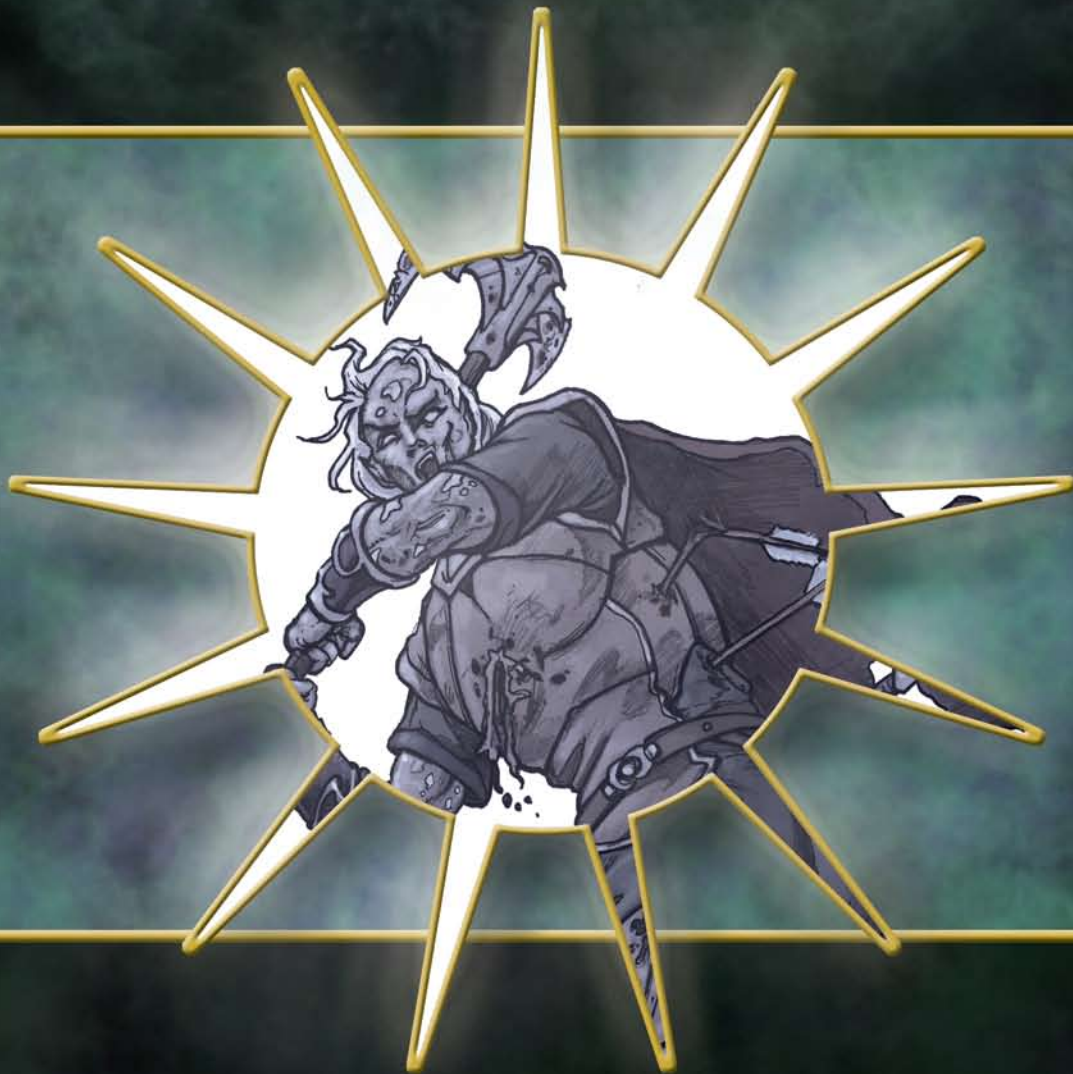


RACES OF THE SHROUD

# THE HALF-DEAD



ONE  
BAD  
EGG

THE  
SHROUD

WORLD  
SEED





RACES OF THE SHROUD  
**THE HALF-DEAD**

Writing • Fred Hicks • Lee Hammock

Editing • Adam Dray

Layout • Fred Hicks

Art • Storn Cook

## WE ARE LISTENING!

We want your feedback! This is a **living document** that needs quality feedback from fans of Dungeons & Dragons like **you**.

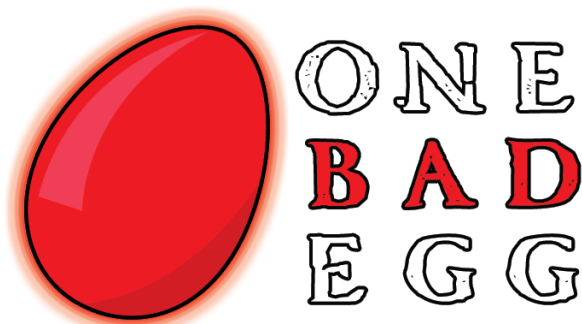
If something in here particularly rocks or particularly stinks, we want to hear about it. Please drop us a line at

[feedback@onebadegg.com](mailto:feedback@onebadegg.com)

and share your thoughts!

If we think we need to change something here in response to the feedback we get, we absolutely will, and we'll post updates to this document whenever we can.

Working together with fans like you is important to us. Come be a part of the Egg!

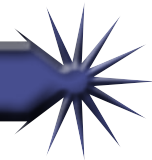


[www.onebadegg.com](http://www.onebadegg.com)

RACES OF THE SHROUD: THE HALF-DEAD  
©2008 One Bad Egg, LLC

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Compatibility Logo, D&D, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, and MONSTER MANUAL are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. in the USA and other countries and are used with permission. Certain materials, including 4E References in this publication, D&D core rules mechanics, and all D&D characters and their distinctive likenesses, are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used with permission under the Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Game System License. All 4E References are listed in the 4E System Reference Document, available at [www.wizards.com/d20](http://www.wizards.com/d20).

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4th Edition PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, written by Rob Heinsoo, Andy Collins, and James Wyatt; DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, written by James Wyatt; and MONSTER MANUAL, written by Mike Mearls, Stephen Schubert and James Wyatt © 2008 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.



*Tragic figures cursed to wander the earth, neither fully living nor fully dead*

## RACIAL TRAITS

**Average Height:** 5'4"-6'5"

**Average Weight:** 110-250 lb.

**Ability Scores:** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution

**Size:** Medium or Small

**Speed:** 6 squares

**Vision:** Low-light

**Languages:** Common, choice of one other

**Skill Bonuses:** +2 Endurance, +2 Intimidate

**The Dead Rise:** You may stand up as a minor action.

**Half-Dead Resistance and Weakness:** You have resist necrotic 5 + one-half your level, and vulnerable radiant 5.

**Relentless:** You gain a +5 racial bonus to saving throws against dying.

**Shroudborn Origin:** You are considered a creature of the Shroud for the purpose of effects and powers that relate to creature origin.

**Horrified Wrath:** You can use *horrified wrath* as an encounter power.

## Horrified Wrath

Racial Power

*Your wounds overcome your living mind, and the undead brute within breaks free.*

**Encounter**

**Immediate Reaction**     **Personal**

**Trigger:** You become bloodied by an attack.

**Effect:** Add your Constitution modifier as necrotic damage to your attacks until the end of your next turn. You are at -2 to your defenses vs. any fear attacks or abilities while this power is in effect.

Infected with dark, necrotic magics while dying, the half-dead have returned only part-way to life, their flesh afflicted by an undead curse. Though they can be killed, Death's grip upon the half-dead is a slippery one at best. Half-dead characters—whether tragic heroes or dark villains—hound their foes relentlessly, driven to action by the horror of their condition. Many half-dead seek to hide their nature from others. When the half-dead are

finally revealed for what they are, much of the world responds with horror, revulsion, and worse.

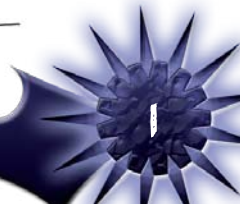
**Play a half-dead if you want ...**

- ◆ to be a tragic hero cursed by necromancy.
- ◆ to be death-resistant and relentless.
- ◆ to be a member of a race that favors the defender role, particularly the fighter class.

## PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Members of any race can find themselves among the half-dead. The half-dead's original race is still recognizable on some level, but all half-dead lose their original racial qualities and undergo the same changes.

In appearance, all half-dead resemble a recently deceased version of their original race, but the specifics



vary greatly among individuals. A half-dead's skin becomes a sickly pale color, often splotched with purple from the pooling blood from their semi-functional circulatory system. As they age, they become increasingly gaunt, no matter how much food they eat. After a few years they look to be perpetually starving. Their faces become sunken, tight-stretched masks with little expression. Some half-dead conceal their nature with makeup or clothing that conceals. However, their milky, blank eyes never can be hidden short of magic. This gives them a lost, haunted gaze that never seems to focus on anything—at least anything in the land of the living.

Many of the half-dead's bodily functions, such as hair growth or healing of injuries, stopped when they left the ranks of the fully living. Each half-dead is unique. Which processes continue differs among individual cases. Some are able to grow hair but cannot heal without scarring. Others quickly lose their teeth to rot but continue growing fingernails without a problem. All half-dead eventually smell like a graveyard, never quite rotting but giving the impression something is not right within them. This half life makes it difficult for the half-dead to conceal their true natures, the longer they exist.

## PLAYING A HALF-DEAD

The half-dead are drawn from all races, professions, and people among the Shroud, but they all have one thing in common: they were not willing to lie down and die. Without exception, all half-dead died with some great feat left unaccomplished. Their drive to finish this task and the power of the Shroud have given them a second chance. Thus half-dead are all driven, willful sorts who have the power to fight back death. Resolving a quest does not release a half-dead. Indeed, even when others have taken up the half-dead's lost quests and brought them closure, the half-dead continues to exist. Death is the only real escape from this half-life. Once the half-dead are returned to the land of the living, at least in part, they can only leave by dying again. Some half-dead are driven mad by this realization, having found no comfort in closure. There is no peace in this world for the half-dead, save what they make.

Generally, all half-dead have the personality, cultural knowledge, and memories of their living existence, though most now see these beliefs through a dark and sardonic filter. The great causes they valued in life often look pale and empty through the eyes of the dead.

Many half-dead are deeply sarcastic, cynical, and bitter people. Some manage to find new causes and beliefs to champion, but most avoid placing too much faith in anything but themselves. More than a few half-dead lose faith in their gods, who (the half-dead reason) must have abandoned them to this half-life rather than letting them rest in peace.

Some of the half-dead try to reinsert themselves back into their old lives, but this rarely works. Few people are comfortable around the half-dead, especially when it's a husband, mother, or friend. This drives most half-dead to seek out new homes; often their search never ends due to the widespread fear and violence that greets them. Many people cannot differentiate between a half-dead and an undead, and angry mobs have executed more than a few well-meaning half-dead due to such confusion. Many half-dead live as hermits, wandering adventurers who conceal their true nature, or who reside among the more spiritual tribes of the Ghostcrag Peaks, where consorting with the dead is not such an issue.

Many of the half-dead show a strange affinity for the ancient ruins scattered across the Ghostcrag Peaks. They explore and research these ancient and little known remains of an elder civilization. Some go mad in this pursuit. Others pay the mystery little mind aside from a quick investigation. Theories about this affinity to these mountainous ruins abound. Some believe that the energy animating the half-dead is the essence of the spirits of this long dead civilization, whereas others think the Shroud itself directs them to find something in these ancient ruins.

**Half-Dead Characteristics:** Cynical, dedicated, outcast, persecuted, searching, self-reliant, solitary, unstoppable, vengeful, willful

Half-dead individuals usually set aside their “mortal names,” and adopt monikers that better fit their accursed state. Those who do not take on a *cursed name* have names appropriate to the race they were when fully alive.

**Cursed Names:** Bonewalker, The Breaker of Graves, Dead Jack, Gaunt, Heinrich the Pale, The Lost Brother, The Mockery, Raven, Shadowheart, The Wronged Son



## HALF-DEAD ADVENTURERS

Three sample half-dead adventurers are described below.

For Mercy, a half-dead paladin of the Pale Wanderer, something as simple as death will not stay her from apprehending the necromancer Aarsok the Accursed. She was once a human paladin of great skill. Mercy spent years tracking down Aarsok, who killed off her tribe, but she was never quite able to kill him. Five years ago, she thought she had cornered him in a box canyon only to find it was a trap. The necromancer ambushed Mercy and she fell to the hordes of undead common in the Ghostcrag Peaks. Unfortunately for Aarsok, Mercy died on a cliff edge and fell out of his reach. She was able to escape being animated by Aarsok. Instead, Mercy rose up as a half-dead to continue her mission. She has not yet given much thought to what her life will be once her quest is over, but for now the quest is enough.

William the White, a half-dead fighter, sees his second chance at life as an opportunity to atone for his evil deeds. Before his death, he was a raider and pillager with few equals. William died in an avalanche during a caravan raid that was to be the last raid. He had planned to leave the Shroudlands and retire to the south in style. Driven by his greed and desire for the easy life, William refused to die and instead awoke as a half-dead trapped under tons of rubble. He was trapped for days before his cries were heard by a shaman of the Pale Wanderer, who had stopped to bury the dead from the caravan. The shaman dug up a transformed and reformed man who had found his old life wanting. Being stuck under the rubble with nothing but his own conscience had driven William to vow that, should he ever escape, he would right the wrongs he had wrought on the world. Now he works to hunt down every raider he worked with. William hopes that his second chance at life will let him earn a decent place in the hereafter before his time comes again.

The Shaman of Plagues is a half-dead witch doctor of the Bone-of-the-Mountain tribe. He has held the position for hundreds of years. Driven by the need to protect and serve his people, the Shaman fought off the approach of death at a young age, when a plague struck his village. He became infected with plague after caring for the sick and died in short order, but this was not enough to stop the willful Shaman. He rose again and continued his treatment of the dead. Eventually, the Shaman developed a treatment that used local herbs to

eliminate the illness completely. He has served as the healer and advisor of the tribe ever since, but despite his help and power, he lives apart from his village to avoid the fearful glances of the people and the cries of children as he approaches. While the Bone-of-the-Mountain tribe values the Shaman of Plagues, they also fear him, but he bears this burden for the greater good.

## NEW FEATS

### HEROIC TIER FEATS

#### BACK FROM THE DEAD [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisites:** Half-dead, *Relentless* racial ability

**Benefit:** Add your Constitution modifier to your healing surge value for any healing surge you take while at or below 0 hit points.

#### BREATHLESS [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisite:** Half-dead

**Benefits:** Add your Constitution modifier to the number of rounds you can hold your breath before needing to make Endurance checks.

#### DEATH SUSTAINS ME [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisite:** Half-dead

**Benefits:** You gain a +10 feat bonus to any Endurance check made to ignore hunger or thirst.

#### DEATH'S SLIPPERY GRASP [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisite:** Half-dead

**Benefit:** You are not considered dead until your hit points are reduced to your full hit point total expressed as a negative number.

#### GO DOWN FIGHTING [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisite:** Half-dead

**Benefit:** You gain the *go down fighting* racial attack power.

## Go Down Fighting

Feat Power

*As you are struck with a mortal wound, you return the blow in kind.*

### Encounter

**Immediate Reaction**    **Melee weapon**

**Trigger:** You are reduced to 0 hit points or fewer by an attack

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** Make a melee basic attack against the target.

**Hit:** Normal damage for your melee basic attack.

**Miss:** Strength modifier damage.

## HORRIBLE BLOW [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisites:** Str 15, Half-dead

**Benefit:** When you score a critical hit on a Large or smaller size opponent, you may push the target one square.

## STILLNESS OF THE GRAVE [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisite:** Half-dead

**Benefits:** You gain training in Stealth.

When standing perfectly still, you gain a +2 feat bonus to Stealth.

## PARAGON TIER FEATS

### LINGERING HORROR [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisites:** Half-dead, *horrified wrath* racial power

**Benefit:** Attacks affected by your *horrified wrath* power also inflict ongoing 5 necrotic damage.

### ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE GRAVE [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisites:** Half-dead

**Benefit:** When you score a critical hit, you deal an extra 1d10 damage and may shift 1 square.

## EPIC TIER FEAT

### NEVER DEAD [HALF-DEAD]

**Prerequisites:** Half-dead, *Relentless* racial ability

**Benefit:** When you roll 20 or higher on a death saving throw (see the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4TH EDITION PLAYER'S HANDBOOK**), you may spend an additional healing surge beyond the one already allowed.

## HALF-DEAD (TEMPLATE)

Half-dead are humanoids who were revived by necromantic magic while dying, but not yet fully dead. The result is a cursed fusion of the benefits of both the living and the undead—fast on its feet like a living man and tough to kill like a zombie. Unfortunately, the process leaves the victim with a mind at war with itself, prone to lash out uncontrollably in moments of horrified clarity.

**Prerequisite:** Humanoid

### Half-Dead

Humanoid

### Elite Soldier

XP Elite

**Horrified Fury** aura 1 (only active when bloodied); the half-dead must make a melee basic attack as a free action against each creature that begins its turn in the aura. This aura remains in effect for the rest of the encounter. While the aura is in effect, the half-dead is at -2 to all defenses against attacks and abilities that use the fear keyword.

**Defenses** +2 AC; +4 Fortitude, +1 Reflex; see also *horrified fury*

**Resist** 5 necrotic at 1st level, 10 necrotic at 11th level, 15 necrotic at 21st level

**Vulnerable** 5 radiant

**Saving Throws** +2

**Action Point** 1

**Hit Points** +8 per level + Constitution score

### POWERS

#### The Dead Rise (minor)

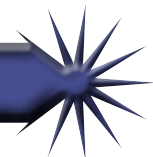
The half-dead may stand up as a minor action.

**Relentless** (the first time the half-dead drops to 0 hit points)

Make a new initiative check for the half-dead. On its next turn, the half-dead rises (as a minor action) with hit points equal to half its bloodied value.

## HALF-DEAD MINOTAUR

If a living minotaur is relentless, a half-dead minotaur takes “relentless” to an entirely new level. Fallen minotaurs are summoned back to life by dire purposes: battles left unfought, dark lairs that won't release their grip on their horned guardians, and so on. It all adds up to the simple truth that few things are more dangerous than a wounded half-dead minotaur, overcome by the horror of its existence.



**Half-Dead Minotaur** Level 10 Elite Soldier  
**Medium natural humanoid** XP 1,000

**Initiative** +7 **Senses Perception** +14

**Horrified Fury** aura 1 (only active when bloodied); the half-dead minotaur must make a melee basic attack as a free action against each creature that begins its turn in the aura. This aura remains in effect for the rest of the encounter. While the aura is in effect, the half-dead minotaur is at -2 to all defenses against attacks and abilities that use the fear keyword.

**HP** 204; **Bloodied** 102; see also *ferocity* and *horrified fury*

**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23

**Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 5

**Action Point** 1

⚡ **Thundering Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⚡ **Thunder, Weapon**

+16 vs. AC; 1d12+6 thunder damage, and the target is marked until the end of the half-dead minotaur's next turn.

⚡ **Thundering Charge** (standard; at-will) ⚡ **Thunder**

The half-dead minotaur makes a charge attack: +17 vs. AC; 1d8+6 thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone.

**The Dead Rise** (minor)

The half-dead minotaur may stand up as a minor action.

**Ferocity** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

The minotaur warrior makes a melee basic attack.

**Relentless** (the first time the half-dead minotaur drops to 0 hit points)

Make a new initiative check for the half-dead minotaur. On its next turn, the half-dead minotaur rises (as a minor action) with 51 hit points.

**Alignment** Any **Languages** Common

**Skills** Dungeoneering +12, Intimidate +11, Nature +9

**Str** 23 (+11) **Dex** 10 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+7)

**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 9 (+4) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** scale armor, heavy shield, thunderous battleaxe

## HALF-DEAD MINOTAUR TACTICS

A half-dead minotaur opens with a *thundering charge* that puts it right at the center of a fight. Once there, it marks opponents with its *thundering battleaxe*, drawing plenty of abuse and damage from its enemies. When bloodied, the half-dead minotaur's *horrified fury* is unleashed, making it a whirlwind of death that doesn't stop even when the first death-blow falls, thanks to *ferocity* and *relentless*.

## THE HANGED MAN

After years of looting and pillaging, the bandit lord Silas Creel finally met his end on the gallows of the town of Ryhill a few weeks ago due to the tireless efforts of the town guard captain, Hella Wulfson. Unfortunately for the residents of Ryhill, Silas was not content to remain dead. He climbed down from the gallows later that night to begin a new reign of terror. No longer content to steal, Silas seeks his revenge on the people of Ryhill one by one. Hella and her guards have been unable to stop the new half-dead version of Silas, and the town has put up all the money they have as a bounty on his head. He's wanted, dead or alive—or anything in between—as long as he is stopped.

## THE LONGEST ROAD HOME

When Marcus Idyrod was killed in the depths of an ancient ruin, he thought it was the end of his research expedition to study the magical effects of the region around the Ghostcrag Peaks. Through his love to his family this was not the case, but now he is alone, the only survivor of his doomed expedition. When the characters come across him wandering half-mad through the mountains, he is more than willing to promise a sizeable part of his family fortune if they can see him safely back home. Whether his family will accept him when he gets there, and whether his mind will survive the journey without descending further into madness... that's another story.

## NO SON OF MINE

The village of Hog End has suffered terribly of late. One of its most promising young people went missing during a blizzard several days ago while trying to bring the village's herd in from the cold. To make matters worse, an undead creature has been seen skulking around the village and trying to enter homes, but the locals chased it off with fire and steel each time. The villagers are desperate to find someone to deal with the blasphemous creature and find their missing herdsman. They have not yet realized that the creature and herdsman are one and the same.





## THE WORST KIND OF KNOWLEDGE

Necromancers are interested in every manner of undeath, but so far the half-dead have escaped their understanding. In an effort to create a suitable population to experiment on, the necromancer Alda Balli has begun kidnapping tribal people, torturing them at length, and then killing them in the darkest hope of creating half-dead. So far her experiments have not succeeded, but this means little to the tribes she has attacked. Those tribes are all looking for aid in getting their revenge.

## A SECOND END

The warrior Earnest Garren died the first time while preventing his long time foe, the undead creature known as Eytaker, from killing off a tribe of apelords. His drive to destroy his hated foe caused him to rise as a half-dead, and he spent several more years fighting Eytaker before finally destroying him. Now that Garren has seen the end of his life's cause, he looks to end his life, but first there are sights he wishes to see, experiences he wishes to have, and final scores to settle—regrets from his former life lived too narrowly. For those scores in particular, Garren needs guides and allies. He hopes these suicidal battles will end his days once and for all, honorably—a death had while standing up. Hopefully, the allies he's talked into accompanying him won't follow him to his death, but it's difficult to say whether or not the thought has occurred to him.

### HORRIFIED WRATH

ENCOUNTER • RACIAL POWER

#### Immediate Reaction

##### Personal

**Trigger:** You become bloodied by an attack.

**Effect:** Add your Constitution modifier as necrotic damage to your attacks until the end of your next turn. You are at -2 to your defenses vs. any fear attacks or abilities while this power is in effect.

**Constitution modifier** =



*Your wounds overcome your living mind, and the undead brute within breaks free.*

### GO DOWN FIGHTING

ENCOUNTER • FEAT POWER

#### Immediate Reaction

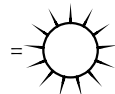
##### Melee weapon

**Trigger:** You are reduced to 0 hit points or fewer by an attack.

**Target:** The triggering creature.

**Attack:** Make a melee basic attack against the target.

**Hit:** Normal damage. =



**Miss:** Strength modifier damage.

**Strength modifier** =



For use with the 4th Edition

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, and Dungeon Master's Guide core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, Inc.