

# THE INTERACTIVE TOME OF STRAHD



Explore the history of Barovia through its lord's eyes in these adventures for the world's greatest role playing game.



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# THE INTERACTIVE TOME OF STRAHD

Much of the truth surrounding the dread land of Barovia's past has been lost to its mysterious mists. Adventure through the pages of Lord Strahd von Zarovich's personal journal and see the past through his eyes.

A SERIES OF ADVENTURES EXPLORING THE ECHOES OF BAROVIAN HISTORY FOR CHARACTERS OF 5TH TO 15TH LEVEL.

BY THE ACIDUOUS ADVENTURER



# THE TOME OF STRAHD

his hand-assembled, aged, leather book hangs on weighted, steel hinges. Though many pages are brittle and damaged, it is clear that it was penned by Strahd von Zarovich, the Lord of Barovia himself, over the course of the many centuries of his life. A brief, intimate introduction gives you the impression that the pages may reveal deep secrets of his long life, though they are mostly written in a near incompressible cipher.

## WHAT IS CONTAINED HERE?

The Tome of Strahd is an ancient text penned by a terribly powerful, immortal wizard. This guide turns the legends of Strahd's history into a series of short adventures.

The following adventures are scaled for an adventuring party of 4-5 characters that discover the Tome at level 4 and levels to 5 upon its discovery. While the party may explore the chapters at their own pace, these adventures are set to scale in difficulty at the rate of approximately 1.5 chapters per level.

## TOME OF STRAHD (ITEM)

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

While attuned to the Tome you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on any skill checks made to recall information about Barovian history or lore.
- You gain a +1 to your AC and to any saving throws when defending against Strahd von Zarovich's magic.

While attuned to the Tome you may spend 4 hours attempting to decipher new sections of the Tome in order to gain further insight into the life of Strahd and the land of Barovia.

Deciphering a chapter requires an **Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Arcana) check** and at least 4 hours of dedicated research time. Another creature may assist you in the attempt and grant advantage on the check if they help. Attempting to decipher the book or offering your help in deciphering it reduces your passive perception by 5 for the duration of the 4 hours.

The Tome also appears to contain esoteric, magical knowledge akin to spells inscribed within a wizard's spellbook. As the secrets and magic contained within are revealed to you, you may cast any spells recorded in the Tome as a ritual. If a spell found in the Tome does not have the ritual tag, it is nonetheless a ritual spell for you when cast from the Tome. Once a spell is cast in this way, it cannot be cast from the Tome again until the following dusk.

If the spell is of a higher level than you are able to cast, you must succeed on a **DC10 + the spell's level Intelligence (Arcana) check**. If you fail, the spell's use for the day is still expended.

## RULES OF THE TOME

- Once the attuned creature has decided to investigate a chapter—if it is successfully decoded—they are forcefully absorbed into the pages of the book along with any other creature within 30 feet.
- The first chapter has already been decoded by Rudolph van Richten and will absorb the readers instantly when it is opened for the first time after it has been attuned to.
- If the creature attuned to the Tome dies, a creature friendly to them may attune to it and refer to their companion's shorthand to resume the translation.
- Time moves differently inside the pages of the Tome. Exploring a single chapter takes 1 hour of time in addition to the 4 hours spent on research and deciphering the text.
- While inside of the Tome, doors not connected to rooms relevant to the current events open to the [Mists of Ravenloft](#).
- Non-magical items found in a chapter can be brought back to the present. Magical items taken from the memories of the Tome lose any magical properties if returned to the present. (See the **Fortunes and Futures** sidebar below for a possible exception for this rule).
- Any damage taken while in a chapter is sustained when a creature leaves. If a creature dies within the chapter, their body must be carried to the end of the chapter's events or it is lost to the pages of history.
- Any creatures exploring the chapters are referred to by their names, but illusory visages relevant to the events in that chapter mask their appearance so that they blend in. See each chapter for the related illusions. These illusions cannot be dispelled.
- Events are recorded on the pages as they occur. The attuned creature—and any creatures friendly to them—may read the documented events again but cannot re-enter a previously decoded chapter.
- The written version of the events unfold precisely as they occurred in the adventure but are written from Strahd's perspective. Although creatures exploring the memories are referred to by name, their names are altered in the written version of the events that reflect the true moment. This way, any choices made in “the past” are always the correct version of history.

## FORTUNES AND FUTURES

The Tome of Strahd is only one of three important artifacts at the heart of *Curse of Strahd*. It's possible that the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind and the Sunsword were lost somewhere in Strahd's past, and the party must find them there.

Before you conduct Madam Eva's Tarokka card reading, you may conceal the Holy Symbol and the Sunsword within the Tome's chapters. See Appendix A for suggestions about where and when to hide them as well as readings to accompany their new locations.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Though the Tome itself does not have a formal table of contents or distinct chapters, the age and decay of the pages indicate two distinct eras. Strahd's entries in the Tome are divided into two distinct periods: **Life** and **Death**. This module also includes a series of appendices for your reference.

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## THE INTERIOR

With a successful DC13 Intelligence (Arcana) check, a character can recognize a dispelled Glyph of Warding on the clasp that once secured the front cover. This was removed by Rudolph van Richten.

When a character opens the Tome for the first time after they have attuned to it, read:

*You leaf through the pages, some torn or flooded. Some branded with unknowable symbols, and others still artfully scribed with a murky, black ink. The tale is long and written in a series of foreign scripts, save the first page which transforms before your eyes into Common:*

**"I, Strahd, Lord of Barovia, well aware certain events of my reign have been desperately misunderstood by those who are better at garbling history than recording it, hereby set down an exact record of those events, that the truth may, at last, be known."**

*The pages flutter open to the book's center, and mist begins to pour from the binding. You feel lightheaded.*

*Your vision fades, and from the blackness now surrounding you, a hungry fog rolls along the ground.*

*You shout, and there is nothing. The mist chokes closer. A man clad in a black cloak and a regal, red tunic looks at you through the cloud with a stern face and piercing eyes. He steps toward you with the grace of a king. Your eyes meet his cold glare as it bears down on you, he speaks.*

Anyone present immediately begins to experience the Prologue. Strahd speaks the bolded text below before the mists change.

## PROLOGUE: YOUTH

***I am the Ancient. I am the Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past...***

This chapter details Strahd's childhood. It establishes his relationships with his father King Barov, his mother Queen Ravenovia, Rahadin, and Sergei. It also allows the party to meet the boy who will go on to become the Devil.

*The visage of the man disperses into a black and red cloud before reforming into a young boy no older than 12, with a small sword at his side and tears streaming down his cheeks. The mist recedes further, revealing a well-adorned, sunlit castle courtyard.*

*The low buzz of insects and humidity add weight to the summer air. Hanging on the ramparts overhead are red banners depicting the same raven iconography cast in metal on the cover of the Tome.*

*The boy that stood before you moments ago now sits atop a small set of stairs leading to a wooden door. From beyond it, you can hear distant but boisterous laughter.*

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party is in a faraway land. A kingdom that stood long before the country of Barovia was founded. This is Strahd's childhood home, just after the young prince has completed a training session with his father's advisor, Rahadin. They have some quiet time to meet the future lord under the guise of being his imaginary friends.

## THE COURTYARD

The courtyard is walled-in on four sides by 30 foot tall stone walls. There are 10 foot tall wooden double doors set on the east, south, and west walls.

The boy seated on the stairs is a young Strahd von Zarovich, taking a short rest from his sword training with Rahadin. His father's attendant has bested him and is currently reporting back to King Barov.



## THE DOOR

Just beyond the northern door is a small office chamber where Barov is drunkenly boasting of his excitement for his soon-to-be-born son Sergei and the immense pride he has for Strahd, his heir.

Any character listening at the door that succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear Barov request that Rahadin pushes Strahd harder. Barov wants him to be a great, powerful ruler one day. They also hear Rahadin respond, in turn, informing King Barov that the prince is still far too young to lead and that he is brash, foolish, and overzealous.

## THE BOY

The young Dark Lord will speak freely about himself and his family so long as the party is not hostile.

Anyone speaking to the boy in a kind manner can learn the following:

- His name is Strahd von Zarovich.
- He is meant to become lord of this castle, and his mother thinks he'll make a great lord. His father, King Barov, believes he might, but he also says that he has a lot of work to do.
- He is nervous about living up to his father's expectations.
- His father's advisor, Rahadin, is his teacher. He's a difficult teacher, and he pushes really hard.
- His mother is pregnant with a boy, Sergei, and she says it'll be his job to teach Sergei everything he knows.

After the party has spoken to young Strahd, listened at the door for some time, or attacked the boy, Rahadin steps outside and draws his blade, announcing that he and Strahd will return to training at once.

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"...yet that past now is filled only with regret."*

**Treasure** The attuned creature may now cast *Illusory Script* as a ritual spell once per dusk. By combining the shorthand used to inscribe this spell into the book, the text from this chapter, and the scrawlings along the diary's margins, a pattern begins to emerge in the swirling, mysterious symbols on the following pages.

The attuned creature may now begin to study the book and attempt to read further chapters.

## SETTING THE DIFFICULTY

The DC for decoding each chapter will vary from party to party. I suggest beginning with a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check for the first chapter and increasing the DC by 1 per chapter, but you may choose to make it easier or more difficult depending on your party's makeup.

## CHAPTER 1: THE BATTLE OF ARGYNVOSTHOLT

*"I was the warrior, I was good and just. I thundered across the land like the wrath of a just god.."*

When Strahd's armies marched on the cold, forested lands nestled between Mount Ghakis and the Baratok Mountain range that would go on to become the kingdom of Barovia, they had little knowledge of the valiant Order of the Silver Dragon.

As the von Zarovich forces closed in on the final holdout of the previous kingdom, they climbed the steep mountain roads into the center of the countryside. It is here they planned their final approach to claim the land once and for all and where Strahd incurred an unpayable debt to the mysterious Vistani.

The party will assume the role of soldiers during the siege of the castle.

## THE VILLAGE OF ZMEI

This iteration of Barovia includes Zmei, a small village at the base of the hill that leads to Argynvostholt. It is no longer standing by the start of the adventure, but its ruins may be easily added to contemporary Barovia.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party now finds themselves standing at a table with Strahd and two of his closest advisors—Rahadin and Aleksandra Gwilym. The two are mounting an offensive to remove the Order of the Silver Dragon from the land. The party appears alongside them as lieutenants in Strahd's army. They are wearing illusory suits of plate armor emblazoned with the von Zarovich crest.

As the army marches on, the party can elect which commander they would like to report to and ultimately the role they will play in the battle ahead.

## THE WAR TENT

As the mists gather once more, read:

*The mist coalesces into the dusk elf you saw in the previous chapter, not aged a day. The chatter of voices and the clanking of metal sing from outside the walls of an enormous tent. Its primary occupant is a colossal, rectangular table atop which is carved an intricate, scale map of the lands of Barovia.*

*The model mountains climb nearly five feet high, and valleys sink deep into the tabletop. You see a man to your right, who does not appear dissimilar to a young boy you met at his home one summer afternoon. He now stands clad in scarlet armor adorned with angelic feathers etched in gold leaf.*

*He gestures across the table. 'Commander Gwilym, the table is yours.'*

Alek will walk the party through the information below, taking questions about the plan as she goes.

The tent has a 20-foot radius and is 12 feet tall at its center. The enormous table depicting the geography of Barovia occupies a 10 foot by 8-foot rectangle at the center.

Any character who spends time to review the table and succeeds on a **DC16 Intelligence (History) check** can discern the location of Argynvostholt and the village of Berez to later add to their own map.

If the party inquires further about the plan of attack, the commanders will detail the assault and refer to each of the characters as "Lieutenant" for the duration of the conversation.

## THE PLAN OF ATTACK

Lord Strahd, Commander Gwilym, and Commander Rahadin will share the following information if asked:

- The Order of the Silver Dragon is proud and plans to fight rather than be starved out of their castle.
- The castle itself sits high on a cliff overlooking a valley, and the knights will have nowhere to go but down toward the village.
- The people of Zmei are commoners who will not stand in the way, and we will do what we can to protect them.
- The Lord General Strahd will hold the rear of the forces from the village of Zmei.
- Commander Rahadin will hold the base of the hill and monitor the treeline to ensure we are not routed.
- Commander Gwilym will ride up the hill to the castle to challenge the remaining forces directly.

The party may elect to defend Strahd at the backline or follow either Rahadin or Aleksandra into battle as the army marches the following day.

## THE BATTLEFIELD

When the party has decided how they wish to proceed and have done all they wish to do in the War Tent read:

*The conversational chatter of the camp builds to a roar. You blink and are now standing amid a quaint farming village, many of its buildings wreathed in flame. Dozens of soldiers adorned with ravens are locked in combat against knights in silver and blue armor.*

*Strahd sits atop a stocky, black mare, points his blade forward, and shouts 'Advance!' As he does so, a javelin strikes his side and he is knocked to the ground. Ahead of you, you see Rahadin and Alek galloping off toward their posts, unaware that their lord has fallen.*



## STRAHD AND THE VILLAGE

If the party decides to remain in the village and assist Strahd, they are attacked by a **Paladin of Argynvost** (a [Life Priest](#)) wielding a silvered longsword and three [Infantrymen](#).

Strahd is injured and bleeding. Two of the Infantrymen will fight past the party to strike Strahd while he's down.

If he is successfully defended for 1d4 turns, three Vistani arrive to help nurse him back to health. They provide him a healing potion and help him walk to one of their wagons.

**Treasure** The paladin is wielding a silvered longsword

## RAHADIN AND THE WOODS

If the party moves to the treeline with [Rahadin](#) they initially find silence. The trees are quiet, and the battle is now distant. A successful DC14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a series of snare traps laid in the grass. A character that rushes into the bushes triggers the snare and must make a DC14 **Dexterity saving throw** or they are *grappled* and suspended 10 feet in the air by their ankles.

They may release themselves through a successful DC13 **Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check or by spending 1 minute of time struggling to remove the snare. A companion may also help take them down. If they remove the snare themselves, they take **1d6 bludgeoning damage** as they fall back to the ground.

A successful DC16 **Wisdom (Survival)** check reveals the familiar signs of foot traffic in the area.

A character that fails to notice the telltale signs of the enemy forces are surprised as an ambush party comprised of a **Paladin of Argynvost** (a [Life Priest](#)) wielding a silvered longsword and three [Infantrymen](#) attack from the trees.

**Treasure** The paladin is wielding a silvered longsword.

## ALEKSANDRA AND THE CASTLE

If the party charges through the frontline with Aleksandra (a [Master-at-arms](#)) they are met with some resistance from the Order's defensive forces. The battle rages around them; Strahd's soldiers are locked blade to blade with knights in silver and blue, and the terrain disadvantage quickly becomes evident.

Argynvost's forces begin to roll large stones downhill toward the party as they climb. 2d4, 10-foot-diameter stone spheres begin to crash down the hill toward the army. ([Refer to the Dungeon Master's Guide's section on traps for information on rolling sphere traps.](#))

When the party overcomes the boulders and reaches the top, they encounter a powerful general, and Commander Alek Gwilym's brother, [Sir Godfrey Gwilym](#) (*as he is currently human, he is without his revenant abilities, undead status, and undead resistances*) wielding a silver shortsword. The hilt is sculpted to resemble silver dragon wings and a pommel shaped like a silver dragon's head clutching a black opal between its teeth. Three [Guards](#) responsible for leveraging the boulders down the hill accompany him into battle.

**Treasure** Godfrey Gwilym is wielding a decorated silver shortsword.

## THE DRAGON RISES

Regardless of the path the party chooses to follow, once combat has been resolved, and they have had a brief second to catch their breath, read:

*A river of blood flows down the enemy's silvered sword lying idly in the mud. A divine cacophony of thunderous booms beats on your eardrums. The swell of sound is followed by a cold shiver that runs the length of your spine. The cold seems to emanate from the mansion high on the hill.*

*A blood-curdling roar rips through the air, silencing the battlefield, and your attention is drawn southward. The sun above reflects harshly off of a pair of glinting silver wings and claws that crest the turrets of the castle, and you gaze, in full view of Argynvost. The Silver Dragon.*

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"...but the war years and the killing years wore down my soul as the wind wears stone into sand."*

**Treasure** The attuned creature may now cast *Unseen Servant* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF RAVENLOFT

*"My army settled in the valley, renamed for my father as we took power over the people in the name of a just god, but with none of a god's grace or justice."*

With the final resistance of the Order of the Silver Dragon suppressed, the bountiful countryside was claimed in the name of the late, great King Barov.

Too many years of Strahd's life were spent campaigning across the country with a sword in his hand and an army at his back. These long years isolated him from his family, and in his time away, he lost both his father and his dear mother.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

In this chapter, the party has the opportunity to meet with members of Strahd's court, including Leo Dilisnya and the Dawnmaster Gabriel Andral, witness Strahd's pledge to the land, and take some time to explore the Lord's private study in Castle Ravenloft.

The war party has climbed the high hills of Barovia and arrived for the first time at the threshold of the soon-to-be-christened Castle Ravenloft. When the party appears they are wearing the same von Zarovich plate armor from the previous chapter. In the study, they are invisible forces free to explore and manipulate the study while Strahd is away.

When the mists clear, the party is marching toward the castle after crossing the drawbridge. Read:

## THE CASTLE COURTYARD

*You stand just beyond the front gates of a curtain wall, so colossal that the largest of giantkind could pass through with ease. The wall is nearly fifty feet in height, interrupted by squared-off turrets that rise even higher.*

\*The wall is further dwarfed by the rounded towers of the keep overhead, the tallest of which soars three times the height of the gates. Weighted hooves clop across the wood of a seemingly infinite bridge behind you.

Rahadin, Aleksandra Gwilym, Leo Dilisnya, and Gabriel Andral all follow behind the party. Strahd has gone ahead of the rest through the castle doors with a few men to see the inside and will return shortly. The party may take this time to explore the courtyard (area K1) and speak with his advisors.

What the advisors know:

- The lands here now belong to Lord Strahd.
- Their own stories (see Appendix B).
- Rahadin and Alek are aware that there is an assassin—hidden amongst the forces—that hopes to eliminate Strahd.
- They captured and executed a man who was in possession of a dagger commonly carried by the mystical Ba'l Verzi assassin's guild, but they do not believe he was the actual assassin.

## I AM THE ANCIENT, I AM THE LAND

After the party has explored the courtyard, Strahd emerges from the entrance of the castle (area K7). If any character is mid-conversation, any of Strahd's forces request they fall silent. Read:

*The unnerving silence is interrupted by the cold ring of a blade being unsheathed. Strahd clutches tightly to a red, black, and gold dagger. Its finely crafted hilt leads to a sinister, curved blade. He kneels and wrenches his left hand into the soil, returning to his feet with dirt crumbling from between his knuckles.*

*He points the tip of the dagger briefly to the north, east, south, and west before plunging it into his mud-caked palm. A mixture of dirt and blood drip as he squeezes. 'I am Strahd, I am the Land.' He repeats the mantra three more times, once in each cardinal direction before looking to the clouds and speaking: 'Draw near and witness. I, Strahd, am the land.'*

*Blood and magic meet the soil, and the sky is swallowed. The courtyard vanishes.*

## STRAHD'S STUDY

*"All goodness slipped from my life. I found my youth and strength gone, and all I had left was death..."*

The party emerges from the void and finds themselves in Strahd's study (area K37). Read:

*What feeble light burns in the dimming fireplace is enough to fill the room with rolling waves of red and amber light, illuminating rows and rows of ancient books—their leather covers well-oiled and preserved through careful use—large gaps span segments of the shelves, likely left to fill in more knowledge.*

*A stone floor is concealed beneath a thick, luxurious rug. In the center of the room is a large, low table, waxed and polished to a mirrored finish. Even the poker in its stand next to the blazing fireplace is polished.*

*A sturdy, carved desk houses several scrolls of parchment, open books, and candles burned nearly to the wick. In one of two chairs crafted of burgundy-colored wood with padded leather seats that face the hearth, is Lord Strahd von Zarovich; his head rests sorrowfully in his left hand, a letter is gripped tightly in his other.*

Strahd has just received word that his mother, Queen Ravenovia, has passed. She was never able to see her namesake. Gabriel Andral stands off to the side in the doorway. He has delivered the news to Strahd personally, and he hopes to provide some comfort to his Lord by offering condolences on behalf of the Morninglord.

Strahd tolerates the Morninglord's presence in the land and recognizes the power of the church but is not devout himself and believes the Dawnmaster's words are nonsense.

The party only witnesses this conversation, and any character paying particular attention and succeeds on a DC15 Intelligence (Insight) check can sense a clear tension between the two.

Strahd eventually accepts an offer from Gabriel to take a walk down to the chapel and leaves the party to explore the room.

Any character navigating the chamber can access the secret door leading to the False Treasury (area K38).

Strahd's desk contains a variety of spell components (none worth more than 10gp), some high-quality spellbook parchment, and a small lockbox.

The chair he was seated in also contains a letter from his family's attendant informing him of the queen's passing. Refer to the handout in Appendix E for a copy of the letter.

## THE CASTLE'S ARTWORK

As this chapter occurs before Strahd's introduction to Tatyana, the portrait detailed in the module is not above the fireplace. Instead, there is a portrait of King Barov and Queen Ravenovia. Alternatively, if your players are raring for a fight, you may include Strahd's [Guardian Portrait](#).

After the party has had time to explore the space, Strahd returns to the room and pauses. He looks around knowingly as if he recognizes that someone was here. Once the party is sufficiently unnerved, he snuffs the fire (if it has not been already), and pulls the poker, stepping through the secret door to area K38. The embers sputter out, the darkness overtakes the study, and the world goes black.

**Treasure.** Any books found in Strahd's growing collection are worth 1gp-100gp each.

The lockbox on the tabletop contains 37sp and 162gp as well as 1d4 gothic trinkets.

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"Escape from the isolation of death was impossible. In my many years, I learned that the brightest days cast the darkest of shadows."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Gentle Repose* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 3: BROTHERS IN ARMS

*"At my advisors' behest, I called for my remaining family, long unseated from their ancient thrones, and brought them here to settle in the castle I built for them. From this plea came a younger brother of mine, Sergei, nearly grown. I had never known him."*

With the von Zarovich line bequeathed to him, Strahd sent word to bring his family to their new seat of power. The man that responded to the summons was none other than Sergei von Zarovich.



This chapter introduces the party to the exuberant, charismatic, and beautiful man that is Sergei and how starkly contrasted he is to Strahd. Sergei is also an acolyte of the church who has pledged his life to the Morninglord.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party has the opportunity to partake in a welcome party of sorts. Strahd celebrates his brother's homecoming as only a warrior may know how: with an exhibition tournament. The characters appear as assorted Barovian nobles.

## THE AUDIENCE HALL

It seems that all of Barovia has gathered to greet the incoming von Zarovich family. When the chapter begins, the party finds themselves standing in the Audience Hall (K25) of Castle Ravenloft. Read:

*You stand on either side of a high-back, wooden throne atop a marble dais. Strahd is beside you, donning a scarlet red tunic with glimmering gold clasps and a black cape flowing over his shoulders. A hall extends thirty feet ahead. Various guards and well-adorned nobility form an aisle, and the crowd is abuzz with hushed voices, and the attending crowd is illuminated by a towering, stained-glass window in the far corner depicting a cerulean and gold sunrise.*

While it is clear that the audience is gathered for some remarkable event, it has also clearly not yet begun. Characters asking around the room learn the following:

- The people gathered here are assorted Barovian noble families.
- They have come to greet Lord Strahd's family.

Any character inspecting the stained glass can identify the abstract sun painted on the window as the symbol of the Morninglord with a successful DC12 **Wisdom (Religion)** check. Anyone devoted to the Morninglord can recognize the symbol immediately, no check required. Once the party has had sufficient time to explore the space, read:

*The murmurs of the hall are quieted by the groan of heavy wooden doors parting. A procession of marching footsteps and the fanfare of trumpets precede a beautiful man with wavy black hair, kind eyes, and a warming smile strutting into the chamber.*

*He approaches boldly, draped in the familiar robes of the Morninglord. A gilded, radiant sword rests at his hip. The hilt of the weapon is so finely crafted that you would not be faulted for believing it was made of pure light. He drops to a knee before the throne.*

Sergei does not have much regard for formality or processes. He is young and excitable and has long been an only child. Even now, in his late twenties, he is driven by a vibrant enthusiasm and warm spirit that Strahd lacks.

With Sergei's approach, Rahadin stands next to Strahd and announces the arrival:

*'Welcome Sergei von Zarovich, second son of King Barov and Queen Ravenovia, Awakened son of the Morninglord, to our Castle Ravenloft. The keep's splendors and comforts are yours.' Sergei rises to his feet. Strahd rises in turn and steps down the marble stairs, standing half a foot taller than his younger brother.*

*He reaches to shake his guest's hand, but as their forearms meet, Sergei pulls his brother in for a hug. Strahd steps back and pronounces, loud enough for the room to hear: 'It is good to have you, brother. Come, let us celebrate.'*

Anyone observing this interaction can recognize, with a successful DC11 Wisdom (Insight) check, that Strahd is made visibly uncomfortable by the hug.

The room erupts into applause, and the stained glass window shines like the rising sun. Powerful rays of light overtake the scene.

## THE CHAPEL GARDEN

The festivities have shifted and an exhibition tournament has been set up behind the castle in the Chapel Garden (area K5). When the party arrives, read:

*You feel a gentle breeze brush your cheek. The earthy smell of fresh grass brings spring and summer warmth. The sun embraces you, but the serenity is broken by raucous cheering.*

*Three sets of tiered benches have been constructed around a ring of dirt, and two guests currently stand at its center in studded armor with weapons drawn. Forty feet ahead of you are two wrought iron gates that lead to an overlook. Even from this distance, you can see the snowcaps of far off mountain ranges to the east.*

Two young participants exit the ring, and Rahadin notes the victor. He is currently presiding over the event, and if anyone wishes to participate in the festivities, they can speak to him.

The party may also sit and converse with any of the members of Strahd's court, look around the grounds, or investigate the Overlook (area K6).

## FROM CHIVALRY TO CALVARY

If your party is not particularly interested in hand-to-hand combat or you want a change of pace from traditional combat encounters, you might consider adding a jousting lane near the Ravenloft carriage house (area K4). [Here is a great set of jousting rules](#) that are easy to run and make for a great rock, paper, scissors approach to a mini-game.

## PARTICIPATING IN THE EXHIBITION

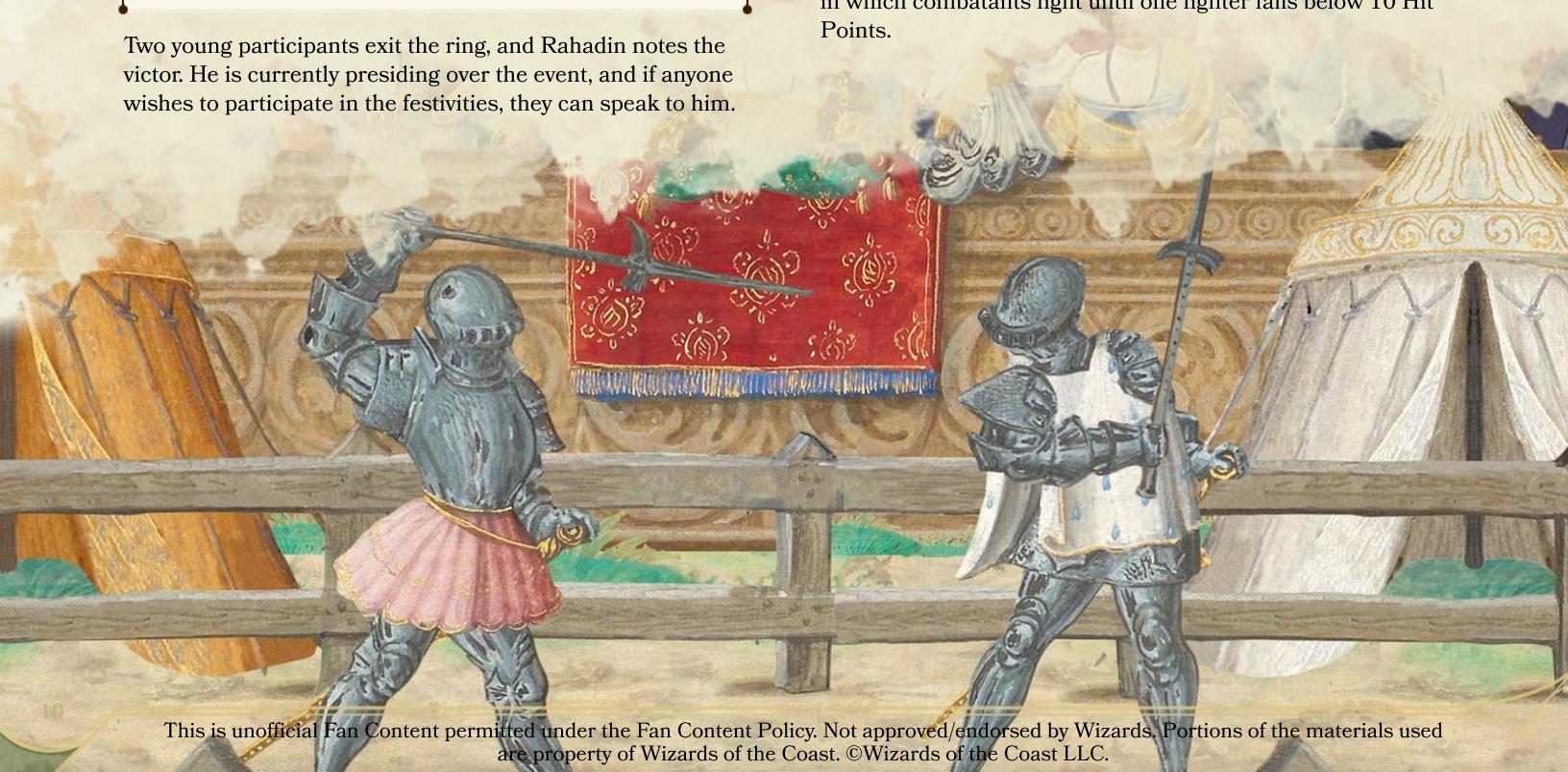
After a short break, Rahadin announces that a new round of fights will begin soon.

Challengers may select their opponent, and Strahd's guests are all far too proud to turn down a challenge. A character may select any of the following to challenge in the ring:

- Strahd von Zarovich (a [Warlord](#))
- Sergei von Zarovich (a [War Priest](#))
- [Rahadin](#) (without his Deathly Choir ability)
- Aleksandra Gwilym (a [Master-at-arms](#))
- Gabriel Andral (a [War Priest](#))
- Leo Dilisnya (a [Zealot Barbarian](#) with 14 Intelligence)
- Lady Ilona Darovnya (a [Mastermind Rogue](#) that can cast Healing Word 3/day)
- Any Barovian [noble](#) in the audience
- Each other

The exhibition matches are not intended to be deadly, they are meant to be entertaining, but those in attendance are all capable warriors in their own right. When a match begins, the competitors roll initiative and conduct combat as normal. Each fight is conducted until either one fighter earns five points (restraining themselves on each hit and striking for one point of damage).

Alternatively, you may host a more aggressive tournament in which combatants fight until one fighter falls below 10 Hit Points.



## A BROTHERLY BRAWL

After every character (or as many characters wish to partake) has taken their turns in the demonstration, Sergei rises from his seat to challenge Strahd, and the roar from the crowd overtakes the scene. The party reappears in seats around the pit, and Strahd and Sergei are locked in a duel.

*Sergei's sword flies down, nearly chopping Strahd in two, but the Lord raises his sword in time to leave an inch's gap between steel and skull. Sergei dips back, narrowly avoiding his brother's parrying dagger. He props himself up, tossing his own parrying dagger into a reverse grip and tilting his short sword, not like a noble in a duel but a teenager in a street fight. Strahd scans Sergei's sloppy stance, and in a flurry of black cloth, he leads with a feint before swiping low with his red, black, and gold dagger.*

*The younger von Zarovich is caught off guard but manages to catch his brother's arm, batting the dagger away just as the point scratches his armor. Sergei hastily brings his blade around in a broad sweep and spins frantically toward his target. Strahd parries the obvious attack with ease, but the Dervish twirls mask the dagger that nearly finds the elder's throat.*

*Strahd weaves into Sergei's whirling blades like a dancer twirling with their partner, pulling his neck back enough to avoid the fine steel edge, and forcing his brother to overstep. He stands swiftly upright, his blade held straight, the point pressed gently to the base of Sergei's skull. They lower their weapons and bow.*

*The crowd erupts. The brothers look out over the people. Sergei waves enthusiastically, an enormous smile is plastered on his exuberant face, and hardly a drop of sweat breaks on his forehead. Strahd, drenched in sweat, blots his face with a black kerchief, and waves out of obligation. His penetrating eyes snap briefly in his brother's direction, cutting more harshly than his longsword ever could.*

## CHAPTER CLOSE

**"He was handsome and youthful. I hated him for both."**

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Mage Armor* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 4: TATYANA

**"Then, all my disparaging thoughts fell away like dead leaves. She was, without doubt, the most beautiful person I'd ever seen."**

Tatyana and her subsequent reincarnations are the heart of Strahd's eternal curse. He viewed love—and even physical relationships—as distracting or dangerous for many years.

It was not until he met Tatyana, a Barovian commoner that Sergei had come to admire, that he surrendered to a deep, relentless, and unhealthy obsession for another person. This meeting, courtesy of Sergei, spelled the beginning of Strahd's end.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

In this chapter, the party attends an intimate dinner with Strahd, Patrina Velikovna, Sergei, Tatyana, Ilona Darovnya, and Rahadin. Though they are not the guests of honor, they appear to be wearing the well-to-do garb of Barovian nobility and have the freedom at the table to drive some discussion and ask questions of their host and other guests.

Once the dinner is over, they are whisked through a series of Strahd's favorite memories with Tatyana, memories that, in Strahd's mind, meant that she loved him. In these moments the characters are merely observers.

## BEING A GOOD HOST

It is important to distinguish the events of this chapter from a present-day dinner with Strahd. The castle halls should feel alive and resplendent in ways that they no longer can in Barovia.

Also, in order to mediate the number of NPCs that you have to run concurrently, I would suggest letting the party or Strahd drive the conversation. For especially large parties, you may instead have the players play the other guests at the table. If you choose to do so, give them the relevant bulleted lists on the following page.

Lastly, this moment may be an enormous reveal for the players. If, up to this point, they have not learned of Tatyana and the nature of her soul's reincarnation, emphasize that the auburn-haired woman is the spitting image of Irene Kolyana.

## THE DINING HALL

The party is seated around the table in Castle Ravenloft's Dining Hall (area K10) in formal dinner wear. When they arrive, read:

*Three enormous crystal chandeliers brilliantly illuminate a magnificent feast hall. Pillars of stone stand against dull white marble walls supporting the ceiling. At the center of the far west wall, between floor-to-ceiling mirrors, brass pipes climb the stone-like grapevines. They extend upward from the wooden base of an expansive pipe organ. The grand fireplace set into the southern wall blankets the room in a homey warmth.*

*You are seated in the center of the room at a chestnut refectory table draped with a white satin tablecloth. The table is laden with an assortment of delectable foods: roasted beast basted in a savory sauce, roots and herbs from distant lands, and sweet fruits and fresh vegetables of all sizes and colors.*

*Places are set for each of you and six other guests with delicate porcelain and silver. Set near each plate is a crystal goblet filled with an amber liquid emanating a delicate, tantalizing fragrance.*

## GUESTS AND THEIR GOALS

This dinner is not a particularly pleasant meal as each guest will be vying for attention and their place at the table. Their respective motivations and goals are listed below.

### Strahd

- Learn as much as he can about Tatyana.
- Sabotage his brother in any way that he can, including casually making the point that as a member of the church, Sergei does have to take a vow of non-marriage.
- He will pay no mind to Patrina even though he is technically her escort for this evening.

### Patrina

- Attempt to regain Strahd's attention any way she can.
- Avoid Rahadin's judgments.

### Sergei

- Engage all of the guests at the table in conversation.
- He is entirely oblivious to Strahd's advances on Tatyana.
- Believes his older brother's insults are merely jokes and smoothly brush them away or twist them into positives.
- Keep the table in high spirits and abate any tension that he notices.

### Tatyana

- Do everything in her power to fit in with the noble crowd.
- Light up any time that Sergei speaks.
- Kindly acknowledge Strahd's comments and compliment him in return.
- Be extremely kind to Patrina and remain entirely unaware that Patrina is jealous of her.

### Ilona

- Bask in the chaos of the meal.
- Speak to any guests that seem to have any religious iconography on their person about their god or the Morninglord.
- Remind Strahd that this young woman is a commoner, and he's being foolish but... subtly.

### Rahadin

- Keep the peace as best he can.
- Aggressively aid Strahd in conversation and tout his accomplishments.
- Keep decorum at dinner at all costs. If one of the characters is actively aggressive toward another guest, Rahadin will escort them out or kill them if they attempt to attack.
- Mock or otherwise demean Patrina.

When dinner winds down, enough blows have been struck, and the party has asked their fair share of questions, the following scene plays out:

- Sergei excuses himself and Tatyana because he must return her to the village down the hill.
- Strahd insists that she remain in the castle as a guest, and he will have a room drawn up for her immediately.
- Tatyana remains humble and initially refuses.
- Sergei respects whatever she wishes.
- Patrina wishes she would go.
- Rahadin insists she stay to spite Patrina.
- Ultimately, she stays, but even as she accepts Strahd's offer, she stares longingly at Sergei, and Strahd's face falls somber.

*"It was as if the sun that had favored me had been all along hidden by a cloud. Its brilliant glory now shone in full upon him... and him alone."*

## THE COURTING OF THE COUNT

Strahd does everything in his power as Lord of Barovia and ruler of Castle Ravenloft to impress Tatyana. When those gestures of affection fail time and time again, he falls back to his growing magical abilities.

In his research, he has learned that love is an elusive energy, and long-term effects on emotions are nearly impossible to maintain, but that does not prevent him from trying. As Strahd's voice echoes and dinner closes, read:

## THE CHAPEL COURTYARD (K5)

*You are whisked away to the castle courtyard where Strahd walks alongside Tatyana in the soft dusk light. He asks her how she finds her new quarters here and of her satisfaction with the amenities of castle life. 'Everything is wonderful, Old One.' Strahd's eyes momentarily grow wide as if a knife has pierced his chest. The sound of a gentle harp strums over the quiet courtyard, and the mists blind you.*

## DINING HALL OF THE COUNT (AREA K36)

*Tatyana giggles behind you, but you are no longer behind the castle. She sits on a stool in a grandiose, paneled music room. Her hair has grown several inches, and her homely vestments have been replaced by a simple but beautiful summer dress. Stunning harp music drifts through the air, and you see Strahd plucking at the instrument's strings, entirely at peace, and enraptured by Tatyana's joy.*

*Almost frozen in time, the two begin to sing. Until a door clicks and Sergei enters. She stands, bows to him, and he hurries toward her, hugging her so tightly that she rises from the ground. He spins her around and around the fading room.*

A successful DC11 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that she is confused as he lifts her. Not to a point of dislike, but she feels uneasy. If a character succeeds by 5 or more, they recognize a sense of guilt on her face after her eyes flicker in Strahd's direction.

## A SONG IN HIS HEART

[Elsa's Song by The Amazing Devil](#) is a fitting song for Strahd and Tatyana to perform together. Consider playing it to set the scene if you have the opportunity! Thank you, [u/StevenV](#) for sharing it with the community.

## RETURN TO THE DINING HALL (AREA K10)

Tatyana continues to spin and her already stunning dress morphs into a blossoming red gown with a large petticoat. She now dances in a ballroom, the same hall where you sat for dinner, now cleared for a crowd. She whirls to the tune of the now lively pipe organ and a small band.

Her outstretched hand clasps with Sergei's as he forms from the mist, and they are entwined, twirling and floating through a crowd of nobles all doing the same. All but Lord Strahd Von Zarovich who sits starkly below a deathly still portrait of his own likeness.

He calls for a toast to the people of Barovia and his incredible guest, staring deeply into Tatyana's eyes. He steps forward from his throne and presents Tatyana and Sergei with goblets.

A character that succeeds on a **Wisdom (Perception)** check contested by Strahd's **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check (+3) notices Strahd remove a small vial from his pocket and poured a bubbling pink liquid (a *Philter of Love*) into Tatyana's drink.

If the party intervenes, Tatyana spills some of her drink, curtseys, and excuses herself. Sergei follows after her.

If Tatyana drinks the *Philter* she turns toward Sergei at the end of the toast and immediately steals him away for a dance with impassioned fervor.

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"One would think the ritual for casting a love spell or creating a love philter would be more common, but my books were bereft of such things, except for a single short treatise on the subject. The writer's conclusion that love was a force that could not be successfully reproduced by magical methods struck me as being inanely smug."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature learns how to craft a *Philter of Love* using the rules from [The Alchemy Almanac](#). When prepared using Strahd's notes here, the philter may be brewed on any night, and is no longer limited to the "must be brewed on a new moon" requirement.

The relevant bases and reagents can easily be purchased from Jeny Greenteeth—should you use her shop in your campaign—found around Barovia, and even more easily discovered lining the shelves and pockets of spellcasters found across the country.

## CHAPTER 5: THE UNHOLY COMMUNION

*"I began dealing with something far beyond my experience in magic and needed no wise teacher to tell me it was deadly..."*

If meeting Tatyana was the beginning of Strahd's eternal end, his pledge to Vampyr was the final nail in his coffin. His voracious hunger for magic—the same hunger he believed would grant him Tatyana's love and remove his brother from his path—drove him mad and opened his soul to the terrible powers housed in the heart of the Balinok Mountains.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

It is in this chapter that Strahd succumbs to the draw of undeath, and the party is given the chance to help or hinder his quest through the Amber Temple to Vampyr's resting place. The party returns to Strahd's study on the night he discovered the dark magic that dwells in the ancient Amber Temple. They then accompany Strahd and Aleksandra on their warpath through the temple. Here their visage is that of Alek Gwilym's most loyal guards.

## STRAHD'S STUDY

The Study (area K37) has changed in the years between this chapter and the day that Strahd learned of his mother's death. When the party arrives, read:

*You settle into a familiar room: Strahd's study. Unlike your previous visit, however, the hearth lies cold. The room is near pitch dark and lit by a few scattered candles. Their flickering light casts long shadows on shelves fit to bursting with tomes. Books new and old, that even at a glance, you presume contain hundreds of spells and incantations.*

*The portrait above the mantle no longer resembles the members of the von Zarovich family. Instead, it is a lifelike oil rendering of Tatyana. In the far corner of the room, looking over the space is Strahd, enveloped by his black cloak, muttering under his breath and weaving arcane gestures in the air. When his hand lowers wood shifts and creaks in the otherwise empty room.*

The party appears as Strahd is attempting to cast *Animate Objects*, practicing the proper verbal and somatic components on the two leather armchairs.

## WHISPERS IN THE DARK

During this time, Strahd believes the characters to be voices of spirits that have been plaguing him in recent days. The voices are getting louder, more aggressive, and more inquisitive.

Strahd is willing to disclose the following as he is losing his mind:

- He is bothered that Sergei and Tatyana will not leave each other's side.
- He no longer trusts any member of his court—except Rahadin and Alek—because he feels everyone would support Sergei taking over his rule.
- He grows even more suspicious that other nobles are seeking to eliminate him.
- He feels himself growing older. Slower.
- He grows desperate in his pursuit of Tatyana.
- He has grown from a warlord and tactician to a capable spellcaster. (He is currently a 9th-level spellcaster.)

After several minutes of conversation, there is a knock. Strahd's focus on his spell is shattered, and before he offers permission to enter, the door swings open.

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT

The door opens to reveal Sergei and Tatyana, hand in hand, grinning from ear to ear. They have come to announce their betrothal, and they wish to host the ceremony in Castle Ravenloft's chapel in one moon's time.

The party may whisper in Strahd's ear to temper or stoke his anger, and he will glance around as if seeking their input on allowing the couple to marry. Tatyana's pleas overtake all else, however, and eventually, the couple takes their leave. Strahd turns to the character that spoke last and speaks.

**"She calls me 'elder.' 'Old one.' Yet she has fallen for that gullible, faithless boy."**

He returns to his desk and begins fervently leafing through a decrepit-looking spellbook. Read:

*You hear a voice rasp from somewhere unseen. Dozens of voices echo in reply. Tatyana, Rahadin, Alek, Sergei, you even recognize the voices of your fellow party members: 'You cannot find what you seek in a book.' Strahd whips around in terror, and the book folds itself to a close, page by page. The minimal comfort of the library vanishes, and the candles are snuffed by an arctic breeze. A howling winter wind whispers 'Come to me.'*

## THE AMBER TEMPLE (EXTERIOR)

The exterior of the temple is a magnificent facade, even in the unbearable cold. The temple currently houses an enclave of powerful mages and the monks of the Order of the Guardians Monastery. They curate its expansive library and protect the long-sealed tombs of unfathomable old gods, ensuring they remain locked away here.

Strahd has mounted an expedition here alongside his most trusted commander (Rahadin remained back to monitor the castle). He fully intends to kill anyone that stands between himself and the voice beckoning him here. The party can work to help or hinder Strahd as he unearths Vampyr.

*The growing number of voices pierce your mind and the wind that claimed the candles whips against your cloak. Your vision returns, and you stand in a blizzard on a mountainside before six, carved amber statues, towering over forty feet tall.*

*Each figure stands deep in prayer with hoods draped over their faces, looming over an enormous stone door of a temple. Two other figures—standing your height—lie ahead of you: Strahd von Zarovich and Aleksandra Gwilym, clad in snow-coated armor and trekking over the white field toward the temple.*

Fueled by inhuman rage, Strahd tears through this sacred place, and the party must succeed on a [Skill Challenge](#) in order to keep pace. Should they succeed on **three skill checks before failing three**, they keep pace with Strahd. Should they fail, they automatically earn one failure for the following skill challenge in the Amber Vault.

*You approach the entrance hewn into the face of the mountain. Torchlight is losing a fight against the darkening sky, and in the fading firelight, you see the silhouette of Strahd glide effortlessly across the fallen snow, and paint the powder red with the blood of a person that—a moment ago—stood guard at the temple's door.*

## THE AMBER TEMPLE (INTERIOR)

You may use the map from the current [Amber Temple](#) to guide the party while they attempt to keep up with Strahd as he charges into the temple's depths. The massacre proceeds through the following rooms as Strahd follows Vampyr's whispers through the temple to the Amber Vault (area X42).

## TEMPLE RUN

### Overlook (area X4)

*A black marble balcony overlooks a sprawling temple chamber carved entirely of smooth amber. A forty-foot-tall-robed statue stands watchfully over the room. Two steep staircases descend from the balcony to the temple center below. Strahd darts westward toward a set of double doors on this floor and bursts into the adjacent room.*



## Reading Annex (area X15)

The doors crash open to reveal a reading room, set with low shelves and uncomfortable wooden chairs. A man and a woman in non-descript monk robes turn in terror. Strahd reaches for the hilt of his sword.

The party may choose to intervene and save the monks from Strahd. Some potential checks include **Charisma (Intimidation)** or **Charisma (Persuasion)** to convince them to bow down to Strahd or using a spell to get them to safety. If they fail, Strahd kills them both and continues moving.

## Hallway (area X17)

With a snarl, Strahd turns to his right toward another set of doors and thrusts them open. A long hallway lined with doors and lit by sconces stretches northward. 'Alek, ahead.' Strahd commands as Alek runs into the hall, blade drawn.

When the party enters the hall, some of the guardians of the temple creak open the doors to the Potion Storage (area X19) and the Architect's Room (area X20) and begin to lob Fire Bolts at the party. Strahd retaliates, but the party may attempt checks like **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** to close the doors or **Intelligence (Arcana)** to identify gaps in the volley when they can safely pass. If they fail, everyone takes 2d10 fire damage.

## Banquet Room (area X22)

Slamming the door at the end of the hall behind you, you arrive in a dining hall set with a dozen simple wooden place settings. The gem-carved doors rattle behind you as you hear a monk shout 'We shall be rid of you and your companions yet, Devil!'

The guardians receive some backup and attempt to break down the doors. A character may attempt checks like a **Strength (Athletics)** to hold the doors or an **Intelligence (Investigation)** check to find something to block it with. If they fail, the monks break in. Everyone takes another 2d10 fire damage from their attack.

## Northwest Balcony (area X23)

A corner set balcony looks over the grand hall of the temple. Ten feet from the banister, the head of the robed statue in the central chamber looms in silence. A group of monks, forty feet below on the ground level, flee into a hall on the east side of the building. The eldest at the back of the group looks up toward you – his face painted with fear and regret.

There is not a check in this location, and Strahd will quickly burst forward toward the next room. Give the party a moment to reflect on the situation. If they rest too long, let them know that Strahd is still moving quickly.

## Shrine (area X24)

The amber door slides aside to reveal a rectangular room stretching westward. Ornate candelabras line alcoves along the walls. Set into the end of the hallway is a diminutive version of the robed statue that looks over the main chamber.

The statue draws the attention of everyone that enters the chamber. Any living creature that enters this room must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** or be drawn to the statue as though affected by the sympathy effect of an antipathy/sympathy spell. In order to succeed on the skill check in this room, more than half of the party must succeed on the saving throw against the spell.

## Secret Alcove (area X26)

Strahd surveys the room, and for the first time, it appears you have come to a dead end. The hissing voice that danced on the wind when you arrived on the mountainside rasps: 'Knock.' Strahd closes his eyes, and with an intense, focused breath, traces the tip of his sword along a hidden, seamless door frame in the glimmering wall.

Strahd enters the alcove and presses onward through the following secret door as well. The skull trap that is present in the modern-day Amber Temple is not here, and the group can easily follow behind.

## Wizard's Chamber (area X27)

The wall gives way to a fully furnished bed-chamber set with all manner of ancient books, spell components, and finely-crafted side tables and dressers. Standing in the center of the room is an elderly man with gaunt features and a red robe that sweeps the amber floor. 'It appears my fears were correct. Welcome, my lord.' It appears Strahd is distracted by the figure momentarily. What do you do?

The robed man is Exethanter before he became a lich. At this point in his life, he has met Strahd several times before but has never explicitly told him of the temple or its location. He knew the time would eventually come that Strahd would find this place.

They may exchange some formal conversation, and Exethanter will express his disappointment in Strahd, but he refuses to do battle with the Dark Lord as he knows that he will lose.

A character may attempt checks such as a **Wisdom (Perception)** check to locate the room to the next chamber and get ahead of Strahd and Alek, a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check to sneak through the next door, or a **Wisdom (Insight)** check to gain a clearer understanding of what Strahd is doing here from Exethanter's speech.

## Library (area X30)

The Dark Lord presses through another hidden door toward a domed library carved of immaculate black and white marble. Its shelves house hundreds of books. A gold marble staircase curves around the north wall and spirals down into a black pit of shadow. Without hesitation, Strahd leaps over the railing and falls into the depths below.

The party, at this point, will have succeeded or failed on its challenge. Failing earns them an automatic failure on the upcoming challenge. They can choose to chase Strahd immediately or search the library for answers. If they succeed on a DC15 Intelligence (Investigation) they can uncover some hidden knowledge and gain advantage on their first check to stop or aid in the ritual in the following section.

## THE AMBER VAULT (AREA X42)

When Strahd has completed his devastation of the temple, the characters find themselves alongside him and Alek in the vault. It is here that Strahd bonds his soul to Vampyr, and the party has the opportunity to help or hinder the process. When they arrive, read:

*You follow Strahd, covered in blood, into a deep, underground sepulchre. 'I am here! What do you require of me? You are Death, no? Have you come for me? If so, then take me and be damned.'*

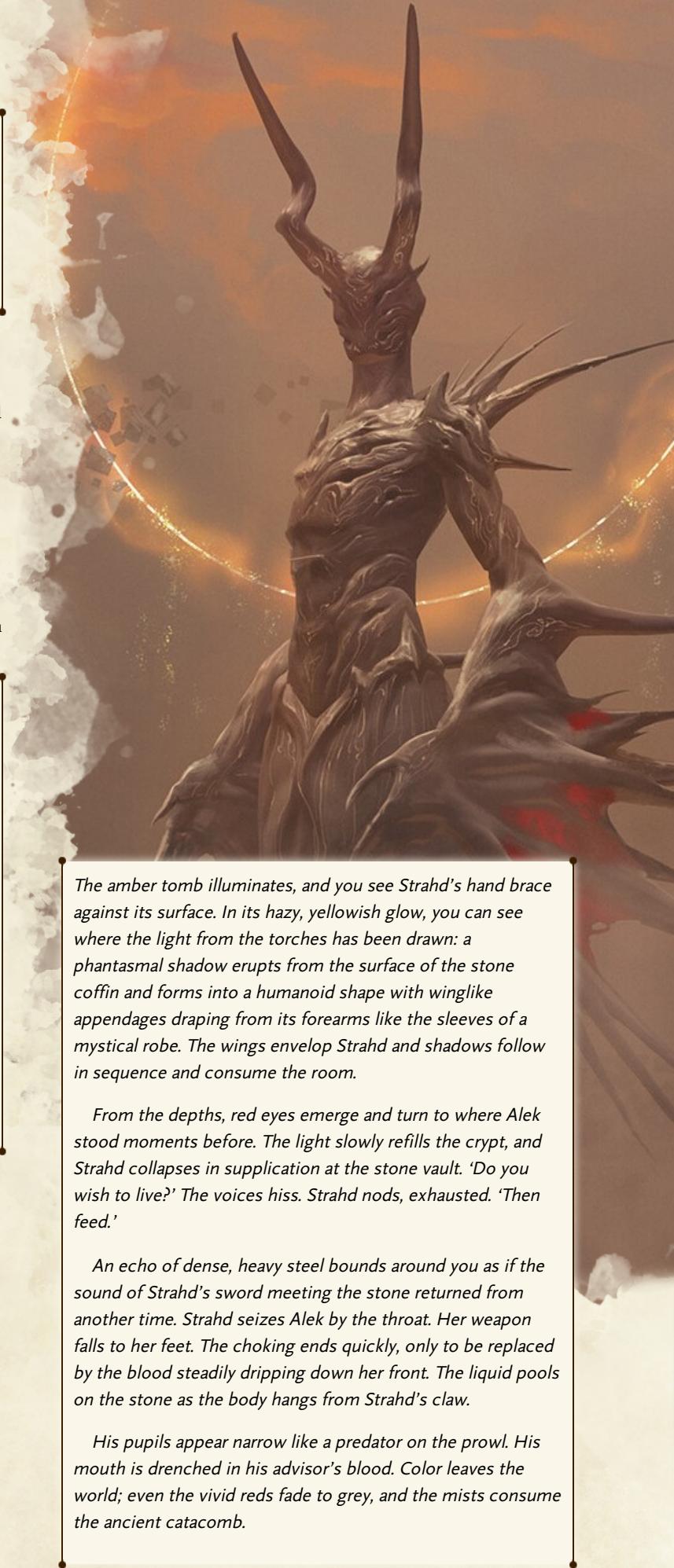
*A legion of voices rattle the bedrock: 'I have come on your behalf. You have fed me well, and you are due your reward. Lay your hand on my tomb. You hunger for your lost youth, Strahd von Zarovich. I shall remove the rival from your path, and you shall age not one day more...'*

*Aleksandra, hearing these voices for the first time, grips firmly to her weapon. Strahd steps toward an imposing amber sarcophagus. He drops his sword to the ground, but it makes no sound. All falls silent, and with each of Strahd's footfalls, the torches shift from orange to green to blue to black before the light is swallowed.*

When Strahd approaches the amber sarcophagus, let the players know that they now have a choice to aid him in the ritual or work to prevent it. Regardless of their decision, they must **succeed on five skill checks before failing three skill checks**. Some potential checks include:

- **Intelligence (Arcana)** to study and understand his incantations.
- **Wisdom (Religion)** to help maintain the seal of the sarcophagus.
- **Charisma (Persuasion)** to make Alek understand that what Strahd is doing is dangerous and wrong.
- **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** to steal Strahd's spell components.
- **Wisdom (Medicine)** to help him remain conscious.

If the party succeeds in aiding Strahd in the ritual:



*The amber tomb illuminates, and you see Strahd's hand brace against its surface. In its hazy, yellowish glow, you can see where the light from the torches has been drawn: a phantasmal shadow erupts from the surface of the stone coffin and forms into a humanoid shape with winglike appendages draping from its forearms like the sleeves of a mystical robe. The wings envelop Strahd and shadows follow in sequence and consume the room.*

*From the depths, red eyes emerge and turn to where Alek stood moments before. The light slowly refills the crypt, and Strahd collapses in supplication at the stone vault. 'Do you wish to live?' The voices hiss. Strahd nods, exhausted. 'Then feed.'*

*An echo of dense, heavy steel bounds around you as if the sound of Strahd's sword meeting the stone returned from another time. Strahd seizes Alek by the throat. Her weapon falls to her feet. The choking ends quickly, only to be replaced by the blood steadily dripping down her front. The liquid pools on the stone as the body hangs from Strahd's claw.*

*His pupils appear narrow like a predator on the prowl. His mouth is drenched in his advisor's blood. Color leaves the world; even the vivid reds fade to grey, and the mists consume the ancient catacomb.*

If the party succeeds in preventing Strahd's ritual, he faints, collapsing to the stone, and the sarcophagus glows. Read:

*A terrible phantasm of shadow erupts from the surface of the stone coffin and forms into a humanoid shape with winglike appendages draping from its forearms like the sleeves of a mystical robe. The form rises the height of the chamber, towering over you. Ruby eyes shine like beacons on Strahd's unconscious form. 'You are worth more to me in death than you ever could be in life.'*

*The eyes seem to lock with each of yours simultaneously. 'You, however, will not live to see the light of another sunrise.' The shadow swallows the room, and Alek cries in the dark. Steel clangs reverberate off of the stone walls. Torches spark on around the room, and Strahd kneels over the body of his advisor, indulging in geysers of her blood. His pupils are sharpened to cat-like slits.*

If the party is present when Vampyr assaults Alek, they all take 4d10 necrotic damage as his shroud consumes them.

### CHAPTER CLOSE

*"There it was. The parley, the bargaining, the trade. What did they want of me? What could they possibly want from me..."*

### TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Commune* as a ritual spell once per dusk though their message is relayed directly to Vampyr.

## CHAPTER 6: WEDDING BELLS

*"I wish you had someone like Tatyana," he enthused at me. 'Oh, but I will...' I thought."*

The dawn of Strahd's final day. His pact was initiated in the vaults of the Amber Temple, but his eternal soul was sealed by drinking his brother's blood.

On the day of Sergei and Tatyana's wedding, Strahd's twisted jealousy boiled over into an unrelenting rage. As Sergei bled and Tatyana fell to her death, another key member of Strahd's court seized the opportunity to overthrow the Lord of Barovia.

Leo Dilisnya's forces plotted for months to turn the wedding day red, and Strahd's transformation only fueled their vindication.

### THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party is present for the wedding ceremony as guests of Tatyana's. The ceremony itself includes the deaths of Sergei and Tatyana as well as Strahd's battle against the traitorous forces led by Leo Dilisnya. After Tatyana's death, the party fades into the mist and watches as Strahd reflects on Leo's betrayal.

### EASE OF ACCESS

This chapter adds a door on the northeastern corner of the Chapel (area K15) connecting it directly to the Chapel Courtyard (area K5). If you do make this adjustment consider whether this door is still an entrance that is available to your players in the present day.

### THE CHAPEL COURTYARD

Royalty and common folk from across Barovia and beyond join together in the spring sun for some light conversation in area K5. When the party arrives at the party, read:

*A joyous melody sings from the pipes of Castle Ravenloft's grand organ and wakes you from a deep, restful slumber. The jubilance of a verdant spring afternoon energizes your skin. Dozens of guests are gathered with wine in hand conversing with people of a wide range of races and decorated in spectacular tunics and dresses of fine silks.*

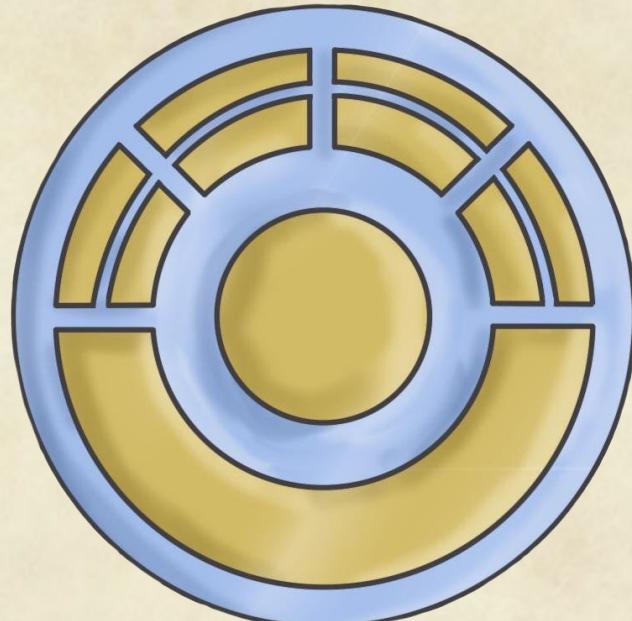
*With the bong of a bell, they all draw their attention toward a beautiful stained glass window depicting a white knight and red-haired bride who seem almost alive in the sunshine. The gathered guests begin to walk toward a single doorway leading into the castle.*

The party has the opportunity to speak with an assortment of Barovian (and non-Barovian) citizens about the wedding today. Rumor has it that Strahd had this new window commissioned for his brother and Tatyana. He didn't. Strahd did allow the construction, but it was Lady Darovnya's idea.

This scene should feel spectacularly light-hearted and joyful. Everyone is full of love and anticipation.

### THE CHAPEL

The chapel is currently radiant and colorful, decorated floor to ceiling for the most elaborate wedding anyone has ever seen. If the party follows anyone inside, read:



You enter a cathedral-like chapel capped by a ninety-foot-tall domed ceiling, raised by towering archways. The white marble walls are wreathed by strings of flowers and vines, and the decadent smell of a feast wafts down the hall, blending with the fresh air and a symphony of flowers from the gardens.

Guests filter into rows of chairs set to face the ceremony along the east wall. Standing at the front of the room as you pass, next to an altar carved with bas-reliefs of angelic figures entwined with grapevines, is Sergei in a white coat, decorated with golden tassels and a priestly pendant on a cerulean ribbon hanging from his neck.

At his waist is his sword, dazzling in the chromatic fragments of sunlight gleaming through the painted glass. On his right is Lady Ilona Darovnya in blue and gold priestly robes, standing poised to officiate. To his left, Strahd stands proudly in his red armor with golden angel wings and a heavy, black cape. He watches as you enter.

As the party explores the room or tries to find seats, a servant approaches on behalf of Tatyana requesting that they come to see her before the ceremony begins. They are escorted to the Hall of Faith (area K14) to speak with her.

### THE BLUSHING BRIDE

If Irene is set to marry anyone in the present, this scene offers a chance to create a direct parallel. Regardless of which body she is in, her soul may process her emotions about this day the same.

Tatyana will primarily keep the conversation centered on these topics:

- I'm nervous. I love Sergei, but I don't feel I have anything to offer him.
- I've never seen the castle this busy, and it is quite intimidating.
- I've been living in the castle, but still feel entirely out of place here.
- "Elder" (Strahd) has seemed distant lately. Cold even. More so than usual. I'm worried that he does not approve of the union.

When the party has concluded their conversation with Tatyana or settled her nerves, she sends them off to their seats in the chapel and asks that one of them walk her down the aisle, if they would be so kind.

### THE ATTACK

If the party returns to the chapel, they find enough open chairs for all of them in the front row. The organ music from further in the castle falls mute, and the large doors to the chapel are opened wide. A character that makes a successful DC18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the attendants opening the doors and standing at the garden exit are wearing armor beneath their robes.

If a character takes notice, any further inspection reveals they are not wearing any von Zarovich sigils. These are six [Dilisnya family guards](#), preparing to lock the doors as the ceremony begins.

When Tatyana enters (with or without her escort), the chapel doors are closed and locked behind her. She will join Sergei, Ilona, and Strahd next to the altar at the front of the room. When Lady Ilona begins the ceremony, however, at the back of the room a crossbow is nocked.

A successful Wisdom (Perception) check contested by the assailant's Dexterity (Stealth) check (+4) alerts the character to someone drawing their weapon and the groan of someone who has been quietly stabbed.

The crowd is hushed, but the stillness of the moment is broken by the snap of a string and the whistle of a crossbow bolt that embeds itself beneath Strahd's left pauldron.

Another fires off from the back of the room toward Tatyana but is stopped by Sergei, lunging forward to knock her from harm's way. The bolt instead embeds itself into his shoulder and a flower of blood stains his white shirt.

Strahd's pupils thin when the scent of the wound finds him, and in his frenzy, he appears more beast than man. Amidst the chaos, you hear the dozens of voices from the Amber Temple echo: 'Remove your obstacle.' There is no hesitation. A pool of scarlet forms on the breast of Sergei's pristine coat.

He tries to fight his older brother off, but Strahd's fangs find his throat. And Sergei's sword, drawn to protect his love, drops to the floor. Its blade falls loose from the hilt into the rapidly spreading pool of blood, though both pieces continue to dazzle in brilliant color from beneath the gore.

Many of the guests, including Tatyana, fight at the doors in a scramble to leave. More of the Dilisnya forces are littered throughout the crowd and begin to kill those in attendance once by one. Eventually, a few attendees and Tatyana flee to the garden. Strahd is locked feeding on Sergei.

### THE ESCAPE

If the party follows Tatyana into the courtyard, read:

The castle halls and grounds are bathed in blood and drowned in desperate screams. The courtyard is greying. The sun is gone. The spring afternoon is now choked by a deep mist that claws its way over the castle walls.

Tatyana is in a terrible state. If approached, she has nothing but questions:

- Who betrayed us?
- I saw Strahd change, I think. Did the traitors do something to him?
- Was Sergei hit? I couldn't see. Is he alright?
- Did I see Strahd lunge at him?

Several members of the Dilisnya forces eventually arrive in the courtyard in pursuit of Tatyana.

### EVENING THE ODDS

An assortment of NPC soldiers can be used in this encounter including a few [Sergeants](#), [Knights](#), [Gladiators](#), or some even [War Chiefs](#) depending on how challenging of a fight you're looking for.

On initiative count 20, in the third round of combat, Strahd arrives, covered in blood. Three crossbow bolts protrude from his armor, and his sword is drawn. Rahadin, Petyr Wachter, his young daughter Lovina Wachter (Fiona Wachter's ancestor), and several nobles follow him out.

He points them northward toward the carriage house. Rahadin leads them on that way. Strahd will slay any remaining Dilisnya guards before rushing toward Tatyana.

*Strahd limps toward Tatyana. 'Betrayal...Tatyana, the Dilisnya's have betrayed us.'*

*'Elder, you're frightening me, what has happened to you? Where is Sergei?'*

*Strahd stops in his tracks as the mists seem to advance toward him. 'He is gone! I am here for you now. I will protect you.'*

*His new monstrous features are only amplified by his stained, worn armor, and Tatyana retreats. They continue in a dance. He limps forward and she steps back. Strahd shifts. Dragging himself faster toward her, and the mists grow denser. It is not until you and Strahd hear the creak of iron that you realize you have reached the castle's overlook.*

*'Tatyana!' In her daze, she reaches the railing and tumbles. The mist parts beneath her. You rush to the ledge to watch her in her white dress soar through the air like a spirit toward jagged rocks below, their spires peering over the low-hanging clouds. But she is not dashed across them. There is no impact. There is no blood. Thousands of feet below, the white dress simply fades into the mist.*

Strahd rests broken, grieving. Tears of blood stream down his face, and he will speak to the characters as if they are his imaginary childhood friends.

He will truthfully answer any questions about his life up to this point. Once the characters have spoken with him for some time, his final moments of humanity fade with the arrival of Leo Dilisnya. Read:

*A bolt cuts through the mist and plunges into Strahd's back. Then another. And another. But he does not fall. Instead, his already pale skin fades to a pallid, deathless white. His eyes flood scarlet and fangs extend from his gums. At every angle, bolts protrude from his body. Then, they begin to fall from his wounds like raindrops. Though his tunic is torn, there is no blood. Leo Dilisnya steps through the encroaching mists, helming a militia of over two dozen soldiers.*

### CHAPTER CLOSE

*"The blackness returned, covering me, covering the world. Never to lift. It weighed upon me, heavier than the mountain, smothering and crushing me into something less than dust, but I was looking at dead men.*

*Before another hour passed, I'd send them wailing on their way to rotting hell. All of them. All except the traitor behind them."*

### TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Ceremony* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 7: THE CORRUPTION OF YESTER HILL

*"In my youthful folly, I believed I was the land. But time revealed powers beyond the mortal mind still maintained their hold here."*

Strahd's possession of the land was finalized when he desecrated the Fanes of Barovia. His first step toward eliminating them began with sacrificing undead hordes to the once-sacred Gulthias Tree.

The Huntress of the Mountain Fane was once revered here. The most sacred and blessed members of the Forest Folk had their bodies committed to the holy tree, but by perverting death and interring the walking dead to a place dedicated to eternal rest, Strahd corrupted the earth itself.

### THE DESECRATION OF THE FANES

For more information on the desecration (and possible reconsecration) of the Fanes, please check out DragnaCarta's [Curse of Strahd: Reloaded](#) and MandyMod's [Fleshing Out Series](#) for their incredible histories for the locations. This chapter—as well as the following chapter—draw heavily from their lore.

Servants of the Morninglord, including Gabriel Andral and Sorina Markovia, fought tirelessly to stop Strahd, but his cursed immortality meant that his success was inevitable. The fall of the Mountain Fane at Yeser Hill marked both the beginning of the end for the Forest Folk and a new beginning for Strahd von Zarovich.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party stands alongside Strahd as the Faithless-Forest Folk deserters that have bowed to their new lord. They are wearing robes decorated with leaves and branches and stand against soldiers of the Morninglord who resist Strahd's reign. The Forest Folk must ensure that the resurrected bodies of their fallen druidic rivals are consumed by their sacred tree. This act will finalize Strahd's corrupting ritual.

Andral and Markovia fought back against Strahd's forces, but by slaying the druids, they played right into his hands. They provided the victims for his unholy rite. If the Gulthias Tree is desecrated here, Strahd also takes its blood for the creation of the Heart of Sorrow.

## THE GROVE OF THE GULTHIAS TREE

The grove around the once beautiful tree (area Y4) is beginning to rot and fester due to Strahd's influence. When they arrive on the hill, read:

*Rays of divine light fight to pierce the heavy cloud of Barovian mist above; a sun engraved on an ornate, gilded pauldrone radiates, shining brighter than the muted sunlight masked by clouds. Gabriel Andral shakily props himself up on his warhammer. Blood dripping from a gash on his forehead is mirrored by the gore splattered on his weapon.*

*Next to him is a young woman shouldering a mountain of gilded plate armor; gripped tightly in her gauntlets is a brutal morningstar in the shape of the Morninglord's sun.*

*You stand just on the edge of a wilting grove, high on a hill, facing a colossal, blossoming tree.*



## THE STUDENT, THE MASTER, AND THE DARK LORD

For many years, Gabriel Andral supported Strahd and his rule, accepting that Strahd was simply not a man of faith. Sorina Markovia, however, regularly advised her mentor that Strahd was a violent warlord and that the church must be careful of a powerful man with no regard for the religion of the people.

Andral remained Strahd's friend and counsel even after the pact with Vampyr was struck. In some ways, he approved of the removal of the paganistic druids. He soon learned that Strahd would not stop with their expulsion, and it was only a matter of time before the Morninglord was stripped from Barovia as well. (These histories have been adapted from this amazing guide by [u/Tygrus: St. Andral and St. Markovia - Reimagined](#).)

*'Strahd, you're better than this. There's no need for this to go on.'*

*You see Lord von Zarovich clutching a still-beating heart in his claw. Five figures, their bodies wrapped in fibrous robes woven of natural materials and their faces obscured by heavy hoods, lie scattered about his feet. He crushes the heart and dark tendrils of energy writhe from it, wrapping around the bodies and rooting them to the soil. They rise to their feet, stoic, still. A series of cracks, snaps, and rumbles follows. Behind you, a small army of skeletal warriors clad in decrepit, tattered leather pry themselves from long-sealed cairns atop the burial mound.*

Gabriel Andral, a [War Priest](#) with a warhammer, and Sorina Markovia, a [War Priest](#) with a morningstar, stand between the characters, [Strahd](#) (with *Wall of Fire* and *Danse Macabre* prepared), and his allies ([5 Simplified Strahd Zombies](#) ([courtesy of u/Gerglie](#)) and 2d12 [Skeletons](#)), and the Gulthias Tree.

Strahd casts [Danse Macabre](#) using a 5th-level spell slot to revive the druids. He orders the skeletons and the party to protect the zombies as they march toward the tree, who take the Dash action on each of their turns to reach it as quickly as possible. They then fall into a mouth-shaped hole in the trunk, no action required. Strahd is successful in desecrating the Fane if **at least three of the five zombies** sacrifice themselves to the tree.

## DEATH FOR THE UNDEAD

If the zombies begin the encounter at staggered distances, the last should be able to reach the tree by the end of the fifth round of combat, at which point the encounter is over.

The party may also choose to ignore Strahd's order and instead defend the tree. If they do this, he commands the skeletons to deal with them as well.

If Andral and Markovia are left standing by the end of the encounter, or if the players side with them and successfully destroy all of the undead, Strahd uses a 4th-level spell slot to cast *Wall of Fire* and surround anyone that opposes him.

If Strahd successfully sends at least three zombies into the growing maw of the Gulthias Tree, read:

*The wood splinters again, parting to welcome what it believes to be the remains of a revered warrior, but the ghastly, shambling husk of its druidic protector commits itself to the maw. Bark peels from the trunk of the tree like decaying flesh falling from a rotting corpse.*

*Globs of amber tree sap morph into thick droplets of blood, and the dew-like twinkle on the green leaves evaporates as boughs crash down by the dozens. The holy site lies in ruin. Strahd vanishes in a swirl of his cloak and reappears next to the tree with a vial. He drags the glass along the trunk and fills it with bloody sap before fading into the mists that surround the hill.*

If Andral and Markovia, with or without the help of the party, prevent Strahd's ritual, read:

*The cold isolation of the mist-choked hilltop becomes scorching hot as arcane flames rise in the grotto. 'Your betrayal is noted, Gabriel. You've allowed Sorina to whisper in your ear for too long. You of all people should know that this was inevitable. All those years ago, you requested I remove the Ancient Ones from this place, did you not?*

*It is of no consequence to me. Your Morninglord cannot reach you, cannot save you, cannot support you. He is gone, and this site—as well as the others—will fall in time.' In a whirl of black cloth, Strahd fades from view and into the clouds encircling Yester Hill.*

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"I set to raze and salt the earth to purify it. Neither the ancient spirits of the druids nor the gods of the old world would rule above me. I am the ancient. I am the land"*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Hallow* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

# CHAPTER 8: THE HEART OF THE OLD GODS

*"I wrenched superstition and tradition from the claws of the few who clung to their old ways. The souls trapped here were to succumb or suffer."*

In the months and years that followed the desecration of the Mountain Fane at Yester Hill, Strahd learned more about the sacred sites that remained within the ethereal Barovian borders.

The two remaining sites dedicated to the Forest Fane in the Svalich Wood—near where Old Bonegrinder now stands—and the Swamp Fane at the edge of the river village of Berez, required careful observation and research in order to permanently render them impotent.

With the aid of his nursemaid, Lysaga, and several hags, including a young Morgantha, Strahd was able to complete his domination of Barovia.

By severing and claiming the Rozana's connection to the land itself, he gained total control of Barovia; by combining their now perverted sacred essences, he was also able to grant unholy life to a living heart that beats from within the walls of Castle Ravenloft, a heart that protects him from any possible danger.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

At Berez, the party may observe the desecration ritual, inspect the stones, and listen in on Lysaga and Strahd's conversation. Strahd and Baba view the party as Faithless Forest Folk druids who are aiding in the maintenance of the desecration site. Each character appears wearing dark, moss-covered robes decorated with plant matter.

At Old Bonegrinder, they play a more active role as hags working with Strahd to prepare raven pies—pies made of both Barovian ravens and Wereravens—that are to be fed to nearby residents.

## THE STANDING STONES OF BEREZ

The party arrives in the midst of the Fane's desecration. When the book's mists fade, read:

*Humidity swells, and damp air sticks to your skin. The stench of putrid water swirling with rotting plants floods your nostrils, and your feet sink into soft peat. A dozen moss-covered menhirs form a near-perfect circle in the spongy earth. These weathered stones range in height from fifteen to eighteen feet, and four to the north, south, east, and west rise above twenty. Each of the cardinal stones has a figure bound to it with rope.*

*A wild-looking woman with sticks and mud plastered to her greying hair stands at the northernmost stone, and in the center of the circle is Strahd von Zarovich, levitating inches above the muddy soil.*

## BABA LYSAGA

Baba Lysaga attains much of her immense power by aiding Strahd in his effort to corrupt the land. As the ritual is not yet complete, Lysaga has the stats of a *Barovian Witch*.

Baba is currently lashing at a priest of the Rozana that has been bound and chained to the northern stone. She is demanding that they renounce their faith.

She has already cut the hearts out of the priests that are bound to the stones at the south and east, but this one is holding out and refuses to renounce the Ladies.



If approached, Lysaga asks the character for some assistance with torturing the priest. She will otherwise not reveal any substantial information and gets aggravated if a character asks too many questions because she supposes that they should already know everything about what is going on here. She does, however, revel in her work and will be grateful and kind to anyone that helps her to torture the priests.

## THE STONES

Any character investigating the eight, non-cardinal standing stones can recognize depictions of a bear, elk, hawk, goat, owl, panther, raven, and wolf carved into their surfaces.

At the foot of each stone is also a ruined carcass of the creature etched on the stone.

A successful DC13 Wisdom (Medicine) or Wisdom (Survival) check reveals that these animals were butchered within the last day and with precision and intent.

A successful DC15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals that nature deities often revere and protect creatures of the world and that these bodies have been strewn to intentionally and ritually disrespect whatever deity is (or was) worshipped here. Just as rituals can be performed to honor the gods, some may be performed to curse them.

The taller stones to the north, south, east, and west have priests of the Rozana bound to them. Any character that approaches the southern or eastern stones sees the mutilated corpse of a priest, their body scarred and covered in cuts and lashes, and their hearts ripped from their chests. A successful DC16 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that they were starved and the wounds are both pre- and post-mortem.

The priest bound to the western stone is barely alive but clinging to consciousness. Their eyes have been gouged out. Without their sight, they assume that anyone approaching is Lysaga. If the characters speak to them and make it clear that they are not hostile, the priest willingly reveals the information below in Sylvan. The party hears Sylvan but can understand them even if they don't speak it.

- They were kidnapped from their tribe.
- They've been here for a month. The witch has been feeding them just enough of something to keep them alive.
- Every day they are lashed, and during their torture, the witch demands they renounce the Rozana as false gods and recognize Strahd as their only master.

After the characters have investigated the area, read:

*A shriek ripples across the swamp, silencing the chirping and buzzing in the air. The old woman steps away from the colossal northern stone, with her bony fingers caged around a still-beating heart. She motions to Strahd with her open hand, and he drifts toward her. The lord removes a glass vial from his coat and slides it delicately through a mound of soil at the stone's base.*

*The heart gushes and squirms as if trying to escape, and the woman squeezes what blood remains into the vial to mingle with the bog soil. Strahd seals the glass with a cork, kisses the woman tenderly on the forehead, and vanishes in a quickly dissipating cloud, leaving her with a wide, motherly grin cracking her aging face.*

## THE MONOLITHS OF THE FOREST

The stones of the Seeker sit just outside of the walls of a hags' hut on the top of a gloomy hill. The party arrives inside of this makeshift, wood-and-mud hut.

*The harsh smell of swampy decay withers, but the warmth remains. The thick, heavy air is replaced with a dry heat, and the mists coalesce into ramshackle walls made of twigs and logs, dense wooden furniture, and all of the trimmings of a kitchen. Scents of seasoned meat pies linger in the air.*

*At the center of this small hutch is an iron kiln. Horrid-looking hags with blue-green skin, wiry hair, and wretched fingers that creep like spiders' legs huddle around it. You now see your own skin is a blueish-green hue, and your hands are tipped with claw-like fingernails.*

*Strahd stands with you, no more than a few feet away in the tightly crowded shack, pressed against a heavy table set with a butcher's knife and a wide array of diced vegetables and spice jars. A raven is restrained in his hand, fluttering feverishly to fly away, but he snaps its neck and passes it to a young girl. 'Another for the cutting board, Morgantha. Feather it as you would like.' With that, she places it on the chopping block and lops the bird's off before sloppily plucking its feathers.*

While the young Morgantha plucks the raven, Strahd exits the hut and returns with a new raven every thirty seconds or so. The party is free to explore the rather sparse hut (area O5, see Appendix D) while the young Morgantha feathers and chops.

Once the party has taken some time to look around, Strahd speaks up, wondering why they are taking so long to begin cooking. Morgantha will take a break from chopping to help them prepare a recipe.

### MAKE SURE THEIR GOOSE IS COOKED

I recommend using [these rules from Cecilia D'Anastasio](#) to run a skill challenge wherein the party chooses which dish they wish to prepare based on their inspection of the room and their own interests—maybe they'll discover an amazing recipe for raven pudding or the first iced-raven dish instead of baking pies!

While the party works to prepare (**DC16**), cook (**DC18**), and plate (**DC12**) their new raven-based dish, Strahd continues to snap neck after neck from the pile of raven carcasses. When the dish is complete, read:

*'Someone will surely have to taste this...blasphemous meal.' Strahd claps his hands and a man with slicked black hair, harsh eyes, and a dreadful if regal air steps across the threshold of the hut—a man identical to Strahd in every way. The seated Strahd invites his double inside, and the clone marches up to the freshly plated dish.*

If the party succeeds in preparing and plating the dish:

*The lookalike stands upright and nods. 'These will serve nicely.' The original Strahd nods in return and bids the taster to leave before kneeling and filling a glass vial with viscera, bird bones, and black feathers. He then blends into a cloud of vapor and phases through the silty walls of the hut.*

If the party fails to prepare the dish:

*The lookalike collapses and vomits violently on the floor. Strahd surveys the room, eyeing each of you with terrible distrust. 'Potent, but I thought that we had discussed our goal and were in agreement. Which of you was in charge here?'*

If a character steps forward, they are hit by Strahd's Unarmed Strike attack. If none volunteer, he will systematically approach them until someone admits to being the leader, at which point, he will strike that character.

*Strahd returns to his seat beside the charnel, and with a flick of his wrist, conjures a spectral hand. The hand firmly grasps a raven's neck and begins to squeeze. The pressure wrings blood from the bird onto the pile of feathered corpses, and Strahd furnishes a small glass tube. He holds the container beneath the steady drip, all the while whispering an incantation.*

*With the addition of one of the black feathers to the vial, he corks it and returns to you. 'I expect a proper dish upon my next visit. Get to work.' His petrifying stare holds intently to you before he evaporates into a cloud, blending with the shadows that consume the muck-coated hut around you.*

### THE HEART OF SORROW

The party arrives near the top of the Spires of Ravenloft, on the landing immediately next to the Heart of Sorrow (area K20) and the Bridge (area K58). Read:

A wailing wind brushes away the mists around you, revealing the cracking, ancient stone of Castle Ravenloft's walls. The exterior is illuminated by a muted vermillion glow. A low thrumming rises and falls, and the light pulsates in unison.

The source of the light appears to be a ten-foot-tall, ruby-red gemstone in the shape of a human heart, wrapped firmly in golden bands, and floating over the depthless, hollow center of the tower spire. The doorway into the tower and the source of the glow are suddenly eclipsed by a cloaked figure—Strahd has climbed the stairs of the tower's interior and now stands between you and the crystal.

With a nonchalant wave, his black leather boots rise from the staircase landing, and he glides through the air toward the heart. He touches his hand to it and retrieves three glass vials filled to the brim with murky admixtures. He pours the first over the top of the gemstone. 'I am the Ancient. I am the Land.' The second, repeating the chant. And as he repeats the motion a third time, with the final vial, the thrum turns to a pounding.

The ruby flashes in sync with the sound again, and the crystalline structure fractures. Shards of the heart crumble and fall into the depths below, and layered beneath the gemstone are bits of flesh. Thump thump. Thump thump. The rest of the shell shatters and a ten-foot-tall human heart now hangs, aglow in the night.

## CHAPTER CLOSE

**"This was not mere iconoclasm. My faith was in myself. I had none to spare for the gods"**

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Magic Jar* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 9: THE MARCH OF THE DAWN

**"In life, the Morninglord's light never reached me. In death, its presence was as an eternal plague."**

Nearly two decades of terror passed after Strahd's bond with the land was complete. Gabriel Andral was killed protecting the people of Vallaki from an onslaught of undead, sacrificing himself to sate their hunger.

Five years after his death, Sorina Markovia amassed a small army of the faithful—including mercenaries, hunters, farmers, priests, and druids loyal to the old ways—from across Barovia. They marched on Castle Ravenloft to destroy Strahd once and for all.

While ultimately unsuccessful, the resistance mounted by the March of the Dawn was the closest that Strahd had been to true death in years, and Markovia's martyrdom secured her sainthood within the Morninglord's domain, even if her remains were never recovered.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The characters serve as Strahd's champions of Castle Ravenloft during the battle. The party dons sets of pitch-black von Zarovich plate armor. Strahd's decimation of the enemy forces begins when the drawbridge leading to the castle is dropped by a small covert force. As he descends upon the front line to show them the wrath of their new god, his generals—the party and Rahadin—may drive back the forces in the castle or join him on the field.

### PREPARE FOR BATTLE

The party stands proudly on the ramparts of Castle Ravenloft (area K46) alongside Lord Strahd and Rahadin. When the mists of the tome disperse, read:

*Looking across the grand chasm that descends thousands of feet below the drawbridge, the mists and rain in the distance part as a crowd of hundreds marches toward the edge of the ravine. Leading the charge is a blinding, radiant light burning through the watery veil like a small sun.*

*A trumpet sounds from the army, thundering through the valley, and grinding, heavy metal gears and chains groan below you, almost in response. A series of clanks and clangs screech from the gatehouses, and the heavy chains of the drawbridge fall, unrestricted. The castle's bridge crashes down, bowing and nearly snapping as it slams into position, spanning the vast canyon.*

When the drawbridge drops, Strahd, for the first time in decades, is genuinely excited. He turns to Rahadin and the party and nods. Rahadin turns southward to take his leave and attend to their guests at the front door.

*'Rahadin, hold. Generals, I trust your judgment. Would you like to join me for a welcoming party, or would you prefer to tend to our dinner guests with Rahadin?'*

Once the party reaches a decision, Strahd opens his cloak and sends his familiar, a bat (or [vampire parrot](#)) named Bartholemew, to accompany Rahadin. Their connection allows Strahd to be fully queued into and aware of the events that unfold should the party stay behind in the castle.

*In a black plume, Strahd's form dives over the battlement like a bird of prey. A rising cloud of steam precedes a deep orange glow that rises to meet your eyes.*

*Strahd reappears, mounted nobly on a flaming, black steed. Its body is dense with muscle, but its face is skeletal and vicious; its bony jaw and hollow eyes spew ash and embers into the night sky.*

## THE RAVENLOFT WELCOMING COMMITTEE

If the party chooses to follow Rahadin downstairs, read:

*The elf leads you around the edge of the castle's walls to a steep spiral staircase that snakes through the center of Ravenloft, down a narrow hall on the ground floor, and into an archer's post along the perimeter. Through slits in the stone, you have full view of the courtyard, but Rahadin presses his ear to the eastern wall.*

Rahadin guides the party from the castle walls (area K46) to the spiral Guards' Stair (area K64) and out to the South Archer's Post (area K11). He is pressed up against the secret door leading to the Dining Hall (area K10), and the pipe organ has been pushed aside so that the door can be used.

An adventuring party that has found themselves trapped in Barovia is coordinating with Markovia in the invasion against Strahd. They feared he would come for them soon, so with the aid of the church they cast *Teleport* to gain access to the castle and lower the drawbridge for the invading army.

A Barovian noble that supported their cause stole a utensil from the dining hall to give them an anchor for the *Teleport* spell, but Strahd's servants discovered that it was missing, and he was able to prepare for their arrival.

The party is made up of a Guerilla Scout or Swashbuckler, Rogue, Diviner Wizard, and a Holy Redeemer Paladin.

When the party opens the secret door to the Dining Hall, read:

*The stone passage slides open in conjunction with a grunt and the clang of steel. The luxurious dining hall of Ravenloft is devoid of its typical glamor, though it continues to serve its purpose. The castle's guests—a knight in glimmering mail and a slender figure enshrouded in an aura of silver magic—have found their way here without their host's assistance. They now stand over what remains of five vampires.*

The Wizard has cast Mage Armor on themselves and has expended 1 spell slot of every level but 8th in order to secure their access to this chamber.

On their initiative, in the second round of combat, the party's Rogue returns from lowering the bridge at the Gate Towers in the Front Courtyard (area K1) and joins the fray.

On initiative count 20, in the second round of combat, the characters hear a massive explosion muffled by the stone walls, and dirt is shaken from the ceiling. Strahd falls from the sky as Beucephalus is hit by a blast of radiant light and vanishes in a cloud of smoke.

On initiative count 20, in the third round of combat, Strahd's pained scream carries over the valley and through the walls of the castle. The pouring rain outside turns warm and red. The blood rain forces any rebels to succeed on a **DC18 Wisdom Saving Throw** or their morale leaves them. They are *frightened* and turn to flee from the fight.

On initiative count 20, in the fourth round of combat, Strahd casts Maddening Darkness on the battlefield, gatehouse towers, and the western half of the bridge. Before casting his spell, Strahd severs his connection to the Heart of Sorrow, and, in a fit of rage, includes both himself and Sorina Markovia in the spell's radius. Characters inside of the castle hear all noise outside fall silent.



## TURNING THE TIDE

At this point, if they have not already, the invasion party should be doing their best to retreat. Consider having them vocalize their surrender or execute some retreat strategy. Alternatively, you may provide Rahadin with a powerful magical object that he can use to either restrain or kill them outright.

Once the party has dispatched or otherwise ended their encounter with the invading adventurers, the mists flow around them, the castle walls melt away, and they arrive on the battlefield alongside Strahd.

## THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

If the party chooses to go with Strahd to the front lines, read:

*With an arcane gesture and a wave of a black feather, you feel lighter. Your feet rise from the floor. 'Follow me.' Strahd whips the reins of his horse and gallops, full speed through the air toward the oncoming horde. 'Ride, Beucephalus!'*

Strahd casts *Fly* on as many as may need it and dashes off into battle. When the party jumps off of the wall, read:

*The lord and his horse soar at a nightmarish speed and tear ahead of you through the sky. The two swoop down, level with the drawbridge that is now flooded with commoners storming the front gates. The vampire lord extends his hand again and snaps his fingers. An invisible force erupts from the center of the path, sending nearly a dozen invaders plummeting over the unguarded sides of the precarious bridge.*

If any party chooses to descend here and fight the forces back from the bridge, Strahd will warn them that he will not maintain their *Fly* spell much longer, and they will need to touch down or risk following their guests to the depths.

Otherwise, they may continue to follow him to the other side, descend, and flank the army. When the party has made their decision, read:

*Strahd sails over the guard towers and leaps from Beucephalus' saddle. Fletching feathers etch the arc of dozens of arrows through the clouds, and after narrowly avoiding their volley, Strahd plucks a black pearl from his coat sleeve.*

*'Was it naivety or foolishness that allowed you to believe that you could enter, without invitation, into the lair of a Dark Lord and escape without retribution? All of Barovia will suffer for your hubris, Dawnmaster. All will know, that while your flock lives, there will be only darkness.'*

*The pearl crumbles to dust in his palm; the silver reflection of moonlight carried on the rolling mist turns crimson. The moon above, now fighting through a gathering storm is blood red, and on the ground below, the grass wilts.*

*Waves of festering, necrotic energy ripple from a single patch of soil, the plague grows, the tendrils of vile magic lurch hungrily outward, and in an instant, they swallow a sixty-foot dome. Nearly a quarter of the armed men and women fighting to enter the castle drop dead in an instant.*

*'Enjoy your feast, generals.'*

Strahd casts *Circle of Death* on 4d10 commoners that came here believing that their numbers would give them strength (and that the Morninglord would help protect them). Unfortunately for them, neither was true.

## BATTLE FOR THE DRAWBRIDGE

Should anyone stop to fight on the bridge, Strahd snaps his finger and ends his *Fly* spell as they touch down before continuing his own flight atop Beucephalus.

The party comes face to face with three waves of Barovian soldiers fighting their way toward Castle Ravenloft. The waves advance as follows, arriving each round:

1. 2d4 *Guard* minions with 1 Hit Point each, AC14 (no shields), and equipped with crossbows and makeshift spears.
2. 1 *Banneret Fighter* and 1d4 *Guard* minions
3. 1 *Eldritch Knight* and 1d4 *Guard* minions

On initiative count 20, in the second round of combat, the party sees Strahd fall from the sky as Beucephalus is hit by a ray of radiant light and vanishes in a cloud of dust.

On initiative count 20, in the third round of combat, Strahd's pained scream carries over the valley, and the pouring rain turns warm and red. The blood rain forces any rebels to succeed on a DC18 **Wisdom Saving Throw** or their morale leaves them. They are *frightened* and turn to flee from the fight.

On initiative count 20, in the fourth round of combat, Strahd casts *Maddening Darkness* on the battlefield, gatehouse towers, and the western half of the bridge. Before casting his spell, Strahd severs his connection to the Heart of Sorrow, and, in a fit of rage, includes both himself and Sorina Markovia in the spell's radius.

## THE LAST OF THE FOREST FOLK

If any characters continue to the battlefield alongside Strahd to witness his *Circle of Death* up close, he ends his *Fly* spell after it is cast, dropping the party on top of the bodies lying in the 60-foot radius clearing left in the wake of his attack. Beucephalus catches Strahd, and he rides toward the army, taking part in the fight from directly above the party.

Dozens more commoners turn to flee the scene in terror, but the raiding party knew this would not be an easy fight, and are not yet deterred enough to leave. They continue their march, hoping to reach Markovia who is rallying her troops and attempting to knock Strahd from the air. A unit breaks from the cluster beneath him and turns its attention to the party.

New segments of advancing soldiers will join the fray in waves. The waves advance as follows, arriving each round.

1. 2d4 [Tribal Warrior](#) minions with 1 Hit Point each and 2d4 [Commoners](#)
2. 1 [Ancestral Inheritor Barbarian](#) and 2d4 [Tribal Warrior](#) minions
3. 1 [Arch Shepherd](#) and 2d4 [Tribal Warrior](#) minions

On initiative count 20, in the second round of combat, the party sees Strahd fall from the sky as Beucephalus is hit by a ray of radiant light and vanishes in a cloud of dust.

On initiative count 20, in the third round of combat, Strahd's pained scream carries over the valley, and the pouring rain turns warm and red. The blood rain forces any rebels to succeed on a **DC18 Wisdom Saving Throw** or their morale leaves them. They are *frightened* and turn to flee from the fight.

On initiative count 20, in the fourth round of combat, Strahd casts *Maddening Darkness* on the battlefield, gatehouse towers, and the western half of the bridge. Before casting his spell, Strahd severs his connection to the Heart of Sorrow, and, in a fit of rage, includes both himself and Sorina Markovia in the spell's radius.

## THE DEVIL'S WRATH

If the party is in the field and they have not yet defeated the invaders, any that remain outside of the sphere of *Maddening Darkness* now flee. When the party has had their fill of combat, all of the rebels escape, or all of the remaining rebels are killed, read:

*An oppressive, white-hot column of light descends from the heavens, crashing into the dome of shadow like a heavy stone-shattering glass. The sky's blood dries to your face, the rain ceases, and before you, in a ray of pure sunlight stands Strahd, face to face with Sorina Markovia—much older than when you saw her during the unholy ritual at Yester Hill—clad in gold and blue armor.*

*The land's Dark Lord and its Dawnmaster are both on the verge of collapse. The ground at their feet is scorched, the scattered dead lie incinerated. With a savage swing of Markovia's morningstar, sparks fly from a previously unseen, arcane shield guarding Strahd's face.*

*The mystical deflection catapults her weapon from her hand, sending sliding across the razed earth. Without a moment's hesitation, she lunges, drawing a stake from beneath her breastplate. The spike pierces Strahd's doublet but is halted, frozen in place as the wood meets flesh. Strahd grasps the air as if he were holding the Dawnmaster's collar and magically lifts her from her feet as she gasps for breath.*

*'I am a just ruler, Sorina. Do you not believe I have earned my place as Lord of Barovia? This land's laws are my laws. Breaking those laws means betraying me. And do you know what happens to those who betray me? I would not suppose you would. There are none left to speak of it.'*

*Occult glyphs materialize between them that reform into a skeletal hand. Its pointer finger hovers above the Dawnmaster's heart and taps her chest. Sorina Markovia's pained, violent scream is choked by a grotesque gurgling; she vomits bubbling, blackened blood, and her body slouches in the air, still strung up by Strahd's magic like a twisted marionette.*

*The magic is dismissed, and Strahd falls to his knees exhausted alongside the lifeless shell that clatters onto the ash-coated battlefield. With the light of the Morninglord extinguished, the vampire dissolves in a cloud and drifts across the bridge. His gaseous form mingles with the mists enveloping Castle Ravenloft.*

*The body of Sorina Markovia rises sloppily to its feet, its right leg bent backward at the knee, and it limps toward its new master and eternal servitude.*



## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"The best way to rid the world of a plague is to begin with the rats."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Find Greater Steed* as a ritual spell once per dusk. When the spell is cast in this way, the creature instead summons a [Nightmare](#).

# CHAPTER 10: THE LEGACY OF VASILI VON HOLTZ

*"I finally took it upon myself to visit the new head of the Wachter family. Lovina Wachter was no longer the fragile-looking child I'd seen all those years before, but a ruler.*

*She extended her hand and greeted me warmly.  
Welcome, Lord Vasili.'*

Though Strahd was able to successfully silence and punish those involved in the March of the Dawn, his words to the now canonized St. Markovia were a lie. There was a single traitor who had escaped paying for their crimes against him: Leo Dilisnya.

Fifty years after the night of death and destruction that punctuated the end of Strahd's natural life, Lovina Wachter—a guest that lost her family at Sergei and Tatyana's wedding due to Leo's coup—discovered the location of her lord's most elusive prey and her family's nemesis.

Leo Dilisnya had taken up the nom de plume Henrik Steinman and hidden away in a monastery high upon Mt. Baratok. Believing his long exile had provided enough cover, he returned to the village of Vallaki for a festival while wearing his signature lion pendant.

Under the guise of Vasili von Holtz, Strahd followed Lovina's instructions, located Leo, and damned him to a slow, painful death by starvation.

## SPOILER WARNING

A link to a magical item found later in this chapter – in the Auditorium (area M3g) – contains minor spoilers for the Fifth Edition module *Tomb of Annihilation*.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party joins Vasili von Holtz for tea and an information session at the home of Lady Lovina Wachter. They are operating as a group of mercenaries and spies hired by Strahd for a covert mission: hunting the traitor Leo Dilisnya. After learning of Leo's whereabouts from Lovina, the group sets out toward the Order of the Guardians Monastery—resting high on the cliffs of Mt. Baratok—to aid Strahd in his quiet hunt.

## WACHTERHAUS

The party is seated on the couches in the parlor of Wachterhaus (area N4i) with Vasili von Holtz and Lovina Wachter.

## A PASSING FAMILIARITY

The following description presumes that the party has met both Vasili von Holtz and Fiona Wachter and that they have been inside of the Wachterhaus parlor. If this is not the case, consider rephrasing.

When the mists clear, read:

*A stone fireplace pops and crackles in a familiar, ebony-paneled parlor. Three elegant suede couches surround a table made of obsidian and set with a stunningly crafted, gold-plated ceramic tea set.*

*Two figures glimmer in the fire's glow, lightly masked by steaming tea: a woman in a red and black lace dress with strange familiarity to her aging face and a handsome man with kind eyes and an irresistible smile. A smile you recognize all too well. The smile of Vasili von Holtz.*

A servant arrives to pour tea for Lovina and her guests. The lady of the house tells Vasili and the party more about the reason for their invitation, her experience with Leo at the festival, and as much as she knows about the monastery. Her knowledge includes:

### Knowledge of Leo

- Leo Dilisnya is a traitor that murdered my family.
- He has been hiding for the last 50 years.
- He still wears his signature necklace around his neck: a shining, golden lion.
- Lovina recognized his medallion immediately when she saw him just one week ago during the Festival of White Sun, a local celebration for the Morninglord.
- She imagines he should be about 90, but he seemed strangely youthful. He couldn't have looked older than 50.
- He is a sick old man who deserves to suffer for the rest of his days.
- He is operating under the name Henrik Steinman.

### Knowledge of the monastery

- The monks that live in the mountains belong to an order known as the Order of the Guardians.
- The order is devoted to gathering and maintaining restricted and ancient knowledge.
- The monks have all taken vows of silence.
- She has visited twice before as a dignitary and has a vague memory of the layout though she was not permitted beyond the Grand Hall (area M3b).

Once the party feels as though their questions have been sufficiently answered or Lovina shares all of her knowledge, she unveils a map and shows them the precise location of the monastery on the mountainside overlooking Lake Baratok.

## M2. THE MOUNTAIN PASS

When the party decides to leave, read:

*The sleek, ebony walls of Wachterhaus warp and bow. Mist leaks through the cracks in the panels and images of the night sky clouded with ravens rise from the wood grain. The boards now frame the interior of a carriage. Gulls knock at your windows, and the wagon bounces along a rough gravel road. Even the regal posture of Vasili von Holtz buckles slightly on a particularly large bump on the path.*

*The clop of horse hooves and clatter of wooden wheels slows to a stop. Vasili looks through the window and surveys the craggy vista, and with a deep inhale his vest darkens and a cloak drapes from his shoulders. A pallid undeath washes over his face. The kind eyes sink into his skull. The lord of Barovia opens the door of his carriage and steps down its stairs to meet the fresh mountain air and dirt of his land.*

*His illusion dismissed, Strahd's physical form melds with the air, and you drift alongside him into the skies, climbing above hundreds upon hundreds of feet of switchbacks and dangerous mountain paths woven into the peaks as they rise well above the clouds.*

The Black Carriage comes to a stop at the base of a hill north of Lake Baratok and just south of hundreds of stairs that hug the cliff face and lead to the entrance of the Order of the Guardians Monastery (area M2).

### THE ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS MONASTERY

This monastery was founded by members of the order that maintained the Amber Temple as both an escape from the confines of the temple when its dark energies became overwhelming and as a secure location from which they could study and meditate in quiet.

#### MONKS' KNOWLEDGE

Most of the monks of the Order of the Guardians Monastery know and are willing to share the following if the party is not hostile and request written directions or information:

- The monks do not recognize the name Leo Dilisnya, but if they are asked about the location of Henrik Steinman, they nod, and gesture further up the mountain path.
- Henrik Steinman is the Orator, the only monk in the order that is allowed to speak.
- He maintains all of the knowledge of the Order through verbal traditions and curates other information in the library.
- The members of the order are housed in ascending order up the mountain beginning with the Acolytes and continuing on to the Observers, the Binders, the Keepers, and the Readers.
- Beyond the Readers' residence, the other buildings include the Overlook, the Sanctum, and the Orator's Chambers.
- Any rooms belonging to the Scribe and the Orator are off-limits to other members of the Order and outsiders.
- The order builds all of their structures with wood.

## M2A. MOUNTAINSIDE STAIRS

When Strahd leaves his mist form and descends to the landing outside the first of the buildings, read:

*Precariously secured rotting planks jut from the sediment layers of mountain stone. Hanging between segments of the staircase are facades of buildings mounted to the rock.*

When Strahd takes his first step onto the stairs, read:

*A violent determination possesses Strahd's face, but as his leather boot presses to the first plank, he recoils as if he touched a hot iron. The black cloak billows behind him like wings, and he retreats, gazing scornfully over the mountain complex.*

The monastery's religious rites protect this place from Strahd and other undead as if under the effects of a *Forbiddance* spell. The monks of a bygone age further warded the Orator's Chambers, Auditorium, and Scribe's Library so that these spaces could be used to protect and safely study ancient, dark artifacts. The effect is identical to an antimagic field centered on the rooms.

Strahd is infuriated by this realization and informs the party that he must remain at a distance. He then asks them to locate Leo on his behalf, summon him, and once they locate him, he will bear the pain in order to claim his prey. In the meantime, he will observe the exploration from a distance.

### M2B. ACOLYTES' QUARTERS

For the next 100 feet up the winding stairs, two two-story domiciles are set into the mountain alongside the path. If the party chooses to enter either building, read:

*A small, quiet room with little more than a washbasin, a barrel, and a worn, splintering table is nestled into the mountain. A rickety ladder leading to a second floor is propped up through a small square cut into the ceiling.*

These buildings each house two young *acolytes*. They are currently asleep upstairs and have no interest in fighting any intruders.

If roused, they will maintain their vows of silence but are accommodating to strangers and offer what little resources they can. They live an ascetic life and besides the washbasin and minimal rations, they have no material possessions.

### M2C. MONKS' QUARTERS

The path reaches a natural outcropping before coming to a rope ladder that climbs 15 feet to another wooden path. Three more two-story buildings are built into the mountainside directly ahead.

If the party chooses to enter any of the structures, read:

*Woody incense burning in caged censers fill a barren living chamber with a welcoming smell. Wisps of smoke mix with the cold air and rise through a hole leading to a floor above.*

Each building, from left to right, houses 1d4 ascetic monks. The first houses the Observers and the Binders, the second the Keepers, and the third the Readers. They are currently asleep upstairs and have no interest in fighting any intruders.

If roused, they will maintain their vows of silence but are accommodating to strangers and offer what little resources they can. They live an ascetic life and have no material possessions.

## M2D. OVERLOOK

The easternmost building of the monastery complex is a meditative chamber that the Order of the Guardians uses as both a facility to watch over the forests and lake below and as a sacred place for the Readers, Scribe, and Orator to engage with their sacred texts and histories.

It also serves as a connecting point for the living quarters below and the sanctum above.

When the party approaches the Overlook, read:

*The exterior of this building stands apart from the facades of the others. A tower-like structure stands inverted, its domed roof is embedded in the ground, and its foundation clings firmly to Mt. Baratok like a stalactite. Directly ahead is an open door frame. A door once hung from rusting hinges bolted to the stone and wood but has long since worn away.*

If the party decides to enter, read:

*The cleanly swept floors of this room sit empty. A ladder to the immediate left is propped up through to the second story. The northern wall seems carved rather than paneled, and fitted in the stone, spanning the entire eastern wall, is a sliding door.*

Beyond the sliding door is a balcony that runs the width of the building and freely hangs out over the valley below. A character looking out across the valley can see the distant lights of Vallaki through the mist with a successful **DC16 Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Any character who climbs to the second floor finds a slightly larger room with a desk and heavy, carved wooden doors.

The doors are locked, and the key can be found in the Auditorium (area M3g). A character can also pick the lock using thieves' tools and a successful **DC14 Dexterity check**.

Through these doors is a larger meditation balcony, nearly identical to the one below, and a heavy iron chest. The chest contains several scrolls detailing an incomplete and largely incorrect history of Barovia.

On the southern wall is a door frame that opens to the Mountainside Stairs (area M2a) leading toward the Inner Sanctum (area M3).

## M3. THE ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS

### MONASTERY – INNER SANCTUM

*A wall, nearly twice the width and — by the numbers of chips, cracks, and wear — twice the age, of the other buildings, extends from a recession in the mountainside.*

This building is the longest-standing piece of the Order's mountain complex. It houses their communal spaces as well as the places they hold most sacred.

When the party arrives this evening, the hall is nearly empty except for the Scribe, Anya Alexeev, and Leo Dilisnya. Anya is asleep in her study (area M3c). She left the braziers in the Grand Hall (area M3b) and the Dining Hall (area M3a) burning. Leo is currently in the Auditorium (area M3g).

## M3A. DINING HALL

If the party opens the Inner Sanctum from the eastern door on the path, read:

*A smooth, hand-carved table surrounded by matching chairs extends the length of a thirty-foot long hall. Shelves on the north end of the room are stocked with rations and utensils. A door set in the west wall hangs ajar.*

The rations are salted fermented fish. The western door leads to the Grand Hall (area M3b).

## M3B. GRAND HALL

When the party opens the door from the Dining Hall, read:

*Braziers hang from the edge of a banister overhead and give light to a cavernous chamber. A staircase is tucked against the north wall and snakes around to a second story. A symbol is branded to the floorboards and covers most of the room, and resting over its furthest edge is a woven meditation mat.*

The open space in the middle of the room is used by the monks for silent meditation practice. Anya left her mat here and intended to pack it away before bed.

The stairs lead to the Second Floor Landing (area M3e).

Two doors on the far western wall lead to the Scribe's Study (area M3c) and a ladder (area M3d).

## M3C. SCRIBE'S STUDY

The Scribe, Anya, is currently asleep at her desk in this room. When a character enters, read:

*A nondescript desk with a nearly extinguished candle melted down to its wick takes up most of the far wall. A robed figure is hunched over a pile of papers on the tabletop.*

A tall chest of drawers is propped up along the south wall that contains all of the individual pieces of a Priest's Pack and all of the individual pieces of a Scholar's Pack.

A character can also locate a key hidden in the drawers with a successful **DC16 Intelligence (Investigation) check** that opens the Scribe's Library (area M3f) and the Auditorium (area M3g).

A rack on top of the drawers carries 50 gp worth of fine parchment paper rolled into scrolls.

### The Scribe

The figure at the desk is Anya Alexeev, the Scribe. She has been working on recording recent Barovian events in the Scribe's Library (area M3f) and came here to finish organizing her space for the following day but fell asleep in the process.

If she is disturbed, Anya is disoriented and flustered as the Scribe's Study is off-limits to anyone not of proper ranking within the order.

She maintains her vow of silence but will actively try to remove the party from the premises, leading them to the Readers' quarters and communicating to the other monks that the outsiders must leave.

In addition to the information in the Monks' Knowledge section, Anya also knows the following that she will only share if forced, manipulated, or threatened into sharing:

- She last saw Henrik Steinman in the Auditorium before she fell asleep here. He usually stays there fairly late.
- If the Orator is not in the Auditorium, he will be in his bedroom.
- Their most recent work from today was documenting the Festival of the White Sun that occurred in Vallaki.

**Treasure.** 50 gp worth of fine parchment paper and a key to areas M3f and M3g.

### M3d. LADDER

The ladder in this chamber climbs out of the Inner Sanctum and into the Acolyte's Tunnel (area M3i) that leads to the Orator's House (area M4).

### M3e. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

The staircase winds around to a balcony that lines the south wall. A door to the east leads to the Scribe's Library (area M3f) and a door to the west, at the far end of the balcony, leads to the Prayer Chamber (area M3h).

### M3f. SCRIBE'S LIBRARY

The door to this room is locked and can be opened with the key found in the Scribe's Study. A character can also pick the lock using thieves' tools and a successful **DC17 Dexterity check**.

If the party enters this room, read:

*Crumbling, aged scrolls, rolled and bound by leather ties, pile from floor to ceiling. Nested alongside the neatly ordered bundles of parchment are hand-bound tomes in color-coded rows.*

A door on the northern wall leads directly to the Auditorium (area M3g).

Any character that stops to read through the materials finds that this library contains hundreds of years of Barovian history, much of it dating back before Strahd's rule, creating a rich tapestry of knowledge about the land once known as Cerunno, the Fanes, the religious rites of Forest Folk and Mountain Folk, and the rule of King Dorian of the Tergs.

The last fifty years have been thoroughly catalogued as well, but all of the information about Strahd himself is dramatized and largely incorrect. They read like ghost stories of a terrible monster. The March of the Dawn is recounted, but Strahd is described to be a twelve-foot-tall demon with hulking wings who breathes fire and can kill a man with his red eyes alone.

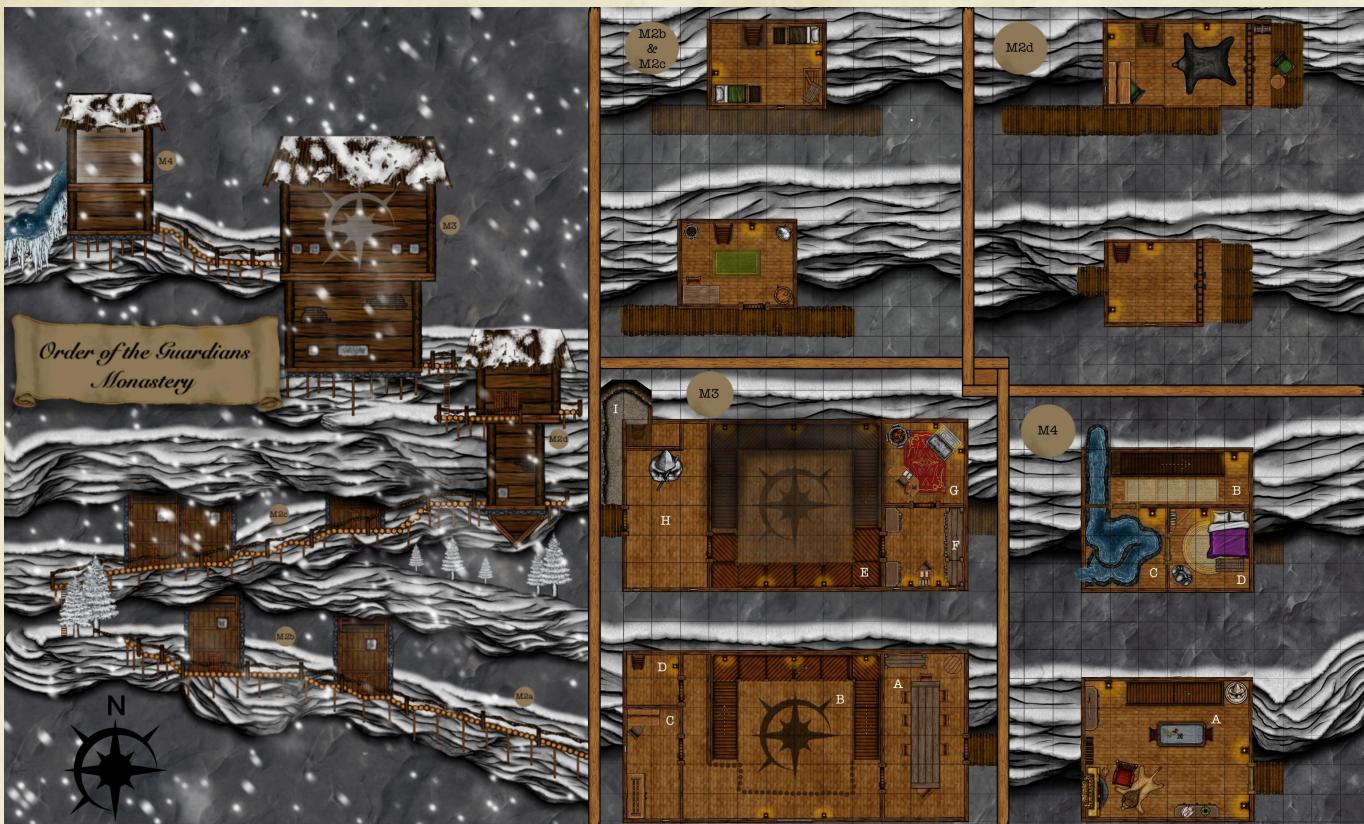
### M3g. AUDITORIUM

The door to this room is the only door in the monastery made with reinforced iron bars. It is currently locked and can be opened with the key found in the Scribe's Study (area M3c). A character can also pick the lock using thieves' tools and a successful **DC20 Dexterity check** or break the door down with a successful **DC22 Strength check**.

If the party opens the door, read:

*Candlelight paints monstrous shapes on the walls of this small room. A marble podium stands in the corner. Leaning over the dais is an aging man with tightly cropped, greying hair, and a dense, fraying beard. Around his neck, weighing heavily against his thick, wool robes, is an ostentatious golden lion head.*





### Leo Dilisnya

Leo Dilisnya has mysteriously survived for fifty years in Barovia after betraying Strahd. This is due to a combination of his vigilant paranoia and several layers of magical protection. He has sealed areas of the monastery with iron doors (even though the monks have exclusively used wood in their construction for centuries), added running water to his own quarters, removed the windows from his chambers and the auditorium, takes regular hikes down to Vallaki for vials of holy water used in protection rituals, and has killed dozens of people to sate the anger and fury within the golden ring on his left hand.

In a desperate effort to remain undetectable, Leo claimed an object from the Amber Temple nearly thirty years ago, and it is driving him mad. [The Ring of Winter](#) is a dark artifact crafted by Delban, the Star of Ice and Hate and was long guarded by the monks of the order.

### ARTIFACTS & ANTI-MAGIC

The ring's abilities are unaffected by the protective, anti-magic area of this room due to its nature as a dark artifact.

### Roleplaying Leo

Leo has been expecting (and preparing for) Strahd's arrival for decades, and while he hoped that the [Forbiddance](#) spell protecting the monastery would keep the forces of the undead away until his own quiet death (he believes the ring is slowing his aging, not preventing it), he has also built other contingencies into the room. He will not go gentle into that good night.

In his research, he has learned what Strahd has become. He acts as if he is superior to and smarter than Strahd for having outmaneuvered him all those years ago, but in truth, he fears Strahd's retribution above all else and will bargain with the party to spare his life and betray Strahd.

If the party stops to speak with him, he will get more desperate the longer the conversation goes on and change persuasion tactics as follows:

- He will begin by attempting to convince the party of Strahd's evil.
- If they are not won over by the prospect of an alliance or they attempt to threaten him, he will offer them the 1,000 gp (the remainder of his family's fortune) that is stored in the chest in his room (area M4c) to lie to Strahd and say that he is not here. He will give them the key to his room and send them on their way.
- If the party still disagrees with him, Leo—a [High Priest](#) wielding the Ring of Winter—will use all of the powers at his disposal to flee and lock himself in his room.

If the party calls for Strahd:

- Leo will use all of the powers at his disposal to kill his opponents and will wait for Strahd's arrival here to restrain him before fleeing to his quarters.
- On initiative count 20, on the second turn after combat begins, Strahd bursts through the wall and pushing through his desperate pain, lunges at Leo. He attempts to cast a [Fireball](#) centered on Leo.
- If no one warns Strahd, the antimagic field dissipates his spell. Leo attempts to stake him.
- After casting the spell, he will realize his error in judgment and focus on dealing non-lethal damage.
- If Strahd is warned of the anti-magic field, he will instead take Leo's mace and attempt to knock him unconscious.

- Once Leo has been knocked out, Strahd will slough his body over his shoulder and leap from the hole in the wall, falling until he can cast *Fly* on himself.

If the party sides with Leo or otherwise convince him that they are here to help him, he will tell them on his plan:

- Lure Strahd into this protected room, assuming his hubris will draw him into the anti-magic trap.
- The pain brought on by the *Forbiddance* spell will prevent Strahd and his forces from reaching him, and if they do arrive they will be badly weakened.
- He will use the power of the *Ring of Winter's Flesh to Ice* ability to freeze Strahd solid.
- He will also use the *Ring of Winter* to decrease the temperature of the room down to -30 degrees Fahrenheit.
- With the temperature cooled and Strahd frozen, he will shatter Strahd's body.
- Strahd will be forced into a mist-like state and will try to find a resting place that would have to be nearby, likely at the base of the mountain.
- Leo will try to reach Strahd's place of rest and drive a stake into the vampire's reincorporated body.

Unfortunately for Leo, even a vengeful and prideful Strahd is an intelligent and adept tactician and soldier.

- If Leo attempts to freeze Strahd, he will turn to mist as soon as the ice begins to form around him.
- Strahd will return to his physical form outside of the monastery's walls and cast *Fly* on himself.
- If he has fallen below half of his health he will flee, pledging that he will find Leo eventually.

### M3H. PRAYER CHAMBER

If the players enter this room, read:

*The low groan of a shifting foundation cuts through the silence. A hooded figure looms silently in the corner, its limbs drawn beneath a cloak.*

This room is used exclusively by the Scribe and the Orator as a place of quiet meditation and prayer. Any other monks that need to climb to the Orator's House (area M4) must climb the ladder and exit through the Acolyte's Tunnel (area M3i).

The statue here is dedicated to the Order's founder who led the construction of the monastery on the mountainside in order to keep a watchful eye on (and a respectful distance from) the Amber Temple. An engraving at the base of the statue simply reads: "The Guardian."

### M3I. ACOLYTE'S TUNNEL

This tunnel is a man-made cavern carved into the mountain to allow Acolytes to cross through the Sanctum and bring the Orator food and drink when necessary.

## M4. THE ORDER OF THE GUARDIANS

### MONASTERY - THE ORATOR'S HOUSE

The Order strictly adheres to its hierarchy. No other monks are permitted to enter the Orator's House. As such, Leo has continued to live as luxurious of a lifestyle as his family's remaining fortune has permitted without the order's knowledge.

When the party approaches the exterior, read:

*Reinforced iron secures the doorway of the structure at the end of the path. A cascade of water rushes down the mountain behind the building, raining down into the haze hundreds of feet below.*

Leo Dilisnya has replaced the door to the Orator's House with an alloy of iron and silver and created a makeshift waterfall to reinforce his defenses against the undead after learning that iron and running water may protect against vampires.

The door is currently locked and can be opened with the key found on Leo's person in the Auditorium (area M3g). A character can also pick the lock using thieves' tools and a successful DC22 Dexterity check or break the door down with a successful DC25 Strength check.

### M4A. LIVING ROOM

When the party opens the door to the house, read:

*The scent of pine and a trickle of water fill the room with a sense of natural comfort. Aside from those features, however, this room is gaudy and overflowing with abundance. An extravagant lion's pelt is sprawled at the foot of a fireplace.*

*A gilded chandelier is hoisted overhead by rope and hangs above the headrest of a leather lounge chair. Along the northern wall, a set of stairs climbs to a second floor.*

### M4B. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Leo has done his best to keep warm, even with the cold embrace of the *Ring of Winter* closing in on his mind and body. As such, he has tried to lay exquisite, Vistani rugs down across the floorboards and light the torches of his home with magical fire. These efforts, however, are not helping.

The second floor of this building is where Leo spends most of his time, and the ring's presence has left a painful chill here.

A stream cascading from the north wall and into the southwest corner of the room still runs, but large chunks of ice occasionally impede its smooth flow.

The temperature on this floor reaches extreme temperatures. Characters who don't have heat sources, cold weather gear, or magic to protect them are subject to the effects of extreme cold, as described in the "Weather" section in chapter 5, "Adventure Environments," of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

### M4C. INDOOR RIVER

In another attempt at staving off Strahd, Leo has dug through the mountain walls to an underground river and diverted its flow through the building, forming a protective barrier of running water.

The barrier is not perfect and will not actually keep a vampire from entering Leo's Quarters (area M4d). He has, however, hidden a Light Crossbow and 20 silvered crossbow bolts under the water.

**Treasure** A light crossbow and 20 silvered bolts.

## M4d. LEO'S QUARTERS

When the party enters this room, read:

*Opulent violet bedding drapes over the edges of a bed built for a king. At its foot rests a banded iron chest, thrice locked and secured to the floorboards. Standing stalwart over the bed-chamber is a ten-foot-tall suit of armor clutching tightly to a greatsword.*

The suit of armor is a medium-sized [Iron Golem](#) wielding a silvered greatsword that Leo has enchanted to protect him from any intruders. If someone enters the room without speaking the command word, "Dilisnya", within 1 minute of entry, the golem will spring to life and follow its order: "kill anyone who you do not recognize."

The lead-lined chest at the foot of the bed is currently locked and can be opened with the key found on Leo's person in the Auditorium (area M3g). A character can also pick the lock using thieves' tools and a successful **DC25 Dexterity check**.

Inside is a bag of assorted coins and gems worth a total of 1,000 gp, several patches and brooches depicting the Dilisnya house sigil, and a smaller coffer.

The coffer is locked and sealed with an *Arcane Lock* spell. Leo has disposed of the key, and it can only be opened using thieves' tools and a successful **DC35 Dexterity check**. The chest protects a [Manual of Clay Golems](#) that Leo obtained in case his Iron Golem is ever lost or destroyed.

**Treasure** The chest at the foot of the bed contains 700 gp worth of assorted gemstones, 300 gp in gold coins, assorted jewelry worth 50 gp, and a [Manual of Clay Golems](#).

The [Iron Golem](#) in the corner wields a silvered greatsword.

## A GIFT FOR A FRIEND

When Leo is knocked unconscious or killed, Strahd flees, or the party has otherwise completed their mission on the mountain, read:

*Fog blurs the ancient buildings and stone of Mt. Baratok. Walking alongside you in the cloud is Vasili von Holtz, his mouth soaked red with blood and the body of Leo Dilisnya slouched over his shoulder. The haze condenses and turns to a cold stone.*

*The young noble lowers the man's body into a coffin set into the wall of a mausoleum and seals the grave shut. Vasili steps across the chamber and climbs into his own velvet-lined black coffin.*

*The mists erase the coffin from view, and Vasili stands before you once more. Clean. Rested. Heavy granite doors scrape open from a staircase not far behind you, and the measured, steady click of boot heels follows. Lovina Wachter greets her guest with a bow. 'Well, where is he?'*

*Vasili gestures to the carefully placed tablet that now seals Leo Dilisnya's grave.*

*'What, then, is left to be done? I'd rather hang him from the gates than simply watch his corpse rot.' Her words are almost interrupted by a panicked scream from within the walls of the tomb, wailing desperately for aid. Lovina presses her ear to the surface and a look of devilish glee possesses her somber visage. 'Will he die?'*

*Vasili grins. 'Eventually.' Lovina Wachter finds a seat on a nearby sarcophagus. The lace of her dress dusts the mausoleum's floor, and as she comes to rest, she bids Vasili take his leave while her full attention remains drawn to the final, tormented resting place of Leo Dilisnya.*

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"At that, Lord Vasili smiled and bowed low, his promise fulfilled."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Forbiddance* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## CHAPTER 11: THE FINAL DUSK

*"My curse is to know no happiness. No love. At every turn this accursed place turns hope to ash, slipping from my grasp."*



Strahd, even after almost a century, continued to believe that Tatyana was rightfully his true love, but for some time before meeting her—and in the time after her death—he maintained something close to what a normal person would call a relationship with the dusk elf Patrina Velikovna.

Patrina, of course, never held a candle to Tatyana in Strahd's eyes. Regardless, he does not enjoy others taking things he believes to be his. The dusk elf tribe killed Patrina after they presumed she was in league with Strahd, and their decision incited the wrath of the devil himself.

One of Strahd's Vistani spies rushed to the castle to inform him that the tribe had turned against Patrina, but the Dark Lord arrived too late. He could not save her, but he could enact swift and terrible vengeance on the dusk elves and ensure that they could not continue their lineage.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party arrives along with Strahd and Rahadin at the dusk elf and Vistani encampment on the outskirts of Vallaki. They wear dark, hooded cloaks clasped with the von Zarovich crest as they lurk through the area around the hill. They have come with Strahd to round up dusk elves for their treason.

### A REVISED HISTORY OF THE DUSK ELVES

The module indicates that Rahadin was sent by Strahd to commit this atrocity all his own. This chapter supposes that Strahd, in both his boredom and fury, would want to be present for the event. If you do not feel Strahd would attend directly, you may wish to skip this chapter. You could also have his familiar, a bat (or [vampire parrot](#)) named Bartholemew, accompany Rahadin and deliver Strahd's lines as Rahadin.

You may also consider revising the history of the dusk elves in Barovia using pieces of [u/TheAmuzingMu's "Much Ado About Dusk Elves."](#) These changes include:

- Kasimir and Patrina are the prince and princess that Rahadin betrayed for King Barov because he disapproved of their “weak” leadership.
- All of the male dusk elves are killed in this event instead of the female elves.
- Kasimir is a transsexual male elf and is not killed alongside the other male elves.

This chapter will allow for either history to be useful largely by changing the pronouns used, so keep the alterations in mind if you're interested!

### THE DUSK ELF CAMP

The party stands at the top of the hill of the Vistani Camp (area N9). The key difference this evening is that the Vistani wagons are nowhere to be seen, instead a gruesome murder lies before them. When they arrive, read:

*The tops of pine trees pepper your periphery. Fading light far beyond the clouds grows distant, and you recognize that it is nearly sundown here in Barovia. You linger around a circle of figures clad in dark cloaks and leather armor. Many of their faces are obscured, but the few that are visible have distinctly elven features. At their feet is an unmoving humanoid shape.*

*A muffled but forceful shockwave of energy erupts from the crowd. Their hoods are blown back, and one of the elves lunges at you, their eyes burning with death and hatred. ‘Traitor!’ They shout, locking eyes with the Rahadin, who stands unmoving at your side. The now unhooded elf spits forcefully, but their projectile meets an invisible wall and drips through the air.*

The elf that attempted to spit at Rahadin is Kasimir Velikov, the current leader of the dusk elves and Patrina's sibling.

The boom of energy was a [Forcecage](#) spell that Strahd has cast to seal in the perpetrators of Patrina's murder and prevent them from aiding the other elves. The cage is 20 feet on a side and is made from 1/2-inch diameter bars spaced 1/2 inch apart. Strahd is slowly climbing the hill toward the party.

Before he arrives on the scene, the party may choose to briefly investigate their surroundings or speak with Rahadin.

If the party chooses to speak with Rahadin he will willingly (even with a tinge of frustration) explain why they are here, but he will not share any information about his own past or his relationship with the tribe.

### THE CAGED ELVES

Trapped inside of Strahd's magical cage are thirteen dusk elves, including Kasimir Velikov and the body of Patrina Velikovna.

If approached, the elves are initially hostile to the party but will share the following information if asked:

- Strahd corrupted Patrina and her mind. They killed her to prevent her from becoming a terrible monster like him.
- Rahadin is a traitor to his people, and it is his fault that there are so few of us left here.

If a character asks what they can do to help the elves in any way, they must first succeed on a **DC22 Dexterity (Stealth) check** to speak quietly enough that Rahadin does not hear them. If they are noticed by Rahadin, he will actively pull the traitor away and question their loyalty to Strahd. If they defy him or otherwise deny their fealty to Strahd, he will attack.

If they are successfully able to whisper to the caged elves, a character can convince the dusk elves to trust them with a successful **DC18 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Deception) check**. The elves will share the following:

- The remainder of the tribe may not yet know that Strahd is here, and they must be warned that they are in danger.
- Help protect the children. The devil will not hesitate to kill everyone.
- There are some hovels just beyond in the woods, you may be able to hide them there.

After a minute or so has passed, read:

*Strahd's cloaked silhouette rises from beyond the edge of the hill, and his demonic eyes fall on the body. A look of righteous fury and a hint of pain, masked beyond the rage, flickers in his eyes. 'Find the rest so that we may never be plagued by their ilk again.'*

*Rahadin unsheathes a sword and marches across the grass toward a smokestack climbing into the sky no more than a hundred feet away.*

## THE HUNT

The party is tasked with locating the remaining dusk elves in the camp and returning them to the top of the hill so that Strahd can finish them off.

There are currently 3d10 dusk elves unaccounted for on the hilltop that are still within the area of the camp. A small portion of the remaining population is currently off in other areas of Barovia and will be killed in the days and weeks that follow as Strahd ensures his vengeance is carried out in full. Any elves they free here may find refuge elsewhere in Barovia.

The 3d10 dusk elves in the area of the camp are hidden around the hill in their hovels and along the edge of the forest. Any character searching inside of a home can find 1d4 dusk elves inside with a successful **Wisdom (Survival) check** contested by the elves' **Dexterity (Stealth) check**.

Any character searching the woods can track 1d4 dusk elves through the foliage with a successful **Wisdom (Survival) check** contested by the elves' **Dexterity (Stealth) check**. Any elves hiding in the forest have advantage on this skill check.

Any elves found in the search will plead with the party to keep them safe, insisting that they did nothing wrong. If any character inquires about what is going on, they will share the following information:

- Patrina, Kasimir, and some of the others have practiced magic for ages, but she was beginning to explore the darker sides of the arcane.
- Patrina has regularly been the tribe's liaison with the castle.
- Kasimir and the others believed that Patrina was too close to Strahd and that she had become a danger to the tribe.

If any character directly requests that the elves come with them or the party attempts to remove any of those in hiding by force, the elves will bargain for their safety by offering:

- Up to 5 gp per person—their life savings.
- A protective prayer from an old Elven deity.
- An individual may volunteer themselves and request that the rest of their family be spared and allowed to flee.
- A promise that they will disappear from this place and Strahd will never find them.

They do not believe that they can actually escape Strahd, but they will try to make a case for it. Any character trying to discern the elves' intent can easily recognize genuine fear. A successful **DC12 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals that these people are honestly offering all they have.

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The party must round up at least twelve of the elves or disappoint Strahd. If they are unable to locate the elves, he will cast *Thunderwave* at 5th-level when the party is together at the top of the hill, knocking them back and forcing them to make a **DC15 Dexterity saving throw** or be knocked down the hill and take 3d10 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Regardless of the party's performance, Rahadin returns with a group of 10 elves bound together with rope by the end of the hour.

## SNUFFED OUT

With the party and elves gathered atop the hill, many unconscious or otherwise injured, read:

*Strahd closes his hand and magical force releases a shockwave around the newly captured elves. The subtle thud accompanying the magical cage is punctuated by a shout. Rahadin's voice draws Strahd's eyes to Kasimir Velikov, reforming from an ethereal cloud of glimmering vapor after slipping through the conjured cell.*

*Arcane flakes of snow and ice flurry around the mage's hand, and an avalanche pours out toward the vampire lord. With an irreverent wave and a 'Halt,' the ice storm is reduced to a puddle.*

*Rahadin rushes to his master's aid and shoves the enfeebled wizard to their knees. With a single cut, the chamberlain lops off Kasimir's ear. 'You may keep the other for now so that you might hear their screams as they burn. Your sister was better than you could ever hope to be. You're a failure and a disgrace to our people.'*

*Strahd stares at the faces of the gathered prisoners. Flames spark beneath a bound elf, and in a flash, they are consumed by a raging bonfire. 'One...' And the Dark Lord points to the next.*

## CHAPTER CLOSE

*"If Tatyana's beauty was as a river in a spring flood, Patrina's was a brushfire smoldering in a dying forest. With her flame extinguished, I ensured her murderers joined me in the cold night."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Forcecage* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

# CHAPTER 12: A SOUL'S RETURN

*"The girl's auburn hair was braided high, and her clothes more closely resembled rags, but it was her. The same Tatyana I'd known all those years ago..."*

Strahd believed for decades that he was doomed to never see Tatyana's face again. That his curse was to lose his love for eternity. It was not until he met a young servant girl by the name of Marina in the village of Berez did he realize that Tatyana's soul could find new life. He could try again.

In an attempt to succeed where had failed decades before, Strahd hoped desperately to charm Marina and turn her into a vampire to rule by his side. Over the course of the three days after their meeting, Strahd watched over Marina's every move, and each night he would return to her home, charm her, speak with her, savor their time together, and ultimately feed on her. Unfortunately for him, Marina's adoptive father, Lazlo Ulrich—the burgomaster of Berez—and the local priest recognized her symptoms as the telltale signs of a vampiric corruption.

Though it pained him to do so, Lazlo decapitated Marina before Strahd could complete the bride ceremony that would make her undead transformation permanent and helped Strahd to realize the full pain of his curse.

## THE BRIDE CEREMONY

Vampires can create new undead fairly easily, but creating a new vampire bride is not a simple process. The important information to keep in mind for the events here is that the "first step is that a vampire feeds on a mortal, nearly to the point of death, on three separate occasions. Once the vampire is done with the third feeding, they immediately cut themselves open and press their intended's mouth to the bleeding wound so that they drink vampiric blood." You can read all about the full ceremony in [this amazing write-up](#) by [u/guildsbounty](#).

Every ounce of obsessive passion that Strahd had (and still has) for Tatyana boiled over when Marina was killed, and he rained hell upon the settlement for robbing him of his true love, turning the quiet, riverside village into the decaying swamp that it is today.

## THE PARTY'S INVOLVEMENT

The party has the opportunity to visit the bustling village of Berez, two days before its destruction. On the first day, they arrive in the village as travelers accompanying Vasili von Holtz on a visit to the burgomaster—a man who has come into possession of several books of old magic that have piqued Strahd's interest.

Vasili bids his companions leave as he lays eyes on Marina, and the party can explore the village while they wait for their lord to finish conducting his business. As Strahd lays waste to the village on the third night, the characters once again become passive observers of Strahd's history.

## THE GOSSIP OF BEREZ

Anyone the party interacts with in the village knows the following:

### Concerning the Village

- The village square is bustling during the day, but Berez goes dark after sundown to hide from Baba Lysaga and her hut.
- Baba Lysaga is a terrible spirit of a wood witch that was killed here.
- Taltos' Trading Post has supplies if you're headed on a journey. Their prices are quite reasonable.
- River's End doesn't receive a lot of visitors, but their accommodations are just fine.
- The Church of St. Ecaterina and the graveyard behind it are maintained by Father Grigor.

### Concerning the Burgomaster

- Lazlo Ulrich is the burgomaster of Berez.
- He's fat and lazy but mostly stays out of the village's way.
- Marina Ulrich was adopted by the burgomaster when she was young.
- Rumor has it, he actually wants to undo the adoption and marry her.

### Concerning Marina

- She was found unconscious along the river by Father Grigor as a young woman.
- She does not remember where she came from before arriving here.
- She is a kind woman that offers her help to those in need.

## A DAY (OR THREE) ABOUT TOWN

In the early days of Strahd's rule, the village of Berez continued to prosper for a limited time. While the party explores the village, they have the opportunity to meet a number of Berez's inhabitants and take a brief respite to pick up some supplies. Many of the village's people are Barovian souls that the party has encountered on their journey that found new bodies to inhabit centuries later.

## REDUCE, RESOUL, RECYCLE

Reincarnated Barovian souls physically resemble their past lives, but their personalities may be wildly different. Use this to toy with your players' expectations for the citizens of Berez.

If the players wouldn't recognize any of the citizens listed here, feel free to swap them with NPCs that they're more familiar with.

The cottages (area U1), the church (area U4), and the village square (which stands in the open space between the cottages and area U3 in the present day) are all busy and bustling. The village square also includes a general store and an inn: Taltos Trading Post and the River's End.

## OUTSIDE

The village is busy with trade, conversation, and work during the afternoon. If any characters choose to spend time wandering around outside without entering a specific location, they may encounter one or both of the following people:

### Darzin (Bildrath Cantemir)

- A local turnip farmer with a passion for his crops.
- He is chipper and excited about the upcoming harvest.
- He's close friends with Tural Taltos.
- **Day 1:** He is wandering around the village square talking to people.
- **Day 2:** He is in his yard, harvesting turnips.
- **Day 3:** He is in the village square with a stall, selling his vegetables at a farmer's market.

### Grilsha (Gertruda)

- A young woman who spends most of her days taking care of her father.
- Every so often she has the opportunity to spend the afternoon wandering near the river.
- She is a devout follower of the Morninglord and wears a pendant made of twine and stone around her neck.
- **Day 1:** She is leaving her home for a walk around the village.
- **Day 2:** She is leaving the church and headed home.
- **Day 3:** She is buying some turnips from Darzin.

## TALTOS TRADING POST

Taltos Trading Post is Berez's general store. The owners, Tural and Kala, sell items from the Adventuring Gear table in the Player's Handbook that have a price of 25 gp or less.

### Tural Taltos (Vargas Vallakovich)

- A person who has few joys left in life.
- He cares deeply for his wife.
- He is easily offended if anyone disrespects the store or complains about the merchandise.
- **Day 1:** He is cleaning and restocking shelves.
- **Day 2:** He is trying to do some accounting work and some of the numbers appear to be off.
- **Day 3:** He is upset with Kala about her side business.

### Kala Taltos (Fiona Wachter)

- A frighteningly melodramatic woman. There is a flair about her that most Barovians simply do not have.
- She makes all of her own clothes.
- She manages all of the finances for the trading post.
- She is lying to Tural about how successful the business is at the moment and has been doing work around the village to keep them afloat.
- **Day 1:** She is cleaning and restocking shelves.
- **Day 2:** She is walking around behind the building, hoping to sneak away to do some farming work.
- **Day 3:** She is fighting with Tural and then marches off to River's End for a drink.

## RIVER'S END

River's End is Berez's inn and tavern. On Day 1 and Day 2 the inn is empty. On Day 3, Kala Taltos can be found at the bar.

There are casks of all three wines from the Wizard of Wines Winery here. A pint of Purple Grapemash No. 3 is 3 cp, a pint of Red Dragon Crush is 1 sp, and a pint of Champagne du le Stomp is 3 sp.



## Miruna (Anna Krezkov)

- A woman with a bored and flippant demeanor and indifference to new customers.
- She inherited the inn from her family, but she's been jaded by the fact that no one ever visits Berez except for the occasional Vallakian or Vistani merchant.
- She spends most of her days recording bits of gossip she hears in a journal and will actively share any ongoing information about other people in the village.
- **Day 1:** She is actively writing down notes about what she saw other people doing in the village square.
- **Day 2:** She is spying on the party from the top floor and comes downstairs when they enter.
- **Day 3:** She is rolling an empty cask of Red Dragon Crush out of the front door.

## ST. ECATERINA'S CHURCH

St. Ecaterina's Church has the same layout as the churches of Barovia and Vallaki, without the undercroft. It was named after Fatima Ecaterina, a priest of the Morninglord that the people of Berez believed fought back Lysaga and her wood witches.

The story is untrue. Lysaga is alive and well and has become the hag-like creature she is in the present day. Ecaterina did, however, successfully chase the witches from the land and consecrate the church grounds.

## Father Grigor (Izek Strazni)

- A fanatical priest of the Morninglord with zealous but kind energy. He truly wants what is best for the village, even if he is a bit aggressive about it.
- He firmly believes that the Morninglord is the only way that anyone can be saved from undeath or the torture of Baba Lysaga.
- He fears that anyone walking around outside after dark is a monster.
- He is well-read and knows how to kill vampires and prevent the dead from being raised.
- He has stopped burying bodies and started burning them without anyone's knowledge even though it is against his belief as a priest.
- He has dug up most of the cemetery and has been systematically burning the bodies in secret.
- He cares deeply for Marina Ulrich and regrets not taking her under his wing himself.
- **Day 1:** He is giving a sermon and blessing a handful of orphans that help around the church.
- **Day 2:** He is digging a new grave in the cemetery, but it is for show. He has actually been digging up old ones to make sure they have not been bitten. He has gotten word from the burgomaster about Marina's sudden illness and suspects that she may be turning.
- **Day 3:** He is preparing a kit including holy water, a stake, garlic, a symbol of the Morninglord, and a mirror to take with him to the burgomaster's mansion just before sundown. The burgomaster arrives at the end of the conversation to talk to Grigor about the plan for later that day.

## THE BURGOMASTER'S MANSION

The burgomaster's mansion of Berez has the same layout as those of Barovia and Vallaki. Lazlo hosts Vasili and the party in the mansion's equivalent to the parlor (area N3b).

Vasili will request that his escorts leave the parlor after he lays eyes on Marina, but he will be too focused on her if they decide to stay against his wishes.

## Vasili von Holtz

- He has come to Berez to gather some powerful magical tomes in his pursuit of esoteric knowledge.
- Upon seeing Marina, his focus turns to learning everything he can about her.
- He spends his days here learning as much as he can about her.
- **Day 1:** He will spend the day asking the burgomaster questions about Marina as she darts in and out of the room.
- **Day 2:** He demands that he have some time alone with Marina.
- **Day 3:** He helps a nursemaid take care of Marina as she appears to be on death's door.

## Marina Ulrich (Irenea Kolyana/Tatyana)

- A sheepish but physically strong girl who has grown up in the burgomaster's mansion as more a servant than an adoptive daughter.
- She vaguely remembers being found by the river as a child.
- She has had strange dreams of living in a castle all her life.
- She spends almost all of her time inside the mansion. Lazlo does not like her to leave often.
- She loves to read.
- **Day 1:** She serves the house's guests and will step in and out of the parlor with food and drink.
- **Day 2:** She is a bit under the weather but spends her day with Vasili in the parlor.
- **Day 3:** She is bedridden with an intense fever, has been vomiting blood all morning, and appears paler than the Barovian mist. She is on the verge of a total vampiric transformation.

## Lazlo Ulrich

- A pompous, self-absorbed man that was once a great, charismatic leader. He now uses his age as an excuse to binge on food and drink.
- He has tried to grow his own wine grapes here in the village. He will brag about them, but they are rotting, and the wine is practically undrinkable.
- He secretly wants to marry Marina. She would be his fourth wife.
- He contacted Strahd to offer up some old books that he found in the attic after Rahadin visited the village a few days ago on the lord's behalf, requesting that everyone conduct a thorough search of their family heirlooms and shelves.
- **Day 1:** He is as gracious a host as he can be to Mr. von Holtz and his guests.
- **Day 2:** He is binge drinking and ranting to one of his servants in his suite about how he's been put out in his own home by an assistant to a lord that doesn't exist.

- **Day 3:** He takes an early morning trip to the church to tell Father Grigor of Marina's sickness. Grigor immediately recognizes the symptoms, and the two meet in secret at the church in the afternoon to discuss killing Marina if it is too late to save her.

### TIME TO MOVE ON

A day in Berez ends after the party has taken the time to speak to at least two villagers or have otherwise spent sufficient time investigating the village.

You may also choose to give them more or less time to explore as the core story of Berez's destruction is documented through Strahd's relationship with Marina after the sun has set.

### VISITS IN THE NIGHT

At the end of each of the three days in Berez, the party observes Strahd's visits with Marina (and her gradual transformation) firsthand.

### NIGHT ONE: A REUNION

When the first day ends, read:

*Marina Ulrich rests peacefully in her bed. From the shadow in the corner of the room, Strahd von Zarovich rises as if separating himself from the night and shifts into a beacon of moonlight.*

*He stares at Marina with a kindness not seen in his eyes for centuries. 'Tatyana... Tatyana...' The young woman sits up in her bed, a haze swirls in her eyes, and she returns his longing stare.*

Strahd sits with Marina through the night, covering his presence with his vampiric charm, and reminding her, in excruciating detail, of his version of her past life. A life they shared. He ends the conversation by sinking his teeth into her neck and laying her to rest just before sunrise.

### NIGHT TWO: A PROMISE

When the second day ends, read:

*Silver spears of light reflect off of beads of sweat gathering on a young woman's pale skin. Marina wheezes. She rises to meet her love, Strahd, but a hacking cough knocks her to the floor. Her weakness is not reflected in the fervor with which she rises to her feet, and they embrace.*

*His breath meets her neck. Pearled fangs protrude from his gums, extending past his lips, and they find their mark on her throat. A geyser of blood paints the sickly hues of their skin. Marina exhales a groan of pain and ecstasy so intense that she trembles and collapses into Strahd's arms. 'Soon, my love. You and I will share our eternity together. As we were always meant to.'*

### NIGHT THREE: A FLOOD

When the third day ends, read:

*White light of the moon melds with the deep crimson pooling beneath a ghostly nightgown. Marina Ulrich's body lies still with a stake embedded in her chest. The Dark Lord of Barovia weeps, and he leaps, without thought, toward her. But before he can hold her cold hand, her pale skin greys, and she dissolves into vapor. Marina is gone.*

*The moonlight filling the bedchamber is dulled. Storm clouds coalesce overhead, thunder cracks, and lightning strikes. The storm buckles Lazlo Ulrich and Father Grigor, both cowering in the corner, to their knees, prostrate before their dread lord.*

*Grigor draws something from his robes and lunges with all his weight toward Strahd. His claw catches the priest's wrist and snaps his arm in two. Lightning paints the sky outside, and in its revealing flash, the burgomaster is bathed in a red mist bursting from what was, only moments ago, Grigor.*

*The corpulent coward is dragged to his feet. His pleas for forgiveness are suppressed by the shattering of glass, and with a point, Strahd catapults Lazlo's flailing body through the window into the storm.*

*Hurricane winds batter the exposed room and lift you into the skies. The already murky clouds of Barovia deepen in their sorrow. The torrential, horizontal rain and outraged winds emulate their lord's fury. Lightning bolts seize into a cage of electricity that surges through the soil.*

*An inky darkness obscures Strahd, forming a devilish shape cast against the streaks of lightning in the storm. 'I once believed that I had but one lifetime to suffer. I now recognize it is not only my lot to live eternally but to suffer eternally as well. I will grant you no such honor. Your death will be eternal, but dying will be painful. I will be certain of that.'*

*The burgomaster's boots cannot find purchase in the bog. Watery vortexes surge around him. A roar, harsher than the thunderous clouds rises from the ground.*

*Walls of water climb hundreds of feet into the air, condensing the power of the storm and the maelstrom of the Luna River into tidal waves that lay waste to the village of Berez. The shifting river's current, now littered with wreckage, ebbs. Strahd remains airborne, peering over the decimation left in his wake.*

### CHAPTER CLOSE

*"Nearly half a century had passed, and I'd grown accustomed to the pain of mourning. Then to have her return—to have a glimpse of the paradise that lay before us—and then to lose her again... It was too much. Despairing, I swallowed in the mud and gave in to the grief."*

## TREASURE

The attuned creature may now cast *Tsunami* as a ritual spell once per dusk.

## EPILOGUE: A LORD'S REST

When the party is ejected from the end of Chapter 12 and returns to the present day, the text of the chapter is recorded as usual, but the ink continues to fill in on the following page as if it is being written before their eyes.

If a character follows along with the writing, you can either read the following or share the handout in Appendix E.

*'How many times over the centuries had I met you? How many times had I lost you? I could not say. You ever wore the same face, but under a different name, sometimes a wholly different personality, though somehow I'd always found a way to touch those hidden memories in your heart.'*

*'And somehow, we always lose. Throughout the generations, we have lost over and over again, forever trading joy for grief.'*

*'If I could just once break the pattern, break whatever curse that keeps us apart. In doing that, I might find freedom for us both.'*

*'But year after year flies by; they pile into decades, mass into centuries.'*

*'How many lay before me? And are they all to be as lonely as those I've already had? Unable to answer, unwilling to guess, I sit and stare at your portrait and feel another night slipping away into the irretrievable past.'*

*'If I could just rest. Sleep. Sleep for more than just a single day, sleep away all my sorrows and lose myself in... I am unsure. To drift, dreamless and serene. To forget. To... rest.'*



## APPENDIX A: FORTUNES AND FUTURES

The Fortunes of Ravenloft are the keys to defeating Strahd von Zarovich. The powers of the Sunsword and the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind are unmatched in the final battle for Barovia. With that in mind, if you choose to hide the treasures within the Tome, you may consider altering the Tome's rules or otherwise making their hiding places more obvious so that the party does not overlook them. Here are a few suggestions:

- When the party nears the treasure, it hums, and whichever member you feel is its most likely wielder can hear it calling.
- If the party does not find the treasure while venturing through its chapter, the treasure is ejected with the party and appears on the floor near them when the chapter concludes.
- If the party does not find the treasure, they may re-enter that chapter to claim it. The treasure hums from within the pages, calling to whichever member you feel is its most likely wielder.
- If the treasure is being held by a prominent individual of Strahd's past, refer to Appendix B for their histories and motivations or to [Appendix D](#) in the module directly.

### MADAM EVA'S SIGHT

The original Fortunes of Ravenloft Tarokka readings are not meant to hide treasures in the past. If you are interested in using these fortunes at your table, consider altering Madam Eva's note about the Tome to read:

*This card tells of history. The secrets of your enemy's past hold the key to your future.*

### PROLOGUE: YOUTH

Perhaps the treasures have been tied to Strahd longer than he could have known. Fate's cruelty knows no bounds.

#### TREASURE LOCATIONS

##### 8 of Swords—Dictator

A devil is molded, not born. The treasure you seek is held by a king of a faraway land.

The treasure is in King Barov's possession.

##### 7 of Swords—Hooded One

I see a loyal servant training a young boy. Look to the lord's past to find his mentor.

The treasure is with Rahadin; he kept them as trinkets taken from the dusk elves he killed.

### CHAPTER 1: THE BATTLE OF ARGYNVOSTHOLT

The ancient relics of the land of Barovia may have been raised in its defense once before. They now must pass to a new era of champions.

#### TREASURE LOCATIONS

##### 2 of Swords—Paladin

The treasure was used to protect the land once before. Look toward the past to the day Barovia and its conqueror fell.

The treasure is being carried by the paladin in the *Strahd* and *The Village* section.

##### Master of Swords—Warrior

Look to the hill that climbs to the dragon's keep. In centuries past, the silver champion defended the castle from the devil's invasion. He holds your treasure.

The treasure is being wielded by Sir Godfrey Gwilym in the *Aleksandra* and *The Castle* section.

### CHAPTER 2: THE RISE OF RAVENLOFT

Strahd's most loyal retainers are well-traveled and respectable warriors in their own right. They may not know, but they once held onto sacred objects.

#### TREASURE LOCATIONS

##### 9 of Glyphs—Traitor

I see a haughty lion returning from a successful hunt. Turn to the day that the devil claimed his castle. You will find your treasure there.

The treasure is being carried by Leo Dilisnya as the parties cross the bridge into the courtyard.

##### 8 of Glyphs—Bishop

A holy man, devoted to his cause, supports the devil's reign. The day the devil claimed the land, they spoke. What you seek lies in that moment.

The treasure is with Gabriel Andral when he tells Strahd about Ravenovia. He places it on Strahd's side table as a gesture of comfort.

### CHAPTER 3: BROTHERS IN ARMS

The treasures are relics of Barovia's past, handed down through generations

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 2 of Coins—Philanthropist

There is a champion of light who brings joy to this land. Look to the day he arrived here. Speak with him to claim your treasure.

The treasure was brought back to Barovia by Sergei von Zarovich. Even if this card is not drawn, he will still be carrying the hilt of the sunsword when he arrives in the audience hall. If a character asks for the treasure, he will request a formal challenge in either the ring or the jousting lane.

### 8 of Coins—Tax Collector

What you seek belongs to one with a heavy purse and a silver spoon. Where a royal guest arrives, this treasure may be found.

The treasure is with one of the Barovian nobles who is visiting as part of the celebration.

## CHAPTER 4: TATYANA

Nothing, not even the treasures of Ravenloft, could disrupt the joy Strahd felt during Tatyana's stay in Castle Ravenloft. The night they met, however, the treasures floated right under his nose.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 6 of Stars—Evoker

An elven woman scorned, yearning for the devil's attention. The night she was first neglected holds the key.

The treasure is held by Patrina Velikovna.

### 3 of Glyphs—Healer

I see a priestess, pledged to the Morninglord but shrouded by the night. Her warnings fell on deaf ears the night the treasure vanished.

The treasure is in Ilona Darovnya's possession.

## CHAPTER 5: THE UNHOLY COMMUNION

The night Strahd pledged his soul to undeath was clouded in unbridled rage. In the twilight of his mortal life, however, he ignored treasures that would one day be instrumental to his downfall.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 9 of Stars—Conjurer

Search the place where death whispered in the devil's ear. A magical collection amassed by greed houses the treasure you seek.

The treasure is on the bookshelf in Strahd's study as he is enraptured by the voice whispering through the room.

### 8 of Stars—Necromancer

Look to the wizard who guards forbidden knowledge. The night he surrendered was the night the treasure was lost.

The treasure is with Exethanter. He will offer it to the party as Strahd leaves the room so that they can do what he and the other members of the Order of the Guardians could not.

## CHAPTER 6: WEDDING BELLS

Tatyana and Sergei's wedding day should have been one of joy and love. Instead, Strahd's narcissism and cruelty turned the dream into a nightmare. The treasures were lost in the chaos of the massacre.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 2 of Glyphs—Missionary

A brother of light, devoted to love. The treasure you seek was with him on his darkest day.

The treasure is with Sergei during the ceremony.

### 4 of Stars—Abjurer

What you seek is guarded by a beacon of love and hope. Look to the day her wedding bells rang.

The treasure is with Tatyana as she readies herself for the ceremony.

## CHAPTER 7: THE CORRUPTION OF YESTERHILL

The desecration of the Fanes began with Strahd's sacrifices to the Gulthias Tree. Champions of the Morninglord fought desperately to prevent the inevitable.

Whether they wielded the artifacts of Strahd's demise or they were carried by the slain Forest People, Strahd's singular focus on the tree meant that he overlooked the treasures nearby.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 5 of Glyphs—Druid

I see those who dwell in the forests, twisted to believe the devil and the land are one and the same. They carried the treasure you seek to their undying grave.

The treasure is with one of the Forest Folk resurrected by Strahd who carries it to the Gulthias Tree.

### 1 of Swords—Avenger

A sacred tree withers and rots. The night the Devil claimed the roots for his own, a warrior of the sun held the treasure you seek.

The treasure is held by Sorina Markovia as she defends the tree from Strahd.

## CHAPTER 8: THE HEART OF THE OLD GODS

The hags and witches of Barovia are largely loyal to Strahd. Unfortunately for him, as they focused intently on aiding his corruption of the land, they overlooked other powerful artifacts in their possession.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 9 of Swords—Torturer

Go to where the last of the faithful were sacrificed by the other mother. That night they clung to the treasure as they clung to their faith.

The treasure is with the priest of the Rozana bound to the western standing stone.

### 7 of Stars—Illusionist

Search the hutch where the woad witches culled the flock. The treasure lies a murder of corpses.

The treasure is in the hags' pantry behind a few ingredients.

## CHAPTER 9: THE MARCH OF THE DAWN

The March of the Dawn marked the first and only major attempt at overthrowing Strahd's rule in the last several centuries. The brave soldiers raised the treasures against the Dark Lord in their rebellion.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### Master of Stars—Wizard

There were warriors who came centuries ago. The treasure you seek was carried into battle the night they failed.

The treasure is being carried by the wizard leading the Castle Ravenloft invasion party.

### 4 of Swords—Mercenary

I see a grand army marching to their doom. The night they fell they clung to the treasure you seek.

The treasure is with the soldiers marching along the bridge toward Castle Ravenloft.

## CHAPTER 10: THE LEGACY OF VASILI VON HOLTZ

Strahd von Zarovich is a Dark Lord of purpose and law. Even a half-century after Leo Dilisnya's attempted coup, Strahd was blinded by a desire for revenge. So blinded he overlooked dangerous, magical treasures.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 1 of Glyphs—Monk

I see a monastery, high in the mountains and long lost to time. Find the one who kept Barovia's history the night the Devil came. The treasure is with her.

The treasure is with Anya Alexeev in the Scribe's Study (area M3c).

### 7 of Glyphs—Charlatan

What you seek was taken by a traitor. An iron warrior guards the treasure at his request. Look to the night the Devil enacted his revenge.

The treasure is in Leo's Quarters (area M4d).

## CHAPTER 11: THE FINAL DUSK

The death of Patrina Velikovna sparked a violent fury in Strahd, one that manifested in the butchering of the men, women, and children of the dusk elves. His singular focus on this genocide meant overlooking the treasures.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### 6 of Coins—Beggar

What you seek was guarded by the dusk elves before the Vistani came. They hid the treasure in their home the night the Devil descended upon them. You will find it there.

The treasure is hidden in a dusk elf hovel.

### 5 of Stars—Elementalist

A dusk elf who led his people through their darkest night stood against his Lord. The night he was consumed by grief, he held your prize.

The treasure is with Kasimir Velikov.

## CHAPTER 12: A SOUL'S RETURN

Nothing and no one, living nor dead, can capture Strahd's attention like Tatyana Federovna. His obsession with her damned Barovia. It is only sensible that her first reincarnation would mean overlooking the treasures just around the corner.

## TREASURE LOCATIONS

### Master of Glyphs—Priest

There is a church that suffered a terrible fate. The day it was drowned, its priest found the treasure on the grounds.

The treasure is with Father Grigor at St. Ecaterina's church.

### 3 of Coins—Trader

I see a merchant, lost in a great flood. The day the Devil arrived, the treasure came to their store.

The treasure is in Taltos Trading Post.

## APPENDIX B: DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following descriptions provide insight into the motivations and behaviors of some of the prominent figures of Strahd's past. They are listed here in the order in which they appear.

### ALEKSANDRA 'ALEK' GWILYM

Aleksandra is the older sister of Sir Godfrey Gwilym and Strahd's second-in-command. Although Rahadin remains his most loyal retainer and mentor, Alek is the closest thing Strahd has ever had to a friend.

She is loyal to Strahd to a fault, but unlike Rahadin, she also has no qualms about talking back to Strahd. In battle, she is aggressive but precise and will not be felled easily.

## RAHADIN

Rahadin is Strahd's oldest mentor, advisor, and servant all in one. He slaughtered his own people at King Barov's behest because he felt they were weak. In the aftermath of this genocide, he was tasked with training a young Strahd von Zarovich in the ways of battle.

Rahadin is cunning, sadistic, and perhaps even more mysterious than the Dark Lord himself. While neither would ever acknowledge this fact, Rahadin was often more of a father to Strahd than the conqueror Barov ever was.

## LEO DILISNYA

The Dilisnya family was one of the wealthiest banners pledged to the von Zarovich cause. They served under Barov for decades, and Leo's brother Reinhold took up that pledge after their father passed. Leo, however, thinks that Strahd is a cruel, senseless warlord and a danger to his people.

Leo is boisterous and cocky, and even in the heat of a fight will not be found without colorful robes and a gaudy, golden lion head necklace that he had commissioned.

## SERGEI VON ZAROVICH

Sergei is Strahd's younger, bolder, and more charismatic brother. He is a little over a decade younger than Strahd, and he was raised within the safe walls of their parents' castle. Sergei has never seen war and was brought up under the watchful eye of the church.

While still youthful and rebellious, he has prepared his entire life to be a representative of the Morninglord. Above all else, Sergei is naive, kind to a fault, and always thinks the best of people—especially his elder brother.

## TATYANA

Tatyana is an auburn-haired woman from the small village of Barovia. She is giving and selfless, and even though she has farmland to maintain, she spends the majority of her days helping others, especially the elderly, around the village.

Tatyana met Sergei on his journey into the village—as both an envoy of his lord brother and the church—and fell in love with him. Similar to Sergei, Tatyana is optimistic, helpful, and sees the best in everyone.

Though she enjoys the time she spends at Castle Ravenloft, she feels like a farm girl out of place in a royal court.

## ILONA DAROVNYA

Ilona Darovnya is a Dawnlord (the third-highest rank within the Church of the Morninglord) though is still often referred to as "priestess." She traveled alongside Strahd throughout his several-year-long campaign to claim Barovia and serves as a spiritual advisor, tactician, and occasionally, healer.

Ilona has a calm demeanor, a keen mind, and a sharp wit. The only thing sharper is her tongue. She is not afraid of Strahd; she knows the Morninglord guides her.

## **GABRIEL ANDRAL**

Gabriel Andral is a Dawnmaster (the highest rank a mortal can reach within the Church of the Morninglord). In the aftermath of Strahd's victory in the valley, Gabriel takes on the role of the head of the churches of Barovia.

To Strahd, Gabriel is a tool that can be leveraged in order to keep the villages of Barovia placated. To the ancient Forest Folk, Gabriel Andral is a crusading zealot that wants to separate them (and their Ladies) from their ancestral homes.

Gabriel is devout, committed to his convictions, and initially believes Strahd's victory is a service to the Morninglord.

## **SORINA MARKOVIA**

Sorina Markovia, at the time of Strahd's conquering, is a young assistant to Gabriel Andral. In the years following Strahd's death she grows to become High Dawnlord (the second-highest rank within the Church of the Morninglord), and after the death of Gabriel Andral, Dawnmaster.

Sorina is insightful, adaptable, and dedicated to helping others over all else.

## **PATRINA VELIKOVNA**

Patrina is the princess of the dusk elves and sister to Kasimir Velikov. She harbors a deep-seated resentment for Rahadin after he betrayed their people, and she holds nearly as much hatred for Strahd because of his family's role in the genocide.

In the early days of Strahd's rule, she genuinely came to care for him after forgiving him for his father's sins.

In undeath, she only saw him as an easily misled tyrant and an opportunity to grow her own powers and enact revenge. Patrina is manipulative, self-centered, and a master of deceit.

## **VASILI VON HOLTZ**

Vasili is Strahd's alter ego. He is courteous and, due to his illusory nature, can easily mask Strahd's distaste for playing the part of the servant with respect for those he interacts with.

Vasili knows the intricacies of high society and can seamlessly blend in when necessary, but Strahd's monstrous nature drives his intentions.

## **LOVINA WACHTER**

Lovina Wachter is a distant ancestor of Fiona Wachter and became the matriarch of the Wachter family in the wake of her family's deaths during Sergei and Tatyana's wedding. She was only five years old at the time of the coup and was hidden by her father during the slaughter.

She has repressed much of the evening, but nearly her entire life she has been motivated by hatred for the Dilisnyas. Lovina is vindictive, self-assured, and cruel.

## **MONASTERY MONKS**

The monks of the Order of the Guardians monastery are solitary academics. They have vowed to protect and maintain the knowledge of the order from those who would abuse it.

While reclusive, they are welcoming hosts and want to spread goodness through the world where possible. They remain bound by the tenants of their order, however, and require guests to respect their rules. The monks are content, generous, and well-read.

## **KASIMIR VELIKOV**

Kasimir Velikov is the prince of the dusk elves. He shares his sister's hatred of Rahadin and Strahd. Unlike his sister, he never believed Strahd was any better than his father and would give anything to see his sister returned and Strahd defeated. Present-day Kasimir has given up all hope. The night his sister was killed, Kasimir was blinded by vengeance, recklessness, and grief.

## APPENDIX C: REWARD LIST

Chapter	Reward
Prologue: Youth	<a href="#">Illusory Script</a>
Chapter 1: The Battle of Argynvostholt	<a href="#">Unseen Servant</a>
Chapter 2: The Rise of Ravenloft	<a href="#">Gentle Repose</a>
Chapter 3: Brothers in Arms	<a href="#">Mage Armor</a>
Chapter 4: Tatyana	<a href="#">Philter of Love (Recipe)</a>
Chapter 5: The Unholy Communion	<a href="#">Commune (with Vampyr)</a>
Chapter 6: Wedding Bells	<a href="#">Ceremony</a>
Chapter 7: The Corruption of Yesterhill	<a href="#">Hallow</a>
Chapter 8: The Heart of the Old Gods	<a href="#">Magic Jar</a>
Chapter 9: The March of the Dawn	<a href="#">Find Greater Steed (Nightmare)</a>
Chapter 10: The Legacy of Vasili von Holtz	<a href="#">Forbiddance</a>
Chapter 11: The Final Dusk	<a href="#">Force Cage</a>
Chapter 12: A Soul's Return	<a href="#">Tsunami</a>

## APPENDIX D: MAPS

Many of the maps referenced here are found within the *Curse of Strahd* module itself. For original maps designed for these adventures, see below:

1. [The Hag's Hut \(Area O5\)](#)
2. [The Order of the Guardians Monastery](#)

## APPENDIX E: HANDOUTS

1. [Item Card](#)
2. [Letter announcing Ravenovia's death](#)
3. [Epilogue: A Lord's Rest - Final Page](#)
4. [Cover Art](#)

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- Giant in the Cloud by [Mist XG](#)
- Morninglord Brooch by [DoodleLily](#)
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Umbramy's [Interactive Tome](#)

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u/DragnaCarta's [Curse of Strahd: Reloaded](#) and their new [Patreon page](#)

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William Rotor's [Outclassed NPC Compendium](#)

Elsa's Song by [the Amazing Devil](#) as recommended by [Steven V](#)

Cecilia D'Anastasio's [How to Cook](#)

TheAmazingMu's [Much Ado About Dusk Elves](#)

guildsbounty's [vampire bride ceremony](#)

# THE TRUE HISTORY OF BAROVIA

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If you and your intrepid adventurers are interested in more content from The Aciduous Adventurer, [check out my other adventures on DMsGuild.](#)



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