

Ancient Guide

“Darkness is but a seed in the human heart. Maybe, if it weren’t for the greater shade of the dead, yours would be a terrible blossoming.

Be then grateful for the Four Who Escaped...”

Lich notes

Arch-Lich – 72 points. Weakened Arch-Lich – 36 points.

Lich-magic is a union of amber pieces and energy (mana). The magic itself is divided into three categories of increasing power; cantrips, spells and dreams. Cantrips require neither amber nor mana - their execution is free of charge. Spells are released with the destruction of an amber piece and form the backbone of battle magic. Dreams require the sacrifice of amber and mana, their manifestation takes a greater toll from the caster. All of the above are accessed through the inventory, default button I.

Initially a lich has 8 amber pieces and a mana bar divided into 1/9ths. Weaker liches may start with no amber or have a mana bar divided into 1/6ths (or both). A mana fraction is called a unit.

Two pieces of amber can be forged at a cost of one mana unit (I-0 Special). Amber is easily destroyed and volatile; it is possible to use amber as makeshift munitions. Since all magic save cantrips require them, ambers are rapidly depleted so store them accordingly. Mana, once fully drained, can be regained by resting (I-0 Special) for 5 minutes in combat. IE – no spellcasting for 5 minutes after.

Other Units

Vengeful – 8 points – Frenzied undead melee units with a knack for surprising opponents with their astonishing lethality. They can be unhealed.

Changeling – 12 points – Slow moving but powerful melee units, with the ability to heal and toss objects.

Venom Spiders – 3 points – Quicker and stronger, every bite paralyses the victim.

Mire Wights – 3 points – Similar to Grub Wights, invisible on the overhead and tougher-skinned.

Warlock Heroes – 12 points – Confusion special and enhanced range.

Magic notes

Since greater magic is limited all spells and dreams need to be rationed. Scarabs and Scarab Swarms (I-1) conform to the roles of archer and dwarf, Shadow Touch (I-2) is excellent for supporting units in a melee. Spells are more powerful artillery and Dreams are best used sparingly and well. Mismanaging greater magic means having to rest earlier and remove oneself from the battle.

Below is a full list of lich-magic; each inventory slot has two abilities associated with it, one primary and one special. Following each description is a set of tips and defensive notes. The mana cost for dreams is given in parenthesis, for example **Finger of Death(2)** requires 2 units of the mana bar.

Cantrips

I-1 Primary: Scarab – a glass-like projectile with excellent range and piercing force, similar to an arrow. It passes through units and hits those behind.

Counter Rune does not block this, simply dodge it. Minimum range is less than a regular arrow.

I-1 Special: Scarab Swarm – a cone in front of the caster is filled with scarabs that move unpredictably, shredding groups of opponents.

Keep units spread out, giant units should approach at an angle to mitigate damage. Minimum recast time is 4½ seconds.

I-2 Primary: Shadow Touch – a deadly pulse of magic that withers and exhausts the target.

No counter. Treat as a powerful melee attack, although it has a longer range.

I-2 Special: Counter-Rune – a defensive pillar of force that blocks incoming missiles and most magical attacks. Lasts 10 seconds.

Lightning attacks can pass through, as can Scarabs (though not Scarab Bombs).

Spells

I-3 Primary: Fireball – a tracking explosive ball of fire. Slow to recast but long range and reliable.

Keep units spread out, fireballs do no damage to the lich that cast them.

I-3 Special: Cloudkill – a deadly fog projected in a cone, capable of engulfing whole formations. The damage done is unmendable.

Stay out of the cloud at all costs. The spell starts at a distance from the caster, staying in melee range is safe. The damage done is fire-based.

I-4 Primary: Lightning – a medium range bolt of blasting electricity, can be recast rapidly.

No counter. This spell also has a very short minimum range.

I-4 Special: Scarab Bomb – a magical charge that looks identical to a single scarab but explodes with devastating effect, filling the surrounds with scarabs. Very effective against large targets.

Try to dodge at all costs. Counter Rune blocks.

Dreams

I-5 Primary: Pillar of Cold (3) – a freezing wall of magic whose velocity can be controlled for different effects. Powerful at short-range and unblockable at long-range. Can be recast rapidly.

This attack stuns units and can trap them in the vortex if it used at close range. Often used as a panic-button – keep units spaced. The damage done is kinetic.

I-5 Special: Halo of Fire (4) – a perfect circle of raging flame that lasts 2 minutes and can be used offensively or defensively. The Counter-Rune opens paths through the flame or can negate it totally if placed in the center.

If possible get important units out of the flame boundary before it ignites. The ring is almost certainly lethal to any units that try to cross it. The ring is not wide enough to stop flags and balls being tagged by a unit standing at the edge.

I-6 Primary: Gizmo (2) – a rock magically imbued with destructive potential and then thrown. It will bounce before detonating.

Try to dodge these, they can bounce far before exploding.

I-6 Special: Storm Field (3) – creates a field around the caster of lightning force. Also harms the caster to a lesser degree.

This spell makes it very difficult for melee to trap a lich. Scatter and be ready for casualties. It is followed by a reasonable recast time.

I-7 Primary: Finger of Death (2) – slams a single target with shadow energy, usually tearing it apart. Dazing for the caster, it takes some time to recast another spell.

Only units able to absorb attacks, like journeymen, can survive this. The spell will kill a Trow. Take advantage of the recast time.

I-7 Special: Mend (1) – restores the health of any unit rapidly over a few seconds, also heals the undead. Can be recast rapidly.

The spell is powerful enough to sustain the lich while it takes a beating; one cast heals about 1/3rd of their health. Just deplete the mana supply.

I-8 Primary: Auroris (3) – powerful scarab magic that descends from above after a delay. Causes great damage to the living with little effect to the undead.

This dream causes a massive amount of gas damage. The effect is preceded by a green spark. The scarabs will home in on the unit that was targeted (unless the spell is cast at the ground) so try to run that target away from any groups.

I-8 Special: Dispersal (6) – army shattering magic that chains through nearby targets.

Don't attack in one group! Ten second recast time.

I-9 Primary: Void Lance (4) – a long-range bolt of shadow energy that binds all creatures in an area of effect. The stasis lasts up to 25 seconds.

The better you dodge this the less time you'll be held stationary. It has a long recast time.

I-9 Special: Shatter (6) – a hugely powerful stream of magic that destroys anything in a path to the target, and everything around the target. Very long range, with a long recast time.

This has a massive area of effect and the epicenter blast is very powerful, so stay spaced. It moves slowly to the target and isn't guided.

Unit Sets:

Dawn – The lightest variant: Weakened Arch-lich 1/1, Journeymen 3/5, Brigands 24/48, Dwarfs 5/9, Ghöls 6/15, Archers 12/24, Thrall 18/54 and Mire Wights 4/6. Assassin targets – Changelings (3), Stampede units – Ghosts (15).

Twilight – Somewhere in between: Weakened Arch-lich 1/1, Changeling 4/8, Berserks 24/60, Dwarf Mortars 2/8, Dwarf Heroes 6/12, Archers 8/24, Venom Spiders 8/24 and Iron Thrall 24/48. Assassin targets – Target Dummies (3), Stampede units – Skeletons (15).

Midnight – Ultra-dark: Arch-lich 1/1, Trow 6/6, Vengeful 12/24, Warlock Heroes 2/6, Fetch 6/14, Soulless 16/24, Skeletons 32/60 and Heron Guards 12/27. Assassin targets and Stampede units – Barons (4).