

The Voodoo Shaman

Class description

The voodoo shaman is a tribal witch-doctor of the worst kind. Instead of living on the donations of his fellow tribesmen in exchange for magical benefits, he seeks to rule them through intimidation and terror.

Although this shadowy individual employs otherworldly means to achieve his ends, his goals almost always lie in the land of the living. Often outcast by personal choice or the anger of his village, he lusts for revenge and power.

A voodoo shaman's favourite tactic is to set up a camp near a burial ground, animate a small army of zombies and launch a campaign of terror against the unsuspecting village. His undead kill and kidnap the weak and the young for human sacrifice or neverending slavery, hurl themselves into the wells to poison the water supply and generally cause as much suffering as possible. This continues until the tribe dies out, flees (but where can they hide from the shaman?), the shaman and his creatures are killed or the village comes under his command. The latter option is little better than death, for the greedy shaman will doubtlessly require human sacrifices and numerous slaves (these servant tribes are often engaged in desperate tribal wars for captives and riches), not to mention treasure and various privileges ranging from taking apprentices to bed slaves and worse.

LEVEL	BAB	Fort/Rfx/Will	Spells
1	+0	+0/+0/+2	+1 level
2	+1	+0/+0/+3	+1 level
3	+1	+1/+1/+3	+1 level
4	+2	+1/+1/+4	+1 level
5	+2	+1/+1/+4	+1 level
6	+3	+2/+2/+5	+1 level
7	+3	+2/+2/+5	+1 level
8	+4	+2/+2/+6	+1 level
9	+4	+3/+3/+6	+1 level
10	+5	+3/+3/+7	+1 level

Class Features

-Weapon and Armor: shamans are proficient with neither arms, nor armor. They incur all penalties of armor regarding saves, arcane failure rates, etc. Additionally, the fetid jungles and hot badlands where they reside are usually too hot to wear any kind of metal armor without the risk of boiling alive.

-Spells: the shaman continues to accumulate spells from his previous class. He doesn't receive any additional abilities (spontaneous casting, bonus feats and the like), with the exception of rebuking undead.

Naturally, there are always those who have no moral qualms about serving a mortal fiend like him: a high level voodoo shaman is often surrounded by scores of elite bodyguards, who are fanatically loyal to him (if the shaman is slain, they are the first targets of an uprising). They are rewarded by a cut of the loot, slaves and goods.

Deep in the heart of the southern lands, there are rumors of entire kingdoms ruled by these degenerate fiends, or godforsaken ruins that are taboo to the living, still protecting the remains of dark necromancers who wielded godly power when the world was younger. Then again, rumors are only rumors and maybe they should stay that way...

Requirements:

- Spell Focus (Necromancy)
- Evil alignment
- Knowledge of three different necromantic spells, all of which must be third level or higher
- Clerics can't become voodoo shamans, unless they worship the god/spirits of the tribe.

HD: d4

Skill points: 2+INT modifier

Class skills: Alchemy (INT), Concentration (CON), Craft (DEX), Knowledge: arcane (INT), Knowledge: religion (INT), Knowledge: nature (INT), Scry (INT), Spellcraft (INT), Wilderness Lore (WIS)

Special

- Ritual Cannibalism, Return I., Animate
- Zombie Master I.
- Greater Animate
- Zombie Master II.
- Comrade of the Damned, Return II.
- Greater Disciple of Necromancy
- Voodoo Curse, Ritual Cannibalism II.
- Zombie Master III.
- Return III.
- Zombie Master IV., Supreme Master of Necromancy

-Alignment: voodoo shamans are evil, there is no way around it. If a shaman strays from the path of corruption, he loses all of his special abilities (but not spells), his undead servitors turn on him and his enemies might dispatch some headhunters to dispose of the traitor. If he was compelled to do these deeds by magic or under the influence of a curse, he must „cleanse” his soul by partaking in a frenzied orgy of killing and butchery, sacrificing no less than three sentient humanoids for each of his levels. He may use as many helpers in the preparations and gathering of victims as he wishes.

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-Ritual Cannibalism : the shaman is able to gain various powers by consuming specific parts of sentient humanoid creatures sacrificed during a grisly ritual. This ritual is to be conducted on New Moon's Eve, in almost complete darkness. The shaman needs a victim, a specially enchanted stone knife, a few candles and various unwholesome material components, all found in a spell component pouch. The enchanted stone knife is given to every shaman upon his initiation, but it can also be crafted with *Craft Magic Arms & Armor* in case of loss or for initiates. Enchanting a knife requires 1000 gp and the spell „*Magic Weapon*“. It is the equivalent of a +1 dagger.

The more powerful the creature to be sacrificed, the greater the rewards. By consuming the specific body parts, the following abilities can be gained:

- eyes: +1 Spot/level
- ears: +1 Listen/level
- blood: +1 Hp/level (increases maximum)
- heart: +1 CON/2 levels
- fingers: +1 DEX/2 levels
- leg: +1 STR/2 levels
- brain: +1 INT/3 levels
- liver: +1 Fort/3 levels
- etc.

These powers last for a full month (until the next New Moon's Eve) and only one such power may be active at a given time. Starting from 7th level, this limit is increased to two powers, although they still may not be the same. At the DM's discretion, consuming certain creatures could produce superior results (e.g. troll's heart, brain of an archmage, the fingers of a master thief, etc).

-Return: consorting with undead and partaking in unwholesome rites prevent the shaman from eternal rest. If he isn't resurrected within a fortnight of his demise, he will return from the grave to torment the living:

- at 1st level, he becomes a standard ghoul that has as many HD as he had levels. He loses all memories and special powers in the process. This transformation can be prevented if the mouth of the corpse is filled with finely ground silver dust (25 gp worth) or the whole body is burnt to ashes.
- starting from 5th level, he becomes a **Voodoo Zombie** instead (see below). The shaman keeps his stats and abilities, but loses the power of casting spells over second level (he can still use high level spell slots for low level magic). This transformation can be prevented if the limbs of the corpse are pierced with nails made of pure silver

(30 gp apiece), the head is cut off and sprinkled with *holy water*. Burning, desintegration and similar methods might also work.

-at 9th level, he becomes a vampire with full powers (see MM appendix). This transformation can only be prevented if the dead shaman is burnt to cinders, his ashes are mixed with a large amount of silver dust (200 gp worth) and buried in a nameless grave at a *consecrated* location. Simple burning and the like will not work, and anyone attempting to do so will receive a powerful voodoo curse.

Whether undead characters remain playable characters is a question for the DM to decide.

-Animate: using the blackest voodoo magic, the shaman can create zombies (and *only* zombies) to do his bidding. The ritual of animation must be performed during the night with no spectators. If someone spies on the shaman (even through a crystal ball or scrying spells), the ritual fails and all invested XPs are lost. The following equipment is needed: a reasonably intact corpse, candles, the shaman's magical knife and 25 XPs for each zombie. These zombies are completely normal specimens, like those created by *Animate Dead*.

-Zombie Master: the character is allowed to control additional zombies over the normal limit (that is, 2HD/level):

- 2nd level: level*3 HD
- 4th level: level*5 HD
- 8th level: level*10 HD
- 10th level: no limit

-Greater Animate: the shaman is able to make pacts with wandering souls and evil spirits, encouraging them to possess prepared dead bodies. The result is a **Voodoo Zombie**, an undead creature that has free will and a (twisted) personality (see below). The zombie can possess as many HD as desired, but no more than the level of the shaman (e.g. a Clr6/Sha4 could animate voodoo zombies with 4 HD at best). Additionally, each HD costs 100 XP. The class of the zombie that shall be created is determined randomly, but the shaman can modify the roll in the desired direction by up to 2%/level.

-Comrade of the Damned: starting with 5th level, the shaman has sunk so deep into the mire of evil that lesser undead and evil outsiders will recognize him as an ally. He is completely immune to energy drain (but not ability damage) and no free-willed undead of 6 HD or lower will harm him without provocation. This ability is both a boon and a blessing, as from now on he will be affected by *turning* as if

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he were an undead (fortunately, he can only be turned but not destroyed in this way). Also, certain animals might sense his evil and bolt when he approaches them.

-Greater Disciple of Necromancy:

necromantic spells cast by the shaman are harder to resist. The shaman's Spell Focus adds a +3 to the save DCs of his spells instead of +2.

-Voodoo Curse: if the shaman is familiar with the spell *Bestow Curse* and possesses personal belongings or body parts (hair, nail clippings, etc.) of the intended victim along with a wax doll, he can employ the curse at an unlimited distance, even without seeing him. This curse lasts only 1 week/level, though, and it is immediately cancelled if the subject changes plane (by etherealness, winkout and similar spells).

-Supreme Master of Necromancy: all necromantic spells employed by the shaman are automatically *empowered* as the feat, without an increase in level. Naturally, the caster can't *empower* them a second time.

Voodoo Zombie (Medium Undead)

HD: varies (d12)

Spd: 30

AC: 12 (+2 Nat)

Atk: as class

Stats: 10/10/-8/10/10

Toughness, Undead Immunities

The Voodoo Zombie is an undead creature that was animated by the foul magic of a voodoo shaman. They appear as normal zombies, but can be recognized by the emberlike reddish glow in their eyes. When a voodoo zombie is created, it gains class abilities randomly:

01-50 Warrior (+4 STR)

51-75 Fighter (+8 STR)

76-85 Adeptus* (+2 WIS)

86-95 Cleric* (+4 WIS)

96-98 Sorcerer* (+2 CHA)

99-00 Wizard** (+6 INT)

*May not use spells over 2nd level.

**As above, but it needs a spellbook for memorization.

The Voodoo Zombie possesses an intellect and free will, making it an ideal aide, guardian or assassin. It tries to obey the orders of its master in the most efficient way possible (unlike regular zombies, it has a limited self preservation instinct). If its master allows it, it may even command lesser zombies up to its level. Unlike most common undead, voodoo zombies are even capable of amassing experience and going up levels.

Voodoo Zombies must satiate their unholy hunger to continue their existence: they must gobble up 1 HD worth of fresh (preferably live and shriekin') meat for each HD they possess every month. A zombie that doesn't get its nourishment is freed from control and immediately begins to plot the death of his master (and tries to capture a few unfortunates, too). Fighting types may just charge and kill, while spellcasters are capable of weaving intricate plots of deceit, waiting ever patiently to make their move. If a level gain frees them from control (exceeding max HD limit, higher level than shaman, etc.), they will likewise turn on the unsuspecting (?) creator.

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Designer Notes

+Gabor Lux (Melan)+

First of all, this product isn't completely free. Now, I don't ask for money, but if you read this text (or use it in your campaign), I ask you to send me an email with your opinion to my address (luga998@kktstud.pte.hu). You needn't write a detailed analysis, it can be as simple as „Boo, it sucked”, or „My God, this really, I mean really sucked” or even „If there was an illustration of suckitude in my dictionary, it would most certainly depict this Lacking Product”. Emails with honest opinions and constructive criticism are a great help to me and show that at least someone read my writing. They also teach me how to design better things in the future.

Secondly, while it was originally used for a replacement character (the unfortunate predecessor of whom got possessed by an unholy artifact of the snake-god Yig), it is primarily intended to be an NPC class. If one of your players wants to become a voodoo shaman, excercise caution. You don't want to make it into the next Chick tract/Parent Watchdog Death Corps pamphlet, etc., do you?

This class, like most „continue to gain spells” classes, favours sorcerers/wizards over clerics (clerics lose more than they gain). The granted powers are pretty strong, but they will (and should!) be balanced by the greatest disadvantage of the shaman: social acceptance. Simply put, if the shaman doesn't take extreme precautions to maintain secrecy, he will not be trusted by any of his comrades (unless they are all similar types). Paladins will mercilessly hunt him down, most servants will serve him only out of fear and so on. In civilized society (with the possible exception of the most decadent empires), even agents of evil will feel revulsion when they recognize what kind of monster he is. Of course, a ring of mind shielding and clever roleplaying can always help (pretending the zombies are the spirits of his ancestors who help him on a mission, for example). For a while, at least.

Legal notice: this prestige class may be freely used by anyone (just send me an email!). In the very unlikely event that it is used for profit (e.g. in a for-pay magazine, module, worldbook or such publication), you must write me an email AND send me a copy of the product. Oh yes, and don't forget this class when you are preparing for a swords and sorcery campaign inspired by the adventures of Solomon Kane, Conan or Matt Carse. That is the best place to use it!