

Good Evening

Are You Wild About Vampires? Here's Something to Sink Your Teeth Into

This is the first installment in what we plan to make into a monthly feature. From the title, you may notice a connection to AD&D. If you read the forwards and prefaces in a number of the D&D and AD&D books, you will notice the author's name mentioned in most, if not all, of them. That he can speak with authority is authenticated there. —ED.

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There is much information on the Vampire, but just as much is left unsaid and unquantified when the details of the play of the monster are studied. While many of the things stated about the Vampire herein may seem obvious, nevertheless arguments on each of these topics have arisen in this DM's experience.

The Vampire has $8 + 3$ hit dice, and once calculated the hit point total will not vary; thus, when the monster regenerates in its coffin a new hit point total is not generated. A Vampire can have its minions buy a figure it has killed so that human can rise as a Vampire on the next night. Note that humanoids and demihumans can NOT become vampires.

In theory, since the "draining" of a figure is due to the Negative Material Plane force, a humanoid or demihuman "drained" by a Vampire might become a lesser Undead that exists on the Negative Material Plane. However, this makes the Vampire too strong and is not allowed.

It should be noted that a Vampire is unlikely to want too many other "lesser" Vampires under his/her control. Thus the number of vampires under the control of a full $8 + 3$ h.d. Vampire should be limited to no more than four at one time. If this rule is not observed, entire small towns would be full of Vampires in the span of a few short weeks! Furthermore, "lesser" Vampires will not create other "lesser" Vampires answerable to themselves; only the Full Vampire will create "lesser" Vampires as a matter of will and choice. Inadvertent creation of a Vampire is possible in either case if a body killed by a Vampire is buried and subsequently the body is dug up (assuming that the burying of the Vampire's kill does not properly prevent the body from rising again as a Vampire).

This brings up the point of how a body can be properly "disposed of" after being killed by a Vampire or a "lesser" Vampire. This process should be a simple one and accomplishable in a few ways: 1. The body and head can be separated; 2. The body can be burned; 3. The body can be disposed of just as a Vampire would be disposed of; or 4. The body is drained of blood and either a Bless, Prayer, Chant or Exorcism is said over the corpse. Other reasonable means can be ruled on by the DM.

The Vampire's existence on the Negative Material Plane is such that normal Invisibility can be foiled by his/her ability to see into another plane. My personal ruling in this regard is a range of 40 feet with a 50% chance per direct viewing (that is, looking right at the invisible creature/object) of seeing the invisible object. Naturally the size of the invisible object can vary this percentage. The Vampire also has a 5% natural chance to observe Invisibility due to its level and intelligence (see the *Dungeon Masters' Guide*).

Other Vampire Forms

The Vampire has the ability to become a Giant Bat and also a

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Gaseous Cloud at will. This transformation is very rapid (taking only 1–4 segments with the 4 segments only being used if the Vampire is surprised) and the new form can operate after but a 1-segment delay; this applies to the alternate forms of Bat to Cloud, Cloud to Vampire, etc. In the Bat and Cloud forms the abilities of the Vampire are, at best, poorly defined. First of all, the Vampire can not Drain, Summon, Charm or use its physical strength in either form. Changing to another form will cause all carried items to change also.

As a Bat, the monster has the following statistics:

Hit Dice (for attack purposes) $2 + 1$; Hit points are based upon its full hit die potential; Move 18"; Damage per attack 1–2 but not draining ability; susceptibility to spells is just the same as in Vampire form (a full list of spell immunities follows); a magic weapon IS needed to inflict damage. The Bat can see with the Vampire's eyes (i.e., it has Infravision) but it can not detect Invisibility. The vampire does not regenerate in the Bat form. The Bat has only minor existence on the Negative Material Plane, so there is no draining of levels or strength by the Bat's attack

(touch). The Bat form never has any abilities of the Vampire's former profession in life. The Bat is not an animal in any way, so spells affecting animals only do not come into play. However, if the Vampire summons Bats and then turns into a Bat himself/herself, he/she can lead the summoned bats in some direction, even away from a party. It can not Command the bats in the classic sense; it can only obtain reaction by its own example, which the bats will mimic.

In Gaseous form, the Vampire has different abilities and characteristics.

Its sense of vision is reduced and it can not see with 20/20 vision nor with Infravision; a *slight* blurring effect comes into play. The Gaseous Cloud can move at 6" (faster than the Potion-bestowed Gaseous Form). It has no hit dice, attack abilities, regeneration abilities, summon abilities, harm abilities or drain abilities. It is immune to all magic except Fireball, Lightning Bolt (½ damage), Cold (½ damage), Air Elementals (double damage; this includes Djinni Whirlwinds) and Gust of Wind (which can overcome the 6" movement speed).

Even if the Vampire is "scattered to the four winds" it can re-form, given time (1-100 rounds; the decision must be based upon conditions). If it is split up and cannot re-form (part is in a container like a bottle, or part is on one side of a wall and part on the other with the connecting hole blocked), the Vampire is not killed unless he/she is exposed to sunlight or unless he/she was on the way back to his/her coffin because of a **forced** assumption of the Gaseous Form. If underground, the two parts could remain apart for years and still re-form; however, if the coffin has been disposed of while he/she was split up, then another matter arises. In Cloud form the Vampire is absolutely free to move as he/she chooses if he/she has not been **forced** into Gaseous Form (i.e., lost all hit points due to combat). If the Vampire is forced into Gaseous Form, he/she must make for his/her coffin by a reasonably direct route (no going out of the way to cross a river or bog).

The Cloud form can re-form quickly; it can also ooze through any space that is not airtight. It can even seep through soil that is not too moist at the rate of 1" per hour. In Gaseous Form, the Vampire has almost no Negative Plane existence, but the link is not completely broken. Note that if hard-pressed, a Vampire may break off melee by assuming Gaseous Form.

It is a wise decision to set a hit point total at which the Vampire will automatically go Gaseous in the next melee round. The Vampire, is, after all, a very intelligent monster and he/she will not waste himself/herself on Forced Gaseous Form if he/she can avoid it. During forced assumption of Gaseous Form, the Vampire is **most** vulnerable, since he/she can not do anything at all for 8 hours after entering his/her coffin in the Cloud form. Note also that if the Vampire is beyond the 2-hour limit of travel to reach his coffin, he/she will most certainly assume Gaseous Form before being forced into the situation!

Note that if the Vampire takes damage from one of the listed spells while in "Free will Gaseous Form" it could lose all hit points (remember, it does not regenerate in this form) and be forced to go to its coffin at once.

Immunity to Spells

The next subject concerning the Vampire is its immunities to various spells and spell forms. Clearly the Vampire is immune to Sleep, all Charms, all Holds, Poison and Paralyzation. In like manner, it is obviously immune to Death Magic. Under the realm of Charms and Holds, it is a logical extension that Suggestion will not work either. However, arguments from two different points of view can be offered in the case of Fear, Confusion, Magic Jar, Cause Wounds, Disease, or Blindness; Friends, Web, Stinking Cloud, Enfeeblement, Illusions, Polymorphs, Feeblemind, Raise Dead, Reincarnation, Power Word Stun and a few others I have yet to run into.

I rule that the following spells do not affect a Vampire, as extensions of its normal immunities; Fear, Friends, Stinking Cloud, Illusions that charm in some way, Raise Dead and Reincarnation.

Spells that fully effect a Vampire are Confusion, Magic Jar, Cause Wounds, Cause Blindness (if the Vampire must be touched, the loss of 2 levels is automatic — figure who delivers a spell by touch must do so

with the bare hand, never with a gloved or covered hand!), Feeblemind and Power Word Stun.

Spells that I rule as variable in effect are Cause Disease (the Vampire can throw this one off by returning to his/her coffin for 8 hours of rest); Web (the Vampire has two ways out; Gaseous Cloud, and because he/she exists on another plane the Web can, at best, be half strength against the monster — one-fourth, if a saving throw is made. It takes a Vampire but 1-4 segments to become Gaseous, but he/she must remain in that form for a full round before taking normal or Bat shape.); Enfeeblement (since the monster is already dead and since the spell is based upon Cold, I rule that this spell has only half effect, or no effect if the normal saving throw is made.); Polymorphs (since the Vampire is an inherent shapechanger — though limited — as to what forms it can take — polymorphing the monster is only *temporary* in effect. The Vampire can shapechange back to normal form, Bat or Cloud on the next melee round. It is illogical to have an Undead become an elf, a red dragon or a beetle, since by its non-living nature the resultant polymorph will also be "non-living". Thus, a polymorph of an Undead always results in an Undead, but the polymorph would not have the powers and abilities of the new or old form, save for locomotion and speech. This rule prevents an evil MU from making a Shadow in a Wraith, e.g.). It is also noted that Vampires take but half damage from Cold and Electricity, but of course if a saving throw is made the damage is one-fourth. Note that a "Flame Tongue" or a "Frost Brand" sword does not prevent normal regeneration of hit points to a Vampire.

Regeneration

Regeneration is the next topic for discussion. The Vampire does not regenerate any points in Bat or Gaseous Form. It must be in "human" shape to regenerate. Note that regeneration, as well as other Vampire powers, are possible deep underground regardless of the time of day outside.

I rule the following way when it comes to what constitutes "deep underground." If the Vampire is abroad, goes outside, or sees daylight (he/she does *not* have to be *exposed* to daylight) he/she must return to the coffin at the next daylight period and must remain there through the day. However, if the coffin lid is opened in a non-daylight/sunlight situation, the Vampire can defend him/herself! Thus, the old canard about attacking a Vampire during the day is false!

Remember, this is not the Bram Stoker Vampire, this is the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* Vampire. The AD&D Vampire drains levels due to negative plane coexistence and does not necessarily bite the victim. Even if "far beneath the surface of the ground," the Vampire must return to his/her coffin eventually — I rule *once* each week. If the Vampire does not return to his/her coffin: 1. Within a week if underground the full time; 2. Each night if exposed to the outside (including seeing daylight), or 3. Within 3 hours of being reduced by melee (damaged) to zero points, the monster crosses over to the Negative Plane exclusively and can not return. On the Negative Plane the monster is virtually powerless, as its powers come from the *coexistence* on two planes. If he/she does go to the Negative Plane, all carried items remain behind.

The next big area of argument comes over what type of monster results when a Vampire kills a human, the human is buried, and then is unearthed the next night (or later). How the figure is killed is one major bone of contention: Does the figure die due to damage or due to being drained to zero level? If the figure dies due to damage (not all necessarily from the Vampire), then the figure can retain abilities from his/her former profession. If a 12th-level Wizard, for example, is wounded by some form of attack and is then touched by a Vampire such that he becomes a Necromancer but is also killed due to damage of the Vampire's touch, the resultant monster will be a "lesser" Vampire who is also a Necromancer!

This Vampire must read his spells just as before and rest periods are the same but are only allowed in the coffin. Since the figure is not alive, however, he may not again become a Wizard by experience, nor may he learn new spells. Furthermore, items that require a touch of a human hand (like a Wand, for example) will not function in his hand since he is not alive. As DM, you can rule in numerous ways as to which items need

the touch of a living hand (body) in order to function. This rule limits the power of the Vampire Spellcaster. If the figure dies by full draining, then all former profession abilities and levels are lost — the figure is a vampire, nothing more. It should be noted that a Vampire does not willingly want a “lesser” vampire whose profession level is very high (7th level or higher) since if the “lesser” ever gains full Vampire status he/she may not be friendly to his/her former master.

The “Lesser” Vampire

Exactly what is a “lesser” Vampire (“... appropriately strengthened vampire under control of its slayer.” AD&D Monster Manual, page 99)? He or she is the monster created by a Full Vampire after killing/draining the victim. This monster follows, to some degree, the rules set for Negative Plane Undead.

If a Wight kills a figure, a “. . . half-strength wight under (its) control . . .” will result. The same statement is made for the Wraith and the Spectre. Yet, “If the vampire which slew the creature is itself killed, the vampires created by it become free willed monsters.”

Somehow all of this must be quantified. First of all, the “lesser” vampire is under the control of the Full Vampire even if killed by another “lesser” vampire. As long as the Full Vampire maintains control, the “lesser’s” will be subject to his/her command.

Now the questions arise; is the “lesser” vampire half-strength or not, and if it is released to become “free willed” does it then grow to full strength? I’d say that the Vampire is $\frac{3}{4}$ strength, and if control is lost the vampire grows to Full Vampire status. To put this in rule form: A “lesser” Vampire must be uncontrolled for 7 days before it will become “free willed.” Thus, if the Full Vampire gives commands or is present within 7 days the “lesser” vampire remains a “lesser” vampire. If the “lesser” becomes “free willed” it will take two full days to grow to Full Vampire status. Once it has “free will,” the Full Vampire can not regain control, though it can have all of its statements take on the power of a Suggestion which the new “free willed Vampire” can Save versus. While this may seem like a contradiction of the “charm” rule, consider the circumstances of the exchange and the existing relationship. Note that the Full Vampire did not have to Charm the “lesser” vampire while the “lesser” was still alive!

The statistics for the “lesser” Vampire are as follows; 6 + 2 hit dice, A.C. 2, Move 12/18, Damage per attack 5-10; Special Attacks: Energy Drain*; Special Defenses: +1 or better to hit but Silver does half damage; Magic Resistance: As discussed in this article and as with a Full Vampire.

The importance differences are due to the fact that the “lesser” does not exist as strongly on the Negative Material Plane as the Full Vampire. If uncontrolled, the “lesser” has the “free will” to gain full Negative Plane access. Note the fewer hit dice. The Energy Drain of the “lesser” vampire is one level, plus a 50% chance for a second level to be drained. Note that Silver weapons do half damage. Finally, the “lesser” Vampire IS subject to a Raise Dead spell, if it fails its saving throw versus magic. The “lesser’s” former profession abilities are retained with the obvious exceptions of those abilities defined by alignment. (There is no such thing as a Vampire-Paladin.)

A “lesser” vampire’s physical strength is tied to its negative plane existence, so a “lesser” vampire does have a physical strength of 18/76. However, alignment and intelligence are open to some interpretation.

If the figure in life is stupid and foolish and his/her alignment is neutral, lawful or good, the transition to becoming a Vampire should not automatically change his/her intelligence or alignment. Obviously a Vampire is evil, and that change is automatic. But a “lesser” vampire can view evil from a lawful or neutral posture, at least initially. Eventually he/she will become chaotic, but this could take a period of time. I allow the monster a saving throw taken weekly to see if the alignment change occurs.

Intelligence/Wisdom is another matter. If, in life, the figure is Smart or Wise, then the resultant “lesser” vampire can have “exceptional” intelligence of 15–16. If the figure is not too bright then the resultant vampire should not be too bright either. The Vampire can acquire “cunning,” but that should be worth no more than 2–8 points of Intelligence or Wisdom.

I raise the subject of intelligence because if Vampires used all of their

intelligence and were lawful too, they likely would rule entire sections of the planet, if not the entire planet! Played intelligently, a Vampire would 1) accumulate at least two coffins; 2) create a few “lessers” to “guard the fort,” 3) use their charming powers to gain minions; 4) never fight until melee does produce Forced Gaseous Form; and 5) use summoned and charmed monsters to weaken opposition before the Full Vampire him/herself enters the battle, etc.

A Vampire can go on for many hours picking away at a party before a final outcome is assured, one way or the other. If a Vampire knows his/her coffin is threatened and it is his/her last one, he/she will become extremely clever. Yet before any Vampire makes a really clever defense, the DM should have him/her make a saving throw to reflect his/her chaotic nature. In this way, the party has a better chance.

Summoning and Charming

Finally, the Vampire can summon and charm. The Vampire must be limited in its summoning ability, or thousands of rats and hundreds of wolves will appear. I allow a Vampire only three summons each night and there must be at least a full hour between each. I contend that this summons s of the magical Monster Summoning type and thus the argument about how many wolves, bats and rats are in the area is not germane. If the wolves, bats and rats are available and within 2–12 melee rounds, then they will come, of course.

What are the statistics of these summoned monsters?

BATS: 90% of the time they should be the mundane sort that “hang around” in caves, bell towers, etc. They have 1–4 hit points, are Armor Class 7 (due to size and speed), move 12” (but usually flurry about figures when a Vampire summons them), do “inadvertent” damage of 1 point 50% of the time — if and only if at least 5 are swarming around a single figure and the Armor Class of the victim indicates a hit. Swarms reduce the ability “to hit” by 3 points. 10% of the time, however, 1 Vampire Bat per 10 bats (round down) may appear. It is 1 hit die A.C. 8, moves slower, 9”, and does 1 point of damage per hit. In addition, if it does it drains 1–4 points of blood just as a Stirge does but then flies away after 8 points are drained.

RATS: 90% of the time they should be the mundane sort that scurries about in dungeons, though they will always be especially large rats. 1–4 hit points, A.C. 8, bite causes 1 point of damage (no change of disease). But 10% of the time (and only in especially deep dungeons) Giant Sumatran Rats will appear, as per the *Monster Manual*. The quantity of these Giant Rats is 7–70 and not 10–100.

WOLVES: Their type should be a function of the climate. If in polar regions, Winter Wolves should appear, but only 2–7 would come. In other areas the chance of the normal wolf is 70% for the full 3–18 in number (see the *Monster Manual*); however, 30% of the time 2-14 (1d6 + 1d8) Dire Wolves will appear.

Lastly, we come to the Charm ability of a Vampire. When is a “glance met?” Can it be avoided? I use 1d20 for the figure Meleeing the Vampire and 1d12 for the Vampire (the case in which a Vampire meets someone casually can easily be adjudicated). If the 12-sided die equals or exceeds the roll on the 20-sided die the glance has been met. If the Vampire is surprised use 1d6; if the victim is surprised use 1d8 for him/her also. The victim, in melee, can purposefully avoid the glance by not facing the monster directly. Thus the Vampire will use 1d8 versus the player’s 1d20 but the player is then –2 to hit the vampire and his/her own Armor Class is 2 levels lower. The player can’t hit his/her opponent as easily, and since his/her own anticipation when attacked in melee is inhibited by not facing the monster, his/her Armor Class suffers.

When the Vampire does Charm, the victim immediately ceases hostility — no verbal command need be given. This Charm is far more powerful than a Charm Person spell, but obvious self-destruction will not be allowed. The charm is so powerful that the victim will fight his friends (at –2 to hit due to his/her zombie-like condition) and even allow him/herself to be drained of levels by the characteristic Vampire bite.

Hopefully, I haven’t missed too much, but every DM knows how “inventive” players can be. A little common sense, regardless of what the textbooks omit or gloss over, is fully the prerogative of the Dungeonmaster.