

THE DEAD KING

WARLOCK PACT OPTION

Holding aloft a bone charm belonging to a dead god, a tiefling clad in black robes begins the incantation that will defile the earth beneath her feet for her undead lord.

A human raises her hand and points forward, and the skeletons under her sway charge ahead as one. As they break against her foes, she waves her hand, and the largest of them explodes in a gout of vile green ichor.

A halfling wearing a top-hat sighs and pinches the bridge of her nose, as her skeleton cohorts stand thoughtlessly before her under a banner reading “Milfred’s Fabulous Dancing Dead.” Raising her bone wand, she eyes the group up and down before intoning, “Alright. Once more, from the top.”

Many dark, powerful things that have died choose not to stay fully dead, clinging onto a semblance of half-life through only their powerful magics. Such creatures could be liches, gods of death, or powerful death knights, and almost universally these creatures seek out worthy minions to brandish and control the dark arts of necromancy as they do.

Warlocks that sell their souls for necromantic power often seek the protection that only the eternally loyal dead can offer, as well as attempting to discern the nature of life after the grave. These potent spell-casters can



commune with the dead and command small cadres of undead minions, but their grim patrons ubiquitously barter for their services after death and well into eternity as faithful undead lacking free will, which will likely last much longer than most warlocks care to admit.

There are no shortage of undead gods, kings, queens, ladies, lords and liches willing to make this pact with willful would-be necromancers, and some of these that may exist in your setting are Nerull, Strahd, Acererak, Vecna, Orcus, The Worm That Walks, Velsharoon, Osiris, Chemosh, and Kiaransalee.

EXPANDED SPELL LIST

The Dead King lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you choose a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

DEAD KING EXPANDED SPELLS

Spell Level	Spells
1st	<i>inflict wounds, ray of sickness</i>
2nd	<i>blindness/deafness, web</i>
3rd	<i>stinking cloud, feign death</i>
4th	<i>phantasmal killer, Evard's black tentacles</i>
5th	<i>cloudkill, hallow</i>

ACCURSED RETAINERS

The dead serve your will, and the will of your dread patron through you. Your patron instills in you the power to call the dead to bended knee, and the keen senses to detect where the dead lie buried.

At 1st level, as an action you may raise a skeletal retainer from an available corpse or bone pile. These retainers have AC 10, 1 hit point, and a Strength of 8, and cannot attack or speak. You may only have one skeletal retainer raised and accompanying you at any time.

Once on each of your turns as a bonus action, you can mentally command the retainer to move up to 15 feet and interact with an object. The retainer can perform simple tasks that a human servant could do, such as fetching things, cleaning, mending, folding clothes, lighting fires, serving food, and pouring wine. Once you give the command, the retainer performs the task to the best of its ability until it completes the task, then waits for your next command. If you command the retainer to perform a task that would move it more than 60 feet away from you, it will wait at the edge of the 60-foot radius for further commands.

At 5th level, your retainer gains a Charisma score of 6 and can speak simple words and phrases.

At 9th level, the retainer has the ability to detect all undead or intact corpses dead for more than a day within 60 feet of it

and not behind total cover, but will not necessarily have the initiative to inform you of a presence unless you ask it directly.

Starting at 13th level, your retainer gains an Intelligence score of 10, training in Arcana, History, or Religion (your choice, when you raise the retainer) which uses your proficiency bonus, and it gains the ability to speak fluently in full sentences.

At 17th level, you may raise up to two retainers, and may have a maximum of two retainers accompanying you at any time.

MASTER OF DEATH

The will of your patron flows through you, and you have become versed in channeling it into the bones of the dead to raise powerful, combat-ready servants.

Once you reach 6th level, you may, as an action use a warlock spell slot to raise one undead minion, either a skeleton elite, flame skeleton, or warhorse skeleton, from a corresponding pile of bones or corpse (from a horse for the warhorse, from a Small or Medium humanoid for the others) within 10 feet. The statistics for the skeleton elite and flame skeleton are available at the end of this document, and the statistics for the warhorse skeleton may be found on page 273 of the *Monster Manual*, with the exception that the warhorse you raise may not attack.



Undead creatures raised by this feature gain the following benefits:

- The creature's hit point maximum is increased by an amount equal to your warlock level.
- The creature adds your proficiency bonus to its damage rolls from attacks.

You may raise up to two of the creatures from this list instead of one at 7th level, and up to three of the creatures here at 9th level.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any creature you made with this ability if the creature is within 60 feet of you (if you control multiple creatures, you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the creature will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as to guard a

particular chamber or corridor. If you issue no commands, the creature only defends itself against hostile creatures. Once given an order, the creature continues to follow it until its task is complete.

These creatures last until they are killed or until the end of the next short or long rest, upon which they crumble into dust. If these creatures would expire due to a rest, you can instead gain one less warlock spell slot from the rest per each spell slot spent on this feature to keep them active.

BONE ARMOR

At 10th level your patron demonstrates to you the secret ways in which death can be used as a tool to preserve life.

Whenever you take damage and have an undead creature you control from the Master of Death feature within five feet of you, you may use your reaction to take half the triggering damage and have the undead creature you control take the same amount of damage, of the same type and from the same source. This damage may not be negated or avoided in any way. If using this ability causes your minion to fall to 0 hit points and die, you gain temporary hit points equal to twice your Charisma modifier.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

CORPSE EXPLOSION

Upon reaching 14th level, you learn from your patron a brutally effective way to do away with minions that have outlived their usefulness.

As a bonus action on your turn, you may target an undead creature from the Master of Death feature that you control within 60 feet of you and cause it to explode, reducing it to 0 hit points and killing the targeted creature that you control instantly. You may also use this ability as a reaction when one of your raised undead creatures within 60 feet of you is reduced to 0 hit points, in which case that minion must be the one you choose to explode.



All non-undead creatures within 5 feet of the exploding creature must make a Constitution save versus your spell save DC. Creatures that fail this save take 9d6 poison damage and are poisoned for up to one minute, while creatures that succeed on this save take half this damage and are not poisoned. Creatures that are poisoned by this ability repeat the Constitution save at the end of each of their turns, and are no longer poisoned if they succeed.

You must finish a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.



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SKELETON ELITE

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 15 (2d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the skeleton can deal an extra 2 (1d4) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the skeleton that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

FLAME SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 10 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison, fire

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Ignited Illumination. The flame skeleton is constantly smoldering, and may fully ignite or extinguish itself as a bonus action. While ablaze, the skeleton sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. The skeleton ignites automatically without spending a bonus action whenever it takes the Firebolt action.

ACTIONS

Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) fire damage.

Firebolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+2) fire damage.