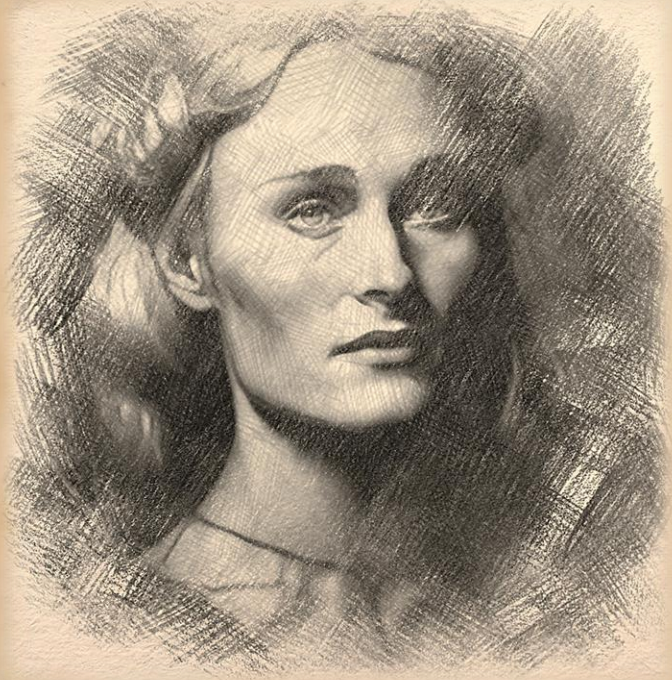


Diary

Lovina Wachter



Fiscal 12, 347

Today, I attended a lavish party in Vallaki and unexpectedly encountered Leo Dilisynya von Zarovich. It seems he took quite a liking to me. Leo possesses an aquiline nose and dark eyes that hold an alluring gaze, but his Vistani heritage is undeniably more prominent than I would prefer. Yet, there's a kindness in his demeanor that intrigues me.

What truly astonishes me is the fact that Leo, the illegitimate son of the King, is the only Vistani permitted in Vallaki. It's quite a scandalous revelation to think Vistani blood runs in the veins of the King's own offspring. Yet, within these walls, no one dares to utter a word about it, as if it were an unspoken pact among the townsfolk.

Apryl 4 347

Leo has extended an invitation for me to accompany him to a Royal Ball at Ravenloft, marking my first visit to the renowned castle and an opportunity to witness the royal family firsthand. In anticipation, I am having a special gown tailored for the occasion. Although Castle Ravenloft is still undergoing reconstruction, it remains a formidable and authentic fortress.

The evening at the Royal Ball surpassed all expectations. The culinary delights and fine wines were unparalleled, while the artwork and intricately crafted stained glass left me in awe. Every aspect exuded regal elegance, solidifying my sense of belonging in such distinguished surroundings. I had the chance to meet Leo's half-brothers, Strahd and Sergei. Strahd, a tall and enigmatic figure, emanated a commanding presence that permeated the room.

Yet, in contrast to his brother Strahd's stoic demeanor, Sergei radiates love and joy, showcasing his remarkable skills as a dancer. His affectionate bond with Tatyana, a captivating local villager, is evident to all who witness them. Their love story exudes a sense of hope, revealing that one need not be born into royalty to embody its essence.

With this realization, my focus shifts to keeping Leo content and perhaps, in doing so, winning his affection in return. The path to a potential royal union lies before me, and I am determined to navigate it with grace and unwavering commitment.

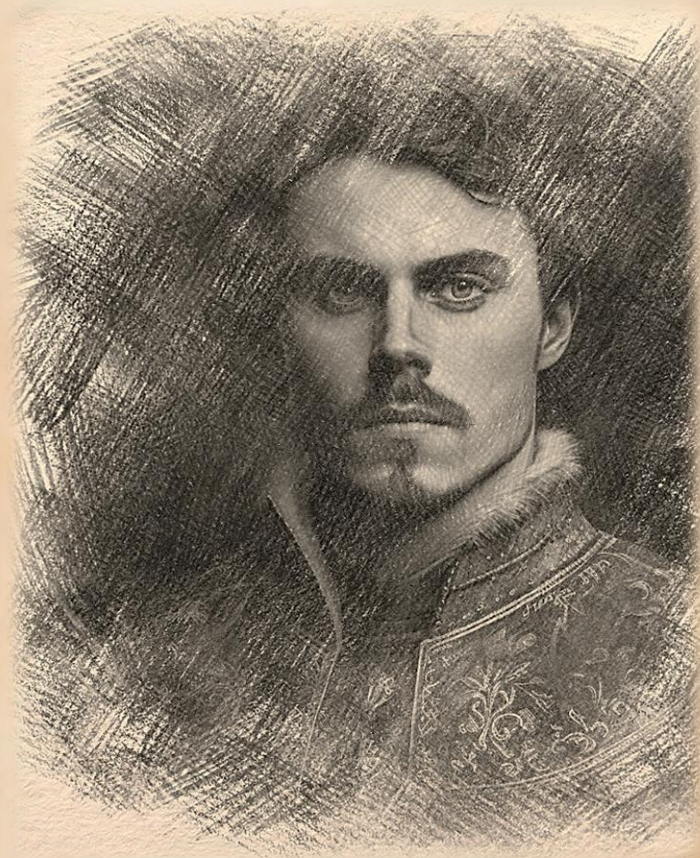


Eyune 7, 347

Leo and I have cherished numerous days and evenings together, yet I have steadfastly preserved my chastity, knowing it to be my sole influence in capturing his affection. I am willing to surrender myself to him, but solely on the condition that he pledges his betrothal, cementing my position within the esteemed realm of the Royal Court.

August 15, 347

Weeks have passed without sighting Leo, and an unsettling fear has taken hold within me. It seems that someone else may have captured his heart, diminishing my prospects of joining the esteemed ranks of the Royal Court.



Neyarr 1, 347

Under the cloak of darkness, Leo has made a clandestine arrival, burdened with a distressing tale. He reveals that his half-brother, Strahd, has an intense infatuation for Tatyana, the betrothed of his brother, Sergei. Leo discloses Strahd's sinister intentions towards Sergei, and in a brave confrontation, he faced his brother's wrath, leading to his own escape as Strahd ordered his arrest. Seeking refuge, Leo sought solace within the confines of my home.

The realization dawns upon me—I cannot afford to become an adversary of Strahd, the prince and now Lord of Barovia. My intentions hold no malice but respect and unwavering loyalty towards the von Zarovich family and the esteemed Royal Court.

Aware of Leo's Vistani heritage, I, like many others, have held reservations about the potential ramifications. I suspect that Leo's motives were driven by a desire to sow discord among the brothers and pursue personal gain, leading to his confrontation with Strahd and subsequent banishment from the family.

To safeguard my position and maintain favor with Strahd, I have resolved to compose a personal letter, wherein I will elucidate the situation. I earnestly intend to demonstrate my unwavering loyalty and utmost respect as I strive to secure my place within the esteemed Royal Court, serving the von Zarovich family with unwavering dedication.

Mayar 4, 347

A black carriage arrived, bearing a private letter and a small wooden box adorned with the von Zarovich Royal seal.

My heart brimmed with excitement as I held a handwritten letter from the Prince and Lord of Barovia.

With great reverence, I shall safeguard this missive, recognizing that it might be the sole correspondence I ever receive from the esteemed Lord of Barovia.



Dearest Lovina Wachter,

It pains me to inform you that my misguided half-brother, Leo, has exploited our family's trust since our father's passing. He has aligned himself with those who oppose us, and we fear grave consequences may ensue.

From the moment we first met, I recognized your exceptional nature, your beauty and grace, deserving of a place among the esteemed ranks of the Royal Court. You are cherished and spoken of fondly by Tatjana. Regrettably, Leo is no longer welcome within the walls of Ravenloft, stripped of his title. He confronted me, prompting the royal guards to tirelessly search throughout Barovia for him to answer for his transgressions.

Though I acknowledge your affection for him and the possibility of some goodness within him, I must express concern over your relationship and allegiance to my half-brother, a Vistani. It places you in a delicate position of harboring an enemy of the Royal Court. If, in your wisdom, you can discreetly rectify this situation, ensuring the safety of the von Zarovich family and the Royal Court, your loyalty shall be duly rewarded with a seat among our esteemed ranks.

I recognize the weight of this burden upon your shoulders, yet I trust that in your heart, you will choose the path that serves the greater good of Barovia.

With the utmost respect and gratitude,
Strahd von Zarovich



The small wooden box, adorned with the Royal Seal, beckoned my curiosity.

Anticipation filled me as I opened it, revealing a petite glass vial. Etched delicately into the surface were the words "Lover's Sleep." I recognized it instantly—the renowned Iser Flower's potion, capable of bestowing eternal slumber upon its imbiber.



Mayar 18, 347

Leo's restless state persisted for several days. In an effort to offer solace, I prepared a comforting bath and served him a cup of tea. Despite his well-intentioned nature, his actions and betrayal have brought disgrace upon me and inflicted harm upon all Barovia. With a heavy heart, I added the contents of the Lover's Sleep vial into the tea, leaving it by his bedside. I feigned illness and retired to the guest room for the night.

The following morning, I discovered him in eternal slumber, a serene smile adorning his face. He shall find everlasting peace in his rest.

I dispatched a message to Ravenloft, informing them that the task has been completed.

May 20, 347

With an ominous air, a foreboding black carriage arrived at the house. Two grim figures stealthily retrieved Leo's lifeless body, shrouded in unsettling silence. Their departure matched the speed of their arrival, instilling a sense of dread that lingered long after they vanished.



Yinvar 1, 348

Weeks have passed since any word from Prince Strahd von Zarovich. Today, a black carriage bearing the royal seal arrives. Prince Strahd himself steps out, and I warmly invite him into my humble abode.

In the study, my servant serves us tea before discreetly withdrawing. Alone with the imposing Lord of Barovia, I sense an underlying sorrow in his presence. Prince Strahd speaks, his voice burdened with grief.

"Your act was valiant, yet perhaps too late. Our adversary hunted down and murdered my dear brother Sergei. It appears this was Leo's sinister scheme all along. Another light has been extinguished, for upon learning of her betrothed's tragic fate, Tatyana leaped from the Pillar of Ravenloft to her demise."

In a state of shock and sorrow, I find myself at a loss for words, unable to offer solace to the grieving Prince and ruler of Barovia.

Prince Strahd reassures me that Leo's betrayal will remain a hidden secret, as his disappearance will be attributed to a tragic hunting accident. My beloved Leo had strayed into the darkness, leaving me to endure these lonely days.

Looking at me with a warm smile, Prince Strahd declares, "At least you are here with us, bringing hope and light to Ravenloft."

He presents me with a royal decree, appointing me as Lady Lovina Wachter, a distinguished member of the Royal Court of Ravenloft. Overwhelmed with pride, I nearly faint.

Just as I am about to express my gratitude to Prince Strahd, his servant enters, bearing a large chest secured with a lock. Bowing to the Prince, the servant departs.

Prince Strahd leans in closely, gripping my hand tightly, and chilling darkness engulfs my very soul. His gaze fixes upon the locked chest, and his eyes brim with shadows.

"You have secured your place on the Royal Court by slaying your lover. The cursed remains of your beloved are imprisoned within this chest, denied both burial and resurrection. They shall remain in your possession, a testament to the sacrifice you have made in service to your Lord and Master. As a member of the Royal Court, you and your descendants, for all eternity, bear the responsibility of surveilling those who defy Ravenloft and your Lord and Master!"

Releasing my hand, Prince Strahd rises and faces the door, his demeanor and tone returning to that of the amiable prince.

"Thank you for the tea, Lady Wachter. I anticipate your presence at the upcoming ball this month."

With those words, he departs from my home, and I have a lingering suspicion that my duties will surpass merely reporting on those who defy him.



Mari 8, 348

Using funds provided by Ravenloft, I have constructed my manor. The news of Leo's vanishing has faded, with many assuming he perished during one of his renowned hunting expeditions, earning him the moniker "Leo the Lion." The chest containing Leo's remains stays locked in my closet, a constant reminder I strive to ignore, yet it lingers in my dreams. On certain nights, I hear Leo's voice beckoning to me, though I dismiss it as mere illusions and foolish dreams.

