



# GHOULS

*The loss of my dearest spouse left upon me a sorrow I thought insurmountable. A fog hung over my days. As the carriage transporting my beloved's body clattered down the road, I wondered if I would ever feel joy again. Lost in my melancholy, I didn't see the creatures bounding from the mists until they were almost upon me. Just before I lost consciousness, I saw the coffin dragged free.*

*I awoke beneath the bright moon, consumed by a powerful, gnawing hunger. The scent of delicious meat led me deep into the woods, where I found the missing coffin of my dearest, open and empty. Her body lay on the cold ground, surrounded by the ghouls. Only then did I realize the delectable scent was that of my beloved's corpse. As I joined the feast, I felt an inner warmth—as though the two of us had never been closer.*

—Lord Skevin Morboulan, *Graveside Confessions*



Fear of flesh-hungry ghouls keeps people away from graveyards at night. Though the creatures can reason, they seldom listen to what the living say, and would much rather treat them as meals than as friends. Ghouls figure prominently in superstitious tales, and their hunger is legendary. Stories of cannibals turning into ravenous undead still stop many people from eating the dead even in the most desperate of circumstances.

Always searching for the flesh of humanoids, ghouls thrive where people live, and their domains steadily expand as the creatures infect new victims with ghoul fever. This spread can be abrupt or gradual, but either way it stops only when someone seeks out and slays all of the ghouls. Potential victims have good reason to fear ghouls, as dying of ghoul fever is a horrifying fate. From the onset of the disease, an insatiable hunger overcomes the victim, yet her body begins to reject all normal food and drink. If denied food, the victim becomes increasingly desperate and violent as her hunger grows. Feeding the victim flesh from a corpse temporarily alleviates her cravings, but does not slow the onset of the disease. Eventually, the victim's mortal body fails entirely. After the victim finally dies, she wakes up at the next stroke of midnight, obsessed with the hunger for flesh.

Most ghouls are so filled with self-loathing that they have little love for others of their kind. They have a natural tendency to form into packs for defense and hunting, but no trust or love is shared between the members of these packs. Though a ghoul might serve a leader loyally for years, it won't hesitate to betray its leader if doing so results in more frequent meals. Though ghouls are, in their most basic state, more powerful than other ghouls, they rarely take on leadership roles because of their overwhelming aggression. However, when a ghoul rises, opportunistic ghouls emboldened by its presence might make attacks against elven communities they would otherwise avoid as difficult targets.

Graveyards have a natural allure to ghouls, and many wind up spending their undead existence dwelling in such places. Small packs of ghouls often live in warrens carved beneath cemeteries where they can dig up corpses to satisfy their cravings for flesh. Graves settling unnaturally or sinkholes in a cemetery are sure signs of a ghoul pack. Some ghouls are content to survive on the flesh of the dead for years at a time, but eventually almost all of them start to hunt the living.

Not all ghouls live in dark warrens under cemeteries, however. In some remote regions, entire cities or nations are populated by ghouls and other undead. The ghouls in these cities consider living humanoids little more than livestock. Though these nations of undead are often ruled by lichs or other, more powerful undead, ghouls are known to hold positions of power or even rule in some such places. The rulers of these nations recognize that they cannot hope to win a war against the much more populous nations of living creatures, so arrangements are made with neighbors to trade

## THE HUNGER

Though consumed with the urge to eat, ghouls have no physical need for feeding or normal sustenance. A ghoul can exist for a thousand years without food ever crossing its lips. Nevertheless, ghouls find themselves dominated with an overpowering urge to consume flesh.

The physical form of ghouls reflects the amount of food they have consumed much as a human's does. Most ghouls are lean, but particularly well-fed ghouls are fully fleshed. Weight and diet do little to affect the appetite or strength of a ghoul—the most well-fed ghouls feel the overwhelming urge to feed as strongly as long-starved ones. Regardless of their physical shape, all ghouls share the same wiry strength and agility, fueled by the necromantic magic that animates their forms.

Ghouls' dining preferences vary greatly, though most seem to prefer well-ripened meat to freshly slain prey. A ghoul lair often contains one or more caches where choice meals are buried and stored for days or weeks to improve the flavor. There is much debate among ghouls over the best type of victim—some ghouls prefer older victims who have lived long, rich lives, which they say improves the taste, while others prefer younger, more tender victims. Particularly cruel ghouls carve pieces off of a living victim and feast as it watches.

Only once a ghoul masters its hunger is it able grow in power and become more than a ravening beast. How exactly each ghoul overcomes its hunger varies. Some use sheer willpower, a few feast regularly to take the edge off their cravings, and others channel their hunger into dedication to a deity or the insatiable pursuit of arcane power.

for slaves or even just corpses. Larger undead nations use humans as slave labor, forcing them to work the farms to feed themselves so they can in turn be served up as meals for their undead masters.

Aquatic ghouls, called lacedons, live within secluded reefs and underground caves near communities of underwater humanoids like grindylows (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 148), locathahs (*Bestiary* 2 179), or merfolk. Lacedons are as notorious in the folktales of undersea peoples as ghouls are in those of surface races. Lacedons who prefer easier targets to prey upon primarily dwell near shores or along trade routes, where they suffer through hunger for long stretches of time until a shipwreck provides them with a glorious, gory feast. Lacedons are also more mobile than other ghouls. If they catch the taste of humanoid blood carried by the currents, they can trace it for miles back to the source.

Full statistics for ghouls can be found on page 146 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.



## GHOUl COMMANDER

Ghoul commanders have stoked a burning hatred for the living. A ghouI commander might lead a pack of ghouls or may serve as a guardian or lieutenant for a more powerful ghoul monarch.

### GHOUl COMMANDER

CR 8

XP 4,800

Ghoul antipaladin 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 118)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

**Aura** cowardice (10 ft.)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 99 (9 HD; 2d8+7d10+52)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; **Immune** disease, undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** mwk greataxe +15/+10 (1d12+7/19–20/×3), bite +8 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis) or

bite +13 (1d6+5 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +13 (1d6+5 plus paralysis)

**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +12/+7 (1d6+5/×3)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (DC 17, 4d6), disease (DC 15), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 15, elves are immune to this effect), smite good 3/day (+4 attack and AC, +7 damage)

**Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*detect good*

**Antipaladin Spells Prepared** (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd—*desecrate*

1st—*disguise self, inflict light wounds* (DC 15)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The ghoul commander is usually accompanied by a fiendish dire boar mount. If he is defending an area, he casts *desecrate* on the area (these bonuses are not included in his statistics).

**During Combat** The commander begins combat by charging in on his boar. He prefers to attack with his greataxe.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Cleave, Improved Critical (greataxe), Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

**Skills** Bluff +11, Intimidate +16, Perception +15, Ride +12

**Languages** Common, Undercommon

**SQ** cruelties (fatigued, staggered), fiendish boon (fiendish dire boar servant), touch of corruption 7/day (3d6)

**Combat Gear** *scroll of inflict serious wounds*; **Other Gear** mwk breastplate, mwk composite shortbow with 20 arrows, mwk greataxe, *belt of giant strength* +2, 79 gp

### FIENDISH DIRE BOAR SERVANT

CR —

XP —

**hp** 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 36, 294)

When ghouls marshal themselves into organized groups, it is ghoul commanders who shoulder the responsibility of leadership and command. In “civilized” ghoul cities and nations, ghoul commanders serve as an elite officer class, directing and commanding units of more common ghouls in military maneuvers and on excursions. While they receive their orders from ghouls higher up the chain of command, ghoul commanders are responsible for translating those orders into concrete tactics, and enjoy great autonomy on the battlefield—so long as their strategies succeed, at least.





## MASKED MURDERER

Some ghouls walk in villages and cities, using disguises and magic to hide their nature. The masked murderer strikes from the shadows against the living.

### MASKED MURDERER CR 8

#### XP 4,800

Ghoul bard (dirge bard) 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 26)  
CE Medium undead

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 113 (10d8+68)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11; +4 vs. necromantic effects;

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; **Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +10 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis),  
2 claws +11 (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +11/+6  
(1d6+2/x3)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance 24 rounds/day (move action; countersong, dirge of doom [DC 20], distraction, fascinate [DC 20], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, *suggestion* [DC 20]), disease (DC 17), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, DC 19, elves are immune to this effect)

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +14)  
3rd (3/day)—*confusion* (DC 19), *crushing despair* (DC 19), *glibness*  
2nd (6/day)—*allegro*<sup>UM</sup>, *fleshy facade*<sup>\*</sup> (DC 18), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 18), *mirror image*  
1st (6/day)—*disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *silent image* (DC 17)  
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation* (DC 16), *summon instrument*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** This furtive killer disguises herself as a human while stalking her targets. If at all possible, she avoids conflict, though her hunger sometimes gets the best of her.

**During Combat** If her presence is detected, the murderer begins combat by casting *confusion*. She then starts a bardic performance (typically dirge of doom). Before she actually enters melee, she casts *allegro* to gain additional attacks.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14,  
**Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Ability Focus (paralysis), Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

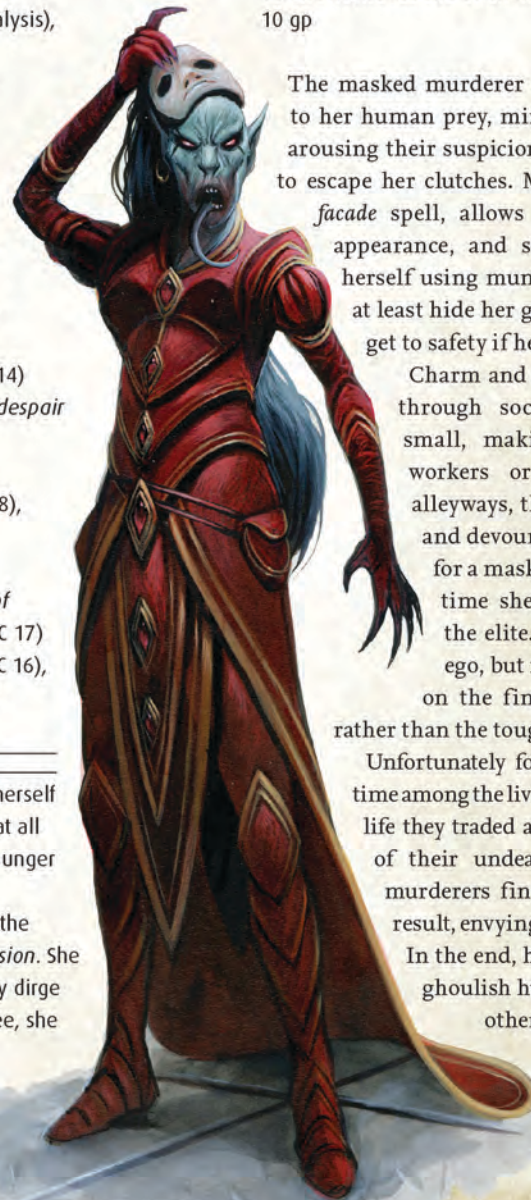
**Skills** Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (local) +20, Knowledge (religion) +15 (+19 to identify undead creatures and their abilities), Perception +15, Perform (oratory) +14, Perform (percussion) +19; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Knowledge (religion) to identify undead creatures and their abilities

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Undercommon

**SQ** bardic knowledge +4, haunting refrain (+4 to demoralize, –2 penalty on saves against bard's fear effects), secrets of the grave

**Combat Gear** +1 *thundering arrows* (4), *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of hold person*, *wand of inflict light wounds* (50 charges);

**Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, mwk composite shortbow with 10 arrows, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, disguise kit, 10 gp



The masked murderer uses deception to get closer to her human prey, mingling among them without arousing their suspicion until it is too late for them to escape her clutches. Magic, particularly the *fleshy facade* spell, allows her to craft her deceptive appearance, and she knows how to disguise herself using mundane means so that she can at least hide her gruesomeness long enough to get to safety if her magic fails her.

Charm and lies pave the murderer's way through society. Typically, she begins small, making friends with low-class workers or farmers in taverns and alleyways, then luring them away to kill and devour them. This is rarely enough for a masked murderer, though, and in time she makes connections among the elite. This could be to satisfy her ego, but more often she wants to dine on the finer morsels of spoiled elites rather than the tough flesh of hard laborers.

Unfortunately for ghouls, spending so much time among the living serves only to highlight the life they traded away for the unending hunger of their undead existence. Many masked murderers find themselves conflicted as a result, envying the vibrant lives of their prey. In the end, however, a masked murderer's ghoulish hunger always overwhelms any other emotion she might feel, and she hunts her prey with as much ravenous fervor as any other ghoul, if not more.