



Phelantar's Guide

to

Monsters of the Forgotten Sagas part 1

for

The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



Compatibility with the 13th Age Roleplaying Game requires the 13th Age Roleplaying Game from Fire Opal Media Inc. and Pelgrane Press Ltd. See 13thAge.com for more information on the 13th Age Roleplaying

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Introduction

My first experience running 13th Age started in December of 2012. The game wasn't even really done yet. When I started collecting players, the game was on Escalation Edition 5 though it hit the nearly-complete Escalation Edition 6 before we actually started playing. The campaign ran for more than 2 years, 55 sessions, and roughly 120 hours of gameplay through March of 2015. It even won Obsidian Portal Game of the Month for March 2013 and was the runner-up for Game of the Year. It was the first campaign of any sort that I've run to an actual completion.

For this campaign, I created dozens and dozens of creatures for the party to encounter. All hand-written with pencil and notebook paper. Looking back on them recently, I realised how far I'd come as a designer and a GM. Not that all the creatures I designed early on were bad, but they weren't necessarily the way I'd do things given all the the experience I've gained since then. Furthermore, even creatures that I did later on in the campaign's lifespan didn't always work right out of the box either, so this a chance to revisit them and make something that could be useful for your game (or even my future games).

So in this project, and the future parts to come, I'm going to present you all the original monster design, the revised monster design (if necessary), as well as notes for each creature regarding what I was trying to do with the creature, why I was doing the creature that way, and what I felt I really did wrong or did right with it. Something like a director's commentary of sorts. Hopefully, you'll find these notes and anecdotes interesting, useful, or amusing.

If you're interested in watching the campaign for yourself, maybe as you read about the monsters as I'm using and seeing how they worked back then, you can find it on Youtube [here](#) and if you'd like to see the campaign on Obsidian Portal you can find it [here](#).

If you are interested in following along with my current campaign as it plays out, you can find it on Youtube [here](#) and on Obsidian Portal [here](#) with livestreams taking place every two weeks on Wednesdays at 5pm PST/8pm EST on Google Hangouts.

Ratlings and Rats

Ratlings are about 3 foot tall and look entirely like a humanoid rat. They are the result of long ago magical experiments that managed to escape and breed true. Common to sewers, living dungeons, and other underground areas. They are vermin and often treated as such, but they are very cunning and dangerous vermin as they have a supernatural ability to control rats.

Ratling Adult (Original)

Level 1 Troop (Humanoid)

Initiative: +4

Jagged Knife +8 vs AC - 4 damage

Natural Even Hit: 4 ongoing poison damage (save ends)

Natural Even Miss: Ratling Adult may pop free

AC 17

PD 13 HP 20

MD 14

Ratling Adult (Revised)

Level 1 Troop (Humanoid)

Initiative: +4

Jagged Knife +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Natural 16+ Hit: At the end of the encounter, the target makes a normal (11+) saving throw. On a failure, they lose a Recovery. No character may lost more than 1 recovery this way.

Natural Odd Miss: Ratling Adult may pop free

Rat King - Rat allies gain a +1 to damage rolls for each nearby Ratling Adult (Max +3)

AC 17

PD 14 HP 24

MD 13

Rat Swarm

Level 0 Mook (Beast)

Initiative: +3

Frenzied Biting +5 vs AC - 3 damage

Tide of Rats - Any enemy ending their turn engaged with the Rat Swarm takes 2 damage.

AC 15

PD 13 HP 7 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: For every 7 damage done to the mob, one rat swarm dies

Rat of Unusual Size (Revised)

Level 1 Wrecker (Beast)

Initiative: +5

Snapping Jaws +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Natural Even Hit: +3 poison damage

Scurry - Once per battle as an immediate reaction, the rat of unusual size may reduce damage from an attack by half and pop free

Cornered Rat - When staggered, the rat of unusual size gains a +1 to attacks and damage

AC 16

PD 14 HP 29

MD 11

Designer's Notes

The rats and ratlings are your typical sewer/dungeon fodder and were the first original designs I think that I did for 13th Age. The ratling was inspired to some extent by the skaven from Warhammer Fantasy, though I don't think they were the only real inspiration there. After all, primitive and dangerous humanoid rats aren't unheard of in fantasy fiction outside of Warhammer. But you don't often see them a lot in gaming. Rats yes, dire rats, also yes, but not humanoid talking rats.

Surprisingly, more than 2.5 years later, I think I largely did alright with them in terms of mechanics and numbers. The Ratling Adult got the biggest changes. The original had two big differences, one of which isn't seen here. Originally there was a disease/infection called Filthy Fever involved with the ratling adult, but I felt that it was a bit unnecessary in retrospect. I felt that losing a recovery at the end of a battle would emulate some of the feel of a disease without going into more complex mechanics. In addition, the original version was a little too squishy and didn't really fit the fluff about "supernatural control of rats", so I added the Rat King ability to both imply that control as well as to suggest coordination with other Ratlings, so that they're more than just mindless beasts. The original also was a bit too much of a bruiser with the potential ongoing poison damage it could do, so I pulled that out entirely and raised the base damage slightly.

Now, I generally like (pet) rats, but the idea of a horde of rats crawling over you and biting you creeps me out. So naturally I had to turn it into a monster. The thing that I find best about it is that each mook in the mob is probably dozens of rats biting, clawing, and tearing. Describing that as a GM can really give players a visceral image in their head. I changed very little with them except to slightly bump their HP and damage since they're otherwise somewhat squishy.

The Rat of Unusual Size is obviously a Princess Bride reference. I didn't change much here, but I did enough that I decided to classify it as a Wrecker than a Troop. I added the Scurry ability to give it a bit of resilience since it's otherwise got somewhat low defenses. It's a monster that'll linger a bit longer than players might expect and do some real damage before it dies.

Gang Members

Not every criminal on the city streets is a sly and subtle member of a thieves guild. Some criminals are just petty and violent thugs. Muggings, murder, arson, vandalism, and other violent crimes are their path through life. Like bandits in the woods and hills, gangs are often short lived and reach violent and bloody ends, but not before they spread fear and death across their area of control.

Gang Leader (Original)

2nd level leader [humanoid]

Initiative: +3

Shortsword +7 vs. AC - 6 damage

Natural Odd Hit: One nearby ally deals an additional 3 damage on their hit

Natural Even Miss: 3 damage.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 32

MD 12

Gang Leader (Revised)

2nd level leader [humanoid]

Initiative: +3

Shortsword +7 vs. AC - 6 damage

Natural 16+ hit: One nearby ally may immediately make an attack against the target

Natural Even Miss: 3 damage

You Lazy Dogs - A nearby ally may immediately move/disengage or roll a saving throw against an ongoing status effect. Quick Action 1/turn.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 32

MD 14

Nastier Specials

You Made Me Bleed My Own Blood - While the Gang Leader is staggered, all nearby non-leader allies crit on an 18-20.

Coordinated Beat Down - Allies who attack the same enemy as the Gang Leader gain a +2 to damage rolls

Back Alley Alchemist

2nd level caster (humanoid)

Initiative: +6

Club +6 vs. AC - 5 damage

R: Choking Smoke +6 vs. PD - 5 damage and the target takes 2 additional damage from each hit until the start of the Alchemist's next turn.

Natural Odd Miss: Choose a nearby ally. This ally also takes 2 additional damage from each hit during this turn.

Natural Even Hit: Choose a nearby enemy. This enemy also takes 2 additional damage from each hit during this turn.

AC 17

PD 12 HP 34

MD 16

Nastier Specials

Inhaled Poisons - Enemies hit with the primary Choking Smoke attack also take 3 ongoing poison damage

Smokescreen - As an immediate interrupt, an enemy making a ranged attack against the Alchemist must reroll the attack and take the lower of the two rolls. Usable once per battle.

Wasps Leader, Akos (Original)

2nd level troop [humanoid]

Initiative: +5

Greataxe + 7 vs AC - 8 damage

Dangerous - Akos has a melee crit range of 17+ unless he is Staggered

Unstoppable - When Akos drops to 0 hp, he does not immediately die. Ignore any damage in excess of 0 hp, roll 2d6, and give Akos that many temporary hit points. No other healing can affect Akos or give him more temporary hit points: when the temporary hp are gone, he dies.

AC 16

PD 15 HP 40

MD 13

Wasps Leader, Akos (Original)

Double-Strength 2nd level Wrecker [humanoid]

Initiative: +3

Greataxe + 7 vs AC - 14 damage

Miss: 5 damage

Psychotic Rage - For attack rolls, roll 2d20 and take the higher of the two rolls. If both rolls are an 11+, make a second attack against a different enemy. If both rolls are 1-5, then make the attack against an engaged ally instead.

Unstoppable - When Akos drops to 0 hp, he does not immediately die. Ignore any damage in excess of 0 hp, roll 2d6, and give Akos that many temporary hit points. No other healing can affect Akos or give him more temporary hit points: when the temporary hp are gone, he makes a Spiteful Blow attack and then dies.

Spiteful Blow - Upon dying, make a Greataxe attack as an immediate interrupt. This attack crits on a 17+. If both rolls are 17+, the target is Stunned (save ends).

AC 17

PD 15 HP 75

MD 13

Designer's Notes

I think that many games need your typical "thieves and thugs" kind of enemies. I needed them for the first adventure of Forgotten Sagas, where a gang called the Fire Wasps was causing problems. Most of the gang members were reskinned or otherwise tweaked enemies from the core rulebook. Orcs, kobolds, and even lizardmen got the reskin treatment to become violent gang members. It was easy enough. But I needed some more variety and decided to do a few from scratch.

The gang leader was functional, but a bit boring, in the original format. It didn't feel very interesting and it really didn't feel like a Leader-style enemy. I think the revision is much better in both ways. It's the kind of enemy that players are going to want to kill quick. It's also an enemy that needs to be protected, which means that the GM is going to have to use the interception rules and the You Lazy Dog ability to keep the players from ganging up on him.

The back alley alchemist wasn't horrible originally. I wanted it to be a bit more complex than other creatures, plus have the chance to hit either allies or enemies. All I really did here was clean up the wording some and then add the nastier specials. The nastier specials potentially mitigate some of the "I rolled bad and hurt my allies" frustrations. Even though as a GM you know your monsters are likely to die, doesn't mean it can't get frustrating sometimes to roll badly.

Akos got a fair amount of work. He was potentially dangerous, but was a bit squishy and so players could wipe him out fast. And they likely would if they realised how hard he could hit. So he got turned into a double-strength creature, his abilities were reworked to make him a lot more dangerous (to everybody) as well as to make the mechanics line up better with the fiction of him being a bloodthirsty maniac running a gang of violent thugs. Any fight with Akos (or whatever the GM reskins him into) is going to be really brutal, as it should be. He'd make a great orc warchief, maybe the fanatical enforcer of a dark cult, or an unhinged gladiator.

Horrors of the Blackstaff

The murderous mage known as the Blackstaff brought forth many creatures in his single-minded goal to slaughter all those who mocked, abused, and derided him over the years. When he broke space and time within his family mansion, reality flew out the door and the creatures at his command were limitless.

Licker

Level 0 Mook (Undead)

Init: +1

Vulnerable: Holy

Disturbing Licking +5 vs AC - 3 poison damage and the target is seriously creeped out

Creepy Crawler - The Licker can crawl up walls and ceiling and is not slowed or stopped by difficult terrain

AC 16

PD 12 **HP 5 (mook)**

MD 8

Mook: Kill 1 Licker for every 5 damage done to the mob

A licker is an undead creature created from the decapitated head of a humanoid creature. It is one of a variety of similar creatures called crawling skulls. Thick tentacles sprout from the severed neck, the tongue mutates to be several feet long, and both tentacles and tongue become coated with a thick venomous goo.

Bullywug Warrior

Level 1 Troop (Humanoid)

Init: +3

Jagged Spear +9 vs AC - 5 damage, 8 damage if the bullywug warrior has moved before attacking

Natural Even Hit: The bullywug warrior may pop free

Chameleon Skin - Once per battle as a quick action, the bullywug warrior may turn invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks. Attacks from invisibility crit on a 19-20.

AC 17

PD 15 **HP 19**

MD 11

Bullywug Shaman

Level 1 Caster (Humanoid)

Init: +3

Staff Strike +5 vs AC - 4 damage

Poison Blast +6 vs PD - 5 poison damage

Natural Even Hit: Target is Dazed until the end of their next turn

Miss: 2 poison damage

Chameleon Skin - Once per battle as a quick action, the bullywug warrior may turn invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks. Attacks from invisibility crit on a 19-20.

AC 16

PD 12 **HP 27**

MD 16

Bullywugs are a race of tribal frog-like creatures that are known to be xenophobic and violent. They prefer to live in swamps, rainforests, and other areas that are rich in standing water or humidity. They hunt, kill, and eat all intruders into their territories and will fight to the death in the face of overwhelming enemy forces.

Crab Swarm

Level 1 Mook (Beast)

Init: +2

Oh Gods The Claws +6 vs AC - 5 damage

AC 16

PD 16 HP 7 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one Crab Swarm for every 5 damage done to the mob

Giant Enemy Crab (Original)

Level 1 Wrecker (Beast)

Init: +1

Claw Strike +6 vs AC - 6 damage

Natural 16+ hit: Make a second claw strike attack

Armored Brute - Ignore the first 2 points of damage done each round

AC 17

PD 17 **HP 27**

MD 9

Giant Enemy Crab (Revised)

Large Level 1 Wrecker (Beast)

Init: +1

Vulnerable: Fire

Claw Strike +6 vs AC - 12 damage

Natural 16+ hit: Make a second claw strike attack

Armored Brute - Twice per battle, the giant enemy crab may reduce the damage from a non-fire based attack by half.

Mount - Once per round an allied creature that is riding the giant enemy crab may choose to direct the attack against it towards the crab instead.

AC 17

PD 17 HP 55

MD 9

Nastier Specials

Grab and Tear +5 vs PD - 10 damage and the target is Grabbed. This attack may be made as a quick action once per turn against an enemy that is currently Grabbed.

Sweeping Blow +5 vs PD against 1d3 engaged enemies - 6 damage and the target pops free

Thick Shell - The Giant Enemy Crab ignores non-magical miss damage.

These are crabs. Lots of little crabs. A really big crab. Bring lots of butter and a warhammer.

Water Naga (Original)

Level 1 Archer (Humanoid)

Init: +3

Spear +4 vs AC - 4 damage

Jade Darts +6 vs AC - 5 poison damage

Natural 16+ hit: Target is Dazed until the end of their next turn

AC 20

PD 15 HP 19

MD 11

Water Naga (Revised)

Level 1 Trooper (Humanoid)

Init: +3

Barbed Spear +4 vs AC - 4 damage

Natural 16+ hit: Additional 4 ongoing damage

Jade Darts +6 vs AC - 5 poison damage

Swimming Agility - Enemies who make a ranged attack against a Water Naga that is under water must roll 2d20 for the attack and take the lower of the two.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 26

MD 11

Naga are snake-like humanoid creatures, frequently with a snake's body from the legs down though some naga have other physical properties. In terms of society and culture, naga tends to be rather diverse and ranges from rather civilized towns and villages to violent barbarism to families and individuals who have integrated into wider civilization with some work.

Stingray

Level 1 Mook (Beast)

Init: +4

Venomous Sting +6 vs AC - 4 damage

Natural Even Hit: 2 additional poison damage

AC 16

PD 15 HP 7 (Mook)

MD 12

Mook: Kill 1 stingray for every 7 damage done to the mob

Locathah

Level 1 Troop (Humanoid)

Init: +3

Trident +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Nat Even Hit: Locathah may immediately pop free

Quick Charge - The locathah deals an additional 3 damage when it moves before attacking

AC 17

PD 15 HP 25

MD 11

Wyvern Shade (Original)

Level 1 Wrecker (Construct)

Init: +3

Tearing Bite +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Natural Even Hit: Additional 3 ongoing poison damage

Blood Rage - +1 to attack and damage while staggered

Winged Foe - The Wyvern Shade can fly but must land at the end of its turn.

AC 14

PD 12 HP 38

MD 8

Wyvern Shade (Revised)

Level 1 Wrecker (Construct)

Init: +3

Tearing Bite +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Natural 16+ Hit: The Wyvern Shade may immediately make a Venomous Stinger attack

Venomous Stinger +5 vs PD - 3 ongoing damage. Usable as a Quick Action once per turn.

Shadowy Substance - Once per battle, as a quick action, the Wyvern Shade may increase all defenses by +1 until the end of its next turn.

Winged Foe - The Wyvern Shade can fly but must land at the end of its turn.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 32

MD 10

Angelic Crab Swarm

Level 1 Leader (Beast)

Init: +2

Righteous Fury +6 vs AC - 5 damage

Natural 16+ Hit: Allied monsters gain +1 to attack and damage until the start of the Angelic Crab Swarm's next turn. This stacks to a maximum of +3

Riposte - When an enemy attacking the Angelic Crab Swarm rolls a natural 1 or 2, the Angelic Crab Swarm may make an attack as an immediate interrupt.

AC 16

PD 12 HP 30

MD 15

Flying Zombie Carp

Level 1 Mook (Undead)

Init: +3

Zombie Fish Slap +5 vs AC - 3 damage

Icksplosion - When a Flying Zombie Carp reaches 0 HP, roll a d6. On a 4-6, it dies normally. On a 1-2, make the following attack against 1d3 nearby enemies: **+6 vs PD** - 3 poison damage

AC 16

PD 15 **HP 7 (Mook)**

MD 12

Mook: Kill 1 flying zombie carp for every 7 damage done to the mob.

The Blackstaff

Double Strength Level 3 Caster (Humanoid)

Init: +5

R: Acid Arrow + 8 vs PD - 15 acid damage

Natural 16+ hit: 5 ongoing acid damage

R: Magic Missile - No attack roll. 6 force damage against a nearby or far enemy. Usable once per turn as a Quick Action

Shocking Grasp +6 vs PD - 10 damage and the target is Dazed (save ends)

Natural Even Miss: 5 damage

Necromantic Focus - When the Blackstaff is hit, nearby undead mooks take half of the damage applied. In addition, all nearby undead non-mook allies ignore the first 3 damage taken each turn.

Desperate Power - When the Blackstaff is first Staggered during battle, up to 5 nearby undead mooks are revived with full health. The Blackstaff loses the *Necromantic Focus* ability when this occurs.

AC 18

PD 14 **HP 90**

MD 17

Designer's Notes

That's a lot of creatures for one adventure or storyline isn't it? And such a strange variety of them at that. Well, there's a reason for it. The Blackstaff was a wizard who had absolutely lost his mind and turned into a serial killer, going after people who had mocked him through his time at an arcane academy. Yes, in retrospect, it's kind of petty and lacks oomph. It's a very adolescent motivation. What I should have done is just a tweak so that he's now performing disturbing necromantic experiments and his first choice for test subjects were people from his informative years so it's something of a two-fer. But either way, The Blackstaff was completely loco and turned his mansion into a series of other-dimensional spaces. Which admittedly was mostly an excuse for me to go a little crazy myself and do some really weird stuff that the players and characters wouldn't expect.

The licker quickly became infamous in the campaign. It's still referenced in the next campaign I'm running and none of the players in that campaign were even around to deal with the licker themselves. It's just that creepy and evocative. That's why I just left it unchanged from the original design. It doesn't need anything else. Which means that, yes, the "seriously creeped out" bit was part of the original write up.

The bullywugs and crabs (but not the angelic crabs) were part of a beach encounter. Characters walked through a door and found themselves on part of a sailing ship which was next to part of a beach. Why bullywugs and crabs? Because I could, mostly. I think bullywugs are hilarious, the idea of a swarm of crabs clawing at you is both hilarious and terrifying, and the giant enemy crab is a reference to an infamous Sony Playstation 3 presentation but is also a shout-out to the giant crab in the classic White Plume Mountain adventure.

I did very little to change the bullywugs, not enough to justify an original and revised version in any case. I did clarify their chameleon ability as originally I'd short-handed it as invisibility, which isn't really correct. The bullywug warrior played very well initially and the only real tweak I made was to give it more damage when it moved before attacking, which fits the common fiction of bullywugs having a hopping charge attack with impaling weapons like spears. The shaman in the original fight was riding the giant crab, which was very evocative and my players really enjoyed it (as did I), and I don't think the shaman really needed any changes. The crab swarm also was left completely intact from the original because the simplicity worked here. I couldn't think of anything that a crab swarm creature might need that didn't feel tacked on.

The giant enemy crab got a fair amount of work because the original didn't play very well. As with Akos earlier, the giant enemy crab was far far too squishy for the brute it should be. So changing it to a large creature was the natural thing to do. The armored brute ability, while mechanically functional, didn't do much to make it more resilient so that was changed as well to be something which has a lot more damage-saving potential. The mount ability seemed a natural thing to add given the original way I used it and can be a really good ability in conjunction with the new armored brute ability to save the rider's life and then null some damage. The nastier specials are also new, just in case the crab isn't being used as a mount or the GM is feeling a bit grumpy. I was a bit reluctant to put a grabbing attack, but after thinking about it I felt like I kinda needed to. It felt incomplete without it.

The water naga, stingray, and "locathah" are for an encounter that is entirely underwater. Underwater fights in fantasy tabletop games are not exactly common despite there being a lot of interesting and iconic water monsters out there. The logistics of fighting underwater just makes it a problem to do. In this case, since having an entire ocean in a room of a mansion was impossible anyway, I felt free to go for it. I'd already ignored reality to some level so ignoring it the rest of the way for a fun fight seemed okay. In the fight, there was an obstacle called "blood" ice which drifted around randomly and attacked creatures automatically, but it didn't ultimately end up adding a lot to the fight so I've left it out here.

The original water naga was functional, but ended up being kind of boring for me as a GM to play. The revised version is a bit more well rounded and a bit more interesting. It can complement other underwater monsters better this way as well, whether they're my creatures here or from other sources.

The stingray, like a lot of my mook monsters, was also done pretty simply and I didn't see a compelling reason to change or add anything to it. Mooks tend to die so quickly that giving them a lot of active abilities seem to be wasted. So I generally prefer to give them passive or reactive things which can take advantage of either their numbers or the fact that they do die so easily.

As you might suspect, the locathah was not actually the locathah in the original writing. It was something that I can't actually include here because it's considered product identity for another fantasy RPG. I think you can guess which one. That being said in this particular case changing the name didn't really require any further changes. I probably would have done an actual locathah the same way as it ended up here anyway. Looking at it reminds me that I have a tendency to overuse a particular gimmick, however. That gimmick being the one where a creature can pop free on a good hit and does additional damage if it moves before attacking. It's a really righteous synergy between abilities, don't get me wrong, but I think I do it a bit too often. You can see that I already did it up above with the bullywug warrior and you're likely to see it again before I've finished with the Forgotten Sagas creatures. Sometimes a creature who can charge like that should have to disengage normally or have a different sort of ability to help it get free so it can charge again.

The wyvern shade, angelic crab swarm, and flying zombie carp were from the third extra-dimensional area, which was a bunch of island ruins floating in an infinite void. Given that the setting was pretty unusual, you can tell that I felt like I could absolutely go wild with the creatures in it. The players and I really enjoyed the fight here, having to jump around from island to island, fighting really weird monsters. I don't know how useful some of these monsters would be for the average campaign, though maybe with a reskin they could be made into something more generally applicable.

The wyvern shade is a living shadow in the shape of a wyvern. Having a shadow of the wyvern let me have a big monster in the fight. I wanted it to be a glass cannon that could deal out a lot of damage, but it ended up being a little too glass and not enough cannon. The revision doesn't change the damage output a lot, but does make the shade much more difficult to kill even with a slight reduction in HP. I was tempted to make it a large monster and more dangerous, but I didn't want to make it the focal point of the fight and keeping it as a normal monster allowed for the possibility of more than one of them running around.

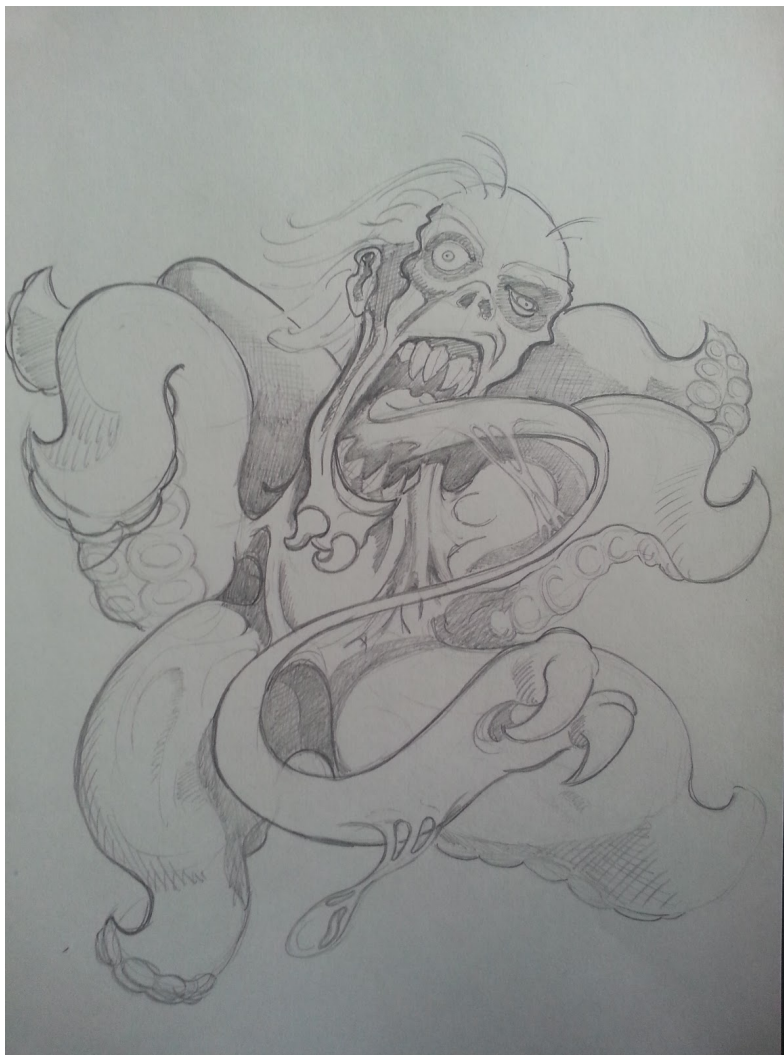
The angelic crab swarm is just... yeah. What can I say. They're a horde of crabs with angelic wings and halos. They like to spout stereotypical good guy phrases. They're angels who happen to be crabs. Lots and lots of little crabs. They are one of the favorite monsters I've ever done. I could have maybe done some more with them, added another leader-like ability or something, but I kind of like them as they stand.

The flying zombie carp is about the only thing that compares to the angelic crab swarm in terms of weirdness here. If I remember right, it comes from a twitter joke about zombie fish along with my tendency to slap a "template" onto every creature out there to be funny. Yet, it came out as a pretty good monster. A very memorable one, at the very least. Being slapped in the face by rotting fish flesh tends to make an impression and the idea of an ickspllosion left a mark as well.

As ridiculous as it is, I think it's a genuinely good monster to shake up any zombie apocalypse scenario. Because really, I find it a bit odd (and boring) that necromancers rarely seem to make zombies out of all sorts of other creatures. It's just humans and humanoids. Occasionally you get a zombie dog or a zombie dragon or zombie giant, but there's a huge variety of creatures potentially available to the typical fantasy RPG necromancer. Why aren't we seeing zombie manticores, zombie bulettes, zombie harpies, or zombie ogres? Now, it's true that "flying zombie carp" is unlikely to be the first choice for a necromancer, GM, or game designer unless those people are all me, but still I like to think that it demonstrates in its silly way that there are a lot of things a necromancer could do that people don't consider.

Then, lastly, there's the Blackstaff himself. Largely, he's a "typical" fantasy gaming wizard who has branched out into necromancy because he's crazy and vengeful and kind of petty. In fact, throw out the two passive abilities and he's pretty much just a wizard and could be used as such and would be easily modified to be a normal strength wizard at that by reducing damage and HP by about half. What I most did here for inclusion in this document is clean up the writing. Originally, the way I wrote him was kind of confusing and didn't necessarily make a lot of sense. And that showed when I actually used him in battle since me-as-GM was a few weeks removed from me-as-designer and I kind of messed some of the abilities up.

So now he makes a lot more sense, at least I think so. His wizard abilities are pretty straight forward and classic. He can deal out a lot of damage each turn either in melee or ranged, though he's better off staying ranged. Which is where his necromantic abilities come in, which revolve around letting his undead minions keep him safe and keeping his enemies pinned in place while he blasts them with spells. Yeah, he's a really dangerous opponent, but keep in mind that he's the "boss" of this adventure, fought at the climax of numerous sessions investigating and hunting him down. I like the idea of boss monsters at the end of an adventure and I do it a lot. Akos and Blackstaff weren't the first I did and they won't be the last either.



Licker illustration

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