

FRIDAY FREEBIE – HELLEBARDE GAMES

Dead Ship Isle

AN ADVENTURE FOR LOW LEVEL CHARACTERS.



Note: This is the Castles and Crusades ® version of this free module. Find other versions at <https://www.hellebardegames.com>

The lonely ship sits perched upon a small, rocky island. Seafarers warn you to stay away, but the myths of riches hidden within the hold counter the horror stories of people going to the island never to return.

Adventure beckons! Can you brave Dead Ship Isle to find what wonders are hidden beneath the decks?

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INTRODUCTION – HELLEBARDE GAMES

Player Introduction

The ship has been there as long as anyone can remember, but the decay seems to be only a few years along. Mists shroud the isle it sits upon for most of the year, but in the heat of summer the mists seem to burn off, and the rocky slopes can be seen. There is a spot where rock and scree make a path to the afterdeck, if you can land on the area close to the sea and climb around the isle, you can explore the wreck. Tales of horrors eating people's faces, and of mad eternal sailors are just that, tales, right? The lure of a king's treasure hidden in the hold is more than the fear of those other tales.

Players stop reading here. Only information for the Game Master is beyond this point.

Game Master Introduction

Sailing on wild and rough seas, The Free Titan, both privateer and pirate ship, depending upon the year, sailed into the bay seeking shelter. But a monstrous wave – some say a monster in the shape of a wave – swept them far into the air and landed them on Rock Isle. Rock Isle already had a reputation, but since that day more than 100 years ago, the screams of men fighting and dying echo across the bay every time a storm sweeps in, and everyone knows the Rock Isle – now known as Dead Ship Isle – is haunted.

What's going on

The ship was indeed carrying a wealth of cargo, including a small stash of magical items. One of those items was a silver dragon statuette that the shipwrecked crew passed around to try and figure out what it was and how it worked. They were desperate for a way off the island, and the ship lost its only longboat in the rough seas before it crashed. Being miles from the nearest shoreline, the crew couldn't take their treasure with them by floating on debris, so looked to the magical stash to find an easy way off the isle.

The dragon statuette was cursed (If you play Hellebarde's One Night Adventures, this is the Curse of the Dragon Temple in ONA-4), everyone touching it was doomed to become the walking dead. Being pirates, and being under stress, fights broke out quickly. When someone died, they came back to life as a zombie. The zombie(s) then attacked the next pirate that had held the cursed statuette. Soon, the majority of the crew had become zombies, cursed to return the statuette to the temple it was stolen from, but unable to get off the island.

Landing on the Isle

When any boat makes landfall on the island, three **Skeletons** (See area #19) will jump over the side of the ship and rush the boat. Their imperative is to return the statuette, and a boat is what they need.

1. Afterdeck

Fish skeletons lie about this worn section of deck, and part of the railing on the starboard side is broken away. Ladders stick up from the main deck below on both sides. The ship's wheel stands just in front of a mast.

The deck is weak here, and if a character who weighs more than 100 pounds steps up to the ship's wheel, the decking will give way. The character that causes this to happen must make a DC 5 Dexterity check to avoid falling through to area #7. Those who fail the check will take 3 (1d6) falling damage and be prone in area #7. If the GM wishes, a second dexterity check to hold onto whatever was in their hand.

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2. Main Deck

Ladders lead up from this deck to both the aft deck and the forecastle, and two sets of stairs lead down into the ship. A door enters the aftercastle on the aft end of the ship, and another enters the forecastle at the bow of the ship. A disgusting looking sailor, a gaping hole where his intestines belong with rotted ends hanging out is chained to the forecastle door. His chains appear long enough to reach both the port and starboard rails, but only about a third of the way to the aftercastle.

This was Bonny, the Bosun's Mate. He was the first to die, as his punishments had always been cruel, and being stranded on a rock made some crew members lose their fear of the man. One of the crew gutted him in a sabre battle, and when he woke from the dead, they captured and chained him here. He is a **Ghoul**, and will fight anyone that comes in reach of his chains (within 40 feet of the door in the forecastle).

GHOUL

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

SIZE: Medium

AC: 14

HD: 2 (d8)

HP: 10

MOVE: 30 ft.

ATTACKS: 2 Claws (1d3), Bite (1d6)

SAVES: P

SPECIAL: Paralysis, Darkvision 60 ft.

XP: 20+2

COMBAT: Ghouls are mindless, and attack with a wild ferocity akin to that of rabid animals. They are always hungry, and will often stop in the middle of a battle to feast upon a fallen foe.

PARALYSIS: Any living creature, other than an elf, that is clawed or bitten by a ghoul must make a strength save or be paralyzed. This paralysis lasts 1d4+1 minutes, or until a remove curse or remove paralysis spell is cast upon the victim. Elves are immune to ghoul paralysis.

3. Forecastle Deck

Three broken ballistae sit beyond the forward mast, the rest of this deck being clean and worn. A piece of the railing near the bow is broken away, leaving an opening over the north shore of the isle.

If the party goes to the bow to inspect the ballistae, a **Giant Toad** will jump up from the shore and try to pull the nearest character through the broken rail. The toad will use its jump to attack, then if it grapples successfully, will attempt to fall back to the rocks below with the grappled character. The character must make a strength or dexterity save (strength if resisting by planting feet, dexterity if grabbing onto something to stop from being pulled down. The DC for this check is 10 if the character is surprised, 5 if not. Failing the check means the toad has dragged the character off the deck, and the character takes 3 (1d6) falling damage to the rocks below. The toad will then attempt to swallow the character. If successful, the toad will then head for the water at its best movement

TOAD, GIANT

TYPE: Animal

INT: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Large

AC: 16

HD: 4 (d8)

HP: 20

MOVE: 20 ft., 40 ft. (jump)

ATTACKS: Bite (1d4)

SAVES: P

SPECIAL: Twilight Vision, Swallow

XP: 90+4

CAMOUFLAGE: Giant toads have a +5 bonus to hide checks, and a +10 bonus to surprise rolls. This ability is negated at night if a light is flashed upon them.

SWALLOW: If a giant toad strikes with its tongue, it inflicts 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed at a strength save, or the tongue wraps around the victim's waist or one of the victim's limbs. If the creature is small in size, the toad instantly pulls it into its maw and swallows it. Giant toads can only swallow small creatures, such as dogs, gnomes, and halflings. If a giant toad successfully swallows a creature over 3 feet tall, it takes 2 full rounds for it to choke the creature down. During this time it is very vulnerable to attack. Its movement is halved, and its armor class is reduced to 10. Any creature swallowed by a giant toad suffers 2d8 points of damage per round. A giant toad's gullet is too small to allow a swallowed victim to fight its way out.

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rate and swim away unless stopped. There is nothing else of interest here. The ballistae are beyond repair.

4. First Mate's Cabin

This room is a mess. A bunk sits against the port hull, the bedding pulled off and covered in red-brown stains. A chest sits in the port corner toward the bow, a large padlock on it and rust brown stains across it in dots. A fold-down table was down, but the leather thongs used to hold it when in the down position have rotted and the table has flopped down into the wall. Ruined papers are strewn about the desk, moisture having obliterated their writing and started a grey mold over them.

This was the First Mate's cabin. Teofuld was a good first mate, and treated the crew well – counting on the Bosun to handle discipline. It didn't save him from his shipmates once the curse turned them to undead though. Three of them burst into his room and killed him. He is now below with the other accursed. His chest holds the remains of his worldly possessions, with 23 gold pieces, 41 silver pieces, two copper pieces, a *dagger +1*, and an iron bar with a sword hilt attached to it that acts as a *club +1*. These items are intermixed with rotted clothing and leather. The mold is natural, and not a threat to PCs. (Though one of our writing team would make every mold deadly, he was over-ruled)

5. Bosun's Cabin

This cabin is neat and sparsely furnished. If not for a tipped over chair, it would seem like whomever lived here might have only recently stepped out. The bunk built against the starboard hull is made, a set of drawers under it closed, and a closed chest sits near the bed on the bow end.

This was the cabin of the Bosun. He was killed on the isle the first day the ship was stranded here, and later chained to the deck. The drawers hold clothing and his accumulated wealth – 2 gold pieces, 38 silver pieces, and a matched set of ivory dice worth 15 gold pieces.

6. Captain's Cabin

The mast runs down through the center of this room, two unlit lanterns hanging from it. A bed of redwood is built against the starboard hull, with two padlocked chests built against the port hull. The bed is made with satins and silks, and an aged tapestry showing a ship and a sea monster hangs on the port wall over the chests.

This was captain Terrinque's quarters. Terrinque was a very neat individual that liked finery but did not like to show it off. Terrinque also knew that the crew was a collection of cut-throats that could not be trusted, so the chests are trapped. Pins set into each of the locks are coated with Serpent Venom. Any character that touches one of the locks with bare skin must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (3d6) on a failed save, half of that number on a successful save. Each lock will only poison once before the venom is depleted. The locks are otherwise those available in the equipment lists, requiring a DC 10 Dexterity check to pick. Should the characters become frustrated, the chests are AC 15 and each has 10 (3d6) hit points. Anything fragile in a chest that is smashed open will be destroyed on a roll higher than 5 on a D20.

Once the poison and locks have been overcome, the chest closest to the bow holds 137 gold pieces and two potions of healing, while the chest closest to the stern holds a silver flute worth 100 gold pieces and a set of eight crystal goblets worth 75 gold pieces mixed in with musty-smelling clothing of a wild variety of colors and styles.

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7. Crew Quarters

Four rows of hammocks line this large cabin, tied to boards that run bow-to-stern at head height. Most of the hammocks have sea bags tied to the anchor board next to the hammock ties. Six hammocks have bodies in them. There is a door toward the bow and a door toward the stern in the center of the wall.

Three of the bodies are **Zombies**, crew members impacted by the curse and here in case the group that attacked at the landing failed. If a character fell through the ceiling from area #3, they will jump to attack that character immediately. If a party enters through one of the doors, they will lie in their hammocks until the PCs get close, then jump up and attack. All three are in hammocks near the center of the room.

The junk in the sea bags is just that, junk. If the party spends ten minutes searching, they will uncover 216 copper pieces and a broken comb worth 5 gold in its current condition, double that if repaired.

8. Lavatory/Poop Deck

In an ingenious improvement over the poop deck, this room is fully enclosed except oversized portholes on both port and starboard, and outhouse seats line the stern wall. There is a bucket near each seat, each with some small amount of water in it.

There is nothing here. The sewage runs through pipes right out the back of the ship, and the buckets are for rinsing the sewage tubes out so they don't stink. A size small character could squeeze out these release tubes, being deposited ten feet above the rocky beach behind the stern. The over-sized portholes could act as an exit for medium or small sized creatures – they are latched, with a rope dangling outside. These were used to refill buckets, the ropes stretching down beyond the water line. The ropes are old and frayed, but will not break unless more than 200 pounds of weight is placed upon them at once.

9. Ship's Supplies

This room is in shambles, but from the door you can see extra sails, spars, tools, ropes, and an anchor. There are boxes and chests, and one box that is partially broken open appears to have nails in it.

This is the ship's stores, kept here to be close to the decks and masts. When the ship first crashed, the crew went through here thoroughly to see how much equipment they had and decide how best to get off this rock. The ship's carpenter took some of the tools and nails, and started working on a raft in area #18, but alas being out and exposed, he was one of the first attacked by the recently undead. With the carpenter's death, hope of escape largely fled.

ZOMBIE

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

SIZE: Medium

AC: 12

HD: 2 (d8)

HP: 10

MOVE: 20 ft.

ATTACKS: Slam (1d8)

SAVES: P

SPECIAL: Slow

XP: 10+2

COMBAT: A zombie is mindless, fearless, and only seeks to kill and devour living flesh.

SLOW: A zombie never gains initiative and always acts last in any given round.

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10. Galley

Two iron stoves, a long table, and two cupboards are built into this room. There are rails around the room just above head height that hold bowls and plates. One of the stoves is open, and the lower half of a body is protruding from it.

The body is Cook. Several of the sailors didn't like his cooking, and when they realized that no one was likely to get off this island alive, they took their frustration out on Cook. There is nothing of value here, and Cook is just a body, not the animated kind.

11. Armory

Weapons and bits of leather armor lie scattered about this room, with ten hammocks and sea bags hanging along the wall toward the stern. Two bodies in leather armor lie in the room, both mutilated.

This was the cabin for the marines and their equipment. The captain preferred to have a professional boarding party lead the way onto the other ship, then follow with sailors. It won the crew quite a few captures. A thorough search of the room will reveal two shortswords, seven sabers, three saps, and enough usable bits of leather armor to make one suit.

12. Aft Hold

Crates, barrels, chests, and amphorae line the sides of this room, and the main mast runs down the center of the room from the deck above to the deck below. The containers show signs of having been opened, and marks from several different kingdoms are evident on the outside of the containers.

This is the general booty that ship had taken on this voyage. The containers were opened as the crew attempted to determine what could be used to help them escape the island – but the inventory was never completed because of the curse that the crew suffered under. The containers hold common trade goods and are marked as from countries in your world that would trade in them – amphorae have olive oil, chests contain cotton or grains, barrels and casks contain ale, wine, or salted fish. It is all old, and even with preservation some has spoiled, so the value is low.

13. Main Hold

There are nets and ropes lying around this room making it clear that its normal use is a hold. There are scratch marks along the floor to indicate that things were repeatedly dragged across this hold also. But there is currently no cargo here. Just to the port of the center of the room is a trap door that shows signs of heavy use. There is a trail of dried mud going from the trap door to the port side stairs. There is a door in the center of each of the aft and bow walls.

If someone with any kind of tracking ability looks at the mud tracks, it will be clear that there is somewhat regular heavy traffic between the trap door and the stairs. The stairs go up to the main deck and the trap door used to lead to the bilge, but the bilge (along with the keel and the rest of the underside of the ship) was sheered off as the ship was shoved up on the isle. Now the trap door opens into the caverns below, where the accursed sailors are staying while trying to appease their curse or find a way to the mainland.

14. Fore Hold

The skeleton of some lizard-like hominid lays on the floor of this otherwise empty hold. The door toward the bow lies ajar, and there is a door on the stern side of the room also.

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The skeleton is animated, a lizardfolk variant of a normal **Skeleton**. It got into the caverns and found the dragon statue, the zombies killed it, and it came back in this form, cursed just like the crew. It will attack when the first PC reaches any square around it.

15. Treasure Hold

This room has been mostly cleaned out. A single chest and a single crate, both bolted to the floor, are all that remains. The chest is open, and the top of the crate has been pried loose. A reptilian hominid skeleton lies beyond the chest.

This room was the treasure hold, where valuables were stored. After the wreck, the room was cleaned out by the crew – first to look for useful items, then to steal what they could. The skeletal body is another of the lizardfolk that came aboard the ship, and it too has been converted into a lizardfolk **Skeleton** from carrying the artifact.

16. Food Stores

Sacks, crates, and barrels once lined this room, but something has made a mess of it. There are rotted remains everywhere, and the half-emptied sacks have been dumped on the floor.

Four **Giant Rats** nest inside the sacks and will swarm over any character that disturbs them. There is nothing else of value in the room.

17. Bow Hold

There is more in this smaller hold than there is in most of the other holds. Crates, boxes, a chest, and weapons fill the area. The containers have been opened, but the room is still generally neat.

This hold was reserved for use by Captain Terrinque. He was transporting high value trade goods, but unfortunately mostly perishables. There are the rotted remains of coffee in boxes, the chest contains 270 silver, and the crates held wheat, now a dried rotten paste. There are eight nicely made scimitars and four ruined longbows here. The scimitars have gold and silver inlaid into the hilt and are worth 50 gold pieces.

SKELETON

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Medium

AC: 13

HD: 1 (d12)

HP: 6

MOVE: 30 ft.

SAVES: P

ATTACKS: Weapon

XP: 5+1

COMBAT: Skeletons attack silently and with a very frightening intensity, killing anything living in their path. Because of their boney nature, any slashing or piercing weapons do half damage, while blunt weapons do normal damage.

RAT, GIANT

TYPE: Animal

INT: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Small

AC: 13

HD: 1 (d4)

HP: 2 each

MOVE: 30 ft., 15 ft. (climb)

SAVES: P

ATTACKS: Bite (1d2)

SPECIAL: Disease, Twilight Vision

XP: 7+1

COMBAT: Rats are skittish and avoid combat at all costs, fleeing whenever disturbed. They may try to bite and eventually eat anyone that is wounded and vulnerable. Large swarms of rats become emboldened, and may attack partially wounded people.

DISEASE: Any creature bitten by a rat has to make a successful constitution to avoid being infected by a disease from the rodent's saliva. The Castle Keeper should refer to the Castle Keepers Guide for examples, but the disease should have a base CL of 2.

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18. Fight Remains

The rotted remains of a partially built raft lie here, skeletal bodies of at least two humanoid races laying around it, their rusted weapons lying next to fleshless hands. An old rope hangs over the side of the ship, granting access.

This is where the ship's carpenter was trying to put together a raft so the crew could get to shore. There were four sailors working here when the zombie attack came, and two more sailors rushed to help fight. These skeletons are just skeletons, and the tools/weapons they were using have been left out to rust.

19. Landing Peninsula

This small peninsula marks a low point on the island, offering access to small boats. There is a whirlpool in the lee of the peninsula, but boats who avoid that corner will find docking easy and an iron stake conveniently set by the shore to tie off boats.

If the party lands a boat here, a group of 3 (1d6) **Skeletons** will jump off the main deck of the ship (area #2) and rush to attack the party. If the party does not use a boat, or lands a boat elsewhere on the isle, they will stay on the deck and attack when the party arrives there.

20. Rocky Scree

Loose shale-like rock lies in piles here, with a two-foot hole near the center of the rocky area. Two daggers lay rusting on the rocks.

This pile of rocks was here before the ship got stranded, and a mated pair of **Giant Lizards** that came here with the Lizardfolk has dug out the hole and lives there. If the party spends more than two minutes here or reaches into the hole, the lizards will attack.

21. Entry Cave

The ladder run down from the ship above ends in an uneven cavern with two exits, one to the north and the other to the southeast. Footprints track through the muddy floor heading toward both exits.

If a party sits here in the dark and waits, **Skeletons** will pass through in pairs every fifteen minutes.

SKELETON

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Medium

AC: 13

HD: 1 (d12)

HP: 6

MOVE: 30 ft.

SAVES: P

ATTACKS: Weapon

XP: 5+1

COMBAT: Skeletons attack silently and with a very frightening intensity, killing anything living in their path. Because of their boney nature, any slashing or piercing weapons do half damage, while blunt weapons do normal damage.

LIZARD, GIANT

TYPE: Animal

INT: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Large

AC: 16

HD: 4 (d8)

HP: 20

MOVE: 30 ft., 30 ft. (climb)

SAVES: P

ATTACKS: Bite (2d6)

SPECIAL: Twilight Vision

XP: 40+4

COMBAT: Giant lizards will lie still for many long hours waiting for prey to come within striking distance. When prey approaches, a giant lizard will launch from its hiding place and attack the smallest member of a group. If successful in slaying their quarry, a giant lizard will not remain in the area to fight. It will flee, carrying its meal with it.

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22. Sludge Cave

The left side of this cave is filled with a glowing green sludge, while the right side is mud like the rest of the cave complex. Four skeletons turn and rush over as you enter the cave.

The **Skeletons** will fight to the death, all bear bits of clothing and armor that mark two of them as sailors, and two of them as some kind of warrior. One of the Skeletons carries a *shortsword +1*. The glowing pool is just a thick sludge that gives off a glow. Filling any type of clear glass container with the sludge will provide just enough light to see in a ten foot radius. The GM might have ideas for other uses for the sludge.

23. Main Cave

Three tunnels lead off this cave, and three Skeletons stand, one near each tunnel. They rush toward you as you enter the room.

The **Skeletons** will fight until destroyed or turned. There is nothing of interest here, and other Skeletons will not come to the fight.

24. Side Cave

This cave is a dead end, with no exits other than the one you have entered from. When your light hits them, three obviously dead people – one in tattered remains of plate mail and two in the remains of sailor's garb – turn toward you, hold up their arms, and shuffle toward you, moaning.

These three **Zombies** will attack until turned or destroyed. They have 20 gold pieces, 13 silver pieces, and 7 copper pieces on their bodies.

25. Guardian Cave

Six Skeletons stand in a line in front of the northwestern exit from this room. Their heads turn to follow you as you enter. There is nothing else here, but the soft glow of a lamp is reflected down the tunnel behind them.

After some adventurers and the lizardfolk made it all the way to the dragon statuette, the undead now guard the idol directly. These **Skeletons** will fight to keep the party out of area #26. In the north corner of the room is a leather sack with two potions of healing in it.

ZOMBIE

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil

SIZE: Medium

AC: 12

HD: 2 (d8)

HP: 10

MOVE: 20 ft.

ATTACKS: Slam (1d8)

SAVES: P

SPECIAL: Slow

XP: 10+2

COMBAT: A zombie is mindless, fearless, and only seeks to kill and devour living flesh.

SLOW: A zombie never gains initiative and always acts last in any given round.

AREA KEY – HELLEBARDE GAMES

26. Cave of the Statuette

Four Skeletons stand in front of an ornate chest with a dragon statuette on it. Next to the chest is a vaguely human figure that is caressing the statuette. The four skeletons rush to attack you.

These beings cannot be turned and will not leave the room while there is a threat in the caverns. They are **Skeletons** with a **Ghoul**. They will fight to keep characters away from the figurine.

After the undead here are defeated, the silver dragon statuette is worth 40 gold pieces, but has religious significance, and 50 gold plus assistance getting the curse it creates removed can be had at a temple. The curse is simple. After holding the statuette and studying it for a minute, or keeping it on their person for more than ten minutes, the person carrying it will become cursed. When next they die, the person will come to life the following night, take the statuette, and attempt to return to the temple where this statuette was stolen from. That is not defined here, but it could be the abandoned temple in Hellebarde Games' ONA-4: *Horror at Milltown*, or any temple that would curse thieves with undeath. If, when a newly created zombie is taking the statuette, any other party members bear the curse, the zombie will kill them, and try to take the body along. This way there are more zombies taking the statuette back to its temple.

The Chest the dragon statue rests on was Captain Terrinque's chest. The zombies brought it down here to keep the statuette out of the dirt.

Inside are two scrolls, one with *Cure Wounds* and *Sound Burst*, the other *Magic Missile*. Next to them are two *Potions of Healing* and a *Ring of Protection +1*. Underneath all of these is a leather sack with 120 gold pieces in it. Finally, at the bottom of the chest, is the captain's logbook. Along with tales of Captain Terrinque's brave exploits, toward the end of the book are entries describing the statuette, and how the zombies always came after it, killing people who had studied it, and trying to take the statuettes away. The last entry says there are only two survivors, and the captain knows that they are doomed. There is a strong warning against holding or studying the dragon statuette.

GHOUL

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

SIZE: Medium

AC: 14

HD: 2 (d8)

HP: 10

MOVE: 30 ft.

ATTACKS: 2 Claws (1d3), Bite (1d6)

SAVES: P

SPECIAL: Paralysis, Darkvision 60 ft.

XP: 20+2

COMBAT: Ghouls are mindless, and attack with a wild ferocity akin to that of rabid animals. They are always hungry, and will often stop in the middle of a battle to feast upon a fallen foe.

PARALYSIS: Any living creature, other than an elf, that is clawed or bitten by a ghoul must make a strength save or be paralyzed. This paralysis lasts 1d4+1 minutes, or until a remove curse or remove paralysis spell is cast upon the victim. Elves are immune to ghoul paralysis.

SKELETON

TYPE: Undead (Common)

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: Medium

AC: 13

HD: 1 (d12)

HP: 6

MOVE: 30 ft.

SAVES: P

ATTACKS: Weapon

XP: 5+1

COMBAT: Skeletons attack silently and with a very frightening intensity, killing anything living in their path. Because of their boney nature, any slashing or piercing weapons do half damage, while blunt weapons do normal damage.

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