

MOON DICE GAMES PRESENTS

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE AGE OF



UNDYING

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The Age of Undying

A SUPPLEMENT FOR DCC RPG



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A MOON DICE GAMES PRODUCTION

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the Age of Undying has Begun.

FIRST, SOME BACKGROUND

In my *Dungeon Crawl Classics*/Crawljammer campaign, it began when a PC — a cleric of Cthulhu — in a moment of desperation, against the wishes of his party, sacrificed a monstrously powerful magical artifact to his god in a well-meaning but dangerous attempt to remove the veil between the living and the dead.

It worked. And the party unleashed what I called “The Age of Undying,” when the once-dead rose from the ground and physical death was no longer a state of being for the PCs or their enemies. This was not necromantic magic nor was this immortality. This was a new state of existence for every being in the world with a nervous system and a brain. Wounds no longer bled, and hearts no longer stopped beating. Instead, veins throbbed with magical energy and souls provided the connective tissue that kept the arms and legs moving. In this new

state of existence, the PCs learned what it meant to survive when traditional death and dying no longer mattered. The world was still dangerous — in the Age of Undying, it was more dangerous than ever.

Once that happened, I knew the setting — and even the rules of the game — needed to be altered, upended, undermined, and sabotaged. The Age of Undying had to be weird, but also deadly and insane and terrifying, even if what used to be known as death seemed to be gone forever. This supplement contains the bits I changed to make the Age of Undying feel different than what had come before, expanded for use in your own game of *Dungeon Crawl Classics* and/or Crawljammer. This is the Age of Undying, and the PCs in my game (mostly) survived it. Let’s see if yours are as brave. Or crazy. Or lucky.

THE AGE OF UNDYING AND YOU

In your campaign, in your world, perhaps something else brought forth the Age of Undying. Perhaps it was a faraway cleric performing a desperate ritual. Perhaps it was a god rewriting the rules of reality. Perhaps it was the death of a great being or the rebirth of a long-lost ally that triggered this new age. It's always best when the actions of the PCs cause the Age of Undying to occur so they must face the consequences of their own decisions. Maybe you leave the potential of the Age of Undying as a reality-bomb, waiting for a trigger that seems appropriate in your game. Once unleashed, the game changes substantially. Be warned. Be ready. (Actually, you'll never be ready, so just pull the trigger when the time feels right.)

Put simply, the Age of Undying is a new game state layered atop your own campaign adventures and it differs from traditional un-death. Though zombies and skeletons may still roam the lands, this new situation does not turn everyone into those kinds of un-dead creatures. Instead, the *10 Principles of the Age of Undying* kick into place and change the typical game of Dungeon Crawl Classics in a way that requires new approaches to problem-solving and combat. Dealing damage just isn't what it used to be.

This supplement will go into further detail on all of these principles, but let's just get right to it and identify them up front:

THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF THE AGE OF UNDYING

1. Zero Hit Points does *not* Equal Death
2. The Recently-Dead will Arise
3. Souls are the Life Force
4. Free Souls May Attempt to Possess a New Body
5. Critical Hits are Extra-Vicious
6. Spells have Weird Effects
7. Class Features are Altered
8. Traditional Un-dead Creatures are Still Traditional Un-dead Creatures
9. Most Gods Take Notice
10. New Monsters Emerge, Thriving in this New Age

PRINCIPLE NUMBER ONE

ZERO HIT POINTS DOES NOT EQUAL DEATH

In the Age of Undying, death does not occur at zero hit points. There is no need to apply immediate healing or attempt to “roll the body.” Once this new age begins, there is no demonstrable difference between the state of being alive and the state of being dead. They are the same. Technically, there isn’t even much of a reason to keep track of hit points in the Age of the Undying unless the age comes to an end, but the PCs won’t know that, and they will continue their ritualistic tracking of hit points as if such a thing matters in this new state of reality. Perhaps it comforts them.

Characters no longer bleed in the Age of Undying. Their blood has been replaced by a stable green-gold phlogiston fluid that instantly seals itself upon exposure. This fluid does not heal wounds or close physical gashes, but it does prevent anything that resembles

bleeding, and the phlogiston fluid acts to keep broken bones somewhat in place and cancels out any traditional physical ailments like decay or disease. Any spell or effect (such as poison) that relies upon internal organs failing is useless in the Age of Undying. They simply do nothing, since there is no blood pumping into the heart to affect and the phlogiston fluid cancels any such vile bane.

Bodies *can* be destroyed, either by severing the head from the neck or destroying 50% of the body or more (cutting a body in half, for example, would destroy it, as would an explosion that blasted away all arms and legs or a particularly vicious *scorching ray*), but even that doesn’t equal absolute death. Destruction of the body simply sets the soul free, and that will be discussed a bit later.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER TWO

THE RECENTLY DEAD WILL ARISE

Necromancy works as it always has on any old bones or corpses that have begun to rot in the ground. The un-dead will rise if that is their fate. But the Age of Undying triggers a specific effect upon those who have died within the last 48 hours. They arise as if they had not died at all, unless the majority of their body has been destroyed or they have

been decapitated. Otherwise, they claw their way out of coffins, startle their loved ones, and go about their business as if nothing has happened. They may sport visible wounds and deformities from bloating and brief decay, but as far as these recently-dead are concerned they merely slept for a day or two and awoke refreshed. They are as alive as anyone else.



PRINCIPLE NUMBER THREE

SOULS ARE THE LIFE FORCE

When the Age of Undying begins, the blood of every living and recently-dead being converts to green-gold phlogiston fluid, and that magic binds the physical form together even when so-called “damage” would otherwise reduce the character or creature to zero hit points and therefore lead to death. But it’s the soul that matters most. It is the soul that wills the body to move and act even as many of the physical functions of the body have failed. There is no need to eat, for example, and if characters do, they will become bloated and for each meal they eat they must make a DC 10 Fort save or lose -1 Stamina and -1 Agility since there is no way for their body to properly digest or expel the foodstuffs. The soul needs no particular physical sustenance.

In some cultures, and perhaps in other ages, it is said that elves do not have souls, nor do beasts. In the Age of Undying, every living creature has a soul, but it is extremely difficult for a base soul to survive outside of its body for long.

Lesser animals have souls that will dissipate if the body is destroyed, but any being with a Personality 6 or greater has a soul strong enough to survive outside the body for a

short time. Though a soul may not leave an intact body without special magicks, a soul of Personality 6 or greater *will* leave the body once more than 50% of the body is destroyed or the head is severed from the neck. In this free-floating state, the soul appears as a green-gold shimmering apparition of the character or creature, can fly at a rate of 20’ per round, and can survive outside of a body for 2 rounds + 1 additional round for each point of Personality above 12 (thus the soul of a being with 14 Personality could survive exposure for 4 rounds, a 17 Personality soul could survive 7 rounds without a body, etc.). While functioning as a disembodied soul, a being retains his or her Intelligence, Personality, and Luck, and may still cast spells that do not require any material, verbal, or somatic components. The soul can see as if he or she had eyes, but cannot speak or affect the physical world in any way through touch. The soul can also move through solid objects, unless the object is enchanted by magical energies to prevent such passage. And, most importantly, the disembodied soul can attempt to possess a new body, even one that already has a soul of its own.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER FOUR

FREE SOULS MAY ATTEMPT TO POSSESS A NEW BODY

In order for a departing soul to seek a new host, the following procedure must be followed:

The free-floating soul must occupy the same physical space as its intended host body. Even though the soul cannot make physical contact *per se*, it must overlap the body's physical space. The smallest soul-to-body contact can trigger possession.

If the new host body has no soul of its own (a highly *unlikely* event, but possible via strange magicks), the free soul immediately takes possession of this new form.

If the new host has its own soul (a highly *likely* event), a battle of wills must occur. To resolve a **battle of wills**, the “attacking” soul and the “defending” soul must each roll a single opposed Will check, and the higher result gains control of the body, with the losing soul rendered powerless but still present in the back of the controlling soul's mind (which will manifest as second thoughts, self-doubt, and self-loathing). Luck *may* be used in the battle of wills to gain control of the body or to repel an intruding soul, but unlike the normal expenditure of Luck, the Luck points must be spent *prior* to the die roll. A PC soul rendered powerless within the back of another soul's mind is effectively eliminated from the game unless magicks are used to exorcise the controlling soul. Probably time to roll up a new character.

Once a soul controls a new host, the creature or character gains the Strength, Agility, and Stamina of the host body, and the soul retains its own Intelligence, Personality, and Luck. All class or inherent abilities (and character level, etc.) remain the same as the soul's original class abilities. In the event that the host body does not have a clearly-defined Strength, Agility, and/or Stamina, those attributes should each be rolled with 3d6, in order. No rerolls. The Age of Undying is harsh but true.

In the event that *three or more* souls inhabit the same body, no one soul becomes dominant, and the creature or character immediately becomes a maniacal *savage host* under the control of the judge (see PRINCIPLE #10: NEW MONSTERS EMERGE for more information). It is assumed that any available host only contains a single soul unless the judge has described a free soul attempting to take control or it has already manifested as a savage host, though if a particular battle or area seems to involve a number of physical deaths in the double-digits or higher, with souls seeking hosts, the judge may use this optional rule: whenever a PC soul attempts to control a new host, there is a 20% chance that the host already has a second soul within, and thus a successful control attempt will lead to the PC inadvertently triggering the birth of a savage host and losing control to the judge. In any event, if the player loses control of the soul of his character, it is time for that player to roll up a new PC.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER FIVE

CRITICAL HITS ARE EXTRA-VICIOUS

Traditionally, a natural 20 is a crit. In the Age of Undying, any *modified* to-hit roll of 20 or higher becomes a critical hit, and it is often the only way to completely destroy an opponent's physical body in traditional combat. That crit range expands as necessary depending on character class (for example, a warrior crits on 19-20 normally so a modified roll of 19+ would trigger a crit in this new age, while a dual-wielding Halfling would crit on a modified roll of 16+ with his or her d16 attack roll). Critical hits are significantly more common and more devastating in the Age of Undying, since the traditional trading of blows is ineffective with hit points rendered mostly meaningless. Thus, opponents are less afraid of single hits, putting themselves in more aggressive, but sometimes more vulnerable positions. Instead of each character class and monster warranting its own critical hit table, in the Age of Undying, all combatants use **Table AoU-CH** to determine

critical hit effects, with the character's traditional crit die replaced as indicated below (if the same result is rolled a second time in a combat for the same target, trigger the effect one level higher than the one rolled, making a 4 into a 5, for example — taking one crit makes a second crit more dangerous):

Wizard types (*inc. technomancers, elves, etc.*):
1d4 + 1d at every 2nd level (d10 max)

Cleric types (*inc. druids, ecclesiasts, etc.*):
1d6 + 1d at every 2nd level (d14 max)

Thief types (*inc. halflings, riftrunners, etc.*):
1d8 + 1d for every level (d16 max)

Warrior types (*inc. psychic knights, dwarves, etc.*): 1d10 + 1d for every level (d24 max)

Monsters and other Creatures:
1d4 + 1d for every level/HD (d24 max)

TABLE AOU-CH – Age of Undying Critical Hits

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Knock your foe off-balance. Attack at +2 to hit against the same enemy next round. |
| 2 | Gain a strategic advantage over your enemy with your cunning maneuver. You and any ally attacking this enemy receive +3 to hit next round. |
| 3 | Smash the arm of your enemy, dealing 1d10 additional damage, penalizing the enemy -2 on all future attacks for the rest of the day. |
| 4 | Slice the tendons of your foe's leg. Movement permanently reduced by half (rounded down). |
| 5 | Sever the secondary arm of your foe. Two-handed weapons are rendered useless. Attacks by the enemy now suffer a permanent -4 penalty to hit. |
| 6 | Chop off the primary fighting arm of your foe. Foe scrambles to pick up the weapon with whatever hand remains. Gain +4 to hit this foe next round. Foe cannot use two-handed weapons and makes all physical attacks at -4 to hit and damage. |
| 7 | Strike to foe's face disorients the enemy, providing you two immediate attacks against him or her at +2 to hit. |
| 8 | Sever both legs of the enemy in a single swipe. The enemy cannot move, its armor class is reduced -4 and the next successful attack against it that deals 6+ damage will cause decapitation. |
| 9 | Slash the enemy's throat. Your foe gurgles in pain and takes an additional 1d16 damage immediately. The next successful attack against the enemy that deals 4+ damage will cause decapitation. |
| 10 | Decapitate foe. Its phlogiston-powered body makes one desperate attack against the nearest target at -4 before dropping to the ground as the head rolls away. The soul floats up from the body. |
| 11 | Chop your foe completely in half. Its soul floats where his or her body once stood. |
| 12+ | Sever the head of your foe with such force that it flies 2d12 feet away. The departing soul attempts to catch the bouncing head unsuccessfully. The soul will not attempt to gain possession of your body if another target is within reach. Gain two additional melee attacks this round. |

PRINCIPLE NUMBER SIX

SPELLS HAVE WEIRD EFFECTS

Due to the changes in the phlogiston energy — particularly the necrotic side of things, but also the life-giving and healing side of divine magic — many spell effects will manifest differently. The spellcasters should have no forewarning about the alteration in the effects of their spells, but should learn the “rules” of the Age of Undying as they explore it and try out their spells. This is not a comprehensive guide to every possible spell and the way it would be impacted in this new age, but you can consider this a guide to the types of spells that are affected and what the range of the effects might be. Adjust for your own world — and the spells of 3rd party publishers — accordingly:

WIZARD SPELLS AFFECTED:

Level 1

Chill touch: No longer imbues the caster with necromantic energy, but instead anti-matter. The spell results are otherwise the same with two major differences: creatures of the opposite alignment as the caster take double damage. Creatures of the same alignment as the caster take no damage and heal 1d3 hp.

Choking cloud: Because it is magical poison affecting the very molecules of its target(s) the affects still occur as normal and any spell check roll of 20+ triggers a critical hit roll on **Table AoU-CH** (with the flavor of the result adapted to that of a cloud-based attack).

Enlarge: The phlogiston fluid inside all living (ahem, undying) things adds an extra level of juice to this spell. Automatically add 1d6 to the spell check roll when casting this spell on a living being.

Mending: At a spell check result of 24 or higher, this spell may be used to reattach one severed limb on a target creature or character (or two severed limbs with a 32+ result).

Sleep: People still need sleep. The Age of Undying can be exhausting. But this spell is cast at a penalty of -2d because of the energized, adrenaline-like phlogiston fluid inside of every living thing.

Level 2

Arcane affinity: Any character who chooses (or has chosen) the *necromancer* affinity suffers a -1d penalty on spell check rolls associated with spells of the affinity *but* may decide to replace a known spell permanently with the ability to summon magical thread and scissors AND replace an additional known spell to gain the ability to craft one stitcherman deadboy per day if suitable body parts are available in the general area.

Detect invisible: Because of the phlogiston fluid running through every undying thing, all spell checks with this spell are rolled with a d30. If the invisible object is inanimate, consider the result two tiers lower than rolled for purposes of resolution (thus a 31 result would become 22-25 instead).

Invisibility: As explained above, invisibility is just harder to pull off when you have magical energy running through your veins. All spell checks for invisibility suffer a -2d penalty.

Ray of enfeeblement: Weakening opponents is useful in making them easier to decapitate. Any victim of a ray of enfeeblement at a result of 20+ provides opponents a +4 to any crit rolls against it for as long as the spell effects last. All other results of the ray's magic still apply.

Strength: The highly potent phlogiston fluid in the veins increases this spell effect. Roll the check at +1d.

Level 3

Breathe life: Spell effect as normal, and cannot be used on the remains of living creatures.

Dispel magic: With a result of 22+, this spell can be used to cause a stitcherman deadboy to collapse into a heap of limbs or an abulatory soulfield to dissipate. With a result of 34+, this can be used to cause a colossus of souls to collapse, unable to reform for 24 hours.

Haste: Similar to other physiological enhancements like the *strength* spell, the spellcheck for this spell gains +1d.

Slow: The invigorating nature of the phlogiston fluids render this spell less powerful. Roll this spellcheck at -1d.

Transference: No change in the effect of the spell, but heed this warning: if the host body already possesses two or more consciousnesses and this spell is successfully cast with a result of 22+, the caster will become trapped in the crazed mind of a savage host.

Level 4

Polymorph: This spell becomes more volatile in the Age of Undying, pushing against the bounds of an already-altered reality. Each time it is cast, roll for a one-time mercurial magic effect and apply it regardless of whether the spell fails or succeeds.

Level 5

Mind Purge: With a result of 24+, this spell may be used to "cure" a savage host or free a host body for safe possession by a free soul until the spell wears off. A cured savage host will take one of the following course of action, determined randomly (1) attack the caster until defeated, (2) aid the caster unwaveringly, (3) flee in terror.

CLERIC SPELLS AFFECTED:

Note that Cleric spells may be additionally affected by the relevant deity's reaction to the Age of Undying.

Level 1

Food of the Gods: No alteration of effects, but refer to PRINCIPLE #3: SOULS ARE THE LIFE FORCE to see how eating food has a negative impact in the Age of Undying.

Paralysis: Successfully paralyzed creatures can be attacked at +10 to hit and if a (likely) critical hit is rolled, add +2d to the crit roll.

Level 2

Neutralize Poison or Disease: This spell does nothing in the Age of Undying.

Restore Vitality: This spell works in a limited capacity. Roll the spellcheck at -1d and ignore any "heal lost hit points" aspect of the effect.

Level 3

Animate Dead: The raw materials needed for this spell are slightly different in the Age of Undying. Due to phlogiston fluid residue keeping even a soulless body preserved longer, corpses must be dead for at least a full week before they can be animated via this spell. Bodies that died prior to 48 hours before the beginning of the Age of Undying may still be animated as normal. In addition, this spell is weakened overall and rolled at a -1d spellcheck.

Exorcise: On a roll of 16+, this spell renders a host body open for a soul to inhabit or removes the controlling soul so a secondary soul can take over the body. The previous soul must find a new host or dissipate as per PRINCIPLE #3: SOULS ARE THE LIFE FORCE. In addition, this spell, at the level 32+, can be used to carefully prune away all but one selected soul from a savage host or incapacitate the hivemind of a colossus of souls, disbanding the bodies that compose the colossus permanently.

Speak with the Dead: Corpses from an era prior to the Age of Undying may be affected by this spell as normal, but no soulless destroyed bodies during this age may be communicated with, no matter what the spell result says. Free souls, disembodied, may be contacted by this spell as if they were corpses.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER SEVEN

CLASS FEATURES ARE ALTERED

The reshaping of reality caused by the Age of Undying has not only affected spells, but it may also affect class features and abilities. Because the campaign in which I inflicted the Age of Undying upon the players used the Crawljammer classes in addition to the traditional Dungeon Crawl Classics character classes, I have included those supplemental classes here as well (ignore them as needed and make any adjustments to your own unique classes as you deem appropriate):

Cleric

The cleric's god is likely affected positively or negatively (see PRINCIPLE #9: MOST GODS HAVE TAKEN NOTICE) and some clerical spells are affected as well. The class ability of *turn unholy* works as normal, though it's important to note that undying creatures are NOT considered unholy for any alignment. All living things in the Age of Undying fall in the category of the "undying" as distinct from "un-dead." Un-dead beings – skeletons and zombies and the like – still exist, but new monstrosities like the colossus of souls or the stitcherman deadboys are not considered un-dead and are not affected by turning. *Lay on hands* and any other healing effects continue to work as normal, though all healing causes blisters and gold-green (with specks of black) lines of disfigurement on the healed character. A healing effect on the same character in a 24 hour period will cause minor corruption to the healed, and a third healing touch in that same period will cause major corruption to both the healer and the healed.

Dwarf

A dwarf may use *mighty deeds* to "call" shots that would lead directly to decapitation or dismemberment on any creature of total HD at least three steps lower than the dwarf's level (thus a level 5 dwarf could decapitate a 2 HD creature with a successful *mighty deed* roll). *Infravision* also grants the dwarf an automatic ability to see invisible living (and undying) creatures, due to the phlogiston fluid glow.

Ecclesiast

Like the wizard and the cleric, spells and patrons may be affected, and specific racially-modified ecclesiasts may gain additional bonuses. Demi-human ecclesiasts with *infravision* can see invisible creatures, and fish-man ecclesiasts gain +1 to all physical attributes during the Age of Undying. The *self-healing* ability has the same effect as normal, but each use causes a minor corruption.

Elf

Some spells and patrons may be affected as indicated under the relevant sections of this supplement. *Infravision* allows an Elf to see invisible creatures in the Age of Undying.

Halfling

Like other demi-humans, *infravision* allows the ability to "see" invisible creatures.

Lizardman

Just as the dwarf and the warrior, *mighty deeds* can be used to "call" shots that would lead

directly to decapitation or dismemberment on any creature of HD at least 3 steps lower than the lizardman level. *Infravision* allows the ability to “see” invisible creatures.

Psychic Knight

Because the phlogiston energy running through the character’s veins is potent, a psychic knight may select any *psych die* result, up to his maximum, at any time. Changing the result from one level to another requires one full action.

Riftrunner

The phlogiston energy inside the riftrunner’s body increases his *phlogiston fist* attack by +1d. In addition, the instability of reality in the Age of Undying amplifies the power of the spellcasting domains. The riftrunner now rolls 2d10 and selects the preferred option (though if a 1 is rolled, that result must be used), and any resulting damage effect is doubled vs. any monsters specific to the Age of Undying.

Technomancer

Like the wizard or elf, some spells may be affected. Most importantly, a technomancer can dedicate a week of study and permanently remove two known spell slots from linked artifacts to repurpose the technology to become a “stitchermancer” or a “stitcher-technomancer” with the ability to create one stitcherman deadboy per day from available body parts.

Thief

Mostly unaffected, though the skill of handling poison is now useless.

Warrior

Mighty deeds can be used to “call” shots that would lead directly to decapitation or dismemberment on any creature of HD 3 levels lower than the warrior level (as the example in the dwarf description in this section).

Wizard

Like the cleric, some spells are impacted, and specific patrons may also be affected, which would affect bonded spells as determined by the judge.

Yolovar

The yolovar lacks a traditional soul and cannot attempt to inhabit a new host body, although the character’s connection to the Dimensional Orrery allows for multiple lives as normal for the class, with its previously-destroyed physical form phasing out of existence as the new one flickers into being. The yolovar’s hyper-senses grant it an additional +1 to Reflex saves during the Age of Undying and crit rolls against a yolovar suffer a -1 penalty.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER EIGHT

TRADITIONAL UN-DEAD CREATURES ARE STILL UN-DEAD CREATURES

Though the Age of Undying blurs the line between the living and the dead, and death is no longer what it once was, the un-dead are still the un-dead. Un-dead creatures still use Crit Table U from the DCC Core Rulebook (pp. 390-391) instead of the new crit table provided in this supplement. Magical banes vs. un-dead have no additional effects against characters and creatures that reach zero hit points in the Age of Undying. Ghosts, ghouls, mummies, shadows, skeletons, vampires, and zombies (and the like) are un-dead. Ambulatory soulfields and stitcherman deadboys are undying. The difference is in the timing. Un-dead creatures emerge from a time prior to the Age of Undying, and though they might still shamle through the now of the new age, they were birthed before — or spawned from the remnants of the days prior. Creatures and characters “killed” — through decapitation, body destruction, soul destruction, etc. — during the Age of Undying may have their component parts repurposed via technomagic (via the stitchermen or a similar effect) but their tainted bones would not make for suitable necromancy. And those who continue to live after reaching zero hit points, propelled by phlogiston fluids, are considered the undying as well. They seem to live, but their bodies are notably disfigured by combat. But they are not dead, nor are they un-dead. Hence, un-dead and undying are different states of being. If an effect from *Dungeon Crawl Classics* affects “un-dead” it *only* affects un-dead. If something in this supplement affects the “undying” it does not



affect the “un-dead.” Un-dead can still be destroyed when their hit points reach zero (assuming any other death conditions are met — wooden stake through the heart or what have you). They have no souls in the way that the undying do.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER NINE

MOST GODS TAKE NOTICE

Many gods and patrons view the Age of Undying as a curiosity, or perhaps as a way to see the mettle of their followers tested. The gods of your campaign may be affected to some degree, depending on their allegiances. Here's an alphabetical guide to some of the Dungeon Crawl Classics and Crawljammer gods and patrons affected during the Age of Undying. Adjust accordingly to suit your own campaign.

Ahriman, god of death and disease has abandoned us, travelling to the outer reaches of the universe to petition the gods to restore balance to life and death. His clerics lose -1d4 to every attribute until the Age of Undying has ended.

Amun Tor, god of mysteries and riddles is amused by this new reality. Whenever his cleric's soul finds a new host to inhabit, the cleric immediately learns a new random spell of one level higher than he or she is currently capable of casting.

Bobugbubilz, demon lord of evil amphibians is bemused. He isn't sure what to think, and he'd rather spend his time wallowing in filth than contemplating the metaphysical ramifications of the ethically complex Age of Undying. All of his clerics and wizard followers randomly lose access to one known spell due to the inconsistent attention. This spell is regained the following day, at which point a different random spell is lost. This process continues until the Age of Undying comes to an end.

Cadixtat, chaos titan is interested in the upheaval in this new age and even more interested in what changes to reality will follow. His clerics gain +1d to all spellchecks and are provided with a vision of Cadixtat that tells of all three prophecies that will bring about the end of the Age of Undying.

Cthulhu, priest of the Old Ones slouches closer toward full awakening in the Age of Undying. His clerics permanently gain +1d4 to every attribute.

Justicia, goddess of justice and mercy prefers to see enemies quickly dispatched. If her cleric crits and decapitates a target on his first attack against that creature (and the creature has not yet been attacked or otherwise affected by others), the cleric gains one Luck point.

Klazath, god of war is invigorated by the increased violence and upheaval and grants his clerics +1d to their crit die.

Malotoch, the carrion crow god finds her powers waning and lashes out in anger at her clerics, penalizing all of their saving throws by -1 but granting them an additional level 1 spell with a mercurial magic effect (rolled at -20).

Sister Ultiva, goddess of vengeance rewards excellence in battle in these harsh times, particularly when retribution is at hand. All clerics and bonded wizards gain +1 to hit (and a +1 increase to crit rolls) vs. anyone or anything that damaged them previously.

Sperato, god of hope knows that everything looks bleak and thus provides his clerics and bonded wizard with a divine optimism that provides +1 Personality to the character throughout the Age of Undying and an additional +1 to all Will saves as well.

The Three Fates, mistresses of destiny offer a sense of stability to their bonded wizards, allowing their followers to roll two action

dice and choose the highest for each check (unless a 1 is rolled on either die, then the 1 must be used), and providing an alignment-appropriate vision of the prophecy that will bring about the end of the Age of Undying.

Ulesh, god of peace penalizes his clerics by reminding them to find other ways to live in this new age, reducing the cleric's crit rolls by -2.



PRINCIPLE NUMBER TEN

NEW MONSTERS EMERGE, THRIVING IN THIS NEW AGE

Because the Age of Undying is a layer of change atop the setting and adventure which already exist, all of the typical Dungeon Crawl Classics (and maybe Crawljammer) monsters and enemies are still in play, but this new age also brings forth new challenges, and here are just a few that the judge may want to consider bringing into play. Thematically speaking, most of these new creatures would not emerge immediately in the Age of Undying, but would evolve after weeks of the new status quo. In my own game, the ambulatory soulfield and the savage host emerged during the first major battle after the veil between the living and the dead had vanished. The colossus of souls and the stitchermen came later, after the PCs had started to settle in to the terrifyingly harsh new reality which their cleric had birthed.

Ambulatory Soulfield

Init -2; Atk psychic field +3 melee (special); AC 11; HD 2d8; MV fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP successful attack deals 1d3 Personality damage; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +6; AL L.

Some stubborn souls refuse to dissipate and although they lose any sense of consciousness as they merge with other soul fragments into a vaguely blanket-shaped field of green-gold threads, they continue to float around the landscape of the Age of Undying, syphoning Personality from the souls lucky enough to still have host bodies. Ambulatory soulfields tend to roam in formations of 2d4, aimlessly floating toward the strongest souls – the souls with the highest Will saves, whenever possible. Unlike other creatures in the Age of Undying, the hit points of the ambulatory

soulfields matter quite a bit. When attacks on a soulfield reduce it to zero hit points, the fragments of souls trapped within finally release their connection and dissipate into the aether.

Colossus of Souls

Init +4; Atk grab +8 melee (2d20 plus special); AC 16; HD 10d8; MV walk 100'; Act 2d24; SP on a successful grab attack, the target merges with the colossus's enormous body; SV Fort +10, Ref -2, Will +18; AL N.

In every Age of Undying, there are not only souls who refuse to depart, but there are powerful consciousnesses that overwhelm the thoughts and desires of others and tap into the power of the phlogiston fluid for new effects. One of the most powerful and monstrous of the creatures that emerge in the Age of Undying is the colossus of souls. At any time, there are only two of these in existence, and they usually travel together, and when one dies, another one may form within 1d6 days. A colossus of souls is a 200' tall collection of bodies, merged together in the service of a single dominant consciousness, striding across the lands of the Age of Undying to collect more specimens to add to its hideous form. If a victim is added to its gigantic composite body, the victim will become permanently merged with the colossus, its own soul sublimated to the much-greater power in control, unless a miraculous *battle of wills* is made against a Will of +18 (at which point the “winner” gains temporary control of the colossus for 1d8 rounds before being repelled by the mass hivemind). If a victim

fails the battle of wills, which is likely, he or she may still be forcibly removed from the colossus of souls within 3 rounds by a DC 15 Strength check. After 3 rounds, even if the body is recovered, the soul is lost to the hivemind forever, with only an *exorcise* spell or its equivalent able to help free the trapped soul.

Because the hivemind permeates all bodies in the colossus of souls, it is immune to all critical hit results of less than 11. Results of 11+ will trigger as appropriate for the oversized monster, but will not “destroy” the entire body, merely 1d6 of the bodies which form part of the oversized neck, allowing the souls of those bodies to seek new hosts as the colossus temporarily falls. The colossus of souls will reform a new neck and head 2d8 rounds after receiving the critical hit of 11+.

Savage Host

Init +4; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8+2) or pummel +6 melee (1d8+4); AC 14; HD 3d8; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP the competing consciousnesses of the savage host cause unpredictable behavior, roll 1d6 to determine its next action (1) tear at its own hair and flesh, (2) bite the closest target (3) tackle the nearest target to the ground as an opposed Ref check, (4) pummel the nearest target with both hands clenched together, (5) gouge the eyes of the nearest target as a pummel attack dealing no damage but causing permanent blindness if successful, (6) fall to the ground screaming in pain and terror; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will -3; AL C.

When moments of vicious slaughter leave bodies torn apart and multiple souls claim the same new host, the body becomes savagely transformed. A savage host is just such a being, brimming with three, four, five, maybe dozens of souls competing for control of the physical form, their consciousnesses comingling and creating a terrifying conglomeration of fear and uncertainty, but with a tendency toward destruction. A savage host typically looks like a partially-armored humanoid twisted and warped by torment, its face frozen in a horrific mania, saliva dripping from its mouth. Any hairs on the body of a savage host stand on end, and its eyes throb with phlogiston-laced remnants of blood.

A savage host may be “cured” via a high result on an *exorcise* spell (see that spell description in this supplement) by removing all but one soul from this host. If the soul is known to the caster, that known soul takes control of the body. If all souls in the savage host are unknown to the caster, roll 1d7 and refer to the special ability of the savage host to see how it behaves, permanently, with this last remaining soul. On a roll of a 7 the cured host wanders off to seek peace and tranquility.

If the savage host's body is destroyed, as outlined in PRINCIPLE #3: SOULS ARE THE LIFE FORCE, the tormented, comingled souls do not separate to seek new host bodies. Instead, the warped, fused souls have a 10% chance of soothing themselves on the air currents and transforming into an ambulatory soulfield and a 90% chance that they will swirl off into the sky, dissipating as they fly toward the nearest celestial body.



Stitcherman

Init +0; Atk scissors +2 melee (1d6+2) or spell; AC 12; HD 5d6; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP will also know 2 random level 1 wizard spells, 2 random level 2 wizard spells, and 1 level 1 cleric spell; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C.

The stitcherman is a specialized user of magic who has quickly learned the understructure of the Age of Undying and weaves together the fragments of bodies otherwise torn apart. With dismemberment and decapitation so common now, stitchermen may appear from the ranks of the former necromancers, shamans, and other strange sorcerers inclined to use their skills to make their warped way in this new age. In addition to their enchanted scissors which are impervious to destruction effects both magical and mundane, each stitcherman also carries an assortment of needles attached to their pouches of wire and thread dipped into pools of pure phlogiston. These are the tools the stitcherman uses to create the monstrous "stitcherman deadboys," the amalgamated creatures woven together from bits and pieces of other formerly living and undying things. When encountering a stitcherman, there is a 90% chance that he will be accompanied by at least one stitcherman deadboy and a 30% chance that he will be accompanied by 2d4 stitcherman deadboys of various types.

Stitcherman Deadboy

Init -1; Atk claw +5 melee (1d12) or bite +3 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 6d8; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP each stitcherman deadboy will have 0-4 additional characteristics as determined by its origin, gains +3 on all crit rolls; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will -2; AL C.

A stitcherman deadboy is a 5' tall magical construct woven together from the body parts of a variety of creatures. Unless he loses a limb, the stitcherman deadboy prefers to swipe with its arms in a powerful dual claw attack every round, attempting to detach opponents' limbs (or decapitate its victim) for additional fodder for its stitcherman master.

Each stitcherman is crafted — via magical wire and thread — from a variety of humanoid sources (humans, lizardmen, orcs, beastmen, martians, great apes, demonkin, etc.) and the standard version of a stitcherman deadboy will be a composite of some or all of those. But each stitcherman deadboy also has a chance of gaining additional features as determined by the origin of its components. Reference the tables below for additional information.

TABLE SD-1: Does the Stitcherman Deadboy Have Additional Features? Roll 1d6 on the table below.

- 1 Nope, it's just a standard stitcherman deadboy
- 2 Yes, unfortunately its "extra feature" is that it is defective (roll 1d4 to determine the defect): (1) missing one arm, reduced to 1d20 action per round, (2) no claws on hands, claw attack replaced by slap attack at +2 to hit (1d8 damage), and -3 instead of +3 on crit rolls, (3) no legs, must drag itself around by its arms, reducing its movement to 10' per round and only severs opponents' legs on crit unless victim is already prone, (4) no head, can only attack if connected by a 20'-long magical thread to the stitcherman master (if thread is targeted by an edged weapon or magical attack, treat it as if it has an AC of 12 and can withstand 10 damage before being cut).
- 3 Yes, it gets one additional feature on Table SD-2 below.
- 4 Yes, it gets two additional features on Table SD-2 below.
- 5 Yes, it gets three additional features on Table SD-2 below.
- 6 Yes, it gets four additional features on Table SD-2 below.

TABLE SD-2: What Extra Features does the Stitcherman Deadboy Have? Roll 1d8 on the table below for each additional feature. Duplicate results allowed, and all bonuses are cumulative.

- 1 Self-healing arms: if an arm is severed, it will crawl back into place and repair itself within 1d4 rounds unless 8 damage is dealt to the severed arm before it becomes reattached.
- 2 Phlogiston spew: replace the bite attack with a spew attack at +6, dealing 1d12 damage and causing minor corruption to the victim unless a DC 18 Fort save is made.
- 3 Sawblade implanted in hand: add +2 to hit on claw attack, +6 damage, +1d to crit roll.
- 4 Lion head: add +2 to bite attack, +6 damage, bite becomes preferred attack.
- 5 Mechanoid arm: one arm is mechanical in origin, increasing the creature's AC by +2, and adding a +5 missile attack dealing 1d10 damage.
- 6 Flesh and metal wings: add +2 to Reflex saves, add Movement fly 50'.
- 7 Multi-eyed insectoid head: add +2 AC, +2 to Reflex saves, and replace 2d20 action dice with 2d24 action dice
- 8 Spiked chains dangling from forearms: replace claw attack with spiked chain attack at +6 (1d10 damage), victim must make a Fort save vs. attack roll or be entangled, victim rendered immobile unless a DC 20 Str check is made in a successive round.

LIFE AFTER UNDYING – THE END OF AN ERA

After the intense struggle the PCs will face in the Age of Undying, they will surely look for a glimmer of hope — some way to end this horrible state in which souls steal bodies and death loses all meaning. The Three Prophecies below hint at a way to bring about the end of the Age of Undying:

The Prophecy of Law

An untainted martyr must ride a steed of noble intent into the lake of fire.

The Prophecy of Neutrality

The scroll of the unfolding sky must be read at the top of the tallest mountain in the land as a balanced life is sacrificed to the world.

The Prophecy of Chaos

The horn must blow from the caverns below, while lightning strikes the many-in-one and a soul pays the greatest price.

The judge can be creative with how to resolve these prophecies, but here's my advice: let the players figure out how they interpret the prophecy they hear (or all three prophecies), and if their plan to fulfill the prophecy makes sense, and if at least one PC is willing to sacrifice himself or herself to pull it off, then it should work — of course, there will be plenty of obstacles in their way, because it's not an adventure without conflict.

When the Age of Undying comes to an end, almost everything returns to normal, with two stipulations:

Stipulation #1

Since PCs may or may not have been tracking hit points once hit points no longer seemed to matter in the Age of Undying, the PCs may, in fact, be “dead” when the Age of Undying comes to a close. If the PCs had not been accurately tracking their hit points, determine their current hit points in this manner: PC must roll a Will save vs. a DC of 10 (with the DC increasing by 1 for each additional week, beyond the first, that the Age of Undying has lasted, up to a maximum DC of 20). A failed Will save results PC death, with the soul leaving the irrevocably damaged body to enter the newly-restored realm of death. A successful Will save results in the PC finding himself alive, rolling one HD to determine his or her current hit points, and then healing as normal after that. Note: if hit points have been faithfully tracked all along, then there is no need for a Will save except for the PCs at zero HP at the time the Age of Undying reached its end.

Stipulation #2

The Age of Undying must have *some kind* of lasting consequences, as determined randomly on **Table WatLC – AoU: What are the Lasting Consequences after the Age of Undying?** Keep in mind that these are reality-shifting consequences that will affect your campaign world forevermore, or until a PC undertakes an appropriately perilous quest to reverse these new realities:

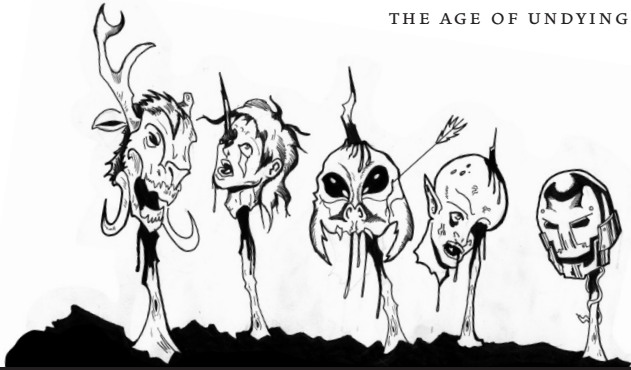


TABLE WATLC – AOU: What are the Lasting Consequences after the Age of Undying?

Roll 1d12 twice and ignore duplicate results.

- 1 The sun never rises again. The world is bathed in eternal night. The stars continue to sparkle in the firmament.
- 2 One of the PCs, determined randomly, permanently gains the ability to cast the Level 3 cleric spell *animate dead*, regardless of his class or level. He also gains a deity disapproval rating (starting at 1) if not currently a cleric — and if unaligned with a specific deity, becomes watched by the Three Fates.
- 3 Horses have vanished from reality. No one knows what you're talking about when you mention them. "You mean a donkey?" they ask. Unicorns and pegasi are removed from all of the mythology books and grimoires too.
- 4 Spellcasting becomes taboo, punishable by death in every civilized society in the known world.
- 5 One of the PCs, determined randomly, gains a mercurial magic effect for the class feature or spell most commonly used by the character.
- 6 All dormant volcanoes in the world become active.
- 7 All gold turns to clay, creating economic upheaval throughout any land based on a gold standard.
- 8 One of the PCs, determined randomly, gains an additional level instantly.
- 9 All of the PCs lose one random language they currently speak and gain another random language they have never previously spoken.
- 10 The PCs are shifted to a mirror universe where everything they thought they understood about good and evil in the world has been reversed.
- 11 Not all the dead have gone quietly back to rest. There is a 25% increase in un-dead activity in the world. Add 25% more un-dead to every encounter featuring un-dead creatures, add a 1-in-8 chance of encountering un-dead on any random encounter check.
- 12 Whenever a PC reaches zero HP from now on, they instantly die unless magical healing is applied within one round after dropping to zero. Death comes easily now, and the PCs have become "persons of interest" to the gods of the dead.

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