

Doomspike started out as a throwaway joke on the old Wizards of the Coast forums, back in the days of D&D 3rd edition. When we were first working on *Terrors of Athas* for DS3e, I suggested a sample hunting cactus NPC. And things kind of got out of hand.

Hunting cacti are one of several species of predatory plant in Dark Sun but according to the lore, they aren't native to Athas. So the idea of an intelligent alien cactus with psionic powers acting as a secret criminal mastermind in the Tablelands was too much to resist. Somewhere along the line he became undead too. Lord Doomspike was born.

This week's blog presents his original 3e stats and also gives a version for use in AD&D 2nd edition for the very first time. The 2e stats here use my own personal hacks for that edition and so vary slightly from the standard rules for AD&D. See [Lawful Stupid RPG blog #3](#) for the variant AD&D 2nd edition psionics rules in use here.

Bow before Doomspike, meat-things!

Description

A pale green cactus sporting spiny pods and clad in a flaring velvet cloak with tall collar, this creature turns and angles its body to follow the movements of all who approach it, sneering with contemptuous abandon at your puny meat-bodies. When in motion, it moves with a delicate, mincing stride. Or maybe just an exaggerated limp.

Lord Doomspike began life much like any other hunting cactus – as a writhing mass of recently joined seed-pod matter. As he grew, the young cactus began to look to the far horizon, his budding mind ripe with the possibilities of a life yet to be lived. Such was not to be, however. A chance encounter with a renegade elven defiler soon changed all of that. The defiler (who was fighting – and subsequently eaten by – a nightmare beast) did not even notice the hapless hunting cactus that became undead as a result of his careless spellcasting. The newly undead plant, on the other hand, conceived a dire hatred deep in its unliving heart for all humanoids and vowed to lay low the civilizations of the same flesh-things that had cursed him to this hideous half-life. Now, many years later, Lord Doomspike sits at the heart of a criminal empire that spans the Tablelands.



Less intelligent plants are his favored agents, but he has a loyal network of enslaved humanoids at his beck and call, many addicted to the bizarre drugs concocted by their unspeaking master. Day by day he draws nearer to his pet apocalypse, the *Night of the Long Spines*, when cacti of all kinds will rise up and take back the lands that once were theirs – and grow fat on the mulch of human blindness.

Weighing ten pounds and standing three feet high, Lord Doomspike has a definite complex about his size. He often worries that other cacti have much longer spines and is beginning to wonder if his quest for global conquest isn't compensating for something. He does grow at a rate of three inches per month, mind you, and so still has high hopes for a stature in keeping with his delusions of grandeur.

LORD DOOMSPIKE

2nd Edition Stats

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any
FREQUENCY: Rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Day
DIET: Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE: Special
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 14
MOVEMENT: 9
HIT DICE: 9
ATTACK (CMB/CMD): +9 (N/A)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 10 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d3 or 1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Blood drain, poison, psionics
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Backlash, psionics, regeneration, undead traits
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Special
SIZE: S (3' high)
MORALE: Elite (13)
XP VALUE: 11,000
PSIONICS: Power check +10, PSPs 72, MAC 16
Powers: Powers: 1st - *conceal thoughts, detect life**, *detect psionics**, *false sensory input, project force, sense link, speed burst, synesthete**; 2nd - *attraction, aversion**, *biofeedback, ESP, telepathic suggestion*; 3rd - *detonate, ectoplasmic form, mind thrust**, *mindlink, telekinetic flight*; 4th - *death field, energy containment, inflict pain, mental barrier**, *superior invisibility*; 5th - *domination, probe*; 7th - *ultrablast**.
*innate power - does not count against known powers

Combat

For all his vaunted prowess, Lord Doomspike is something of a coward and prefers to let others do the fighting for him. He does possess considerable psionic might, however, and can bring this to bear in a number of surprising ways (chiefly flying away from his foes, blasting them with spines from the air and promising dread vengeance through psionic mindlink). If cornered, he favors a paralyzing blast of spines from one of his pods, followed by a leisurely feed, but will not shirk from begging and sniveling like a little baby to strengthen his position if necessary.

3rd Edition Stats

Defiled Hunting Cactus, 9th-Level Psion (Telepath)
Small Undead (Plant)
Hit Dice: 14d12 (91 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares)
Armor Class: 17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+2
Attack: 10 spines +10 ranged (1d3+1 plus poison)
Full Attack: 10 spines +10 ranged (1d3+1 plus poison) and 1 feeding spine +4 melee (1d3 plus blood drain)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.
Special Attacks: Blood drain, improved grab, poison, psionics
Special Qualities: Backlash, defiled traits, fast healing 4, plant traits
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +9
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 12, Con -, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13
Skills: Bluff +10, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (local)+8, Psicraft +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spot +8, Survival +8
Feats: Ability Focus (backlash), Ability Focus (poison), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (spine) +2
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 10
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Neutral Evil

Lord Doomspike has 30 spine pods around the base of his body. Each pod carries 10 spines and each spine has a tiny poison sac at its base containing a paralyzing venom. Lord Doomspike fires these spines at his targets - each spine pod is angled so as to be able to hit targets up to 30 feet away in a 140° arc - generally six Medium targets.

Assuming the target is paralyzed, Lord Doomspike moves to within 5 feet and extends a feeding spine from his base. Using this spine, he drains blood until he is sated, the victim dies, or he is forced to make a suitably dramatic exit.

2nd Edition Abilities

Lord Doomspike can fire up to 10 spines per round. The spines deal 1d3 damage each. Any creature hit by a spine must save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 1d4+2 rounds. This save must be made for each spine that hits. Each spine inflicts 1d3 damage.

Once a victim is paralyzed, Doomspike shuffles over to their side and inserts a feeding spine into the motionless victim. The feeding spine automatically hits a paralyzed creature for 1d3 damage and drains blood, dealing an additional 1d6 damage per round. Lord Doomspike feeds until he has drained 30 hit points or is damaged, at which point he flees, swearing horrific vengeance. Any hit from an edged weapon severs a feeding spine. New spines can be regrown at a rate of one per day.

As a defiled undead plant, Lord Doomspike is able to directly damage any wizard that attempts to use him to fuel their spells. Any wizard who casts a spell that would place Doomspike within that spell's defiling radius (regardless of whether the wizard is a defiler or not) exposes the wizard to an amount of negative energy. The wizard automatically takes 5d4+5 points of damage (save vs. death magic for half damage) and has their spellcasting disrupted.

This same undead status means that Lord Doomspike regenerates 4 hit points per round and is immune to charm, hold, fear, cold damage, death magic, poison, and any attacks that rely on living processes.

Lord Doomspike has the powers of a 9th level psionist, as noted above. He saves at that level and has all applicable psionist class features. Doomspike makes ample use of his psionics to keep attackers at bay.

3rd Edition Abilities

Backlash (Su): Lord Doomspike is able to directly damage any wizard that attempts to use him to fuel their spells. Any wizard who casts a spell that would place Doomspike within that spell's defiling radius (regardless of whether the wizard is a defiler or not) exposes the wizard to an amount of negative energy. The wizard automatically takes 5d4+5 points of negative energy damage, with a Fortitude save (DC 15) for half damage. The wizard must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level + damage dealt, as described in the Concentration skill) in order to continue casting their spell.

Blood Drain (Ex): If Lord Doomspike successfully grapples a target with his feeding spine (succeeding automatically against a paralyzed target), he may initiate a blood drain. A grappled target that is being drained suffers an additional 1d6 points of damage per round. Lord Doomspike will continue to drain available targets until he has drained 30 hit points, at which point he seeks to withdraw from combat, laughing maniacally.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Lord Doomspike must hit with a feeding spine attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity, and can blood drain.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage paralysis for 1d4+2 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

Psionics (Sp): Discovered powers: Talents - *burst, daze, detect psionics**, *distract, far hand, missive, telepathic projection*; 1st - *attraction, mind thrust, mindlink, psionic charm, sense link, synesthete**; 2nd - *aversion**, *biofeedback, brain lock, concussion blast, inflict pain**, *psionic suggestion, read thoughts**; 3rd - *crisis of breath, false sensory input, mental barrier, psionic fly*; 4th - *energy adaptation, mindwipe, psionic dominate, psionic modify memory*; 5th - *mind probe, psychic crush*.

*Racial ability. Useable at will.

Power Points per Day: 8I. Manifest level 9th

Habitat/Society

Lord Doomspike is a highly intelligent blood-drinking plant who likes to boast about his spread of useful psionic powers. When enraged, the hunting cactus fires paralyzing spines at his prey and then drains the blood from his inert victims, although he tries to avoid doing this in public as it tends to be bad for morale. Lord Doomspike makes his home wherever he darn well pleases, but is known to prefer the company of other cacti (although this is largely because his humanoid servants are forever absent-mindedly picking him up and putting him in the window to get better light).

Ecology

Lord Doomspike prefers a carnivorous diet, but will consume the saps of other plants for nourishment if no other options are available. He secretly relishes this form of cannibalism, and often daydreams about a second apocalypse known only to himself. This *Hour of the Guacamole* is, however, a horror best left unexplored.