

Necronom (Prestige Class)

Life, death and undeath are merely states of existence. Although often mistaken for necromancers, the rare Necronoms view themselves differently. They research not to control or to serve the powers of evil, but to understand the world in which they live. Fear of death is like superstition to them, and the undead are simply powered by *different* energies than the living. What matters is not what you are, but what you make of it. Basically, there are three different types of Necronoms. The first type are visionaries, hoping to achieve something so great that it will change the world forever. Most of these Necronoms are good-aligned, longing to find a cure for disease and death, or even to release the sparks of divinity which exist in all life. The second type are like dark mirrors of the visionaries. Their experiments are not limited by moral thoughts, and their visions are in no way for the good of all. They work only to unleash the limitless energies of their own existence. Their goal is to become god-like, and all who stand in their way will be crushed.

In between the two extremes, there are brilliant minds driven by some very individual desire. Bringing back their true love from the dead, or bringing vengeance to someone who wronged them, are possible goals for these Necronoms. They work tirelessly to achieve this, their unbreakable belief that what they do is right giving them the energy and endurance they need.

All of these Necronoms have a few things in common. Their intelligence exceeds that of most other people, and the only rules they follow are those that bring them closer to their goals. Even if they respect law and order, they would rather leave their homelands than give up their research.

Requirements

To qualify for becoming a Necronom, the character needs to fulfill the following criteria:

Intelligence: 18

Alchemy: 10 ranks

Knowledge (nature): 5 ranks

Feats: Iron Will, Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item

Special: The Necronom must have experienced a situation in which he had to face death. The experience must have been very personal, threatening either his own life, or that of a person important to him.

Class Skills

The Necronom's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (Int), Profession (Wis) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at each level: 1 + Int modifier

Class Features

As he gains experience and understanding, the Necronom learns to handle both the physical shell that inhabits the soul, and the energies that grant life, undeath, and free will. But while all Necronoms basically gain the same core understanding, it's their choice how exactly they use their exceptional knowledge.

The following are the Necronom's class features which he gains over time. Note that the creation of pseudo-zombies and creating/changing body shells require a fully equipped alchemic laboratory.

Exceptional willpower: A Necronom's desires are so strong, so deep that almost nothing can make him leave his path. He gains a +2 bonus against any spells, supernatural powers etc. that affect his mind, and he gains a completely immunity to any mind affections that attempt to make him stop his experiments.

Anatomy: Through observation and experiment, the Necronom learns about specific functions of the various body parts, and the physical similarities that all beings share. With a successful Intelligence check (which the DM can modify or even disallow, depending on the situation), the Necronom can find vulnerable spots, physical weaknesses or immunities, tell whether a person has a disease or not (and what kind of disease it is), or how certain wounds have been inflicted. Each such information takes 1d20+10 minutes to find, in which the Necronom concentrates fully on this task alone. The Necronom can use this knowledge to cause extra damage in a battle by focussing on vulnerable parts or to support healers (increase such effects by 10%, rounding up, if no other information is available), or as preparations for using more powerful Necronom class features.

Energy channeling: The flow of the energies of life and death has to be understood by every Necronom. Over time, he develops an innate feeling for these energies, and learns how to channel them. By use of gem stones, he can harness or store such energies, influence the way they flow, or even unleash them as a weapon.

To channel energy, the Necronom needs a pure gem stone of a value of at least 2.000 gold pieces for every hit

die he wants to channel. In a complex ritual which combines science with magic, the gem stone is the focus through which the energies of life or undeath are re-directed. The Necronom can make the energies flow into the gem stone and store them there, or he can make energies from one body or body part flow into another. This way, he could heal one person with the life energy of another, or kill a living person through the negative energies of an undead (or vice versa). The ritual takes 3d20+60 minutes to perform, and all involved beings, except of the Necronom, have to be bound so they can't move a bit (which would endanger the ritual). Besides directly using these energies, he can also store them in the gem stone. The Necronom could use the gem stones for later experiments, or he could use them as "energy grenades". Destroying such a gemstone unleashes the energies stored within. All beings in a ten-yard radius are affected by the energies. Negative energies harm living beings and heal undead, while positive energies have reversed effects. The stored energies are splitted up equally on all affected beings. Healed beings can receive hit points even above their usual maximum, but all received hit points fade again after 1d20+10 minutes. A being that receives more than double its normal maximum of hit points has to succeed a Constitution check or burst into pieces as the body is overwhelmed by the vibrant energies.

Create pseudo-zombie: Through a combination of the above two class features, the Necronom learns to channel energies into dead bodies, reviving them without granting them a mind. The Necronom needs a gem stone which has stored the energies he wants to use. He then has to use his Anatomy ability on the body he wants to revive. The DM should secretly roll this check, because the Necronom is not aware whether he maybe missed an important detail. If the check fails, so the ritual is doomed to fail.

The ritual to create a pseudo-zombie takes a full day of preparations, after which the Necronom channels the energies into the dead body. This act takes much strength from the Necronom, and he temporarily loses 2d4 points of Constitution in the process. If his score falls to or below 0 points, he becomes unconscious. The Necronom recovers these points at a rate of 1 point per 6 hours.

The pseudo-zombie earns as many hit points as were stored in the gem. Depending on the energies, he can be either a living or undead being, but has no mind at all. He does not react to commands of any kind, but can repeat simple actions almost infinitely after someone has made his body move accordingly. Pseudo-zombies cannot be controlled or turned, do not defend themselves, and have no special powers to speak of.

Create or change body shell: Having learned all the intricacies of the physical shell and how it is influenced by the energies of life and undeath, a Necronom can create a body from various body parts, or change a living or undead body by replacing original parts with body parts from other beings. Naturally, the first thing he has to do is finding the body parts he needs. All organs, limbs, etc. need to be from related species (e.g. humanoids). Including very different body parts takes a successful Intelligence check with a penalty of at least 4 points (the DM may increase this depending on the differences of species). This check has to be made for every unfitting body part, and a failure ruins the whole process. For a whole new body, that means the body cannot be finished by the Necronom, staying no more than a collection of parts sewn together. A body part that was attached to a living (or undead) body becomes withered and useless.

If the experiment is successful, a body part attached to a living/undead body can be used by the affected being as a normal part of his physical shell. He has full control over it, can use special features of the body part, and gains abilities like strength (for an arm) or constitution (for lungs) for that body part.

A newly created body is no more than a dead shell yet, but it can be used for further experiments, like creating pseudo-zombies.

The time needed for the process depends on how much of a "core" body is available. Every body part needs 3d4 hours to be integrated, very different body parts need double that time. Taking a human body and "only" giving it a new lung and a new heart from another humanoid would take 6 to 24 hours; taking every body part from a different source easily makes the process take many days.

The Quest: After all the experiments and observations the Necronom has made, he finally reaches an understanding of existence beyond that of almost all other mortal beings. He can now decide for a personal quest, a goal that has driven him from the beginning on. Whether he wants to bring a dead person back from true death, turn himself into a force of nature, or find a cure for any disease - he is now ready to search for a way to achieve it.

In game terms, the player of the Necronom should discuss this quest in detail with the DM. The Necronom should not be able to achieve his goal in less than one adventure. Maybe it will even take many, many adventures, but the Necronom could achieve partial goals throughout the campaign.

While the Necronom should have a real chance to achieve his goal, it should be in no way easy. He will have to make unique experiments, find rare alchemic components, maybe even kill himself and return from the dead. The DM should design adventures or adventure parts specifically for the Necronom's quest (but, of course, he should also make sure the other players don't get bored or jealous). The Quest should be a unique and amazing experience for all involved!

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+1	Exceptional Willpower
2	+0	+0	+0	+1	Anatomy
3	+0	+0	+0	+2	
4	+1	+1	+0	+2	
5	+1	+1	+1	+3	Energy channeling
6	+1	+1	+1	+3	
7	+1	+1	+1	+4	
8	+2	+2	+1	+4	Create pseudo- zombies
9	+2	+2	+2	+5	
10	+2	+2	+2	+5	Create/change body shell
11	+2	+2	+2	+6	
12	+3	+3	+2	+6	The Quest