

# REVENANTS

## DEATH OR VENGEANCE



**I**N ANCIENT LORE, LEGENDS SPEAK OF THE DEAD returning to life in order to right a terrible wrong. Corpses which seek revenge upon the living, unable to fully rest until their grisly task is complete. While most stories portray revenants as wicked monsters, in truth their goals can also be noble - protection, or justice. This article introduces the revenant as a new race for fantasy, future, or modern campaigns.

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## REVENANTS

Revenants are people who have returned from beyond the grave to finish a specific task. Walking corpses, revenants are pale creatures, often confused with vampires, and are feared as agents of terror and destruction. In truth, their goals vary greatly.

**Revenge.** The most common purpose of a revenant is that of revenge, either for its own death or for the deaths of those close to it. A revenant bent on vengeance will not stop until the focus of its bloodthirsty desires is destroyed.

**Protection.** Some revenants return to protect a loved one. Often these revenants keep their true nature a secret - at least as much as possible - and focus their activities on keeping a specific person safe from harm.

**Love.** Strong emotions, especially those of love, can result in a revenant rising from its grave. Unrequited love, in particular, is often a driving force; revenants are also known to be created when two lovers die together, returning to the world to spend eternity in each others' embrace. Separating such pairings can result in long, endless searches for one another.

**Justice.** Those wrongly accused of a crime can return to unlife with the singular goal of exposing the true perpetrator and clearing their own name. Often these creatures cannot be satisfied until the true criminal suffers the same fate that the revenant did.

**Guardians.** Sometimes revenants are brought back against their will by necromancers or higher powers. These revenants are tasked with guarding holy or precious items for all eternity.

### CHOOSING A GOAL

When selecting a revenant's goal, the player and the GM should work together to choose something achievable within the campaign. The goal is not intended to be a shield protecting the PC from death forever, but rather a task which the PC strives to accomplish.

If the PC does not strive to accomplish this goal, she goes insane.

## Racial Traits

As a revenant, you look much as you did in life. Your skin is pallid, and those who know you will often think you are ill. Any injuries sustained during your death remain, although many revenants go to great lengths to hide or cover fatal wounds.

You are single-minded, and hard to injure.

Revenants excel at hunting prey; they make excellent trackers, bounty hunters, and assassins.

**Size:** Medium.

**Attributes:** CON +2, WIL +1, INT +1

**Skill choices:** *history, law, religion, disguise, hardy, tracking, scent.*

## Exploits

**Undead.** You have the undead creature type. You have the Evil virtue, and detect as such, whatever your personal moral code may be.

**Everliving.** Whenever you are reduced to 0 HEALTH, you do not form a death dice pool. Instead, you rise the following day at half your normal HEALTH maximum. Each time this happens, your normal HEALTH score is permanently reduced by 2 points.

If you are reduced to a negative HEALTH value equal to twice your normal full HEALTH score, you are permanently destroyed.

**Defiled.** You cannot heal or be healed other than the normal overnight healing that all creatures benefit from. Additionally, you are Vulnerable (1d6) to holy damage.

**Ageless.** You do not age. You will continue to live forever unless destroyed.

**Darksight.** You can see in the dark as though it were normal daylight.

**Goal.** You have a specific goal, such as revenge, protection, love, justice, or guardianship. Establish your goal with your GM. Once that goal has been accomplished, you lose all the above revenant exploits. You are finally able to die normally if reduced to negative hit points.

## REVENANTS IN FICTION

The revenant is a popular fictional archetype - the creature who returns from death to seek revenge or complete a task. From Clint Eastwood's *High Plains Drifter* to James O' Barr's *The Crow*, revenants abound in popular culture - even if they are sometimes mistaken for zombies or vampires.

The revenant came from Irish Celtic mythology, and was popular in Middle Ages folk tales and superstitions. Usually regarded as evil, blood-drinking monsters, legends claim that the only way to kill a revenant is to decapitate it or to remove and burn its heart. Such claims are very similar to those associated with vampires and zombies.

Thereupon snatching up a spade of but indifferent sharpness of edge, and hastening to the cemetery, they began to dig; and whilst they were thinking that they would have to dig to a greater depth, they suddenly, before much of the earth had been removed, laid bare the corpse, swollen to an enormous corpulence, with its countenance beyond measure turgid and suffused with blood; while the napkin in which it had been wrapped appeared nearly torn to pieces. The young men, however, spurred on by wrath, feared not, and inflicted a wound upon the senseless carcass, out of which incontinently flowed such a stream of blood, that it might have been taken for a leech filled with the blood of many persons. Then, dragging it beyond the village, they speedily constructed a funeral pile; and upon one of them saying that the pestilential body would not burn unless its heart were torn out, the other laid open its side by repeated blows of the blunted spade, and, thrusting in his hand, dragged out the accursed heart. This being torn piecemeal, and the body now consigned to the flames...

- William of Newburgh

