

# Secrets of Necromancy

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**Playtest and errata comments welcome, and will be incorporated in future versions!**

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## Foreword

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**Welcome to Zodiac Gods Publishing's Secrets of Necromancy!** The *Secrets of Necromancy* is the first in a series of new class books written for use with *Dungeons & Dragons 4<sup>th</sup> edition*. Each book is designed to provide the player with all the content he needs for an interesting and unusual class option, including powers, skills, feats, racial options, magic items and more. The DM will get some additional monsters, the NPC stat block for the new class, some deities and plot hooks to integrate the class in to his campaign setting.

This first entry in the secrets series focuses on the necromancer, a much-loved villain throughout the history of *Dungeons & Dragons*, and a personal favorite of mine. This class makes for excellent villains and very dark antiheroes, and a DM should carefully evaluate it before letting players abuse the class in his home campaign. Some of the concepts in this class involve elements of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition rules that are only recently becoming apparent, such as how one might handle pets and servants. As DM, you should have final say on how this class will apply to your campaign setting, and it should be well within your rights to keep it restrained to NPCs if you so desire. Conversely, if a player your group really, really, *really* has a great idea for her gothic necromancer queen, and promises to be respectful of any house rules you make, then by all means let her give it a shot!

I appreciate feedback on this class, and will happily implement play test changes you discover in the course of play. This class has been designed with a reasonable attempt at balance, but counter weighted by a desire to evoke some specific intents and options for the necromancer that are indicative of its tradition in fantasy gaming. Meshing the "grim and cool" factor with the "balanced and fair" factor can be a tough line to walk, but I tried my hardest.

Thanks to Keith Dowell, John Diffley, and the many other Albuquerque area gamers who suffered through various "necromancy blitzes" in the regular games to hash out the playability of the class at hand. Thanks!

Version 1.12 note: special thanks to several purchasers in the last few days who have provided me a wealth of advice on the mechanics and format of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition system. Just goes to prove that even if you have been playing the game 10 hours a week for the last eight months, you may not know all you think you do! Special thanks to Alain Giorla who took the time to provide some excellent detailed feedback, which has been incorporated in version 1.12.

*Tori Bergquist*  
January 25, 2009

# Secrets of Necromancy-Revealed



## Introduction

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The tradition of black magic is ancient. Known as *necromancy*, this is a potent abominable force, in which the tethers of magic are corrupted to inevitably dark ends through the manipulation of forces of death and decay. In the worlds of fantasy gaming, this translates in to potent energies culled from the outer darkness and the far realm, channeled by its practitioners to harvest soul energy, bring the dead back from the beyond, and send terror in to the hearts of their foes.

The necromancer is a type of wizard, an arcane variant class featuring a wizard who specializes in necrotic energy attacks and the summoning, control, and creation of undead beings. This class is written to work as a viable player class, but the DM will find this class will be very useful in designing villains and foes.

Necromancers demonstrate strength in their ability to manipulate necrotic energies. There are two specific builds provided below to demonstrate different angles of this class: the summoner and the enervator. The summoner build focuses on the necromancer's ability to harness the undead for personal use. The enervator relies on his mastery of necrotic energy to weaken and subdue or slay opponents, while himself getting stronger through their suffering.

## Necromancy or Witchcraft?

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Traditionally the term necromancy referred to the divination of the dead, usually through invocation of spirits using bones or other remains, and sometimes through subtler or less charnel mechanisms. It was one of a long line of divinations that was popular in the old world, along with oineriomancy (divination through dreams), haruspicy (divination through animal entrails) and other more exotic mechanisms for learning of omens and future events.

In modern adventure fantasy, the necromancer has become synonymous with evil and the undead. No longer does the poor necromancer root through the remains of the dead, hoping for a glimmer in to the future or an omen of good or ill signs. In modern fantasy fiction and games, he is a potent arcanist who harnesses the power of the undead to harry his foes and terrify his neighbors. I guess he's a bit lonelier for all that antisocial mayhem, but power does tend to make up for such!

The necromancer is intended to be a supplement for the more traditional role of necromancer. To prevent this class from losing its own value I have derived some names and features from unusual sources; thus, the power of the necromancer comes from necromantic powers. Likewise, mysterious and dreadful mythic gods such as Ereshkigal, Ah Puch and others are the entities which serve as the source of power for necromancer.

This class should help fill a role for players who find the warlock class just a little too timid or gentle, or for a malicious DM who is seeking a truly malevolent foe to toss at his PCs. Either way, you should be able to get plenty of mileage out of necromancers!

## Alternative Titles for the Necromancer

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Looking for a more exotic title to grace the name of your necromancer? Try these!

***Haruspex***

***Black Magi***

***Hexen***

***Cultist***

***Thaumaturge***

***Diabolist***

***Hecatomb***

***Heka***

***Bocor***

***Nagual***



## New Races

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There are a number of races that dwell in the dark corners of the earth, waiting for the time most suitable to appear and weave their dark powers for the glory of their dreadful gods. A few members of these races may even break away and seek out their own path, perhaps having been cast out from their society for not feeling, well, inimical enough towards mankind and the other fair races. Any of these species are well suited for use as characters or NPCs.

DMs should read over the races below carefully before specifically allowing them in to their campaign world. Each race is a rare but monstrous offshoot of mankind, forever tainted by the dark powers that their forebears dabbled in. These races will make excellent models for tragic heroes or antiheroes, but this may not be suitable for every campaign setting. You have been warned!

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### Batrachians

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The dark race of batrachians may once have been human, but were long ago changed in to hideous aquatic humanoids in the service of the outer darkness. Batrachians are cousins to the kuo-toa, sahuagin and other pure species of aquatic humanoids, but the ancestral taint of man runs thick in their veins. Many batrachians are born to human mothers, and only later in life does the batrachian taint manifest, driving them in to the deep waters.

#### Racial Traits

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**Average Weight:** 200 to 300 lbs.

**Average Height:** 6' to 6'10"

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**Ability Scores:** +2 Str, +2 Con

**Size:** medium

**Speed:** 6 squares, 8 swimming

**Vision:** night vision

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**Languages:** common, batrachian

**Skill Bonuses:** +2 Athletics, +2 Stealth

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**Aquatic Denizen:** Batrachians are amphibious. They can swim 8 squares per round with no effort, and are unimpaired in watery environments. As amphibians, however, they must immerse themselves in water

for an extended rest. They do not receive the benefits of an extended rest without this immersion.

**Rending Claws:** Batrachians grow lengthy claws which they can retract at will as a free action. These claws are a natural basic attack which does 1D8+Str damage, and can be used in two weapon strikes as dual-wield martial melee weapons. They gain a +2 proficiency bonus with the claws.

**Sense the Taint:** Batrachians are exceptional at detecting the presence of taint in other creatures. Batrachians gain a +5 insight or perception bonus when trying to detect monstrous traits (defined by the DM) that a creature is attempting to hide.

You should play a batrachian if you want:

- The challenge of a character that is both powerful and limited by his own nature
- An outcast whose very nature is corrupted by dark forces that he may wish to pursue
- A character with a decidedly Lovecraftian Deep One theme

#### Batrachian Lore

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Batrachians begin their lives as humans or other demihumans who soon discover a taint in the family line, one which twists and warps them over time in to hunched, aquatic beings with traits not unlike a fish, octopus, or other deep sea creature. This mutation is dramatic, and the human elements of the batrachian are often obliterated by the time the transformation is complete.

Batrachians who gather together join communities, oftentimes with pureblood members of their kind (other deep ones such as kuo toa and sahuagin) and give in to the overwhelming urge to worship the aquatic death gods they revere. The worship of the Old One is irresistible to the batrachians.

Those few who are able to cast off the racial imperative to enter the deep oceans and spread the faith of the Old One tend to make good adventurers, although they must sulk at the edge of human communities, and are forced to always seek out a source of water in which to immerse them. Such a character has limits, but can be a clever and challenging personality to role play.