 1d6 from attack rolls and saving throws instead of 1d4.

DEATHLY PRESENCE

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Level 8+, Death Knight Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength, Constitution, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Awful Presence. You always have the *Fear* spell prepared. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You can cast it without expending a spell slot by expending 1 Death Point. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have. When you expend Death Points to cast *Fear*, you deal 7 (2d6) Psychic damage to each creature that fails its saving throw against the spell, in addition to the spell's normal effects.

UNHOLY STEED

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Level 8+, Death Knight Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Spectral Steed. You always have the *Find Steed* spell prepared. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You can cast it without expending a spell slot by expending 1 Death Point. When you expend Death Points to cast *Find Steed*, the summoned steed is a Fiend, and targets you choose have Disadvantage on the Wisdom saving throw against its Fell Glare. You can also cast the spell using any spell slots you have.

DEATH KNIGHT ASCENSION

Path of the Death Knight Feat (Prerequisite: Level 12+, two Path of the Death Knight Feats)

Your path to becoming a death knight is complete.

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Undead. Your creature type is Undead.

Unholy Anatomy. You have Resistance to Necrotic and Poison damage. You don't gain Exhaustion levels from dehydration, malnutrition, or suffocation.

Hellfire Orb. As a Magic action, you can expend 1 to 5 Death Points to throw an orb of pure hellfire at a point you can see within 120 feet. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius Sphere centered on the chosen point makes a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 plus your Charisma modifier and Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, a target takes 2d6 Fire damage and 2d6 Necrotic damage per Death Point expended. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage.

PATH OF THE LICH

Liches are powerful spellcasters who have conquered death through the relentless pursuit of arcane power. All liches undergo a ritual that binds their soul to a spirit jar, a personal and well-protected object that allows the lich's destroyed body to re-form as long as the object is intact.

LICH RITES

The path to lichdom is unique to each who walks it. To complete the transformation, aspirants must fulfill a personal and often profane ritual. The Lich Rites table contains examples of such rituals to inspire your journey.

LICH RITES

1d6 To Conduct Your Ritual, You Must...

- 1 Consume one hundred souls to strengthen your magic.
- 2 Decipher and recite a forbidden incantation from a lost tome written in a dead language.
- 3 Use ancient abjuration magic to conceal yourself from the gods of death.
- 4 Pen a blasphemous verse and perform it in a defiled temple.
- 5 Craft a potion from your victims' remains and imbibe it beneath a full moon.
- 6 Corrupt your soul so completely no afterlife will accept it.

LICHES ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE

While the most infamous liches in D&D represent evil incarnate, liches can vary in alignments, motivations, and deeds. Those who achieve lichdom make their mark on the multiverse as demigods and despots, mentors and protectors, masters and manipulators. These storied beings include the following:

Renwick Caradoon, founder of the Knights of Samular in the city of Waterdeep

Szass Tam, Thay's zulkir of necromancy

Vecna the Archlich, Oerthian king and demigod of secrets and evil magic

Vlaakith the Lich-Queen, the ironfisted leader of the githyanki

Zlan, the frozen amalgamation of the seven liches who created the *Crystal Shard*

All liches have in common their arcane prowess, their undead nature, and the sequestering of their souls. For more on liches, see the *Monster Manual*.

PATH OF THE LICH FEATS

The following Path of the Lich feats represent one path a character can take to become a lich. To complete the Path of the Lich, begin by taking the Lich Initiate feat, followed by any other Path of the Lich feat you choose. Finally, when you reach level 12 or higher, take the Lich Ascension feat.

LICH INITIATE

Path of the Lich Feat (Prerequisite: Level 4+, Spellcasting or Pact Magic Feature)

You take the first steps toward lichdom, which involve creating your spirit jar, a magical vessel that anchors your soul to the world of the living in the event of your body's destruction.

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Creating Your Spirit Jar. Choose a Tiny object of great significance to you. Roll on or choose from the Spirit Jars table to inspire this object. You spend a Long Rest anchoring your soul to this object, allowing you to consume the souls of the living to bolster your own power. You can have only one spirit jar at a time. If you create a second spirit jar, the old one is destroyed.

SPIRIT JARS

1d6 Your Spirit Jar Is ...

- 1 An acorn from a forest destroyed long ago.
- 2 A love letter from a deceased paramour.
- 3 The inkwell that you used to scribe your first spell or prayer.
- 4 The defaced holy symbol of a god you've denounced.
- 5 A bell whose toll becomes lower with each soul you collect.
- 6 A desiccated body part—such as an eye, finger, or horn—that was once part of you or someone you knew.

Spirit Jar Destruction. Your spirit jar's Armor Class equals your spell save DC, and it has a number of Hit Points equal to your spellcasting ability modifier plus your character level. If your spirit jar is destroyed, you gain 2 Exhaustion levels, and you can't use the Soul Siphon ability until you create a new one.

Soul Siphon. When you reduce a Humanoid enemy to 0 Hit Points, you can consume its soul and gain a boost of arcane energy (no action required). On your next turn, the first creature you hit with an attack takes extra Necrotic damage equal to 1d6 plus your spellcasting ability modifier. You also gain this benefit if someone else reduces a Humanoid enemy within 10 feet of you to 0 Hit Points. A soul consumed in this way can be restored only by a *True Resurrection* or *Wish* spell.

ARCANE RESTORATION

Path of the Lich Feat (Prerequisite: Lich Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Essence Rejuvenation. When you use Soul Siphon to consume a soul, you can choose one or more expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level equal to no more than 4. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

TRANSFER LIFE

Path of the Lich Feat (Prerequisite: Lich Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Soul Transference. When you use Soul Siphon to consume a soul, you can choose a creature within 60 feet of yourself to gain Temporary Hit Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus plus your spellcasting ability modifier (minimum of 1 Temporary Hit Point).

UNDEAD GRASP

Path of the Lich Feat (Prerequisite: Lich Initiate Feat)

You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Paralyzing Touch. You know the *Chill Touch* cantrip. If you already know it, you learn another cantrip of your choice. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell (choose when you select this feat).

When you deal damage with *Chill Touch*, you can expend a level 1+ spell slot to attempt to paralyze the target. The target takes an extra 1d10 Necrotic damage per level of the spell slot expended and must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or have the Paralyzed condition until the start of your next turn.

LICH ASCENSION

Path of the Lich Feat (Prerequisite: Level 12+, at least two Path of the Lich Feats)

Your path to lichdom is complete. You gain the following benefits.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Undead. Your creature type is Undead.

Unholy Anatomy. You have Resistance to Necrotic and Poison damage. You don't gain Exhaustion levels from dehydration, malnutrition, or suffocation.

Frightening Gaze. You learn the *Fear* spell if you don't already know it, and you always have it prepared. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell (choose when you select this feat). You can cast the spell without expending a spell slot a number of times equal to your spellcasting ability modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest.

Rejuvenation. If you die, you re-form in 1d10 days if you have a spirit jar and aren't revived before then. You gain a new body, appearing with all your Hit Points in the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of your spirit jar.