

3

MAGIC OF THE NIGHTMARE EMPIRE



NECROMANCY IS SCORNE AND DESPISED ON THE mainland, but it thrives all across the Scharde Islands. In these dark lands off the southwest shores of western Immoren—and in the nation of Cryx in particular—necromancers of all descriptions explore the potential breadth and depth of this school of magic as they innovate new runic formulae to better master the energies of death. The blight of Toruk pervades magic in the Scharde Islands, just as it does everything else there. The Dragonfather's blight-tinged energies manifest in the magic worked in his domain, and spells touched by this blight produce crackling greenish runes when cast.

There are also traditions of magic in the Scharde Islands that predate the coming of Toruk. For centuries before becoming blighted, the inhabitants of Satyx practiced their own art of blood magic, one that shares similarities with the practices of the Molgur tribes and the mortitheurgy of the distant skorpe. By sacrificing their own blood—or preferably, that of a human sacrifice—the blood witches of the Satyxix can harness immense power.

So too is the wild magic of Devourer-worshippers among the islands. Many Molgur tribes, forced from the mainland, linger in the jungle-covered islands. Drawing on the forces of the natural world, storms, and tides, these throwbacks to the days of the Molgur alliance rise to positions of prominence in their tribes and kriels. Some are drafted into the navies of Cryx to serve as powerful shipboard witches and sorcerers, augmenting the killing power of the crew through summoned storms and hurled bolts of lightning.

No matter the tradition of magic its users draw upon, the spells commonly known in the Scharde Islands are like its inhabitants: brutal and utterly without mercy. Many are excruciating to experience, horrifying to behold, and tainted with darkness from the Dragonfather's influence. Unlike the Iron Kingdoms, where certain practices like mesmerism are looked down upon if not outright banned, no practice is considered off-limits in the Scharde Islands. Unscrupulous

EXISTING SPELLS

Note that some of the spells in this chapter were previously published in *Borderlands & Beyond*. They are reproduced here for ease of reference.

mainlanders who wish to dabble in these darker arts sometimes journey to ports like Blackwater, seeking out arcane formulae that allow them to raise and command the dead, control spirits, or bind the minds of another being.

Indeed, for a devoted arcanist the only limitations on what magical talents one can learn in the Nightmare Empire is the great enemy of all living things: time. It would take many lifetimes to fully comprehend the vastness of the arcane knowledge possessed by beings such as Lich Lord Tenebrous in the Archive of Skell. Fortunately for those willing to discard their humanity, the Nightmare Empire has its own solution for escaping the grip of old age. Those who seek immortality can rise as iron liches by shedding their souls and storing them in specially prepared soul chambers.

The iron liches are a fusion of necromancy and mechanika, powerful intelligent undead who exist as an elite caste in the Nightmare Empire. In their unlife, the liches are free to pursue whatever forbidden knowledge they seek. Even the destruction of their new iron bodies does not spell their death. Their only vulnerability is the chamber housing their soul. So long as it remains safe, an iron lich can move from body to body, across thousands of years, amassing occult secrets and building up their power to rival that of the greatest arcanists ever to live.

This chapter presents new spells for characters and monsters to use. Following the spell lists and spell descriptions, the chapter offers a dark evolution for characters and NPCs in the form of the hell-wrought metal bodies of iron liches.

CLASS SPELL LISTS

The following spell lists show which spells can be cast by characters of each class. The names of new spells described later in this chapter are italicized.

BARD SPELLS

1st Level

Black Poison
Dark Waves
Whipping Winds

2nd Level

Decrepitude
Grave Wind
Scything Touch

3rd Level

Admonition
Black Spot
Malediction
Mirage
Veil of Mists

4th Level

Dark Guidance

5th Level

Dark Seduction
Mark of Decay

BLOOD WITCH SPELLS

Cantrips (0 Level)

Arcane Bolt
Guidance
Light
Poison Spray
Resistance
True Strike

1st Level

Black Poison
Bleed

Bullet Dodger

Cloak of Fear
Dark Waves
Whipping Winds

2nd Level

Blood Burst
Flashing Blade
Grave Wind
Hellbound
Hobbler
Scything Touch
Weakness

3rd Level

Blood Shadow
Breath Stealer
Devil's Tongue

Distillation

Heart Burst
Hemorrhage
Shadow Step

4th Level

Dark Guidance
Freedom of Movement
Hold Undead
Stygian Abyss

5th Level

Blood Rain
Death Strike
Mislead
Passwall
Seeming