

Corpse Host



Necromancy

Level: 6

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Duration: 1 day/level

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell enables an individual touched by the caster (including himself) to transfer his lifeforce in order to temporarily animate the fresh corpse of a human, demi-human, or humanoid. The spell fails if cast on an undead creature.

The recipient can will the cadaver to move and act and can even cast spells through it-all while his or her own body is safely up to 5 miles away per experience level of the caster. While animated by the intruding lifeforce, the corpse ceases to decay; however, unless illusionary magic is cast upon it, the cadaver will appear to be a form of undead (such as a ju-ju zombie).

The spell recipient can see, hear, and sense through the host body. The host body can fight, talk hoarsely (with the voice of the corpse), and carry things- in fact, it can perform all tasks less exacting than lock picking, sewing, and similar handicrafts. It can even go adventuring and earn experience points for its "master."

The recipient's mind functions in two places simultaneously-within the corpse host and within his real body. The real body can still sense (see, hear, and so on) exactly as before, even benefiting from enhancements such as a magical ring. The trade off is paralysis. Aside from breathing, blinking, and moving his eyes, the recipient cannot move his real body while the host is animated. (Friendly guards are a wise precaution; so is a pleasant or strategic view). The recipient's real body does not need to eat, drink, or sleep while the spell operates.

The recipient is vulnerable when the host body is the target of magical and psionic powers that affect the mind. These are resolved as if the recipient was viewing the illusion or resisting the attack, although physical results affect only the host body.

Physical attacks against the host don't damage the recipient's body, though they do harm to the host body. The host body has a number of "hit points" equal to the recipient's normal maximum hit point total. The host body has the recipient's natural Armor Class (10), though it can wear armor and employ weaponry with the same restrictions that apply to the recipient. The host body does not benefit from anything worn or carried by the recipient's real body, however.

The host body can withstand attacks as well as (or as poorly as) the recipient. Note that since the host body is not undead, it cannot be turned or affected with spells or magical items that influence such creatures.

If the host body drops to 0 or fewer hit points, the recipient must make a system shock roll. Failure indicates that the recipient's body also dies along with the host body. The link between the recipient and host body can be abruptly severed by successfully casting the wizard spells dispel magic, limited wish, or wish, or by employing the priest spells exorcism, spirit release, or dispel evil against the host body. Severance of the mental link in this way also requires the recipient to make a system shock roll in order to survive the ordeal.

The recipient can abandon the link with the host body at any time, with no harm to himself. The host body immediately collapses (resuming its usual decay), and the recipient immediately regains control of his or her real body. The same thing occurs when the spell ends or the host body somehow moves beyond the spell's range or to another plane.

The spell requires a fresh corpse (dead no longer than one day per caster level) and as a material component a freshly-excised patch of the recipient's skin. Taking this piece of flesh from the subject at the time of the casting inflicts 1-3 points of damage. At the conclusion of the spell, the recipient is entitled to a saving throw vs. death magic. If failed, the hit point loss is permanent (consumed by the spell) and cannot be reversed or magically healed except with a wish or restoration spell. If successful, the loss in hit points is temporary, but can be regained only by normal rest.

Notes: Restricted to necromancers; common.