

Dead Warrens

The Gray Gardens, Covrada's vast, yet secluded graveyard, holds a quiet found in no other place within the city walls. While unrest stirs across the city, here the silence lingers palpably while the graveyard itself awaits a tide of fresh corpses. Perhaps the graveyard's bleakest corner is the Fields Forlorn, which only holds forgotten graves. Its crumbling mausoleums suggest the resting place of bloodlines long past. Few mourners pass through here—as those buried here had none to carry their memory.

Within this desolate quarter, startling signs of disturbance emerge: fresh wheel tracks and small footprints leading to a lonely mausoleum. There, under its cracked stone leads a hidden descent into the Dead Warrens, a labyrinthian catacomb claimed by Ramon the necromancer. Though its master is absent, seeking power elsewhere, and his lair is inhabited by cabal of halfling necromancers, lead by an exile named Vernan Mordanse. The cabal serves Ramon, seeking payment in forbidden knowledge.

The Warrens teem with experiments born of Ramon's research and his dark allies. Though Ramon's is absent, his presence lingers, promising retaliation against those who dare disturb his laboratory.

Necrophidius. The Necrophidius were some of Ramon's earliest creations to serve as his slithering sentinels that lurk in the Warren's shadows. They are composed of skeletal serpentine bodies crowned by human skulls whose empty eyesockets swirl with a haunting light. While their bone-like structure would indicate an undead nature, these are constructs of vile purpose; to hunt the living, for which they are uniquely equipped for. Silent in their movement they strike from the dark to inflict paralysis with their bite. Against the vigilant they use hypnotic movements that prey on the senses of living being, putting them into temporary stupors which leave them wide open for attack.

Cabbage Head. Cabbage Head is Ramon's repulsive prison guard, his body deformed by the vile Troll Taint. At least now his ugly form matches his vile character. Twisted features and a lumbering frame make him a liability in the world above, so Ramon found a perfect purpose for Cabbage Head in the Dead Warren. To him, Ramon is both master and savior, to whom he seeks to repay his debt with absolute zeal. His captives are well taken care of, as Cabbage Head seeks to please his master, but his childlike temper and brute strength have led the occasional prisoner reduced to bloody pulps for Ramon to reassemble.

Vernan Mordanse. Vernan Mordanse is the embittered head of the group of halfling necromancers who have sought sanctuary in Ramon's shadow. Exiled from their families and homes, these outcasts united through desperation and obsession, tied together by their goal of escaping death and thus escape an exile's fate. Vernan stands both as leader and inspiring example, his ruthless nature garnered the fervent devotion of the fanatical and the broken.

For Vernan Mordanse, Ramon Vargas is less a mentor but a contractor—knowledge exchanged for service, power traded for obedience. Vernan neither schemes for the City of Covrada nor cares for its fate; his eyes are fixed only on the home that cast him aside. He dreams of the day he will return at the head of a tide of ravenous dead, when the hearths and fields of his childhood burn and relish in the lamentations of the fools who once spurned him.

VERNAN MORDANSE

Small Humanoid (Halfling), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (mage armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d6 +42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con+6, Int+6, Wis +5, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +5, Persuasion +4

Damage Resistances Necrotic, Poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Proficiency +3

Dark Devotion. Mordanse has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Lost in among the Dead. Mordanse can move through spaces of other creatures one size larger than himself. If those creatures are undead under his control, moving through their spaces costs no extra movement.

BONUS ACTIONS

Command Minions. Up to two zombies within 30 ft. of Mordanse can use a reaction and move up to their speed and make a melee weapon attack or can attempt to grapple a creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mordanse makes one spell attack and a zombie under his control within 20 ft. of himself makes a melee weapon attack.

Necrotic Surge. *Melee Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) necrotic damage, if the target is an undead creature Mordanse can chose to heal it by that amount instead.

Bone Chill. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

Heart Stopper (Recharge 5-6). *4th-level Necromancy Spell, Components:* V, S, *Requires Concentration.* *Effect:* A living creature within 60 ft. of Mordanse must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target becomes stunned for one minute or until Mordanse concentration is broken. On a successful save the creature takes 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and is not stunned. At the end of the stunned creature's turn it takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage and makes a saving throw, ending the stunned condition on a success.

Spellcasting. Mordanse casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *Cause Fear*, *Ray of Enfeeblement*

1/day (Each): *Animate Dead*, *Dispel Magic*, *Fear*, *Invisibility*

Dead Warrens Lair Actions

When fighting Mordanse inside the Dead Warrens, he can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing ties), Mordanse can take one lair action to cause the following effect:

Endless Hordes. Two zombies previously created by and under the control of Mordanse crawl from the shadows and join combat.

More than Expected (1/Day). Six zombies previously created by and under the control of Mordanse arrive and join combat.

MORDANSE INITIATE

Small Humanoid (Halfling), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (mage armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 +5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (0)	9 (-1)

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances Poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Halfling

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency +2

Dark Devotion. The initiate has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Lost in the Crowd. The initiate can move through spaces of other creatures one size larger than itself.

ACTIONS

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

Necrotic Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) necrotic damage.

Spellcasting. The Initiate casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

1/day (Each): *Cause Fear*, *Unseen Servant*

CABBAGE HEAD

Medium Humanoid (Human), unaligned

Armor Class 14 (brawn)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 +42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +1

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency +2

Brawn. When Cabbage Head wears no armor, he adds his Constitution modifier to his AC.

Gauntlets of Giant Strength. Cabbage Head wears Gauntlets of Ogre Strength. Without them his Strength score is 16.

Troll Taint. Cabbage Head is inflicted with the Troll Taint disease (see Troll Taint from Fear the Forgotten Foes). Any creature that is hit by one of Cabbage Head's unarmed strikes or touches him must succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become afflicted with Troll Taint.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cabbage Head makes three unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Retaliate. When Cabbage Head is hit with an attack and it scored a critical hit or the attack roll had advantage, he makes an unarmed strike against the attacking creature.

NECROPHIDIUS

Medium Construct, unaligned

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 71 (11d8 +22)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (0)	1 (-5)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Charmed, Poisoned, Exhausted, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 12

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency +2

Detect Living. The Necrophidius has advantage on perception checks to find humanoids, beasts, and monstrosities.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage and the target must succeed a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save a creature is poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature is paralyzed and repeats the saving throw at the end of its turns, ending the poisoned condition on a success.

Dance of Death (Recharge 5-6). The necrophidius begins to sway. Each beast, humanoid, and monstrosity creature within 30 ft. of the necrophidius that can see it must succeed a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A charmed creature is incapacitated and repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the charmed condition on a success.