

NECROPOLIS

FINGERS WORKED TO THE BONE



For use with the Kingdom role-playing game by Ben Robbins
www.lamemage.com

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Ryan was one of the Power backers for Kingdom but instead of having me make a seed for him he decided to write one himself based on the setting for his upcoming book, Engine of Change. Take it away, Ryan! -Ben

In Necropolis, you work even after you're dead. Your corpse is state property, reanimated as a mindless undead laborer. Either by intention or accident, some deceased retain their identities. Free-willed undead have no rights, no representation, and must beg from the living for anything they want. Things are tense between those calling all undead perversions, the sentient undead who want a voice in government and a chance to rule, and residents who want nothing more than a stable life (or unlife). Between the city-state and the rest of the world is a stretch of blasted desert called the Wastes, populated only by ghouls, undead vermin that will devour any corpse, animated or otherwise.

Necropolis is a republic city-state. It is isolated from the rest of the world by culture, environment, and choice. It is an industrialized city-state powered by reanimated perpetual motion machines. If it can be powered by crank, piston, or gear, you'll find it worked by a skeletal hand. A entropic fog, the Miasma, rises out of the ground. It saps life from the unprotected, but powers the city's undead. The city is quiet despite the bustle of the streets; industry runs silent and the reserved people try not to breathe too deeply when out of doors.

The Kingdom is Necropolis' people, from its ruling council, to the Vitalists who hate undead on principle, the sentient undead who want their raspy voices heard, and the many citizens content to live and die with things as they have been.

CUSTOMIZE *(pick one answer for each)*

- The kingdoms out past the walls have grown [weak and disorganized | into a powerful, unified empire | to forget Necropolis even exists].
- Necropolis is [a town, five years after its founding, with just over five hundred citizens | a three hundred year old city with seventy thousand citizens | an ancient and stagnant city-state no living soul has passed outside of in more than a thousand years, its population too large and densely packed to count].
- The technology level of the city-state is [levers and pulleys, with skeletal horses pulling carts and fat candles for light | clockwork and steam, with buggies zipping along on steel tracks, and homes and streets lit by gas lamps | electromagnets spun by undead hands, with monorails and magnetic lifts and glowing glass bulbs in lamps and chandeliers].
- The sentient undead are a minority, numbering [one for every thousand | one for every hundred | one for every ten] living persons.

THREATS

- The Miasma all around us is trying to kill us.
- The undead are underrepresented. It isn't even a crime to destroy a minded one.
- Undead in government won't have the best intentions of the living at heart.
- The outside world is primitive, but its inhabitants outnumber and hate us.
- Ghouls hunger for the flesh of the dead, animated or otherwise, and lurk just outside the walls.
- One day you will die. Then what?

LOCATIONS

- Council meeting room
- A group home for free-willed undead, paid for by living descendants
- Hargroves University, where the future necromancers of the city are educated.
- The Cistern, where the city's water is collected and pumped back up to the people.
- Processing Center, where the newly dead are taken to be reanimated for "Civil Service".
- Animation Studio, where parts of the deceased are worked into machines.
- The outer wall between our world and theirs.

CHARACTER SEEDS

- Council member harboring deep disgust for the undead.
- Council member with an accidentally undead spouse.
- Outspoken anti-undead activist, shining a light on the twisted nature of walking corpses.
- Undead spokesperson, rallying the dead for corpse suffrage.
- Undead artist, popular and with an influential live patron.
- Undead sympathiser, among the living.
- Someone out to replace the living with the dead.
- One who has been undead since before the Founding.
- One who turned undead yesterday.
- An animator who converts bone and metal into machines.
- A living person with a number of sentient undead relatives to support.

NAMES

Female: Dahlia, Daisy, Clover, Fleur, Heather, Iris, Jasmine, Lily, Burnett, Ivy, Xeni, Rihanna, Verbena, Briar, Rose, Violet

Male: Thornton, Bracken, Basil, Canna, Fern, Fennel, Bay, Alder, Birk, Ash, Reed, Vernon, Arthur, Perry, Wen

CROSSROADS

- Convert entirely to undeath?
- Destroy the undead entirely?
- Allow the thinking undead full rights, knowing their interests aren't those of the living?
- Reconnect with the outside world?
- Eliminate the Miasma?
- Banish the sentient undead?

NOTES

Necropolis was born of contemplating the undead depicted in most fantasy stories. Commonly monsters and/or masterminds, at their core magical undead are engines of motion fueled by the entropy. That they could act as perpetual motion machines, and what that would mean to the civilization willing to put them to work, got me thinking in terms of a necromancy powered industrial revolution. I made that the setting of my book, *Engine of Change*, about an animator of the dead working in that city-state, but thought there was more potential for stories to be told than I alone could do service to. I look forward to seeing what others do in and to Necropolis.

You can find more on *Engine of Change*, Necropolis, and other stories at <http://ryandeugan.com/>.