

CURSE OF STRAHD: THE WEDDING AT RAVENLOFT

BY WYATT TRULL



HERE COMES THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

THE WEDDING AT RAVENLOFT

Triumphant in his centuries-long pursuit of his beloved Tatyana, Strahd von Zarovich cannot help but gloat. Wedding invitations have been sent out across Barovia, and all are expected to witness this unholy union. In his arrogance, he has invited the adventurers to his place of power to humiliate them one last time before draining Ireena Kolyana of her life's blood and damning her soul for eternity.

Might the gods watch over these wayward souls. Might the strength of their sword-arms and the courage of their hearts be enough to stand boldly against the devil's shadow—for here, in Barovia, all is not well. It can never be well so long as this valley and its people live under the curse of Strahd.

WELCOME TO THE WEDDING

The Wedding at Ravenloft is a module balanced for a party of **four 9th-level adventurers** and is intended as the opening salvo to the titanic conclusion of *Curse of Strahd*.

True to Ravenloft's nature, the deck is stacked *heavily* against the adventurers—either they triumph and live forevermore as heroes or join the legion fools that fell before the devil's claws. They are joined, however, by several allies, as described below, to *almost* even the scales.

The adventure spans four acts, but can be interrupted at any time, advancing straight to the fourth and final act: The Devil's Wedding Night. All told, the entire wedding will last up **five to seven hours** depending on how quickly your players can act and whether they keep the peace until Act IV.

WEDDING OVERVIEW

The Wedding at Ravenloft spans four acts:

I. Greeting the Guests sees the adventurers arriving to Castle Ravenloft, swearing an oath to hospitality, and mingling with the guests. They also have the opportunity to sneak about the castle.

II. The Ceremony is the shortest act, featuring the wedding ceremony between the devil and his bride. If he yet lives, the Abbot crashes the wedding to object, offering his flesh golem, Vasilka, instead.

III. The Reception is the calm before the storm. Strahd enjoys his victory lap and, after leaving for his marital bed, has his minions betray the adventurers.

IV. The Devil's Wedding Night is a modular act offering several side quests for the adventurers to complete, up until they face Strahd at the location determined by their tarokka card reading.

CHARACTERS

Several characters from throughout the campaign attend the wedding, as described in the Guest List. Given the authority Strahd wields over the valley, no guest would willingly rebuke his invitation. Unless slain or otherwise preoccupied, they will attend, bearing gifts and smiling politely.

If a character is dead or indisposed in your campaign, but is mentioned here, adapt. Some characters are versatile; others can be substituted. For example, if Father Lucian died in the St. Andral's Feast event (see "Special Events," Ch. 5), then he can still officiate the wedding as a vampire spawn if his body was never burned. Otherwise, Strahd forces Donavich to officiate, and if the man can't, a nondescript officiator takes his place.

Bottom line: it's your game. Make it work to the story you've already started.

FACTIONS

This is not a quiet affair, but a ceremony for all nobles of the realm and loyalists of the devil Strahd. In his arrogance, the vampire has brought friend and foe alike here to gawk at his triumph.

If a faction does not make sense for you, change it. You can also change the number of agents they have to better fit your party's capabilities.

These factions include:

Comrades. These individuals stand against the devil and include Ismark Kolyanovich or Donavich.

Cultists. Eager to demonstrate her ability to Strahd, as well as pilfer arcane secrets from his study, Fiona Wachter has brought four **cult fanatics** and three **cultists**, disguised as Vallakians.

Dusk Elves. Kasimir Velikov has been invited as yet another sleight against his people; he has brought a retinue of three dusk elf **guards**.

Innocents. These characters are noncombatants that flee from carnage. Some, like the Wachter brothers, can be elevated to Comrade or Loyalist status at your discretion.

Keepers of the Feather. As nobles, the Martikovs have been invited to the wedding. Strahd is unaware of their lycanthropic nature. They've stationed six other **wereraven** agents and 2d4 **ravens** outside the castle walls to assist the adventurers. Brom and Bray Martikov only have 7 hit points each and are considered Innocents. This faction is described as "Wereravens" on the Guest List and other sections.

Loyalists. These individuals include **Rahadin**, **vampire spawn**, and other characters loyal to the devil Strahd.

Vistani. Strahd has need of minions unafflicted by sunlight or silver and has brought his Vistani servants. Led by Arrigal, these four Vistani **thugs** are the main instruments of Strahd's betrayal of the adventurers. Any number of additional Vistani thugs, bandits, or spies are at your disposal.

Werewolves. The pack, led by Kiril Stoyanovich, attend the wedding as enforcers. These five **werewolves** hide amongst the sheep in their human forms and roam the halls during Act I. Unless the adventurers have previously met them, they're none the wiser that the wolves have come to dine.

THE VAMPIRE HUNTERS

Both Rictavio and Ezmerelda d'Avenir can be included in this adventure—they would no doubt like to capitalize on the devil's distraction. Neither, however, have been invited unless they're the destined ally of the adventurers. Ezmerelda can be found stalking the castle via a Random Encounter. Given their importance in *Curse of Strahd*, it's possible that Strahd has already found and slain either of the two, in which case he would use them as added **vampire spawn** for the wedding. If Ezmerelda d'Avenir has been reduced to such a state, she serves as a bridesmaid to Ireena Kolyana.

The status of these two are left up to you; the module has been written assuming they're not present.

THE GUISE OF GUEST RIGHT

When the adventurers arrive, they're expected to swear to an oath of hospitality. They will offer no violence or disrespect to their host and his guests unless they've been attacked.

In truth, this fragile peace is merely a ploy by Strahd to ensure that things go as planned. Once Ireena has been married and slain, he intends to round up the adventurers to be her first meal come the hour of her dark rebirth.

A NOTE ON LYCANTHROPY

Should any character succumb to lycanthropy, inform them that the full moon is still days or weeks away—but Strahd is the Ancient. Strahd is the Land. In Act IV, he reaches out to hurl the moon from its lofty bed and into the Barovian sky so that in this newfound bloodlust, these wolves turn their fangs and claws on those that once were friends.

See Act IV for more information.

GUEST LIST

NAME	FACTION	STATISTICS	PG. ¹
Adrian Martikov	Wereravens	LG wereraven	174
Anna Krezkova	Innocents	LG noble	155
Arabelle	Innocents	NE commoner	38
Arrigal	Vistani	NE assassin	121
Bray Martikov	Innocents	LG wereraven	98
Brom Martikov	Innocents	LG wereraven	98
Cult Fanatics (4)	Cultists	LE cult fanatic	115
Cultists* (3)	Cultists	LE cultist	115
Danika Dorakova	Wereravens	LG wereraven	98
Davian Martikov	Wereravens	LG wereraven	174
Dmitri Krezkov	Innocents	LG noble	145
Donavich	Comrades	LG acolyte	46
Dusk Elves (3)	Dusk Elves	N guard	121
Escher	Loyalists	NE vampire spawn	70
Fiona Wachter	Cultists	LE priest	110
Heinrik van der Voort	Innocents	LE commoner	116
Ismark Kolyanovich	Comrades	LG veteran	43
Karl Wachter	Innocents	N noble	100
Kasimir Velikov	Dusk Elf	N mage	121
Kiril Stoyanovich	Werewolves	CE werewolf	201
Krezkite Nobles (8)	Innocents	LN noble	N/A
Lief Lipsiege	Innocents	CE commoner	62
Lucian Petrovich	Comrades	LG priest	97
Luvash	Vistani	CE bandit captain	121
Lydia Petrovna	Innocents	LG commoner	105
Nikolai Wachter	Innocents	N noble	100
Rahadin	Loyalists	LE (see appendix D)	237
Sasha Ivlickova	Loyalists	NE vampire spawn	89
Urwin Martikov	Wereravens	LG wereraven	98
Vallakian Nobles* (5)	Innocents	LG noble	N/A
Vargas Vallakovich	Innocents	NE noble	105
Vistani Thugs (4)	Vistani	NE thug	N/A
Werewolves (4)	Werewolves	werewolf	N/A

¹ Found in *Curse of Strahd*

² Invited to the reception, but not the ceremony

THE FORTUNES OF RAVENLOFT

The adventurers' tarokka reading can affect this module in several ways.

ARTIFACTS

If an artifact lies within the castle, the adventurers ought to go searching for it during Acts I or III.

DESTINED ALLY

With exception to a few characters, Strahd would invite the party's destined ally to the wedding as well, whether or not he knows that the character has sided with the adventurers.

Characters that would not normally be invited and must then find another means of entry include:

- Clovin Belview
- The Mad Mage
- Pidlwick II
- Rictavio
- Sir Godfrey Gwilym
- Sir Klutz Tripalotsky
- Vasilka

DESTINED SHOWDOWN

Fate is a fickle thing. In regard to the adventurers' tarokka reading that determines where they will find Strahd in the castle, you may need to bend the rules. Follow these guidelines.

Before the Wedding. If the adventurers proceed immediately to their destined showdown, they find Strahd there—but the vampire need not stay. If they decide to fight, Strahd eventually retreats by phasing through a wall with his lair action and orders his castle guard and minions to hold them off. This module then becomes a dash to the chapel to stop the wedding—at your discretion.

During the Wedding. If the adventurers' destined showdown is to occur in an area used for the wedding (for example, the Audience Hall (area K25)), they might interpret it as both the time and place of their battle—when in fact, it is only the place. Later, in Act IV, the adventurers return to this place, they will find Strahd there.

PREPARATION

While this module has been written to alleviate as much work for you as possible, it does assume you have basic knowledge of the campaign's several characters and their motivations.

Because this is the conclusion to a months-long campaign, your story can hardly be expected to align perfectly with what's written here. Characters may have died off or been modified in the course of your campaign. *The Wedding at Ravenloft* operates under this assumption but requires you to take the initiative to check for plot holes when in regard to your campaign. Before you run this module, you should ask yourself the following questions, adjusting accordingly based off the answers:

- Has Rahadin, Ismark Kolyanovich, or Ireena Kolyana been slain? Have any other characters mentioned in this module?
- Are any of the characters at the wedding, like Arrigal, the party's destined ally? Does this conflict with the module?
- Was St. Andral's Feast thwarted? If not, did Father Lucian die to Strahd? Was his body burned?

- Were the Vallakoviches executed?
 - Has Lady Wachter seized Vallaki?
 - Was the Abbot met? Does he yet live? Does Vasilka?
 - Were the Keepers of the Feathers helped by the adventurers in any way?
 - Has Kasimir Velikov received his dark gift from the Amber Temple?
 - Has the werewolf pack been annihilated?

PLAYERS' PREPARATIONS

The players are not just mute witnesses to a wedding in this module and have opportunities for their own creativity. The players are encouraged to:

Write Toasts. Each adventurer should have a toast prepared for the happy wedding couple. Incendiary toasts are either met by Strahd's mocking smile, or Rahadin's glare.

Give Gifts. Each adventurer is expected to bring a wedding gift and will present it during the reception. It would be a great insult to not present their host a gift for such an important event.

Scheme. The adventurers are encouraged to have a battle plan ready. You can guide them through this with a Socratic method with these questions:

- Will you object during the wedding?
- How would you stop Strahd from killing and turning Ireena Kolyana?
- What do you intend to do after it all goes to hell?

ARTWORK

Glory to our most-anticipated artists:

DEAN SPENCER

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- *Vampire*: Cover Page
- *Desert Gear*: pg. 5
- *Mage Reading*: pg. 25
- *Skeleton Attacking*: pg. 27
- *Werewolf*: pg. 21

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- *Dusty Ruins*: pg. 11

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ACT I: GREETINGS THE GUESTS

Dismal rain wails against the castle's windows and walls while inside guests whisper amongst themselves. Corpses in armor stand guard against spies and dissenters, and all in the air is the worry that tonight will be red—but by Strahd's hand or the adventurers,' they do not know.

ACT I OVERVIEW

Act I spans five chapters, and covers the adventurers' arrival to Castle Ravenloft and their efforts up until the ceremony begins. The adventurers are disarmed (under threat of expulsion) and sworn to guest right but can recover their contraband later.

1. ARRIVAL TO RAVENLOFT

It's assumed adventurers arrive in a carriage; either they've brought their own or they can take the Black Carriage (see Area I, Ch. 2). The drawbridge is no longer trapped; there is no risk of falling over.

1A. APPROACHING CASTLE RAVENLOFT

No matter from where the adventurers start their trek to Castle Ravenloft, they find that Barovia has no new troubles to offer them. No wolves harry their trip. No amount of rain can turn the Svalich Road into mud. The land itself bends to the will of Strahd—and it is the devil's will that his greatest foes arrive on time for their humiliation. Read:

The road that has been so fraught with peril is eerily quiet on this last journey. Ruts of previous wagons mark the Svalich Road like fossils as you venture closer to Castle Ravenloft. Through those silent hills and watchful forests your carriage continues on with no music but the sound of hooves and nervous silence.

Farther east you go as the day darkens into dusk and the wind begins to howl like a neglected child. The rain swells from mere tears to a storm that shakes the very valley.

But the roads, you notice, do not turn to mud. They do not worsen. Curiously enough, the closer you draw to Ravenloft, the quicker the wheels turn. The faster your mounts move. As you near the belly of the beast, it seems to welcome you.

Just as you crest that last hill, the tallest of Ravenloft's spires hails you, its awesome presence both startling and ominous. A drawbridge spans a gorge that plummets into unseen depths, and its chains moan with the wind.

And so, it has come to this, heroes: the darkest hour of your quest. You stand in the shadow of Castle Ravenloft, in the shadow of the devil himself. The road has been paved with blood and broken hopes. Will you triumph against Strahd? Or will you join the legion of fools buried beneath his iron heel?

Might your gods watch over you. Might the strength of your arms and the courage in your hearts be enough to overcome this final challenge—for here in Barovia, all is not well. It can never be well so long as this valley and its people suffer under the curse of Strahd.

Dare you end it?

1B. OUR MOST ANTICIPATED GUESTS

When the adventurers reach the Front Courtyard (area K1), they're greeted by Cyrus Belview, Strahd's faithful **mongrelfolk** servant. This text assumes they arrived via carriage and horses. Modify it as needed:

The courtyard teems with thick, cold fog. Lightning lances the weeping clouds while thunder shakes the very stones of this place. A hunched figure shelters from the dismal rain nearby, nursing his lantern. As your carriage pulls up, his monstrous face comes into view: scales line his left cheek; panther's ears protrude from his hood, and one foot is that of a duck's. When his yellowed gob opens, you find that his voice is as grating and hideous as his face.

"Ah, it's you! Yes, yes! Welcome to Ravenloft! Your arrival is most anticipated, most anticipated indeed! I am the master's servant, Cyrus of Belview. Welcome!" The beast of a man chuckles, rubbing his hands together. "Your horses, oh your horses! I will take your horses! You, yes, into the keep with you! Most anticipated, oh yes!"

That hideous mongrel reaches out for your horses' reins. Even they seem repulsed. Cyrus points you toward the keep: the main doors are ajar. Warm light spills out into the courtyard only to be devoured by the fog.

The adventurers are the last of the guests; regardless of whether they arrived via the Black Carriage or by their own, Cyrus takes it and the horses to the Carriage House (K4).

ROLEPLAYING CYRUS BELVIEW

Cyrus is Strahd's chaotic evil faithful servant, and a crass, rambling lunatic. He's hunched at 4 feet, 9 inches and has the Keen Hearing and Smell feature. His left cheek is scaled, and his ears are that of a panther. His webbed foot causes him to shamble unevenly. See pg. 77, Ch. 4 for more information.

2. THE OATH OF HOSPITALITY

Once inside the Entry (K7), the adventurers face **Rahadin** and six **wights**. The chamberlain has come to ensure that the master's most dangerous guests understand the rules of the evening.

If the adventurers offer violence, Rahadin can call for reinforcements. The Vistani, werewolves, and other allies of the devil in nearby areas can arrive in

2 rounds. Additionally, Rahadin can shut the door and wake the four **red dragon wyrmlings** in K7.

When the characters enter the Entry (K7) read:

The light is almost blinding as you step from that dismal rain and into the entry, but it's hardly inviting. Cold and distant music floats from the innards of the keep.

Overhead, in the vaulted foyer, dragon statues glare down, their glossy eyes flickering in the torchlight. Corpses clad in armor stand in the corners of the room and an elf motions you forward: Rahadin, chamberlain of Castle Ravenloft and honorary brother to Strahd himself. The countless souls of those this fanatic has slain howl in the silence of the hall, only drowned out in the outside crash of thunder.

Rahadin's grim voice intones, "Our most anticipated guests. Please step forward and be recognized in the House of von Zarovich."

2A. SWEARING OF GUEST RIGHT

Rahadin expects the adventurers to swear to the oath of hospitality: a mutual assurance of protection between guest and host. So long as the adventurers obey guest right—spill no blood, unsheathe no sword, respect thine host, and obey Strahd's laws—they need not worry about being attacked first.

Of course, this is all a ruse. After the reception, Strahd intends to make these most-anticipated guests Ireena Kolyana's first tasting when she awakens as a vampire spawn at tomorrow's dusk. Rahadin, however, is inscrutable.

Read the following:

Rahadin's lips are pressed into a flat line. "As honored guests of Count Strahd, there are *expectations* to be had. Guest right will not be ignored, and you must swear to the oath of hospitality. Tonight, we celebrate this union. No harm shall come to you in these halls unless you provoke it—and so the lord of this house expects the same.



"Swear to me, here and now, at this hour. Swear to me, as brother and servant of Strahd of House von Zarovich, lord of this house, lord of Barovia. Swear to spill no blood, unsheathe no sword, respect thine host, and obey his laws. Swear to this, all of it, or begone."

A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check, or has the Noble background, is quite familiar with guest right and the oath of hospitality and can find no tricks in the language offered by Rahadin.

2B. DISARMING OUR HONORED GUESTS

Before the adventurers may continue, Rahadin demands they relinquish their arms and armor. Given that they've acquired guest right, their worries should be soothed by this new development. Read:

The wights loiter silent about, their eyes far too intelligent for your liking. They seem to regard your mortal frames with more hunger than intrigue.

With the oath sworn, you move towards the Grand Entry—but Rahadin blocks your way. His eyes narrow. "This is not yet done, *guests*." He throws this last word as if it were an insult. "Given your history," the elf says, "I must insist that you disarm yourselves. It is, after all, a wedding. Your belongings will be returned to you at evening's end, and our lord has promised that no harm will come to you and yours tonight should you... behave."

If the adventurers protest, they find that this is nonnegotiable. Rahadin will not allow even the smallest chance that the adventurers can disrupt his brother's wedding. To refuse now would be to break guest right—Rahadin, as a servant of Strahd, could expel them for such a refusal.

The **wights** frisk and collect the adventurers one by one. Characters can attempt to hide small objects, such as daggers or the hilt of the *sunsword*, with a DC 18 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

Once the wights have the adventurers' belongings, they leave for the dungeons by way of the South Tower Stair (K21) and scatter the objects throughout the zombie-infested waters of the Torture Chamber (K76). All guests on the main floor see this black parade and can inform the adventurers.

2C. GIFTS FOR OUR LORD

"If you've brought gifts, like any sensible guest would," Rahadin says in his stony voice, "I shall see that they're delivered with the others. I do hope you've brought something *worthwhile* for the gracious host of this house."

Rahadin collects any gifts brought by the adventurers, turning to the *unseen servants* that roam the Grand Entry (K8), or the wights for heavier gifts.

2D. THE BEST MAN'S OMEN

Before the adventurers part, Rahadin has one last warning for Ravenloft's most-anticipated guests.

Rahadin straightens. His hands curl into fists. The countless souls slain by the elf howl like abandoned children in an otherwise silent hall.

"No doubt, you have some plans," the elf says. "Some delusions of grandeur. A scheme up your sleeve, and doomed hope in your hearts.

"Listen to me, and listen to me well," he says. "This is the day of my brother's wedding. A wedding he has waited four *hundred* years for. For Strahd, I slaughtered my own people—cut down to the very last mother holding her very last child. Should you endanger this wedding, ask yourselves what I will do to *you*. Have we reached an understanding?"

Once done, Rahadin excuses himself to oversee wedding preparations, heading towards the Audience Hall (K25) via the Grand Landing (K19).

3. MINGLING WITH THE GUESTS

The halls are occupied with the various guests and served by several *unseen servants* carrying platters of wine and other refreshments. There's just short of an hour until the ceremony begins, but with so many eyes watching them, how can adventurers sneak off?

Announcing... As the characters cross the threshold from area K7 to K8, the enchantment wakes a disembodied voice that announces Strahd's most-anticipated guests. The voice isn't omniscient; it only recognizes those that Strahd has designated. If a character that Strahd did not anticipate arrives with the party, the voice remains silent. The enchantment lavishes titles and pomp on the guests. An example would be, "Announcing Victor of House Vallakovich, heir apparent to the barony of Vallaki."

So too does the voice mock characters when possible. When Kasimir Velikov arrived, it announced, "Announcing Kasimir Velikov, Doom of the Dusk Elves."

Guests. The guests are clumped in various groups across areas K8, K9, K14 and K19. The adventurers would be shocked to see that only they have been disarmed: all the devil's minions and the Barovian nobility have retained their weapons, if any.

Relevant Areas. This chapter includes areas K8-10, K14, and K19.

K8. GRAND ENTRY

After being announced, the characters cross into the Grand Entry. Read:

The hall vaults into a grand entry supported by cobwebbed columns. Under decaying frescoes guests huddle in disparate clusters, trading hushed whispers while the storm rages outside. Platters of wine and other refreshments are held aloft by unseen hands that roam throughout the hall until someone, anyone, takes a chalice or appetizer. Organ music floats throughout the halls, haunting and surreal.

All eyes, you notice, are on you, Strahd von Zarovich's most anticipated guests.

ISMARK & DONAVICH

Ismark and Donavich (if he's not officiating the wedding; otherwise, he is preparing in the chapel) lean against the wall in brooding silence. They watch the adventurers with stony faces. When they approach, read:

Ismark Kolyanovich cradles a glass of wine in one hand, the other on the hilt of his longsword. "My father is rolling in his grave as we speak, friends. I ask you only once: what is the plan?"

Ismark's sword-arm is strong and his heart is true. He will not accompany the adventurers around the castle in Act I, for he must give Ireena away at the start of the ceremony, but he promises his strength later on.

THE KREZKITE PARTY

The remainder of the Krezk party, Dmitri Krezkov and his wife Anna, along with eight Krezkite petty **nobles**, three of which are invited to the ceremony, flock together in the Guest Hall. They're visibly jumpy and do their best to stay away from Strahd's most-anticipated guests. If the adventurers try to speak to Dmitri Krezkov, read:

"I want nothing to do with you," Dmitri Krezkov warns. His hands tremble in manic worry. "I want only to leave this wretched place and return to where things might not be well, but at least make sense. Do *not* rope us into your schemes."

THE DUSK ELVES

Much to your surprise, a small party of dusk elves led by Kasimir Velikov himself are in attendance. The earless elf glances at you with a tangle of dejection and hope.

As one last affront to the dusk elves, Strahd has demanded their presence at the wedding—repayment for the bride previously lost to Kasimir's stoning. The dusk elf **mage** and his three **guards** wallow about before the wedding begins.

Kasimir's Dark Gift. If Kasimir has attained the power to restore life to the dead (see Ch. 13), he and his dusk elves are instead defiant and confident

(while secretly nursing their nervous hope deep in their hearts). They intend to slip away during the reception and make for Patrina Velikovna's crypt (see Crypt 21, K84). Read:

Kasimir wrings his hands together. His eyes are bright—desperation or hope, who knows? "We're prepared to move onto the catacombs during the festivities. To Patrina's crypt. Will you join us?"

K9. GUEST HALL

When the adventurers enter the Guest Hall, read the description for area K9 (pg. 56). The only additions are a sign posted before the South Tower Stair (K21), and that the Martikovs are clumped together.

The posted sign reads:

All Guests
Are Asked to Remain on the Main Floor
Trespassers will be Punished Accordingly
and Guest Right Revoked

THE MARTIKOVS

The Martikovs, dressed in blue attire, share whispers. The six of them seem to twitch at the slightest sound, no matter the distance.

Davian and Adrian have attended as part of the envoys from Krezk, while Urwin and Danika and their two sons, Brom and Bray, have come with the Vallaki party. Much to their "great honor" the boys are acting as the ring bearers for the ceremony.

Assuming the adventurers have become privy to the Martikovs' secret, and are allied with the Keepers of the Feather, Davian informs them that he has their back. Read:

Davian Martikov leans in for a handshake, and whispers, "I have six of my finest birds out along the parapet. Say the word, and they're yours. So... What, I must wonder, is the plan?"

The Keepers of the Feather have been staking out the castle since the wedding was announced and can offer simple information on the castle—including the insidious Heart of Sorrow. Alas, none of the agents dared to flutter into Strahd's halls, and their information is limited. The Martikovs themselves have only visited Castle Ravenloft a handful of times in their lives and rarely did they roam.

Before the adventurers part ways, the Martikovs warn them of the Heart of Sorrow. Read:

"Our birds..." Davian Martikov begins, swallowing loudly. "They saw something in the center tower. Some... crystal *thing*. Utterly massive. And on the wind, they heard it: a heartbeat."

If Baba Lysaga was defeated in the Ruins of Berez (see Ch. 10), then Muriel Vinshaw studied some of

the crone's notes and has gleaned—from Lysaga's witches' reports—that the "Heart of Sorrow" shields Strahd from harm. She would pass this information onto the Keepers, and thus Davian can add:

"The hag of Berez—Baba Lysaga—had many agents here in the castle to watch over Strahd. Her minions spoke of this crystal *thing*—the 'Heart of Sorrow,' they call it. So long as it beats, the devil Strahd cannot be harmed."

K14. HALL OF FAITH

Knights of carved stone line this grand hall, armed with marble spear and shield. Their eyes seem to regard you. Cobwebs hang from the arched ceiling like drapes while dust chokes the torchlit air. At the far end, a symbol of beaten bronze shaped into a setting sun hangs above double doors. Whispers bounce off the stones of this place as nobles speak amongst themselves.

THE VALLAKIAN PARTY

Baron Vallakovich and wife Lydia Petrovna trade pleasantries with well-attired peers. The baroness giggles like a shrieking hawk, interrupting the quiet of the hall, and eliciting an eyeroll from Lady Wachter nearby.

The Baron has brought as his entourage a tangle of Vallakian petty nobles and well-to-do merchants, totaling twelve in all. Four are actually **cult fanatics** secretly serving Wachter and have been invited to the ceremony. Another three are **cultists**. With a *detect magic* spell, a character can ascertain that these individuals are spellcasters.

Heinrik van der Voort. For playing his part in stealing the bones of St. Andral, Heinrik has been invited (dragged) to the ceremony. He wants only to be free from this madness and return to his quiet life as the town pariah. This attention leaves him sweaty and manic.

The Wachter Sons. Nikolai and Karl stand apart from the rest of the party; several chalices of wine are on the floor, and now they share a bottle—swiped from an *unseen servant's* platter. They've an escapade to offer the adventurers. Read:

Nikolai and Karl, already rosy in the cheeks from wine, pull you aside. Grinning ear to ear, Nikolai tells you, "Listen to me. Listen to me very well. Somewhere in the count's wine cellar lies Champagne du lu Stomp. The winery hasn't made that vintage in *years*. Every ounce is gold. This is a once in a lifetime chance to taste the finest wine of all Barovia. Will you join us on this caper, friends?"

The vintage is in area K63, the Wine Cellar. These idiots are ready to move now or during Act III.

K19. GRAND LANDING

When the adventurers reach the Grand Landing, read the description for K19 (pg. 58). The only additions are the Vistani drinking on the steps and a posted sign which reads:

All Guests
Are Asked to Remain on the Main Floor
Trespassers will be Punished Accordingly
and Guest Right Revoked

THE VISTANI

Six brightly-dressed men and women—Vistani, all—sit about the steps sharing skins of wine. They regard you with grins and great interest.

Arrigal, a Vistani **assassin** and his brother Luvash, a **bandit captain**, mill about with their brethren: four Vistani **thugs**.

All the Vistani here are loyal to Strahd. These six have been invited to the wedding, while their fellows roam the castle (see the "Vistani Thugs" Random Event, Ch. 4) and will report the adventurers' actions to Strahd or Rahadin.

The Vistani know the suits of armor (see K19) are trapped and cackle madly at any character that triggers them.

Luvash. If the adventurers saved Arabelle (see Area L, Ch. 2) Luvash bears them no ill will. He'll even implore them to keep the peace, so as not to throw away their lives. Arrigal has left Luvash in the dark on the betrayal planned during the reception (see Act III), for the cur rightfully believes Luvash has a soft spot for the adventurers now.

4. THE BRIDE AND GROOM

Rahadin approaches the adventurers before they can run off, stark and brooding. Strahd has requested a word with the men, and the bride has a favor to ask one of the adventurers. Read:

A storm approaches—some unsettling storm that rages just beyond your hearing. Rahadin. The elf stalks up to you, as stony-faced as ever while the souls of his countless victims wail from beyond the grave. "Gentlemen. Count Strahd would like a word over wine. A last toast before the ceremony. He's expecting you in the Dining Hall. The bride has a favor to ask as well; she's preparing up in the Guest Room of the South Tower."

If the adventurers have at least one female character, Ireena intends to ask her to be the maid of honor. If there are no female adventurers in the party, then choose one male; Ireena will ask him to be a groomsman—as Rahadin is Strahd's best man.

Rahadin will direct the characters to the Dining Hall (K10), and personally escort the chosen adventurer up to Ireena in the Guest Room (K50) via the South Tower Stair (K21).

4A. A DRINK WITH THE GROOM

While preparations are under way, Strahd invites the adventurers to a glass of wine in the Dining Hall (K10). This event runs concurrently with "The Bride Asks a Favor" if the adventurers do not protest to being split up. Unlike the default encounter, the illusion here lasts here until Strahd wills otherwise. At the end of the conversation, the hall is *not* plunged into darkness.

The illusion here is an avatar of Strahd; he speaks and acts through it, but it is incorporeal and cannot attack and is immune to damage. A *dispel magic* spell (DC 16) destroys the avatar.

When the adventurers enter the Dining Hall, narrate its description (pg. 56).

You should prepare and personalize a speech that references the past deeds and characteristics of the adventurers but also include this:

The devil Strahd offers a fanged smile. "You truly are the greatest foes I have ever faced—and that is why at dawn tomorrow, you may leave Barovia forever. Whatever blood there is between, consider it washed away. So long as I have Tatyana, I need nothing more in this life. We met as enemies so let us part, perhaps not as friends, but as equals."

Whatever the devil promises, it's a lie. This is Strahd's ultimate hour: the feast for his arrogance. To have Tatyana *and* humiliate his greatest foes is far too great to pass up. All this serves is to distract the adventurers while the true Devil moves in on their fated ally (see "The Devil's Enemy: Charmed" below).

4B. THE BRIDE ASKS A FAVOR

Ireena Kolyana has a favor to ask one lucky adventurer. This event runs concurrently with "A Drink with the Groom."

Relevant Areas. This section includes areas K21, K47, K49, and K50 (pgs. 59 & 69-70).

If the adventurer is female, Ireena asks her to be her maid of honor. If the adventurer is male, she wants him to be a groomsman.

Rahadin leads the adventurer up the South Tower Stair. The chamberlain will answer questions if asked—he's in a good mood, after all. It's his brother's wedding, and should the happy couple tie the knot, Rahadin knows Strahd will never be happier.

Read the following as the characters ascend:

Rahadin leads you up the staircase. The silence is tense, broken only by the long-lost wails of the countless men and women the elf has slain. If he notices, he does not show it. You find yourself holding back, just to escape the periphery of that deathly choir.

Outside thunder cracks, and the cold rains patter upon the windows, but here in the staircase the air is stale, stifling. Finally, after minutes of climbing, you reach a darkened landing.

A cold wind sweeps down from a nearby offstair, rattling the iron ring of a trapdoor set into the floor. An immaculate rug stretches before a framed portrait of a young, handsome man with a serene yet penetrating gaze that seems to look beyond time and into the space of the soul itself.

The characters arrive to the Portrait of Strahd (K47) on Map 6, (pg. 69). The **rug of smothering** and **guardian portrait** remain dormant so long as the adventurer remains in the presence of Rahadin, though the portrait is alive and knows whether things have gone awry. If the adventurer attempts to steal Ireena Kolyana away from this place, the portrait and rug both attack.

Rahadin clears his throat and leads you past the portrait into a nearby room. Thunder shakes the tower, answered by groaning beams that one day won't be able to take the ceiling's weight.

Bookcases line the wall, peering off through the steel latticework windows. On an old and faded couch lounges a handsome young man dressed in elegant but faded fabrics.

Rahadin gives the young man a dismissive glance. "Escher," he says. "How is our bride?"

The man sneers, "Heart's still beating."

Rahadin rolls his eyes and knocks at the door. "Ms. Kolyana? You have a guest."

Escher looks to you with a wolfish grin, "Enjoy this last word with her; eternity's as Strahd's plaything awaits... If only some of us could be so lucky, no?"

Rahadin checks on Ireena before letting the adventurer enter, leaving him or her with Escher for a brief moment.

Escher is afraid and has been taking it out on Ireena. He believes that his freedom is about to come to a close—what use will Strahd have for Escher when at long last he's been reunited with his beloved "Tatyana"? Escher fears that the vampire will discard him and confine him to the crypts like so many of Strahd's past brides and lovers. He would like nothing more than to rip out Ireena's throat, ending this threat to his freedom, but knows he'd provoke doom if he even tried.

When Rahadin returns ("The bride will see you now.") he holds open the door for the player. Read the following as they enter the Guest Room (K50).

No expense has been spared on this guest room. A four-corner bed canopied with a black curtain and gold trimmed sits at the center of the room.

Ireena Kolyana sits on a divan as Danika Dorakova fusses with the bride's hair—this woman from that dismal village below the mists is simply breathtaking. The devil has clearly lavished his fiancé in gems and gold since seizing her. A golden locket sporting a ruby the size of a pinecone drapes Ireena's neck. Her smile is as bright as the sun of the distant world you dimly remember. "You've come," Ireena says. "You've actually come."

Her eyes glance beyond you; you turn and see a once-beautiful woman in a scarlet bridesmaid's dress staring at you with a fanged smile.

Ireena is terrified but puts on a brave face. She clings to a desperate hope that all will be well—and failing that, Strahd has promised that during their marriage, the vampire will see that her people will be clothed and fed, and her brother equipped with the tools and funds to improve the village. Ireena doesn't believe a word, but it's the only consolation she can find.

The woman beside the door is Sasha Ivlikova, one of Strahd's older **vampire spawn** brides. She's been freed from her crypt (see Crypt 20, K84) and freshened up to serve as a bridesmaid—another layer of security to ensure no one steals away Strahd's beloved. Sasha is jealous of Ireena's freedom and the attention Strahd defers to her. More so, in her time as Strahd's plaything, Sasha had to listen to Strahd prattle on about "Tatyana." Years of being confined to her crypt has festered this resentment, but, alas, she obeys Strahd's command.

Danika Dorakova, a **wereraven** agent of the Keepers of the Feather, is Ireena's only sympathetic bridesmaid and her sole means of remaining sane with imminent death and damnation staring the poor girl in the face. If the adventurer asked here is male, Danika is instead the maid of honor.

After Ireena has asked an adventurer to partake in the wedding as either a maid of honor or a groomsman, Rahadin clears his throat and insists they part. Ireena embraces the adventurer and asks her favor:

As she embraces you, Ireena Kolyana whispers in your ear, "Do *not* let me marry that monster. I would rather die a thousand deaths than be his. He calls me... *Tatyana*."

Rahadin then escorts the adventurer from the room, and back down the South Tower Stair, passing Strahd himself ascending to go speak with Ireena

Kolyana—to vampirically charm her before the wedding. Read:

As you and Rahadin descend the cold steps, you hear footfalls nearby. Thunder beckons outside. The spiral twists—and out from the dark walks Strahd von Zarovich himself, grinning ear to ear. "Good evening, my most-anticipated guest. Your stay, I hope, has been pleasant. I'd stay, but there are... other matters to attend. If you'll excuse me."

To the adventurer this hints that the encounter with Strahd in the Dining Hall is a farce—and all but confirming it for any players that are watching the scene unfold. What, they might wonder, was Strahd up to while they were speaking with an illusion?

4C. THE DEVIL'S ENEMY: CHARMED

While the adventurers sit with the illusory Strahd, the devil himself intends to isolate the destined ally of the party and attempts to charm them. Later, should battle erupt, Strahd intends to "activate" the ally, turning him or her against the adventurers.

Amidst the crowd, Strahd will approach his fated enemy, and attempt to charm them (DC 17 Wisdom saving throw; see Strahd's statblock in Appendix D). If successful, he will command them to betray the adventurers at the most opportune moment.

The adventurers, once reunited with their ally, can notice something's off with a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check; the character seems dazed.

Most allies have a relationship with other characters present at the wedding, such as Arabelle seeing her father, Luvash, or Victor Vallakovich speaking to his father (or his new liege, Lady Wachter, if she took over Vallaki). Only the following characters do not have ties to other characters or distractions that could take them away from the party—or cannot be charmed in the first place—in which case this event does not occur.

- Clovin Belview
- The Mad Mage
- Pidlwick II
- Sir Godfrey Gwilym
- Sir Klutz Tripalotsky
- Vasilka

5. LAST STOP BEFORE OBLIVION

The adventurers have one last opportunity to explore the castle, complete objectives, and recover their confiscated gear before the ceremony begins—time is short, and their absence would be glaring. From the time of their arrival, it was less than an hour until the ceremony. Chapters 3 and 4 of Act I amounted to at most a half hour. Once the adventurers find their armor, they still must don it (see Ch 5. of the *Player's Handbook*), and thunder back up the stairs.

The wights took the adventurers' gear from the Entry (K7) to the Torture Chamber (K76) South Tower Stair (K21). They were not subtle, and several guests saw the undead descend the stairs into blackness. Many, like the Martikovs, will tell them.

When the adventurers approach the stairwell, read:
The spiral staircase leads only to darkness—and your last, doomed hope. What chance do you have against the devil Strahd without your arms? Where in those black depths have they stored your weapons?

The posted sign reads:

All Guests
Are Asked to Remain on the Main Floor
Trespassers will be Punished Accordingly
and Guest Right Revoked

The message is merely meant to scare the adventurers; Strahd will revoke guest right when the moment suits him. It would please him to see the adventurers tip-toeing around on eggshells.

The South Tower Stair leads to areas K61 and K73, the Elevator Trap and the Dungeon Hall, respectively. The wights have taken the adventurers' belongings and scattered them across the zombie-infested waters of the Torture Chamber—Strahd has no intention of returning his foes' weapons.

THE ELEVATOR TRAP

The South Tower Stair's first stop is at area K61, the Elevator Trap. Run it as it's written (as described on pg. 74 of *Curse of Strahd*). If the adventurers fall prey to the Elevator Trap, the ceremony continues without them—the devil Strahd will marry his beloved without those pesky adventurers to interfere.

THE DUNGEONS

The Dungeons span areas K73-K76 (pgs. 79-82). Run these areas as written in *Curse of Strahd*.

The wights have trudged through the black waters and scattered the adventurers' weapons across the zombie-infested waters of the Torture Chamber (K76). While submerged, the six **Strahd** zombies have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to remain hidden.

A character that spends 10 minutes searching the brackish waters of the Torture Chamber can succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check to find 1d4 + 1 pieces of their equipment. The wights did not care about emptying bags or similar containers, so items like quivers and packs still contain all their contents—though likely waterlogged, perhaps even ruined.



ACT II: THE CEREMONY

The day has come at long last. For centuries, Strahd has dreamed of this moment: when his final campaign, his final conquest, can come to its rosy end. Today, the devil Strahd fills the hole in his heart with Tatyana's love.

ACT II OVERVIEW

The ceremony is relatively short—both within the story and at the tabletop. It involves all the pleasantries and customs of a wedding ceremony, replete with not one but *two* dramatic (some would say cliché) objections to this unholy union. It's centered on the Chapel (K15).

If at any point the adventurers spark bloodshed, see "Developments: A Red Wedding" at the end of this Act, then proceed into Act IV: The Devil's Wedding Night.

CHANGES TO THE CHAPEL

The following changes have been made to the chapel for the wedding:

- The corpse of Gustav Herrengast and his *mace of terror* have been removed.
- The shattered stained-glass panes have been repaired.
- The broken pews have been replaced.
- The **Strahd zombies** in the King's Balcony (K28) have been removed.

CHARACTERS PRESENT

All told, there are approximately forty-four characters present in the wedding, excluding the adventurers. See the Wedding Seating graphic for their positions, and the Guest List in the introduction of this supplement.

1. THE CEREMONY BEGINS

When the adventurers reach the chapel, read the following description instead of the description in *Curse of Strahd*.

The chapel is awash with torchlight as guests whisper amongst themselves. Lightning flashes through the stained-glass panes every so often, causing the countless bats that cling to the domed ceiling to flutter about. A harp rings out from the balcony above, bathing the chapel in gentle music.

The aisle leads to a stone platform on which an altar stands, carved with bas-reliefs of angelic figures entwined with grape vines. The light from above falls on a silver statuette in the form of a priest kneeling in supplication.

Beside the altar stands Strahd, Rahadin, and the groomsmen; and to the right, Ireena's bridesmaids. The chamberlain of Ravenloft scowls at you; the master merely grins.

ROLES IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Role	Name
Officiator	Father Lucian or Donavich
Best Man	Rahadin
Maid of Honor	Player Character or Danika Dorakova
Groomsmen	Ismark, Escher, Player Character ¹
Bridesmaids	Danika Dorakova ² , Anna Krezkova, Sasha Ivlskova
Flower Girl	Arabelle
Ring Bearers	Brom & Bray Martikov
Harpist	Unnamed Harpist ³ or Clovin Belview ³

¹ If no female player characters were asked to be Maid of Honor

² If not the Maid of Honor

³ Plays from the King's Balcony above (K28)

The silver statuette is the Icon of Ravenloft (see "Treasure K15" and appendix C for details).

The adventurers are led to their seats by a Vistana servant—and to their horror find that they've been split up and surrounded by foes.

Seating Tactics. Strahd and Rahadin have carefully crafted the seating chart to ensure that the adventurers are strung out and the most dangerous ones are farthest from the front. Should the party have a paladin or other strong melee warrior, Strahd would place them in the back. A physically weak character he would keep near himself or Arrigal. Refer to the Wedding Seating graphic.

Changing Seats. It's possible to change seats but time is short; the music's started and the flower girl is due any moment. The adventurers have at most 2 rounds to persuade other characters and move.

2. FLOWERS AND RINGS

Arabelle, the seven-year-old daughter of Luvash, skips down the aisle scattering posies that begin to wilt the moment they touch the floor. She's followed by Brom and Bray Martikov, the sons of Urwin and Danika. They cradle together a scarlet satin pillow with two gold rings encrusted with a ruby, diamond, and onyx—the colors of House von Zarovich.

3. HERE COMES THE BRIDE

The guests expect Ireena Kolyana to soon follow the ring bearers but are left disappointed. Outside the chapel, in area K14, Ismark is trying desperately to get his sister to snap out of her daze, but the devil's vampiric charm is too strong. Too many **wights** (six in all) watch with disinterest for him to escape with Ireena. Ultimately, Ismark gives up and begrudgingly walks his sister down the aisle.

An adventurer can walk out to speak to Ismark during this—who is growing more and more

distraught and demands to know why they ("you heroes") are allowing this tragedy to happen. Rahadin walks out to join them if necessary, demanding that they wrap this up and proceed with the ceremony.

Once the ceremony continues, read:

The music picks up as the chapel doors swing open. Out from the flickering torchlight and dancing shadows comes Ireena Kolyana, escorted by her brother Ismark. The devil's bride is beyond lovely, her radiance on full display. Her auburn hair burns like fire in the torchlight, and a ruby glows in a golden pendant around her neck.

The crowd hushes. Men leer, women glower. Rahadin claps Strahd on the shoulder and the two brothers share a smile.

But who isn't smiling?

Who amongst this flock of fools and sycophants has nothing to wear on her face? Ireena Kolyana. Her eyes are dull and distant, her lips lax. Without so much as an expression, she lazily marches down the aisle, every step light, every motion as graceful as a brain-dead doe.

Ismark grimaces as he holds his sister for what might be the last time before delivering her to the monster that stopped his father's very heart and wrought havoc on his people. Yet when he glances to you, dear heroes, hope burns bright in those eyes.

Rahadin tells Strahd, "She's beautiful, my lord."

"So she is," the devil agrees. "My beautiful Tatyana returned after all these years apart."

4. WORDS OF WELCOME

Once Ireena has taken her place before the altar, the officiator—either Father Lucian, Donavich, or some newfound priest if those two are unavailable for the wedding—begins his speech. Read:

"Dearly beloved, and dearly despised, we are gathered here today to witness the wedding of Count Strahd of House von Zarovich and Ireena, daughter of Kolyan Indirovich. We are here today to witness history in the making. To witness the culmination of a courtship that has spanned four centuries and more—but this is not the final chapter, oh no.

"The warmth of Strahd and Ireena's love shall echo throughout Barovia like the thunder of a just god. It shall rain down and nourish the hopes and fortunes of Barovians everywhere. Their love shall shine as a beacon of hope and prosperity across this bleak land of ours forevermore.

"Would if Ireena's father could see the joy in her face this day. She comes now as an orphan—just as our Lord Strahd has lived these past centuries. From their shared sorrow the seed of joy will bloom evermore.

"Count Strahd—he is the Ancient; he is the Land, the warrior, the conqueror... Yet the one thing has he never conquered has been his own heart. And now, under

storming skies, and before our honored guests, he will make do on a vow made so long ago. Now he shall be reunited with his lost love, and their fates shall be entwined together for all time."

5. OBJECTIONS

The priest clears his throat and asks: "If there is any amongst you that have just cause for why these two ought not be wed, speak now, or forever hold your peace."

No wedding is complete without a dramatic objection, and this one is no different—except that it threatens a slaughter.

5A. THE ABBOT OBJECTS

The Abbot arrives with Vasilka in one last desperate bid to prove the promise of his creation. So enraptured by his own narcissism, the Abbot *must* succeed, lest his delusion of perfection be shattered.

The Abbot is not here to fight and offers no violence. Unless the adventurers act then and now, Strahd's silver tongue is enough to beguile the Abbot into embarrassed acquiescence. At most, if violence erupts, the Abbot would only decide to kill Ireena Kolyana—this obstacle that threatens to prove his imperfections. The fallen angel knows that Strahd cannot die, and that it would be pointless to try killing him.

Read:

The doors to the chapel silently swing out. Warm light floods out from the archway and standing there are two figures: a stitched-together woman in a wedding dress, and a young man in a simple monk's robe.

"You will find that *I* object to this union."

Murmurs burst out across the crowd like lesions of a plague. Strahd merely stares as the Abbot steps foot into the chapel, his flesh-golem creation dutifully following behind.

"This vapid noble," the Abbot calls out, "is by no means the perfect bride. Look at her: weak of mind and body, uncultured and brash. She is *flawed*, and I bear to you, Lord Strahd, the perfect bride. The bride that will set you free, and cure Barovia of its disease. Cast Ireena aside, I beg you, and embrace... *Vasilka*."

Strahd takes a moment to mull over his response, giving the adventurers a moment to exploit this distraction. Unless their actions (if any) are significant, the devil replies to the Abbot. Read:

The devil's silence is deafening. The crowd shifts uneasily, as his dark eyes narrow on the Abbot. After several tense moments, Strahd breaks out in a cold smile.

"Abbot, it is true that you have fashioned for me the perfect bride—look at her, look at that beauty, that *elegance*; truly, none can compete... But I do not want perfection, Abbot. All I want is Tatyana, and with her at

my side, I will never be happier. Can you not see that? Is it not your divine mission to end this curse over Barovia once for all? Is it not your duty now to trust me in this fateful hour to know my own heart's greatest desire?

The adventurers have one last opportunity, otherwise the Abbot acquiesces.

While the masses watch, the Abbot's smile melts away. His hand quivers—but in fury, or in embarrassment, you do not know.

Finally, in a quivery voice, the angel says, "Very well, then. Vasilka, follow."

With a wave of the Abbot's hands, the chapel doors swing shut behind them, and all eyes turn from their departure to the devil's fanged grin.

"Well, Father," Strahd says, "Let us go on, eh?"

5B. ISMARK OBJECTS

If you cannot or do not run "The Abbot Objects" then you can have Ismark Kolyana object to the wedding—with a blade in hand. You can even run both: dismayed by Strahd's disarming of the situation and the adventurers' passiveness, he takes matters into his own hands at long last. Read:

The tension in Ismark's face dissolves into unmasked fury. "No," he growls, hardly heard throughout the hall. Then, in a louder voice, he shouts, "*No!* You cannot have my sister, Strahd! I will cut you down myself before I see her stolen by you, monster!"

Ismark draws his longsword, and charges!

The adventurers get one moment to act, otherwise Rahadin grapples and subdues Ismark. The wights that lurk in the Hall of Faith come forward to arrest Ismark. No blood is shed for Ismark's transgression. The peace will go on unless the adventurers break it.

Consequences. For breaking guest right, Ismark is sent to the dungeons. His punishment will be decided during Act III.

6. THE KISS OF PROMISED DEATH

After the objections, if the wedding has not devolved to bloodshed, the officiator finishes the ceremony.

6A. STRAHD'S VOWS

Strahd, of course, goes first. Read:

Ignoring the world, Strahd gazes deep into Ireena Kolyana's eyes and says, "Tatyana. My dearest Tatyana... After so long apart, after so many chases and disappointments, you are finally mine. Neither time nor death can separate you and I, and I vow that never again will either get the chance. You and I shall be bound together forever."

6B. IREENA'S VOWS

The vows Ireena utters are a lie, a script put upon her by Strahd through his vampiric charm. In this state, her emotions seem genuine—but in her heart, the poor girl is screaming into a silent void. Most attendants to the wedding understand this truth, but even those that are sickened by this travesty can only smile politely and clap at the right moments.

Ireena looks lost. A dreamy expression drifts across her face, finally interrupted with a smile. "Strahd, my love... If only my father could be here to see this day. From the very first night you came to our home, I knew I would day be yours, and you mine. I vow to never leave your side, to serve you in life and in death, and to trust in your loving wisdom—I vow that I'm yours, now and forever."

6C. YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE

After the vows have been exchanged, the officiator utters those long-awaited words. The crowd is uneasy, but Strahd is not so uncouth that he would drain the girl's blood here before his honored guests—that's what their marital bed is for, isn't it?

The priest clears his throat and announces, "By the power vested in me by House von Zarovich, I declare you lord and wife. Count Strahd, you may kiss your bride."

Queasiness ripples throughout the crowd—will there be blood? they must wonder—but when Strahd dips Ireena and plants his lips on hers, a collective sigh rises from the guests, quickly followed by applause and cheer. They clap and cheer, some of it authentic. Strahd and Ireena von Zarovich rise and present themselves to the crowd as the storm outside rages against the stained glass—and when eyes are not on the happy couple, they're on you.

You've failed.

DEVELOPMENTS: A RED WEDDING

If the adventurers choose to attack, the wedding quickly becomes a bloodbath. Roll initiative for each faction; alternatively, you can the prescribed results below to cut down on preparation. Strahd's initiative is separate. Refer to the Wedding Seating graphic for initial starting positions.

While the battle seems daunting at first, it quickly tapers out as forces leave the chapel. Strahd's first command is for Rahadin and Sasha Ivlskova to escort to Ireena his bedchamber (K42) by means of the North Chapel Access (K16). See "The Devil's Bride" in Act IV for more information.

Crossing Pews. The pews count as difficult terrain.

Once the peace is shattered, read:

Chaos blooms like a plague after a grueling winter. With the voice of a king, Strahd orders, "Rahadin, take my bride to my bedchamber."

The devil turns to you and smiles. "You've lost, fools. I've no choice but to declare you traitors to the crown—soldiers and servants of Barovia! Children of the Night! Kill these 'heroes'! Bring me their broken bodies and let *none* survive!"

The Hour of Night has finally dawned.

Roll initiative for each faction; alternatively, you can use the prescribed results below to cut down on preparation. Strahd's initiative is random.

Strahd. The vampire fights until his bride is safely out of the chapel. His Lair Action allows him to phase through the floor, walls, or ceilings.

(19) Rahadin. The brother of Strahd will protect his bride with his very life. He moves Ireena (who willingly follows, without halving his movement speed) toward area K16, the North Chapel Access.

(18) Vistani. The Vistani are cunning and seek to ambush the weaker adventurers. While all are loyal to Strahd, some fear death and would flee. If the adventurers saved Arabelle earlier in the story, Luvash refuses to fight the adventurers. Even if they did not, his daughter's life is more important, and he flees with her. Their forces include:

- Arrigal, Vistani **assassin**
- Luvash, Vistani **bandit captain**
- Four Vistani **thugs**

(16) Wereravens. Fearing that they're about to be cut down, the Martikovs spend their action on the first turn transforming into hybrid forms. Brom and Bray escape by hurling themselves through the glass and warn the other Keepers of the Feather of what's happened. The remaining four **wereravens** fight alongside the adventurers or flee.

(14) Werewolves. The five **werewolves** spend their action on the first turn transforming into their hybrid forms, then hurling themselves at the adventurers. Strahd has instructed them to infect at least one adventurer with lycanthropy.

(13) Comrades. Characters such as Donavich (an **acolite**) act on this initiative and aid the adventurers.

(12) Vampire Spawn. Escher and any other vampire spawn you may have included attack the adventurers but try to escape via the King's Balcony if critically damaged, using their spider crawl feature.

(11) Dusk Elves. If Kasimir Velikov, a **mage**, lacks the dark gift to resurrect his sister (see "Kasimir's Dark Gift," Ch. 13), he and his three dusk elf **guards** remain in the chapel and aid the adventurers. Otherwise they make for the catacombs.

(10) Cultists. This initiative includes Lady Wachter (a **priest**; see "Wachter's Spells" below), if present. She and her four **cult fanatics** cast their spells on the first turn but prepare to escape via the Hall of Faith (K14). Wachter intends to pilfer arcane secrets from Strahd's Study (K37).

(6) Innocents. The bystanders cower beneath the tables or flee from the carnage, perhaps accidentally shoving adventurers in their desperate bid to escape.

FOLLOWING A SCRIPT

This titanic battle is waged between over forty characters—if you do not want to control so many forces, you can follow this script:

- Innocents cower beneath the pews.
- Rahadin and Sasha Ivlskova leave immediately with Ireena; Sasha will even use her spider crawl feature, dragging the girl along the ceiling if need be.
- Luvash snatches his daughter Arabelle and flees.
- The werewolves and wereravens square off; only Kiril Stoyanovich attacks the adventurers.
- Lady Wachter and her **cult fanatics** leave with Rahadin; Wachter casts *hold person* (spell save DC 13) on the weakest-willed adventurer.
- The dusk elf **guards** preoccupy against the Vistani **thugs** unless Kasimir has attained his dark gift; the elves leave via the Hall of Faith (K14).

This leaves you with Strahd, one **vampire spawn**, Arrigal (Vistani **assassin**), Kiril Stoyanovich (**werewolf** 90 hit points), possibly four Vistani **thugs** (if not preoccupied) and a near unlimited number of **swarms of bats** (drawn from the ceiling) to run. Up to six **wights** can be called upon from area K14 as well if need be. Strahd fights until Ireena is secure; his Lair Action is set to allow him to phase through walls and ceilings.

WACHTER'S SPELLS

Lady Wachter has a different list of prepared spells than a priest from the *Monster Manual*:

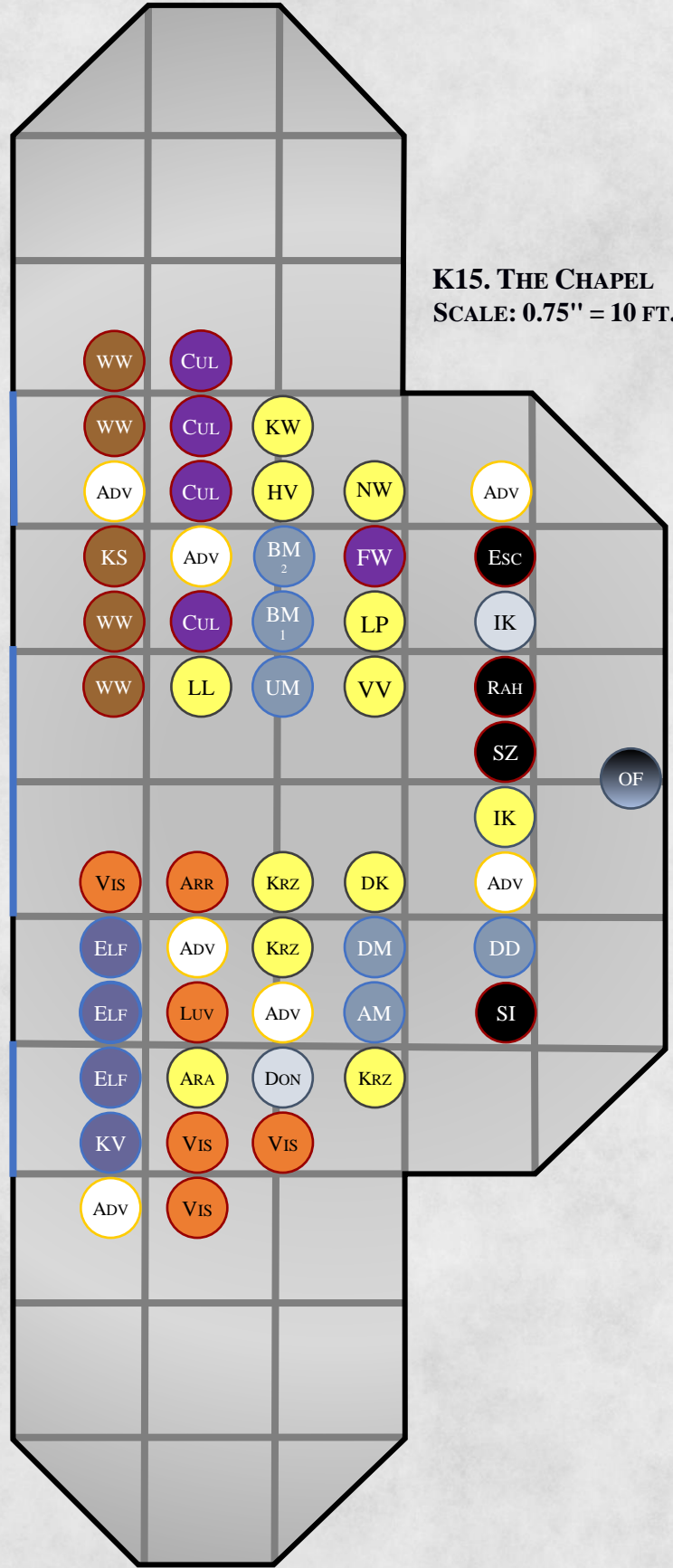
- Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, purify food and drink, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *augury, gentle repose, hold person*
3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead, create food and water*

WEDDING SEATING GRAPHIC

This flawless, expertly drawn graphic represents the initial positions of the wedding attendants.

LEGEND

	ADV ADVENTURER		KREZKITE
	ARABELLE		KIRIL STOYANOVICH
	ARRIGAL		KASIMIR VELIKOV
	BRAY MARTIKOV		KARL WACHTER
	BROM MARTIKOV		LIEF LIPSIEGE
	CULT FANATIC		LIEF LIPSIEGE
	DAVIAN MARTIKOV		LUVASH
	DANIKA DORAKOVA		NIKOLAI WACHTER
	DONAVICH		RAHADIN
	DUSK ELF GUARD		SASHA IVLISKOVA
	ESCHER		STRAHD VON ZAROVICH
	FIONA WACHTER		URWIN MARTIKOV
	HEINRIK VAN DER VOORT		VISTANI THUG
	ISMARK KOLYANOVICH		VARGAS VALLAKOVICH
	IREENA KOLYANA		WEREWOLF
	ANTAGONISTIC		OFFICIATOR*
	NEUTRAL		INNOCENT/ NONCOMBATANT
	PROTAGONISTIC		WERERAVEN



ACT III

Never in centuries has Strahd von Zarovich's heart sang the way it has today—for at long last, Tatyana is his and the devil raging in his veins demands her eternity. Now is a time to celebrate with friends and gloat before foes. Now is the quiet before the storm. The Reception is Strahd's last hour of triumph, and the vampire is enjoying every moment of it. This is the feast before the hunt, the challenge rendered before the contest begins.

ACT III OVERVIEW

The Reception spans an hour or so and is centered on the Audience Hall (K25) and its adjacent areas. Because of the lack of strenuous activity, so long as the adventurers remain in these areas, they benefit from a short rest; if they strike out on their own, they forfeit that chance.

The adventurers can leave during the reception, but they find that all eyes are on them. Their absence would certainly be noticed and send up red flags amongst the devil's minions. If they're willing to risk it, so be it. Otherwise, they can content themselves with scheming against the devil, speaking to characters, and watching the show unfold.

Relevant Areas. This Act includes areas K13, K25, and K26.

CHANGES TO THE AUDIENCE HALL (K25)

The following changes have been made:

- The window's broken glass has been replaced.
- Strahd's throne faces the north, the room, rather than the south. A second, shorter throne for Ireena has been constructed.
- Tables have set up along the walls with guests assigned among them. A gift table stands in the southwest corner.

1. THE PROCESSION

After Strahd and Ireena have pledged themselves to each other for eternity, the wedding procession begins. The adventurers are swept up into crowd and led from the Chapel (K15) to the Grand Entry (K8), presenting their first chance to slip away.

Read:

As the devil and his bride join hands and rush through the aisle, the procession swells into a wave from which you cannot escape. The guests sweep up into a throng and push into the Hall of Faith—the armored statues watch with silent interest, their eyes following you. Just you.

The procession rolls into the grand entry and as the guests take to the stairs of the grand landing, you spot the south tower staircase yonder. Now is your sole chance to leave—but wouldn't that absence be glaring?

If the adventurers do not slip away, they follow the procession into the Audience Hall (K25). Read:

The procession marches up the steps and into a great hall overlooking the western slopes of the valley, lit by periodic lightning. Though torches burn in the hall, the room is no less cold—and at the end of the hall stand two crimson thrones on a marble dais.

Behind the throne stands a table bustling with gifts from the wedding guests. You spot your own amongst the piles. Round tables dot the hall, draped in silk fineries and topped with wine, meats, savory delights and sweets. As the bride and groom assume the throne, the guests divide themselves to their respective tables while the wind howls outside like a forgotten child.

Once seated, the adventurers endure a welcome speech provided by Rahadin and other tawdry announcements.

2. MINGLING

After the tawdry details have been announced, the guests are free to move about and socialize. The adventurers quickly realize that leaving is hardly an option:

K19. Four **wights** guard the stairs down to the Grand Landing.

K26. Four **wights** stand guard at the Guards' Post. At both locations, a posted sign reads:

All Guests
Are Asked to Remain at the Reception
Trespassers will be Punished Accordingly
and Guest Right Revoked

3. TOASTS TO THE HAPPY COUPLE

While guests mingle once more. During this time, toasts are made, the first being Rahadin's.

If one of the adventurers has been made the maid of honor, she too must present a toast following Rahadin's—it's only expected—otherwise Danika Dorakova makes it (see below). The adventurers can also make toasts, as do other wedding guests.

3A. THE BEST MAN'S TOAST

Rahadin starts things off:

Rahadin brandishes a chalice of wine in one hand and announces to that hall with his crypt keeper's voice, "Silence yourselves; I've words for our happy couple."

The elf turns to Strahd and smiles. "Brother, I still remember that day when Tatyana was to the castle. Oh, how your face lit up with first shock at such beauty. 'She is as beyond beauty' you told me, 'as a river in spring flood is beyond a drop of water.'"

"Castle Ravenloft was dark before those days. *You* were dark, brother, and your love for Tatyana lit these halls like a virile sun—and for that, my new sister, I will always be grateful. Father would be proud, Strahd. I only wish he could be here today to see what beauty you've brought into the world.

"To Strahd," Rahadin shouts, turning to the crowd. "To Tatyana! To a union forged in the very heavens!"

The crowd goes wild with fake praise.

3B. THE MAID OF HONOR'S TOAST

Danika Dorakova's toast is anything but:

After the awkward and sycophantic applause dies down, Danika Dorakova stands with her own chalice. She looks visibly disgusted and toasts through her teeth: "Ireena, I'm so... *happy* that you've found love. That you've found a devoted husband.

"Count Strahd worships you, worships the very thought of you—none can deny that. I'm sure your father rests easy in his grave knowing that you'll be warm with our lord's love from this day until the end of... days. To... To the happy couple!"

The applause, this time, is painful.

4. GIVING OF GIFTS

After the toasts have been made, it is time to present gifts to Strahd. Notable gifts are outlined below but replace them as you see fit. All guests are expected to present a gift, including the adventurers. The master of Ravenloft does not expect or even need much—all Barovia is his already, isn't it?

Fortunes of Ravenloft. If the adventurers have yet to claim one of the three artifacts, or lost them, it's possible that one of the devil's minions presents it to him as a gift. For example, if your reading indicated that a treasure laid within Wachterhaus, Lady Wachter could present it to Strahd to add to his treasury or to destroy.

Krezkovs. The Krezkovs bear a family tree: an actual diagram carved into a slab of wood, chiseled to perfection and colored with dyes. It includes "Tatyana" on it, along with Strahd's other brides.

Martikovs. The Martikovs have brought "the last" cask of Champagne du lu Stomp. The winery stopped producing it years ago.

Vallakoviches. Baron Vallakovich presents a commissioned portrait of Ireena Kolyana sitting atop Strahd's lap. He sent a painter to Castle Ravenloft mere days after the wedding was announced.

Wachters. Fiona Wachter presents to Strahd a manuscript entitled *The Night Lord*, detailing Strahd's history and "wise rule."

5. THE PUNISHMENT OF ISMARK

There are two options to running this event:

The Oathbreaker. If Ismark objected during the wedding and attempted to attack Strahd, he is brought back from the dungeons to be punished for breaking guest right.

A Desperate Bid. If Ismark did not object during the wedding, his desperation and dismay boils into outrage. He draws his blade and challenges Strahd to a duel. Whomever wins keeps his sister.

THE OATHBREAKER

From the stairs sings the rattle of chains and march of steel. Two corpse-knights come forth dragging Ismark Kolyanovich. His attire has been soaked, and it's clear that his struggling has earned him more than one bruise.

Strahd smiles and announces, "My honored guests and dearest vassals. I asked but thing of you all: to respect the oath of hospitality, and my dearest brother-in-law has gone and pissed all over it. How can I rule this realm if I show favoritism to my kin? Should they not be held to the highest standards. It pains me, but the penalties for oathbreaking are clear: Ismark Kolyanovich must set an example and pay the steepest price: his life."

This is all just another ploy of Strahd's see what the adventurers will tolerate. He is not insulted in the slightest by Ismark's crime but, in fact, impressed. Regardless, Ismark means nothing to the devil—and once Ireena is turned, undeath will turn her love into ash. Charmed by Strahd, the most she can offer now are weak protests easily ignored by the devil.

The adventurers can negotiate with Strahd. See the following suggestions:

Amnesty. With a heartfelt plea, an adventurer can attempt a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check—this is not just to convince Strahd, but to convince his assembled vassals and guests to excuse Ismark's crime. Vallakovich, a sycophant, and Wachter, by default, would vote for Ismark's execution. The Martikovs would argue for a lighter sentence. The Krezkovs, neutral as always, go with the tide.

Imprisonment. Likewise, with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, an adventurer can implore Strahd to instead imprison Ismark.

Trial by Combat. If an adventurer proposes trial by combat, Strahd agrees wholeheartedly. No roll is required. Ismark will appoint a champion to fight on his behalf, and Strahd will as well. Potential champions include:

- A **wight**—its Life Drain attack will further hamper the adventurers' future efforts.
- **Rahadin**—though Strahd is loath to risk such a devoted and capable servant. He will instruct Rahadin to

yield if death is imminent. Ismark's life is nothing compared to Rahadin's.

- Kiril Stoyanovich, a **werewolf** with 90 hit points—the chance of infecting an adventurer with lycanthropy is far too great for Strahd to pass up.

The rules are simple; characters with the Noble background know these rules by heart, otherwise a character can make a DC 12 Intelligence (History) check.

- Ismark appoints his champion, then Strahd appoints his. If the former's prevails, Ismark is spared, otherwise he's put to death.

- Any outside interference forfeits the duel, and the violator will be punished.

- One can yield to avoid death, forfeiting the duel.

A DESPERATE BID

If Ismark did not object during the wedding, his outrage forces him to act—for the sake of his family.

Ismark draws into himself, his hands trembling. When his eyes open, they're hard and cruel. Desperation has boiled into rage, and the son of Kolyan stalks out to the center of the hall and shouts, "No more! No more will my family suffer under your shadow, Strahd! You cannot have my sister, monster!" Steel sings as Ismark pulls his family's longsword from its sheathe. "Duel me, devil! Blade to blade, duel me for my sister's hand, lest you sit there a coward and a thief!"

The crowd watches with rapt dismay and ecstasy. Strahd merely grins and rises. "So be it," he says, accepting a scimitar from Rahadin.

Strahd fights with a scimitar (+9 to hit, 1d6 + 4 slashing damage). One on one, Ismark stands no chance against the dark lord, but given that these "heroes" continue to nothing, he cannot afford to stand idly by any longer. Win or lose, live or die, he can go to his grave knowing *finally* he has stepped out of his father's shadow.

If defeated, the adventurers can plead for Ismark's life, attempting a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a failure, Strahd simply says, "No" and plunges his blade into Ismark's throat.

The adventurers may exploit this moment to attack, turning the reception into a bloodbath. See "Early Blood" below.

6. A RED RECEPTION

If the adventurers do absolutely nothing to stop this tragedy, Strahd announces to a surge of applause that he and his bride will retire for the evening. He proceeds through the Guards' Post (K26). The four wights inside open and then shut the doors behind him, sliding planks into the handles. Characters within 10 feet of the doors with a passive Perception of 17 or higher can hear the planks being slid into place.

The reception continues for some minutes, and Arrigal finds a mean to share a drink with one adventurer until word arrives that everything is ready. Arrigal does not have a shortsword on him, but a dagger (1d4 + 3 piercing damage). Read:

Arrigal claps you on the shoulder and says, "Truly, I expected you all to ruin this night, but I must say: we're all very impressed with your restraint. Come. Share a drink with me."

While the two drink, the Vistani move into position to block the steps to the Grand Landing. Characters that succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check notice their movements; likewise, an Intelligence (Investigation) check can determine the nature of these movements.

Once word arrives from Strahd that he's secured Ireena, a Vistana approaches Arrigal. Read:

As you and Arrigal share a second cup of wine, a Vistana approaches him, whispering in his ear. "Uh huh," Arrigal nods. He finishes his wine, sets down his glass—and in one fluid motion, draws a dagger that makes for your gut.

CARNAGE

Immediately, the devil's allies spring into action. Werewolves rip their lent attire in gruesome transformations; the Vistani aim for the weakest of adventurers. Roll initiative for each faction; alternatively, you can use the prescribed results below to cut down on preparation. Rahadin's initiative is random.

Rahadin. The chamberlain of Ravenloft will not shirk his duty to his brother and lord. Strahd, however, has other plans for him. If critically endangered, **Rahadin** casts *misty step* to escape or takes the secret door to area K13.

(18) Vistani. The Vistani are cunning and seek to ambush the weaker adventurers. While all are loyal to Strahd, some fear death and would flee. If the adventurers saved Arabelle earlier in the story, Luvash refuses to fight the adventurers. Even if they did not, his daughter's life is more important, and he flees with her. Their forces include:

- Arrigal, Vistani **assassin**
- Luvash, Vistani **bandit captain**
- Four Vistani **thugs**

(16) **Wereravens.** Fearing that they're about to be cut down, the Martikovs spend their action on the first turn transforming into hybrid forms. Brom and Bray escape by hurling themselves through the window and warn the other Keepers of the Feather of what's happened. The remaining four **wereravens** fight alongside the adventurers or flee.

(14) **Werewolves.** The five **werewolves** spend their action on the first turn transforming into their hybrid forms, then hurling themselves at the adventurers. Strahd has instructed them to infect at least one adventurer with lycanthropy.

(13) **Comrades.** Characters such as Donavich (an **acolyte**) act on this initiative and aid the adventurers.

(12) **Vampire Spawn.** The two **vampire spawn** (Escher and Sasha Ivlskova) attack the adventurers but try to escape via the window if critically damaged.

(11) **Dusk Elves.** If Kasimir Velikov, a **mage**, lacks the dark gift to resurrect his sister (see "Kasimir's Dark Gift," Ch. 13), he and his three dusk elf **guards** remain in the Audience Hall and aid the adventurers.

(10) **Cultists.** This initiative includes Lady Wachter (a **priest**; see the "Wachter's Spells" sidebar), if present. She and her four **cult fanatics** cast their spells on the first turn but prepare to escape via the Grand Landing. Wachter intends to pilfer arcane secrets from Strahd's Study (K37).

(6) **Innocents.** The bystanders cower beneath the tables or flee from the carnage, perhaps accidentally shoving adventurers in their desperate bid to escape.

BUT ONE ESCAPE

Wights lurk in the Guard's Post (K26) and at the landing of the South Tower Stair (K21). They intend to stop fleeing characters from advancing any further. Only the Grand Landing (K19) is unprotected, but characters must first make it through the Vistani and werewolves. Alternatively, they might find the secret door to area K13 with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Should the adventurers survive this carnage, they enter Act IV: The Devil's Wedding Night.

REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

Three rounds after the carnage erupts, six more **wereravens** in hybrid form crash through the window and join the fray.

FOLLOWING A SCRIPT

This betrayal is a titanic battle waged between over a dozen characters. If you do not want to control so many forces, you can follow this script:

- Innocents cower beneath their tables.
- Luvash snatches his daughter Arabelle and flees.
- The werewolves and wereravens square off; only Kiril Stoyanovich attacks the adventurers.
- Lady Wachter and her cultists leave the Audience Hall by means of the Grand Landing on turn 1; Wachter casts *hold person* (spell save DC 13) on the weakest-willed adventurer on her way out.

This leaves you with **Rahadin**, two **vampire spawn**, Kiril Stoyanovich (a **werewolf** with 90 hit points), Arrigal (Vistani **assassin**), and four Vistani **thugs**. Only Kiril will fight to the death without even considering fleeing for his life. As subsequent turns go on, you can have wereravens or werewolves die off.

AFTERMATH

Once the carnage quells, the adventurers enter Act IV: The Devil's Wedding Night. All niceties and hospitalities are cast away: the devil Strahd will crush his greatest foes and conquer his greatest love at long last.

DEVELOPMENTS: EARLY BLOOD

Chaos blooms like a plague after a grueling winter. With the voice of a king Strahd orders, "Rahadin, take Tatyana to my bedchamber."

The devil turns to you and smiles. "You've lost, fools. I've no choice but to declare you traitors to the crown—soldiers and servants of Barovia! Children of the Night! Kill these 'heroes'! Bring me their broken bodies and let *none* survive!"

The Hour of Night has finally dawned.

If the adventurers draw blood before Strahd's betrayal, follow the same guidelines described in "A Red Reception" but with the following changes.

- Strahd orders **Rahadin**, and Sasha Ivlskova, a **vampire spawn**, to escort Ireena to his bedchamber by means of the secret door to area K13.
- Strahd joins the fray, fighting until half health. His Lair Action is set to allow him to phase through walls, ceilings, and floors. He uses a Legendary Action to escape.

The adventurers then enter Act IV: The Devil's Wedding Night. The game is afoot, and the devil Strahd sets out to crush his foes—after sending Ireena to an early grave.

ACT IV

The Hour of Night has dawned over black Barovia, and for all ages to come the people will remember this night as either their anniversary of liberation or greatest disappointment.

This act is highly modular and will vary on what the adventurers' goals are in the castle. Many side quests have been written for you to be thrown in as you see fit. The most important determinations are Strahd's location within the castle, as determined by the Fortunes of Ravenloft, and if the adventurers have any intention of saving Ireena Kolyana.

Strahd is preoccupied—he is no fool and knows that this is his last chance to damn his beloved Tatyana to an eternity as his vampire spawn. While he's busy with Ireena, his forces act throughout the castle on his behalf, as does his illusion.

Leveling Up. At your discretion, these side quests can level your players from 9th to 10th if three are completed. It's assumed that, like in all of *Curse of Strahd*, milestone leveling has been used. They do not gain the benefits of a rest, however.



DESTINED SHOWDOWN

Each possible site of the adventurers' showdown with Strahd are written here and provide tips or strategies; some include changes to what might be described in *Curse of Strahd*. Use them at your discretion. See "Destiny Calls" at the end of Act IV.

SPLITTING UP

"We will not go the way of Saint Markovia," Davian Martikov tells you, dusting off his attire. "Whittled down as one angry mob until nothing is left. No, to survive this Hour of Night, we must distract the devil. He cannot be everywhere at once."

The Keepers of the Feather insist on splitting up to divide Strahd's attention. They can accomplish minor quests escorting the innocents out of Ravenloft. However, the adventurers only gain experience for quests they personally complete.

A WOLF AMONG SHEEP

If any of the adventurers contracted lycanthropy in their dealings with the werewolves, they rest assured that the full moon is weeks awake—except it's not. Strahd is the Ancient. Strahd is the Land. The sun and stars and moon obey *him*. Strahd will reach into the sky and rip the full moon into view.

This event can be attached to any other quest or area. The ideal location is the Tower Roof (K57), the Bridge (K58), or the upper reaches of the Heart of Sorrow itself (K20). However, any windowed room with a view of the sky works.

Read the following:

Strahd offers a fanged smile. "Fool. You rely on the position of the sun and stars to protect you? *I am the sun!* I am the stars! I am the Ancient, and I am the Land—and I alone control the tides of the moon! *Watch!*"

Strahd reaches out to the night with a single hand, gripping at something unseen. His muscles tense; black blood courses through his veins. *Straining*, he claws at the air and rips at the fabric of the Barovian skyline! Thunder cracks—and between the storm clouds hangs a swollen, golden moon.

"So it begins," the devil laughs.

To those that succumb to their lycanthropy, read:

You drop to the floor, convulsing as fur erupts from your flesh, and your nails turn to claws! Your tortured cries become one long, *hungry* howl that splits the night, and when your eyes open, they're yellow and full of hate.

The adventurers succumb to the rage of lycanthropy and turn on their allies. Spells of *remove curse* or *greater restoration* end their bloodlust and reverse their curse. Otherwise, the werewolves rage until knocked unconscious or slain.

BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT

So many have been invited to the devil's wedding, and so many will perish in these black halls if left unguarded. Will you let these innocents fend for themselves or escort them to the gates?

This quest involves spiring the noncombatants out from Ravenloft. The Grand Entry and Entry are both trapped, as described on pgs. 54-55. Without protection, this flock of fools will surely die.

The flock consists of up to seventeen innocents: **nobles** all, but bereft of weapons and armor (AC 11). They're effectively noncombatants.

From Act II. The innocents start in area K15.

From Act III. The innocents must also contend with the trapped statues in the Grand Landing (K19). One noncombatant triggers a trapped statue.

A. GRAND ENTRY (AREA K8)

A foul wind sweeps the vaulted hall! All torchlight is devoured by the wind and in creeps the dark... and in it you hear the beat of wings. Grating and cruel voices cry out in a language not of this world.

The eight **gargoyles** here are sadistic fiends that would like nothing more than to squeeze the life from these innocents or drop them from 30 feet (inflicting 3d6 bludgeoning damage). The gargoyles are quite grateful to Strahd for the opportunity and have manned their post for centuries.

B. ENTRY (AREA K7)

Thunder shatters the skies as you near the castle's entry. One man, screaming incoherently, races ahead of you into the hall, wrapping one hand on the door's handle.

And that's when a gout of flame bursts from overhead, washing the hall in hellish amber.

The man—preferably Baron Vallakovich, screeching that all will soon be well—is roasted alive by one of the **red wyrm**'s fiery breath. The other three hold their own fire while the first recuperates.

C. THE GATES OF RAVENLOFT

The very sky is alight with lightning chased by thunder so loud the stones of this place tremble with nervous ecstasy. The gates of Ravenloft loom like the mouth of some gargantuan beast—and you're on the wrong side of it.

This section spans area K1, the Front Courtyard and Area J, the Gates of Ravenloft. The adventurers might strike out for the Carriage House (K4), in which case they find enough carriages and horses to spirit their guests away. Only two more hazards lie before the innocents:

The Portcullis. As described in Area J, Ch. 2, a patch of green slime (see Ch. 5, *Dungeon Master's guide*) clings to the wooden portcullis and drops on the first character to leave the castle.

A character can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot or warn of the slime, avoiding its deadly drop. Otherwise, the triggering character must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) acid damage and again at the start of its turns. Any sunlight, or effect that cures disease or deals cold, fire, or radiant damage, destroys the green slime.

The Drawbridge. As described in Area J, Ch. 2, there is a 5% chance that a board breaks under a character as they cross the drawbridge. The character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall 1,000 feet. If a companion is within 5 feet of the creature and reaches out to grab it, the character has advantage on the save.

Once the innocents have successfully escaped Castle Ravenloft, read:

You've done it. You can go to your graves knowing that at the very least, you spirited away these innocent souls. This night might haunt their dreams forevermore, but they'll *live*. To leave with them is so, so tempting but now, it's back into the belly of the beast with you.

BROTHER TO EVIL

Ismark Kolyanovich languishes in the dungeons. His sword-arm is strong, and his heart is true. Should you spring him from the prison, he will surely stand with you against the devil's shadow. Dare you stage a rescue?

Ismark rots in the North Dungeon (K74), guarded by wights and Emil Toranescu (if he was not previously freed), a **werewolf**. Strahd has offered the werewolf a deal: freedom so long as Ismark remains chained until tomorrow's dusk. Some events must align for this quest to be possible in Act IV.

From Act II. Ismark objected during the wedding and was sent to the dungeons.

From Act III. Ismark's life was spared during the reception with imprisonment as his sentence. See "The Oathbreaker" in Act III for more details.

Once the adventurers descend to the Dungeon Hall (K73), read:

The dungeon's black depths yawn before you. The air is foul and sour, and, in the distance, you hear Ismark's outrage: "Free me, fiends! The devil's head will be on my pike before dawn! *Free me, cowards!*"

The three **wights** that guard Ismark lie in wait in the South Dungeon (K75), prepared to exploit any confusion if the adventurers trigger any of the teleportation traps. The traps recharge only after 24 hours have elapsed, so any traps triggered in Act I are inactive. Emil Toranescu, if he's in on this, lurks in his cell, pleading for help, hoping the adventurers come to him. He transforms into his hybrid form, kicks open his cell door and attacks.

Unbeknownst to the wights, a **gray ooze** has moved from Cell G to Ismark's and is slowly consuming the man. Read:

"Hey! *Hey!* There's something—something's here!" Ismark's shouts turn to screams. "It burns! It burns! Gods save me, it's *eating* me!"

If Ismark is rescued from his cell, he is eternally grateful and commits himself to ending Strahd.

DAUGHTER OF DUSK

Within the nighted depths of Ravenloft, the ghost of Patrina Velikovna yet whispers to her brother Kasimir from beyond the grave. The very woman that demanded the devil's hand in marriage in life has pleaded for her brother to restore her from death. Even Kasimir doubts the mage has changed her ways—but she is the sole means of saving his people from extinction and redeeming his soul.

Dare you stand with Kasimir and risk evil being returned to this world, or will you condemn the dusk elves to extinction?

Only if Kasimir has received his dark gift from the Amber Temple (see Ch. 13) can this event be run, otherwise the dusk elves either flee the castle or join with the adventurers against Strahd.

If the adventurers explore the catacombs (see Crypt 21, K84, Ch. 4), they come across Kasimir with three dusk elf **guards**. If Rahadin yet lives, he awaits in the darkness of this place; read the following:

You rush through the catacombs as the ceiling pulsates above with legion bats. "Over here!" Kasimir calls to his men, leading further into the crypts. "Patrina's tomb—"

A voice thunders out from the dark: "This ends here, elf!"

"Rahadin!" Kasimir shouts. "Stand aside, kinslayer! My sister will live again! *Our people* will live again!"

"You vermin deserve extinction!" Rahadin shouts back from the gloom. Then you hear it, riding the wind: the faint wails of the countless souls Rahadin has culled from this world.

Kasimir visibly tenses. His hands curl into fists and arcane fire leaps from finger to finger. "After all these years," he asks, "how can you still harbor such hate for your own people?"

"My people *abandoned* me, Velikov! Threw me to the wolves because I wouldn't bend the knee to your petty, corrupt princeling!"

"You bent over for King Barov quick enough."

"Enough of this," Rahadin snarls. Steel rasps against a scabbard, gleaming in your lamplight. "The End starts today."

All around you, the floor begins to quiver with the distant footfalls of plate on stone. In the passageways to your left, your right, even behind you come dead men bearing steel. Rahadin's boxed you in.

Rahadin's reinforcements include six **wights**, each marching two abreast to block all exits. If you need to make the encounter harder, add a **vampire spawn** or two that cling to the ceiling. The wights close ranks, working in tandem, to reduce the battlefield into a slaughterhouse.

While this battle rages, Kasimir casts *wall of stone* around himself and the entrance to Patrina's tomb. Unless the adventurers can counter this, he successfully raises Patrina the next turn. Read:

Stone grinds against stone as Kasimir grunts, shoving his weight against the slab until finally his footsteps recede. His voice cries out, "Come back to me, sister! Come back from beyond your earthly grave! Live again, Patrina!"

Violet light fills the catacombs; thunder cracks as the veil between this world and the next is cracked open like an egg, and a shrill voice calls back, "*I live!*"

Patrina Velikovna, the devil's bride, has been reborn.

Patrina is weakened from her time spent beyond the grave. She has the statistics of an **archmage** with no spells prepared. If Kasimir's guards yet live, he sends them to the Brazier Room (K78) to teleport back to Vallaki with Patrina. If his guards are dead, he demands the party accompany him back there.

Betrayal. If the adventurers are of the mind that Patrina Velikovna is too dangerous to let live, the dusk elves turn on the adventurers.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

The devil's bride has been stolen away by Strahd's minions where she awaits that fatal bite that drain her life's blood and damn her soul for all eternity.

It's a match made in hell. The adventurers must save Ireena Kolyana from Strahd's fatal bite. Regardless from which act the adventurers enter Act IV, Strahd lures his foes to his bedchamber and secretly spirits his beloved away to his tomb to end her life.

A. THE COUNT'S GAMBIT

The devil has laid a trap for those that would dare rescue his bride. Within the King's Bedchamber (K42), Strahd has dressed Gertruda, Mad Mary's daughter of the village of Barovia, in a wedding dress. She is naive enough to believe Strahd's lies—that he will marry her on his return if she remains absolutely silent, no matter who calls out to her.

Four **vampire spawn** lurk nearby: one under the bed; one crouching on the ceiling; one behind the secret door to area K45; and another in the Bath Chamber (K43), hiding under the surface of the illusory blood (see the "Tormented Spirit" event).

When the adventurers enter the room, narrate the room as written with only the following change: rather than in a nightgown, the young woman is in a wedding dress.

Once the adventurers realized they've been duped, a character can attempt a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to determine that if Strahd would not spend his wedding night in his bed, he would undoubtedly spend it in his coffin, with his delightful bride at his side.

B. THE BLACK TRUTH

The truth is grim. Strahd dared not to let Ireena slip away from his grasp again. If the adventurers reach Strahd's Tomb (K86) in the catacombs, read its description and add:

The coffin's lid scrapes by... And in the darkness, you find Ireena Kolyana—dead, with two bloody pinpricks in her neck. The silence is deafening. The black truth has shocked you to your core, but you don't know why you're surprised—would the devil not take every precaution to ensure he got his beloved? Would he not send her to an early grave now than risk losing her forever?

You've failed. You've failed Ismark, Kolyan Indirovich, and Ireena herself. Every cost, every defeat, every sacrifice you've made to get here comes roaring back in your blood and heart.

You've failed, heroes.

A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check knows that if they do not burn her body, she will rise next dusk as a vampire spawn of Strahd. See Endings at the end of this module for more information regarding Ireena's fate.

Strahd's Brides. The vampire left his three **vampire spawn** brides to guard Ireena's corpse, and pounce from their earthen graves a moment after the adventurers lift the coffin but before fire can be put to Ireena's body.

THE HEART OF SORROW

The Keepers of the Feather have caught something on the wind: a heartbeat. Amidst the spires of Ravenloft hangs a crystalline sculpture that, according to the wereravens' sources, magically protects the devil from harm. Dare you sever Strahd from his shield?

While mechanically, the Heart of Sorrow does not pose a significant threat to the adventurers (as it gives the devil a mere 50 hit points), it ought to be conveyed as a drastic hurdle in the story. The wereravens warn them of its location, and, due to that meeting with Ireena Kolyana in Act I, the adventurers know how to reach K57, the Tower Rooftop.

Destroying the Heart is no easy task; Strahd has placed minions there to guard it, knowing full well that tonight is to be bloody.

RELEVANT AREAS

The battle there can span multiple areas and maps, as described below:

K20. The tower pitches and rolls on the Heart's initiative count, subjecting characters within the tower to a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, that character falls to the base of the tower.

K45. While on the rooftop, a character might scramble to the hole that drops into the Hall of Heroes.

K46. Once a character falls to the parapets, **Strahd's animated armor** will join the fray.

K53. A character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to traverse the roof. The check succeeds automatically if the character crawls. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character slides off the edge of the roof and falls 40 feet to the castle parapets (K46). They might also crawl to the hole in the roof that drops into area K45.

K57. The Tower Roof sets the stage for this titanic battle. Strahd has positioned 4 **vampire spawn** below the bridge and along the walls of the tower.

K58. Characters on the bridge must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw whenever they receive damage or fall 60 feet to the Rooftop (K53) and take 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

A WOLF AMONG SHEEP

If any of the adventurers contracted lycanthropy earlier in the module, this area is the ideal location for Strahd to force an early full moon. Strahd's avatar, described below, changes the tide of the stars. See "A Wolf Among Sheep" at the start of Act IV for more information.

THE OPENING SALVO

Assuming the adventurers approach via K57, the Tower Rooftop, read:

You hear it. You hear it not on the wind but in your very blood: that infernal heartbeat. Lightning paints the sky in bright colors, giving you one opportunity to see it: the sheen of a massive crystalline heart.

Thunder cracks its titanic whip and a tide of bats burst forth from awning—and in its wake stands Strahd von Zarovich himself. "Turn back, fools," the vampire snarls, "or be thrown away from this bridge like a broken dream."

Strahd is busy elsewhere with Ireena Kolyana; this is a projected avatar of Strahd, an illusion of the exact same nature as the one used in "A Drink with the Groom" in Act I. Strahd speaks and acts through it, but can only cast *gust of wind* through it, seizing control of the storm. It cannot attack and is immune to damage. Only a spell of *dispel magic* (DC 16) can destroy the illusion.

Animated Halberds. As described on pg. 59, ten animated halberds (use the statistics of a **flying sword** but with an AC of 15 and an attack dealing 1d10 +1 slashing damage), accost the adventurers once one nears the Heart of Sorrow.

Bats. Strahd has woken 6 (2d4 + 2) **swarms of bats** to harry the adventurers in this venture.

Vampire Spawn. Three **vampire spawn** scuttle along the walls of the South Tower, hidden from view while a fourth clings to the underside of the bridge (K58), readying an action to attack a character that crosses the bridge.

Fortunes of Ravenloft. If your card reading indicates an encounter with Strahd at the North Tower Peak (K60), he can be included later in this fight at your discretion. He rides his **nightmare steed**, Beucephalus.

DEVELOPMENTS: FALL TO RUIN

If the adventurers sustain damage on the bridge or are blown off by Strahd's *gust of wind* spell, they fall to the Rooftops (K53) where another **vampire spawn** joins the fray. A character might continue to slip, falling to the castle's parapets (K46) where **Strahd's animated armor** comes to attack.



WACHTERCULT

The devil Strahd undoubtedly has countless sources of arcane lore and power on his shelves—and it's clear Lady Wachter means to pilfer them to advance her cult's own agenda. Should they leave Ravenloft with such secrets, Barovia may find itself under the rule of another iron tyrant, even if Strahd von Zarovich is slain tonight.

Among her, Lady Fiona Wachter, a **priest** with alternative spells, has four **cult fanatics** (which were invited to the ceremony and reception) three **cultists**, and an **imp** at her disposal. They've taken to Strahd's Study (K37) and are plundering its shelves. Once the adventurers reach the Study, read its description with the addition that the cultists are present.

Lady Wachter. The cult leader is shrewd and cunning. If she can talk her way out of a slaughter, she will. She cares not for Ireena Kolyana, only herself, and doesn't stand between the adventurers and their goals. Only if her sons Nikolai and Karl are held hostage will she waver.

Fortunes of Ravenloft. If your card reading indicates an encounter with Strahd here, the cultists are posing as loyalists to Strahd and fight beside him.

WACHTER'S SPELLS

Lady Wachter has a different list of prepared spells than a priest from the *Monster Manual*:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mending*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *purify food and drink*, *sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *augury*, *gentle repose*, *hold person*

3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead*, *create food and water*

DESTINY CALLS: AUDIENCE HALL

To free Barovia, you must challenge the beast from atop his throne. Within the darkness of the audience hall will the fate of this land and its people be decided.

If your card reading indicates the Audience Hall (K25) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he sits atop his throne. No light shines here, only darkness. Read:

You burst into the hall. Brooding darkness has swallowed this place. The reception decorations loom like ghastly reminders of another world... and from atop his throne sits the king of this hell.

A wine chalice in one hand, and a deck of cards in the other, the devil welcomes you with a smile. "You know... All my life, I worried about fate. The war years and the killing years stole my youth just I stole my enemies' lives—and always, at the back of my mind, gnawing, *gnawing*, was doubt. How fickle it all was. How pointless." The devil flips a card and tosses it to the floor. You see it to be the Beast of the tarokka deck. Its monstrous visage lands with other cards you recognize.

"Fate. What a joke. Men are powerless to twist it, but I am no mere man. Neither, it seems are you. So come then, *'heroes.'* Today is a day of destiny. Today, we're all masters of our own fate. Face your end and finally learn that this is *my* world."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

The room is heavily obscured by darkness. With the reception decorations still up, Strahd has a plethora of objects for his *animate objects* spell. It includes cutlery, tables, unwrapped gifts, and more.

DESTINY CALLS: THE CHAPEL

Once the chapel of Ravenloft was a sacred place. A place of prayer and devotion. The Morninglord's light has long since been banished from this place, and now, in the darkness of it all, lurks only the devil Strahd.

If your card reading indicates the Chapel (K15) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he is among the bats clinging to the ceiling. There is no light shining here, only swollen darkness.

Weapons drawn, you burst into the chapel. The posies scattered during the ceremony have withered and rotted. Darkness reigns here unchecked, and in its depths above teems a horde of nightwings. As you challenge the devil for Barovia's freedom, his voice thunders across every stone and brick of this place:

"You'll find no gods for you here, *heroes.* The Morninglord fell to night long ago. His light will never again shine over Barovia. His light is dead and gone. Neither do your own gods have power here. There's but one god left in this world, and He is the Ancient. He is the Land itself. This, *heroes,* is *my* world."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Using an action before combat erupts, Strahd turns from a bat into his humanoid form and *drops* from the ceiling to land atop the adventurer of his choice.

Countless bats teem above. Strahd is joined by 2d4 + 2 **swarms of bats** that descend from the ceiling.

At your discretion, the King's Balcony (K28) can be stocked with 1d4 + 1 **skeletons** that fire arrows at the adventurers. Should a character ascend or fly to the balcony, they're accosted by the two **Strahd zombies** in the chairs (previously absent during the wedding ceremony).

DESTINY CALLS: HALL OF BONES

Destiny will be decided among the dead. Within a hall of bones and desecrated graves will you find the devil.

If your card reading indicates the Hall of Bones (K67) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, sits at the head of the table, with the skull of a long-dead foe: Vladimir Horngard. Read:

In this morbid hall sits the master of Ravenloft, sipping wine and gazing into a skull's eyeless pockets. He hardly seems to notice you.

"Nothing," Strahd murmurs, "can compare to triumphing over your hated foes. Vladimir here?" The devil shakes the skull. "A knight of the Order of the Silver Dragon. I cut down his lover before his very eyes before butchering his men. All of it, a red delight.

"And you fools truly expect to best me? I, who slaughtered the elves? Who trampled my father's foes? Who thundered across this world like the wrath of a just god?" The devil raises his glass toward the dragon skull mounted upon the wall.

"My work," he says. "I tore the drake from the sky. Butchered him in his own home. His greatest knights fell. The elves fell. Saint Markovia fell. Even *Khazan* would not challenge me. All of them—dead, buried, gone.

"And yet here you stand in their ashes. You truly are the greatest foes I have ever faced. Bring your wrath, *'heroes.'* Bring your wrath to bear and learn why *nothing* in this world can stop me."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

At your discretion, the ten **skeletons** from the nearby Guards' Quarters (K69) can be included in this battle. Eight lie amongst the remains in the massive bone piles (two in each pile), while the remaining two skeletons wait in area K68 to flank characters.

DESTINY CALLS: STRAHD'S STUDY

Amidst ancient knowledge and black despair will you find the devil finally satisfied. End him, and free this land.

If your card reading indicates the Study (K37) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he's lounging in a chair, gazing into the fire as the Wachtercult leafs through his arcane tomes. The devil hardly cares; he's in full bliss, marveling at the rosy song singing in his black heart.

Read the description for K37, and add:

Cultists pilfer secrets from the shelves. Ancient magic. Wicked secrets. Lady Watcher smirks and leafs through a heavy tome, lost to the world.

You're aware of a weight in one of the chairs facing the hearth. The flames cast the devil's shadow across the wall.

"You know, I didn't think that things could be this well. That all could be well. That love, sweet, warm love, could fill such a hole in one's heart—and that one could have it all *and* humiliate his greatest foes." The devil sighs dreamily. "You've failed. Know that. You failed; Tatyana is mine in flesh and spirit. All that's left is to provide her with a first meal: you."

The devil stands and sweeps his wedding cloak aside and beckons you forward. The Hour of Night is to draw to its bloody close at long last.

WACHTERCULT

Unless their numbers were culled earlier, Wachter's cult stands with the devil. They have up to four **cult fanatics**, three **cultists**, Wachter's **imp**, Majesto, and Fiona Watcher herself, a **priest** with alternative spells. See "Wachtercult" above for her spell list.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

At your discretion, the devil can call the four **vampire spawn** he's left in his bedchamber (K42) to join the fray. Otherwise, treat that room as empty save Gertruda.

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Strahd has at his command a plethora of tomes for an *animate objects* spell. He can also call for **swarms of bats** or **vampire spawn** from the chimney; the fire snuffs by his will.



DESTINY CALLS: THE OVERLOOK

The devil cannot help but smile at this tortured land from his lofty perch. There on the edge of the overlook will Barovia's fate be decided.

If your card reading indicates the Overlook (K6) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he gazes out from the overlook. The rain douses open flames, while periodically lightning brightens the sky. Read:

Rain smashes down onto the flagstones, running towards the edge. The storm rages above, weeping flashes of light and thunder as a cloaked figure gazes out from the balcony.

"This valley is mine," the devil whispers—even the wind dares not swallow his words, its screams muted by his very tongue. "Its people are mine. Its future: mine. Nothing you do tonight will change that, fools. Your end lies at the bottom of this cliff. So come, *'heroes'*! Let us meet your end together."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Strahd's prevailing tactic is to push his foes closer to the edge by circling behind them. Once in position, he lines up a *gust of wind* spell. Characters that fail their saving throw may use their reaction to snatch at the low wall's edge, making a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the character does not fall. On a failure, they fall 1,000 feet below.

If adventurers succeed, Strahd also attempts to kick a character from the edge (via the Shove action) by using Legendary Actions to close the gap and attack.

DESTINY CALLS: TOMB OF BAROV

Strahd spent his youth escaping the shadow of his father, and under Barov's dead eyes will you topple this beast from the throne of Barovia.

If your card reading indicates the Tomb of King Barov and Queen Ravenovia (K88) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he's in a frenzy of rage and despair. Read:

Dim light from that hazy, otherworldly curtain paints the tomb shifting hues of blue. Lightning flashes through the stained glass—and in that split of a second stands the darkened figure of Strahd von Zarovich himself.

"You would *dare* step foot in this place?" the devil snarls. The stones quiver beneath your feet, but the thunder has yet to come. "You would *dare* to stand where my father rests? The man that shook this very world and draped it in his shadow?"

The devil's hands curl into fists. Outside the storm worsens, railing against the glass. "You would never have the honor to be buried here, fools, but it will be your tomb all the same. Pray now in the shadow of Barov, *heroes*. You'll never escape it."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Strahd is aware of the otherworldly curtain in area K87, and lines up a *gust of wind* spell on characters he knows to have evil in their hearts. The curtain then teleports the adventurer to the top of the stairs, separating them from the party.

If an adventurer nears the stained glass, Strahd will shatter the glass and either shove the adventurer or cast *gust of wind*. A character that falls drops 900 feet to the base of the Pillarstone of Ravenloft.

DESTINY CALLS: TOMB OF SERGEI

For his beloved Tatyana, the devil murdered his own brother and plunged Barovia into darkness. Now, in Sergei's resting place, will the valley's fate be decided.

If your card reading indicates Sergei's tomb (K85) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he's lies across the coffin, weeping... in triumph.

Wails echo throughout these wretched depths. Carven angels watch as the devil weeps over his brother's coffin... but when Strahd looks to you, it's with a smile.

"You've lost," the devil laughs, wiping a tear from his eye. "You've lost, *'heroes'*! Tatyana is mine! Sergei himself could not stop me from taking her as my own. For her, I murdered my very own brother. Shoved that blade deep into his breastbone and drank deep of his life's blood. It was necessary. His death was necessary to have my beloved. So too is yours."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

If Strahd can get a good enough angle on all but one of the adventurers, he casts *gust of wind* to blow them out of the tomb, then pulls the portcullis lever, separating the party. With Legendary Actions, he then grapples the remaining adventurer while the poor fool's companions try so desperately to lift the portcullis (a DC 25 Strength check).

DESTINY CALLS: TOMB OF STRAHD

The Hour of Night is to be drawn to its bloody close. In the depths of Ravenloft, in a place of utter death and pure darkness, will you find Strahd von Zarovich: his tomb.

Unlike in *Curse of Strahd*, if your card reading indicates Strahd's Tomb (K86) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he is not in his coffin but an amorphous cloud of mist from which his voice thunders. Ireena Kolyana is instead in his coffin. Read:

The crypt teems with mist out from which the devil's voice thunders:

"This place will be your tomb, fools. Do you really think you can hope to stop me? *Me?* I, who slaughtered the elves? Who trampled my father's foes? I tore Argynvost from the sky and butchered him in his own home! Saint Markovia starved in these very crypts! Even *Khazan* could not best me! All of them—dead and buried! And yet here you stand in their ashes. You truly are the greatest foes I have ever faced.

"Well, there's no more running. No more games of cat and mouse. Today I die or live for the very first time. Come, heroes! Come! Face your end and finally learn that this is *my* world!"

THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

As described in the quest, Ireena lies dead in Strahd's coffin. Blood trickles from two pinpricks in her neck. See "The Black Truth" in the "The Devil's Bride."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Before combat erupts, the mist condenses into the gaunt form of Strahd; he appears behind the adventurer of his choice. Strahd's three **vampire spawn** brides then erupt from the earth.

If any of the teleportation traps are yet active, Strahd tries to bait the adventurers from his tomb and towards one, kicking or casting *gust of wind* on a character so as to send them to Crypt 14 and conjuring a **wight** in their place (see Crypt 14, K84).

DESTINY CALLS: TOWER'S PEAK

Only by pounding a stake through the devil's black heart might this valley be free from his tyranny—and fate has decreed that near the castle's beating heart, Barovia's destiny will be decided once and for all.

If your card reading indicates the North Tower Peak (K60) as the adventurers' destined showdown with Strahd, he stares outside the window. A strong wind afflicts this place unless Strahd wills otherwise. Once they reach the chamber, read its description on pg. 74 and add:

The wind screams, whipping through the window while thunder promises ruin. The devil gazes into the storm raging across the Balinok Mountains.

"This valley is mine," the devil whispers—even the wind dares not swallow his words, its screams muted by his very tongue. "Its people are mine. Its future: mine. Nothing you do tonight will change that, fools. Your end lies at the bottom of this tower. So come, *'heroes'*! Let us meet your end together."

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

At half health, Strahd phases through the ceiling, moving to the North Tower Rooftop (K60A). After 3 rounds, ten **swarms of bats** accost the adventurers.

Strahd also casts *gust of wind* when he gets a good angle on the adventurers, potentially blowing them off the tower. They fall 130 feet below to the rooftop, taking 13d6 bludgeoning damage. A creature that is within 5 feet of a falling character can reach out to snatch at them, making a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the character doesn't fall.

DESTINY CALLS: THE TREASURY

Behind great beauty will you find the heart of greed and draw the curtains on this terrible night once and for all.

If your card reading indicates the Treasury (K41) as the adventurer's destined showdown with Strahd, he stands atop the tower (a *Daern's instant fortress*). Read the description for area K41, and add:

The starry ceiling paints the vault in a strange glow. Atop the tower, the devil leans from the battlements, sneering down at you. "There's but two treasures in this world: the devotion of your beloved, and sweet triumph over one's foes. And by dawn, I will have both. Come, fools. Race to your end."

Circumventing the Tower. The adventurers will be hard-pressed trying to break down the walls of the tower. Solutions include:

- Casting *identify* on the tower to learn its command word, and thus opening the doors.
- Using the space between the vault and tower walls to slowly scale the tower by bracing one's legs against the tower, moving at half their movement speed.
- Guessing Strahd's command word; if there were any keywords or refrains oft repeated by the devil throughout your campaign, they might try repeating them. It's up to your discretion.

AREA-SPECIFIC TACTICS

Strahd has the high ground against his foes and can resort to his ranged spells, such as *ray of frost* or *fireball* to rain death down upon his foes.

ENDINGS

Never in Barovia's history has its people come so close to seeing the sun in its full glory... Will they?

THE DEVIL TRIUMPHANT

Should the devil emerge triumphant from the Hour of Night, Barovia scatters its slivered hope and falls to black despair. To come so close to freedom just for it be torn away is far too much. Despair blooms like a winter plague, consuming all the valley.

HERE COMES THE DEVIL'S BRIDE

If Ireena's corpse goes unburned, and Strahd defeats the adventurers, his final blow against the last survivor is nonlethal; if any other adventurers are unconscious but alive, he stabilizes them as well. The devil then leaves his vanquished foes in the dungeons. These characters cannot achieve the benefits of a short or long rest while languishing in the dungeons; it's too cold, too foul, and the devil's minions wake and prod the adventurers just as they reach a deep slumber. They merely meander through restless sleep haunted by red nightmares.

At dusk the next evening, the devil Strahd returns with his newly turned bride to sic Ireena on her those that failed to save her. Read:

You awaken in darkness. A chill hangs in the air and foul water laps at your knees. Steel rattles as you try to stand. Manacles. Manacles that bite into your wrists. Memories trickle in a few at a time until thunder cracks and the dam splits. It all comes rushing back to you: the blood, the bodies, the devil standing triumphant. With a shiver you realize he's left you for last. How much time has passed in this accursed dungeon?

A voice in the dark startles you. "You're awake at long last. Good." The devil's voice, cold and satisfied. "It's as I promised, my love. Betrayal is truly the sweetest of nectars. Drink deep of our most anticipated guests and emerge... more than the mortal. Emerge perfect in undeath. Emerge as one with the Night."

The door to your cell creaks open. Steps plod into the water. The devil strikes a lantern so that you might see your bloody end coming:

Ireena von Zarovich. Her pale hands end in talons. Shivering, she licks at her newfound fangs, and whispers to you, "Most anticipated, indeed. And where you failed in life, I... I will triumph. Your Hour of Night is over, but this is just my beginning. Black Barovia will remember you always."

The devil's bride hurls herself forward. Your screams and prayers to impotent gods rend the nighted depths but there can be nothing more you but a cold, crimson end.

LIKE RABBITS LOOSED

If the Blood of the Innocents quest was not completed in any fashion, several sheep fall prey to the deprivations of Ravenloft. Those that survive are rounded up by the devil's minions and kept as cattle. Over the next several nights, a few of the captives are loosed from the dungeons for Ireena von Zarovich to hunt down throughout the halls of Castle Ravenloft. As part of the game, the devil arms them with rapiers, for all the good that does them.

Only Strahd's direct vassals are spared this bloody end, sent back to their hovels to live with the horrors of this night forevermore.

BROTHER TO EVIL.

If Ismark Kolyanovich was never rescued from the dungeons, or lived through the Hour of Night, Strahd returns him to the village of Barovia where the poor man lives under the shadow of his failure until the end of his days—or until the next batch of adventurers are lured into Barovia as Strahd (and his lovely wife's) playthings.

THE IRON LADY OF VALLAKI

Armed with the knowledge pilfered from Strahd's study, Lady Wachter closes her grip around Vallaki at long last, turning it into a bastion of fiend worship. Weekly rituals and parades devoted to praising Strahd replace Baron Vallakovich's dismal festivals.

UPROOTED AND BURNED

If the Martikovs aided the adventurers through the wedding, Strahd wastes no time in revoking their lands and titles, and destroys them utterly—starting first with the children and working his way up the family tree. The Keepers of the Feather disband, hiding amongst the villagers or taking to the wild.

THE DEVIL DEFEATED

The Hour of Night has drawn to its bloody close, and all of Barovia will know this night that the devil Strahd has been thrown to the hellish depths he deserved.

AFTERMATH OF THE WEDDING

The aftermath of the wedding hinges upon what's already transpired in your campaign before the wedding as well as during it. Assuming these characters have lived, they do the following:

Dusk Elves. Kasimir Velikov either breaks down weeping at this pyrrhic triumph for his doomed people, or escorts his sister out of Ravenloft by

means of the Brazier Room (K78) if she was resurrected.

Innocents. Unless escorted by the adventurers, only a quarter of innocents survive. Most fell to the castle's wards and traps. Others escaped into the storm, dying of exposure. Some cowered in the castle, hunted down like rabbits by night-horrors.

Keepers of the Feather. The Martikovs and their allies rejoice and spirit the battle-weary adventurers away from this accursed place; either down to the burgomaster's mansion of the village of Barovia (if Ismark yet lives) or Vallaki.

Vistani. Arrigal and his henchmen set about securing the castle for their own purposes if possible; the assassin has regal ambitions. Otherwise they join the Vistani exodus, fearing retribution by the Barovians.

Werewolves. If Kiril Stoyanovich has been slain, any surviving werewolves turn to freeing Emil Toranescu from the dungeons and elevate him to packleader; otherwise, his wife, Zuleika, usurps command once news arrives. The attacks on the Sword Coast in the Forgotten Realms setting comes to an end.

IREENA AND SERGEI

If the adventurers defeat Strahd and burn Ireena's corpse, her soul is saved from eternal damnation. Follow the "Sergei and Ireena" event described in *Curse of Strahd's* epilogue. If the adventurers burn her corpse after defeating Strahd, you can start the event with this. It assumes they burned her in Strahd's tomb instead of taking her corpse elsewhere.

Ireena's pyre begins to shine with a newfound light. From her bloodied, dusted lips escapes a wisp of light. It soars from the fire and hangs at the threshold of Strahd's tomb, almost beckoning for you to follow.

You follow the wisp through the nighted halls of Ravenloft, over corpses and cobwebs, and through the depths of nightmare, until finally you emerge upon Ravenloft's overlook.

Continue on with the narration provided in the event.

THE RETURN OF STRAHD

If you were to tell your players of the inevitable, disappointing fate of Barovia, you can use this speech. Modify it as you see fit.

Do you wish to know the truth? Dare you ask for the truth, though it might break your hearts?

So be it.

Months would pass in Barovia. Months of peace. Months in which the Barovians knew what joy and hope could feel like. And all would be well... Until it wasn't. For men can sense the ill wind when it blows, don't you know? They can hear it. They can feel it in their very souls and carry it as a weight in their hearts.

The days would shorten. The skies would grow grayer. The rain would kick up a foul mist in the morning that would not leave until dawn... And there would finally come a day when the sun did not shine over Barovia, but from behind a gray shroud.

Like a creeping claw, the mists would rise again to snatch Barovia by the throat... For the curse of Strahd cannot be so easily ended, you must see. The Dark Powers that lie imprisoned in the nighted depths of the earth will not allow it. They will not allow it, oh no, for Strahd is the darkness that sustains them. Strahd von Zarovich is their plaything evermore, cursed to run along the wheel of time again, and again, and again. His return is but another black beginning for Barovia.

And the devil? The devil remembers his death. His revenge is quick, and savage. Those that saw to his end would go screaming to theirs. Some would escape, hiding amongst the sheep and away from the wolves, plotting their next move. Plotting. Praying.

And for those that left? For those heroes that left Barovia? There would come a day when they would wake to a letter at their doorsteps, no matter where in the world they were; no matter *what* world they stood on. A letter sealed in a familiar wax. A letter that invites them to dine at Castle Ravenloft once more as the honored guests of Strahd von Zarovich.

With his dark rebirth, the mists would surround the valley once more, carving it away from the world. The souls of the dead would never find an ever after, forced once again to live and die and live again in this hell. The Vistani would return to the valley, Madam Eva at the helm. The beasts of the land would fall under Strahd's spell, while the burgomasters fortify their settlements, praying to a dead god that someone—anyone—can once again save them from the curse of Strahd.