

# Maximum Mayhem Dungeons™ Mini Adventure #1

## Shadow of the Necromancer

Written by Mark Taormino

AN ADVENTURE FOR FIFTH EDITION CHARACTER LEVELS 1-3



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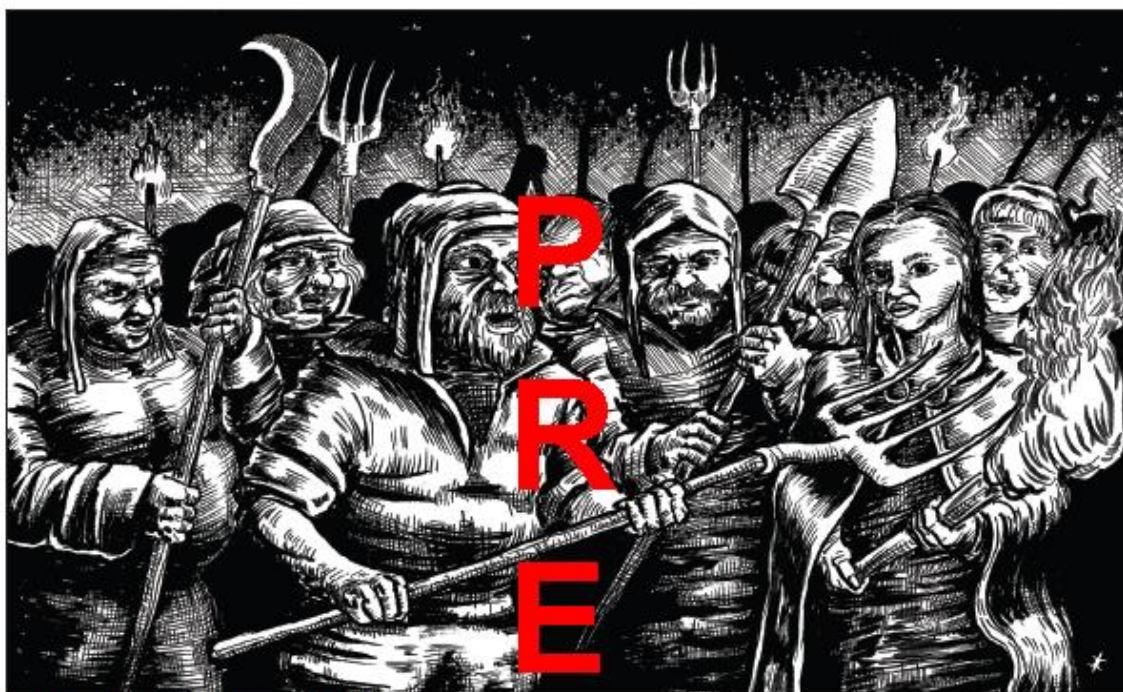


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### MALICIOUS THE NECROMANCER:

Ages ago, in a long forgotten part of the world, at the small keep of a hermit necromancer named Malicious Dreadmore. His whole life he was working perfecting his evil magic to find a way to make the ultimate army full of "super" skeletons, zombies and undead. He wrecked havoc upon the locals with all of his evil creations causing chaos and mayhem over the years. After many years of trial and error (on the poor unsuspecting locals), he finally perfected the magic incantations that would bring his dream to life. A huge smile slowly crept across his face as he wrote the final cryptic runes into his spellbook, knowing that this would be "the one" to make his dream come true after so many failures! However his glee was short lived when suddenly an explosion of fire and smoke rocked his small castle from outside! Startled, the wizard took his diary, notes and spell book and hid it in a secret compartment within the stone slab of his altar. He pulled a black metal skeleton key out of his pocket which he then inserted into the mouth of the central skull carving on the altar. He whispered some strange incantations along with the phrase "true evil never dies" and the key began to glow bright green! He turned it to lock and seal the compartment! After the key stopped glowing and then he put it in his pocket. He ran up to his northwest tower and looked out the window and saw fire and smoke down below along with a small band of adventurers and two dozen

locals armed with torches and pitchforks! It was time for revenge and the people finally rebelled, gathering a small team of professional adventurers along with the local strongbacks they attacked Malicious's castle, breaching the walls! The necromancer's undead army was fighting them off but losing the battle. He fled to his Master Altar Chamber where he could hear the shouting and angry mob charging down the nearby hall towards him. He faced the door and took a deep breath, speaking some strange incantations as the locals burst in! "Kill that evil wizard!" shouted one of the crowd! Malicious quickly cast a few magic spells and numerous attacking townsfolk were melted into puddles like wax by a **Wall of Fire** or electrified by **Lightning Bolts** and even blown to pieces by several volleys of **Fireballs**! It was eerily quiet. "How do you like that?" Malicious shouted at the smoldering corpses of his enemies with a ferocious anger! A few more folks armed with pitchforks entered but were choking on smoke and retreated. Suddenly to his surprise a small band of adventurers burst in! The necromancer shouted "I have perfected the spell for my Undead Super Army and I will take it to the grave with me before you can find it!" An epic battle ensued but ultimately Malicious was killed by a fireball cast by a young wizard which landed right in the face critically wounding and killing him in one surprise blow! He fell dead with his face burning and melting from the fireball as more townsfolk stormed into the room yelling and



screaming. The remaining adventurers and townsfolk quickly locked the Necromancer's melting and still smoldering dead body in a old heavy metal casket. They wrapped thick huge chains around it as well. The young wizard who landed the "critical hit" killing Malicious stepped forward and sealed the casket with a lock with magical **Wizard Lock**. Next the strongbards of the group dragged the coffin to the deepest darkest corner of the the dungeon and left it there to rot. The remaining group set portions of the keep on fire then hastily exited the place. The adventurers that defeated the evil one proceeded to loot the place and moved on to their next quest never to return. However Malicious's actual spell book with the final super incantation has remained safely hidden in the dusty altar for all these years. Ages past and the keep fell into disrepair becoming long forgotten except for a few folks that were at the battle final battle.

### DAMIEN NIGHTFALL AND THE MAGES GUILD:

Decades had past since the death of Malicious and the burning of his Keep. Peace and tranquility reigned over the lands and no one had even remembered or thought about that evil place anymore. Nobody except for a curious young twenty-one year old wizard named Damien Nightfall. He learned of the legend of Malicious from dusty old history texts in the local mages guild where he was a current student. Fascinated at the thought of carrying on Malicious's necromancy work he learned everything about the evil ones story and life. The Wizards of the High Order warned Damien, **"Not to continue this research because that kind of necromancy is too unstable."** He scoffed at them and proceeded to delve further into the legend. One day he decided to use his scrying ability and look into Malicious's ruined keep. To his surprise he discovered a faint glowing green glow emanating from the inner keep. Damien knew this must be something! Curious he continued to watch and to his shock and amazement he saw himself in the glowing light himself continuing Malicious's work and leading an undead army! Terrified of this sight and the personal implications of it, he broke the scrying spell and watched no more, he was in a cold sweat, confused and scared but curious. Days went by and



he continued studying the archives about the legend of the dead Necromancer becoming more and more obsessed with him and his dastardly ideas. As night fell he couldn't resist the temptation and would scry into his crystal ball seeing more and more imagery of himself taking on the mantle of Malicious! Each time growing more confident that this vision is meant to be. After a week of thought and hesitation he requested a meeting in the Mages Guilds Main Audience Chamber with Zandolin oldest and wisest Wizard of the High Order and the Twelve Elders. He told him what he scryed and the old mage sighed and spoke. **"Young man... ages ago, Malicious Dreadmore was once a High Mage here at the guild. He was a brilliant but arrogant and sadly became obsessed with raising the dead and that kind of magic is forbidden here. Life and death is what we are given in this world. Much as it causes pain in our hearts, death is death and is not to be re-animated. Malicious refused to accept that reality and continued his evil experiments, so they expelled him. I was just a young student at the time watching from the shadows. He cursed at the elders with foul language then walked away, disappearing into the hills and we never heard from him again. A few years passed then one day a small gypsy child arrived at our doorstep. The little girl explained she was from the nearby Village of Summerdale where her family lived and it has been attacked by skeletons and zombies. A local ragtag group of adventurers was gathering and they needed some more support and if I would help. I went to the battle. I was the mage that killed Malicious. I cast the Fireball that disfigured face and I enjoyed doing it! I put a Wizard Lock spell on his casket. The scryed images you have seen yourself in are troubling and that place was a evil and has been destroyed for decades now. We are not to disturb it nor pursue those arts."** Damien looked at Zandolin and all the mages in smug disbelief as if they were all stupid and said, **"But why? A powerful Necromancer could control armies of undead and would be invincible! I must learn these skills!"** he boasted. **"Absolutely not!"** spoke the High Wizard. **"Your scrying visions are meaningless nonsense. Do you know why?"** Damien looked puzzled, intense and angrily at the old wizard. Zandolin continued, **"Because you are not a powerful wizard nor are you as intelligent or astute as Malicious was. You have not even completed your 5th level of training yet! He was a 15th level Wizard! You are a petulant child and are forbidden to practice the art of dead. Hear my words boy, if you pursue this action we will be forced to expel you from the School Order we will have no choice to suffer the same fate as Malicious!"** Damien grit his teeth then turned his back

on the wise men and stormed out of the Great Hall. Days went by and he secretly continued his dark research and over the course of the next few weeks he continued to have these scrying sessions and after each one became more and more open and obsessed with the dream of going to the ruins and taking up the reigns of Malicious work. Fumbling through dozens of faded and dusty books in the dead of night he tolled away cursing the elders. **"They can't tell me no!"** He mumbled angrily! **"Who do they think they are? Fools is what they are! I'm not as intelligent as Malicious? That's a laugh! I can do anything! I'm the one scrying these wonderful visions! I know I'm the chosen one! I will use a Spell with Dead spell and talk with Malicious to get his fine secrets! Then I will make the most powerful undead army ever and exact revenge on our sworn enemies!"** He feverishly wrote out his notes and packed everything he could of his meager possessions, including a dagger, several supplies of water and rations, his spell book along with a few books and scrolls that told the detailed history of Malicious. He put everything in a backpack and strapped it on. The wizards had been secretly monitoring his activities and caught him as he was trying to sneak out in the night then brought him back into the Main Audience Chamber. Zandolin the High Wizard spoke. **"What is this?"** he grabbed one of the scrolls from Damien's pack. **"Speak with Dead?"** Damien winced. **"You won't be needing to talk with Malicious's corpse anytime soon,"** he said as he took a burning candle from a wall sconce and lit the scroll on fire. The flame flickered in the rage filled eyes of Damien. **"You have defied our orders for the last time with your desire for these sick and twisted dreams. You are too young and inexperienced in the ways of magic to even attempt that forbidden work! Now, we hereby banish you from this guild forever. Leave and do not return!"** Damien stood there stolidly and after several seconds of thought and contemplation he slowly smiled and spoke to them. **"I will return one day as a powerful Necromancer like Malicious with my own army of undead super warriors and I will lay waste to your feeble guild, your lands and your kin."** The wizards started to laugh which echoed in the chamber. Damien sternly turned around and marched out of the guild into the cold moonlit night. The large doors closed and locked. He looked back at the guild and scornfully yelled, **"I will have my revenge! You will all suffer from my wrath!"** while shaking his fists at the heavens! Dark clouds started to gather as he began his long journey towards Malicious's Keep to fulfill his destiny as the laughter from the wizards inside the guild faded off in the distance.



#### THE RUINS, THE CORPSE AND ALTAR KEY:

After a harrowing journey over many months through dangerous lands, a tired, dirty and tattered Damien finally arrived one cold, rainy night at the ruins of Malicious the Necromancer's Keep. He barely survived the journey which took far longer than he thought. Having run out of food rations months ago, he had to rely on eating wild berries, mushrooms, rats and crickets along the way. Let alone having some encounters fighting wild beasts with only a dagger. As the rain and mud slowly dripped down Damien's face, he smiled and began a semi-subdued but maniacal laugh, knowing that he finally reached the ruins and even better, was still alive from his long sojourn. The rain subsided and when the clouds parted they revealed a full moon as a chilly but deadly quite breeze filled the air. He began to explore the whole place which was blackened and charred from the fire decades ago. A few of the towers had collapsed along with some of the walls. Several skeletons were scattered about the courtyard. Some looked like they were minions of the necromancer and others were wearing normal clothes and armed with simple weapons like pitchforks and short swords. He searched high and low but could not find the Malicious spellbook or notes. Days went by and he grew more despondent, maniacal and disheveled. Until one fateful night while exploring in the dungeon level he found an unexpected surprise - a secret door! It led to a room with the fabled locked casket with the necromancer's body! Frightened but fascinated he used his magical **Knock** spell to unlock the casket, removed the chains and slowly opened it! To his surprise and horror the body of Malicious was fairly intact and wearing a charred black and purple robe. One of his skeletal hands was gripping some kind of rusty, black metal object with a clenched fist. Damien stared at the remains which was quite a disturbing sight and realized this was Malicious! He smiled and looked into the long dead black eyes of the skeleton then spoke in a whisper, **"My master! I have arrived to carry on your work! Please show me the way to fulfill our destiny!"** The corpse stood cold and silent. The place was eerily quiet except for the occasional sound of a water droplet into a nearby puddle from the recent rain. Frustrated and impatient he shouted



filled with rage and shouted at the skeleton's face! **"Where is your spellbook and notes? I know there are hidden magicks here! True evil never dies!"** The corpse stood silent. A chill ran through the air. Damien sighed and turned away from the casket then sat down on the dirty stone floor next it and broke down in tears and spoke to himself, **"I have failed. The Master were right. The visions were just meaningless nonsense. What a fool am I!"** It was quiet... dead quiet. After a few seconds of silence, the sound of metal falling down and hitting the stone floor startled Damien! He jumped back and noticed a thick black skeleton key had fallen from the corpses' hand. It landed on the ground next to Damien and began to faintly glow green. With a nervous and shaking hand he picked it up and to explore the dungeon seemed to be "guiding" him. The key glowed brighter as he approached the old altar room! Damien was awestruck! He knew this must be what he had scryed back at the mages guild! The key grew bright as a blinding light when he approached the altar with the central skull keyhole! Inserting the key it unlocked the secret compartment with Malicious's diary, notes and spellbook! Breathing a sigh of relief he began the long process of preparing the castle for the future work and experiments!

#### THE SPELL, THE MAD MAN AND THE DEAD

A few years have passed since the young necromancer took over the castle. He has been busy using the long dead Malicious's magic spell for animating the dead corpses from a nearby cemetery. However due to the fact that Damien was only into his fourth level of studies at the mages school when he quit, he doesn't understand that he is too inexperienced pull it off successfully as that would have required him to have advanced up to at least the fifth level of guild. As a result of this, seventy-five percent of the time his animated undead are crazed and uncontrollable while the other twenty-five percent are weak and docile but will take orders. Damien became frustrated and impatient, blindly assuming that the reason the magic "wasn't working right" was because Malicious's spell needed to be "modified" with some changes. Yet another bad idea. Now things are getting much worse. In addition he is slowly going mad and spends several evenings pacing around talking with the corpse of Malicious. When he gets mad with it he puts it back into the the old iron casket, screaming and cursing at the silent corpse of Malicious. Other evenings he places it with him at the dinner table in his chambers having deeply intensive and giddy discussions with about the plan once the perfect undead are under their control and revenge can be exacted upon their "mortal" enemies! And in the evenings he places it in the ornate bedroom to rest. Damien himself chooses to sleep in the dusty and creepy Upper Level Haunted Bedroom where the Poltergeist lives (which certainly is not helping his mental state). He still believes he is close to finding the

correct combination of changes to have 100% stable super undead but unfortunately he is too young, naive and inexperienced for this kind of magic. He's also run out of good bodies from the cemetery so his minions have been kidnapping travelers or locals from nearby lands. Also every now and then foolish adventurers show up at the castle and become perfect subjects for his evil experiments!

#### WANDERING MONSTERS:

Wandering monsters will be encountered in only in the outside courtyards, empty rooms, etc. The DM should check for wandering monsters every turn, with a roll of 1 on a d6 indicating an encounter:

**1. Giant Rats** - (#1d4): (AC: 12, MV: 30 ft, HD: 2d6, HP: 20, ST: -2 DX: +2 CN: 0 IQ: -4 WS: 0 CH: -3, SN: Keen Smell (advantage on smell Perception checks), Darkvision 60 ft, PP 10, #AT: 1, TH: +4, M: 1d4+2, SZ: Small, AL: Unaligned, CR: 1/8) Pack Tactics (advantage on attacks against a creature if the rat's allies is within 5 ft of the creature and not incapacitated).

**2. Zombies** - (#1d6): (AC: 8, MV: 20 ft, HD: 3d8+9, HP: 30, ST: +1 DX: -2 CN: +3 IQ: -4 WS: -2 CH: -3, SV: Wis +0, SN: darkvision 60 ft, PP 8, #AT: 1, TH: +3, D: 6+1 (slam) 4, Medium, AL: Neutral, CR: 1/4) Immune to poison; Undead Fortitude (if damaged to 0 hit points and zombie make Constitution saving throw of DC of 5 + damage taken, unless radiant damage or critical hit, drops to 1 hit point instead). There is a 25% chance the zombie may be deformed and have an extra appendage, That limb could increase the number of attacks. Use GMs discretion for these cases.

**3. Bats** - (#1d10): (AC 10, MV: 0 ft, fly 30 ft, HD: 1d6, HP: 3, ST: 0 DX: +2 CN: 0 IQ: -4 WS: 0 CH: -2, #AT: 1, TH: +3, M: 1d2 (bite, must grapple first, possible disease), SZ: Small, AL: Unaligned, CR 1/8). Users of missile weapons will be at disadvantage on attacks but receive double their attack bonus. They must land on and grapple their intended victims to attack. There is a 1% chance that those so bitten will contract rabies, sewer fever (see SRD, but there is no initial saving throw!) or some similar blood-borne infection.

**4. Skeletons** - (#1d4): (AC: 13, MV: 30 ft, HD: 2d8+4, HP: 12, ST: 0 DX: +2 CN +2 IQ: -2 WS: -1 CH -3, SC: Darkvision 60 ft, PP 10, #AT: 1, DM: 1d6+2 (Shortsword), SZ: Medium, AL: Lawful Evil, CR 1/4) Skeletons are vulnerable to bludgeoning, immune to poison and exhaustion.

