

MonsterFocus

Ghouls



A Minotaur Games Supplement
By Jason Bulmahn



Monster Focus: Ghouls

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While skeletons and zombies are some of the first undead a hero might be expected to face, the ghoul is a far more dangerous threat. Possessing a cunning intellect, these undead plan and scheme when not overcome by their ravenous hunger for dead flesh. While such unwholesome cravings often get the better of them, a pack of ghouls is capable of complex strategies to sate their unending hunger.

This supplement presents a number of rules and options for making ghouls a pivotal part of the game, from a terrifying encounter to an entire campaign arc revolving around these undead cannibals. This supplement includes tools for player characters, including skills, feats, alchemical items, and spells, as well as new rules for Game Masters, such as magic items, new types of ghouls, and adventure hooks.

SKILLS

Characters attempting to gather information about ghouls must make a Knowledge (religion) skill check. The following DCs and provided information are for ghouls. Add 1 to these DCs for ghouls and adjust the information accordingly.

DC Information

- 6 This creature is a ravenous undead known as a ghoul. Unlike other lesser undead, ghouls possess a cunning intelligence. More powerful ghouls are known as ghouls.
- 11 A ghoul can paralyze a creature with a touch, but elves are immune (elves are not immune if it is a ghoul).
- 16 A ghoul's bite carries a terrible disease that can rot flesh and dull the reflexes. Those who die from it become a ghoul themselves.
- 22 (Ghost Only): A ghoul is surrounded by a horrid stench that can sicken those that draw close to the monstrosity.

FEATS

Some of these feats can be taken by ghouls and ghouls while others aid those fighting against them.

Grave Claws

Your claws can cause rigor in the bodies of the living.

Prerequisite: Undead creature type, paralysis special attack.

Benefit: Whenever you hit a living creature with an attack that causes paralysis, the creature is staggered for 1 round if it makes the saving throw to resist your paralysis. This effect stacks with itself, increasing the duration of the staggered condition by 1 round for each successful saving throw. If your paralysis does not apply to creatures of a certain type (such as elves), those creatures are not staggered by this feat. A staggered creature takes a -2 penalty on saving throws made against your paralysis ability.

Mind Over Muscle

You can fight through effects that paralyze you.

Prerequisite: Great Fortitude or Iron Will.

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Benefit: Whenever you become paralyzed by a spell or effect that allows a saving throw, you can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of your turns to negate the effect (using the original DC of the spell or effect). If the spell or effect already allows a saving throw each turn to end the effect you receive a +4 bonus on such subsequent saving throws.

Nauseating Stench

Your stench causes nausea in the living.

Prerequisites: Undead creature type, stench special attack.

Benefit: Whenever a living creature fails its saving throw against your stench special attack, it is nauseated for 1 round and then sickened for the normal duration of your stench ability. If it makes its saving throw, it is sickened for 1 round.

Resist Undead

Your experience with the undead has made you resilient to their abilities.

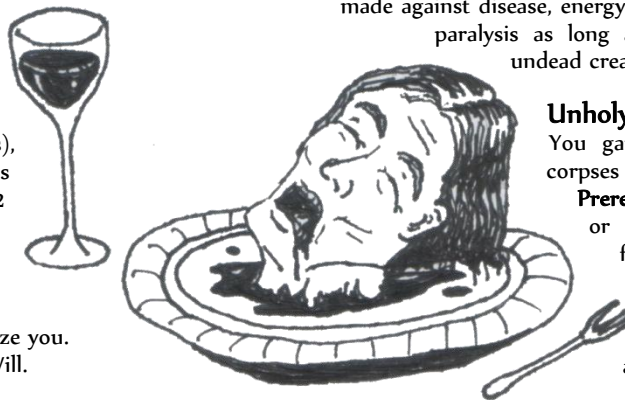
Benefit: You are immune to the stench ability of undead creatures. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus on saving throws made against disease, energy drain, fear, negative levels, and paralysis as long as that effect comes from an undead creature.

Unholy Feast

You gain strength by devouring the corpses of your foes.

Prerequisite: Undead creature type or channel negative energy class feature and Great Fortitude.

Benefits: As a standard action, you can rip off a piece of flesh from a corpse and consume it to gain power.



After consuming the flesh, you gain a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and 1d6 temporary hit points. These bonuses last for 1 minute per Hit Die of the creature consumed and do not stack with themselves. Consuming flesh in this way is an evil act. Using this feat provokes an attack of opportunity. The corpse must have died within the past hour, otherwise you gain no benefit. If you are a living creature, you must expend one use of your channel negative energy class feature every time you use this feat. Channel negative energy expended in this way has no other effect (it does not heal undead or harm living creatures).

ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Those fighting against ghouls and ghouls have a number of valuable pieces of gear they can use to give them an edge.

This section also presents a new type of item made through alchemy that can enhance spells if used as a spell component. These alchemical components are always consumed when casting the spell that they enhance and no more than one such component can be used in the casting of a single spell. The DC to craft an alchemical component is equal to 15 + the level of the spell that the component modifies (this DC is included in the table). While alchemical components are crafted using parts from various creatures, their cost comes from other rare ingredients and reagents.

Aromatic Sachet: This small cloth bag is filled with special herbs and potpourri, soaked in holy water. It is worn around the neck, but it does not take up a slot.

A creature wearing an aromatic sachet receives a +4 alchemical bonus against the stench special attack and a +2 alchemical bonus against inhaled poisons. An aromatic sachet lasts for 1 week before losing its potency.

Black Nail: This alchemical component is made from the thumb claw of a ghoul, soaked in rare oils and then buried in grave soil for a month. When used to cast *ghoul touch*, the spell allows the caster to paralyze up to three targets, one each round. This does not change the total duration of the spell, so any targets struck after the first round are paralyzed for a shorter duration (minimum 1 round).

Flesh Morsel: Crafted by only the vilest of necromancers, this bite of cured human flesh stinks of decay. When consumed by an undead creature, this alchemical item grants a +2 alchemical bonus on Will saving throws made to resist positive energy, such as channel positive energy and cure spells. This bonus lasts for 1 hour. If consumed by a living creature, that creature must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sickened for 1 hour.

Ghast Tooth: This alchemical component is made from the yellowed fang from a slain ghast. If imbedded into the tongue of a dead creature before casting *animate ghoul* or *create undead*, the ghast tooth causes the creature to rise up as a ghast, regardless of caster's level and material component used. In addition, the ghast receives a +2 racial bonus to the DC of its stench ability.

Sacred Oil: Made from blessed sunflowers and scented olive oils, this pale golden liquid is applied to the skin. One vial of sacred oil is enough to coat one Medium creature. Undead creatures that bite a creature anointed with sacred oil take 1d4 points of damage. In addition, undead creatures automatically fail any attack rolls made to confirm a critical hit made by a bite attack against an anointed creature. Once applied, this protection lasts for one hour.

Alchemical Item	Cost	Weight	Craft DC
Aromatic Sachet	25 gp	1/2 lb.	15
Black Nail	60 gp	—	17
Flesh Morsel	30 gp	—	25
Ghast Tooth	100 gp	—	19
Sacred Oil	40 gp	1/2 lb.	20

SPELLS

These spells are some of the most wretched and any copies are generally destroyed immediately upon being discovered. Worse still, some ghoul spellcasters use these spells to create more of their kind, infiltrate society, and corrupt the living. Fortunately, there are also a few spells that can aid in the fight against the hungry dead.

Animate Ghoul

School necromancy [evil]; **Level** antipaladin 4, cleric 4, sorcerer/wizard 5

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (piece of rotting flesh and an onyx gemstone worth 100 gp)

Range touch

Target one corpse

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell causes one humanoid corpse to rise as a ghoul under your control. As long as the corpse is a Medium humanoid, it rises as a standard ghoul, regardless of any class levels, Hit Dice, or abilities it had in life. This spell can also be used on a Small humanoid to create a Small ghoul. If the caster is 11th level or higher, it can be used on the corpse of a Large humanoid to create a Large ghoul. If the caster is at least 13th level, this spell can be used to create a ghast instead, but the material component changes to an onyx gemstone worth at least 200 gp. Undead created by this spell are loyal to the caster, but are subject to the usual Hit Dice limit for the number of undead that can be controlled (as per *animate dead*).

Living Visage

School illusion (glamer); **Level** antipaladin 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one corporeal undead creature per level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw Will negates or Will disbelief (if interacted with);

Spell Resistance no or yes (see text)

This spell causes a number of corporeal undead creatures to appear as they did in life. They take on the appearance they had before death, with no wounds or visible signs of trauma, even if they are missing limbs or other pieces as an undead creature. This grants the undead a +20 bonus on Disguise skill checks to appear as a living creature. This spell cannot be used to make the undead appear as anything other than their original living appearance. Affected undead resume their normal appearance if slain. Unwilling targets can negate the spell's effect on them by making Will saves or through spell resistance.

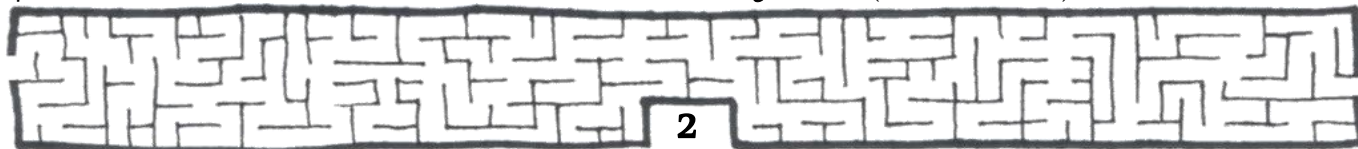
Ravenous Urge

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting]; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a piece of cured flesh)

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)



Target one living creature

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Upon completion of this spell, you must gnaw on the piece of cured flesh, causing your target to be overcome with desire to consume the living. Roll on the following table at the start of the target's turn to determine what it does that round.

d%	Result
01–25	Act Normally.
26–75	Attack the nearest creature with a bite attack. If the target does not possess a bite attack, it gains one as a primary natural attack that deals 1d6 points of piercing damage.
76–100	Bite self, dealing 1d6 points of damage + Str modifier.

The target receives a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end this effect.

Resist Paralysis

School conjuration (healing); **Level** cleric 1, inquisitor 1, paladin 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one creature

Duration 10 min./level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell grants the target a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws made against any spell or effect that causes paralysis or the staggered condition. If the target fails a saving throw against such a spell or effect, it can choose to end this spell as a free action to reroll the saving throw. This reroll is made without the bonus granted by this spell and the target must take the second result, even if it is worse.

MAGIC ITEMS

Unlike lesser undead, some powerful ghouls gain the ability to create magic items to aid them in their foul goals. Meanwhile, those facing off against such undead do have a few tools they can use to help fight these cruel and unwholesome creatures.

Flensing Blade

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th

Slot —; **Price** 12,302 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

This *+1 keen dagger* has a wicked, curved tip to aid in peeling the skin from dead creatures. Whenever the dagger scores a critical hit, the target is left with a painful wound. This causes the target to become sickened until it heals one or more points of damage. In addition, whenever the dagger is used to perform a coup de grace, the DC of the save is increased by +4.

Construction Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge, pain strike*; **Cost** 6,302 gp

Mask of Devouring

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot head; **Price** 14,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

This gruesome mask is made from the cured flesh of a ghoul's face and is complete with horrid teeth and long, pointed ears. A creature that dons the mask gains an overwhelming desire to

devour flesh (although this is not a compulsion). The mask grants a bite attack that deals 1d6 points of damage plus the wearer's Strength modifier. This is a primary natural attack. In addition, once per day whenever the wearer bites a creature, that creature must make a DC 14 Will save or become paralyzed for 1d6 rounds. The creature receives a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. Using this ability is a free action that can be used after the bite attack is made, but before damage is rolled.

Construction Craft Wondrous Item, *alter self, hold person*; **Cost** 7,000 gp

Mask of Life

Aura moderate abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot head; **Price** 16,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

This porcelain mask is painted to look like the average face of a human or elf with no discerning features. When worn by an undead creature, the mask disappears, making the undead creature appear just as it did in life, as per *living visage*. In addition, the undead creature does not detect as undead. Finally, if the undead creature is subject to a spell or effect that deals positive energy damage to undead, the wearer takes no damage if it succeeds at the saving throw to halve the damage (if one is allowed).

Construction Craft Wondrous Item, *living visage, nondetection*; **Cost** 8,000 gp

Scarab of Freedom

Aura moderate abjuration; **CL** 9th

Slot neck; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** —

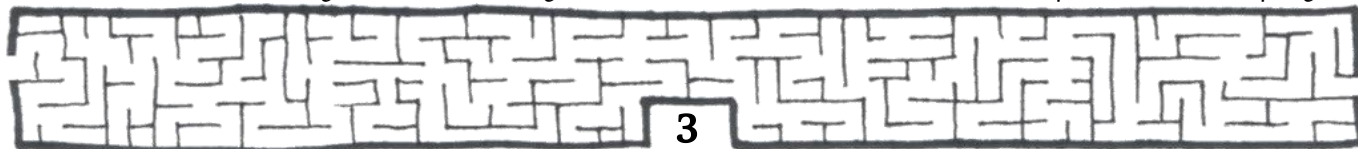
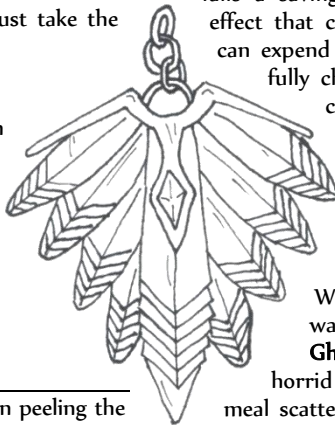
Made from a dark grey iron, this scarab is fashioned to look like a pair of feathered wings. Whenever the wearer of this scarab fails a saving throw against a spell, special ability, or other effect that causes him to become paralyzed or staggered, he can expend a charge as a free action to negate the effect. A fully charged *scarab of freedom* has 9 charges. As each charge is used, one of the feathers from the wings rusts away. When the last charge is used, the scarab is destroyed.

Construction Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement*; **Cost** 10,000 gp

NEW HAZARD

When exploring a ghoulish lair, adventurers should be wary of any foul, rotting feasts they might find.

Ghoul Banquet (CR 3): The lair of a ghoulish pack is a horrid place, with the remnants of their most recent meal scattered about and the stench of death hanging heavy in the air. Worse still is the ghoulish banquet. A grotesque collection of choice organs, appendages, and scraps of flesh left out to rot, the ghoulish banquet is a hazard to the living. Typically only taking up one 5 foot square, any living creature that comes to within 20 feet of a ghoulish banquet must make a DC 15 Fortitude save at the start of each of its turns or be nauseated for 1 round. Those that make their save are sickened for as long as they remain within 20 feet of the ghoulish banquet and for 1d6 rounds thereafter. The stench from a ghoulish banquet can be dispersed with a *gust of wind* or any other similar wind effect, but it returns in 1 minute. Dealing at least 5 points of fire damage to a ghoulish banquet with a spell or effect that targets an area destroys it, but the stench remains for 10 minutes after its destruction. This is an inhaled poison effect. Multiple ghoulish



banquets do not increase the radius, but each banquet increases the Fortitude save DC by +2. Should a living creature eat from a ghoulish banquet for any reason, it must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 minutes. This also exposes the character to ghoulish fever (as per the ghoulish entry in the *Bestiary*).

NEW CREATURE

This section presents an entirely new ghoulish creature to use in your campaign.

Ghast Lord

Dressed in fine clothes, ruined by filth and age, this gaunt, hairless creature moves with unnatural grace. It has huge pointed ears on either side of its head and a long, dagger-like tongue waving from its fanged mouth. Cold dead eyes peer out at you with malice.

GHAST LORD

CR 5

XP 1,600

CE Medium undead

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

Aura stench (Fort DC 18, 1d6+4 minutes)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 57 (6d8+30)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+4 plus disease and rigor mortis), 2 claw +9 (1d6+4 plus rigor mortis)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (8/day, 2d6, Will DC 16), disease, rigor mortis

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +8)

2nd—*hold person* (DC 17), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 17)

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *cause fear* (DC 16), *inflict light wounds* (2, DC 16)

0—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +13, Disguise +14, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +13, Stealth +14, Swim +10

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Undercommon,

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, nest (2d4 ghouls, 1d4 ghouls)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) *Ghoul Fever*—Bite; save Fort DC 18; onset 1 day; frequency 1 day; effect 1d3 Con damage and 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid that dies from ghoulish fever rises as a ghoulish at the next midnight. Those that possess 4 HD or more instead rise as a ghoulish.

Rigor Mortis (Su) Any living creature hit by a ghoulish lord's bite or claw attacks finds its limbs growing weak and unresponsive. These attacks cause the creature to take a –2 penalty to Dexterity unless it succeeds on a DC 18 Fortitude save. This penalty stacks with itself. If a living creature has a penalty to its Dexterity equal to or greater than its Dexterity score, it is paralyzed. *Remove paralysis* reduces the penalty by half (instead of the normal effect). The penalty fades over time, reducing by 1 every minute as long as no further penalty is incurred. A critical hit by a ghoulish lord doubles the penalty to –4, and a successful Fortitude save instead reduces it to –2. This save DC is Charisma-based.

Spells A ghoulish lord can cast spells as a 3rd level cleric. It does not receive any domain spells, nor can it spontaneously cast inflict spells.

Directing entire hives of their lesser kin, the ghoulish lord is a truly dangerous foe. Capable of calling upon dark powers to cast spells, these cannibal aristocrats see themselves as the leaders of their undead race. A ghoulish lord usually creates a lair in a cemetery or in the deepest sewers of a city where it can easily feast upon the dead. A ghoulish lord stands about 5-feet-tall and weighs 100 pounds.

Creating a Ghast Lord: A ghoulish lord can be made by casting *create undead* by a 14th level caster.

NEW GHOULS

While ghouls and ghouls are the most common, there are a few variant types that sometimes arise. These variants can be created using *create undead* by a 12th level caster. These variant ghouls possess all of the base abilities of the ghoulish unless otherwise noted.

Gluttonous Ghoul

Sometimes mistaken for an obese zombie, the gluttonous ghoulish moves slowly about the battlefield, consuming all those that draw too close to its ever-hungry maw.

Challenge Rating: As a normal ghoulish +1.

AC: A gluttonous ghoulish has a +6 natural armor bonus.

Defensive Abilities: A gluttonous ghoulish gains DR 5/slashing.

Speed: A gluttonous ghoulish's base speed is 20 feet.

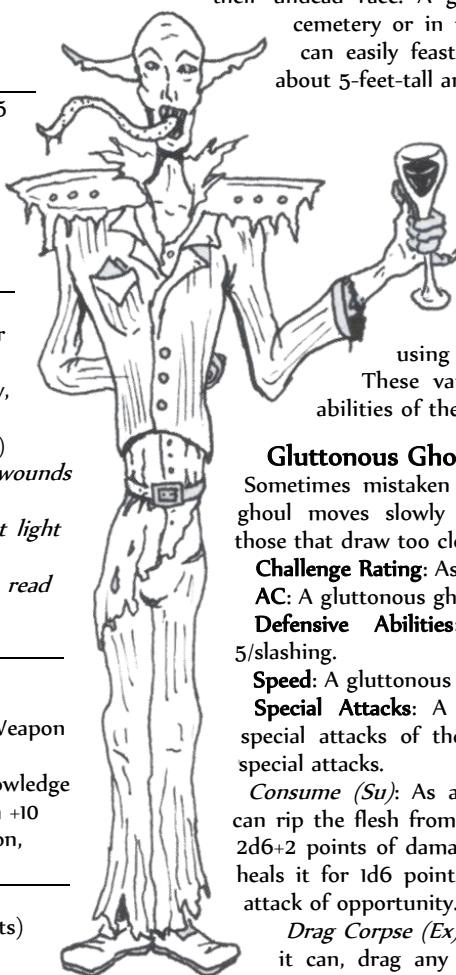
Special Attacks: A gluttonous ghoulish retains all of the special attacks of the ghoulish and gains the following two special attacks.

Consume (Su): As a standard action, a gluttonous ghoulish can rip the flesh from a dead or paralyzed creature, dealing 2d6+2 points of damage. It then consumes this flesh, which heals it for 1d6 points of damage. This action provokes an attack of opportunity.

Drag Corpse (Ex): Whenever a gluttonous ghoulish moves, it can, drag any one dead or paralyze creature along with it as a free action. A creature moved in this way does not provoke attacks of opportunity (although the ghoulish does as normal).

Abilities: As a normal ghoulish, but its Strength score is increased to 15 and its Dexterity score is reduced to 11.

Feats: A gluttonous ghoulish replaces Weapon Finesse with Toughness.



Leaping Ghoul

Appearing almost identical to a regular ghou, these nimble undead can crawl up walls and make extraordinary leaps to reach their prey.

Challenge Rating: As a normal ghou +1.

Speed A leaping ghou has a base speed of 40 feet and gains a climb speed of 40 feet.

Special Attacks: A leaping ghou retains all of the base abilities of the ghou. It gains the pounce universal monster rule and the following special ability.

Acrobatic Charge (Su): Whenever a leaping ghou takes the charge action it can change direction up to two times during the movement of its charge. It can also use its climb speed to scale surfaces as part of its charge, but such a movement counts as a change of direction.

Abilities: As a normal ghou, but its Dexterity score is increased to 19 and its Charisma score is increased to 18.

Skills: A leaping ghou receives a +8 racial bonus on Acrobatics skill checks, giving it an Acrobatics bonus of +14 (+18 on jump checks).

ADVENTURE IDEAS

The following adventure ideas use rules from this supplement and are suitable for any challenge level.

Fresh Graves: The nearby cemetery is being robbed at night, with fresh graves being torn open and the bodies removed. The town militia suspects a necromancer at work, but the truth is far more sinister. A ghou cult has moved into the basement of a nearby slaughterhouse and is infecting the meat with ghou fever. Those that have died from the illness have been clawing their way out the grave shortly after being buried. The ghouls meanwhile have been watching the graveyard using *living visage* to collect the new members of their "family".

Hungry Sewers: Rumors begin to spread around town of people going missing from the streets in the dead of night. As the stories grow, one theme becomes apparent, something is emerging from the sewers and dragging unsuspecting villagers down below and none of them have returned. A group of leaping ghouls has infested the sewers of the town. They are using their incredible agility to dart out from the grates to grab victims and pull them below for a snack. The ghouls have made their lair in a dry cistern, where they are making a rather large ghou banquet. Unfortunately, the sewers are an incredibly complicated maze. To track down the ghouls, the PCs will have to enter the sewers and follow the stench.

Sinister Society: Just over a month ago, an unknown nobleman moved to town and purchased an aging mansion. After having the building restored, the noble has started throwing extravagant parties with all manner of debauchery. Although the social elite of the town are enthralled by his entertainment, some have started to notice that members of their social circle have gone missing. In reality, the noble is a ghou lord wearing a *mask of life* to hide his true nature. Those that have gone missing have been added to the growing feast in his basement for him and his ghou servants. The only way to unmask the threat is to get invited to the party and search for answers.

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