



Rictavio's Notebook

I had not seen her in 10 years, but if Esmeralda had not saved me from the dungeon of Count Lugosi, I am not sure I would have survived much longer. How she learned of my capture and imprisonment, I cannot say. I can only hope she has survived after we had split in the woods while being hunted. She had never arrived at our meeting place at the tower and I fear the worse. As I was stripped of my weapons, especially my raven cane, I have only my coin to alert me to vampires. I could wait no longer and needed a plan.

I have decided my best course of action is to disguise myself as the young Rictavo, a performer, and entertainer. Taking refuge in Vallaki and hiding among the villagers, I continue to seek out allies in my attempt to bring down the greatest of all vampires, Strahd.

This town of Vallaki is one of political intrigue and not everyone is as who they seem and the town is full of secrets. Some, I fear, maybe allies or in league with Lord Strahd.

I am intrigued why Lord Strahd has ignored the Village of Vallaki, perhaps the town is of no interest as it is certainly not a threat to the Dark Lord. Yet, I wonder if there is some power that keeps Lord Strahd away.

My notes about the town are as follow.

Baron Vargus - a man of a skewed moral code and self-importance. He is shrewd and politically savvy. He has forbidden anyone to mention Lord Strahd by name and has held festivals to maintain a pitiful empty celebration after celebration as if it keeps the darkness away. He rules by fear and uses his henchmen and town guard to lay down heavy law. Truth is, the town is miserable under his rule, but at the same time feel safe. His wife is always holding tea parties for the lesser nobles in the village, holding court it seems. The son, Victor, is dark and I fear he is dabbling in dark magic. I have seen more than the occasional body being removed from the Baron's manor by the caretaker and there is a constant posting for servant positions by the Baron.

Wachter - Lady Fiona is the other political power in Vallaki. She comes from one of the older noble houses and believes it is her time to rule. She has convinced many of the lesser noble houses to her side. She believes the Baron provokes Lord Strahd and it is only a matter of time before darkness falls upon Vallaki. She believes Lord Strahd deserves respect and honor, not one to trifle with. I am unsure if she is allied with Lord Strahd or just believes he is one to be respected in hopes of leaving the Vallaki alone. Lately, she has been holding secret meetings at her home late at night, cloak figures enter the home in the back entrance and do not leave until daybreak. Her husband has not been seen in months and her daughter is said to be cursed.

Earnst - he is Lady Fiona Wachter's spy and right-hand man. A sneaky fellow, always lurking. He often sits alone in the Blue Water Inn watching and listening.

Vasili von Holtz - of a lesser noble house seems to have allied with Lady Wachter. He seeks to be recognized and lusts for power, allying with the side he believes will eventually win the power struggle. While I believe harmless, I do not trust him. He is enamored by Lady Wachter's power, almost if bewitched. Vasili speaks of his love for Ireena, the daughter of the Burgomaster of the Village of Barovia, who sometimes comes to Vallaki.

Anya - she is the only half-elf in Vallaki and somewhat of an alchemist or mage, I am not sure. She has a potion shop on the east side of town. I learned her sister was tried for witchcraft and was to be burnt, but Vasili stepped in and convinced the Baron to banish her, saving her from death. Anya is a strong ally of Vasili, owing him her allegiance for saving her sister.

Martikovs - there is far more to this family than meets the eye. Several travelers come and go, staying at the inn and having secret meetings with the Martikovs. While they are no ally of the Vistani, their secret meetings are suspicious. Their family owns the fabled Wizard of Wine vineyard and I know are growing concern with the slowing of wine production. Lately, I have heard noises late at night in the attic above my room at the inn. I have yet to inquire about it. I have a good feeling about them but have yet to learn their secret.

Feedrich the tailor - he is a valuable source of information about the noble families in Vallaki. Feeding him with a drop of gossip and he will pour forth information.

Izek Stranzani - the Baron's right-hand man and henchman. He runs the local guard, manages the prison, and conducts the interrogations. He is ruthless and runs hot, ready to fight. I have seen him often leaving Blinsky's toy shop with a wrapped package under his arm. Blinsky will not speak of it, but Izek is buying something on a regular basis from Blinsky.

Father Petrovich - he maintains the real morale and hope in Vallaki. Most of the town attends his sermons of hope. He respects the Baron but avoids picking sides in local politics. He is a true man of the cloth. However, I believe he holds a secret that weighs heavily on him, almost as if there is far more to his role as the father of St. Andral's church.