

Bypass is a pleasant, quaint village nestled along a small river. It is large enough to contain all the usual staples: a temple, a tavern and the like, yet small enough to avoid any lasting effects from regional politics. Despite its relative isolation, it receives steady influx of adventurers who are 'just passing through,' so much so that the local tavern, the Drunken Dragon Inn, caters almost exclusively to this clientele and serves as a cornerstone for the village economy. Anyone staying at the tavern is bound to find a diversionary side-quest if they choose to look for one. While it may not be as high-stakes and glamorous as many epic globe-spanning quests, there is no shortage of adventure to be found in Bypass for those who wish to seek it out.

Mrs. Bakersfield's Homemade Preserves a mini-adventure for 4 players by Matt Gardner

Player's Introduction

Today at the Drunken Dragon Inn, those looking for adventure are finding slim pickings. The few offers available at the moment either offer negligible pay, inconvenient traveling distance or are otherwise unappealing. After nearly giving up on finding a suitable diversion for the day the party is approached by a kindly old lady. Mrs Bakersfield, her nearly white hair tightly wound up in a small bun and smelling of delicious baked goods, addresses the party. She informs them that she runs the local bakery but has recently been running into a bit of difficulty. A particularly nasty batch of Dire Rats has infested her cellar and are ruining her preserves. If they are not dealt with soon, she will no longer be able to make the delicious pies that many of the villagers count on every day. She offers an astounding 50 gp for a simple afternoon's work as well as a complimentary pie (worth 2 sp) for each adventurer after the rats are dealt with.

If the players do not accept her offer, she politely indicates that she understands that Dire Rats can be intimidating and that the offer still stands if they should change their minds.

If the players wish to ask around the tavern about Mrs. Bakersfield a Streetwise check can provide the following results:

DC 10 - *Her pies are in fact delicious, and a bargain at 2 sp. She could easily sell them for more if she wished.*

DC 15 - *Mrs. Bakersfield has been seen around the tavern a lot recently, seeking assistance with her rat infestation.*

DC 20 - *She seems nervous around more accomplished adventurers, she insists that they not worry about her plight instead requesting assistance from lower level heroes.*

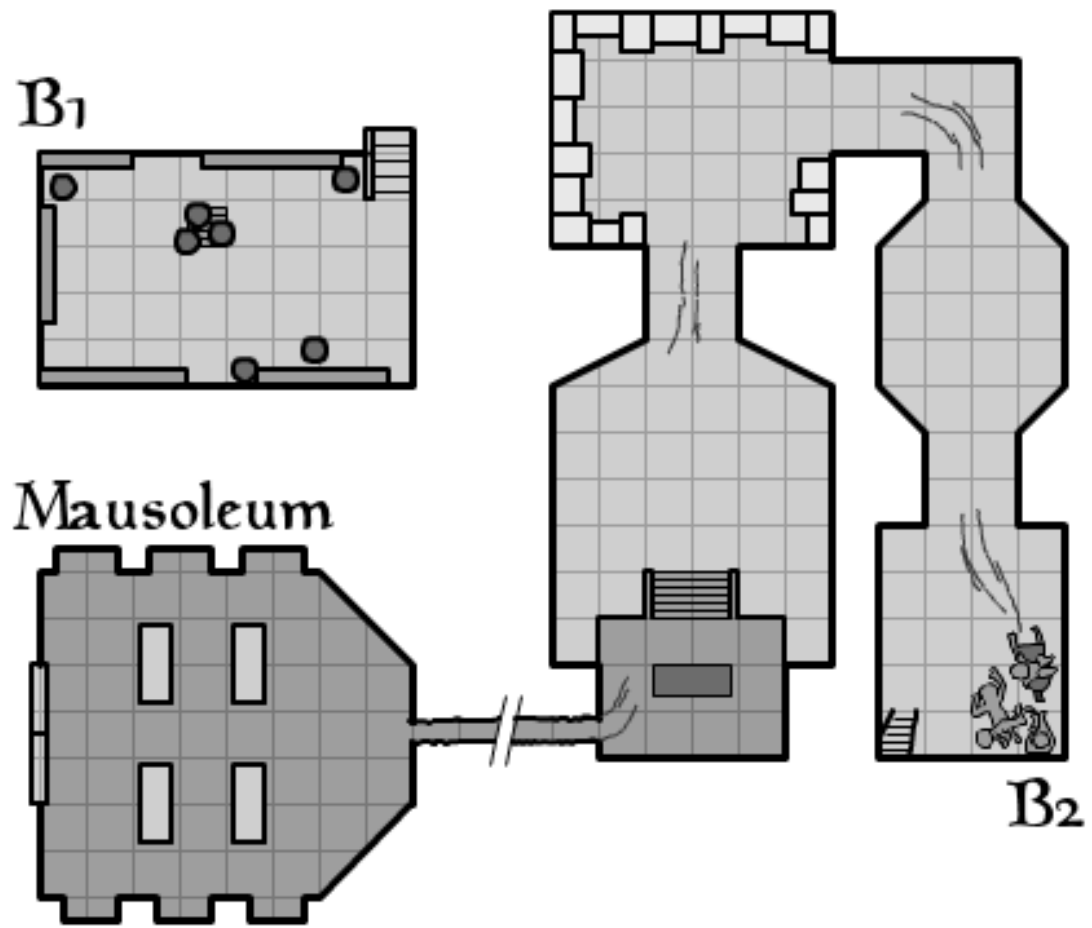
Once the heroes agree to her offer, she politely escorts them to her bakery, conveniently located just outside the tavern. "Adventurers are a hungry bunch," she cheerfully exclaims.

DM's Introduction

Mrs. Bakersfield has no intention of paying the heroes. If all goes according to plan, they'll be dead soon anyway.

Ever since the death of Mr Bakersfield two years ago, Mrs. Bakersfield has been dabbling in the necromantic arts. She's learned rituals to raise the dead into subservient brainless zombies which she darkly refers to as her 'preserves.' She hopes to perfect the ritual so that the deceased subject is fully brought back to life, but still subservient to her. Once this is completed, she will be able to resurrect late husband, and maybe then he'll actually help with the chores for once.

In order to sustain her need for corpses to practice her dark arts, she has excavated a crude tunnel below the village leading from her cellar to the mausoleum underneath the nearby temple. Unfortunately after over a year of practicing on the village's long dead she has run out of available corpses and has needed to supply her own. To this end she has been breeding Dire Rats to let loose in her basement with which to lure unsuspecting adventurers into her clutches. The plan is that the dire rats will be too much for the fledgeling heroes to handle, and she will have fresh bodies to practice her rituals, however her most recent quarry may prove to be more resilient than she had planned for.



Encounter 1: Basement Rats

Encounter Level 1 (350 XP)

This encounter includes the following creatures.

2 dire rats (D)
6 giant rats (G)

Mrs. Bakersfield leads the party down into her cellar to deal with her rat problem. Once the heroes have entered the cellar, she closes the door behind them indicating that she is frightened to witness the rats first hand. A perceptive character (DC 20 Perception) will notice that she securely locks the door from her side. If they attempt to open the door, Mrs. Bakersfield will insist that they deal with the rats before she is comfortable opening the door.

Features

Shelves stocked with fruit preserves and various baking materials line the walls of the cellar. Several barrels of various goods are located near the shelves.

Trapdoor: Towards the center of the room a small group of barrels and sacks of flour are lumped in a specific area of the floor. A DC 15 Perception check will reveal a trap door hidden beneath the stack. The barrels can be moved with little effort and the trap door opened easily. Any player within one square of the trapdoor will immediately notice a horrid rotten smell cutting through the sweet fruity smell of the cellar.

Tactics

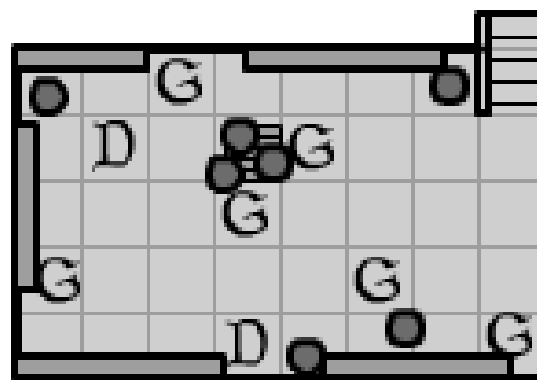
The rats are simple minded and attack the nearest PC. They have nowhere to escape and will thus fight to the death. If the players have opened the trapdoor before dealing with the rats they will attempt to escape through the opening below and return to their breeding grounds (detailed later).

Ending the Encounter

Once the party has defeated the rats they will find the door upstairs still locked and have no indication of Mrs. Bakersfield still waiting outside. With the battle died down, the stench from the trapdoor will become more prevalent. The players can clearly notice the scent of rot and decay coming from the floor. Proceed to the next encounter once the heroes choose to descend into the trapdoor.

Giant Rat		Level 1 Minion
Small natural beast		XP 25
Initiative -3		
Senses Perception +5; Low-Light Vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 13; Reflex 15; Will 12		
Speed 6, climb 3		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---	
Str 12 (+1)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 10 (---)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 2 (-4)	Cha 6 (-2)

Dire Rat		Level 1 Brute
Small natural beast		XP 100
Initiative +2		
Senses Perception +5; Low-Light Vision		
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 15; Fortitude 15; Reflex 13; Will 11		
Speed 6, climb 3		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. AC; 1d2 + 2 damage		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 15 (+2)	Wis 10 (---)
Con 18 (+4)	Int 3 (-4)	Cha 6 (-2)



Encounter 2: The Preserves

Encounter Level 1 (300 XP)

This encounter includes the following creatures.

6 weak preserves (W)

Below the floor of Mrs. Bakersfield's cellar lies another basement which appears to be the foundation from an older building long since replaced.

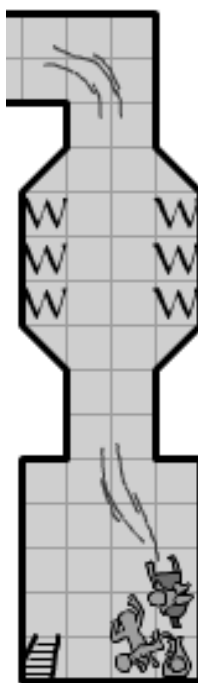
As the party descends into the trap door they immediately notice a sizable pile of fresh corpses piled unceremoniously in the corner. Beside the pile lies an old wheelbarrow with tracks leading further into the basement. A DC 20 Perception check will indicate that the corpses appear to be other adventurers rather than common townsfolk.

Partially down the ensuing hallway a trio of relatively fresh corpses are propped along either wall. These appear to be ordinary civilians, as apposed to the adventurer corpses in the pile.

As the party attempts to pass through the hallway the corpses will suddenly animate and attack the heroes.

Tactics

The preserves attack the nearest players and attempt to prevent further progress into the basement. They fight to the death with no regards to their own safety.



Weak Preserve	Level 1	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 50	
Initiative -3	Senses Perception -2; Darkvision	
HP 19; Bloodied 9		
AC 14; Fortitude 12; Reflex 8; Will 9		
Resist 10 necrotic ; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage		
‡ Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty		
Zombie Weakness		
Any critical hit to the preserve reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 5 (-3)	Wis 7 (-2)
Con 3 (-4)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 2 (-4)

Ending the Encounter

Once the fresh preserves have been defeated the party can proceed deeper into the basement. The next room the party encounters is lined with cages containing several dozen large rats, all with water and food bowls providing adequate sustenance. If the rats are set free they will not actively attack the PCs unless cornered. A DC 15 Nature check will reveal that these rats are being bred in this basement.

The next room they enter appears to be the end of the basement, at a dead end lies a crudely crafted altar which appears to be used for some sort of dark experiments. A DC 15 Arcana check will reveal that this room is used for necromantic experiments most likely resulting in the animated corpses encountered earlier. A player passing DC 20 Arcana check will be confident that this room is not the work of any sort of organized group as most of the tools and effects present are at best rough approximations of more traditional necromantic equipment, though still apparently functional.

A casual investigation of the room will reveal and crudely excavated tunnel behind the altar leading far off into darkness.

A DC 15 Dungeoneering check will confirm that the tunnel leads far off of the property containing the bakery above. Passing a DC 20 Dungeoneering reveals that the tunnel is leading directly beneath the village temple.

Encounter 3: Mausoleum Mayhem

Encounter Level 3 (652 XP)

This encounter includes the following creatures.

1 strong preserve (S)

3 preserves (P)

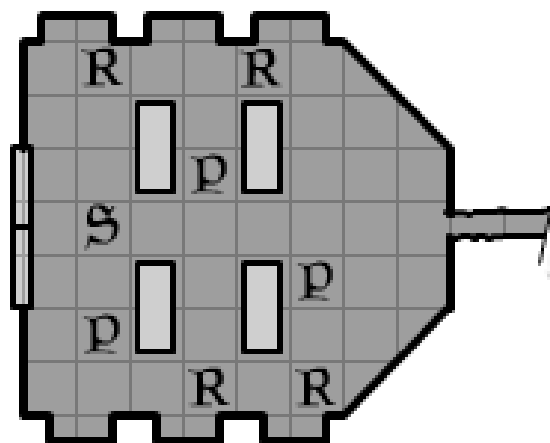
4 rotten preserves (R)

The tunnel leads to a large room which appears to be part of a mausoleum where the village's dead have been buried. On entering the room several of the corpses emerge from their alcoves in the wall or sarcophagi and attack the players. One notably aggressive corpse grabs a decorative sword from one of the sarcophagi to use as a weapon.

Tactics

Again the zombie like creatures attack the nearest enemy with no regard for their own safety and fight to the death.

Strong Preserve	Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 125
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +2; Darkvision
HP 38; Bloodied 19	
AC 18; Fortitude 15; Reflex 13; Will 13	
Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 6	
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will)	+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage
‡ Protective Strike (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent foe attacks another preserve; at-will)	+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target suffers -4 to the triggering attack
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)
	Wis 13 (+2)
	Cha 10 (+1)



Preserve	Level 2 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 125
Initiative -1	Senses Perception ---; Darkvision
HP 40; Bloodied 20	
AC 13; Fortitude 13; Reflex 9; Will 10	
Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 4	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)	+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage
‡ Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)	+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty
Zombie Weakness	Any critical hit to the zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)
	Wis 8 (---)
	Cha 3 (-3)

Ending the Encounter

A large door leading deeper into the mausoleum, however a unmistakable moaning and scratching noise reveals that there are an innumerable number of preserves lurking deeper inside.

Brief investigation of the room will reveal a small stack of notes in one of the empty alcoves. On the notes are what appear to be a rough diagram of the mausoleum labeled "Preserves Inventory" with each location where a corpse would be indicated. One the back of the notes are recipes. A player DC 15 Nature Insight or Arcana check will recognize the recipes as pies, exactly like the ones sold by Mrs. Bakersfield.

Once the players return through the tunnel and reemerge in the altar room begin encounter 4, if they attempt to open the doors Mrs. Bakersfield appears from the tunnel with her guards and encounter 4 takes place in this room instead after which she releases the mass of preserves behind the doors which will follow the PCs outside as the pursue Mrs. Bakersfield leading to the final encounter.

Rotten Preserve	Level 3 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 38
Initiative -1	Senses Perception -1; Darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 13; Fortitude 13; Reflex 9; Will 10	
Speed 4	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)	+6 vs. AC; 5 damage
Alignment Unaligned	Languages ---
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)
	Wis 8 (---)
	Cha 3 (-3)

Encounter 4: Elite Preserves

Encounter Level 3 (600 XP)

This encounter includes the following creatures.

Mrs Bakersfield (B)

2 fresh preserves (F)

2 preserved swordsman (S)

When the PCs emerge from the tunnel they find Mrs. Bakersfield waiting for them, flanked by four preserves which appear to be made from the dead adventurers found previously.

Mrs. Bakersfield will scold the PCs for not dying in her cellar like they were supposed to. The players can speak with her briefly where she will admit to creating all of the preserves the party has encountered and that she's been luring adventurers to her cellar to replenish her stock of available corpses after exhausting the inventory provided by the local mausoleum. When she realized the rats would not be enough to kill the PCs she allowed them to proceed into her sub-basement in hopes that her preserves would finish the job. She will gladly explain her motives for everything if given the opportunity.

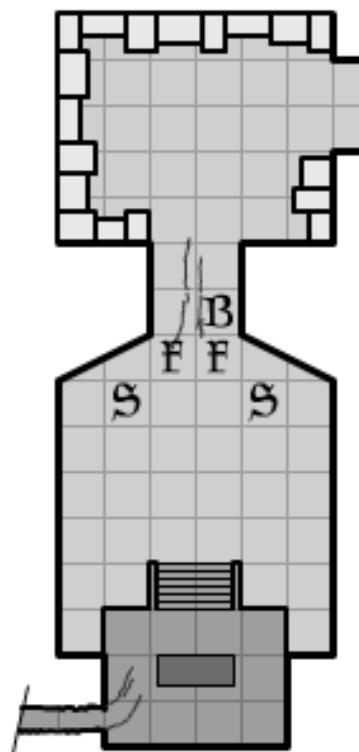
She introduces her latest preserves, made from the last group of adventurers that entered her cellar, cheerfully proclaiming that she has found adventuring types to make far sturdier preserves than ordinary villagers.

She then runs away back to her cellar entrance, leaving her elite preserves to deal with the PCs.

Tactics

These preserves fight more intelligently than the others, attempting to flank the players when possible and focusing their attacks on whoever they perceive as the biggest threat. Nonetheless, they are focused on protecting Mrs. Bakersfield rather than on their own safety and fight to the death.

If the one of the players decides to attack Mrs. Bakersfield as she speaks, she will attempt to immobilize them using Grave Bolt and escape upstairs. The preserves will actively attack anyone threatening Mrs. Bakersfield. If necessary, Mrs. Bakersfield's stats are listed in the next encounter.



Fresh Preserve Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 150

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +7; Darkvision

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22

AC 17; **Fortitude** 15; **Reflex** 17; **Will** 14

Resist 10 necrotic ; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage

⊕ **Running Swipe** (standard; at-will)

The fresh preserve moves up to half its speed and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. This does not provoke opportunity attacks from the target of its attack when moving away from the creature; 1d10 + 3

Combat Advantage

A fresh preserve deals 2d6 extra damage when it makes a successful melee attack on any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** ---

Skills Stealth +9

Str 15 (+3)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 5 (-2)

Cha 3 (-3)

Preserved Swordsman Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 150

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; Darkvision

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22

AC 18; **Fortitude** 15; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 15

Resist 10 necrotic ; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed 5

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the preserved swordsman's next turn

Surprisingly Brisk

When making an opportunity attack, the preserved swordsman gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** ---

Str 15 (+3)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 3 (-3)

Reaching the Climax

When the elite preserves have been defeated the players have an opportunity for a short rest. However, as soon as Mrs. Bakersfield realizes the PCs have not been slain by her elites she will summon her remaining preserves from the mausoleum and they will begin emerging from the tunnel and attacking the players. She escapes outside to the roof of the bakery locking the door to the cellar behind her.

The players will be able to break down the door with little effort. (All defenses 10, HP 20) A player with passive Insight of 15 or higher will realize she has escaped upstairs rather than out the front door. How the players pursue her determine their starting position in the next encounter.

Encounter 5: Mrs. Bakersfield

Encounter Level 2 (350+ XP)

This encounter includes the following creatures.

Mrs. Bakersfield (B)
6 rotten preserves (P)

Mrs. Bakersfield appears to be cornered on the roof of her bakery while an endless supply of preserves pour out of the front and back doors of her establishment. When the party confronts her she commands her preserves to kill them and she assaults the PCs herself.

Notes

The rooftops of Bypass are approximately 10 ft high and can be jumped across using the rules as indicated in the 'Skills' chapter of the Player's Handbook. They can be climbed using 2 squares of movement with a successful DC 15 Athletics check or 4 squares of movement on DC 10, if they fail the check, or do not have enough remaining movement to climb their movement ends without moving to the rooftop. The preserves can climb to the roof as indicated in Tactics below.

Tactics

Mrs. Bakersfield will attempt to avoid the PCs by hovering to other rooftops while immobilizing the most immediate threats using Grave Bolt. If a PC is within melee range she will strike them with her rolling pin to daze them so she can retreat without provoking opportunity attacks. If she becomes surrounded by 2 or more PCs she will attempt to knock them off the rooftops using her Horrific Cackle.

The rotten preserves will swarm around the outside of the bakery or other buildings and attack any player that falls to the ground. Every round on their turn 1d4+1 more preserves exit the bakery from either the front or back doors and take their turn, if a 4 is rolled one of the preserves exits from the door on the roof. The preserves will also climb over each other to reach the rooftops, a preserve adjacent to a building can use its move action to climb to a rooftop space if it is flanked on both sides by other preserves. If a preserve is left alone on a rooftop it will walk off the roof in the direction of its desired target and fall prone on the ground but take no damage, it will then stand up on its next turn and proceed as normal.

Options

If you wish to make the encounter even more over-the-top, you can increase the number of preserves emerging from the bakery and add various humans into the fray, whether in the form of villagers running for their lives, other adventurers emerging from the tavern next door, or the Village Guard coming to combat the threat, you can use the Human Rabble stats found in the Monster Manual.

Ending the Adventure

When Mrs. Bakersfield is reduced to 0 hp she falls unconscious and her control over the preserves is ceased and they fall to the ground becoming ordinary corpses. The Village Guard will arrest Mrs. Bakersfield and request the PCs assistance in clearing the bodies from the streets and returning them to the mausoleum offering them 10 gp each. The players can sell the recipe found earlier to a rival baker for 200 gp, (her pies really are that good.)

Mrs. Bakersfield Level 4 Elite Controller (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid XP 350

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +3

HP 108; **Bloodied** 54

AC 18; **Fortitude** 15; **Reflex** 16; **Will** 17

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5, fly 5 (used to traverse between rooftops)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Putrid Rolling Pin** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon, Necrotic**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

⌘ **Grave Bolt** (standard; at-will) • **Necrotic**

Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends)

⊖ **Horrific Cackle** (standard; recharge 4) • **Fear, Psychic**

Close burst 3; +7 vs. Will; 1d6 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10

Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 9 (+1)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 21 (+7)

Rotten Preserve Level 3 Minion

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 38

Initiative -1 **Senses** Perception -1; Darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 13; **Fortitude** 13; **Reflex** 9; **Will** 10

Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 5 damage

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** ---

Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 6 (-1) **Wis** 8 (---)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)

