

Wretched Ranks: your first three games

The job: learn Gisa's exchange, keep the rules traps visible, and leave three games with one useful next decision. This is a practice companion, not a complete Commander rulebook.

1. **Before play:** read the activation sequence below with a teaching partner.
2. **At the table:** use the three-game checklist on the next sheet.
3. **Before changing the deck:** fill in the overlap worksheet on the final sheet.

Gisa: pay first, resolve later

Ghoullcaller Gisa is a 3/4 Human Wizard, not a Zombie. Her activation requires another creature; she cannot sacrifice herself. [Official card \[1\]](#)

1. **Check eligibility.** You need priority and an untapped Gisa. Normally, you must have controlled her continuously since the start of your most recent turn; haste changes that. An opponent's turn can work, but another spell or ability's resolution is not an activation window.
2. **Pay the whole cost:** one black mana, tap Gisa, and sacrifice another creature. Opponents cannot interrupt this payment.
3. **Allow responses.** The creature is already sacrificed. Removing Gisa now does not itself stop the ability; countering the ability does not refund its costs.
4. **Resolve the ability.** Use the sacrificed creature's last battlefield power. Create that many black Zombie tokens, each with base stats 2/2, absent modifying effects.

Tap eligibility, priority, costs and last-known information: [rules checkpoint \[2\]](#). A new activation needs another legal payment; this is not a once-per-turn ability.

A clean six-power example

One creature with 6 power → six 2/2 Zombies.

A printed 4/4 currently at six power also gives six tokens. It does not give one 6/6, and it does not copy the sacrificed creature.

Assumptions: legal activation, ability resolves, no token replacement or other modifying effects. The sacrificed creature's power is six immediately before it leaves the battlefield.

Two reminders before moving cards

Noxious Ghoul: each of its triggers gives non-Zombies -1/-1 for the turn. Gisa is vulnerable. With Ghoul already present, an unchanged 3/4 Gisa and four entering Zombies, four resolved triggers reduce her toughness to zero. She dies; indestructible does not save her. [Card \[3\]](#); [rule 704.5f \[2\]](#).

Assume no earlier shrink, damage, buffs, type changes or replacement effects. Opponents' Zombies also qualify. If Ghoul entered this turn, count its own trigger too. This shrink is not damage or counters.

Midnight Reaper: a nontoken creature you control must die. Each qualifying trigger deals you one damage and draws a card. Ordinary Zombie-token deaths do not qualify. [Official notes \[4\]](#)

Three games, three small jobs

This is an editorial learning plan, not a tested performance program. Tick the boxes on paper; record the decision you learned, not just who won.

Player / dates / group:

Deck state: stock / modified - note meaningful changes

Game 1 · Make the board easy to read

- ☐ Tell the group you are learning. Agree on intended pace, help with missed steps and takebacks before starting.
- ☐ Find usable mana, an early play and a follow-up in the opening hand. Ask for help if you cannot name their jobs.
- ☐ Keep the graveyard and token groups clear. Distinguish tapped creatures and tokens with different statistics or abilities.
- ☐ Before a Gisa activation, name the sacrifice and expected token count. Ask about an unfamiliar rule before proceeding.

One moment I understood better afterward:

Game 2 · Preserve one useful option

- ☐ Pick one decision to improve: keeping mana available, protecting an engine creature, or counting triggers.
- ☐ Before sacrificing, compare keeping the creature, converting it now, and waiting. What ability or future play do you lose?
- ☐ Check Gisa's timing and payment aloud when needed. Do not assume that removing her after payment cancels the ability.
- ☐ If Ghoul or Reaper matters, name its exact condition. "A Zombie died" is not enough for Reaper.

My choice / the option it preserved or lost:

Game 3 · Diagnose before changing cards

- ☐ Identify a repeated obstacle: mana, cards, Gisa removed before contributing, or stalled combat.
- ☐ Ask whether the cause was sequencing, an isolated draw, table expectations, or the deck itself. One loss does not prove a defect.
- ☐ Write one specific job for a possible change. Keep the stock list unchanged if you cannot explain that job yet.

Repeated obstacle / evidence from these games:

Next session's one deliberate change, or reason to keep practicing:

Ready for a new group when: you can explain the plan, disclose meaningful modifications, track the token board and ask for a rules pause. **Stop adding upgrades** until the next change has a clear job.

How much of this deck will you use?

Use the [official Wretched Ranks list \[5\]](#). Separate a ready-to-play deck from a purchase made mainly for parts. An existing copy committed to another deck is not necessarily a spare.

Intended use / playing group / current deck version:

Record only the cards that change your decision

Card / role	Own a usable spare?	Keep or immediate cut?	What need does it solve?

Blank rows are intentional writing space, not missing product listings. Use another sheet for additional cards.

Deck-level value I actually want: teaching deck / regular game / gift / other

Useful missing pieces versus the whole deck: compare current checkout terms, effort and intended use, not speculative resale proceeds.

Collector preference, kept separate from strategy:

My conclusion: whole deck / only missing pieces / wait - because

The stopping rule: a premium presentation does not fix an unclear plan. If most cards become immediate cuts, evaluate the useful subset rather than borrowing a headline reprint total.

Rules and identity checkpoint

Sources below were checked October 3, 2026 in the guide's research pass. Teaching steps and worksheet judgments are original editorial suggestions. Current official wording takes precedence; this is not tournament certification.

1. [Wizards: Ghoullcaller Gisa, FDC 0006 card face](#) - cost, creature type and token effect.
2. [Comprehensive Rules, September 25, 2026](#) - 302.6, 702.10c, 117.1b, 602.2, 113.7a, 608.2h and 704.5f. [Current rules entry point: magic.wizards.com/en/rules](#).
3. [Wizards: Noxious Ghoul, FDC 0120 card face](#) - entry triggers and non-Zombie shrink.
4. [Wizards: Foundations release notes](#) - Midnight Reaper's nontoken condition and death triggers.
5. [Wizards: Foundations Commander decklists](#) - exact stock list for the overlap check.