

ACERERAK, THE GOD-KING OF DEATH

Acererak as I ran him on the last night of our campaign: retuned for six level 10 characters on the 2024 rules, with three guards holding his invulnerability, a sphere of annihilation on a leash, and lair actions the book never gave him.

ACERERAK

Medium Undead (Archlich), Neutral Evil



Armor Class 20 (natural armor, shield)

Hit Points 320 (32d8 + 176)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	27 (+8)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +15, Wis +9

Damage Resistances Cold, Lightning

Damage Immunities Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing and Slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

Senses Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 25

Languages Common, Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal, Primordial, Undercommon

Challenge Scripted finale (Proficiency Bonus +7)

Tether of the Archlich. While any of his three Phylactery Warriors lives, Acererak can't be reduced below 1 hit point. How much damage gets through depends on how many still stand (see page 2).

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Acererak fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Aura of Annihilation. Only once no Warriors remain. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 ft. of him takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Sphere of Annihilation. A 2-foot sphere of nothingness floats beside him, steered by the *talisman of the sphere* at his throat. Anything that touches it is gone: no save, no body, no resurrection.

Villain Monologue (joke). He has waited nine thousand years for an audience. If a player interrupts him mid-speech, he stops, stares, and starts the speech again from the beginning, as many times as it takes.

ACTIONS

Paralyzing Touch. Melee Spell Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. It repeats the save at the end of each of its turns.

Spellcasting. Spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks.

At will: *ray of frost* (4d8 cold, speed –10 ft.), *shield*, *mage hand* (he uses it to applaud slowly)

3/day each: *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (8d6 lightning, DC 19 Dex, half on a success)

1/day each: *chain lightning* (10d8, then three more targets within 30 ft.), *disintegrate* (10d6 + 40 force; a target reduced to 0 is dust), *finger of death* (7d8 + 30 necrotic, half on a success; a humanoid it kills rises as his zombie)

Time Stop. Narrative only. This is what happens when he reaches 0 hit points.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Acererak takes 3 legendary actions, one at a time, at the end of another creature's turn. He regains them at the start of his turn.

Cantrip (1). He casts *ray of frost*.

Teleport (2). He teleports up to 60 ft. to a space he can see. Use it every round: he should never be cornered.

Frightening Gaze (2). One creature he can see makes a DC 18 Wisdom save or is Frightened of him until the end of its next turn.

Disrupt Life (3). Each non-undead creature within 15 ft. makes a DC 18 Constitution save, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success. Not while any Warrior lives.

RUNNING HIM

Round one *chain lightning*, round two *finger of death* at whoever looks healthiest, then *disintegrate*, then *lightning bolt*, then *ray of frost* for the rest of the fight. Teleport every round. Hold *shield* and *counterspell* as reactions.

He doesn't flee. In the book he teleports away below 100 hit points. Mine fights to 0, and at 0 you stop rolling dice and read the Time Stop.

LAIR ACTIONS

The fight happens in his own pocket dimension, so he gets lair actions the book never gave him. On initiative count 20 (losing ties) he takes one, never the same one two rounds running.



The Floor Remembers. A slab of obsidian under one character shows them the worst thing they have ever done. DC 18 Wisdom save or Frightened of themselves until the end of their next turn, with disadvantage on attacks. Ask the player what it shows them.



Grasping Dead. Skeletal arms erupt in a 20-ft. square. DC 18 Strength save or Restrained until the creature uses an action to break free.



The Sphere Moves. The sphere drifts 40 ft. in a straight line, telegraphed at the end of the round before. DC 18 Dexterity save or 8d10 force damage. If this would drop a character to 0, they are shoved clear at the last instant and make death saves instead.



Nine Thousand Years of Screaming. Each non-undead creature makes a DC 18 Constitution save or takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and can't speak until the end of its next turn.

HIS GUARDS



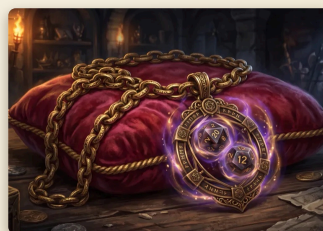
Phylactery Warrior (×3). Large Undead. AC 19, HP 120, Speed 40 ft. Immune to necrotic and poison.

Jagged Greatsword. Two attacks: +9 to hit, 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing plus 9 (2d8) necrotic. Every hit carries a d4 curse: **Rust** –2 AC; **Leech** half speed and the Warrior heals 5; **Grave-chill** disadvantage on the next attack; **The Jar** can't speak.

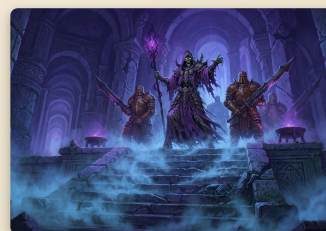
Each one attacks whoever last damaged a phylactery, so the rogue doesn't die in round one.

THE TETHER

Alive	Acererak takes
3	Nothing. Fully immune. Anything thrown at him is wasted, and he enjoys saying so.
2	Half. Resistant to everything, including force and radiant.
1	Normal damage.
0	Normal damage, his phylacteries crack, and his Aura of Annihilation and Disrupt Life switch on.



The talisman of the sphere.



Acererak and his guards.

WHAT I CHANGED

From my own level 12 first draft to what I ran on the night:

Number	First draft	Ran at
Armor Class	22	20
Hit Points	350	320
Spell save DC / attack	23 / +15	19 / +11
Frightening Gaze	DC 20	DC 18
Disrupt Life	12d6, DC 20, 20 ft., from round one	8d6, DC 18, 15 ft., only once the Warriors are dead

At the original numbers, Disrupt Life alone did around 222 damage a round to my level 10 party.



On the table: Acererak, a Phylactery Warrior and the sphere.