

UNEARTHED APOCRYPHA #3



“VILLAINOUS OPTIONS”

Unearthed Apocrypha

This document is part of a series of articles called *Unearthed Apocrypha* (UA). Content released in this series is designed for an upcoming expansion by Red Panda Publishing, and is currently in the play-testing phase. Each UA release is based around a theme, which determines what type of content may appear in the release.

Content released as part of this series is experimental and in draft form. It is not yet official, and content may be heavily revised or dropped entirely before the next official release. Whether or not this content is included in the next official release is determined by your feedback.

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The subclasses in this release were designed using the 2024 rules update, and UA playtest content will default to the 2024 language choices. Officially released content will include both 2024 rules, as well as 2014 conversions, to all applicable content.

Embrace the Dark Side

The theme for this UA release is “Villainous Options,” and explores the darker character options in the upcoming Apocrypha setting. We typically avoid truly evil character options, since playing a Pact of the Fiend Warlock in a setting where your primary antagonists are demons is a bit counterproductive to the narrative. However, there is a lot of room for morally gray characters, and some of our adventures (such as *Azrael’s Guide to the Apocalypse*) specifically call for Player Characters with a dark side. This UA release is going to dive into that dark side. Perhaps you want to play an evil a character that is slowly moving toward redemption. Maybe you were cursed when you were young, and the dark powers granted by this curse have stayed with you. Maybe you have forged a pact with the Leviathan (who is evil) in exchange for the power to fight the antichrist (who is even more evil). Whatever, the reason, it’s time to embrace your dark side...

Lineage: Faded

You died sometime in the ancient past. Your soul descended to Sheol, as it was supposed to, but then... something went wrong. Instead of fading entirely to become a **Shade**, the process halted, leaving your soul stranded in an in-between state... you are definitely not alive anymore, but for some unexplained reason your soul

is unable to rest.

Perhaps a necromancer was interrupted while attempting to call on your soul using the *Contact Other Plane* spell. Maybe a loved one is in danger, and your connection to them will not allow you to rest until you have protected them. Or maybe the ancient superstitions are true, and some souls need to spend 40 days wandering the earth before they can pass on. Work with your GM to determine why you exist... but regardless, you’ve got problems to deal with.

The Rephaim are troubled by your presence, calling you “ghost,” “specter,” and “wraith.” You don’t feel like a ghost, but it’s also hard to argue with their logic. Either way, there’s a bounty on your head, and it’s probably best to avoid the Rephaim until you can figure out what’s going on.

If there are any other Player Characters in your party that are Rephaim, work with the other players and your GM during session zero to determine why they have agreed to work with you. For example, maybe you have convinced your Rephaim companions that this is a unique case that needs to be studied for posterity. Perhaps they believe that the true culprit is the necromancer who summoned you, and that you can work together to lay your soul to rest. Or maybe it’s as simple as recognizing that your undead state was not created through malice or selfish desire, but has been forced on you against your will. Whatever the reason, you should resolve this potential conflict before it arises at the table.

Creature Type: Humanoid

Size: Medium or Small (your choice)

Lifespan: You are immortal unless destroyed.

Speed: 30 feet

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Undying. You are immune to Necrotic damage and the effects of the Fade. Additionally, you have Advantage on Death Saving Throws.

Unusual Nature. You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe.

Hover. You hover between a few inches and a few feet above the ground at all times. You are immune to the Prone condition.

Fade Magic. As you level up, your connection to the Fade grants you the innate ability to cast certain spells, as shown in the table. You can cast each of these spells without a spell slot, and regain the ability to cast it that way after finishing a Long Rest. You may also cast any of these spells using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Character Level	Spells
1	<i>Invisibility</i> (self only)
3	<i>Speak With Dead</i>
5	<i>Gaseous Form</i> (self only)
7	<i>Freedom of Movement</i> (self only)
10	<i>Etherealness</i> (self only)

Lineage: Golem

Golem are large, anthropomorphic creatures made entirely of inanimate matter (usually clay or stone). Imbued with a spark of life from their creator, golems mindlessly follow their commands (usually to guard a location or perform simple chores) to the letter. Golems are soulless constructs that lack any kind of sentience or identity. At least... that's what they're supposed to be.

You're a golem, but something about you is different. Through some experimental tech or surge of wild magic, you came to consciousness. Does this mean you have a name? A destiny? A soul? Right now you have more questions than answers, but you've found an adventuring party who accepts you for who and what you are, and maybe that's enough for now.

Creature Type: Construct

Size: Medium or Large (your choice)

Lifespan: 73 years from the exact moment of creation.

Speed: 30 feet

Unusual Nature. You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe.

Constructed Resilience. You are Immune to Acid and Poison damage.

Magic Resistance. You have Advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Antimagic Vulnerability. If you are exposed to a spell or effect that is designed to dispel magical energy, such as the *Dispel Magic* or *Antimagic Field* spells, your form begins to weaken and disintegrate. You take Force damage calculated by rolling a number of d8s equal to the level of the spell or effect. For an example, you take 8d8 Force damage for each turn you spend inside of an *Antimagic Field*, which is a level 8 spell.

Barbarian: Path of Shadows

"My rage burns to the depths of Sheol." -Deuteronomy 32:22

Through their rage, Barbarians are deeply attuned to the primal emotions of others. In some cases, this attunement creates an extraplanar connection between themselves and Sheol, the Plane of the Dead. Barbarians who walk the Path of Shadows are empowered by echoes of revenge, regret, and righteous fury from the souls of the deceased, and when they enter their rage, open temporary connections to Sheol, channeling its innate magic and allowing the rage of their ancestors to merge with their own.

Level 3: Sheol Surge

Your Rage taps into the unpredictable magic of Sheol. When you activate your Rage, roll on the Sheol Surge table to determine the magical effect produced. If the effect requires a saving throw, the DC is 8 plus your Constitution modifier and Proficiency Bonus.

d8 Sheol Surge Effect

- 1 Your body gains the ability to melt into wisps of shadow at your command. While your Rage is active, you can use a Bonus Action on each turn to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see.
- 2 Skeletal hands erupt from the ground beneath a creature you can see within 60 feet. The target must succeed On a Dexterity saving throw or it has the Restrained condition. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.
- 3 Wisps of shadow energy gather like a cloak around a creature of your choice within 30 feet. While your Rage is active, Attack rolls made against this creature have Disadvantage.
- 4 Shades appear and flit around a creature of your choice within 30 feet. That creature has Disadvantage on attack rolls while your Rage is active.
- 5 Inky black tendrils wrap themselves around your weapon. While your Rage is active, your weapon deals Necrotic damage instead of its normal damage type, and deals an extra 1d6 Necrotic damage to the first target you hit on each turn.
- 6 A specter appears in an unoccupied space of your choice within 30 feet and remains as long as your Rage is active. As a Bonus Action on each of your turns, you can command the specter to move up to 30 feet and make a single melee attack. The specter uses your attack roll modifier and deals an amount of Necrotic damage calculated by rolling a number of d6s equal to your Rage damage bonus.
- 7 Your mind fills with the whispering of souls from beyond the Veil. You cannot be Possessed and have Immunity to the Charmed and Frightened conditions while your Rage is active.
- 8 Your body seems to melt into the shadows around it, making it difficult to track your movements. You gain a +1 bonus to AC while your Rage is active.

Level 6: One with shadows

The influence of Sheol grows stronger. You gain the following benefits.

Darkvision. You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If you already had Darkvision, its range is extended by 60 feet.

Prowler. You know the *Pass Without Trace* spell and can cast it once with this feature. Constitution is your spellcasting ability for it. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a Long Rest unless you expend a use of your Rage (no action required) to restore your use of it.

Level 10: Umbral Reach

While your Rage is active, Whenever a creature you can see starts its turn within 5 feet of an area of dim light or darkness, you can take a Reaction to teleport into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target. You can then make one melee attack against the target as part of this Reaction.

Level 14: Chthonic Rage

While your Rage is active, magical darkness radiates out from you in a 30-foot emanation. The darkness spreads around corners, creatures with Darkvision cannot see through it, and it can only be dispelled by light from a spell of 3rd level or higher.

When you active your Rage, you can designate a number of creatures equal to your Proficiency Bonus that are not affected by this magical darkness and can see normally.

Cleric: Enmity Domain

"I will put enmity between your offspring and hers... cursed is the ground... thorns and thistles it will bring forth." -Genesis 3:15-18

When the first humans were led astray by a wicked serpent, a curse was placed on the very earth they walked. From that day forward, the earth brought forth thorns and thistles, and enmity was placed between the descendants of Eve, and the offspring of the Evil One.

While most high-minded clerics see the thorny brambles of the fallen world as a blemish to be ignored or erased, the Enmity Domain sees them as allies in vengeful war against darkness. As it was the devil that sowed thorns and suffering into the fertile earth, it is thorns and suffering that he shall reap. Clerics of the Domain of Enmity embrace thorns, thistles, biting insects, and venomous serpents: seeing them not as our enemies, but as fellow victims of the evil that corrupted our world the first place.

Level 3: Enmity Domain Spells

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

Cleric level	Spells
3	<i>Ensnaring Strike, Protection from Poison, Sammael's Venom, Spike Growth</i>
5	<i>Conjure Animals, Dora's Creeping Critter</i>
7	<i>Grasping Vine, Den of Serpents</i>
9	<i>Insect Plague, Wrath of Eden</i>

Level 3: Harvest of Thistles

As a Magic Action, you present your Holy Symbol and expend a use of your Channel Divinity to manifest a 10-foot Emanation originating from yourself for 1 minute. It ends early if you dismiss it (no action required) or have the Incapacitate condition.

The Emanation surrounds you with a tangle of thorns and thistles, and is difficult terrain for your enemies. Additionally, when you manifest the Emanation and as a Bonus Action on your subsequent turns, you can choose another creature you can see in the Emanation. The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC or take Piercing damage from the thistles. This damage is a number of d6s equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

Level 3: Venomous Affinity

As a Magic Action, you can sense elements of the fallen nature of the world. You are automatically aware of the presence and location of poisons and poisonous or venomous creatures within 30 feet of you. You can also identify what kind of creature or poison it is. 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 6: Dust Shall You Eat

The size of the Emanation created by your Harvest of Thistles increases to 20 feet.

In addition, when an enemy with a flying speed enters your Emanation, it must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or its flying speed is reduced to 0 and it cannot hover. This effect lasts for as long as your Emanation is active.

Level 17: Crown of Thorns

Your movement is unaffected by Difficult Terrain, and you have Immunity to the Restrained condition.

In addition, whenever a creature within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee attack, it takes 2d10 piercing damage as thorny brambles lash out from you in retribution.

Druid: Circle of Pestilence

"And I will send famine and pestilence among them, until they are consumed." -Jeremiah 24:10

Druids of the Circle of Pestilence embrace the power of disease, decay, and plague as an integral part of the natural world. While many hasten to call such Druids corrupted or even evil, Druids of this circle argue that the cleansing power of contagion is no more destructive or evil than war or slavery or any other malady wrought by human hands. In fact, perhaps Pestilence is merely nature's way of striking back against millennia of defilement and abuse against the very creation we were tasked with protecting. Your enemies may rally armies against you, but what power do swords and shields have against a pandemic?

Level 3: Circle Spells

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

Druid level	Circle Spells
3	<i>Detect Poison and Disease, Plague of Blood, Plague of Frogs, Ray of Sickness</i>
5	<i>Caustic Retreat, Plague of Infestation</i>
7	<i>Blight, Plague of Flies</i>
9	<i>Cloudkill, Contagion, Plague of Pestilence</i>

Level 3: Pestilent Miasma

As a Magic Action, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape feature to cause noxious vapor to burst from either yourself or your Wild Companion (your choice) in a 5-foot-radius sphere. Each creature of your choice within this area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your Spell Save DC or take 2d8 Poison damage and gain the Poisoned condition until the start of your next turn. A creature that succeeds on its save takes half as much damage and is not Poisoned.

The damage increases by 1d8 when you reach Druid levels 10 (3d8) and 14 (4d8).

Level 6: Plague Doctor

You gain Proficiency in Medicine. If you already had Proficiency in this skill, it becomes Expertise.

In addition, you know the *lesser restoration* spell and can cast it once with this feature without expending a spell slot. You can also cast it with any spell slots you have of an appropriate level. You regain the ability to cast it with this feature after a long rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Level 10: Natural Immunity

You are Resistant to Poison damage and Immune to the Poisoned and Diseased conditions.

Level 14: Mutated Strains

Whenever one of your spells or abilities would deal a type of damage from the following list, you can change that damage type to one of the other types in the list: Acid, Poison, Psychic, Necrotic. You can change which type to use each time you deal damage.

Rogue: Shadow of Death

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." -Psalm 23:4

Rogues work in the shadows, often operating as instruments of death. But for some Rogues, their relationship with death is more...personal. Such Rogues see themselves as devout servants of the Horseman of Death itself, and their weapons as consecrated instruments of reaping.

Such Rogues, who refer to themselves as Shadows of Death, are not cruel or bloodthirsty, but rather see death as a natural and necessary part of life which eventually comes for us all. Shadow of Death rogues are usually the mortal enemies of those who seek to prolong their lives through unnatural means, such as liches or other Undead, which they consider to be a direct insult to the sanctity of the domain of Death.

Level 3: Valley of Shadow

You do not need to have cover or be obscured in order to take the Hide action.

Level 3: Whispers of Sheol

You know the *augury* spell, and can cast it once with this feature without Material components or spell slots. You regain the ability to cast it this way again after a Long Rest. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for it.

Level 9: Mantle of the Reaper

As a Bonus Action, you sprout spectral wings that last for 10 minutes or until you dismiss them (no action required) or have the Incapacitated condition. During that time, you gain the following benefits. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

Flight. You have a fly speed equal to your Speed.

Reaping. When you reduce a creature to 0 Hit Points,

you also regain a number of Hit Points equal to Your Rogue level

Level 13: Necrotic Weapons

When you deal Sneak Attack damage, you can choose to deal Necrotic damage rather than its normal damage type.

Level 17: Avatar of Death

You gain the following Cunning Strike options.

Touch of Death (Cost: 9d6). The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or it dies.

Ethereal Form (Cost: 7d6). Immediately after the attack, you take on a ghostly, ethereal appearance until the start of your next turn. While in this form, you have Immunity to Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing damage, and can move through creatures and objects as though they are difficult terrain. If you end your turn inside a creature or object, you take 1d10 Force damage and are shunted into the nearest unoccupied space.

Wizard: Sciomancer

"As I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone." -Ezekiel 37:7

Your studies have focused on the process of death, the magic of shadows, and the innate properties of Sheol. While the uneducated person might refer to you as a "necromancer," you know that nothing could be further from the truth. While Necromancers seek immortality and insult the forces of death by raising undead servants against their will, your interest in death is much more "consensual."

Your research has confirmed what ancient folklore has always believed: that some souls are restless, wandering the Veil in the company of the angel of death, unable to pass on for one reason or another. Often these restless souls are eager to provide aid or pass on information to the living, making them valuable allies in the fight against evil.

As a Sciomancer, you seek to participate with death, drawing on the magic of Sheol to connect with the souls of the faithful departed, not to control them, but to find ways that you might aid each other.

Level 3: Sheol Savant

Choose two wizard spells from the Necromancy school, each of which must be no higher than level 2, and add them to your spellbook for free.

In addition, whenever you gain access to a new level of spell slots in this class, you can add one Wizard spell from the Necromancy school to your spellbook for free. The chosen spell must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Level 3: Shadow Magic

When you cast a Wizard spell that deals damage, you can change its damage type to Necrotic.

Level 6: Channel Sheol

You can call on Sheol to replenish your reserves of magic, allowing you to use your Arcane Recovery feature more than once. When you begin a Short Rest and have no more uses of Arcane Recovery left, you can use this feature to restore your use of it (no action required).

Each time you use this feature, you gain a level of Fade, as described below. Rephaim, Constructs, and Undead are immune to the Fade.

A level of Fade may only be removed by an effect that says that it removes Fade. The effects caused by a level of Fade end if a creature's Fade level is reduced below that level.

Fade Level Table

1	Your skin, clothing, and nonmagical possessions turn a dull gray color.
2	Your eyes turn jet black and your hair turns white. You can now only perceive the world in shades of gray.
3	You gain resistance to Necrotic damage and vulnerability to Radiant damage, and you no longer need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe.
4	You lose all memories of your life prior to gaining your first level of Fade.
5	Your walking speed decreases by 5 feet. You can move through solid objects as if they were difficult terrain. If you end your turn inside of an object or creature, you take 1d10 Force damage and are shunted into the nearest unoccupied space.
6	Your Proficiency Bonus becomes 0. Each time you finish a Short or Long Rest, you lose all of your memories.
7	You become a Shade as your body and mind are consumed by Sheol. Only divine intervention, wish, or similar magic can reverse this transformation.

Level 10: Prophecy of Dry Bones

You always have the *Ezekiel's Dry Bones* spell prepared, and can cast it as a Bonus Action.

You can cast the level 3 version of this spell without expending a spell slot. You can cast it in this way a number of times equal to your current level of Fade (minimum of once), and regain all uses after finishing a Long Rest.

Level 14: A Vast Army

When you use your Prophecy of Dry Bones feature to cast *Ezekiel's Dry Bones*, you now cast the level 5 version.