

APPENDIX F: HANDOUTS

KOLYAN INDIROVICH'S LETTER (VERSION 1)

Hail to thee of might and valor.

I, a lowly servant of Barovia, send honor to thee. We plead for thy so desperately needed assistance.

The love of my life, Freena Kolyana, has been afflicted by an evil so deadly that even the good people of our village cannot protect her. She languishes from her wound, and I would have her saved from this menace.

There is much wealth in this community. I offer all that might be had to thee and thy fellows if thou shalt but answer my desperate plea.

Come quickly, for her time is at hand! All that I have shall be thine!

Kolyan Indirovich
Burgomaster

STRAHD'S INVITATION

My friends,

I know that it is I who have brought you to this land, my home, and know that I alone can release you from it. I bid you dine at my castle so that we can meet in civilized surroundings. Your passage here will be a safe one. I await your arrival.



Your host,
Strahd von Zarovich

FROM THE TOME OF STRAHD

I am the Ancient. I am the Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past. I was the warrior, I was good and just. I thundered across the land like the wrath of a just god, but the war years and the killing years wore down my soul as the wind wears stone into sand.

All goodness slipped from my life. I found my youth and strength gone, and all I had left was death. My army settled in the valley of Barovia and took power over the people in the name of a just god, but with none of a god's grace or justice.

I called for my family, long unseated from their ancient thrones, and brought them here to settle in the castle Ravenloft. They came with a younger brother of mine, Sergei. He was handsome and youthful. I hated him for both.

From the families of the valley, one spirit shone above all others. A rare beauty, who was called "perfection," "joy," and "treasure." Her name was Tatyana, and I longed for her to be mine.

I loved her with all my heart. I loved her for her youth. I loved her for her joy. But she spurned me!

"Old One" was my name to her—"elder" and "brother" also. Her heart went to Sergei. They were betrothed. The date was set.

With words she called me "brother," but when I looked into her eyes they reflected another name: "death." It was the death of the ages that she saw in me. She loved her youth and enjoyed it. But I had squandered mine.

The death she saw in me turned her from me. And so I came to hate death—my death. My hate is

very strong. I would not be called "death" so soon. I made a pact with death, a pact of blood. On the day of the wedding, I killed Sergei, my brother. My pact was sealed with his blood.

I found Tatyana weeping in the garden east of the chapel. She fled from me. She would not let me explain, and a great anger swelled within me. She had to understand the pact I made for her. I pursued her. Finally, in despair, she flung herself from the walls of Ravenloft, and I watched everything I ever wanted fall from my grasp forever.

It was a thousand feet through the mists. No trace of her was ever found. Not even I know her final fate.

Arrows from the castle guards pierced me to my soul, but I did not die. Nor did I live. I became undead, forever.

I have studied much since then. "Vampyr" is my new name. I still lust for life and youth, and I curse the living that took them from me. Even the sun is against me. It is the sun and its light I fear the most, but little else can harm me now. Even a stake through my heart does not kill me, though it holds me from movement. But the sword, that cursed sword that Sergei brought! I must dispose of that awful tool! I fear and hate it as much as the sun.

I have often hunted for Tatyana. I have even felt her within my grasp, but she escapes. She taunts me! She taunts me! What will it take to bend her love to me?

I now reside far below Ravenloft. I live among the dead and sleep beneath the very stones of this hollow castle of despair. I shall seal shut the walls of the stairs that none may disturb me.

JOURNAL OF RUDOLPH VAN RICHTEN

For more than three decades now, I have undertaken to investigate and expose creatures of darkness to the purifying light of truth and knowledge. "Hero" I am named in some circles; "sage" and "master hunter" I am called in others. That I have survived countless supernatural assaults is seen as a marvel among my peers; my name is spoken with fear and loathing among my foes.

In truth, this "virtuous" calling began as an obsessive effort to destroy a vampire that murdered my child, and it has become for me a tedious and bleak career. Even as my life of hunting monsters began, I felt the weight of time on my weary shoulders. Today I am a man who has simply lived too long. Like a regretful lich, I find myself inexorably bound to an existence I sought out of madness and, seemingly, must now endure for all eternity. Of course I shall die, but whether I shall ever rest in my grave haunts my idle thoughts, and torments me in my dreams.

I expect that those who think me a hero will change their minds when they know the whole truth about my life as a hunter of the unnatural. Nevertheless, I must reveal, here and now, that I have been the indirect yet certain cause of many deaths, and the loss of many good friends. Mistake me not! I do not merely feel sorry for myself. Rather, I come to grips with a devastating realization: I now see that I am the object of a malevolent Vistani curse. More tragically, the nature of this hex is such that I have not borne the brunt of it; instead, far worse, those who surround me have fallen victim to it!

I have related the tragic story of how my only child Erasmus was taken by Vistani and sold to a vampire. I explained how Erasmus was made a minion of the night stalker, and how it was my miserable part to free him from that fate at the point of a stake. What I have neglected to illuminate before is how I tracked Erasmus's kidnappers across the land, or how I "extracted" Erasmus's whereabouts from them.

In fact, the Vistani took Erasmus with my own, unwitting permission. They had brought an extremely ill member of their tribe to me one evening

and insisted that I treat him, but I was unable to save the young man's life. In fear of their retribution, I begged the Vistani to take anything of mine if only they would withhold their terrifying powers, of which I knew nothing. To my lasting astonishment, they chose to surreptitiously take my son in exchange for their loss! By the time I realized what had occurred, they were already an hour gone.

Incensed beyond reason, I strapped the body of the dead young man to my horse and doggedly followed the Vistani caravan through the woods, naively allowing the sun to set before me without seeking shelter from the night. Shortly after darkness fell, I was beset by undead that would have slain me, had not their master—a lich—intervened and spared my life, for reasons that I do not completely understand. He somehow detected me and, with his powerful magic, took control of a pack of zombies that wandered in the forest. He spoke to me through the mouths of the dead things and placed a magic ward against undead on me, then animated the dead Vistana and bade it tell me where I could find its people. Unfortunately (I say in hindsight), the plan worked. I found the child-stealers, and my unwelcome entourage included a growing horde of voracious undead that could not touch me, thanks to the lich's ward.

When I found the caravan, I threatened to set the zombies on the Vistani unless they returned my dear boy. They replied that he had been sold to the vampire, Baron Metus. Something inside me snapped. I released the zombies, and the entire tribe was eaten alive.

Yet the story has not ended. Before she died, the leader cursed me, saying, "Live you always among monsters, and see everyone you love die beneath their claws!" Even now, so many years later, I can hear her words with painful clarity. A short time later, I found my dear Erasmus made into a vampire. He begged me to end his curse, which I did with a heavy heart. The darkness had torn him from my loving arms forever, and I foolishly believed that the curse had exacted its deadly toll. I wept until an insatiate desire for vengeance filled the bottomless rift in my heart.

KOLYAN INDIROVICH'S LETTER (VERSION 2)

Hail thee of might and valor:

I, the Burgomaster of Barovia, send you honor—with despair. My adopted daughter, the fair Greenea Kolyana, has been these past nights bitten by a vampyr. For over four hundred years, this creature has drained the life blood of my people. Now, my dear Greenea languishes and dies from an unholy wound caused by this vile beast. He has become too powerful to conquer.

So I say to you, give us up for dead and encircle this land with the symbols of good. Let holy men call upon their power that the devil may be contained within the walls of weeping Barovia. Leave our sorrows to our graves, and save the world from this evil fate of ours.

There is much wealth entrapped in this community. Return for your reward after we are all departed for a better life.

Kolyan Indirovich
Burgomaster

JOURNAL OF ARGYNVOST

My knights have fallen, and this land is lost. The armies of my enemy will not be stopped by sword or spell, claw or fang. Today I will die, not avenging those who have fallen, but defending that which I love—this valley, this home, and the ideals of the Order of the Silver Dragon.

The evil surrounds me. The time has come to throw off this guise and show these heathens my true fearsome form. Let it spark terror in their hearts! Let them tell their stories of dark triumph against the protector of the Balinok Mountains! Let Argynvost be remembered as a dragon of honor and valor. My one regret is that my remains will not lie in their rightful place, in the hallowed mausoleum of Argynvost-holt. No doubt my bones will be scattered among my enemies like the coins of a plundered hoard, trophies of a hard-won victory.

I do not fear death. Though my body will die, my spirit will live on. Let it serve as a beacon of light against the darkness. Let it bring hope to a land wrought with despair.

Now, to battle!

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