

Undead Community Society

The Undead Community Society (UCS) is what is left over when the creation of reliable necromantic reanimation spells results in the sudden appearance of free-willed Undead, who then break into factions supporting/opposing living humans, each other, and society in general. There was a rather nasty little civil war among the Undead, in fact. The UCS was one of the two main factions, and the Zombie Liberation Front (ZLF) was the other. Fortunately for more or less everybody, ZLF lost. Badly.

There are three basic kinds of Undead in the UCS: zombies, mummies, and skeletons. Strictly speaking, these are all different kinds of *revenants*, or dead bodies that have spirits bound to them; generally speaking, a zombie will eventually become a skeleton, as stuff falls off, while a mummy will not. Skeletons are definitely the Undead most popular with humans, mostly because folklore doesn't *always* make them out to be horribly evil. But, to be fair: some of the more lurid powers associated with the Undead (infectious bite, curse, siphoning of life energy) are simply not present among members of the UCS. Not because those powers don't exist, but because

any Undead who possesses them swiftly gets killed. Free-willed, or not.

And that's the other detail about UCS Undead; they're all free-willed, and self-aware. Not all of them are as intelligent as humans, but they're definitely all smart enough to drive a car or learn how to read. Some of them are themselves necromancers, and indeed the UCS is a major player in the field of industrial necromancy. Their mages understand the process intimately, you understand.

The UCS mostly operates as a mutual-aid and job-placement society. There are a lot of jobs out there where having a heartbeat and the need to breathe are actually drawbacks; the UCS is happy to help place suitable workers there, particularly if it's the sort of job that would generate goodwill for Undead generally. The UCS also acts as a buffer between the metabolic community and the Undead one, keeping the more messy Undead out of human sight and smell. Mostly, metabolic humans will encounter UCS zombies in nasty (to humans) working conditions, mummies in information-themed situations (libraries and archives are very common, but so are computer servers), and skeletons in the entertainment and public relations industries. UCS members are expected to be friendly and respectful to humans, without being servile

or overly familiar; all try, most manage, a few are surprisingly good at it.

It's important to remember that, in this setting, the Undead still have rights: you can't just disarticulate a zombie just for looking at you funny, or even if it's thrown a punch at you. They can vote, technically can marry, even more technically can adopt, own property (although the reanimation process legally severs any claim that they might have had on their pre-mortem estates), and act as witnesses. Metabolic humans have to treat the Undead like people, because that's what they are.

Unless the Undead are part of a ZLF underground cell, of course. If that happens, all bets are off. And the UCS will be right there in front, trying to take the ZLF cell down quickly, and utterly without remorse. Societal acceptance comes at a price.

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