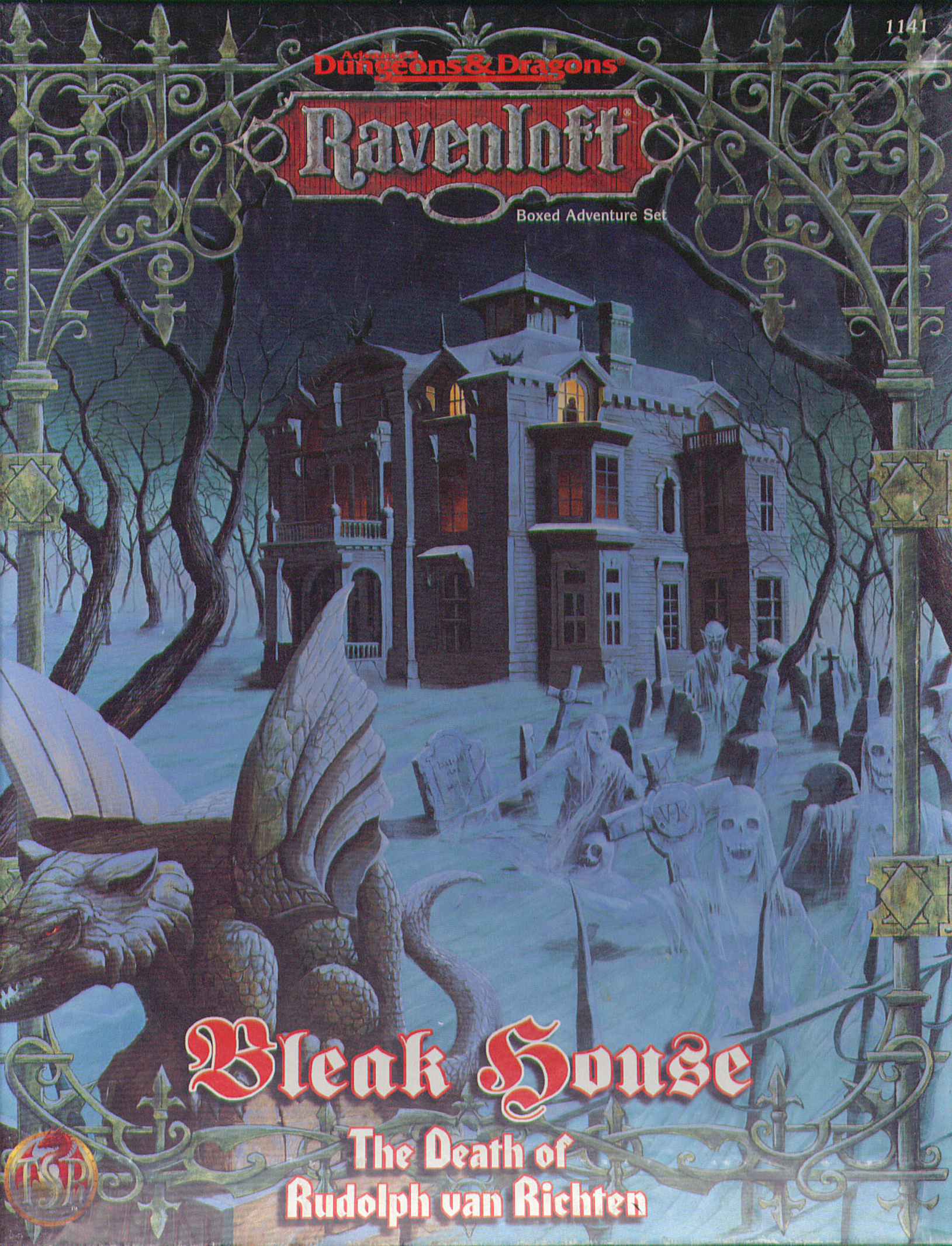


Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

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Boxed Adventure Set



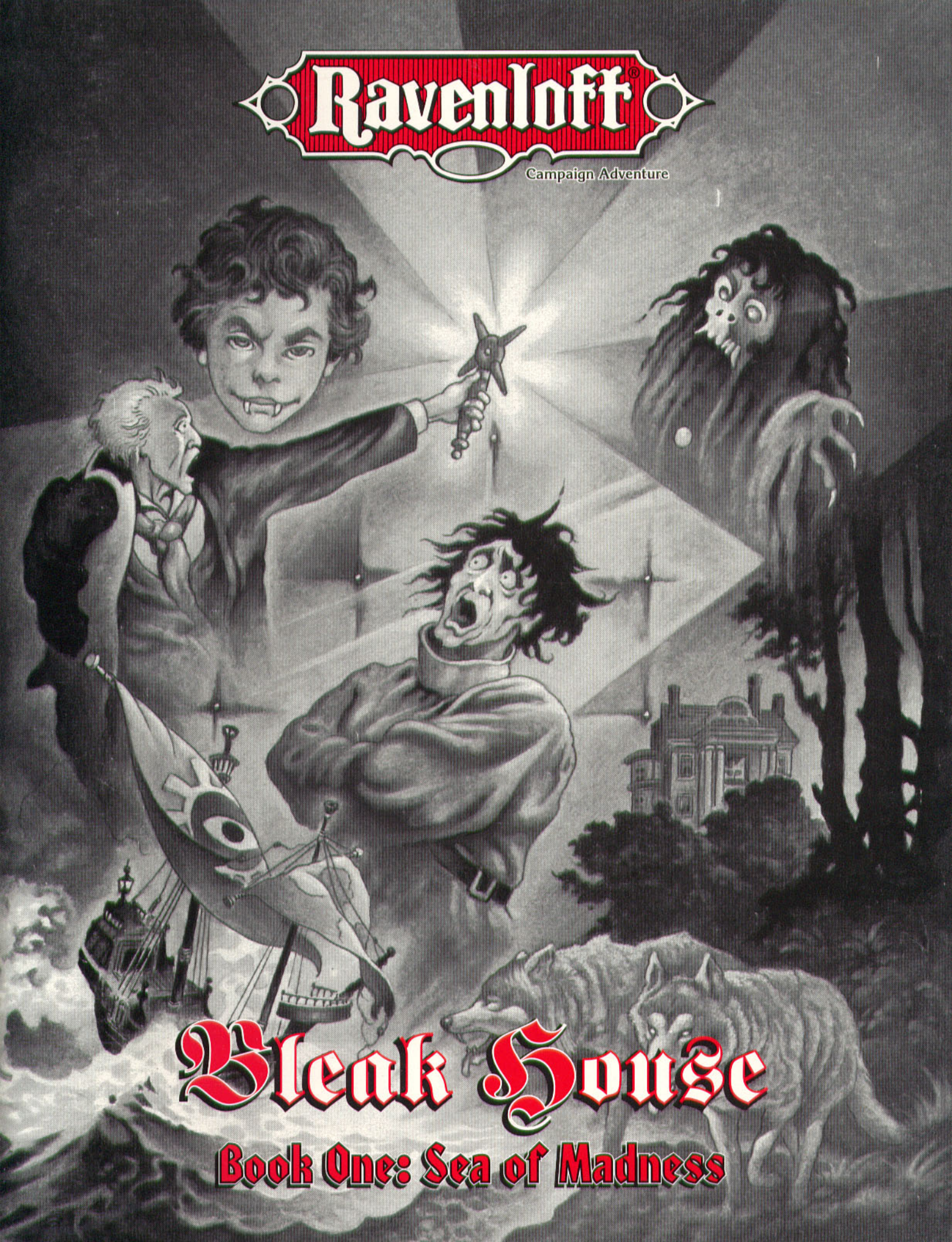
Bleak House

The Death of
Rudolph van Richten



Ravenloft[®]

Campaign Adventure



Bleak House

Book One: Sea of Madness

Player's Aid #1

Baron Metus,

In accordance with your instructions I have accepted into my care the distinguished Dr. Rudolf van Richten. He is a most remarkable man, full of wisdom and courage. Under normal circumstances, I should have welcomed the chance to reduce him to utter catatonia. Such an experiment would doubtlessly provide me with a wealth of knowledge invaluable in my search for a way to eliminate mental illness. Sadly, I shall not have this chance. I take comfort in the knowledge that there are others out there who share many of Van Richten's qualities, several of whom have been recently delivered into my hands.

Please advise me as to your further needs in this matter. Van Richten is ready to be returned to you so that your revenge against him can be concluded. I look forward to doing business with you in the future.

Daclaud Heinfroth

P.S. Pass along my best wishes to M.R.

Player's Aid #2

Dr. Rehner,

I am so glad that you have accepted my offer to join the staff of my humble sanitorium. I will call for you within a fortnight to complete the transformation I described in my earlier letters. Following that, I would appreciate it if you would travel to Martira Bay and stay at the residence of Baron Metus. He makes his home and tends a small clinic on Alptraume Street. I am apprising you of this desire so that you may make preparations for the journey, for once I have visited you, I do not plan to return to the mainland for some time, yet I need your assistance in Dominia promptly. Baron Metus will see to your comfort until one of my agents arrives in Martira Bay.

Daclaud Heinfroth

Player's Aid #3

I have managed to secure two keys. This one, which will open your cell door, and one that I have retained which will open my own. It is my intention to attempt an escape.

I ask for your help because I am but an old man. I am forced to trust you. The wolves of the forest would quickly overwhelm me were I by myself. With the help of such as you, however, I believe we can reach the docks, seize our master's caravel, and set a course for freedom.

If you are with me, I go tonight. Two hours after we are locked in for the night.

Player's Aid #4

My Dear Baron,

It is with a heavy heart that I must report my failure to you. The shipwreck survivors that I wrote about before have escaped. Beyond that, they have taken Van Richten with them. I have enclosed sketches of them in hopes that you can aid me in their recovery.

Your obedient servant,

Daclaud Heinfroth

Bleak House

Book I: Sea of Madness

Credits

Design: William W. Connors

Editing: Steve Miller

Project Coordination: Harold Johnson

Box Cover Art: Dana Knutson

Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian

Interior Art: Kathryn Guldán

Graphics: Dawn Murin & Greg Kerkman

Border Art: Dana Knutson

Art Direction: Bruce A. Zamjahn

Typography: Angelika Lokotz

Technical Support: David O'Brien & Dave Conant

Proofreading: Cindi Rice

Special Thanks: David Wise, Sue Weinlein, Blake Mobley, & Dave Gross

To Bruce Nesmith & Andria Hayday,
For the smiles, the memories, the lessons,
and, most of all, for your friendship.

TSR, Inc
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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Table of Contents



Introduction 3

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Author's Introduction | 3 |
| Adventure Background | 3 |
| Adventure One: | |
| When Fortune Would Destroy | 4 |
| Adventure Two: The Baron | 4 |

Whom Fortune Would Destroy 6

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| The Shipwreck | 7 |
| Passing the Time | 7 |
| The Storm Hits | 8 |
| Shipwrecked | 8 |
| <i>Mercy</i> | 11 |
| The Rescue | 11 |
| Life Aboard <i>Mercy</i> | 12 |
| The Crew | 12 |
| The Voyage | 12 |
| Fighting the Vampires | 14 |
| Exploring the <i>Mercy</i> | 15 |
| Picking Up the Pieces | 21 |
| Arrival | 22 |
| Guests of the Dark Lord | 22 |
| Prisoners of the Dark Lord | 24 |
| In the Asylum | 25 |
| General Remarks | 25 |
| The Staff | 25 |
| The Patients | 26 |
| The Orderlies | 27 |
| The Asylum Grounds | 27 |
| Ground & First Floor | 29 |
| Basement & Attic | 38 |
| Dinner With A Dark Lord | 51 |
| Evening Attire | 51 |
| Dinner is Served | 52 |
| Sleepless Nights | 56 |
| The Vampire's Grip | 57 |
| Useful Work | 57 |
| Surveillance | 57 |
| Betrayal | 58 |
| Failure | 58 |
| Dehumanization | 58 |

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Escape From Dominia | 59 |
| A Secret Message | 59 |
| The Escape Begins | 59 |
| The Sea | 63 |
| The Mists | 63 |
| Confronting Heinfroth | 64 |
| Setting the Stage | 64 |
| Resolution | 65 |

The Baron 66

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Out of the Mists | 67 |
| Refugees | 67 |
| The Caravel | 68 |
| The Folding Boat | 69 |
| Nightmares | 70 |
| Van Richten's Dream | 70 |
| Investigations | 71 |
| A Face in the Crowd | 73 |
| A Face in the Crowd | 73 |
| The Black Tower | 76 |
| Outside Appearance | 76 |
| Entering the Darkness | 77 |
| Business Hours | 78 |
| Map Key | 78 |
| Ground Floor | 78 |
| First Floor | 86 |
| Second Floor | 91 |
| Final Vengeance | 92 |
| The Thinkers Attack | 92 |
| Baron Metus | 92 |
| Victory and Betrayal | 93 |
| Aftermath | 94 |
| Traveling the Mists | 95 |
| Mistbound Heroes | 95 |
| The Journey to Bleak House | 95 |
| Horrors and Ferrymen | 95 |

Inside Covers

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Players' Aid #1 | Inside Front Cover |
| Players' Aid #2 | Inside Front Cover |
| Players' Aid #3 | Inside Back Cover |
| Players' Aid #4 | Inside Back Cover |

Introduction

I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me to be white—whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words—and thin even to the grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness. I saw that the decrees of what was to me Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because no sound succeeded.

—Edgar Allan Poe
“The Pit and the Pendulum”

Author's Introduction

This adventure allows player characters a chance to experience the events surrounding the demise of Rudolph van Richten in the year 750 of the Barovian calendar.

It is important for DMs to understand that the first adventure in this book, “Whom Fortune Would Destroy,” may prove to be one of the most challenging they have ever run. By this, I do not mean challenging to the players, although it will certainly be that, but to the DM.

The nature of this adventure requires that the heroes be kept prisoner by a mad doctor running a sadistic asylum. During this captivity, their every move is watched, and they are frequently subjected to mental treatments that might easily be considered torture. As a rule, players rebel against situations in which their characters are confined and battered like this.

It is impossible to lay down guidelines that satisfy the desires of every gaming group in a situation like this. Instead, the DM will be forced to use a little more initiative in

running this adventure than might normally be the case with a purchased scenario.

William W. Connors

Adventure Background

The chief villains of the *Bleak House* campaign are Madame Radanavich, leader of the Vistani tribe that kidnapped Van Richten's son Erasmus; Baron Metus, the vampire to whom the youth was sold; and Daclaud Heinfroth, a vampire who combines his taste for cerebral fluid with experiments in madness and insanity. The first two of these fiends were defeated long ago by Dr. Van Richten, but both have now returned to exact vengeance. Heinfroth, who has never met the good doctor, was featured in the adventure *Feast of Goblins* and may be known to the heroes as Dr. Dominiani. They may or may not know that he is now the lord of Dominia.

When Van Richten battled Radanavich, she cursed him. Although Van Richten has since broken the Vistani's curse, her spirit still plots against him. Indeed, Radanavich has been preparing her revenge since she died. First, she used her powers to draw Van Richten's family estate into the Mists. Then, she gathered the spirits of all who died as a result of her curse and anchored them to that manor house. Her ultimate plan is to bring Van Richten there and destroy him, body and spirit.

Recognizing that she needed the aid of a powerful corporeal ally if her plans were to see fruition, Radanavich arranged for the ashes of Baron Metus to be recovered and reanimated. Like the gypsy, Metus burns with the desire for vengeance against Van Richten.

Using the talents of an imprisoned Vistani psionicist, Baron Metus has been filling Van Richten's

Introduction

nights with terrifying nightmares.

As a result of these nightmares, Van Richten's mental state has degenerated into extreme paranoia, verging on madness. Physically and mentally exhausted, he was committed to the care of Daclaud Heinfroth, a respected doctor and the master of an asylum on the island of Dominia.

The adventures in this book have been designed to work best with a group of 4 to 6 characters representing a fair diversity of classes and races. The average level of these characters should be between 5th and 8th. A little care on the part of the Dungeon Master, however, can compensate for larger or smaller groups and higher or lower level characters.

Although these adventures can follow many courses to their ultimate conclusion, the following is the most probable sequence of events. Minor deviations are to be expected, but these should pose little problem for an experienced Dungeon Master.

Adventure One: Whom Fortune Would Destroy

This is the first of the three adventures that comprise the *Bleak House* campaign. It brings the heroes into Ravenloft (if they aren't there already), introduces them to Rudolph van Richten, and starts them on the long trail that eventually brings them to the door of the manor known as Bleak House.

Shipwrecked

For the heroes, the adventure begins when they arrive in the land of Dominia. Whether they begin in the Demiplane of Dread itself or in some other world, their journey to this accursed domain begins with them aboard a ship. For the purposes of this adventure, this ship is known as the *Blue Dolphin*. Of course, individual Dungeon Masters are free to give the vessel another name if this will help to link it to their existing campaign.

The exact reason for their journey is manufactured by the Dungeon Master to mesh with his campaign. In any case, a terrible storm whips up, and the ship on which the heroes are traveling breaks up and sinks. Most of the crew and passengers are lost, but the heroes and a handful of others survive and cling to floating fragments of the *Blue Dolphin*.

Mercy

The characters are rescued from the sea by the crew of the caravel named *Mercy*. This vessel is owned by Daclaud Heinfroth, the lord of Dominia and keeper of a private asylum on that island. Its crew is composed of cerebral vampires (see the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book included in this boxed set).

If the heroes explore the ship, they may discover the true nature of the crew. In addition, they may also learn that there is a secret hold in the bowels of the ship which is being used to transport patients to an asylum owned by Heinfroth. These poor souls are not fated to receive treatment, however, but to be the subjects of terrible scientific experiments designed to test the limits of human suffering.

The Sanitarium

Once the *Mercy* reaches the docks of Dominia, the heroes are led to a carriage and driven to the asylum at the heart of the island. There they are shown to comfortable rooms and told to relax until their host can be notified of their arrival.

Shortly thereafter, they meet Daclaud Heinfroth and his staff. After a pleasant meal during which they learn a great deal (not all of it true) about the realm in which they find themselves, Heinfroth sends them off to bed.

For their own safety, the heroes are locked into their rooms. Whether this will keep them there or not depends upon the actions of the heroes. If they decide to stay in their rooms, the night passes uneventfully. If they try to get out of their rooms and explore the grounds, they may run into trouble. In either case, wolves howl ravenously in the woods beyond the asylum's walls until the sun peeks above the horizon.

Introduction

Sleepless Nights

Before long, the heroes find that they are not guests but prisoners. Each night, they are subjected to a magical *sleep* aura and dragged away to be subjected to terrible tortures designed to push them to the brink of madness . . . and beyond.

After attempting to escape, they join forces with another prisoner, who they discover is Dr. Van Richten. With his help, or perhaps he with there, they plan an escape.

The Sinister Truth

Eventually, the heroes discover the truth about Dr. Heinfroth. In short, he is a vampire who sustains himself not on the blood of the living, nor their life energy, but on spinal and cerebral fluids. The vast majority of his patients, Van Richten included, have satisfied his thirst either for twisted experiments or cerebral fluid.

The heroes also learn, however, that Van Richten came to this island following a nervous breakdown caused by horrible nightmares. He is now being kept at the asylum against his will at the orders of a man identified only as the Baron. Among the stipulations of Van Richten's imprisonment is the condition that he may not be killed or otherwise "permanently harmed."

Escape

One way or another, the heroes free Van Richten and escape from Dominia. The final result of any escape attempt is, of course, up to the Dungeon Master.

It may be that the heroes will fail in their escape attempt and be brought back to the asylum. If this happens, they may be called upon to satisfy Heinfroth's obscene thirst. If this happens, a second or subsequent escape attempt becomes even more difficult. However and whenever the heroes manage their escape, the first adventure of the campaign ends with the heroes leaving behind Daclaud Heinfroth and his isle of madness.

Adventure Two: The Baron

Having escaped from the clutches of Heinfroth and his cerebral vampires, the heroes find themselves in the domain of Darkon. Here, they attempt to nurse the good doctor back to both mental and physical health.

Over the course of this adventure, the heroes discover that Baron Metus has been revived and that he is the source of Van Richten's nightmares. If these are to be halted, the heroes must seek out the Baron and destroy him. The heroes discover the vampire's lair and attack him.

In the process of battling Metus, the characters learn that he is not acting alone.

Out of the Mists

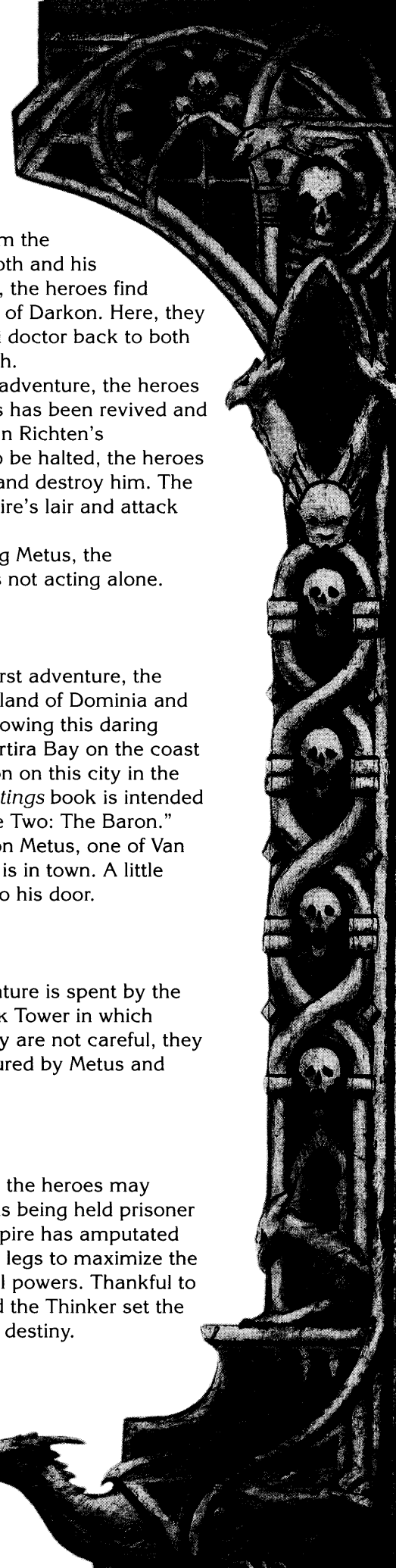
At the conclusion of the first adventure, the heroes escape from the island of Dominia and vanish into the mists. Following this daring flight, they arrive near Martira Bay on the coast of Darkon. The information on this city in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book is intended to supplement "Adventure Two: The Baron." They soon learn that Baron Metus, one of Van Richten's oldest enemies, is in town. A little investigation leads them to his door.

Tower of Darkness

The majority of this adventure is spent by the heroes exploring the Black Tower in which Baron Metus dwells. If they are not careful, they run the risk of being captured by Metus and shipped back to Dominia.

The Thinker

While exploring the tower, the heroes may befriend a psionicist who is being held prisoner by Baron Metus. The vampire has amputated the poor fellow's arms and legs to maximize the development of his mental powers. Thankful to be freed, Bleak House and the Thinker set the heroes on the trail to their destiny.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Whom Fortune wishes to destroy she first makes mad.

Whom Fortune wishes to destroy she first makes mad.

—*Moral Sayings*, Publilius Syrus
1st Century B.C.

This is the first adventure in the *Bleak House* mini-campaign. It brings characters who are not already in Ravenloft into the Demiplane of Dread, introduces them to Dr. Van Richten, and starts the ball rolling toward the culmination of the adventure where the character's explore the ancestral estate of the Van Richten family.

"Whom Fortune Would to Destroy" takes place on Dominia, an island of terror that formed in the wake of the Grand Conjunction. A detailed description of that domain can be found in the 32-page *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book included in this boxed set. Complete information on Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth, the lord of this domain, his orderlies, and Rudolph van Richten will also be found in that text.

Running This Adventure

This adventure may be one of the most challenging that the Dungeon Master has ever run. At the same time, however, it may also be one of the most rewarding and, if properly executed, one of the most terrifying. Here are a few tips to help the Dungeon Master (DM) maximize this adventure.

First and foremost, the DM should be aware that much of the terror in this adventure is generated not by the vampires featured in it, but by the sinister experiments that they are conducting on their human prisoners. In

order to drive this point home, the heroes may even be subjected to one (or possibly more) of the unusual therapies available at the asylum of Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth.

In order to understand the mood that is meant to be established during this adventure, the DM is advised to do a little reading/viewing before the game. Among the best reference books for this purpose are George Orwell's *1984*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and Huxley's *Brave New World*. All of these books provide good examples of ways in which dehumanizing treatment can be used to subjugate the free will of the individual, a key factor in this adventure. An excellent film version of *1984* is available at most video tape rental stores. It can't replace the reading of the book but augments it wonderfully. Another excellent piece of reference film is *The Prisoner* television series. In particular, the episodes *Arrival* and *The Chimes of Big Ben* capture the feelings of paranoia so vital to this portion of the *Bleak House* campaign.

DMs will find that refereeing this adventure is something of a balancing act. On one hand, some really bad things may happen to the heroes. Heinfroth's experiments will most likely leave their mark on the characters' minds. This effect can be very upsetting to the players. After all, they've put a lot of work into the creation of their characters, and these newly induced defects are not easily corrected.

On the other hand, the DM must make certain that the players feel that their characters are not just being abused. They must be given some chance to affect the destiny of their characters. At first, these can be little triumphs, but eventually they must grow into a successful escape from the island of Dominia.

If this is handled well, the players will feel that they have triumphed against impossible odds. Indeed, given the power of Daclaud Heinfroth, the absolute knowledge he has of almost every event that transpires in his domain, and the loyalty of his followers, this isn't too far from the truth.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

The Shipwreck

The sea—this truth must be confessed—has no generosity. No display of manly qualities—courage, hardihood, endurance, faithfulness—has ever been known to touch its irresponsible consciousness of power.

—Joseph Conrad,
The Mirror of the Sea

It is assumed that this adventure will begin with the heroes undertaking some sort of ocean voyage. The nature of this voyage, as well as the type of craft they are on, isn't very important. As long as the DM has managed to get the heroes onto some manner of ocean-going vessel, the game can get underway. The name of the ship, as well as those of any crewmen that the characters might be interacting with at this point, ought to be selected by the DM in accordance with the campaign background. (We refer to the ship as *Blue Dolphin* in the text.)

Getting Started

Several days into the heroes' voyage, the wind fails. The sails hang drably from the masts, and the crew makes preparations to begin rowing. Of course, if the ship they're on isn't equipped with sails, then the only effect of this sudden calm is to spook the crew. The following text should be read aloud:

The sea spreads out around your ship like a sheet of azure glass beneath an equally featureless sapphire sky. The wind, which has been brisk since you left port, seems to have suddenly fallen away to a faint whisper. The deck tilts sluggishly to and fro as the impotent waves break weakly against the hull. The sea air, so recently invigorating and bracing, seems heavy and oppressive now. To a man, the crew seems nervous and upset by this sudden calm.

Passing the Time

At this point, the DM should allow the players to get acquainted with any new characters in the group. Beyond that, he can recap the events that brought them to their current situation.

If any of the heroes are skilled mariners, the DM might want to give them some task that will allow them to make use of their nautical proficiencies at this point. These can be as brief or as detailed as the DM wishes, depending upon the general style of adventure preferred by the players.

The Dungeon Master can increase the effectiveness of this portion of the adventure with a sound effects recording of either crashing surf or a creaking boat. Both are generally available in music stores and serve as excellent background



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

noise for any naval adventure. Of course, the former sound effect isn't really correct for a ship far out at sea, but most players won't object to the taking of such liberties in the creating of the mood.

The Crew

The crew of the ship is upset for a number of reasons. First and foremost, of course, is the fact that a calm of any duration makes the voyage longer and puts a strain on the provisions carried by the ship. Beyond that, however, is the feeling that something is simply wrong. No one can put his finger on it, but there is something in the air. At the risk of being cliché, one might say that it's too quiet. Still, these sailors have their work to do and they manage to keep busy.

In the event that they are needed, the statistics for a typical crewmember are as follows:

Typical Sailor (?): Int Average; AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SZ M (6' tall); ML Steady; XP 15.

The Storm Hits

After the heroes have made some headway on their assigned tasks or otherwise killed a little time, the pace of the adventure suddenly picks up. Without warning, a great storm erupts. The following text can be read aloud to the players in order to start this part of the adventure:

The calm that hangs over the ship snaps with sudden violence. Sheets of charcoal gray clouds boil into the sky, and actinic forks of lightning rip the sky. The wind, lost for so long, slams into the ship, almost capsizing it. Sailors scramble to and fro, attempting to regain control of the ship, which pitches and rolls like a child's toy. Wave after mighty wave hammers the hull, washing the deck with bitter, gray water, which is instantly swept away by pounding, stinging rain.

Depending upon the type of ship that the heroes are on, the DM should present them with some sort of crisis at this time. This could be anything from an important henchman or a hero being washed overboard to poorly secured cargo being rattled loose by the churning waters. The exact nature of the crisis is unimportant, its primary purpose is to drive home the severity of the storm and get things started with a bang.

This storm is not a natural one. Instead, it is the by-product of the dimensional rift that draws them into the waters around Dominia. Because of this, magical attempts by the heroes to dissipate or control the weather fail to have any effect. The DM can emphasize the failure of such attempts by having the storm appear to grow worse in their wake.

After the heroes have dealt with the immediate crisis thrust upon them by the Dungeon Master, things get even worse.

Shipwrecked

Once the crisis in the last scene has been dealt with, the pace of the adventure quickens. The following text presents the situation to the players:

With an ear-splitting crash, your ship pitches hard to port as a stroke of lightning impales the starboard hull. Crimson flames spring to life, engulfing fully half the length of the vessel. Ropes snap, masts splinter, and the screams of the dying challenge the cacophony of the storm for supremacy. A great wave crashes upon the burning hulk, shattering it and sending you tumbling into the churning sea.

The heroes will certainly want to cling to the debris of the ship, perhaps even improvising a raft of some sort. This task is difficult during the storm, requiring ability checks at the least and proficiency checks at the DM's discretion.

Characters with the Swimming and Seamanship proficiencies have an advantage over others and should probably assume a leadership role here, but of course, that is up to players. Dungeon Masters might also want to give bonuses to characters who grew up in coastal communities or otherwise have a nautical background.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

For his part, the Dungeon Master can contribute to the drama and sense of urgency that should be associated with the ship wreck by moving things along fast and furiously. The players shouldn't be given a lot of time to consider their options or plan strategies. Time is of the essence, and the DM should transfer that sense of exigency to his players.

As the storm drags on, your ears grow numb from the endless hammering of thunder and the frozen spray of the sea. Your eyes are seared by the repeating flashes of lightning, reducing your vision to little more than a collection of light and dark patches. It has been some time since you lost the feeling in your fingers and toes, a painful condition that is gradually spreading up your arms and legs.

Other Survivors

Ten members of the *Blue Dolphin's* crew have also survived the wreck and now join the party. These characters are of little importance to the resolution of the adventure, but can be valuable to the DM for establishing mood during play. Whenever the heroes are about to enter a dangerous situation, the nature of the threat can be driven home to them simply by having one of these sailors experience it first.

Once there are no crew members left, the DM is free to inflict these mishaps on any other retainers, followers, or henchmen who might be traveling with the party. It is possible for the DM to target the heroes for these mishaps, but care must be taken not to snuff out the life of so important a character.

Provisions

It is likely that the heroes are without provisions or fresh water. As miserable as things might be right now, they'll be much worse if the characters are forced to pass several days without food or drink.

Drinking water can be gathered simply by setting out bowls, buckets, or other containers during the storm. Once the rain ends, another source of water will have to be found. Efforts to catch fish, recover rations from the wreckage of the ship, and so forth must be dealt with based on a case-by-case basis by the Dungeon Master. Regardless of success or failure, players who think this far ahead ought to be rewarded with a bonus of 200 experience points.

Riding out the Storm

One way or another, the heroes must ride out the rest of the storm clinging to debris or perched upon a lifeboat of some sort. While this is a miserable and wretched way to pass the hours, it's better than vanishing beneath the waves. The following text describes the torture of the next few hours:

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Mercy

Ah Fortune, what god is more cruel to us than thou! How thou delightest ever to make sport of human life!

Satires, Horace

The Rescue

This part of the adventure brings the heroes into contact with a ship full of Heinfroth's cerebral vampires. They'll spend a brief time with them aboard the *Mercy*, a two-masted caravel making its way to Dominia. Read the following text to the players:

As might be expected, the storm is unable to maintain its intensity for long. Some three hours after the destruction of your ship, the charcoal sky lightens to an oppressive slate gray, the pounding rain slackens to a steady downpour, and the hurricane winds weaken to no more than a gale. At last, sea and sky merge in a featureless black void as night falls. At some point, the rain stops, and the howling of the wind falls away. Some time during the night the rain ends, leaving your party floating in an endless, black void.

An eternity later, as the cloud-strewn sky brightens with the dawn, you see a two-masted, gull-prowed caravel making its way across the sparkling waves.

If the heroes don't attempt to attract the attention of the caravel for some reason, the other survivors of the *Blue Dolphin* do. In either case, the ship spots

them and turns toward them. The following text describes this encounter:

A cry of recognition rings out from the lookouts aboard the caravel. Clearly, your plight has been noticed. Gradually, the ship turns toward you. Then, with a sharp snap, the sails fill with wind and the ship surges forward.

Some fifteen minutes later, when the vessel finally reaches you, the dozen or so sailors on the deck begin to wave and shout greetings. Their language is guttural and throaty, both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. The name on the gull-shaped prow speaks well of your luck, for you have been rescued by none other than the *Mercy*.

The crewmen of the caravel are actually cerebral vampires in the service of Dr. Heinfroth. A complete MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Appendix entry for these creatures, as well as deck plans for the *Mercy*, can be found in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. Because of the complexity of the cerebral vampires, no shorthand entry is presented here.

The caravel pulls up to the heroes and tosses them a line. If the characters wave them off or attempt to resist being taken aboard the ship, the vampires become forceful. They won't reveal their powers or true nature, but they are more than strong enough to handle a group of weary castaways. The surviving members of the *Blue Dolphin* will not willingly pass up this chance to be rescued. If the heroes seem to be leaning that way, they will join the vampires in subduing the heroes.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Life Aboard *Mercy*

The *Mercy* serves many roles. First and foremost, it is Heinfroth's link with the outside world. *Mercy* brings patients and supplies (usually from Darkon), serves as a fishing vessels to catch food for the inmates, and undertakes any other nautical missions that Heinfroth deems important.

The crew of the caravel are as friendly and helpful as can be. They'll offer food and fresh water to the survivors, as well as promising to bring them to a safe port. The DM should go out of his way to make this seem like an innocent encounter.

The Crew

There are three important people that the heroes meet as soon as they are brought aboard ship. These are Captain Baykur, Dr. Rehner, and Young Colin. All are cerebral vampires who serve Heinfroth.

These are the only crewmen who speak a language that is known to the heroes. When any of them is speaking, the DM should affect a husky accent, use ragged grammar, and stumble over obscure or difficult words. These NPCs are described in detail in *Heroes*, *Monsters*, and *Settings*.

The Truth

There are a number of things that the characters will not know when they are brought aboard *Mercy*. First among these, of course, is the fact that their hosts are not living creatures, but cerebral vampires. Beyond that, however, is the sinister nature of *Mercy's* cargo.

While it is true that the hold (area 11 on the map) is full of the various supplies and provisions one might expect to find aboard a ship like this, that is only half the story. Beneath the main hold is a smaller, secret compartment in which stacks of coffins are stored. Within each of these pine boxes is a living person, sealed in by the merciless crew of vampires.

These poor wretches have been committed to the care of Daclaud

Heinfroth by loved ones who didn't realize the truth about the sadistic lord of Dominia.

As each patient is brought to the ship, he is taken aboard and treated with the greatest of kindness by the crew. After his friends and family have said their farewells, however, things change drastically. Without exception, each poor soul is dragged down to the secret hold. There he is thrust into a coffin and the lid nailed into place. As the victim's muffled screams echo off the wooden walls of the secret hold, the coffin is lashed to the deck and all but forgotten.

For the duration of the voyage, the patients are left to suffer in the thick darkness of the hold. Once each day, a vampire visits the area with food and water. The food, a bitter piece of hardtack, is dropped through a one inch by six inch slot on the lid of the coffin. Afterwards, a ladleful of water is poured through the slot. If the person within the box isn't able to catch the liquid in his mouth, he must do without for the day. All told, most of the patient's survive to reach the island, but they often lose what fragments of sanity they had left along the way.

The Voyage

It takes about three days for the ship to sail from the point where the heroes were rescued to the docks. Although the actual distance to be traveled isn't that far, the ship must use extreme caution to avoid the reefs and shoals that surround Dominia.

During this time, the vampires treat their new shipmates with care. They know that Heinfroth will be delighted to receive these new subjects for his experiments, and they don't want to incur his wrath by harming them in any way.

If, at any point, the heroes start to snoop around the ship, the adventure continues with the section titled "Exploring the *Mercy*."

Day One

When the heroes are first brought aboard, Captain Baykur will call for Dr. Rehner to examine and treat their wounds. Aware that Baykur wishes *Mercy* and her crew to appear innocent, Rehner does a good job at this task, despite being something of a sadist. The heroes may notice that Rehner has only the crudest of medical equipment aboard ship. After all, with a

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



ship full of vampires he doesn't need to worry about disease or minor injuries. All of the crewmen are immune to the former and quickly regenerate the latter. Splints, bandages, and amputations are about the limit of Rehner's care.

Neither Baykur nor Rehner answer any questions during the examination. They assure the survivors that there'll be plenty of time for that later, after everyone has rested and started to recover from their ordeal.

After their encounter with Rehner, the heroes are led to the forward storage area (area 5). This place, which holds spare sailcloth and rigging, is where they and other survivors will be housed for the duration of the voyage. No beds or other comforts are available for them, but it's better than nothing.

As soon as the characters are settled in, Baykur and young Colin visit them. The cabin boy will be told to make himself useful by seeing to it that the survivors are made as comfortable as possible. From that point on, he is at the heroes' side more or less constantly, eager to do whatever they ask (within reason). In addition, he'll be quick to keep the captain informed of any unusual activity on their part.

Shortly after the heroes are taken aboard, one of the vampires transforms himself into seagull and fly away from the ship. He carries news of the crew's discovery back to the Heinfroth, who begins to make plans for receiving guests. Only if the characters make a point of counting heads will they discover that the crew of *Mercy* has dropped by one.

For his part, Baykur will answer a few questions and tell the heroes what's expected of them. He explains that they're about three days from their home port on the island of Dominia. They're sailing from the city of Martira Bay in Darkon. His cargo is of little value, being comprised mainly of various medical supplies and provisions for Daclaud Heinfroth's private sanitarium. He makes no secret of the fact that he's employed by Heinfroth and that the ship belongs to the doctor as well.

Baykur insists that the heroes stay out of everyone's way for the duration of their time aboard *Mercy*. He invites them to spend time on deck, but instructs them to stay out of the hold or the crew's accommodations in the stern. They have no business

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

in either place, and he's not above tossing trespassers back into the sea.

Once he's said his piece, Captain Baykur bids the party a goodnight (for it will be dusk by then) and leaves. Colin stays behind to help them in whatever way he can. He is full of questions about how they came to be shipwrecked and listens wide-eyed to any story they care to tell him.

Day Two

The routine of shipboard life is fairly dull for the survivors of the *Blue Dolphin*. Unlike the crew, they have no work to do and tend to be in the way just about anywhere they go.

Baykur and Rehner both check in on the heroes shortly after sunrise. Baykur is polite in his conversation, asking them how they slept and such. Anyone who pays attention to him at all notices that he doesn't seem to be particularly interested in their answers. He's eager to get back to his work and doesn't really care if his new passengers are comfortable or not. After all, he knows what's in store for them when they arrive in Dominia.

Rehner takes the time to check all of the wounded again. Again, his lack of medical supplies may prove to be suspicious, but he'll attempt to cover it up by pretending not to understand the conversation. After his examination is concluded, Rehner will leave the heroes and head off to other business.

Most of the nonplayer character crewman who were rescued with the heroes spend the day on deck. If the heroes strike up conversations with them, they marvel at the skills shown by the crew of *Mercy*. None of them have ever seen sailors as agile as these. Of course, they have no idea that the prowess they are admiring is simply the supernatural vitality of the undead.

If the heroes ask for something to do, Captain Rehner assigns them work of some sort. As was the case before they were shipwrecked, these tasks should reflect the nature of their proficiencies.

If the heroes opt to sniff around, they'll have to be careful about it. Details about their adventures follow under the title "Exploring the *Mercy*."

Day Three

Shortly after dawn, the ship comes into sight of Heinfroth's island domain. As long as the heroes haven't managed to get themselves sealed into coffins, they are allowed to stay on deck during the docking process. Of course, if they get in the way, they are sent back to their so-called quarters in the storage chamber (area 5).

It will be well past noon before *Mercy* is secured to the docks on Dominia's eastern shore (area 2 on the map of Dominia). As soon as this happens, Baykur and Rehner will lead them along the road to Heinfroth's sanitarium. Behind them, the crew begins to unload the cargo from *Mercy's* holds onto the wagons that will carry it to the asylum.

Fighting the Vampires

It is possible that the heroes will end up in a fight with one or more of Baykur's crewmen. In most cases, the first attack employed by the vampires is their *confusion* gaze. After this, the creatures resort to more traditional tactics, like crushing the air out of a victim's lungs or beating him into unconsciousness. In no case will the vampires attempt to kill or feed upon the heroes. Those privileges are reserved for Daclaud Heinfroth himself.

Of course, a fight in any part of the ship is likely to draw attention from those in the surrounding area. Unless the characters act quickly and with a great deal of stealth, they end up facing an overwhelming number of attackers.

Crime and Punishment

If the heroes surrender or are defeated in combat, they end up as prisoners of the vampires. What happens then depends upon the current state of affairs.

Option One

If the truth about *Mercy*, her crew, or her cargo has not been discovered, Baykur does nothing to give away his secrets. Instead, he decides which of the castaways was responsible for the brawl (it is never the fault of a crewman) and make an example of that person. If he feels that more than one person (like a hero and a

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

member of *Blue Dolphin's* crew) is at fault, he blames them all.

Once he has done this, Baykur calls the ship's company (including the passengers) to the deck and personally administers 20 lashes to each culprit. Every blow inflicts 1d3 points of damage to the victim. After every five lashes, the victim must make a saving throw vs. paralysis or pass out from the pain. A cumulative -2 penalty is applied to each saving throw after the first. If someone passes out, Dr. Rehner is called to revive him. After this, the beating resumes.

If a victim dies from the lashing, Baykur orders his body tossed over the side. Only this rugged sea dog can actually get away with killing one of the heroes before they are presented to Heinfroth.

Option Two

If the heroes have managed to learn any of *Mercy's* secrets, they're in for a much worse fate. One by one, they are taken below deck and are sealed into coffins like the unfortunate patients bound for the asylum (see area 12). Unless they manage to escape somehow, they must ride out the rest of the voyage in the hold. If this happens, the adventure continues in the next chapter, "Arrival."

It is possible that being trapped in these coffins, with other victims screaming and weeping all around, may cause a hero to lose his mind. Shortly before arriving at Dominia, the DM should call for a madness check with a +4 bonus. Once a madness check has been failed, the character is filled with a strength born from that insanity. He must attempt to break free from the coffin with a bend bars/lift gates roll as if he possesses an 18/99. Once out, the madness table should be checked to see what form of insanity the hero now suffers from.

Exploring The *Mercy*

Sooner or later, the heroes will probably get bored or curious and want to sniff around. The following descriptions and information can be used with the deck plans of the *Mercy* presented in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. Of course, the actions of the player characters may change some of these

entries slightly, and the DM may want to jot notes in the margins if this happens.

If the heroes don't investigate the ship, the DM can continue with the adventure by skipping ahead to the section titled "Arrival," the point where *Mercy* reaches the dock in Dominia.

1. Forecastle

As the bow of the *Mercy* dips and rises with each wave, a fine spray of salt air rises about the forecastle. High above, the foremast creaks, and the square sail pulls hard at the rigging as a brisk wind fills it. Gulls circle about the ship, seeming to dance in the blue sky.

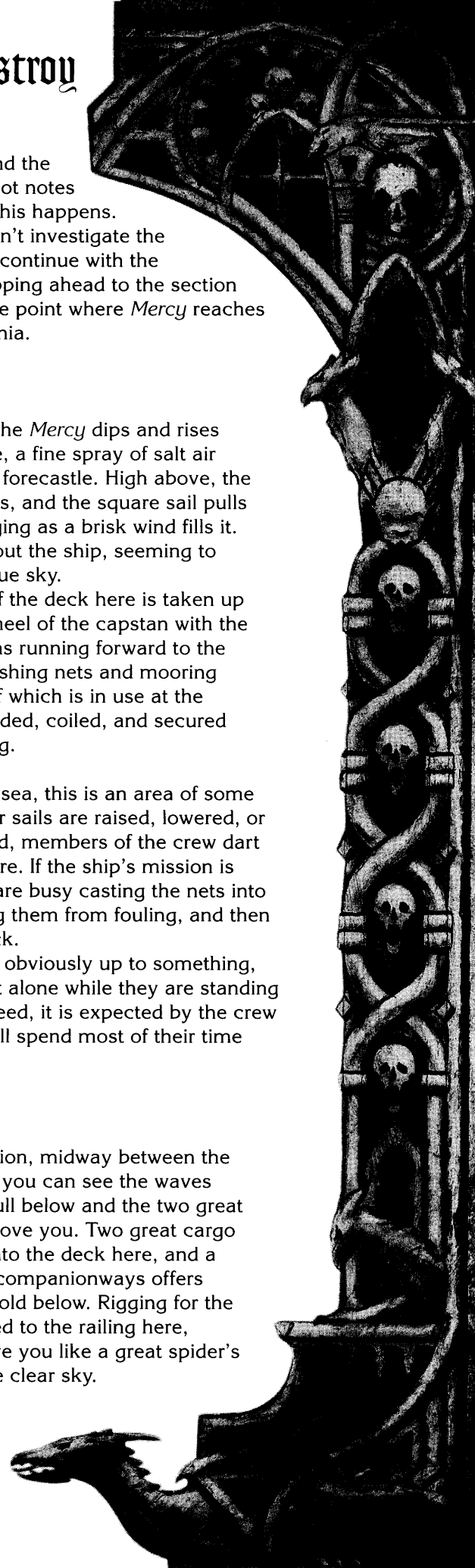
The center of the deck here is taken up by the great wheel of the capstan with the two great chains running forward to the anchors. The fishing nets and mooring lines, neither of which is in use at the moment, lie folded, coiled, and secured along the railing.

While *Mercy* is at sea, this is an area of some activity. Whenever sails are raised, lowered, or otherwise adjusted, members of the crew dart back and forth here. If the ship's mission is fishing, the crew are busy casting the nets into the water, keeping them from fouling, and then drawing them back.

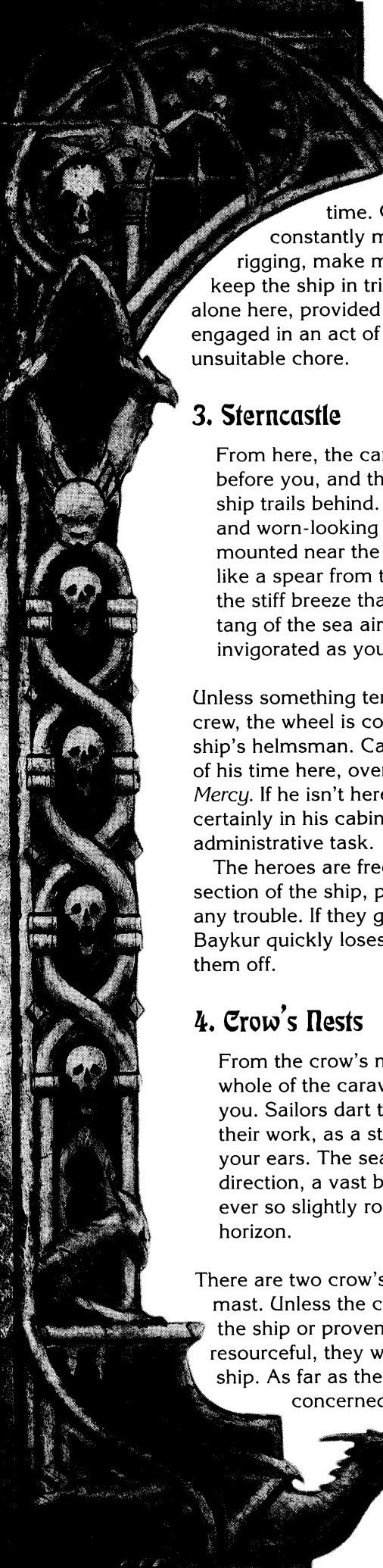
Unless they are obviously up to something, the heroes are left alone while they are standing on forecastle. Indeed, it is expected by the crew that the heroes will spend most of their time aboard ship here.

2. Deck

From this position, midway between the bow and stern, you can see the waves buffeting the hull below and the two great masts rising above you. Two great cargo doors are set into the deck here, and a pair of narrow companionways offers access to the hold below. Rigging for the masts is secured to the railing here, stretching above you like a great spider's web against the clear sky.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



This area of the ship is fairly busy most of the time. Crew members will be constantly moving about to check the rigging, make minor repairs, and otherwise keep the ship in trim. The heroes are left alone here, provided they are not obviously engaged in an act of sabotage or other unsuitable chore.

3. Sterncastle

From here, the caravel stretches out before you, and the wake of the speeding ship trails behind. The wheel, a rugged and worn-looking circle of oak, is mounted near the base of a mast that rises like a spear from the deck below. Between the stiff breeze that fills the sails and the tang of the sea air, it is difficult no to feel invigorated as you stand here.

Unless something terrible has happened to the crew, the wheel is constantly manned by the ship's helmsman. Captain Baykur spends much of his time here, overseeing the operation of *Mercy*. If he isn't here, the captain is almost certainly in his cabin, undertaking some administrative task.

The heroes are free to come and go from this section of the ship, provided they don't cause any trouble. If they get in the way, however, Baykur quickly loses his patience and chases them off.

4. Crow's Nests

From the crow's nest, you can see the whole of the caravel spread out beneath you. Sailors dart to and fro, eager to finish their work, as a stiff wind fairly roars in your ears. The sea stretches out in every direction, a vast blue sheet that seems ever so slightly rounded on the distant horizon.

There are two crow's nests, one atop each mast. Unless the characters have taken over the ship or proven themselves very resourceful, they won't be in this part of the ship. As far as the captain and crew are concerned, they have no business being here. If they do climb the masts

to these perches, they'll find that each has a small telescope and a megaphone hanging on a hook within it.

5. Storage Area

The walls of this low-ceilinged room creak melodically with the gradual rolling of the ship. Bolts of sailcloth, coils of rope, and stacks of wooden planks are secured to the walls. Several crates and barrels dot the center of the room, all labeled in a language unfamiliar to you. A single oil lamp hangs from a hook near the center of the room, spreading a sickly yellow light and heavy odor throughout the area.

A careful examination of the room reveals all manner of tools and supplies needed for the upkeep and repair of the ship. Just about any such item that the heroes might ask about, within reason, can be found in one or another of the boxes. Of course, Captain Baykur isn't going to take too kindly to his guests opening all the crates and searching the place like thieves.

6. Crew Cabins

Note: The doors to these areas are sealed with special *wizard lock* spells. They open only for the ranks of the living dead. Characters may gain entrance only by forcing open the door or through the use of a spell like *feign undead*.

This is a squarish room some ten feet on a side. A lantern hangs from a hook on the ceiling and a porthole some six inches in diameter is set into the hull. Although this room is not unlike the cabins you have seen on other ships, there is something most peculiar about it. Instead of bunks, a pair of coffins are secured to the wall.

Each of these cabins serves as home for two of the ship's vampire crew. If the characters have taken care to enter a cabin that is empty, they may search it freely. Although they can find many of the things one might expect in such a place, there is no food, drink, or other such mortal belongings here.

If the characters have simply entered a cabin at random, there is a chance that it is occupied. The DM should roll 1d10 as soon as the door is

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

opened. On a roll of 1 through 3, there is one vampire in the room. A 4 through 6 indicates that both of the room's occupants are here. A 7 or higher means that the room is empty.

Of course, once the heroes see the coffins they know that *Mercy* is truly a ship of the damned. The crewmembers won't even attempt to talk their way out of this situation. Instead, they will attack at once, attempting to subdue the intruders and turn them over to the captain. If this happens, the events described earlier in "Crime and Punishment" will take place.

Should the heroes triumph and have a chance to search one of these cabins in detail, they'll find little of value. The Dungeon Master can determine what treasures might be in here by rolling once for treasure types P and Q on the tables in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

7. Captain Baykur's Cabin

Note: The doors to these areas are sealed with special *wizard lock* spells. They will open only for the ranks of the living dead. Heroes may gain entrance only by forcing open the door or through the use of a spell like *feign undead*.

This room is an L-shaped cabin with a large window set in the aft wall. Beyond the window, *Mercy's* wake stretches out like a great serpent slithering through the waves. The decor here is sparse, consisting of a roll-top desk with its accompanying chair, a large steel-bound chest, and, where one would expect to find the bed, an ornate, black-lacquered coffin.



Unless the heroes have taken care to enter the room at a time when Captain Baykur is elsewhere, there is a chance that he is here. In order to determine this, the DM should roll 1d10.

On a roll of 1 or 2, Baykur is seated at the desk doing various paperwork or recording an entry in the ship's log. He will attempt to feign nonchalance at the interruption, something that is distinctly out of character for him. As soon as the opportunity arises, however, he will attack the intruders.

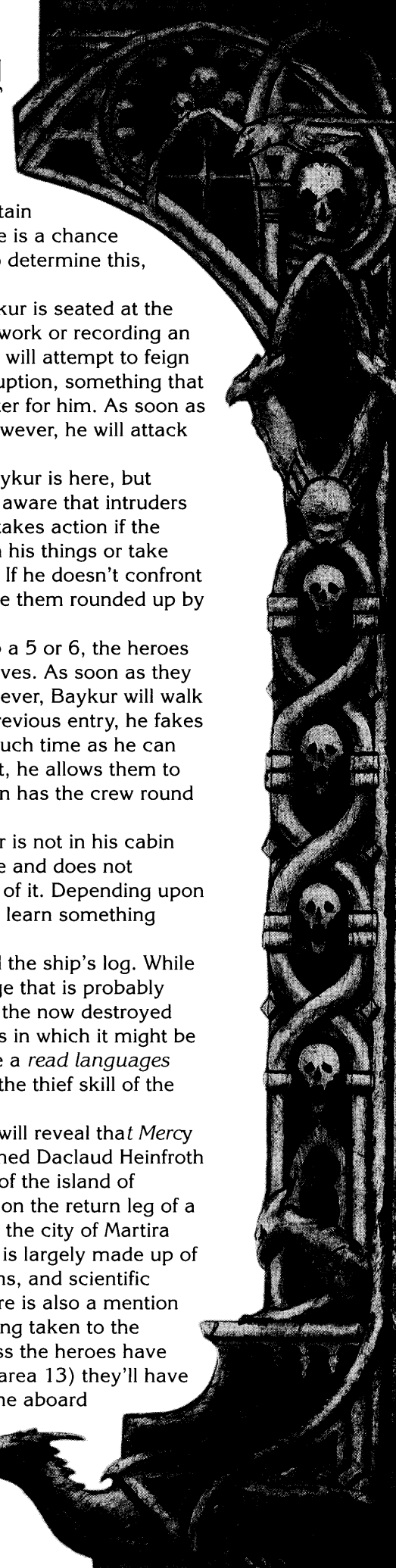
If the roll is a 3 or 4, Baykur is here, but resting in his coffin. He is aware that intruders are in his room, but only takes action if the heroes start to go through his things or take actions that threaten him. If he doesn't confront them right away, he'll have them rounded up by the crew later.

Should the die come up a 5 or 6, the heroes have the cabin to themselves. As soon as they start to poke around, however, Baykur will walk in on them. As with the previous entry, he fakes a confused attitude until such time as he can surprise them. Failing that, he allows them to leave unmolested and then has the crew round them up later.

On a 7 or better, Baykur is not in his cabin when the characters arrive and does not interrupt their exploration of it. Depending upon where they look, they can learn something about the captain.

On the desk, they'll find the ship's log. While this is written in a language that is probably unknown to them (that of the now destroyed Gundarak), there are ways in which it might be deciphered. These include a *read languages* spell or successful use of the thief skill of the same name.

A quick look at the log will reveal that *Mercy* is owned by someone named Daclaud Heinfroth and that she is based out of the island of Dominia. She is currently on the return leg of a run between that port and the city of Martira Bay in Darkon. Her cargo is largely made up of various supplies, provisions, and scientific equipment. Curiously, there is also a mention of 24 patients who are being taken to the island for treatment. Unless the heroes have explored the secret hold (area 13) they'll have no idea that there is anyone aboard the ship but them



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

and the crew. Apart from the mention of the patients, there is nothing here that contradicts the things Baykur told them after they were brought aboard.

The log also contains a complete account of the finding and recovery of the refugees. It includes comments that indicate their fate, however, for it mentions that Heinfroth is eager to put his latest theories to the test with such a robust group of men and women.

In the footlocker, the characters will find an assortment of clothes and personal effects. This includes 250 gold pieces and a dozen pieces of jewelry with a total value of 1,500 gold pieces. Other than this, there is nothing of importance here.

8. Doctor Rehner's Cabin

Note: The door to this area is sealed with a special *wizard lock* spell. They will open only for the ranks of the living dead. Heroes may gain entrance only by forcing open the door or through the use of a spell like *feign undead*.

This room is L-shaped with a large window set in the aft bulkhead through which you can see that *Mercy's* wake rolls out behind the ship like a white tail draped upon the choppy sea. Little effort has been made to decorate this place, although it is clearly someone's cabin. An apparently unused roll-top desk with a wooden chair dominate the room, and a large steel-bound chest has been pushed into the corner. With a sinking feeling, you realize that, where one would expect to find the bed, there is only an elegant, black-lacquered coffin.

As with the other cabins on the ship, there is a chance that Dr. Rehner is here if the characters attempt to break in and search it. If the heroes have taken care to enter the room at a time when Rehner is known to be elsewhere, the DM should decide for himself whether or not they are caught. Otherwise, the DM should roll 1d10 to determine what the characters find when they enter the room.

On a roll of 1 or 2, Rehner is seated at the desk entertaining himself with *Patience* (a one-player card game). He turns quickly around to face the intruders and scowls at them. He assumes that they have learned too much the minute that they open the door and attacks at once. His howls of rage will certainly attract other vampires.

If the roll is a 3 or 4, Rehner is sleeping in his coffin. Any noise awakens him, and he will listen carefully to all that goes on. If someone tries to open the coffin (or even comes too near it) he springs out and attacks. If this happens, the heroes should check for surprise. At the DM's option, a fear check might also be in order. Regardless of the results, however, the resulting battle will draw other vampires to the area. If the heroes don't give him the chance to spring out at them, he reports to Captain Baykur as soon as they leave and has them rounded up by the crew.

On a roll of 5 or 6, the characters will appear to have the cabin to themselves. The moment that they disturb anything, however, Rehner will return and walk in on them. As soon as he sees what is going on, he'll attack. Again, his shouts of rage and the sounds of battle will draw the attention of his shipmates.

On a 7 or better, Rehner is busy elsewhere. He does not return to the cabin until after the characters have had a chance to investigate it. Because Rehner has few personal effects, however, there is less information to be gathered here than in Captain Baykur's cabin. Still, a little effort will offer the heroes a few rewards.

If the heroes manage to open the chest, through some manner of spell or a successful open locks roll, they find Rehner's personal library and study notes. These are written in the language of Darkon. Even if the heroes can't read it, there are ways in which these texts might be deciphered. These include a successful *read languages* spell or the use of the thief skill of the same name.

All of the books deal with experiments on the human mind, physical or psychological torture, and studies of the brain. Without exception, they are highly technical and will probably contain little information that is of immediate value to the heroes.

From the diary, which is also written in the language of Darkon, they learn the story of Heinfroth's arrangement with Dr. Rehner.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Indeed, that is really the only thing that might be learned from the book, for it is a new text which began one month ago when Rehner began his association with the lord of Dominia and agreed to become a cerebral vampire. It is entitled *My Life Renewed*.

In short, the diary tells the heroes that Rehner was contacted by a man who expressed great interest in his work. Exactly what that work might be is unstated, but the nature of the other books in the chest offers some indication of its nature. This unidentified person offered Rehner the chance to continue his work for all time in the service of Daclaud Heinfroth on the island of Dominia. After serious consideration of the proposal, Rehner agreed and was transformed into a cerebral vampire. He is currently en route to assume his new post as Heinfroth's assistant. It is clear from the text that Rehner has never met his new patron, although this is not something that should be pointed out to the heroes unless they specifically ask.

The diary also tells of Rehner's arrival at the dock and initial meeting with Captain Baykur, someone he finds crass and offensive. It makes mention of the loading of cargo and patients, but goes into no detail on either subject. Still, the fact that the heroes probably know nothing about any patients ought to catch their attention.

On the subject of the heroes, Rehner makes little mention of them. He writes that he hopes to test some of his new theories on them, but doesn't explain what those might be.

9. Galley

The meals eaten by the heroes and survivors from the *Blue Dolphin* are prepared here by a balding cerebral vampire who appears to have some kind of skin disease. The food is bland. After the second day, the heroes may notice that *Mercy's* crew doesn't eat meals prepared here. In fact, they may even realize that *Mercy's* crew doesn't appear to eat at all.

10. Forward Hold

This hold is roughly five feet high and triangular in shape. It is tightly packed with crates of various shapes and sizes. Two aisles run the length of this room, angling inward until they meet just aft of the bow. Above the sounds of creaking wood and lapping water you can hear faint chittering and scraping noises coming from behind the boxes.

These crates contain various provisions, mostly consumables, that are intended for the patients on Dominia. Obviously, the cerebral vampires don't need food or drink, but the victims of Heinfroth's sick experiments are not so sturdy. The quality of the foodstuffs stored here is very low, something that may well indicate to the characters that the patients being treated by Heinfroth are not receiving the best of care.

Anyone who pokes around behind the crates will encounter a rat or two. These are common on all manner of seafaring vessels, and *Mercy* is no exception. They pose no threat, however, and will retreat from anyone who spots them.

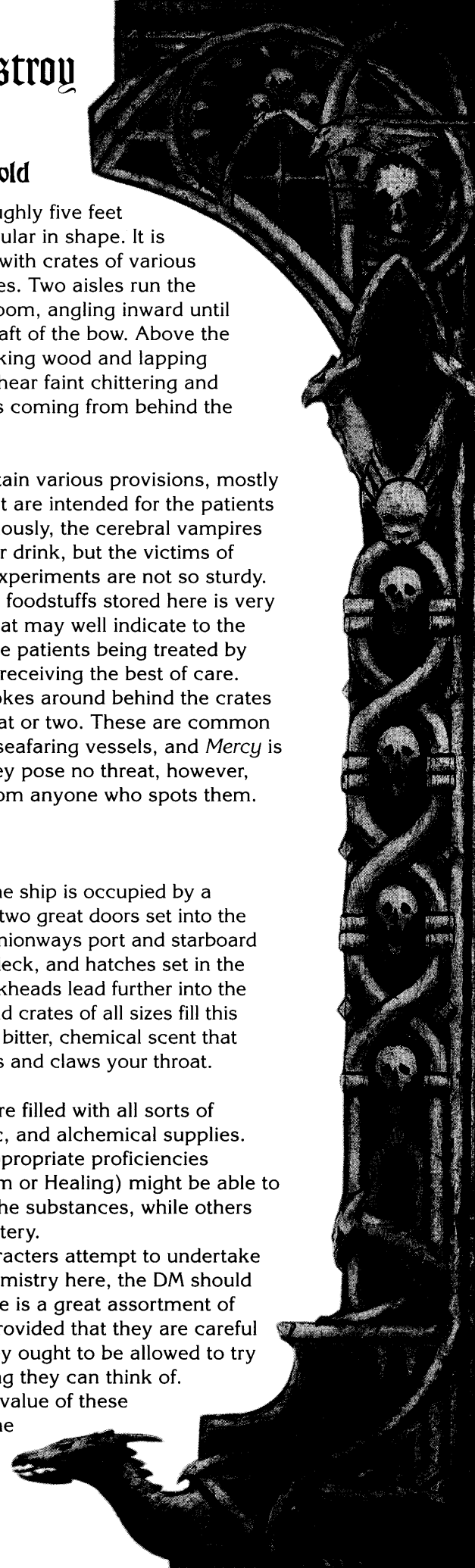
11. Main Hold

The center of the ship is occupied by a large hold with two great doors set into the ceiling. Companionways port and starboard lead up to the deck, and hatches set in the fore and aft bulkheads lead further into the ship. Barrels and crates of all sizes fill this area, as does a bitter, chemical scent that burns your eyes and claws your throat.

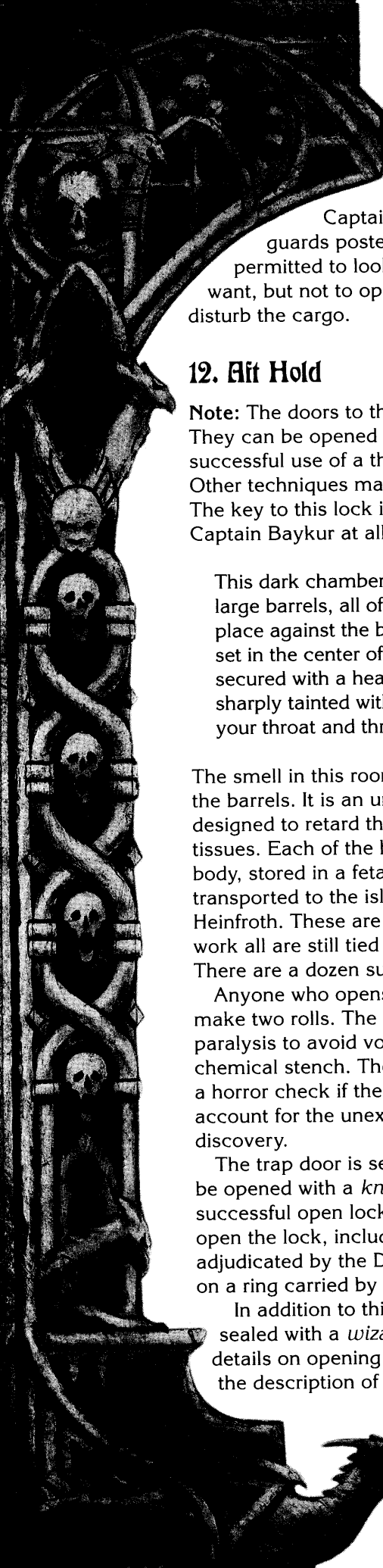
The crates here are filled with all sorts of medical, scientific, and alchemical supplies. Those with the appropriate proficiencies (namely Herbalism or Healing) might be able to identify some of the substances, while others will remain a mystery.

Should the characters attempt to undertake some kitchen chemistry here, the DM should consider that there is a great assortment of resources here. Provided that they are careful and thorough, they ought to be allowed to try just about anything they can think of.

Because of the value of these substances and the fact that they can



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



be very dangerous in certain combinations, Captain Baykur keeps a pair of guards posted here. The characters are permitted to look around in here if they want, but not to open any crates or otherwise disturb the cargo.

12. Aft Hold

Note: The doors to the aft hold are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of a thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option. The key to this lock is on a ring carried by Captain Baykur at all times.

This dark chamber is filled with unusually large barrels, all of which are lashed into place against the bulkheads. A trapdoor is set in the center of the deck, although it is secured with a heavy lock. The air is sharply tainted with an odor that catches in your throat and threatens to make you gag.

The smell in this room comes from the fluid in the barrels. It is an unusual preservative designed to retard the decay of soft bodily tissues. Each of the barrels also holds a human body, stored in a fetal position, which is being transported to the island for examination by Heinfroth. These are example of Rehner's past work all are still tied from various tortures. There are a dozen such containers in the hold.

Anyone who opens one of these barrels must make two rolls. The first is a saving throw vs. paralysis to avoid vomiting because of the chemical stench. The second is a fear check (or a horror check if the saving throw was failed) to account for the unexpected shock of the discovery.

The trap door is secured with a lock that can be opened with a *knock* spell or through a successful open locks roll. Other attempts to open the lock, including breaking it, must be adjudicated by the DM. The key to this lock is on a ring carried by Captain Baykur.

In addition to this lock, however, the door is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell. Complete details on opening this door are presented in the description of Area 13.

13. Secret Hold

Note: The door to this area (which is actually a trapdoor set in the deck of Area 12) is sealed with a *wizard lock* spell. It will open only for the ranks of the living dead. Characters may gain entrance only by forcing open the door or through the use of a spell like *feign undead*.

This unlit chamber is scarcely five feet from floor to ceiling and runs the length of the ship. It is filled thick, choking air and the fetid smell of decay. Perhaps three dozen crates, all unnervingly like coffins, are stacked to port and starboard, leaving a narrow aisle along the keel. Six inches of murky, frigid water cover the deck.

After a second, you see that dark shapes move about in the water. At first, they appear to be fish, but then you notice that they also crawl on and around the crates. With disgust, you realize that this area is alive with rats.

Within each of these caskets is a "patient" en route to Dominia for "treatment." Freeing them from their prisons is difficult, for the lids of the coffins have been nailed into place. Unless the heroes make use of a crowbar or similar tool, a bend bars/lift gates roll is required to pry open any given box. With such a tool, the character need only make an ability check against Strength.

It is important for the DM to keep in mind that the people in these coffins are either utterly mad or on the verge of a complete mental collapse. Whenever an attempt is made to converse with one of the patients, the DM should roll as if prisoner had failed a madness check to determine his mental state. In every case, however, the patient's reaction will be extreme.

It is almost certain that an attempt to free one or more of the patients will result in the discovery of the heroes by the crew of *Mercy*. The crew expects a few terrified shrieks or wild howls from the secret hold, but an unusual commotion will draw attention.

Only the most extreme magical or psionic cures can restore sanity to the people being transported in the hold. Some examples of possible remedies include *heal* or *restoration* spells as well as psychic surgery. Guidelines for the curing of madness can be found in the *Realms of Terror* book from the RAVENLOFT® Campaign Setting.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Picking Up the Pieces

If the heroes have learned any of *Mercy's* secrets, they place the Dungeon Master in a tricky spot. After all, if the characters know the truth about the ship and its crew, they'll likely see it their duty to destroy as many vampires as possible, take the ship, and then make for another port.

Luckily, there are a number of things the DM can do to prevent such unfortunate discoveries on the part of his player from derailing the adventure. The players should be given every chance to think of these things for themselves. If they don't, however, the nonplayer character sailors who are with them will point them out.

First, the idea of turning and running isn't the most heroic thing in the world. If the player characters are at all valiant, they owe it to themselves to go along with the *Mercy* and find out what is going on here. Simply eliminating the crew of this forlorn vessel does nothing to strike at the heart of the problem.

Secondly, the heroes have no idea where they are. Apart from turning 180 degrees and

retracing the vessel's path, they aren't sure which way to sail if they wish to reach a safe port. If they do return to the port from which *Mercy* set sail, they'll be looked upon as mutineers or pirates. (See the second adventure in this book, and the entry on Martira Bay in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book for what might happen when they dock.) This is something that the crewmen who are traveling with the heroes won't want to do.

If neither of these arguments works, the DM can simply manipulate things so that the tide of battle turns against the heroes. This is a bit severe, but it is worth it if it keeps the game from going to pieces.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Arrival

Little islands are all large prisons: One cannot look at the sea without wishing for the wings of a swallow.

—Sir Richard Burton,
Wanderings in West Africa

In this part of the adventure, the heroes come into contact with Daclaud Heinfroth, who they may know as Dr. Dominiani. It also leads to the events that introduce them to Rudolph van Richten. Exactly how the characters are greeted and what they do when they arrive in Dominia depends on what has happened on *Mercy*. The odds are, however, that this chapter will begin with one of two situations.

Guests of the Dark Lord

If the heroes did not discover any of Captain Baykur's secrets during their time aboard the *Mercy*, they'll arrive on the island without too much fuss and be escorted into the company of Daclaud Heinfroth. Events will continue from there.

This will also be the case if the heroes have learned some or all of the truth about *Mercy*, but arrive on the island without letting any members of the crew know what they have discovered. In this instance, of course, they'll be on their guard and Heinfroth may notice that something is amiss.

In either of these cases, the following boxed text describes their first sighting of Dominia:

As the sun passes through its zenith and begins to slide toward the western horizon, *Mercy* glides slowly toward a small, gray outcropping in the midst of the broad white-capped sea. As the ship draws nearer to this island, you can see that it is small and roughly circular in shape. The most obvious feature of the place is a great cliff that rises from the rocky coast to the forest covered plateau above. Apart from the shrieking, gray gulls that whirl about, you see no sign of animal life on the island.

From this point, the ship will reach the island in only an hour or two. During that time the crew is very busy, for the waters around Dominia are peppered with dangerous shoals and jagged reefs. When *Mercy* reaches the island, it will pull up to a sturdy dock as described in the following text:

Masterfully, the crew of *Mercy* guides her past dozens of buoys that stand like sentries amid the choppy sea and carefully up to a sturdy wooden dock that juts out from the broken shore of the island. This is perhaps the most unprotected harborage you have ever seen, but the island doesn't appear to offer any better place to drop anchor.

A handful of workers on the dock receive the lines tossed to them by the crew and *Mercy* is soon secured. A gangplank is swung into place, and Captain Baykur appears at your side with Dr. Rehner and young Colin. "Home at last," he says. "Shall we go ashore?"

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Baykur assures the heroes that their belongings (if they have any) will be brought to the sanitarium along with the rest of the cargo. Transportation for the characters themselves, including any henchmen, retainers, or the survivors of the *Blue Dolphin*, will be provided by large, open wagons. These will prove none too comfortable, as they are intended to carry cargo instead of passengers. The following text describes the journey from the docks to the asylum:

After disembarking the ship, your party is led to the base of the cliff. Captain Baykur leads you to a large, wooden platform which is anchored by slender chains to a pair of crane-like arms atop the precipice. Once everyone is in place, he lifts a tin whistle from the wooden peg on which it hangs and fills the air with a piercing, shrill note. Even before the almost painful sound has left your ears, there is a jerk, and the platform begins to rise.

The ascent may be unsettling to heroes who have a fear of heights. Although the elevator is very well constructed, it does sway a great deal when in transit. For his part, Baykur seems not to notice this. On the other hand, Rehner looks a bit nervous about the whole affair and young Colin is looking about with wide-eyed wonder.

After two minutes or so, the platform reaches the top of the cliff. Levers are thrown into place by two burly men, locking the elevator into place, and Baykur hops off without so much as a glance as the distant beach below.

Without a word of thanks to the men who appear to have operated the winches that powered your ascent, Baykur leads your party to a large, open wagon. You climb aboard and the captain himself takes the reins. As soon as everyone is in place, he cracks a whip above the team and you're under way.

For a short stretch, the wagon follows the edge of the cliff. Then, it suddenly turns into the forest and thick foliage blocks out the afternoon sky. Indeed, so heavy are these woods that one might even believe it had suddenly become night.

As the wagon rolls along the remarkably smooth road, the Dungeon Master should have every hero make an ability check on Wisdom. Those who succeed will notice dark shapes darting through the forest. Although it's impossible to tell how many there are, it seems clear that they are pacing the wagon in much the same way that dolphins will race alongside a ship.

A successful ability check on Intelligence (or a simple question to Baykur) will allow the characters to identify the shapes as unusually large wolves. Baykur will admit with an off-hand manner that "the woods 'round here are chock full of 'em."

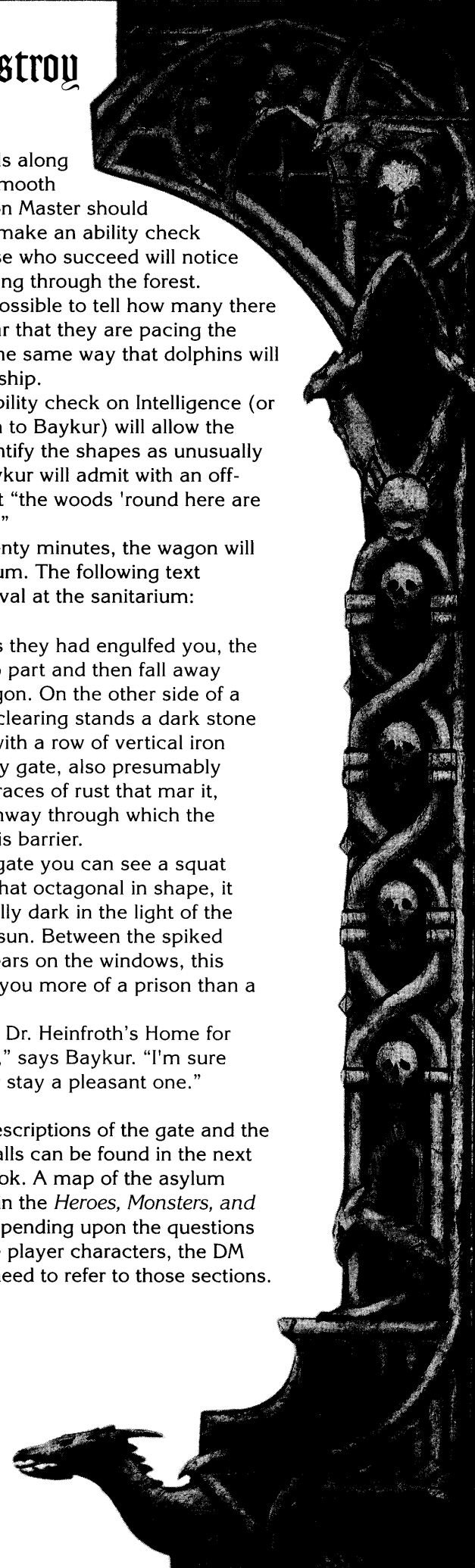
After about twenty minutes, the wagon will come to the asylum. The following text describes the arrival at the sanitarium:

As suddenly as they had engulfed you, the woods seem to part and then fall away behind the wagon. On the other side of a 100 foot wide clearing stands a dark stone wall crowned with a row of vertical iron spikes. A heavy gate, also presumably iron from the traces of rust that mar it, blocks the archway through which the road passes this barrier.

Beyond the gate you can see a squat house. Somewhat octagonal in shape, it looks unnaturally dark in the light of the late afternoon sun. Between the spiked walls and the bars on the windows, this place reminds you more of a prison than a hospital.

"Welcome to Dr. Heinfroth's Home for the Mentally Ill," says Baykur. "I'm sure you'll find your stay a pleasant one."

More complete descriptions of the gate and the area within the walls can be found in the next chapter of this book. A map of the asylum grounds is found in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. Depending upon the questions and actions of the player characters, the DM may or may not need to refer to those sections.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Captain Baykur guides the wagon through the gate, which swings open as he draws near it. If asked about this, he'll tell the characters that this trick is mechanical in nature. Actually, the doors have been sealed with a *wizard lock* spell similar to the one employed on *Mercy*. Thus, they will not open for anyone but the undead but will automatically give way to any such creature that wishes to pass through them.

Inside the gate, the wagon rolls to a stop in a broad gravel lot. The following text describes this area:

Within the great stone walls that surround the sanitarium a broad, green lawn spreads out around a thickset manor. As the wagon pulls into the carriage yard, you have a good chance to look around.

Rows of gardens, some dedicated to flowers and others to vegetables, can be seen in the distance. Hooded figures work these gardens, dressed in featureless gray frocks that bring to mind monks in their vineyards. They go about their tasks slowly and purposefully, but without any obvious enthusiasm. One might even describe their movements as zombielike.

If the characters think to look for them, they will see no sign of anyone who appears to be an orderly or guard. Should they ask Captain Baykur or Dr. Rehner about this, they'll be told that the staff of the asylum dresses in the same robes that the patients wear. This is done, he explains, because Heinfroth feels that it is

harmful for the patients to perceive the staff of the hospital as superior to them in any way.

Following their wagon ride to the sanitarium, the heroes will be taken inside and shown to their rooms (areas 5 and 11 on the map of the asylum). From here, the Dungeon Master can continue the adventure by turning to the section entitled "Dinner with a Dark Lord," following the descriptions of the asylum's encounter areas.

Prisoners of the Dark Lord

If the heroes have been careless in their affairs aboard *Mercy*, they are be in the custody of the vampires. In this case, they have been nailed into coffins and are unloaded from the ship just as if they were cargo.

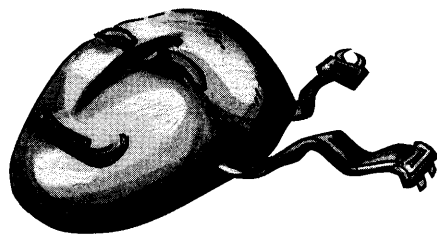
If this has happened, they are transported away from the harbor and taken directly to the cells that will become their homes for the near future. The following text describes their rather uncomfortable journey:

After what seems like an eternity of confinement inside your coffins, you notice a change in the motion of the ship. Before long, scraping and bumping sounds tell you that the cargo is being unloaded.

Another eternity passes, with the sounds of labor drawing ever closer. At last, the coffins in which your party has been imprisoned are hoisted out of the hold and, presumably, dropped on the deck. A sharp-pitched whistle is blown nearby, and then a swaying, jerking motion follows. This continues for well over a minute and is followed by more handling, another impact, and then the swaying and rumbling of a wagon.

For better or worse, and you can only assume the latter, you seem to have arrived on the island of Dominia.

At this point, the adventure can continue with the section entitled "The Vampire's Grip."



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

In the Asylum

The world is so full of simpletons and madmen that one need not seek them in a madhouse.

—Goethe

During their stay with Dr. Heinfroth, the characters will almost certainly want to explore the confines of the sanitarium. This is especially true if they discovered the secrets of the caravel *Mercy* during their journey to the island. In addition, the Dungeon Master can use this part of the book to adjudicate attempts by the character's to escape from the cells beneath Heinfroth's estate.

General Remarks

Dungeon Masters should keep in mind the nature of Dominia and its lord. Wherever possible, they should insert unusual twists and mind games. These needn't be dangerous or even particularly obtrusive; their only purpose is to make the heroes uncomfortable and edgy. In short, the heroes should always have the feeling that something isn't right here.

Life in the asylum should be reminiscent of novels like Orwell's *1984*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, or television shows like *The Prisoner*. This can be a challenge for the Dungeon Master to referee but will ultimately prove to be well worth the effort. If done well, the mood and background of Dominia will frighten or unnerve not only the characters but the players as well.

The Staff

In addition to the many orderlies who patrol the island of Dominia, there are two major Nonplayer characters with whom the characters will have to interact. One of these is the lord of the domain, Daclaud Heinfroth, while the other is Piotr Rehner, the physician that the characters met aboard *Mercy*.

Daclaud Heinfroth

The most important member of the asylum staff is, of course, Daclaud Heinfroth. Complete information on this foul individual has been included in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

As a host, Heinfroth can be most congenial. His true motives, however, are anything but hospitable. After winning the trust of the heroes, he begins to subject them to the experiments described in the section entitled "Sleepless Nights" in the next chapter, and in areas 41-46. As soon as he begins to experiment on the heroes, his horrific self becomes apparent.

Dr. Piotr Rehner

Like the heroes, Rehner is a newcomer to the island. His recent arrival aboard the *Mercy* has marked the start of a new era of horror for the inmates of the asylum. Like Heinfroth, Rehner is described in the appendix at the end of this book.

During the course of this adventure, Rehner is still new to Dominia. In addition, his recently acquired vampiric powers remain something of a mystery

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



to him. While he isn't a bumbling idiot, he may make mistakes and leave himself vulnerable to attacks that the other vampires would avoid without a second thought.

In addition to his research work, Rehner is responsible for the physical well-being of the patients. He has a pair of orderlies assigned to him who are also skilled physicians. When addressing these assistants, Rehner never calls them by name. Instead, they are Doctor Black and Doctor White. As he is little interested in this phase of his job, Rehner leaves all but the most pressing of medical concerns to Black and White. Indeed, this lack of interest in the physical well-being of his patients will quickly drive a wedge between Rehner and Heinfroth, something that the players might be able to exploit during the course of the adventure.

The Patients

All of the patients here are victims of severe mental abuse by their captors. Heinfroth is determined to discover the cause of their various mental weaknesses. In order to do this, he routinely subjects them to mental tortures and exposes them to conditions that will push them to the brink of complete mental collapse.

Curiously, Heinfroth's desire to learn the secrets of the human mind makes it important that each and every patient be kept alive for as long as possible. Because of this, physical abuse is almost unheard of in Dominia. The food that Heinfroth feeds his patients is nourishing, if somewhat bland, and prompt medical care is given for even the slightest injuries.

One of the first treatments that Heinfroth subjects his patients to involves the destruction of their personal identities. Indeed, this theme is dominant in all phases of life on the island. It is most obvious, however, in the dress that all patients are required to wear. The only clothes provided to the inmates of the asylum are

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

coarse, hooded robes. These are a neutral gray in color and cover the wearer's entire body, save for his hands and face. A pair of thin, gray gloves make up for the former shortcoming.

Beyond the robes and gloves, all inmates of the asylum are required to wear clay masks. They completely obscure the features of the wearer and are permanently fastened into place with thick leather straps. Removing one's own mask is next to impossible, requiring a bend bars/lift gates roll. Removing another's mask is much easier, requiring only an ability check on Strength.

The front of each mask is painted with a smiling face. While this might seem innocent enough, the image is subtly wrong, making what might at first appear to be a happy countenance seem sinister and mocking. This is, of course, exactly the effect that Heinfroth wanted when he designed the masks.

The Orderlies

All of the orderlies are cerebral vampires (as described in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book). Like the patients of the asylum, they are constantly robed and masked as they go about their affairs. This makes it impossible to tell if a given person is a patient or an orderly, which is exactly what Heinfroth intends. Unlike the masks worn by the patients, those donned by the orderlies can be removed. The trick to releasing such a mask is not easy to master, however, and it requires a careful examination (as well as an ability check against Dexterity) to spot or master.

The orderlies tend to avoid taking prompt action when they observe a problem, for this would reveal their true nature. As a rule, they'll allow any antisocial behavior to continue while finding a way to counter it later on. For example, if an orderly learns that one of the patients is planning an escape, he may go along with it, even helping the prisoner toward his goal, only to arrange for the escape to be thwarted when it seems to be on the verge of success. Such morale-crushing defeats are the most common results of any such plans.

Dungeon Masters should keep in mind the fact that almost any group of patients will have an orderly hidden among its number. Doing anything without letting one of these spies know about it is an incredibly difficult undertaking.

The Asylum Grounds

This key is used in conjunction with the maps in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

1. The Gate

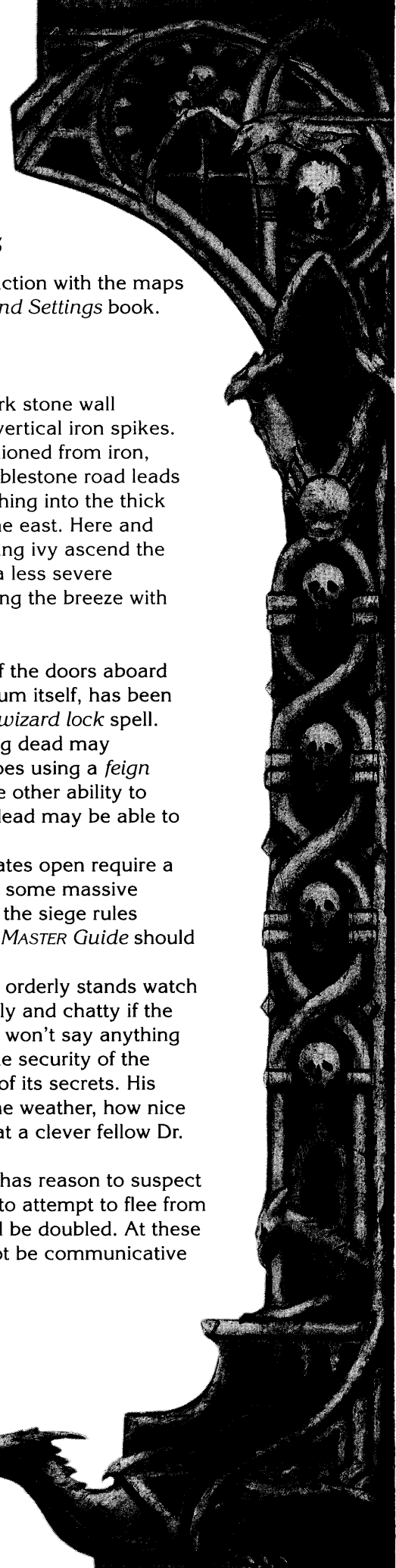
Before you stands a dark stone wall crowned with a row of vertical iron spikes. A heavy gate, also fashioned from iron, fills the archway. A cobblestone road leads through the gate, vanishing into the thick forests of Dominia to the east. Here and there, strands of flowering ivy ascend the wall, helping to give it a less severe appearance and adorning the breeze with a hint of perfume.

The gate, like the many of the doors aboard *Mercy* and within the asylum itself, has been enchanted with a special *wizard lock* spell. Only the ranks of the living dead may command it to open. Heroes using a *feign undead* spell or with some other ability to mimic the legions of the dead may be able to pass through it.

Attempts to force the gates open require a bend bars/lift gates roll or some massive assault. In the latter case, the siege rules presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* should be consulted.

During the day, a single orderly stands watch at the gate. He'll be friendly and chatty if the heroes approach him, but won't say anything that might compromise the security of the asylum or give away any of its secrets. His stock of topics includes the weather, how nice the gardens look, and what a clever fellow Dr. Heinfroth is.

At night, or if Heinfroth has reason to suspect that the heroes are going to attempt to flee from his domain, this guard will be doubled. At these times, the orderlies will not be communicative at all.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

2. The Carriage Yard

A cobblestone yard spreads out between the iron gate and the stocky shape of the sanitarium. Hitching posts run along the north and south sides of the area, obviously well worn but in good shape.

If the characters visit this area shortly after the arrival of *Mercy*, there are no wagons here other than the one that brought them to the asylum. At that time, all of these conveyances are at the dock being loaded with supplies.

After *Mercy* is unloaded, there will generally be three or four wagons here. All told, Heinfroth keeps a livery of five wagons, but one or two of them are usually in use. In most cases, one is at the docks (area 2 on the Island of Dominia map) while the other is at the garbage dump (area 3 on that map).

3. The Green

Picnic tables, each shielded from the rays of the sun by a brightly colored parasol, mark the perimeter of the green, which is as neatly manicured and tended as one could wish.

Depending upon the treatment schedule set up by Dr. Heinfroth, there may or may not be patients here at any given time. If there are, they will often be engaged in the playing games like boccie ball, croquette, or badminton. In every case, they will undertake their sport with an indifferent and methodical manner hauntingly reminiscent of zombies or other mindless automata. If asked about this, Heinfroth, Rehner, or any of the orderlies will attempt to change the subject. Failing that, they'll explain it as an unfortunate side effect of their therapy.

4. The Gardens

This section of the estate has been set aside for gardening. Neatly tended plots of flowers, vegetables, and herbs run side by side here, all carefully tended and in excellent health.

During the day, there will almost always be a dozen or so patients working in the gardens. One or two orderlies are included in this number, although there is nothing about their dress or behavior that sets them apart from the inmates. As might be expected, all work in the gardens takes place at a slow and deliberate pace. As with those playing on the green, the similarity between the gardeners and mindless automata is unnerving.

At night, this area is deserted. Only a loud noise, bright light, or other unusually noteworthy event will bring orderlies to this region after dark.

5. The Clearing

Beyond the walls of the asylum spreads a wide clearing. Although well sprinkled with thistles, brambles, and crabgrass, it is clearly mowed regularly and kept under control. Pollen hangs so thickly in the air that you feel like sneezing, even if you are not allergic to such things.

Anyone who wishes to take a more than casual look at these plants may notice something unusual. If the inquisitive character has the herbalism proficiency or is otherwise familiar with the flora of the world, he'll spot healthy patches of wolfsbane growing among the weeds. Those without these skills will notice nothing unusual.

6. The Asylum

Before you stands a squat manor house. Somewhat octagonal in shape, it has a look of carefully maintained elegance about it. Clearly, this is not a new place, but the care with which it has been kept up speaks well of its owner. Although the estate is ringed by spiked walls and the windows of the house are set with iron bars, the grounds surrounding it are planted with emerald grass and liberally spotted with gardens of vibrant flowers.

Descriptions of the interior of the asylum, as well as those of the front and side entrances, can be found in the next section.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

7. The Walls

The estate is ringed by a dark stone wall set with iron spikes. Light sparkles on bits of glass set into the mortar. Here and there, tendrils of flowering ivy cling to the stones.

Attempts to scale the walls of the asylum can be both difficult and dangerous. Because of the fine craftsmanship of the barrier and the jagged glass protrusions that cover it, a -25% penalty is imposed on any climb walls roll made to scale it. In addition, anyone attempting such an ascent must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon. Failure indicates that the climber suffers 1d6 points of damage from laceration inflicted by the glass shards. A successful saving throw results in taking only 1d4 points of damage.

The spikes set into the top of the wall are more threatening in appearance than function. Anyone who takes care will not be harmed by them unless he falls victim to some unfortunate accident. Should such a fate befall a character, the DM will have to assess the amount of damage inflicted. As a rule, this should lose no more than 2d8 hit points, with a saving throw being allowed for half damage in any case.

Ground and First Floor

This key is for use with the maps in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

1. The Main Entrance

Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option.

You stand upon a wooden porch with the squat bulk of the asylum rising above you. A stout door set with a large brass knocker offers admittance, but the foreboding lock promises that only the invited will pass this portal.

Indeed, entering the asylum through this massive portal is not an easy feat. Like many of the other doors in this adventure, it has been set with a special *wizard lock* spell that

prevents anyone living from opening it. Only the undead may pass freely through this portal.

In addition to this magical ward, the door is protected by an excellent lock. While this is not normally employed, it latches automatically if a *dispel magic* or similar spell is used to strip the door of its enchantment. Anyone attempting to pick the lock suffers a -25% penalty to his open locks roll because of the excellent quality of the mechanism.

2. Southwest Stairwell

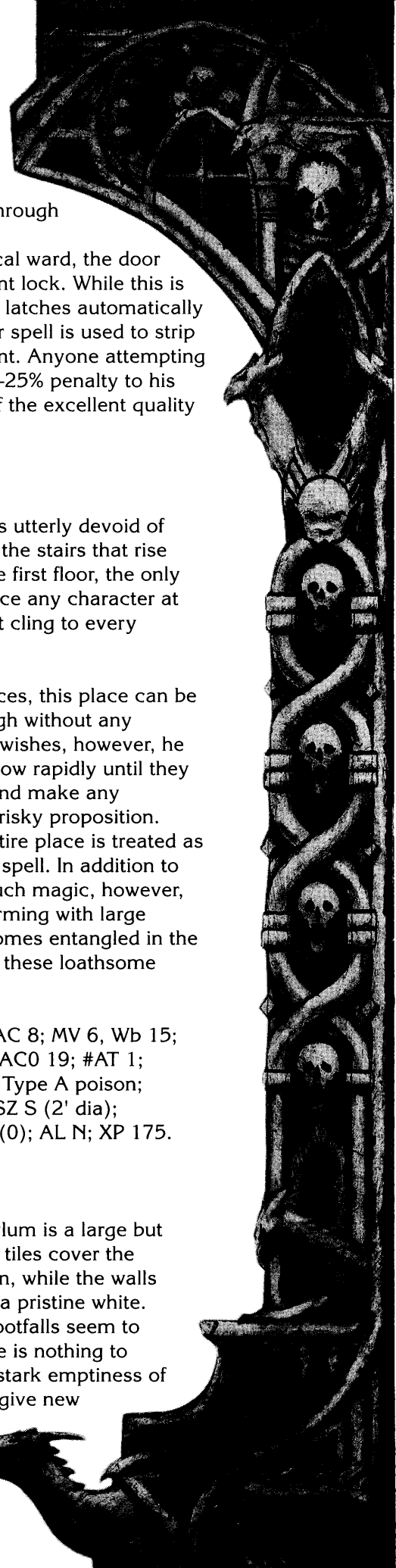
This dimly lit stairwell is utterly devoid of decoration. Apart from the stairs that rise from ground level to the first floor, the only thing that gives this place any character at all are the cobwebs that cling to every corner.

Under normal circumstances, this place can be entered and passed through without any difficulty. When Heinfroth wishes, however, he can will the cobwebs to grow rapidly until they stretch from wall to wall and make any movement in this room a risky proposition. When he does this, the entire place is treated as if it were filled with a *web* spell. In addition to the normal attributes of such magic, however, Heinfroth's version is swarming with large spiders. Anyone who becomes entangled in the web is attacked by 2d6 of these loathsome creatures.

Spider, Large (2-12): AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 point (bite); SA Type A poison; SD nil; SW nil; MR nil; SZ S (2' dia); ML Unsteady; Int Non- (0); AL N; XP 175.

3. Entrance Hall

The entrance to the asylum is a large but spartan area. Jet-black tiles cover the floor of this half-octagon, while the walls and ceiling are painted a pristine white. With every step, your footfalls seem to echo endlessly, for there is nothing to absorb the sound. The stark emptiness of this chamber seems to give new meaning to word "featureless."



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

In truth, this room is under the effects of two magical spells, both designed to make it unsettling to visitors.

The first of these, *endless echoes*, is a variation on the *silence 15' radius spell* and is responsible for the seemingly interminable echoes here. Anyone attempting to cast a spell with a verbal component while in the entrance hall must make an ability check against Wisdom. If the check fails, the confusing and distracting effects of the echoes cause the spell caster to lose concentration. If this happens, the spell fails to take effect. Its energies have been spent, however, and the spell must be relearned before it can be cast again.

The second spell effect that covers this room is *monochrome*, a special variation on the *vacancy spell*. While in this room, all colors are reduced to shades of gray. In modern terms, this makes the entire area appear as if it were being seen on a black and white television set. Apart from being very unnerving, this effect has no harmful effects on those in the entrance hall. It does, however, make the casting of spells like *color spray* or *prismatic sphere* impossible. While the DM is free to rule on the effectiveness that any given spell will have in the room, the following enchantments will most certainly fail if cast in an area that has been draped with a *monochrome spell*: *color spray*, *hypnotic pattern*, *prismatic spray*, *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic wall*, or *rainbow*.

4. Southeast Stairwell

This windowless stairwell is gloomy and dark. The single oil lamp that hangs from the center of the ceiling provides so little illumination that it can scarcely be called a light. What it fails to provide in radiance, however, it makes up for in odor. So thick is the smell of oil in this place that breathing is almost a chore.

As a rule, there is nothing of interest in this area. However, Heinfroth can cause great clouds of smoke to billow out of the oil lamp whenever he wishes. These vapors have the same effect as a *stinking cloud* and require only two rounds to fill the entire area. When

Heinfroth wishes the effect to cease, it takes a like amount of time

for the clouds to retreat back into the lamps. None of Dominia's vampires are affected by these vapors, but orderlies who are exposed to them may well feign illness in order to pass themselves off as common patients.

If the lamps are extinguished, they cannot manifest the *stinking cloud* spell.

5. Guest's Room

It would appear that this chamber is what passes for a guest's room on the island of Dominia. It isn't especially comfortable, being only about 10 feet wide and 20 or so long. Ten bunks have been secured to the wall, but it looks as if the floor might be more comfortable to sleep on.

A pair of oil lamps hang from hooks on the ceiling, spilling a ruddy light into the room. In addition to giving the air a bitter taste, they cause unnerving shadows to jump and weave across the walls. It wouldn't take too active an imagination to decide that those shapes were somehow alive.

This room, as well as its twin (area 11) has been hastily converted from a storage area to a guest room. The effort put into this change was minimal, consisting only of a cursory cleaning and the installation of a few bunks and lamps.

In order to ensure that the "guests" of Dr. Heinfroth cause him no trouble, a magical spell was placed upon the area. Whenever he wishes, Heinfroth can fill this room with a magical aura that mimics the effects of a *sleep* spell. At the start of each round that someone remains in the room when the aura is activated, he must make a saving throw vs. paralysis. Failure indicates that the magic has overcome the victim and he has drifted into an enchanted slumber. Once asleep, a victim of the aura cannot be revived until he is removed from the room or the spell is discontinued.

Heinfroth, Baykur, and the other vampires of Dominia are not affected by this spell.

Heinfroth's Opportunity: Whenever the heroes have been sent to this room for the evening, Heinfroth activates the *sleep* aura. Once all of the heroes have succumbed to it, he sends in a few orderlies to search them and remove any personal effects or dangerous items that the heroes have managed to get hold of.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Once that is done, the lord of Dominia stops concentrating on the effect and counts on nature to keep the heroes asleep for the duration of the night. Thus, it is possible for a character to awaken after the *sleep* spell has been turned off. The unnerving tendency to fall asleep in this room is just one of the many ways that Heinfroth toys with the character's minds.

6. Parlor

As soon as you enter this place, an uncomfortable heat engulfs you and sweat instantly soaks your clothes. This source of both this heat and the rippling orange light that fills this area is a large fireplace set in the center of the room. The roaring, snapping, and hissing of the inferno that fills it seems unnaturally like the spectral whispers one hears in a dream.

Apart from the fire, there is little of special interest in this parlor. Six clusters of chairs, each centered around a small table, are spaced evenly about the room, possibly intended to allow a large assembly to break up into smaller groups. Paintings are evenly spaced along the walls, each depicting tranquil land- and seascapes.

The parlor is a little used area of the asylum. The normal sorts of things that such a sitting room is used for, like relaxing pleasant conversation, are seldom pursued in Dominia. At any given time, there is a 25% chance that there are 1-4 patients and/or orderlies milling about in here. They are sitting in the chairs and staring into space or undertaking simple tasks like dusting or sweeping the floor.

While there is no physical danger hidden in this room, Heinfroth's influence is not unfelt here. At his command, the fire that blazes in the hearth can affect any single person in the room as if it were a *confusion* spell. This power can be triggered only once per hour.

7. Library

This oddly-shaped chamber is lined with bookshelves and furnished with a long, rectangular table surrounded by eight chairs. The shelves are lined with all manner of written texts, including ornate, illuminated manuscripts. Neatly placed

upon the table are a large stack of blank paper and several quill pens, each with a bottle of black ink. The musty odor of old paper is heavy here.

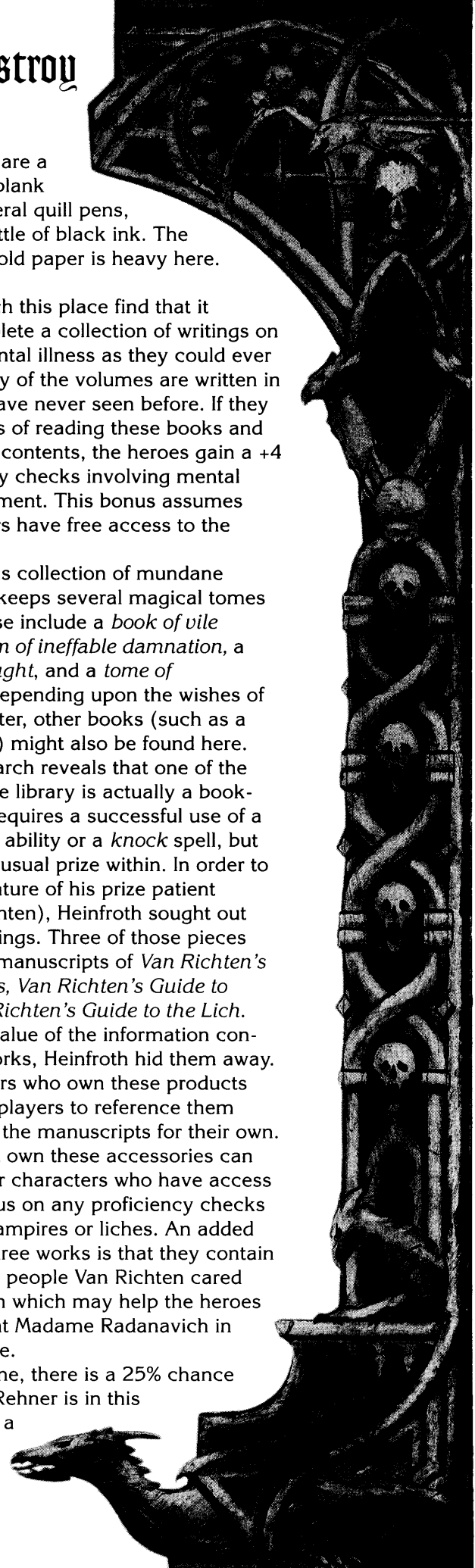
Heroes who search this place find that it contains as complete a collection of writings on the subject of mental illness as they could ever hope to find. Many of the volumes are written in languages they have never seen before. If they have some means of reading these books and assimilating their contents, the heroes gain a +4 on any proficiency checks involving mental illness or its treatment. This bonus assumes that the characters have free access to the library.

In addition to his collection of mundane books, Heinfroth keeps several magical tomes here as well. These include a *book of vile darkness*, a *libram of ineffable damnation*, a *tome of clear thought*, and a *tome of understanding*. Depending upon the wishes of the Dungeon Master, other books (such as a *vacuous grimoire*) might also be found here.

A dedicated search reveals that one of the larger books in the library is actually a book-safe. Opening it requires a successful use of a thief's open locks ability or a *knock* spell, but reveals a most unusual prize within. In order to understand the nature of his prize patient (Rudolph van Richten), Heinfroth sought out several of his writings. Three of those pieces were the original manuscripts of *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*, *Van Richten's Guide to Fiends*, and *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*. Recognizing the value of the information contained in these works, Heinfroth hid them away.

Dungeon Masters who own these products can simply allow players to reference them freely if they take the manuscripts for their own. Those who do not own these accessories can simply give player characters who have access to them a +4 bonus on any proficiency checks involving either vampires or liches. An added benefit to these three works is that they contain information about people Van Richten cared about, information which may help the heroes once they confront Madame Radanavich in the third adventure.

At any given time, there is a 25% chance that Heinfroth or Rehner is in this room researching a particularly



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

interesting case. In addition, there is a 50% chance that 1-4 orderlies (masked and hooded, of course) are in here looking over various books. Although the heroes won't know this, patients are never encountered in this room. Of course, the orderlies here never reveal the fact that they aren't patients.

8. Eastern Entrance

Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option.

This side entrance to the asylum is clearly little used. The hinges are spotted with rust, and the latch is so badly corroded that it looks as if a great effort would be required to turn it.

This is exactly what it appears to be, a disused door. Not only is it locked, but the settling of the house and condition of the hinges has made it so that an open doors roll is required to force it.

If this door is opened, a customized *alarm* spell is triggered. While there is no obvious effect in this area, the orderlies in the Observation Room (area 36) are instantly made aware of the event.

9. Western Entrance

Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option.

This narrow doorway is shaped uncomfortably like the lid of a coffin. Set at eye level is a round window some 12 inches in diameter. The inside of this glass is so covered with grime, however, that is impossible to see what lies beyond the door.

This door has been sealed with a special *wizard lock* spell that prevents any living being from opening it. Obviously, the undead who rule Dominia can move freely through it, as can those who have

cloaked their true nature with a *feign undead* or similar spell.

10. Kitchen

This room is clearly a kitchen, although it was designed and outfitted along the most utilitarian of lines. Iron pans hang from hooks on the walls, a large black stove dominates the center of the room, and a pump stands beside a large basin filled with wall. Rags, towels, and aprons, all obviously well used, are draped from pegs near the doors. A flight of stairs leads down to a darkened doorway.

This kitchen is well equipped with basic cooking equipment. There is nothing of exceptional value or quality here. Clearly, this place was never meant to create haute cuisine.

At most times, there are 1-4 hooded and masked patients (or are they orderlies?) working in here. They are slowly creating the next meal, which usually consists of oatmeal or similarly bland foods.

The staircase in this room ends in a sturdy looking door. In addition to being *wizard locked* so that only the undead may open it, a solid lock is set into the door. Picking this mechanism requires an open locks roll. Beyond the door is area 25 on the Basement map.

11. Guest's Room

This chamber has clearly been pressed into service as a makeshift guest's room. It's very cramped, being only about 10' wide and 20' long. Ten uncomfortable looking bunks have been secured to the wall.

A pair of oil lamps hang from hooks on the ceiling, filling the room with both a ruddy light and a bitter taste. The shifting shadows thrown by these lamps bounce about in an almost hypnotic fashion.

This is the area where Heinroth quarters the rest of the survivors from the *Blue Dolphin*. Like the other Guest's Room (area 5), this chamber has been enchanted with an unusual *sleep* spell that is used liberally on those forced to take up residence in this room.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

12. Northwest Stairwell

This room is painted with a flat gray wash that the years have laced with cracks and gouges. Dust seems to hang perpetually in the air, tickling your nose and sticking in your throat. Something else teases your sense here—an odor of mildew or age that seems familiar, but which you are unable to give a name to.

For the most part, this area presents no threat to those who enter it. When Heinfroth wishes, however, he can cause the dust to thicken until it impairs vision and threatens to suffocate those trapped in the stairwell. When this happens, everyone here must make saving throws vs. breath weapon or become unable to breathe. When this happens, the normal rules for drowning presented in the “Time and Movement” section of the *Player’s Handbook* can be used to adjudicate the situation. A suffocating person must be removed from the room before any attempt at resuscitation can be made.

13. Dining Room

Before you stretches a simple table set with a gray cloth that seems to be made from the same bland fabric as your robes. Simple dishes and cups, all made from the ashen clay that was used to fashion your masks, are set before each of a dozen chairs. Four large clay serving bowls, all empty, are set on the table, as are a half-dozen depleted pitchers.

A massive chandelier set with thick, brightly burning candles hangs from a length of heavy chain. By design or chance, the composition of the chandelier makes it look like a great mechanical spider. Indeed, once your eye registers that resemblance, you notice that the placement of the candles throws long, crisscrossing shadows that look uncomfortably like the strands of an ensnaring web on the walls and ceiling.

This is where the heroes meet Heinfroth when they first come to the island. Following their initial encounter with the lord of Dominia, they are invited to join the doctor every evening for dinner. Of course, as soon as they pass over the line from guests to patients, all that ends.

Unless the heroes are dining with Daclaud

Heinfroth in this room, it is empty.

14. Northeast Stairwell

This stairwell lacks one of the most important features normally associated with such rooms: a flight of stairs. It seems a safe bet, however, that the pile of dried and broken lumber heaped against the walls of the room once made up such a structure. If this is the case, however, the stairs collapsed long ago and were never replaced.

For those who enter this room on the ground floor, there is little of any importance here. Searching the pile of wood will reveal nothing valuable, but could certainly provide a large number of wooden stakes for use in destroying Heinfroth’s minions.

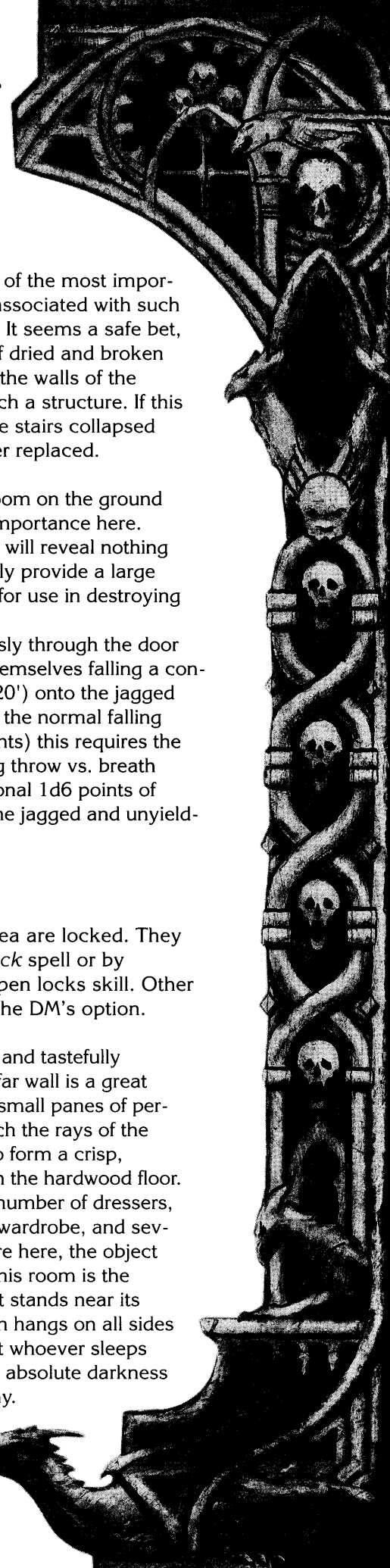
People who rush carelessly through the door on the first floor will find themselves falling a considerable distance (about 20') onto the jagged pile of wood. In addition to the normal falling damage involved (2d6 points) this requires the character to make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer an additional 1d6 points of damage from landing on the jagged and unyielding material.

15. Heinfroth’s Bedroom

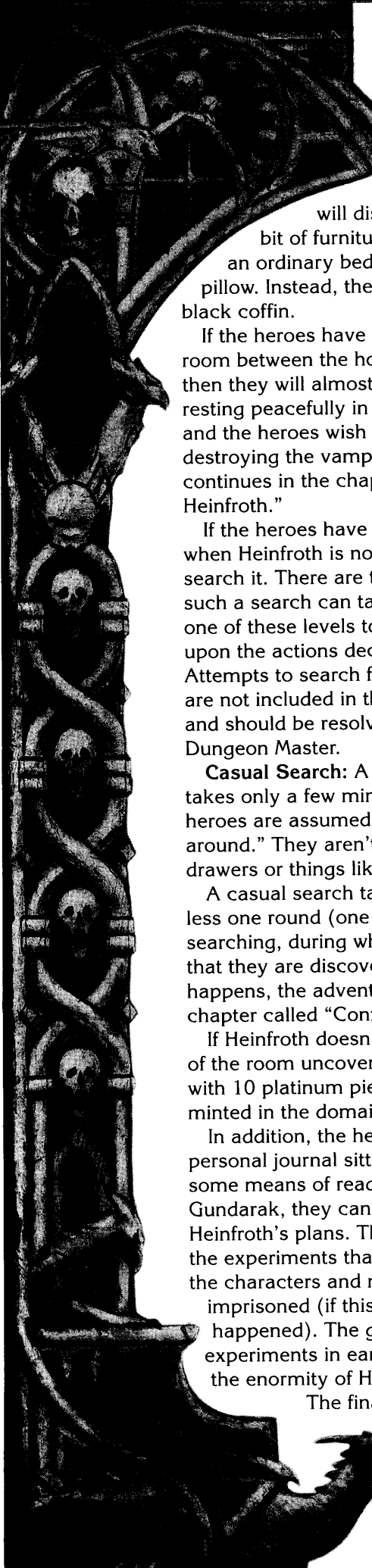
Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of thief’s open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM’s option.

This is a well-appointed and tastefully adorned bedroom. The far wall is a great window fashioned from small panes of perfect crystal through which the rays of the sun (or moon) stream to form a crisp, checkerboard pattern on the hardwood floor.

Although there are a number of dressers, a desk, a free-standing wardrobe, and several other bits of furniture here, the object that clearly dominates this room is the great, canopied bed that stands near its center. Heavy, dark cloth hangs on all sides of the bed, ensuring that whoever sleeps within is able to sleep in absolute darkness on even the brightest day.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Anyone who looks past the curtains on the bed will discover that it is an unusual bit of furniture. While it might look like an ordinary bed, it has no mattress or pillow. Instead, the canopy shrouds a great, black coffin.

If the heroes have taken care to visit this room between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., then they will almost certainly see Heinfroth resting peacefully in his coffin. If this happens and the heroes wish to try their luck at destroying the vampire, the adventure continues in the chapter titled "Confronting Heinfroth."

If the heroes have managed to enter this area when Heinfroth is not here, they are free to search it. There are three levels of detail that such a search can take. The DM should assign one of these levels to the search depending upon the actions declared by the players. Attempts to search for secret doors and the like are not included in the following descriptions and should be resolved individually by the Dungeon Master.

Casual Search: A casual search of the room takes only a few minutes. During this time, the heroes are assumed to be "just looking around." They aren't going through dresser drawers or things like that.

A casual search takes one turn (10 minutes), less one round (one minute) per hero searching, during which there is a 10% chance that they are discovered by Heinfroth. If this happens, the adventure continues with the chapter called "Confronting Heinfroth."

If Heinfroth doesn't interrupt, a casual search of the room uncovers a small leather pouch with 10 platinum pieces in it. These coins were minted in the domain of Gundarak.

In addition, the heroes discover Heinfroth's personal journal sitting on the desk. If they have some means of reading the language of Gundarak, they can learn something of Heinfroth's plans. The last few entries describe the experiments that he has been conducting on the characters and notes that they will soon be imprisoned (if this has not already happened). The graphic descriptions of his experiments in earlier entries will make clear the enormity of Heinfroth's evil.

The final entry in the journal reads as follows:

The experiments on Dr. Van Richten proceed well, if slowly. His resistance to both mental and physical treatments is incredible, but he nears the breaking point. I have composed a letter for M. in which I have detailed the effects of his attacks through Van Richten's dreams. Captain Baykur will carry it to him when *Mercy* returns to Martira Bay.

Standard Search: A more complete search of Heinfroth's bedroom requires two turns (20 minutes). During this time, the characters are assumed to be looking into drawers, opening cabinets, and otherwise looking for things hidden from plain sight. While the characters are conducting a search of this type, there is a 20% that they are interrupted by Heinfroth. Failing that, there is a 25% chance that they attract the attention of the hospital staff, resulting in the arrival of 1-4 masked and hooded orderlies. If any of the latter are allowed to leave, they alert Heinfroth to the events transpiring in his private chambers. The lord of Dominia arrives in 2-8 minutes and takes matters into his own hands. At that point, the adventure continues with "Confronting Heinfroth."

A successful search of Heinfroth's room will reveal the items listed under **Casual Search**, as well as the following curiosity.

In the top drawer of the desk is a parchment envelope. There is no name or address written on it. The envelope is sealed, but can be opened and the letter within read (if the heroes can read the language of Gundarak). The text of the letter is printed on the inside front cover of this book as "Player's Aid #1." You may want to photocopy it for your players.

The Dungeon Master should also consider adding one or two other items to the objects to the contents of the desk. These should be things taken from the characters over the course of the adventure, making it clear to those who haven't caught on yet that every thing they have done so far was watched and recorded.

Thorough Search: Characters wishing to conduct a detailed search of the room will spend a full hour (6 turns) checking for false bottoms in drawers, feeling for concealed pockets in clothes, and otherwise turning the room inside out. There is a 60% chance that Heinfroth will walk in on the party while they

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

are doing this. If that happens, the adventure continues with "Confronting Heinfroth." If Heinfroth doesn't catch the party, there is a 75% chance that a group of 1-6 orderlies will hear the commotion in the room and come to investigate. If even a single one of these folk is permitted to leave, an alarm is raised and Heinfroth is summoned. He arrives in 2-8 minutes to deal with the intruders. Again, when that happens, the adventure continues with the "Confronting Heinfroth" section.

Assuming that the heroes make it through this period, they discover that there is a false back to the wardrobe. Unless someone successfully finds and removes traps before opening this hidden compartment up, a pair of vials are broken. As soon as this happened, a potent paralysis gas floods the room. Everyone who doesn't leave at once must make a saving throw vs. paralysis or be unable to move for $8 + 1d4$ hours. A new saving throw must be made each round that the character remains in the room until the gas dissipates in $1d3 \times 10$ minutes. After the gas has taken effect, orderlies pour into the room to subdue any characters who might still be active and carry the group back to their cells.

If all goes well, however, the heroes will find a minor treasure trove behind the panel. In addition to any magical items that may have been removed from them while they slept, they find *potions of extra-healing* and *super-heroism*, as well as an *elixir of madness*. Heinfroth has also placed an *amulet of inescapable location* here in the hopes that any thief will claim it too and make himself easy to track.

In addition to the hidden panel in the wardrobe, there is another well-concealed treasure in the room, although a *detect magic* spell will reveal it. On top of Heinfroth's desk is an cigar box bearing the brand name *Neblina de Mar*. This is, in truth, a *folding boat* (see the magical item descriptions in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*). The command words for the item are "neblina," "de," and "mar." If the characters haven't hit on the idea of stealing the good ship *Mercy* or constructing their own vessel for an escape, this might be a valuable discovery.

16. Orderly Bedroom

Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by

successful use of thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option.

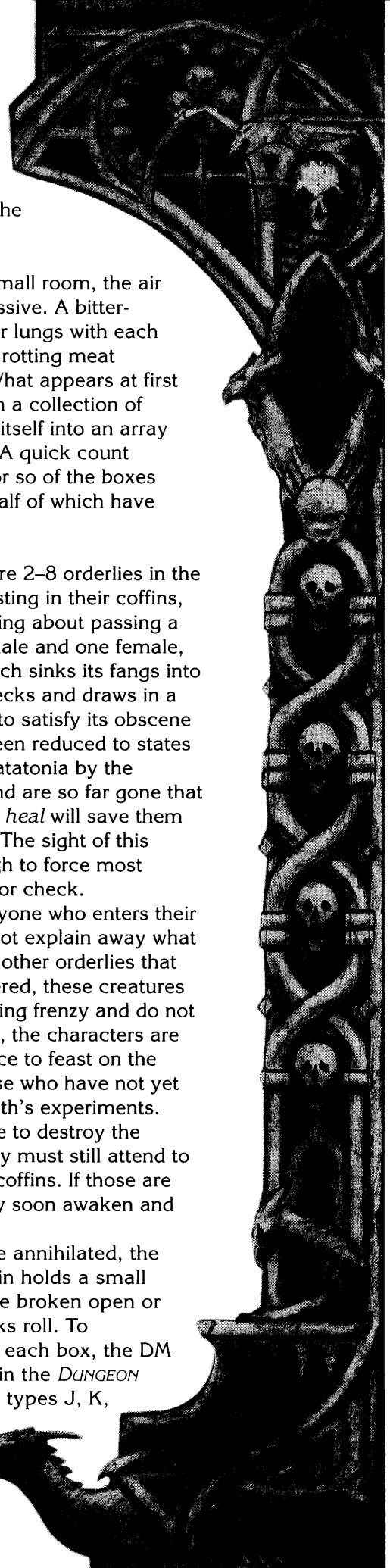
Although this is not a small room, the air here is thick and oppressive. A bitter-sweet odor invades your lungs with each breath and the smell of rotting meat threatens to gag you. What appears at first to be nothing more than a collection of crates quickly resolves itself into an array of simple, pine coffins. A quick count indicates that a dozen or so of the boxes fill this room, roughly half of which have their lids hanging open.

At any given time, there are 2-8 orderlies in the room. Half of these are resting in their coffins, while the others are lounging about passing a pair of limp bodies, one male and one female, back and forth. In turn, each sinks its fangs into the back of the victims' necks and draws in a mouthful of cerebral fluid to satisfy its obscene thirst. The victims have been reduced to states of helpless, whimpering catatonia by the feeding of the vampires and are so far gone that nothing short of a *wish* or *heal* will save them from madness and death. The sight of this nightmarish feast is enough to force most characters to make a horror check.

The vampires attack anyone who enters their lair, certain that they cannot explain away what has been seen. Unlike the other orderlies that the players have encountered, these creatures are in something of a feeding frenzy and do not attack to subdue. To them, the characters are nothing more than a chance to feast on the fresh, vibrant fluids of those who have not yet been destroyed by Heinfroth's experiments.

If the characters are able to destroy the vampires in this room, they must still attend to the ones sleeping in their coffins. If those are not dealt with quickly, they soon awaken and attack the party as well.

If all of the vampires are annihilated, the heroes find that each coffin holds a small safebox in it. These can be broken open or jimmed with an open locks roll. To determine the contents of each box, the DM should consult the tables in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* for treasure types J, K, L, and M.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

17. Rehner's Bedroom

Note: The doors to this area are locked. They can be opened with a *knock* spell or by successful use of thief's open locks skill. Other techniques may work, at the DM's option.

This chamber has the odor of disuse about it, although a number of crates have been stacked here. These are marked "Dr. Piotr Rehner" and presumably contain the doctor's personal effects. A pair of wardrobe's stand along the wall, one with its door hanging open to expose a rack of fine clothing. In addition to all these common furnishings, a black-lacquered coffin rests in one corner of the room, beside a large desk and its accompanying chair. The lid of this great casket is closed, but does not appear to have been nailed down as it would be for burial.

Because he has been busy learning the routine of the asylum and mastering his newly bestowed vampiric powers, Rehner has not yet had time to unpack, although the lids to all the crates have been unsecured so that they can be easily lifted off and the contents examined.

As with Heinfroth's bedroom, the heroes have the option to conduct a casual, routine, or thorough search of the room.

Casual Search: If the heroes opt to take only a quick look around before moving on, they must devote one turn (10 minutes), less one round (1 minute) per search character to the effort. During this time, there is a 10% chance that Rehner returns and confronts them. If this happens, Rehner immediately tries to flee and get help. Unless the heroes are able to stop him and somehow silence his screams, 2d4 orderlies show up in 1d6 minutes to help him.

At the end of a casual search, if they are not discovered, the heroes will find some 1,000 gps worth of jewelry.

Standard Search: A more exhaustive search of Dr. Rehner's chambers requires two turns (20 minutes), less 1 round (1 minute) per searching character to complete. There is a 20% chance that Dr. Rehner happens upon the intruders.

Assuming that the search is completed without interruption, the heroes discover Rehner's journal in one of the desk's drawers. Although it doesn't contain too much of interest, a letter has been folded over and slipped inside the front cover. If the one of the heroes can read the language of Gundarak, allow them to see Player's Aid #2 from inside the front cover of this booklet. This document provides the characters with all the information they will need to locate Baron Metus in Martira Bay (see Adventure Two: The Baron).

Thorough Search: A more thorough search of the room requires three turns (30 minutes), less two rounds (2 minutes) for each hero searching and has a 30% chance of the characters being discovered by Dr. Rehner. Should the heroes complete such a search, they don't find anything they wouldn't have found with a standard search. Rehner, unlike Heinfroth, is not a man who hordes wealth or secret treasures. His work is his wealth, and he desires nothing more.

18-19. Orderly Bedroom

This is the same as area 16.

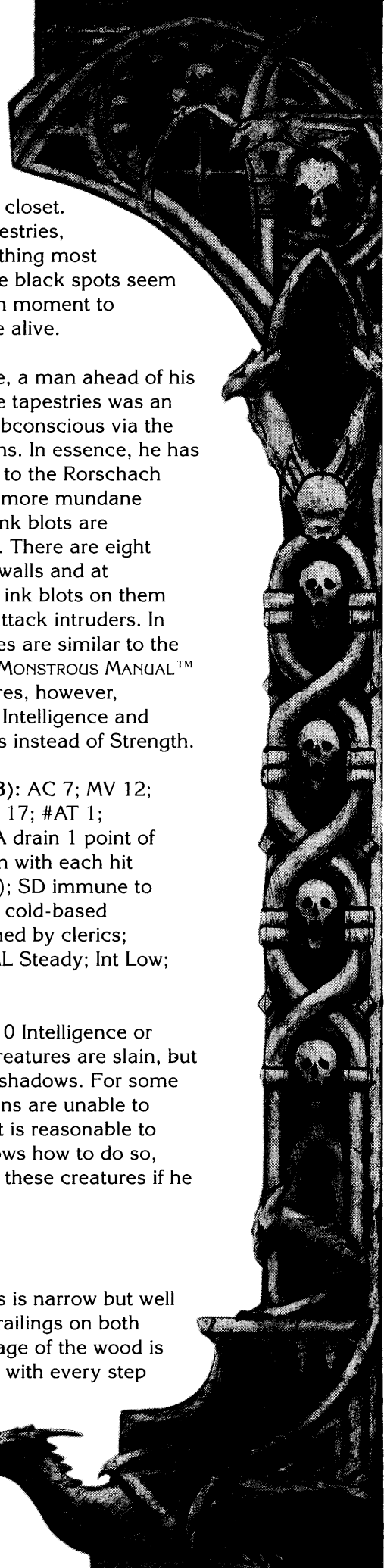
20. Bathroom

This bathroom appears to be all but unused by the keepers of the asylum. Cob webs hang from the ceiling like ethereal drapes, thick dust covers the floor, and a rusted iron pump offers little hope of drawing forth drinkable water to fill the wooden basin that rests beneath it.

In fact, the pump here does work. However, it is a trap for those who, like the heroes, have escaped their cells. Even a single stroke of the pump's handle draws forth a great gush of rusty water that cannot be stopped short of crushing the mouth of the pump flat. Any attempt to stopper the pump will prove no match for the force with which the orange water is gushing forth.

The pump is the vessel of a unique animator, and the creature will cause the water will rise up and attack the heroes as a water elemental.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Common Animator (1): Int 16; AC 2; MV 6, Sw 18; HD 12; hp 75; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 5d6 (slam); SA nil; SD +2 or better to hit; SW nil; MR nil; SZ L (12' tall); ML Champion; Int Low; AL N; XP 6000.

The animator attacks for 4 rounds and then stops. Should the heroes attempt to use the pump a second (or third, and so on) time, the same thing will happen.

21. Bathroom

This is a seldom used bathroom with a basin of dirty water resting before an iron pump. A few combs and other personal effects rest on a small shelf here, but there is no mirror. With the exception of an ornate ivory straight razor that hangs on a hook beside the basin, there appears to be nothing of any value here.

As neither Heinfroth nor any of his cerebral vampire minions has any need to shave, the straight razor may seem to be a bit out of place. Indeed, it is a trap for the unwary. The razor may be taken freely and appears to be worth somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 gold pieces. If a *detect magic* spell is used on it, the razor radiates a faint aura of magic. The moment the razor is used to shave someone's face, it instantly slips and slash open the throat of the person being shaved. If the victim fails to make a saving throw vs. spell, he will lose one third of his hit points until he dies on the third round. During that time, any manner of magical healing can be used to stop the torrent of blood that flows from the victim's throat.

22. Orderly Bedroom

This is the same as area 16.

23. Sitting Room

This is a spartan, but comfortable looking parlor with many tables and soft chairs scattered around. An assortment of potted plants mixes with the broad windows on the southern wall to make the place feel open and alive.

A series of unusual tapestries hang on the walls here. Each is white with an irregular black splash on it, as if someone

with a giant inkwell had been clumsy when walking through a linen closet. As you watch these tapestries, however, you see something most curious about them. The black spots seem to flow and change from moment to moment, as if they were alive.

Heinfroth is, if nothing else, a man ahead of his time. The creation of these tapestries was an attempt to examine the subconscious via the use of meaningless patterns. In essence, he has created something similar to the Rorschach test. Unlike those on their more mundane counterparts, Heinfroth's ink blots are animated, living creatures. There are eight tapestries hanging on the walls and at Heinfroth's command, the ink blots on them can leap off of them and attack intruders. In many ways, these creatures are similar to the shadows described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*TM tome. Unlike those creatures, however, Heinfroth's shadows drain Intelligence and Wisdom from their victim's instead of Strength.

Heinfroth's Shadows (8): AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (touch); SA drain 1 point of Intelligence and Wisdom with each hit (returns after 2d4 turns); SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based attacks; SW can be turned by clerics; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML Steady; Int Low; AL CE; XP 420.

Those who are reduced to 0 Intelligence or Wisdom points by these creatures are slain, but they will not rise again as shadows. For some reason, Heinfroth's creations are unable to make more of their kind. It is reasonable to assume that Heinfroth knows how to do so, though, and could replace these creatures if he needed to.

24. Attic Stairway

This steep flight of stairs is narrow but well built with solid-looking railings on both sides. Despite this, the age of the wood is clear as it creaks loudly with every step you take.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

This stairwell is kept under constant surveillance by the orderlies in the monitoring room (area 27). Thus, if the heroes are exploring this area and have somehow managed to escape detection up to this point, they are undoubtedly noticed now.

Basement and Attic

This key can be used in conjunction with the maps on page 25 of the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. It details the regions of the asylum that Heinfroth wishes to keep secret from all of the inmates, especially the heroes.

25. Cellar

You have discovered a dark room stocked with barrels, jars of various preserved fruits, and bags of flour and the like. Sides of meat, salted and dried, hang from hooks in the ceiling. A rack of wine bottles, covered with cob webs, runs the length of the north wall.

This room serves as both a storage cellar for the kitchen above and the entrance to the basement in which Heinfroth's patient's are kept. When either of the two doors here (leading to area 26 or to the hallway that leads to the cells) are opened, an alarm sounds in the monitoring chamber (area 27). When that happens, the scrying devices there are used to check the area. Only with the greatest of precautions, therefore, can the heroes pass through without attracting the attention of the asylum staff.

26. Infirmary

The metallic smell of chemicals stings your nose in this brightly lit area. The walls, floor, and ceiling, which are made of gleaming metal, reflect the light from the single great lantern that hangs in the center of the room with almost painful intensity. A dozen metal bunks are anchored to the floor along the walls, each adjacent to a table with saws, sharp knives, and other instruments that could be used for either surgery or torture.

At any given time there are 2-8 patient strapped down to these tables. If the heroes interact with them, the charts presented for area 29 can be used to quickly determine the nature of the encounter. In addition to the patients, however, there are also 1-4 orderlies here. As soon as they spot intruders, they assume that they have been sent to the infirmary for medical treatment. Unless the heroes manage to bluff their way past these vampires, the encounter turns violent as the orderlies attempt to recapture the escaped inmates.

27. Observation Room

The door to this room is sealed with a special *wizard lock* spell and cannot be opened by any living creature. Only the hosts of the undead, or those disguised as them through magic like the *feign undead* spell, can open it.

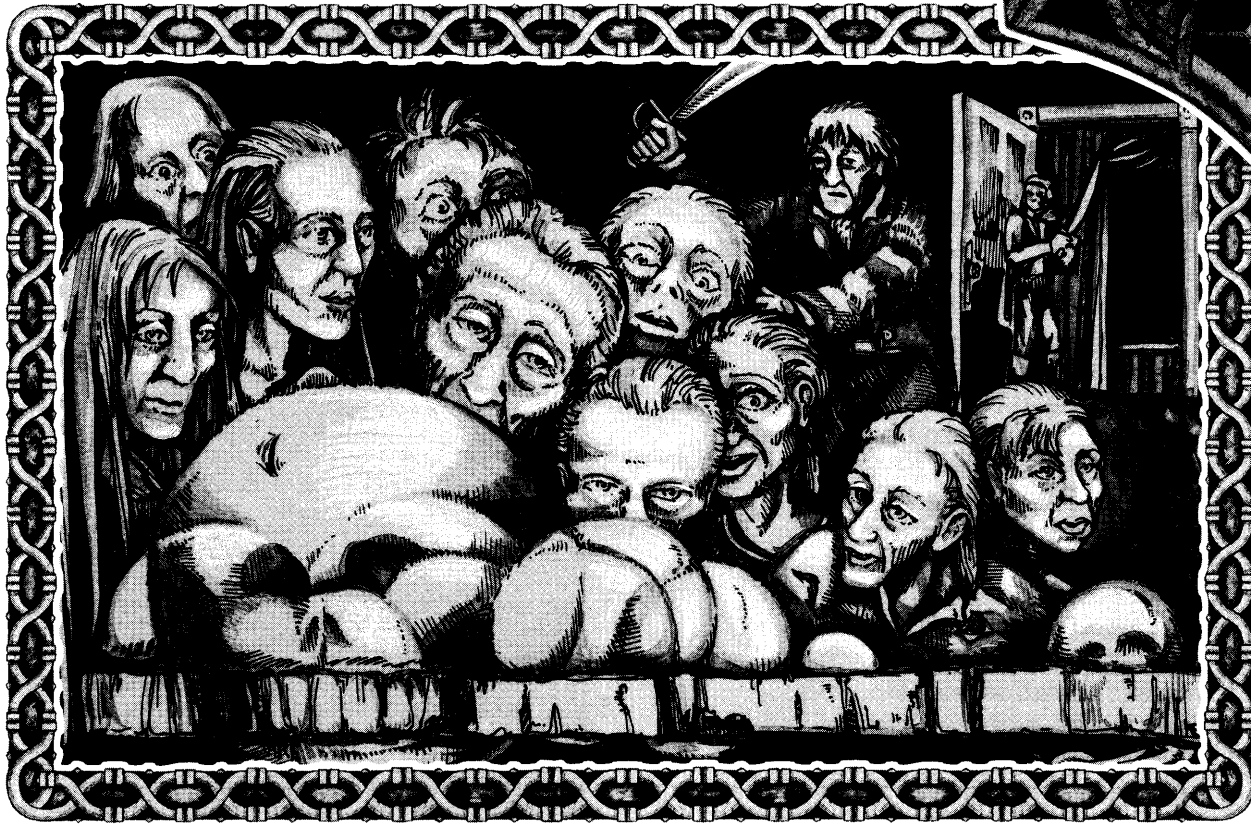
This room is dark and cold, lit only by the glow from ten crystal balls set into a long, hardwood table. Gaunt men and women sit before each one, and here and there stands a figure in the robe and mask that is typical garb in the asylum.

Each of these *crystal balls* is a scrying device that allows the user to view events anywhere on the island. In order to use one, a person need only sit before it, look into the orb, and think about the area that he wants to examine. These balls must be instructed to inspect a given area, and cannot be ordered to show the whereabouts of a given person.

Whenever a living person looks into the orb, he must make a madness check. These were designed for use by the undead, and the eyes of the living were never meant to gaze upon them. If this check is made, the character may use the *crystal ball* freely. If he looks away from the orb and then tries to use it again, however, a new check must be made.

It is through his agents in this room that Heinfroth keeps a careful watch over his domain. Unlike Heinfroth's other minions, these poor wretches are actual living people. They have been selected from among the patients who came to the island because of their psychic gifts. Years of operating the orbs, telepathically contacting Heinfroth when there is something that he must be made aware of, and otherwise

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



living among the ranks of the undead, have left them nothing more than automatons.

In addition to surveillance, all of the treatment rooms are controlled by the mental efforts of a person in this room. When the characters enter this area, 1-6 of the orbs are in use to oversee the treatment of a patient. The person operating each of the orbs is being directed by one of Heinfroth's vampire orderlies.

The monitors themselves do not take any action against the heroes. If wrenched away from the orb into which they are looking, the monitor goes into convulsions and dies in 1-6 minutes. The vampires are not so easily defeated, however, and will leap to attack any intruders.

28. Cell 1

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are hung with white, canvas padding that reminds you of mattresses. Even the inside of the door is cushioned in this unusual fashion. What little light there is in here trickles in through a slot in the center of the door some six inches wide by three inches high.

This is the cell in which the heroes are kept after Heinfroth decides that they are no longer going to be treated as guests. Like all of the cells in this area, it can be filled with a magical *sleep* aura that forces everyone in the room to make savings throws vs. spell each turn or fall into a deep sleep. Every night, this aura is activated for between half an hour and an hour. When the magic is discontinued, those who have been made to slumber will continue to sleep until awakened normally or 3-12 hours have passed. Heinfroth's agents, who are immune to the effects of the sleep aura, enter the cell during this time to search it, repair damage to the padding, or carry off the characters to the treatment rooms in the attic.

29. Cell 2

The player description of this room is identical to that for area 28.

This cell, as is the case with each of the ones not occupied by the heroes, is home to 2-8 patients of various races. The DM should roll 1d10 on the following chart to determine the race of each patient:

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

| Roll | Race |
|------|--------------------|
| 1 | Elf |
| 2 | Dwarf |
| 3 | Gnome |
| 4 | Halfling or kender |
| 5 | Half-elf |
| 6-10 | Human |

There is an even chance that any given inmate is male or female. It can be assumed that all of the other patients in the asylum are quite mad thanks to the treatment of the good doctor. The following chart can be used to quickly determine the personality of any patient that the heroes come into contact with:

1. Orderly in disguise*
2. Aggressive and violent
3. Passive, almost catatonic
4. Naive and friendly
5. Angry and sulking
6. Kind and soft-spoken
7. Aloof and snooty intellectual
8. Artistic, creative
9. Compulsive liar
10. Bratty, smart-mouthed
11. Stern and stubborn
12. Cheerful, extroverted
13. Valiant and heroic
14. Amnesiac
15. Delusions of grandeur, megalomania
16. Extreme paranoia
17. Frequently hallucinates
18. Sane but doesn't trust heroes
19. Snitch, eager to betray heroes to guards
20. Orderly in disguise *

* Roll again to determine the personality that the orderly pretends to have while in the company of other patients.

The DM should roll twice on the table, once to determine the character's primary characteristic and once to see what lies within.

Thus, rolls of 13 and 17 would indicate a patient who seemed to be valiant and heroic on the surface, but is subject to frequent hallucinations. Of course, his true problems surface only in times of crisis.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

30-36. Cell 3-9

These are the same as area 28.

37. Cell 10

The description of this area is similar to that for area 28, but the only person confined here is Dr. Van Richten. If he is encountered before the escape attempt, he is willing to join the party.

Van Richten has learned not to trust the inmates and keepers of Dominia. Even if he knows the heroes from when he was actively hunting monsters (if, for example, they met during one of the adventures in the *Chilling Tales* anthology), he still remains suspicious, only taking a minimal role in any escape efforts, and making remarks like, "I suppose this is where we get recaptured" or "Don't you think this would be more convincing if you acted more like inmates?"

38-39. Cells 11-12

This room is identical to area 28.

40. Guard Room

This is a dimly lit room with humid air that smells of mold. A pair of uncomfortable wooden chairs stand on opposite sides of a card table.

There are two orderlies here at all times, and they promptly attack any heroes who enter the room. Their goal, of course, is to recapture the heroes and return them to their cells. One of the orderlies has the key that unlocks the doors to the rooms in his pocket.

41. Treatment Room 1 (Phobia Inducement)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

You find yourself in a featureless room with gleaming metal walls. There is no apparent exit from this place, but dozens of small holes, each just large enough for you to stick your finger in, cover each brightly polished surface. The walls are dented in many places, as if countless others had pounded their fists upon them, making the reflections that they give off distorted and fractured. The air carries the bitter smell of chlorine.

This room is where Heinfroth conducts his phobia inducement experiments. It is his belief that most of humanity is plagued by fears that can, in extreme circumstances, lead to the destruction of sanity. In order to test this belief, he has constructed a special room that will first induce an overwhelming fear in the patient and then trigger that fear over and over, until madness results. With each exposure to the treatment, careful records of the patient's behavior are kept and cross-referenced with those of previous patients.

The door out of the room is well concealed, although it may be discovered by those able to detect secret doors. Nothing short of a *knock* spell will allow someone in the room to open it, however. The smell that inmates notice is simply a residue of the cleaning fluids used on the room by Heinfroth's staff.

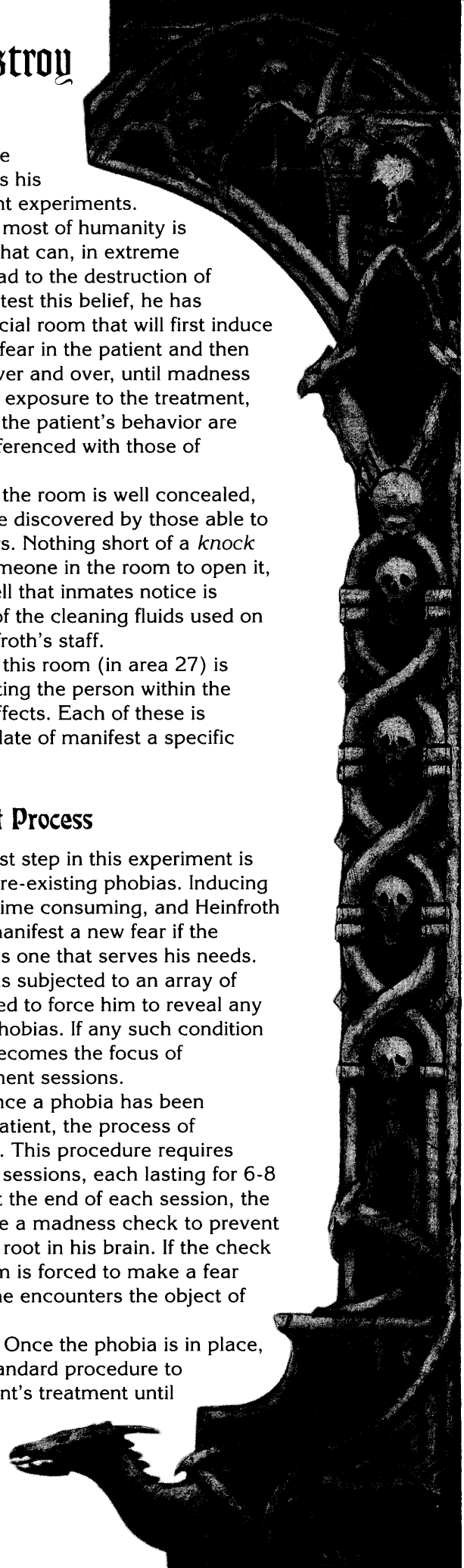
The operator of this room (in area 27) is capable of subjecting the person within the room to several effects. Each of these is designed to stimulate or manifest a specific phobia:

The Treatment Process

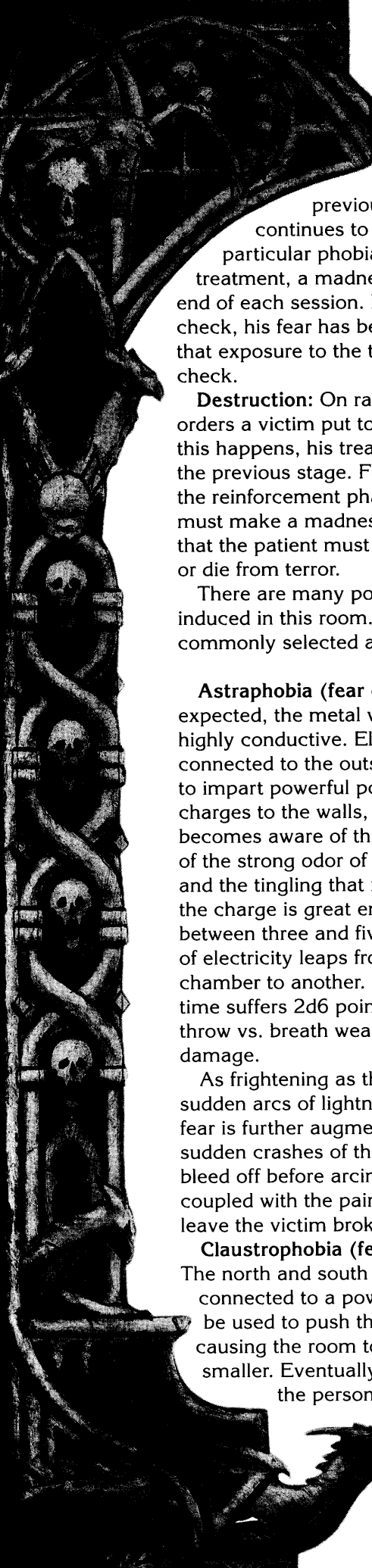
Diagnosis: The first step in this experiment is the discovery of pre-existing phobias. Inducing a phobia is quite time consuming, and Heinfroth sees no need to manifest a new fear if the patient already has one that serves his needs. Thus, the patient is subjected to an array of conditions designed to force him to reveal any already existing phobias. If any such condition is discovered, it becomes the focus of subsequent treatment sessions.

Inducement: Once a phobia has been detected for the patient, the process of inducing it begins. This procedure requires several treatment sessions, each lasting for 6-8 hours (1d3+5). At the end of each session, the patient must make a madness check to prevent the phobia taking root in his brain. If the check is failed, the victim is forced to make a fear check whenever he encounters the object of his fear.

Reinforcement: Once the phobia is in place, it is Heinfroth's standard procedure to continue the patient's treatment until the induced fear becomes



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



overpowering. Following the completion of the previous phase, the victim continues to be exposed to his particular phobia. As with the earlier treatment, a madness check is required at the end of each session. If the victim fails this check, his fear has become so overwhelming that exposure to the trigger requires a horror check.

Destruction: On rare occasions, Heinfroth orders a victim put to death in this room. When this happens, his treatment continues beyond the previous stage. For each session following the reinforcement phase of therapy, the victim must make a madness check. Failure indicates that the patient must make a system shock roll or die from terror.

There are many possible phobias that can be induced in this room. Among the most commonly selected are the following:

Astraphobia (fear of lightning): As might be expected, the metal walls of this room are highly conductive. Electrical generators connected to the outside of the cell can be used to impart powerful positive and negative charges to the walls, floor, or ceiling. A patient becomes aware of the building charge because of the strong odor of ozone that fills the room and the tingling that runs across his flesh. When the charge is great enough, a state that requires between three and five minutes to attain, an arc of electricity leaps from one side of the chamber to another. Anyone in the cell at this time suffers 2d6 points of damage. A saving throw vs. breath weapon is allowed for half damage.

As frightening as the building charges and sudden arcs of lightning might be, the patient's fear is further augmented by flashes of light, sudden crashes of thunder, and charges that bleed off before arcing. These false alarms are coupled with the painful electrical shocks to leave the victim broken and weeping with fear.

Claustrophobia (fear of enclosed places): The north and south walls of this room are connected to a powerful mechanism that can be used to push them toward each other, causing the room to become smaller and smaller. Eventually, if the device were left on, the person in the room would be crushed to death. This extreme

measure is seldom employed, however, for dead men have no place in Heinfroth's experiments.

Over the course of a treatment session, the walls are moved and retracted several times. At first, they move only a foot or so, just enough for the patient to notice that they have shifted, before returning to their normal position. The next time, the move a little further before being withdrawn. Each time, the space left to the patient grows less and less, leaving the poor soul uncertain as to just how many times the cycle will repeat before he is crushed to death.

Entomophobia (fear of insects): This phobia is induced by the gradual releasing of beetles, flies, and other insects into the patient's cell. At first, only a few of these creatures are involved. Thus, for the first turn of the treatment they can be smashed, swatted, or otherwise destroyed. On the second turn, however, the pests become far more numerous. Indeed, so vast is the crawling host that the patient suffers 1-6 points of damage each turn. After a few turns of abuse, the person operating the room releases an odorless (at least to the patient) chemical into the air that causes the insects to retreat into the tubes from which they came. Following a brief grace period, the treatment is repeated.

In order to amplify the effects of the treatment on the patient's nerves, the type of insect employed changes from session to session. In most cases, the insects are a mixture of harmless ones and those that bite or sting. In some cases, however, a swarm that is entirely harmless might be used or one composed wholly of stinging, biting creatures. This uncertainty serves to prey on the mind of the victim, greatly enhancing the terror of each encounter.

Hemophobia (fear of blood): Drops of blood can be released from some of the holes in the ceiling. At the same time, numerous blood-drinking, maggotlike creatures are released into the room known as blood worms. While these disgusting leechlike slugs begin by slithering around and tasting the blood dripping into the room, they soon sense a warm body in the area and seek to satisfy their obscene thirst from that source.

These creatures are not especially dangerous, draining only 1 hit point from the victim each round. There are, however, thousands of them ready to enter the room, making it almost impossible for the patient to destroy them. In

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

the wake of their feeding, they leave the patient covered with bleeding sores that burn painfully for several hours and leave behind round, dimple-like scars when they finally heal.

By the end of the session, standing knee-deep in blood and losing great amounts of the crimson fluid himself, the patient is well on his way to hemophobia.

Pyrophobia (fear of fire): Many of the holes in the metal walls are connected to pumps that can release jets of flame into the room at random intervals. Anyone in the room when one of these fiery plumes is ejected suffers 2d6 points of damage. A successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage suffered by half.

In addition to the fire itself, the room is sometimes sprayed with fine mists of oil. Some of these are flammable, others are not. It is impossible for the patient to know whether he has been sprayed with something that will increase or decrease the burns he suffers from the next jet of flame. In the former case, the patient suffers a -4 penalty on his saving throw. In the latter, he gains a +4 bonus to the roll.

Other Phobias: In addition to the above phobias, the masters of the asylum have many other fears at their disposal. By following the guidelines presented above, the DM should have a good idea of the types of treatment that can be used to create any of the following phobias: apiophobia (fear of bees), taphephobia (fear of being buried alive), cryophobia (fear of cold), scotophobia (fear of darkness), phasmophobia (fear of ghosts), phonophobia (fear of noise), toxicophobia (fear of poisoning), hypnophobia (fear of sleep), ophidiophobia (fear of snakes), arachnophobia (fear of spiders), or keraunophobia (fear of thunder).

42. Treatment Room 2 (Personality Deprivation)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

This unusual room is utterly featureless save for a single seat carved from a block of black stone that rests in the center of the floor. The walls, like the stone seat, are fashioned from single slabs of this gleaming ebon rock. A strange aura seems to fill the place with a pale light, but no obvious source for this illumination can be found.

As with the other treatment rooms, the door to this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors is able to find it. Even if the entrance is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

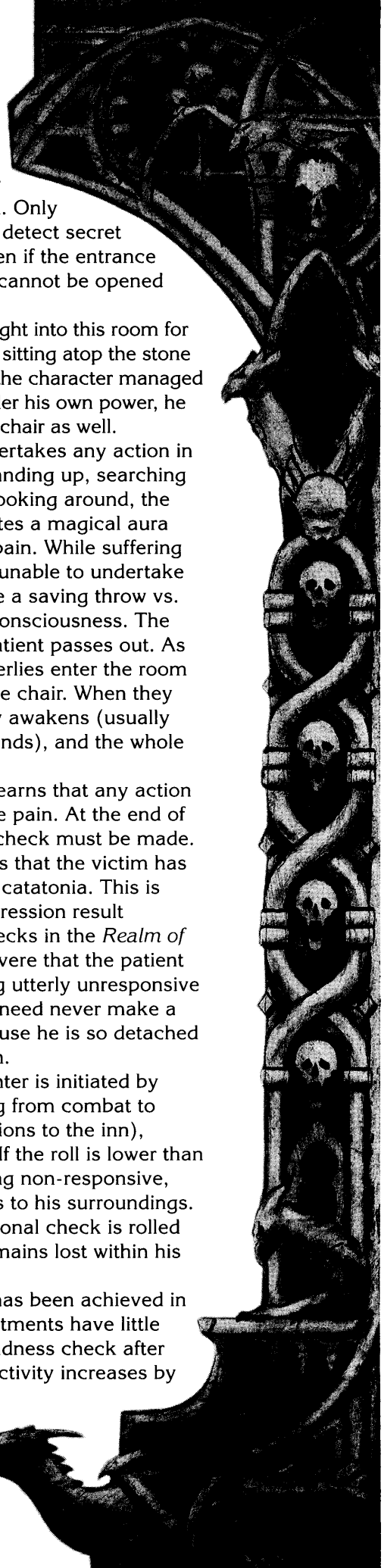
If the character was brought into this room for treatment, he finds himself sitting atop the stone seat when he wakes up. If the character managed to come into this room under his own power, he soon ends up on the stone chair as well.

Whenever a patient undertakes any action in this room, whether it is standing up, searching for secret doors, or even looking around, the operator in area 27 activates a magical aura that causes him extreme pain. While suffering this pain, the character is unable to undertake any action and must make a saving throw vs. paralysis to avoid losing consciousness. The pain continues until the patient passes out. As soon as this happens, orderlies enter the room and hoist him back into the chair. When they leave, the victim gradually awakens (usually over the course of 1-4 rounds), and the whole cycle begins again.

Eventually, the patient learns that any action he takes results in extreme pain. At the end of each session, a madness check must be made. Failure of this roll indicates that the victim has entered a state of walking catatonia. This is similar to the extreme depression result described for madness checks in the *Realm of Terror* book, but it is so severe that the patient has a 75% chance of being utterly unresponsive in any given situation. He need never make a fear or horror check, because he is so detached from the world around him.

Whenever a new encounter is initiated by another character (ranging from combat to someone asking for directions to the inn), percentile dice are rolled. If the roll is lower than the heroes chance for being non-responsive, then he becomes oblivious to his surroundings. 1d4 rounds later, an additional check is rolled to see if he recovers or remains lost within his own bruised psyche.

Once the desired state has been achieved in the patient, additional treatments have little effect. For every failed madness check after the first, the chance of inactivity increases by 5% to a maximum of 95%.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



43. Treatment Room 3 (Psyche Fragmentation)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

While there is no obvious source of lighting in this room, it seems to be well lit. The walls of this room are fashioned from some manner of hard stone that has been polished to a mirror finish. No matter where you look, you are greeted by dozens of doppelgangers glaring out at you. Every move you make is echoed into infinity, creating a dizzying effect that reminds you of some horrible funhouse.

As with the other treatment rooms, the door from this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it.

Even if the exit is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

The intent of this room is to fragment a personality into its component parts.

While most effective against dual- or multi-classed characters, it can be equally devastating to anyone else unfortunate enough to be treated here.

Treatment in this room begins with a powerful psychic attack that attempts to analyze and catalog every facet of a character's personality. This probe is extremely painful, causing the victim no actual damage but requiring a madness check on the part of the patient. A failed check results in a brief loss of consciousness. The psychic treatment itself requires 1–4 hours with the unconsciousness that follows it lasting for 1–6 turns. When the victim awakens, he notices that his reflection has changed. Half of the images now reflect his normal image, while the others show specific sides of his personality. A successful madness check means that the victim remains conscious and that no fragmentation of his personality has occurred. As a rule, the victim is subjected to a pair of fragmentation attempts each day. In exceptional cases, however, Heinfroth may order prolonged treatments with as many as five attempts being made in a 24-hour period.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

For example, if the character were a fighter/mage, the new image might show him only as a wizard. From that point on, the character can act as either a fighter or a mage, but may not employ the abilities of both classes at once. If he were wearing armor not normally allowed to a wizard, he could not use any spells. If under the influence of a spell, he could not wield a sword effectively.

This is, however, just the start of things. After a few minutes, another psychic assault begins. The end result of this one is a further fragmenting of the character's personality. Once a character has been split along class lines (or in the case of single class characters, long ability lines), fragmentation continues at the level of nonweapon proficiencies. For example, a character who has the Stonemasonry skill and the Singing proficiency would find himself split along those lines, being unable to carry a tune while working with stone. The extent of the fragmentation is up to the Dungeon Master.

As this treatment continues, the DM should keep a list of how many fragments the character's personality has been split into. There is an equal chance (rolled at the start of each hour) for any given fragment to manifest itself. For the character used in the above examples, his table might read:

| | |
|-------|--------------------|
| 01-20 | Core Persona |
| 21-40 | Fighter Persona |
| 41-60 | Wizard Persona |
| 61-80 | Stonemason Persona |
| 81-00 | Singer Persona |

For the above example, the core persona would be the normal character able to use all of the class abilities and proficiencies that had not been broken apart. That is, he could use any of the character's proficiencies except for stonemasonry and singing. In many cases, especially when the fragmentation becomes severe, the DM must rule on a case by case basis as to what abilities a given fragment may or may not have. A good rule of thumb in such cases is that this is supposed to be a very debilitating treatment, so characters should be allowed a minimum of leeway in what their fragments can and can't do.

44. Treatment Room 4 (Age Regression)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

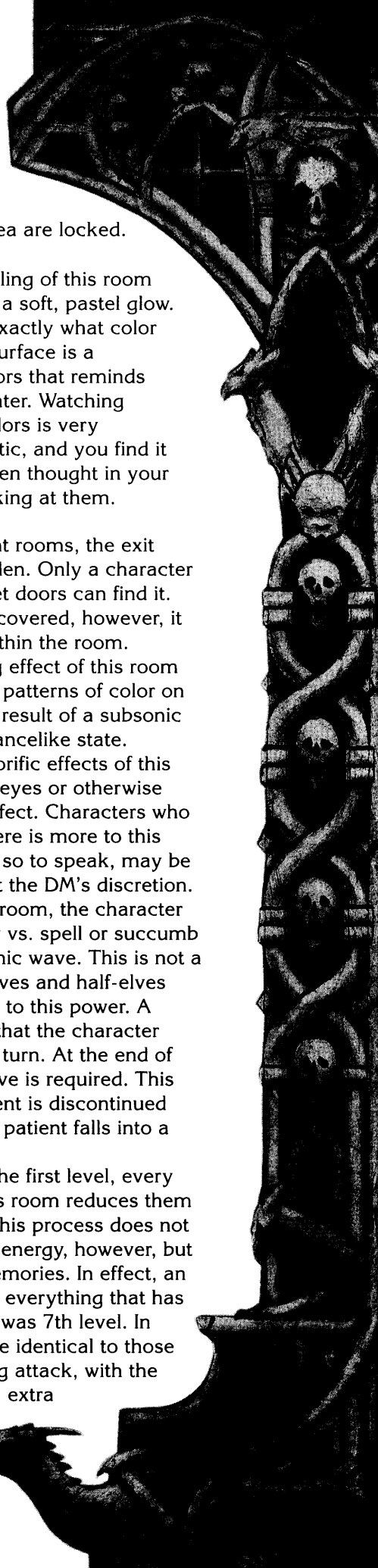
The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are smooth and radiate a soft, pastel glow. It is impossible to say exactly what color the walls are, for their surface is a constant swirling of colors that reminds you of oil floating on water. Watching these ever-changing colors is very soothing, almost hypnotic, and you find it difficult to keep any given thought in your mind for long while looking at them.

As with the other treatment rooms, the exit from this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it. Even if the entrance is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

In actuality, the soothing effect of this room has nothing to do with the patterns of color on the walls. Instead, it is the result of a subsonic vibration that induces a trancelike state. Attempts to resist the soporific effects of this chamber by closing one's eyes or otherwise blocking vision have no effect. Characters who are able to deduce that there is more to this effect than meets the eye, so to speak, may be able to resist the trance, at the DM's discretion.

After 10 minutes in this room, the character must make a saving throw vs. spell or succumb to the effects of the subsonic wave. This is not a *charm* or *sleep* spell, so elves and half-elves have no special resistance to this power. A successful save indicates that the character does not succumb for one turn. At the end of that time, an additional save is required. This continues until the treatment is discontinued (after 1d3+3 hours) or the patient falls into a trance.

For characters beyond the first level, every session of treatment in this room reduces them by one experience level. This process does not involve the draining of life energy, however, but an actual repression of memories. In effect, an 8th-level character forgets everything that has happened to him since he was 7th level. In game terms, the effects are identical to those of an undead level-draining attack, with the character losing hit points, extra



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

attacks, spell casting abilities, and so forth. The character also loses memories.

Once a character is reduced to 1st level, the treatment begins to regress him into childhood. For the purposes of this room, all characters are assumed to have started adventuring as "young adults," with their exact age at that time varying by race. The following progression indicates the reduction in the character's mental abilities with an example of the character's chronological age for humans and estimated level (expressed as a negative number) provided as referents:

| Level | Category | Age |
|-------|----------------|-----|
| 1 | Young Adult | 18 |
| 0 | Adolescent | 14 |
| -1 | Pre-adolescent | 10 |
| -2 | Youth | 8 |
| -3 | Child | 6 |
| -4 | Toddler | 2 |
| -5 | Infant | 1 |

Thus, if a character were reduced to 1st level in this room, he would be assumed to have reached young adult status and an age (more or less) of 18. If given another treatment, he would be reduced to the mental level of an adolescent. Additional treatments would reduce the character further until he was eventually at the mental level of an infant.

45. Treatment Room 5 (Emotion Enhancement)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

The floor, walls, and ceilings of this room are tiled with one-foot wide squares of alabaster tile. It has a clean, chemical odor and glows faintly with a pale, white light. A soft humming, which you feel more than hear, seems to rise and fall rhythmically just below the level of your conscious hearing.

As with the other treatment rooms, the door to this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it. Even if the entrance is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

The treatment that a patient is subjected to in this room is designed to select one emotion and enhance the character's perception of it to the point that all others are lost beneath it. In many ways, it is similar to the phobia inducement therapy given in treatment room one. In many ways, the treatment given in this room mimics the effects of the *emotion* spell.

Emotion enhancement begins with a sweeping mental probe that targets the most suitable aspect of the character's personality for exploitation. This requires one session (1d3+3 hours). If a particular emotion seems suitable to the DM, he can simply select it. If not, he may roll 1d10 and consult the following chart to determine the results of the examination:

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 Amusement | 2 Apprehension |
| 3 Courage | 4 Curiosity |
| 5 Dejection | 6 Fear |
| 7 Jealousy | 8 Love |
| 9 Passion | 10 Pride |

Both the initial examination and the subsequent treatments employ the same techniques. The deep vibration that the character senses when brought into the room will increase in intensity, becoming a bass rumbling that threatens to rattle his teeth loose. Then, when this awful sound is at its height, the light on the walls flares to painful brightness. At that instant, the character's mind is hammered by a powerful psychic probe that requires a madness check to resist.

If the victim successfully resists the effects of the probe, the sound and light instantly cease. After one turn of respite, the treatment begins again. After one hour of effort (three attempts), the treatment is terminated for the day if it has not produced results.

A failed check indicates that the victim's mind has been laid open to Heinfroth's intrusions. At that point, if this is not the initial examination, the victim is compelled to recall events from his past that involved the selected emotion. For example, someone being treated to a fear enhancement session might recall the sinking of the *Blue Dolphin* or another frightening experience. With each subsequent treatment, the emotion involved in the experience becomes more pronounced. At the same time, other emotions become harder and harder for the character manifest.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

At the end of each successful treatment session, the character must make a madness check to avoid having the selected emotion become enhanced. The effects of failure are progressively worse. Following the first failed check, the character has a 10% chance of being overcome by the selected emotion whenever he is put in a stressful situation. This is rolled once every round for the duration of the event, although once a character succumbs to the emotion he is unable to throw off its effects until removed to a more neutral setting. Exactly what qualifies as a stressful situation is up to the DM, but anything that requires a power, fear, horror, or madness check certainly qualifies, as does anything calling for an initiative or surprise roll. Each subsequent failure increases this chance by 10%, to a maximum 90% chance.

The following is a description of the actions a character is likely to take while under the effects of a given emotion. If the player refuses to run his character in accordance with these suggestions, the Dungeon Master should rule that the character has become a nonplayer character for the duration of the event.

Amusement: A character who has been overcome with levity finds any situation wildly humorous. Indeed, the more dangerous or tragic a situation is, the more entertaining the character finds it. The character's laughter and inability to recognize the danger of a situation imposes a -4 penalty on all of his attack rolls, saving throws, and ability proficiency checks. In addition, the character will make so much noise that it is impossible for him (or any group he is a part of) to surprise anyone.

Apprehension: Although many people mistake apprehension for fear, it is actually more like dread. The character is not afraid, per se, but he is convinced that something terrible is looming in the near future and that every action he takes is futile. The end result of this emotional state is that the character is slow to react in almost every situation. Thus, he suffers a -4 penalty to any initiative roll or saving throw that he is called upon to make and never gains any of the benefits associated with surprise. The latter disadvantage extends even to the backstabbing ability of rogues and similar characters.

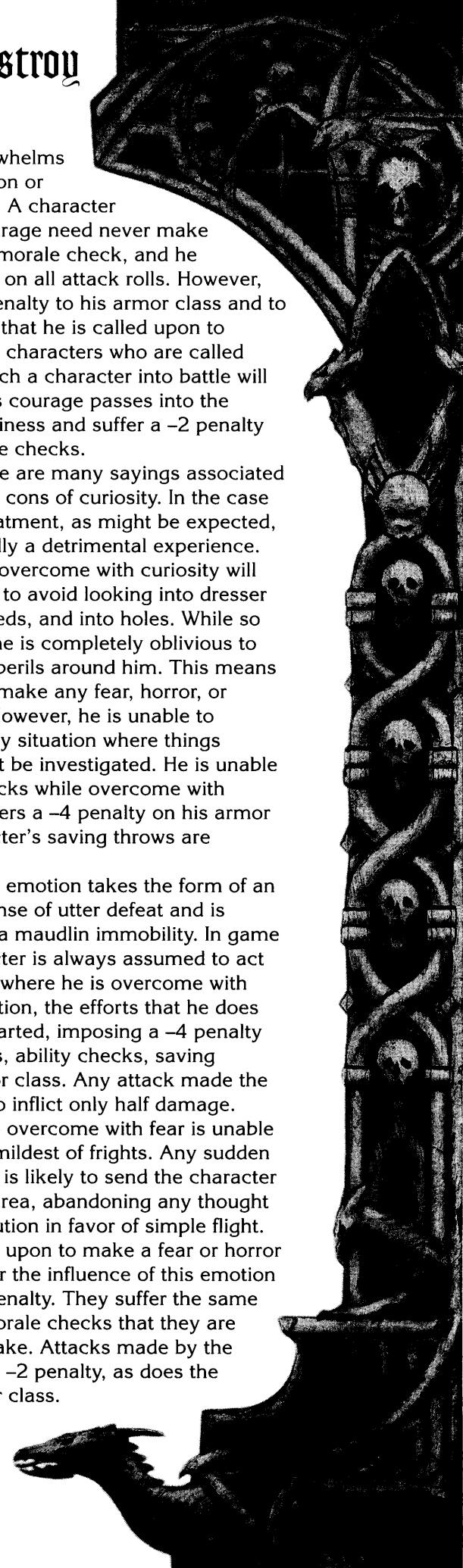
Courage: In many situations, this emotion is a great blessing. Characters who have had it enhanced, however, will find their courage is so

great that it overwhelms all sense of caution or self-preservation. A character overcome by courage need never make a fear, horror, or morale check, and he gains a +2 bonus on all attack rolls. However, he suffers a -4 penalty to his armor class and to all saving throws that he is called upon to make. Nonplayer characters who are called upon to follow such a character into battle will recognize that his courage passes into the realm of foolhardiness and suffer a -2 penalty on all their morale checks.

Curiosity: There are many sayings associated with the pros and cons of curiosity. In the case of Heinfroth's treatment, as might be expected, it is most assuredly a detrimental experience. Someone who is overcome with curiosity will find it impossible to avoid looking into dresser drawers, under beds, and into holes. While so doing, however, he is completely oblivious to the dangers and perils around him. This means that he need not make any fear, horror, or morale checks. However, he is unable to withdraw from any situation where things remain that might be investigated. He is unable to make any attacks while overcome with curiosity and suffers a -4 penalty on his armor class. The character's saving throws are unaffected.

Dejection: This emotion takes the form of an overwhelming sense of utter defeat and is characterized by a maudlin immobility. In game terms, the character is always assumed to act last in any round where he is overcome with dejection. In addition, the efforts that he does make are half-hearted, imposing a -4 penalty on his attack rolls, ability checks, saving throws, and armor class. Any attack made the character will also inflict only half damage.

Fear: Someone overcome with fear is unable to face even the mildest of frights. Any sudden shock or surprise is likely to send the character fleeing from the area, abandoning any thought of safety or resolution in favor of simple flight. Characters called upon to make a fear or horror check while under the influence of this emotion do so with a -4 penalty. They suffer the same penalty to any morale checks that they are called upon to make. Attacks made by the character suffer a -2 penalty, as does the character's armor class.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Jealousy: Among the most dangerous of human emotions, jealousy takes many forms. In game terms, however, these can be difficult to define. If a player is unable to role-play his character's jealousy effectively, the DM may need to step in and mandate certain actions for the character.

The only numeric adjustments involved with a character under the influences of this emotion apply not to the character himself, but to those around him. Anyone called upon to follow such a person can sense his true nature and suffers a -4 on any morale check he is called upon to make. In addition, a similar penalty is applied to the character's initial reaction and loyalty rolls (as determined by the patient's Charisma score).

Love: The Dungeon Master may consider the effect of this emotion to be similar to those that follow the consumption of a *philter of love* or the casting of a *charm* spell. Unlike those lesser "curses," however, the affections of the victim are not applied only to a single individual. Instead, the patient looks upon everyone he meets as someone to be adored and obeyed. In some cases, as determined by the Dungeon Master, these emotions may pass into the realm of the romantic.

In all cases, the character gladly places himself in harms way if it means protecting those he loves. Whenever anyone with the patient is called upon to make a saving throw that the afflicted character might be able to protect his companion from, both parties must make a saving throw. The original target of the save receives a +2 bonus to the roll, while the patient must make a saving throw with a -2 penalty applied to it. This reflects the character's tendency to knock someone else out of harm's way to sacrifice himself for those he loves above life itself.

A character under the effects of this emotion will also suffer a -4 penalty on any attacks he is called upon to make and inflicts but a single point of damage with any successful strike.

Passion: The emotion which can form the foundation of anything from deep hatred through burning love is one that Heinfroth has targeted for a looser study. By making a patient overly passionate, it is his hope to observe how being in a constant emotional state affects long-term health.

Numeric adjustments that apply to this condition involve a -4 on all reaction and morale checks, as it will become clear to other characters that the patient lacks emotional control, which will be interpreted as a deficiency in common sense.

Pride: There is nothing wrong with a judicious amount of self-esteem. When this emotion passes into boasting, showing off, and other detrimental behavior, however, it can be a dangerous state of mind. Those who are overcome with pride are quick to denigrate the actions of others, spend hours boasting of their past accomplishments, and generally assert their superiority over anyone around them. One of the most immediate results of such a mental state is a reduction of 2 points in the character's Charisma score.

In combat or other hazardous situations, the character's pride will lead him to take chances that range from ill-advised to utterly foolhardy. As such, he suffers a -2 penalty on any attack roll, saving throw, and ability or proficiency check.

The great self-confidence associated with this mental state is not without its benefits, however. Any fear, horror, or morale checks attempted by a character who is charged with pride are made with a +2 bonus.

46. Treatment Room 6 (Psychic Amputation)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

The walls and ceiling of this room are a slick, gleaming silver. The former are marked with numerous dents as if they had been repeatedly battered, while the former glows softly, giving the place an eerie radiance. A low, metal table with thick, leather restraints on it stands in the center of the room. The bitter smells of blood and sweat hang in the air here despite the tinge of cleaning chemicals clearly intended to mask them.

As with the other treatment rooms, the exit from this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it. Even if the exit is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

This room is used by Heinfroth to explore the links between mind and body. It is his belief that

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

all aspects of human pain and many physical ailments stem not from the body, but from the brain. Thus, by affecting the brain, he hopes to be able to affect the ailments.

If the patient was brought here by the staff of the asylum, he awakens secured to the table. Although his arms and legs remain free, straps hold him tightly about the waist, chest, and throat. Escape from this situation is almost impossible, requiring a bend bars/lift gates roll to break the straps. The catches that release the straps are easy to operate but are positioned beneath the table so that a patient lying atop it cannot reach them. Of course, even after escaping from the table, a patient is still trapped in the room, which has no obvious exit.

When a patient is slated for treatment in this room, Heinfroth will select a limb (or two) for amputation. The following table can be used to determine the doctor's intentions for any given patient.

| 1d8 roll | Result |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Right Arm |
| 2 | Left Arm |
| 3 | Right Leg |
| 4 | Left Leg |
| 5 | Both Legs |
| 6 | Both Arms |
| 7 | Two Limbs (roll 1d4 to determine) |
| 8 | Both Arms and Legs |

Once a patient's fate has been determined, a series of switches are thrown in the monitoring room (area 27). At that point, the area of the table upon which the selected limbs rest begins to grow hot. This process is gradual, but in one turn the surface becomes so hot that the patient is burned for 1 point of damage each round that his flesh is in contact with it. In addition to the damage inflicted, the heat is intensely painful. Anyone who wishes voluntarily to leave their limbs in contact with the heated metal must make an ability check against Constitution each round. Failure indicates that the patient reflexively jerks the limb clear of the table.

The obvious way to avoid damage, of course, is to lift the affected member from the table. As might be expected, however, this is exactly what the patient is supposed to do. As soon as the victim does this, an arc of electricity leaps from the nearest wall and strike the raised limb. This inflicts 1d4 points of damage and requires

a saving throw vs. paralysis. A failed save indicates that the limb has been immobilized for one round and falls lifeless to the table. Of course, while it rests on the table it is again burned.

At the end of each session in this room, the patient must make a madness check for each limb being "treated." A failed check indicates that the patient's mind has severed its mental ties with the affected member. From that point on, the limb hangs limply from the character's body. The patient cannot move it, feel it, or otherwise make use of the limb.

By the same token, however, the character feels no pain when the limb is injured. This can be a very hazardous situation, for major wounds to the limb may go unnoticed and untreated, resulting in great loss of blood or permanent physical damage.

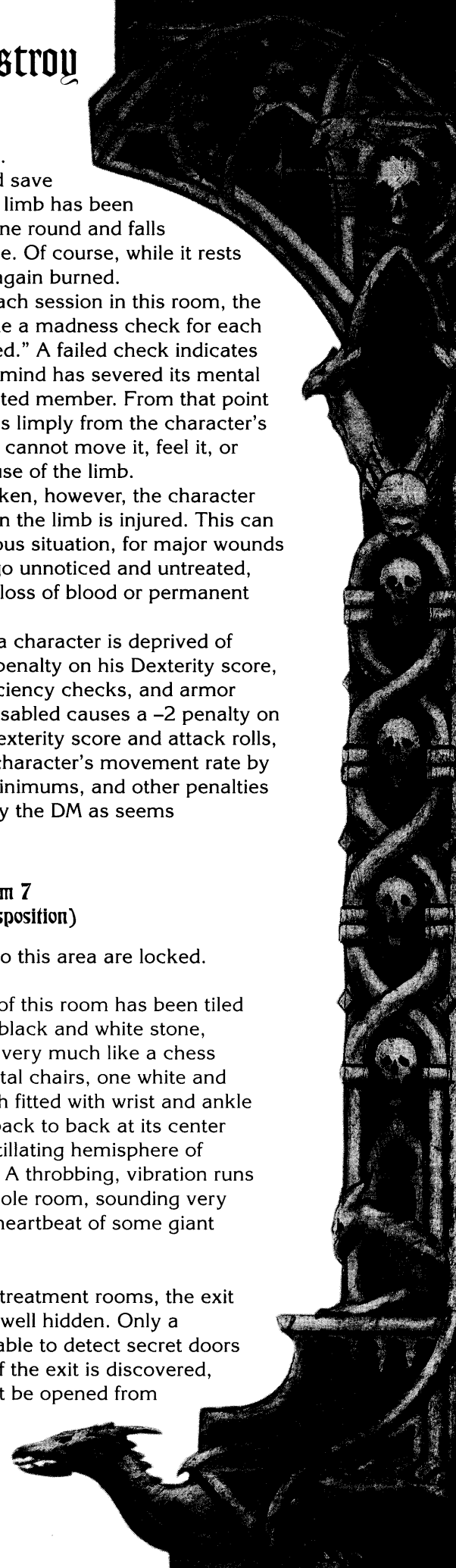
Each arm that a character is deprived of causes him a -2 penalty on his Dexterity score, attack rolls, proficiency checks, and armor class. Each leg disabled causes a -2 penalty on the character's Dexterity score and attack rolls, and reduces the character's movement rate by half. These are minimums, and other penalties may be applied by the DM as seems appropriate.

46. Treatment Room 7 (Personality Transposition)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

Every surface of this room has been tiled with gleaming black and white stone, making it look very much like a chess board. Two metal chairs, one white and one black, each fitted with wrist and ankle manacles, sit back to back at its center beneath a scintillating hemisphere of rainbow swirls. A throbbing, vibration runs through the whole room, sounding very much like the heartbeat of some giant creature.

As with the other treatment rooms, the exit from this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it. Even if the exit is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Unlike the other treatment rooms, characters are brought to this chamber in pairs. Each is secured to one of the chairs and the personality transposition process activated.

Ideally, this equipment removes all of the mental vibrations from each body and swaps them into the other body. Heinfroth has not yet perfected his device, however, so the transference of information is seldom perfect.

After one session of treatment in this room, the characters indeed appear to have swapped bodies. If a fighter and a wizard are placed here, the wizard awakes in the fighter's body and the fighter in the wizard's body. In game terms, this means that the two characters swap mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). The three physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) remain with the body.

However, the transference of proficiencies (both weapon and nonweapon) is not as clean cut. For each proficiency, the DM should roll a die, with even numbers indicating that the skill ends up in the mind of the person in the white chair and odd numbers transferring it to the person in the black chair.

The nature of this treatment is such that the victims are seldom aware that it has taken place. Heinfroth greatly enjoys watching the reactions of people when they learn that their bodies are not their own or that they no longer remember how to do things they used to do.

46. Treatment Room 8 (Intellect Enhancement)

Note: The doors to this area are locked.

In the center of this room is a great, glowing crystal sphere with dozens of crystal shafts connecting it to the gleaming metal walls. The sphere is just large enough for a man to sit in if he curls into a fetal position. A faint sound, like a dozen whispering voices, seems to hang in the air, but it is impossible for you to pick out any meaning from this incessant buzzing.

As with the other treatment rooms, the exit from this room is well hidden. Only a character who is able to detect secret doors can find it. Even if the entrance is discovered, however, it cannot be opened from within the room.

If one of the heroes is brought to this room for treatment, he is curled up and placed inside the crystal sphere. At first, he notices nothing beyond what is described above. After one turn, however, the buzzing whispers become a painful droning that hammers the inside of the victim's skull. Each round after that, the patient must make a madness check. When that check is failed, the victim loses consciousness (in addition to the normal results of the check failure), and the treatment ends.

When the patient awakens in his room, he finds that his Intelligence score has been increased by 1 point. Depending upon the desires of the Dungeon Master, of course, this information may be kept from the player. Only when he attempts tasks that require the use of his Intelligence does it become clear that something is amiss. This process can increase the Intelligence rating of the character to godlike levels (as high as 25). So many madness checks must be failed in order for the score to reach such heights, however, that the character becomes a raving lunatic, not a shrewd genius.

Recovering from the Treatments

Despite the severity and added details of the mental maladies inflicted upon the heroes while they are in the asylum, the madness they may end up suffering can still be reversed in the ways detailed in *Realm of Terror*. The magical and psionic means of helping a mad character remain just as effective. However, due to the nature of the *Bleak House* campaign, the heroes will most likely not be able to find a safe haven in which they can rest a month or more; as will be seen, should they manage to escape from Dominia, they will have to keep their wits about them unless they want to end up back in the care of Dr. Heinfroth.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Dinner with a Dark Lord

Seven days is the length is the length of a guest's life.

—Burmese Proverb

Following their arrival, the heroes are escorted to their rooms by Captain Baykur. This requires them to pass through areas 1, 3, and 6 of the asylum maps. The DM should read the descriptions of those areas to the players. Captain Baykur will answer general questions, but doesn't offer detailed information. He'll tell the player characters (quite rightly) that he's just a sailor; what goes on here is beyond his understanding.

Evening Attire

All of the heroes are placed in area 5, while the other survivors of the shipwreck are deposited in area 11. A number of gloves and hooded robes have been laid out in each room, and the heroes are asked to don them.

Baykur explains that Dr. Heinfroth insists on such garb for all patients, guests, and staff. He knows that it has something to do with "cultural uniformity," but he doesn't pretend to understand what that means. Heinfroth insists on the wearing of such garb, and that's all the reason he needs.

The heroes are given 15 minutes to change. During that time, a pair of orderlies stand watch outside the door. When everyone is in their new clothes,

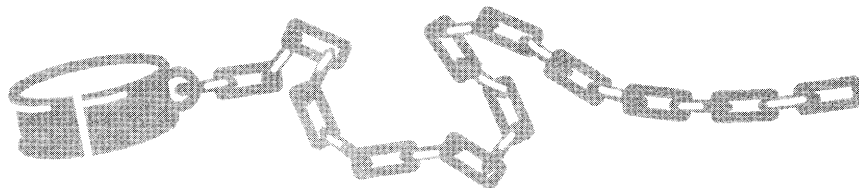
Baykur returns with a wooden chest. Baykur has also removed the clothes he wore aboard ship and is now wearing the same gray robes that the heroes were given.

From this, he begins to remove clay masks (the same ones worn by the inmates and orderlies). He uses a special tool to secure these onto the characters, one by one. Unlike the masks worn by the orderlies, these cannot be removed without breaking them.

If any of the heroes refuses to don the robes or have a mask fitted to his head, Baykur does not make a big deal out of it. He repeats his insistence that this is how things are done here and that it's for the good of the patients. "After all," he assures them, "the doc knows what he's doing."

If none of these approaches work, he simply shrugs and leaves the room. Shortly afterwards, the magical *sleep* aura of the room is activated. When the last of the characters has succumbed to it, Baykur and two orderlies will return. Working quickly, they strip the characters of everything they can find, dress and mask them, and leave. A few minutes later, the *sleep* spell is terminated, and the characters are allowed to regain consciousness. If confronted on this issue, Baykur or Heinfroth says that it was for the good of the patients.

Once the characters have changed clothes, Baykur announces that the time has come for them to meet their mysterious host.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Dinner Is Served

Now properly attired, the characters are lead out of their room, through the parlor (area 6), and into area 13. The following text (which is reprinted here from the previous chapter for ease of play) describes their first impressions of that room:

Before you stretches a simple table set with a gray cloth that seems to be made from the same bland fabric as your robes. Simple dishes and cups, all made from the ashen clay that was used to fashion your masks, are set before each of a dozen chairs. Four large clay serving bowls, all empty, are set on the table as are a half-dozen empty pitchers.

A massive chandelier set with thick, brightly burning candles hangs from a length of heavy chain. By design or chance, it is impossible to say which, the composition of the chandelier makes it look like a great mechanical spider. Indeed, once your eye

registers that resemblance, you notice that the placement of the candles throws long, crisscrossing shadows that look like the strands of an ensnaring web on the walls and ceiling.

As the heroes enter, Baykur invites them to be seated. As the heroes take their places around the table, the seafarer claps his hands twice, and a half-dozen robed and masked figures file into the room. Four of them carry trays with various breads, fruits, cheeses, and vegetables. The other two have amphorae filled with water. Methodically and silently, they begin to move about the table filling pitchers and placing the trays in easy reach of the heroes.

It is impossible to tell if these newcomers are orderlies, patients, or if they hold some other special status on the island. In truth, four of them are patients and two are orderlies, although it is unlikely that the heroes can discover this over the course of the meal. Attempts to converse with the servants or otherwise interact with them are met with silent inactivity. For all intents, the patients of the asylum are zombies who do whatever it takes to

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

complete their current assignment (serving dinner) and no more. When not engaged in serving food, pouring drinks, or otherwise tending to their guests, they simply retreat to the edge of the room and stand motionless.

If any of the heroes comment on the lack of meat in the meal set before them, Baykur responds by explaining that Heinfroth does not believe in the eating of flesh. He claims that it is a barbaric habit which can only be detrimental to the mind and body. While Baykur doesn't share these feelings, he obeys the doctor's orders while on the island.

A Pleasant Repast

When the last of the food is in place and all of the pitchers are full, the servants fall back to the edge of the room and lower their eyes to the floor. For a second, all is still. Then, with something of a flourish, the doorway into the room is thrust open and Daclaud Heinfroth steps in. The following text describes his appearance:

With the suddenness of a shutter blown open by the wind, the door to the dining room bursts open. Without the slightest pause, an imposing figure strides through the portal and to the great seat at the head of the table. His clothes are fairly plain but of obvious quality, and the gray cloak that ripples in the air about him seems almost to have a life of its own. Judging by the air of mastery that this man exudes and the keen intelligence visible in his bright eyes, you cannot doubt that this is your host, Daclaud Heinfroth.

A full physical description of Heinfroth can be found in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

One of the servants near the door closes it carefully, making as little noise as possible, and

then returns to his place by the wall. When this is done, Heinfroth's face lights up with a bright smile. His first comments are addressed to Captain Baykur:

"It is good that you have made the journey from Darkon safely, Captain. It is even better that you were able to save these poor souls from the deadly embrace of the sea. Well, I know that you have much work to do aboard *Mercy*. Let me know when all is well and good, and I will see to the comfort of our guests."

Without comment, Captain Baykur nods sharply in recognition of the compliment that was paid him, spins about on his heel with military precision, and departs. One of the servants pulls the door open for him and closes it behind him.

Dinner Conversation

As soon as Baykur has gone, Heinfroth turns his attention to the player characters. He invites them to eat and drink, striking up a conversation with them as easily as if they were old friends. He begins by asking them to tell him about their voyage, the mishap that befell their ship, and their impressions of his sanitarium. He offers the following responses to some of their questions:

Q.: Where are the other survivors of the *Blue Dolphin*?

A.: It was Dr. Rehner's opinion that they were in need of medical care beyond that given them aboard *Mercy*. They have been removed to the infirmary and will be able to receive visitors in the morning. (This is a lie.)



Whom Fortune Would Destroy



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Q.: Why do all the patients wear masks and robes?

A.: The greatest difficulty in the treatment of mental illness is the overcoming of emotional barriers established by the psyche to protect the mind from harm. While these barriers are normally very healthy, they become impediments to treatment in the case of those who have lost touch with reality. In order to break-down these barriers, the patients must lose any sense of personal identity. Once this is done, they can be cured of their other ailments and the barriers rebuilt for their return to society.

Q.: Why do we have to wear masks and robes?

A.: If the patients were to see others moving about without the same garb that they must wear themselves, they would see them as outsiders. At the very least, they would be frightened. For some of the more volatile patients, this fear could translate into an outbreak of physical violence. Thus, the masks and robes are worn to protect both the patients and the visitors.

Q.: Why don't you wear a mask and robe?

A.: In order for me to be able to treat the patients effectively, they must see me as an authority figure. By making it clear that I am not constrained by the same rules that they must adhere to, I display my so-called superiority to them. Only with such a relationship in place can they accept my treatments and begin the long road to recovery.

Q.: Why are the patients of the asylum forced to labor?

A.: Work is good for the mind and body. It keeps the patients in good physical shape and prevents them from growing bored. No patient is called upon to do more than he is able, and the sick or infirm are excused from duty. I often join them in the gardens myself, for there is nothing like a bit of fresh air and sunshine to make a man feel fit.

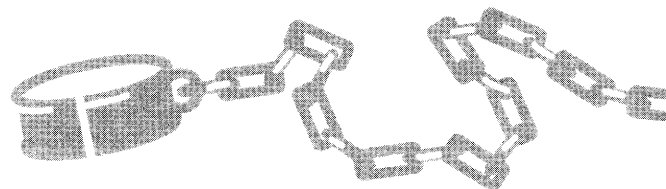
Q.: Why are the patients so zombielike?

A.: When they were brought to the island, many of them were violent and psychotic. They were dangers to themselves and to others. These traits have been stripped from them and that has left something of a void. In time, as they develop new interests and skills, they will gradually return to a more normal state. When that happens, they can be returned to the lands of the free as productive, happy citizens.

Q) When can we leave the island?

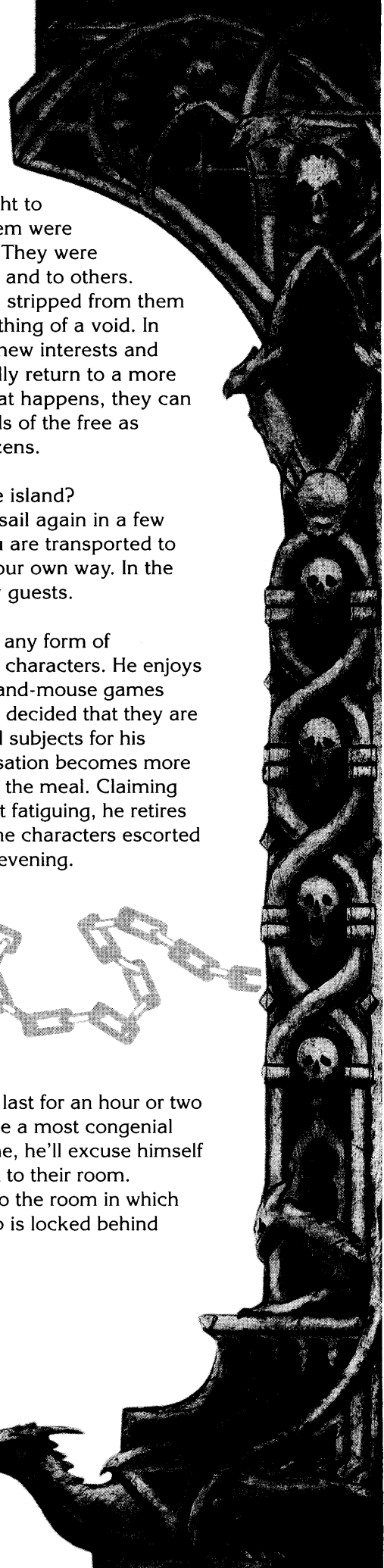
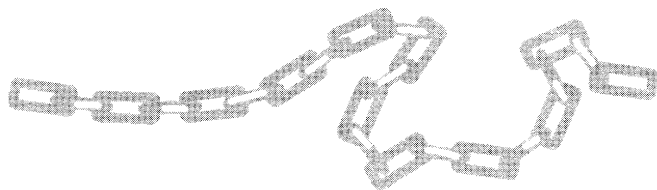
A) *Mercy* will be ready to sail again in a few days. At that time, you are transported to Darkon and may go your own way. In the meantime, you are my guests.

Heinfroth will not stand for any form of interrogation by the player characters. He enjoys playing these sorts of cat-and-mouse games with them, but has already decided that they are nothing more than unusual subjects for his experiments. If the conversation becomes more than casual, he'll break off the meal. Claiming that the day has been most fatiguing, he retires to his chambers and has the characters escorted back to their room for the evening.



Otherwise, the meal will last for an hour or two with Heinfroth proving to be a most congenial host. At the end of that time, he'll excuse himself and have them taken back to their room.

In either case, the door to the room in which the character's are to sleep is locked behind them.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Sleepless Nights

As soon as the heroes are in their quarters, Heinfroth activates the *sleep* aura in the chamber (as described in the previous chapter). Because this effect is ongoing, even elves and half-elves will eventually be overcome by the spell. Of course, it may be that the characters are aware that some magical force is being used against them, but that does little to help them combat the effects of this all-pervasive aura.

than eight characters in the party, then only some of the heroes are removed for treatment. The others pass the night in quiet slumber, waking refreshed and unaware that anything unusual has happened to their companions while they slept.

| 1d8 | Experiment |
|------|---------------------------|
| Roll | Selected |
| 1 | Phobia Inducement |
| 2 | Personality Deprivation |
| 3 | Psyche Fragmentation |
| 4 | Age Regression |
| 5 | Emotional Enhancement |
| 6 | Psychic Amputation |
| 7 | Personality Transposition |
| 8 | Intellect Enhancement |

Each one of these experiments corresponds to one of the "treatment rooms" described in the previous chapter.

Following each treatment session (which usually lasts 1d3+3 hours), the heroes are subjected to the *sleep* aura again and then returned to their rooms. Care is taken to disturb nothing in the bunk room, for Heinfroth wishes the characters to believe that the things which happened to them during the night were nothing more than dreams. He goes to great lengths to maintain this illusion, even using healing spells to make certain that all of the wounds a hero remembers suffering are not apparent when he awakens.

Eventually, of course, it becomes impossible to maintain this illusion. When a hero loses the use of a limb through psychic amputation or has been mired in the catatonic depths of personality deprivation, the time has come for Heinfroth to give up his pretenses.

On a given night, determined by the DM, the characters are transferred a cell (area 28) after their treatment. From that point on, they are clearly prisoners, not guests. When that happens, the adventure continues with the next chapter.

When the last of the heroes succumbs, Heinfroth sends in orderlies to have them moved to the various treatment rooms for experimentation. Each of the heroes are subjected to a different treatment, with the table below being used to determine which room a given heroes is taken to. In the event of a duplicate roll, the DM should roll again until each of the results is unique. If there are more

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

The Vampire's Grip

H

ere's an object more
of dread

Than aught the
grave contains—

A human form with
reason fled,

While wretched life remains.

—Abraham Lincoln
from a letter to Andrew Johnson
6 September 1846

Running this section of the adventure calls for care on the part of the Dungeon Master. After all, the heroes have been imprisoned and will undoubtedly want to escape. They are being abused and will certainly try to resist the efforts of the asylum's staff. In order to allow the players a chance to fully experience the terrors of Dominia, however, the DM must not allow them to escape just yet.

At first, this might sound like a pretty tall order. After all, players are notoriously clever lot. If they think that the DM is foiling their escape attempts without good reason, they won't enjoy the game. On the other hand, if they think that they were outsmarted or set up by their captors, they'll simply vow to try harder next time. It is the latter attitude that a good DM tries to engender in his players.

There are many ways in which the DM can accomplish this. For the most part, however, they center around the instilling of a little healthy paranoia in the minds of the players. A few suggestions follow.

Useful Work

An important part of the therapy that the inmates of the asylum are subjected to includes doing (as Heinfroth calls it) useful work. During their stay on the island, after they have been transferred to the cells, the heroes are called upon to do their share as well.

The variety of tasks that might need to be done is limited only by the imagination of the DM. Some good examples might include scraping barnacles off the hull of *Mercy*, felling some trees in the forest, tending the gardens, or transporting the garbage (which often includes bodies) to the dump (area 3 on the island map).

Each of these work assignments begins with Heinfroth gathering a group of patients (and, of course, orderlies) together and giving them instructions. After that, they're on their own.

Of course, since the inmates know that there are eyes everywhere and that anyone who doesn't work is punished, they usually do as they are told. From time to time, someone attempts to escape or otherwise buck the system, but the results are never pleasant. The woods are full of wolves, always ready to attack a fleeing patient, and the doctor's treatment rooms await those who seem to "lack a sense of community."

Surveillance

From the monitoring room beneath the manor, Heinfroth and his minions can watch everything that goes on within the confines of the great stone walls, at the docks, or along the road that links the two. In addition, the ranks of the patients are liberally sprinkled with orderlies who are constantly watching the actions of everyone, especially the heroes.

Great care has been taken to make the various information gathering methods employed by Heinfroth unobtrusive. Of course, undiscovered surveillance methods don't do much to enhance the feelings of fear, suspicion, and paranoia so vital to this adventure. Heinfroth knows this as well, and since part of his research calls for such emotions to be dominant among the island's populace, he allows one or two of his methods to be discovered.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Exactly what the heroes learn or how they learn it isn't particularly important to the course of the adventure. What matters is that they be made aware of the fact that they are being watched everywhere, all the time. If this is handled well, it won't be long before even the most confident or egotistical player begins to feel a bit nervous.

Betrayal

Another very useful technique that can be used to create feelings of suspicion and fear among the players and their characters is betrayal. The roots for such things are set early in the adventure, with the introduction of the other shipwreck survivors or even Young Colin aboard the *Mercy*. Later in the game, any of these characters might turn on the heroes at a crucial points, causing an escape attempt to be foiled or some secret cache of materials to be raided.

In addition to the characters mentioned above, any number of people could be introduced to the characters as potential allies. These include other patients, orderlies who have had enough of life in Dominia, and even Dr. Rehner. The latter might come to the heroes with a story of mistreatment at the hands of Daclaud Heinfroth, offering to help the heroes escape if they will take him with them.

It is important that not everyone the heroes meet betray them. After all, there are others on the island who are every bit as eager to escape as the heroes themselves. Of course, these people are well aware of the tricks that Heinfroth plays and are as slow to trust the heroes as the heroes are to trust them.

Failure

Another technique for breaking the characters' will that can be quite successful is simply failure. In order to be effective, however, such failures must take two forms.

On one hand, the players need to be reminded that Heinfroth has the ability to thwart even the most basic elements of their plans. This is best evidenced by the nightly searches of the guest room and cells. A hero might hide a key that he has gotten hold of before retiring for the night, only to discover that it is gone the next morning.

These minor defeats provide a solid base for the crushing despair that comes from the other element of this technique, absolute failure. In this case, the heroes have carefully arranged some very clever plan, usually an escape attempt. They may have bribed guards, built an escape raft, or any number of other things. In the end, however, just when it seems that their plan has come off perfectly, Heinfroth reveals to them that he knew what they were doing all along, usually in the most sadistic manner possible.

Dehumanization

The last of the techniques that Heinfroth employs to keep control of his patients is the degrading way in which he treat them. To him, they are no more than laboratory animals and slaves. He does nothing to make them feel that they have any worth, either as individuals or a group. He doesn't even bother to tell them that they are worthless, depriving them even of that simple consideration.

This can be shown in a game through many direct and indirect means. The most obvious example of such treatment is evident in the fact that they are all forced to wear masks and hooded robes. This elimination of basic individuality makes it difficult to retain a sense of identity. Beyond that, none of the patients are ever addressed by name. Each is identified by his cell number and a letter. For example, if there are six people being kept in cell number 11, they would be referred to as patients 11a, 11b, 11c, and so forth. These numbers are marked in black paint on the forehead of each patient's mask. After the heroes are moved from their guest quarters to the cells, they are assigned such numbers as well. Attempts to remove or alter the numbers are ignored, but the alterations are reversed the next time the character sleeps. Following that, of course, the patients probably are taken to one of the treatment rooms in an effort to put an end to his antisocial behavior.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Escape from Dominia

The efforts which we make to escape from our destiny only serve to lead us into it.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson,
The Conduct of Life

Exactly how long the previous phase of the game lasts is up to the DM. Some gaming groups will find the task of escaping from the island against overwhelming odds to be challenging and exciting, demanding their best mental efforts. Others will lose heart before the seemingly insurmountable obstacles placed in their way. Of course, Heinfroth's efforts are designed to engender the latter attitude in his prisoners, while true heroes will almost certainly adopt the former. Here, however, we must consider the attitudes of the players, not their characters.

Once the heroes have failed in at least one escape attempt, or when the DM wishes to move the game along, he should arrange for a special message to be delivered to the heroes. This correspondence takes the form a small sheet of parchment folded and tied with a string.

A Secret Message

Passed to the player characters is of little importance. It might be pressed into someone's palm while working in the garden or hidden in a character's food. No matter how the note is delivered, of course, it must be done with great subtlety.

When the parchment is unwrapped, an intricate iron key is revealed. In addition, the inside of the sheet contains a brief, scrawled note. It is reproduced on the inside back cover of this book as Player's Aid #3. The DM may show this note to the players, since their characters are reading it.

Of course, the odds are very good that the characters will view the note with a great deal of suspicion. Still, to ignore it is to pass up a chance at freedom. In the end, there is really little that the characters can do but take their chances and trust their mysterious benefactor.

The Escape Begins

After their evening meal, the characters are returned to their cells and locked in. An hour later, the sleeping field is activated and left on for three turns (half an hour). At the end of that time, it is shut off and the guards assume that all of the patients are asleep for the night. If the heroes have found a way to stay awake or awaken themselves after succumbing to the field, they can set about making their escape.

The key that they were given works perfectly. With a sharp click it releases the bolt on their cell, leaving the door hanging freely on its hinges. No alarms or other apparent side effects accompany the opening of the cell.

Slipping through the hallways of the basement, the heroes eventually come to the door that leads them out of the cell-block and into the cellar (area 25). Provided that the characters do nothing to draw attention to themselves or cause any sort of commotion, they will meet with their mysterious benefactor as they arrive at the door. His name is Dr. Rudolph van Richten.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Van Richten is not his usual self. If any of the heroes know him from past adventures, they see at once that the bright spark which normally burns in his eye has been replaced with the haze of dementia. Statistics for Dr. Rudolph van Richten over the course of this adventure are presented in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

The details of the escape must be decided upon by the heroes. Based on their plans, the Dungeon Master can decide whether or not they succeed or fail.

In the former case, the escape should be fraught with danger and suspense. If all goes well, the attempt will incorporate one or more of the following encounters. The DM is free to add others or even eliminate some of these as fits the escape plan.

When all is said and done, the escape attempt should end with the heroes heading out to sea. Whether they do this aboard a raft of their own construction, a *folding boat*, or by taking control of the *Mercy* makes no difference.

Dungeon Masters should keep in mind the fact that Heinfroth's orderlies constantly monitor all areas of the estate. It is doubtful that the players will get very far before their escape attempt is noted. Indeed, the odds are good that the staff of the sanitarium will know something is afoot even before the heroes get out of the basement.

Because Heinfroth likes to play cat-and-mouse games, he'll usually let the escape continue for a while. After all, he's very confident that he can recapture the fugitives at any time.

The Basement

From the time that they leave their cell to the moment that they meet up with Van Richten near the basement door, the heroes may be confronted with a variety of encounters.

Other Prisoners

As the heroes move through the darkened halls of the basement, they have a chance to look in on many of the other cells.

Thanks to the effects of the *sleep* aura, the other patients are asleep. Of course, a loud noise or other mishap could wake one or more of these tortured souls. If that happens, the other patients might offer encouragement, demand to join the escape, or even raise a cry of alarm. The results can vary as needed by the DM.

The Asylum

After slipping clear of the cell block, the heroes and Van Richten must make their way through the asylum before slipping into the night beyond. Several things can be done to increase the tension of this part of the escape.

Combat Encounters

On the one hand, of course, there are numerous orderlies and other members of the asylum staff who might be encountered. For the most part, they will attack any group of escaped inmates on sight.

It is important to remember that the orderlies do not attempt to kill the escaping prisoners. Their intention is to subdue them and return the inmates to their cells for treatment. If the heroes can find a way to exploit this, they may be able to gain an advantage during the fight. Of course, the orderlies will not hesitate to use deadly force if it becomes clear that they have no other choice in the matter.

Other Encounters

When an escape attempt takes place, Heinfroth tends to treat it as yet another chance to play with his patients. At least, this is the case while the prisoners are still in the asylum itself.

Heinfroth will make the best use he can of the various special abilities built into the walls of the manor itself. In addition, he attempts to slip a spy into the group if one of his orderlies or other minions has managed to gain the trust of the heroes. He directs his efforts toward harassing and frightening the players rather than recapturing them. His attacks here play upon the fears and other mental traumas that he has managed to induce during treatment sessions.

As soon as they slip clear of the building, however, he redirects his energies to recapturing the patients.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy



The Grounds

Between the time that the heroes actually get out of the asylum and the time that they get past the estate walls, they are vulnerable to a number of unusual attacks and obstacles.

Orderlies

Of course, the grounds are constantly being patrolled by Heinfroth's vampiric minions. Any escaping prisoners are attacked on sight. As was the case indoors, these folk attempt to recapture the heroes without killing them. If push comes to shove, however, they use lethal force to prevent the escape.

Traps

The grounds of the asylum, if the Dungeon Master chooses, can be riddled with an assortment of traps. While these are probable designed to disable and injure, they should not be lethal. (Heinfroth wants his patients back alive, after all.) Of course, a trap designed to injure can easily become deadly in unusual circumstances.

The types of traps that might be encountered on the grounds include pits, snares, poisoned caltrops, and jaw traps of various sizes. Other devices may or may not be encountered, as the DM desires.

Dungeon Masters might also want to toss in an encounter with some manner of dangerous plant-life. Good choices for these are the thornslinger and tri-flower frond from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome or the fearweed and bloodrose from the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*. Other entries, like the archer bush from the *MYSTARA® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix*, can also be used.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

The Forest

Once the party is past the wall that surrounds the estate, they may think themselves free. At the very least, they may assume that they have earned a brief respite from the horrors of Dominia. In actuality, they have only passed from the hands of one enemy into the claws of another.

Wolves

From the moment that the adventurers enter the woods, they are stalked by the savage wolves of Dominia. These creatures are larger and more vicious than their cousins in other lands. In addition, they obey the master of the island and his vampiric minions. As such, they eagerly take up the hunt.

In order to maximize the horror of this scene, the DM should stage a few lesser encounters with the wolf packs before springing an actual attack on the party. These might include flashes of gleaming eyes in the darkness, howls in the night, and fleeting, dark shapes darting between the trees.

In the end, when the wolves finally do attack, there should be enough of them that the party feels overwhelmed. A good estimate is two per party member, although this number might be increased or decreased as the health and power of the party dictates.

Dire Wolves (?): Int Semi-; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA nil; SD nil; SW nil; MR nil; SZ L (7' – 12' long); ML Average; XP 175.

Plants

The woods of Dominia are every bit as savage and untamed as the wolves that roam them. In addition to the normal plants that grow there, several varieties of dangerous or even intelligent plants live there. Unlike the wolves of the forest, these creatures owe no loyalty to Heinfroth or his orderlies. It might even be possible for the player characters to strike some sort of deal with one or more of the sentient varieties. Such an alliance should prove invaluable in bringing the escape attempt to a successful conclusion.

Good examples of the plants that might be found in the forests of Dominia include the choke creeper, snapper saw, thorn slinger, hangman tree, or quickwood from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome and lashweed from the *RAVENLOFT Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*. Other intelligent and dangerous plants, like the evil or undead treant, might be found as well, although encounters with such creatures will require a little more effort on the part of the Dungeon Master.

The Precipice

Scaling the cliffs of the island present a difficult challenge. Even in the best of places, the represent an almost vertical descent of 100 or so feet, with only a jagged shore or rocks and boulders to break the fall of someone unlucky enough to lose his grip.

Of obvious importance here are the mountaineering and climb walls talents. Those who have knowledge of such fields can make the descent with relative ease. For the most part, however, this will not be the case with the escaped prisoners.

Complete rules for resolving the climb can be found in the "Time and Movement" chapter of the *Player's Handbook*. For the purposes of such an attempt, the cliff is assumed to be an even 100 feet tall. Those who fall will suffer normal falling damage (1d6 per 10 feet fallen, 20d6 maximum damage) and should make a successful saving throw vs. death magic to avoid being impaled on a jagged outcropping when they strike the beach below. Impaled characters suffer 2d6 points of additional damage and must make a successful system shock roll or die.

The Elevator

Of course, the easiest way to descend the cliff is to make use of the elevator that connects the docks with the road to the asylum. This area is almost always manned by a pair of orderlies, who will do what they can to prevent the escaping prisoners from reaching the sea.

One of the tactics that they should likely use is to put up only a token fight and then flee into the woods. Assuming that they are not pursued, they'll double back and lock the elevator in place halfway through its descent. At that point, with the heroes trapped 50 feet below the

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

plateau and 50 feet above the docks, they summon help and the escape will come to an end.

The Sea

Unless the players have come up with something really innovative, they're going to have to build or steal a boat in which to make their escape. The obvious place to do this is at the docks. Here, in addition to the great caravel *Mercy*, there are a number of launches and lesser boats that might be stolen.

Mercy

Should the heroes attempt to steal the caravel, they'll have a difficult time. While taking over the ship won't be too hard, for there are only a handful of vampires (1-6) onboard at night, sailing it is a problem. As a rule, the caravel requires a crew of 30. As it is unlikely that the escaping group numbers more than 10, there is an obvious manpower problem.

Still, the Dungeon Master should bear in mind the fact that the player characters are supposed to be heroes. Doing the work of two or three men each is just the sort of thing that heroes do. Unless the party is exceptionally small or utterly without seafaring experience, the DM should allow them to operate the caravel. Of course, such kindness on the DM's part need not extend to the elimination of encounters with the dangers on the Sea of Sorrows.

Other Craft

Lesser boats can be found with little difficulty in the dock area, but these craft are far less seaworthy than the *Mercy*. As a rule, the heroes are able to get their hands on either rowboats. Other craft may or may not be available, but *Mercy* is certainly the only true naval vessel on the island.

The heroes are likely to find themselves challenged by one or more vampires while attempting to steal a boat. This is by far the least dangerous part of their aquatic escape. Once they clear the coast of the island, *Mercy* is sent out to bring them back. In order to accomplish this, the caravel simply rams the lesser craft, grinding it to splinters beneath its deadly keel.

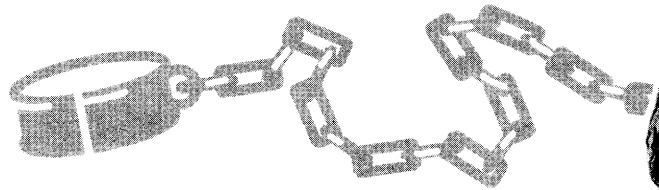
Of course, if the heroes take the time to scuttle or otherwise disable *Mercy*, they'll be able to slip away from the island without pursuit.

The Mists

Once the characters are away from the island and any pursuit by the staff of the asylum has been resolved, they have completed the first adventure. While they might be uncertain as to where to sail in the unfamiliar waters of the Sea of Sorrows, they really have no choice in the matter.

If they are aboard *Mercy*, the ship itself knows where to go. Thanks to a special enchantment woven into the hull itself, the craft will enter a cloud of Mist some three days after leaving the island. After sailing in this seemingly unending fog for 24 hours, the vapors clear. At that point, the heroes will find themselves within sight of Martira Bay in the domain of Darkon.

Should the heroes be making use of some other vessel, the DM can move them to Darkon via a similar route. One way or another, however, this adventure ends with them nearing Martira Bay.



Whom Fortune Would Destroy

Confronting Heinfroth

Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible goal.

—Graham Greene,
The Heart of the Matter

While it is not required that the heroes have a violent confrontation with the lord of Dominia during the course of this adventure, there are certainly many players who will feel that they must, for one reason or another, do this. When this happens, they had better be prepared for a deadly battle.

Heinfroth's statistics are presented in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. Even a casual examination of that information will reveal that Heinfroth is a powerful enemy. When one considers that his might is guided by a keen mind and an obsessive drive, it is clear that the lord of Dominia is not a foe to be taken lightly.

Setting the Stage

Heinfroth will almost certainly control the nature of any encounter between himself and the player characters. After all, his agents tell him almost everything that transpires on the island, and his scrying equipment (see area 27 of the asylum) allows him to remotely examine virtually any point on the island. There is very little that will surprise the lord of Dominia within the confines of his domain.

With this in mind, the Dungeon Master should be aware that it is essentially impossible to surprise Heinfroth. Only the most exceptional of efforts on the part of the players should make this possible. Of course, this doesn't mean that Heinfroth won't allow the heroes to *believe* that they

have surprised him. This is an excellent way for him to turn the tables on them at the last minute and crush their morale.

Before Combat

Heinfroth attempts to persuade the heroes to return to their cells for treatment before combat begins. He adopts a soothing tone and speak to them as a man might talk to a frightened dog.

At first, he is calm and reassuring. He says, "You've been through a terrible ordeal. The storm and shipwreck have taken their toll on your spirit." Of course, it isn't likely that any of the heroes will buy this. If they have any nonplayer characters with them, however, the Dungeon Master may well want to have one or more of them drop their weapons and submit. (This does not apply to Van Richten, however. While the doctor might utter a tired, "I knew there was no hope," he does not surrender without a fight. Thus he keeps any weapon he might have gained.)

When it becomes clear that the heroes aren't going to just give up and return to their cells, Heinfroth's attitude will change. At that point, he becomes more forceful and assertive. "I don't have time for this foolishness!" he says. "Get back to your rooms, and we'll forget this ever happened. You're only hurting yourselves."

The Battle is Joined

As a last resort, Heinfroth resorts to beating the heroes senseless and dragging their unconscious bodies back to their cells. He hasn't any reservations about using physical violence, but never passes up an opportunity to use less direct methods in the hopes of gaining insight into an opponents mind.

Whom Fortune Would Destroy

During the battle, Heinfroth will attempt to use his *confusion* gaze on the leader of the party. If this works, he believes, the morale of the others will fail. Heinfroth fights to disable and frighten, rather than to kill.

In game terms, this means that the majority of his attacks are called shots. Details for resolving such attacks can be found in the *Combat* section of the *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*. An optional, expanded system for both called shots and critical hits can be found in the *PLAYER'S OPTION:™ Combat & Tactics* book. Either of these systems can be used, but the important thing to remember is that any battle with Heinfroth, whether the heroes win or lose, should leave them with some scars to remember it by.

If Heinfroth hasn't been caught off guard, he has set up two important contingencies to ensure that the encounter goes his way.

The first of these is simply a supply of reinforcements. Waiting in the wings are a number of orderlies. With but a word from their master, these vampires race to his aid.

In addition to his henchmen, Heinfroth has studied the mental and physical weaknesses of the heroes. When battle erupts, he'll turn these weaknesses against them. For example, if his treatments have induced pyrophobia in one of the characters, he'll be sure to have a ready supply of open flames close at hand.

Resolution

There are several ways that the battle with Heinfroth might come to an end. At various points in the adventure, the DM may want to consider skewing the battle to the conclusion that he desires. Early on in the adventure, for example, the battle should go against the players so that their characters will have a chance to experience the doctor's hospitality and treatment rooms. Later on, when they are attempting to escape with Van Richten, the heroes ought to be allowed to get passed the vampire, even if they don't defeat him.

If the heroes are defeated, they will not be killed. While it is true that an individual character might be mortally wounded in the fray, the lord of Dominia will do what he can to keep his prize patients alive. The mere fact that they had the courage to challenge him shows

that their wills have not yet been destroyed. There is still a great deal that his sadistic experiments might reveal through the slow, torturous dismantling of their minds.

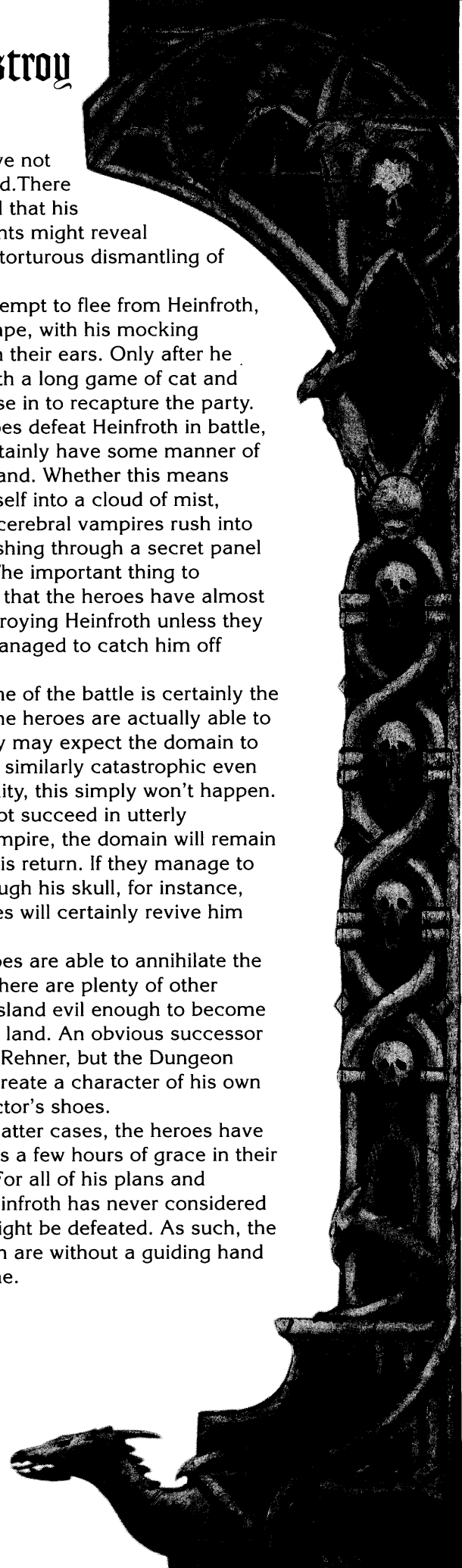
If the heroes attempt to flee from Heinfroth, he'll let them escape, with his mocking laughter ringing in their ears. Only after he torments them with a long game of cat and mouse will he close in to recapture the party.

Should the heroes defeat Heinfroth in battle, he will almost certainly have some manner of escape close at hand. Whether this means transforming himself into a cloud of mist, having a pack of cerebral vampires rush into the room, or vanishing through a secret panel is up to the DM. The important thing to remember here is that the heroes have almost no chance of destroying Heinfroth unless they have somehow managed to catch him off guard.

The last outcome of the battle is certainly the most unlikely. If the heroes are actually able to kill Heinfroth, they may expect the domain to break up or some similarly catastrophic event to occur. In actuality, this simply won't happen. If the heroes do not succeed in utterly destroying the vampire, the domain will remain intact and await his return. If they manage to drive a stake through his skull, for instance, one of the orderlies will certainly revive him soon enough.

Even if the heroes are able to annihilate the lord of Dominia, there are plenty of other vampires on the island evil enough to become the master of that land. An obvious successor is the sadistic Dr. Rehner, but the Dungeon Master is free to create a character of his own to fill the mad doctor's shoes.

In either of the latter cases, the heroes have earned themselves a few hours of grace in their escape attempt. For all of his plans and contingencies, Heinfroth has never considered that he himself might be defeated. As such, the staff of the asylum are without a guiding hand for a period of time.



The Baron

H

e who has a thousand
friends has not a
friend to spare,
And he who has
one enemy, shall meet
him everywhere.

—Ali-Ibn-Abi-Talib

In this adventure, the heroes face the sinister Baron Metus, the vampire who took the life of Van Richten's son, Erasmus. Metus, with Daclaud Heinfroth, has been doing the bidding of the ghost of Madame Radanavich in her quest to destroy Rudolph van Richten. But Metus has his own reasons for seeing Van Richten destroyed as well.

Getting Started

The events of this adventure begin to unfold when the characters arrive in Martira Bay, on the west coast of Darkon. It is assumed that they are aboard the *Mercy*, although there are actually a number of ways that they may have made the transition from the first adventure to this one. The events surrounding their arrival are detailed in the chapter "Out of the Mists."

After that chapter is played out, however, the adventure can go in one of three different directions, or even a hybrid of them. Depending upon the outcome of the first adventure, the Dungeon Master should select the chapter best suited to continue play.

- If they know of Daclaud Heinfroth's dealings with Baron Metus (whether they know him by name or not), they will almost certainly seek out the local vampire shortly after arriving in town. If this is the case, the adventure begins with the chapter "The Black Tower."
- If they have no idea at all that Heinfroth had dealings with someone in Martira Bay, then their first actions after reaching Darkon will probably be somewhat more mundane. No doubt they'll be looking for a place to stay and a way to cover their tracks so that they won't suddenly wake up in their cells

again. If this is the case, continue the adventure with "A Face in the Crowd."

- If they know that Heinfroth had dealings with someone in Martira Bay, but aren't certain who that might be or how to go about tracking them down, see the chapter "Nightmares."

Rudolph van Richten

Before continuing with the adventure, however, it is important that a few things about Van Richten be stated for the Dungeon Master.

Van Richten has just escaped from the island of Dominia. While a prisoner there, he was subjected to terrible tortures and abuse. As a result, he is not the man he used to be. Complete details on Van Richten's health, both mental and physical, can be found in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

To summarize, he has been so tormented by nightmares that he sleeps only when exhaustion forces him to do so. As a result, he is very weak and sickly. His hands shake constantly, and his face is drawn and haggard. Mentally, he is paranoid and untrusting. He finds it hard to believe that the heroes are not actually working for his enemies, and he fears that his ultimate fate is to be returned to a cell beneath the asylum.

Van Richten is still very much a hero at heart. He has a strength of character and sense of nobility that most adventurers can only aspire to. As such, once he interacts with the heroes, he comes to accept that they are his friends. The DM should gradually show improvements in Van Richten's condition. This is not to say that he is completely recovered by the end of this adventure, nor that he will not suffer setbacks. The abuse that he suffered at the hands of Daclaud Heinfroth was far too great for that, but he will certainly be ready to fight when the heroes confront Baron Metus at the conclusion of the adventure.

The Baron

Out of the Mists

It is difficult to fight against anger; for a man will buy revenge with his soul.

—Heraclitus

However the characters managed to escape from the island of Dominia, they will have been absorbed by the Mists and carried off to the west coast of Darkon. The following text can be read aloud to the players to get the second adventure started:

After several days of drifting through thick, swirling mists, your vessel suddenly draws clear of the seemingly interminable fog bank. In less than a minute, you find yourself adrift upon an azure sea that shimmers beneath a clear sky and a warm, friendly sun. A gentle wind blows out of the west, nudging you casually toward a sprawling city that stretches along the edges of a busy harbor. Curiously, even the faintest traces of fog seem to have burned away.

The currents in the area and the sea breeze carry the characters into Martira Bay in short order. If they are on some manner of makeshift raft, the local harbor patrol sends out a skiff to pick them up and bring them safely ashore. One way or another, however, the heroes will end up in the city.

Details on Martira Bay and potential encounters are included in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. While Martira Bay itself is not of particular importance to the running of this adventure, it does provide the Dungeon

Master with an overview of the various districts of the city and can be used in later adventures.

Refugees

If the heroes have been rescued from an obviously makeshift raft, they'll have to explain what happened to them. Depending upon the story they tell, the adventure may take one of many paths.

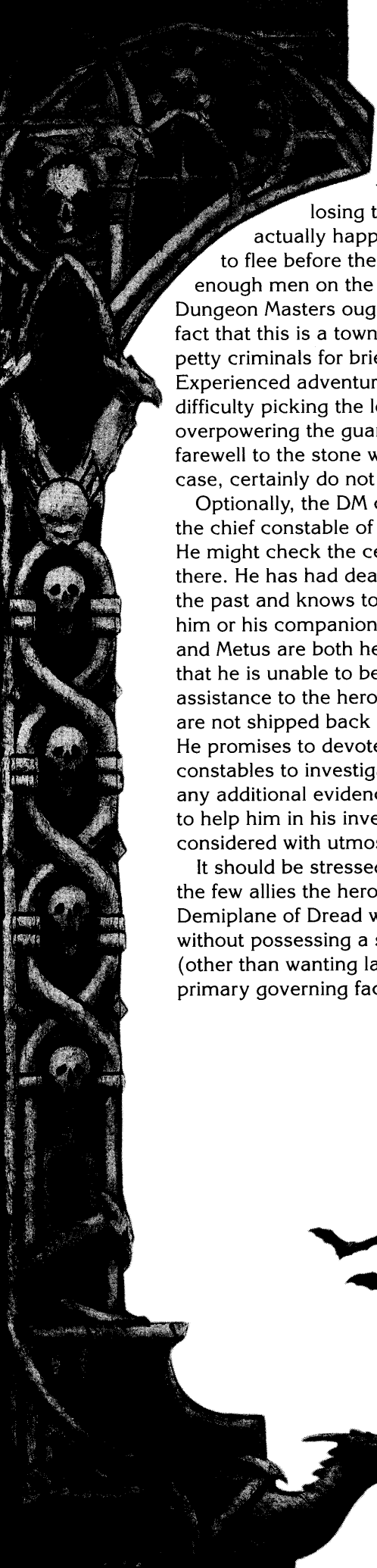
Escape From Dominia

If they make mention of their time in the asylum, their story simply won't be believed. Thanks to an excellent public relations campaign in Darkon (and, indeed, throughout most of Ravenloft's domains), Daclaud Heinfroth is thought of as an angel of mercy in an often cruel world. If the characters speak ill of him, it is rightly assumed that they are inmates who have just escaped from his asylum. Since they are obviously hostile toward their supposed benefactor, it is further assumed that they are dangerous. The authorities, therefore, are quick to restrain them and arrange for their transportation back to the island.

No doubt this will not sit well with the heroes. As they sit in the cold stone cells of the local jail, their thoughts will certainly turn to escape. The Dungeon Master should give the heroes a fair chance to escape, but if they fail, they'll have to escape from the island of Dominia all over again—assuming, of course, that their minds can stand the shock of having their escape thwarted after it seemed to be completed. A map of the City Jail is presented in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

Escaping from the city jail shouldn't present the characters with too great a challenge, although they may certainly see it otherwise, and needn't occupy a long part of the adventure session. Indeed, in all likelihood the

The Baron



heroes will recognize that they are in danger of losing their liberty before it actually happens and ought to be able to flee before the local authorities have enough men on the scene to stop them. Dungeon Masters ought to keep in mind the fact that this is a town jail designed to hold petty criminals for brief periods of time. Experienced adventurers ought to have little difficulty picking the locks on the doors, overpowering the guards, and otherwise bidding farewell to the stone walls that, at least in this case, certainly do not a prison make.

Optionally, the DM can introduce Alanik Ray, the chief constable of Martira Bay to the heroes. He might check the cells as the heroes languish there. He has had dealings with Van Richten in the past and knows to heed claims made by him or his companions. Unfortunately, Heinfroth and Metus are both held in such high regard that he is unable to be of any immediate assistance to the heroes, except to ensure they are not shipped back to Dominia or kept in jail. He promises to devote some of his most honest constables to investigating Metus, adding that any additional evidence the heroes can uncover to help him in his investigation will be considered with utmost seriousness.

It should be stressed that Alanik Ray is one of the few allies the heroes may find in the Demiplane of Dread who is willing to help them without possessing a secret, secondary agenda (other than wanting law and justice to be the primary governing factors of Martira Bay). He

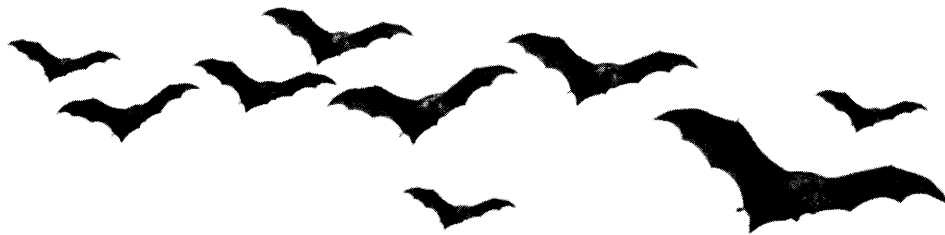
can provide the haggard heroes with some breathing room, if the DM senses the characters are growing dispondant at any time during their stay in Martira Bay. However, DMs should be aware that heroes who engage in illegal activities in Ray's city may find themselves with a persistant enemy rather than an ally. (Harrasing Metus will not draw Ray's wrath, but wholesale destruction of property or violence against innocents will.)

Shipwreck

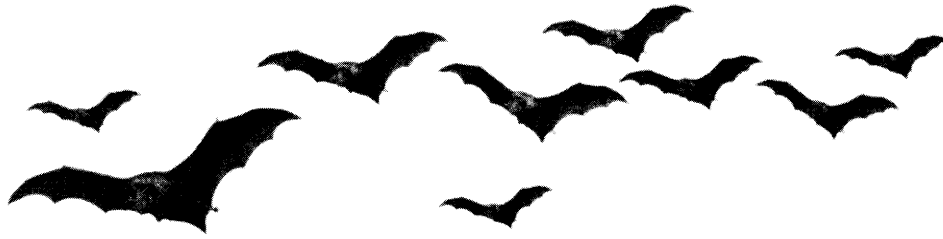
If the heroes are careful about what they say, they can avoid any entanglements with the local constabulary. By making no mention of Dominia or its lord and speaking only of the wreck of the *Blue Dolphin*, they'll find themselves treated for their wounds, given a purse with 50 gp in it (for which they may thank the generosity of the mayor and guilds), and released into the Waterfront district. After that, they're on their own and the adventure can continue with the chapter entitled "Nightmares."

The Caravel

If the characters have escaped from Dominia aboard the *Mercy*, they may be in for a bit of trouble. *Mercy* is known to the harbor master and his crews. They'll quickly recognize that the vessel has been stolen. Beyond that, they'll assume that the heroes are escaped lunatics who must be captured and



The Baron



confined for the safety of the community. Even the best tale that the characters come up with to explain their presence will not be believed. (However, if the heroes have come by a substantial amount of gold or other valuables, the Harbor Watch can be “dealt” with. For more information, consult the entry for Martira Bay in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.)

If the heroes attempt to explain what happened to them on the island of Dominia, they won’t be believed. Heinfroth is a respected individual in Martira Bay, and the local authorities will not put stock in tales of his inhumanity. The only thing that the heroes will do by telling these stories is further convince the local authorities that they are indeed escaped madmen. They will end up in the City Jail.

Jail Break

Assuming that the heroes are unable to slip away from the watchmen who try to take them into custody (which should be fairly easy for experienced adventurers to do), they’ll end up in the local jail. As with getting away from the guards, however, this shouldn’t present a major challenge to the heroes. A map of the City Jail in Martira Bay is provided in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. DMs are reminded that this facility is intended only to hold minor criminals for brief periods of time. Heroes and other experienced adventurers ought to have no problem escaping from it. Should the heroes not attempt to escape, the Dungeon Master can introduce Alanik Ray, as described in the “Escape from Dominia” section.

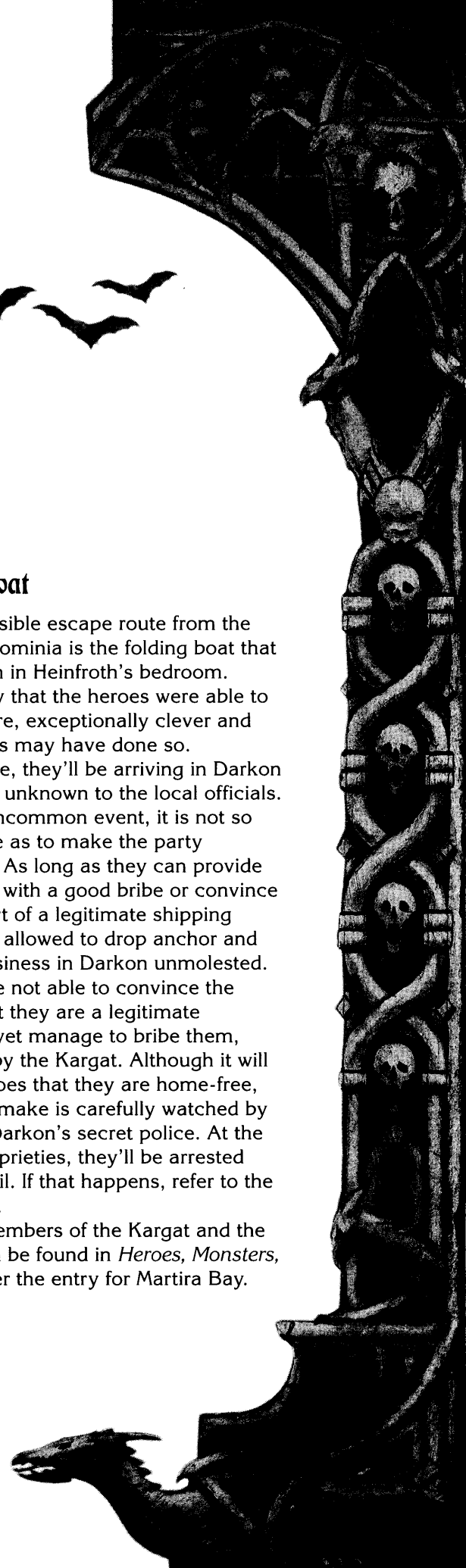
The Folding Boat

Another possible escape route from the island of Dominia is the folding boat that was hidden in Heinfroth’s bedroom. While it is unlikely that the heroes were able to obtain this treasure, exceptionally clever and resourceful groups may have done so.

If this is the case, they’ll be arriving in Darkon with a ship that is unknown to the local officials. While this is an uncommon event, it is not so rare an occurrence as to make the party instantly suspect. As long as they can provide the Harbor Watch with a good bribe or convince them they are part of a legitimate shipping agency, they’ll be allowed to drop anchor and go about their business in Darkon unmolested.

If the heroes are not able to convince the Harbor Watch that they are a legitimate shipping agency yet manage to bribe them, they are noticed by the Kargat. Although it will appear to the heroes that they are home-free, every move they make is carefully watched by the local arm of Darkon’s secret police. At the first sign of improprieties, they’ll be arrested and tossed into jail. If that happens, refer to the previous sections.

Statistics for members of the Kargat and the Harbor Watch can be found in *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* under the entry for Martira Bay.



The Baron

Nightmares

N

ight brings our troubles to the light, rather than banishes them.

—Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*

Once the heroes have managed to get safely into Martira Bay, whether or not they are now wanted by the police, they are able to find themselves a place to stay and collect their wits. It doesn't particularly matter where in town they go. Whether they stay at a fancy hotel or in a cheap dive, the events described herein will come to pass.

Of course, minor deviations may be introduced by the Dungeon Master. The most likely of these is harassment by the local police (if the heroes are believed to be escaped lunatics and have not yet encountered Alanik Ray) or an attempt by Heinfroth's agents to recapture them. In either case, these should be presented to the players as far more threatening than they actually are. At this point, the adventure has passed beyond such concerns, and the DM should avoid allowing the characters to get sidetracked by them.

Van Richten's Dream

While the heroes pass the night more or less calmly, Van Richten will not be so lucky. Exactly at the stroke of midnight, he awakens screaming in terror. His skin is as white as any corpse the heroes have ever seen, and a cold sweat will have soaked his bed. Trembling, he will gladly take whatever comfort the heroes offer him, from a snifter of brandy to a reassuring hug, and tell them of the dream he just had.

"Always my dream is the same," says the shivering Van Richten. "It begins as I wander through rolling clouds of mist. Shadowy figures move by me. I know that they are friends, although I cannot see them clearly enough to make out their features. Knowing they are friends, however, I am also aware that they mean me harm. Because of this, I move away from them and deeper into the mists.

"Before long, a shape rises before me. It is a great house. Drawing nearer, I recognize it as the house grew up in . . . the ancestral estate of my family in Rivalis. Behind me, the shadows draw closer and I am forced toward the manor. Only then do I see that there is no ground here. The house stands alone in the mists, as if it were crafted from them.

"As I approach the house, I see two figures standing in one of the windows. At first I don't recognize them, but then I see that it is my departed wife and my beloved son, Erasmus. They beckon to me, and I know that I must hurry to save them from some great menace. I reach the door and, finding it locked, pound my fists upon it. At first, there is no response, but after a moment, the portal swings open before me.

"To my horror, I am then confronted by the master of this place. He is a dark and terrible creature with features so twisted with evil as to be nothing short of bestial. As I pull away from this creature, I recognize that I look upon none other than myself.

"It is then that the dream ends and I awake screaming. Please forgive me. I did not mean to so disturb the sleep of my benefactors."

The Baron



Even after he has calmed down, Van Richten is unable to sleep again. It is clear to the heroes that his current physical and mental condition will certainly not improve so long as these dreams continue.

Magical or psionic attempts to protect Van Richten from these dreams fail. If proper steps are taken to research the matter, however, it is clear that these nightmares are being forced upon him by some outside influence. So powerful is this mental intruder that no effort by the characters to block or confront it is successful. Indeed, those familiar with the magic or science of the mind are shocked by the power behind these nightmares.

Each night, this scene repeats itself. Van Richten retires normally, hopeful of getting his first night of restful sleep in months, only to find himself caught in the throes of the nocturnal assault.

As the days go by, he begins to resist the idea of even trying to sleep, fearful of the dreams that come with each night. Of course, this only serves to further diminish the man's physical and mental capabilities.

Investigations

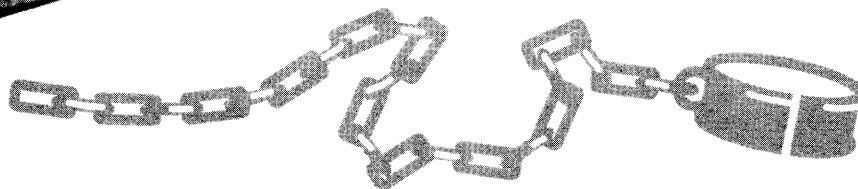
No matter what route the heroes take to investigate the nightmares that are plaguing their companion, they turn up only unsatisfactory results. Still, by putting together all that they learn, they may be able to come to a few helpful conclusions.

Magical Research

Through spells like *detect scrying*, *magic mirror*, or *vision* can provide the characters with some information regarding the nature of the forces affecting Van Richten.

Perhaps the most unexpected clue that they'll receive in this fashion is the information that their good friend is not under the influence of any magical spell. While it is clear that something unusually powerful is forcing itself into Van Richten's mind, it is clearly non-magical in nature. Further, any magical attempts to protect the good doctor from these mental intrusions are doomed to failure.

The Baron



Clerical Research

For the most part, those who seek the guidance of their faith in researching the doctor's affliction will fare little better than their wizardly counterparts. They are able to determine—through the use of spells like *augury*, *divination*, and *magic font*—all that a wizard might learn.

In addition, careful use of magic from the divination sphere (as decided by the Dungeon Master) will allow a priest character to deduce that the influence affecting Van Richten is psychic in nature. Even with this knowledge, however, the hero is unable to protect his friend from the nightmares that haunt him.

Psychic Research

Those heroes gifted with paranormal mental abilities are also free to investigate the strange dreams that are tormenting Van Richten. Whether these attempts are resolved using the original psionic powers rules presented in the *Complete Psionics Handbook* or the modified system provided in the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* hardbound, the results are the same.

Through careful application of the various telepathic or clairsentient sciences and devotions, a character can discover something of the source of Van Richten's torment. While

the DM has the final say over just how successful these endeavours are, the potential harvest of information is great.

At the very least, the characters can learn that a powerful psychic force has aligned itself with Van Richten's subconscious mind. Because of the strength of this force and the tortures he endured in Dominia, Van Richten is unable to offer any resistance to these attacks.

Any psionic character who attempts to bolster the doctor's mental defenses may initially feel that he has been successful. As soon as night falls, however, and the next psionic attack comes, both Van Richten and his psychic ally are overwhelmed by the raw mental power behind the nightmares. As a result, the psionist character will find himself dragged along, sharing Van Richten's nightmare and being unable to resist or alter it in any way.

When all is said and done, a psionic character is able to capture a few fleeting images and words that may prove helpful. First and foremost is the overwhelming hunger for revenge. Whoever is attacking Van Richten feels that he has every right to destroy the doctor for some past transgression. Beyond that, the character will see a tall tower rising above a city and the sinister face of a pale, slender man. Behind all this, the character is aware of the wild, rich laughter of a woman.

The Baron

A Face in the Crowd

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he past not merely
is not fugitive, it
remains present.

—Marcel Proust,
*Remembrance of Things Past:
The Guermandes Way*

After a few nights of restless sleep, the heroes are handed a clue. If they have not yet been able to learn the source of Van Richten's nightmares, this will get them started on the right path.

A Face in the Crowd

The following text can be used to get things rolling. It should be read to the players at some point when they are moving through a crowded section of the city in the company of Dr. Van Richten. If they do not allow the doctor to leave the hotel room (or whatever other lodgings they have taken), it can be assumed that Van Richten is looking out an open window at a crowded street beyond. In either case, it must be nighttime.

The cool sea breeze that sweeps through Martira Bay seems unusually sweet tonight. The sky is clear, the stars sparkle like so much diamond dust on black velvet, and the amber light of a gibbous moon makes the darkness seem less intimidating than usual. Even the crowds moving about through the streets can do little to dampen the good spirits that seem to be in the air.

Suddenly, the little color that remains in Van Richten's haggard face drains away. He lets out a loud gasp and makes a gesture of protection. Looking as much like a ghost as a living man, he flings his

arm up to point at figure in the midst of the crowd. "It's him!" shouts the Doctor as his legs buckle and he falls unconscious. Looking to where he pointed, you see only a swirl of mist caught in a shaft of moonlight, unusual for such a mild night, certainly, but hardly something to be alarmed over.

Awakening Van Richten is not difficult. If the heroes are in public, those around them offer to fetch a doctor. Whether or not the heroes accept these offers, Van Richten revives after a few minutes. Pale and shaking, he will tell the characters what he saw.

From Days Long Passed . . .

Van Richten's story, although it may be interrupted by periods of faintness, questions, or an occasional pull of brandy, runs as follows:

"I can scarce believe what I have seen this night," gasps the shaking Van Richten. "In all my years, I have seen nothing that holds for me the horror of that one creature. I know now the name of the enemy that we must confront, and it is a name that I am slow to utter for the evil about it is so great that one can not speak of it without dirtying one's soul. Our foe is none other than Baron Metus, the vampire who slew my beloved son so many years ago."

The heroes will probably have questions for Van Richten, especially those who are not familiar with his past. The following is a list of the most likely questions to be asked and the answers that Van Richten will provide:

The Baron

Q.: Who is Baron Metus?

A.: Long ago, before I began my war against the forces of evil, Vistani stole my son, Erasmus, from me. I tracked them down but found that I was too late. I learned that they had sold my beloved child to Baron Metus, a vampire. By the time I reached the Baron's tower, he had already transformed Erasmus into a foul creature of the night. After the hammer and stake released by son from the curse of undeath, I tracked down the fiend who had slain him and exacted my vengeance for the wrong he had done to me. I thought that I had done my work well, but it appears that I overlooked something. There can be no doubt that the man I saw in the crowd tonight was Baron Metus himself.

Q.: What powers and weaknesses does the Baron have?

A.: When I last faced Metus, I had not yet acquired the skills and knowledge that I now possess. There can be little doubt that I was fortunate in my encounter with him. By all rights, I should have been killed. Thus, I fear that I learned little about the powers and weaknesses of my first undead enemy. This much I can say, however: When last we met, he was held at bay by my holy star and was burned by the holy water that I cast upon him. The stake that I drove through his heart seemed certainly to have killed him, although it now seems that some agent has reversed the damage that it did to him.

Q.: Are you sure that it was Baron Metus you saw?

A.: When you look upon the face of a creature that has wronged you as Metus wronged me, you remember his features. There can be no mistake. Every night since the death of my beloved Erasmus, I have seen that mocking visage in the seconds before sleep overcame me. No force on earth could deceive me in this matter. That was Baron Metus.

Q.: What happened to the Vistani tribe that stole your son?

A.: In payment for their crime against me, I sought to destroy them and their leader, Madame Radanavich. While I was, in the end, triumphant over them, my victory did not come without a terrible price. Just as they deprived me of my son, so too did they claim the life of my beloved wife. There is only one of their number left alive now, a man named Arturi. He and I have made our peace.

Dungeon Masters wishing more information on this topic are referred to the anthology *Tales of Ravenloft* and the short story "The Crucible of Dr. Van Richten." Additional information can be found in the various *Van Richten's Guides*, but particularly the *Guide to Vampires* and the *Guide to Vistani*.

The Trail of Darkness

Now that the heroes know the name and nature of their enemy, they should not have a difficult time tracking him down. The Baron has taken no steps to hide his identity or his whereabouts, confident in the knowledge that he has reduced Van Richten to a weakened shell of his former self.

Whether the characters had any information from their time on the island that might bring them to the tower in which Metus dwells or not, they can find it in a number of ways. While magical and psionic means are sure to produce results, a few hours of pounding the pavement and casual inquiries will lead them to a tower in the Merchant's Quarter.

Even before the heroes come into sight of the Baron's home, they are able to learn a few things about their enemy. The first of these, which they may already know from their time on Dominia, is that he has been in contact with Daclaud Heinfroth. Indeed, the Baron oversees the operation of a small clinic that keeps a constant supply of patients flowing to Dominia.

Beyond Metus's role in this matter, the heroes will learn that he is a powerful and respected man in Martira Bay. His wealth and generosity are second to none, although none can say where he came by the fortune that sustains him. Still, those who speak ill of this man are looked down upon by the folk of Martira Bay.

The Baron



Like Daclaud Heinfroth, Baron Metus is a man above suspicion. If the heroes have connected with Alanik Ray, then he is willing to listen to their claims and begin a quiet investigation of the Baron. He can't take steps immediately, however.

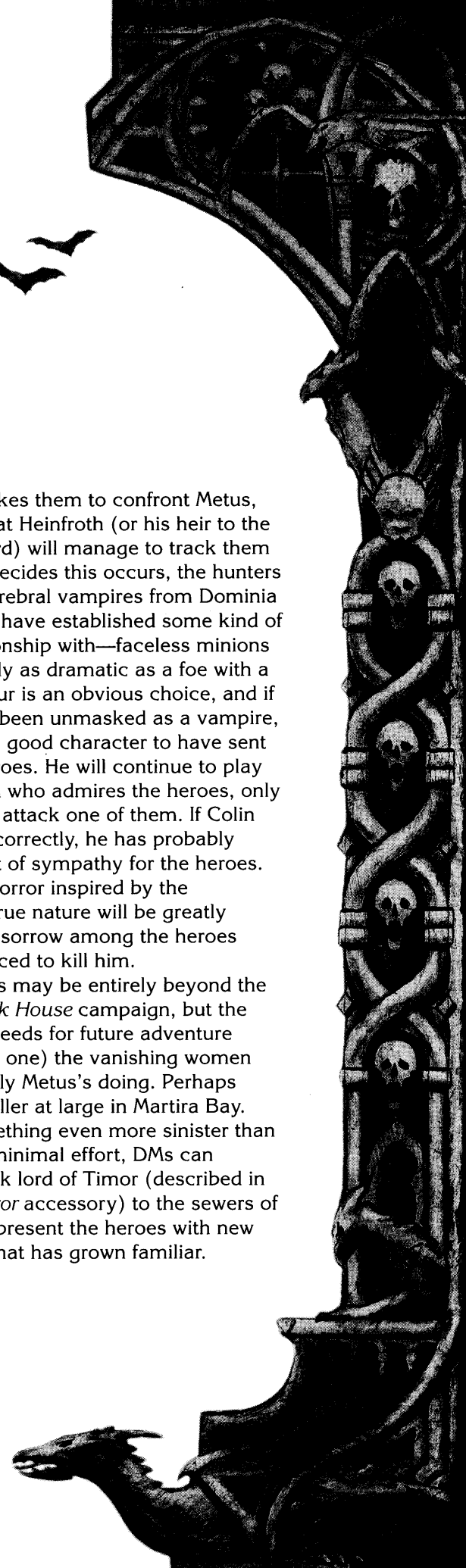
Investigations on the part of the heroes or Alanik Ray will uncover something suspicious. Ever since Metus arrived in the city, there has been an unusual string of disappearances. Whether these are kidnappings or murders, none can say. In every case, however, the victim is a woman between the ages of 18 and 30. To date, some 12 women have vanished. Attempts to link these happenings with the arrival of Baron Metus will fail, but there is some evidence that at least half of the young women had some form of connection with Metus's clinic. While Alanik Ray has to consider politics and must gather more evidence, Van Richten will try to pressure the heroes into taking immediate action. The chief constable promises to look the other way, compromising his principles out of respect for Van Richten.

Notes for Additional Adventures

Martira Bay presents many possibilities for DMs who want to expand the *Bleak House* campaign beyond what is enclosed in his box. The *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book features a brief look at the city, highlighting certain prominent characters. During their investigation of Metus, the heroes might be sidetracked into a confrontation with one or more of these individuals. A run-in with a Kargat agent (possibly mistaken for a vampiric servant of Metus) would be particularly dangerous for a group of heroes who are escapees from an asylum.

The longer it takes them to confront Metus, the likelier it is that Heinfroth (or his heir to the mantle of dark lord) will manage to track them down. If the DM decides this occurs, the hunters should include cerebral vampires from Dominia whom the heroes have established some kind of adversarial relationship with—faceless minions are nowhere nearly as dramatic as a foe with a personality. Baykur is an obvious choice, and if Colin has not yet been unmasked as a vampire, he too would be a good character to have sent to retrieve the heroes. He will continue to play the innocent child who admires the heroes, only he will eventually attack one of them. If Colin has been played correctly, he has probably become an object of sympathy for the heroes. In this case, the horror inspired by the revelation of his true nature will be greatly increased, as will sorrow among the heroes when they are forced to kill him.

Finally (and this may be entirely beyond the scope of the *Bleak House* campaign, but the DM can sow the seeds for future adventure while running this one) the vanishing women may not be entirely Metus's doing. Perhaps there is a serial killer at large in Martira Bay. Perhaps it is something even more sinister than a vampire. With minimal effort, DMs can transplant the dark lord of Timor (described in the *Islands of Terror* accessory) to the sewers of Martira Bay, and present the heroes with new horrors in a city that has grown familiar.



The Baron

The Black Tower

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here is some
goodness in things
evil,
Would men
observingly distill it out.

—William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

This chapter should be played out when the heroes decide to investigate the mysterious Black Tower in which Baron Metus resides. It begins with their impressions of the outside of this mysterious structure and continues with their exploration of its interior. In the end, the scene concludes with their meeting Baron Metus. Along the way, the heroes are given the chance to rescue the Thinker, an imprisoned Vistani who has been forced to project the nightmares that have been tormenting Van Richten.

A detailed map of this structure can be found in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. The key to that map, including complete room descriptions, follows later in this book.

Baron Metus operates a charity medical clinic out of the ground floor of his tower. The quality of health care received here is quite good, well above the standards that one might expect from a charity institution.

Every so often, however, Metus receives word that Heinfroth is in need of new patients to experiment on. When that happens, Metus sees to it that a handful of his charges are referred to the sanitarium in Dominia for additional treatment. As a rule, these victims come from the ranks of the poor, especially those who have no families to be concerned when they do not return from the island sanitarium.

In addition to providing for the needs of Daclaud Heinfroth, Baron Metus has his own needs to tend. In particular, he concerns himself with finding an occasional young

woman to satisfy his thirst for blood. These tend to be drawn from the ranks of the lower or middle classes.

Outside Appearances

The West District, in which the heroes will find Metus's Black Tower, is the closest thing Martira Bay has to a slum. While conditions here are better than in many of Ravenloft's cities, it is still an unpleasant maze populated by cut-throats, broken men, loose women, and starving children. The 50 foot tall stone tower houses Baron Metus and, at its heart, the imprisoned Thinker who has been tormenting Dr. Van Richten. The fact that Metus lives among those he cares for endears him even further people of Martira Bay.

The following text can be read to the players when they first set eyes upon the tower:

The squat shape of the tower rises from the tightly packed buildings that flank it, like a lighthouse on a rocky coast. Resting atop the dark gray stone of the tower is a golden hemisphere that shimmers almost as if it radiated its own light.

The only obvious means of entering the tower, if one doesn't count the iron barred windows on the second floor, are the massive oak doors that stand at street level. Set with demon-faced knockers, they look less than inviting. A bronze sign is set into one of the doors, although closer examination is required to read what is written on it.

Should the heroes actually move closer and attempt to read the plate, they will find that it is in the

The Baron

language of Darkon. While this tongue isn't too dissimilar from their own, they may have to call upon Dr. Van Richten to translate it. In either case, the inscription reads as follows:

The Fellowship Charity Clinic
Baron Metus, Sponsor

Hours: 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Daily

If the heroes have arrived during the listed hours, the front door is closed, but unlocked. Outside of that time frame, the door are locked.

Entering the Darkness

Because of the nature of the neighborhood in which this tower stands, only its front face is accessible from a street. As Metus operates a charity medical clinic, the door at the base of the tower is unlocked from roughly nine in the morning to six in the evening.

The Front Door

Stepping through the front door brings the heroes across the threshold (area 1) and into the lobby (area 2). From there, they are greeted by Metus's staff and assumed to have business in the tower.

Those who opt to try their luck on these portals after hours will need to have a skilled thief with them, for the doors are locked. Defeating the mechanism requires a simple open locks roll. In addition, there are no traps or alarms to further complicate matters.

Of course, Van Richten is not unskilled in such matters, but the traumas that he has survived in recent weeks have left his hands unsteady at best. Because of this, his chances of success with his various thieving skills are not what they used to be (as described in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book). Once the locks on the front door are defeated, the heroes are free to move in and explore the Black Tower, beginning with the lobby (area 2).

Second Story Men

Heroes who wish to be more subtle in entering the building will have to scale walls and make their way across several rooftops in order to

reach a point where they can try their luck on the tower's upper windows.

Although thick iron bars block all of these portals, a good hack saw or exceptionally strong fighter can make short work of such obstacles. As a rule, it takes a character with a saw about half an hour to cut through enough of the bars to allow a normal sized man to enter. Dungeon Masters are free to rule that it takes only 15 minutes to create an opening large enough for a dwarf or halfling and 45 minutes to cut through enough of the bars to allow a hulking fighter in heavy armor to pass.

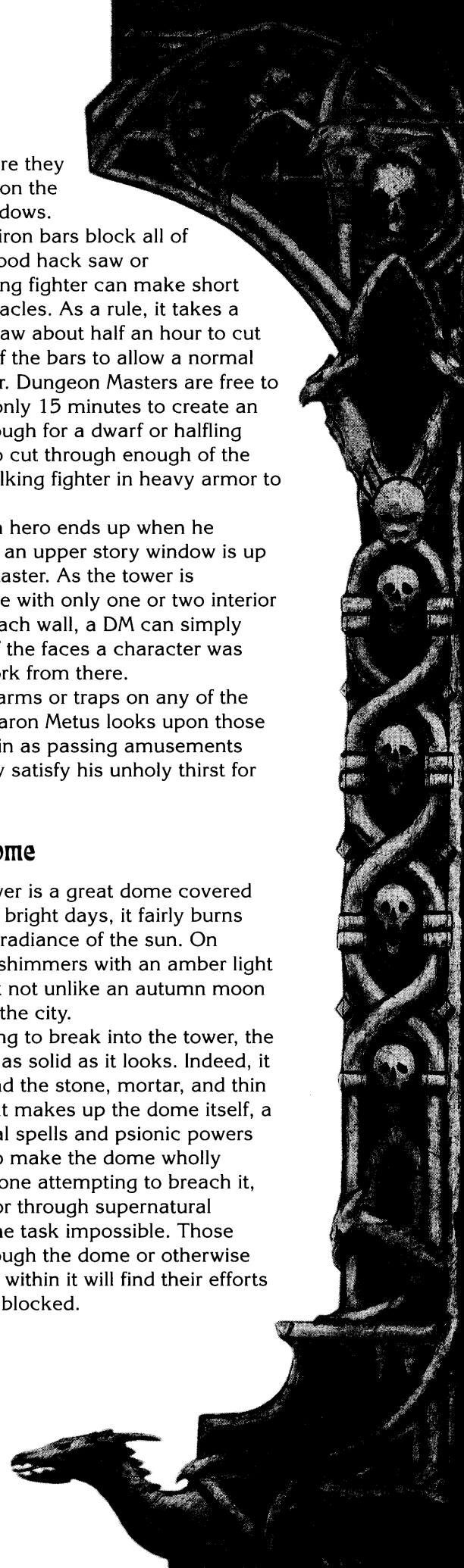
Exactly where a hero ends up when he breaks in through an upper story window is up to the Dungeon Master. As the tower is octagonal in shape with only one or two interior rooms touching each wall, a DM can simply establish which of the faces a character was assaulting and work from there.

There are no alarms or traps on any of the tower windows. Baron Metus looks upon those who might break in as passing amusements that will ultimately satisfy his unholy thirst for blood.

The Golden Dome

The top of the tower is a great dome covered with gold leaf. On bright days, it fairly burns with the reflected radiance of the sun. On moonlit nights, it shimmers with an amber light that makes it look not unlike an autumn moon hanging low over the city.

For those wishing to break into the tower, the dome is every bit as solid as it looks. Indeed, it is more so. Beyond the stone, mortar, and thin veinier of gold that makes up the dome itself, a number of magical spells and psionic powers have been used to make the dome wholly invulnerable. Anyone attempting to breach it, either physically or through supernatural means, will find the task impossible. Those trying to scry through the dome or otherwise determine what is within it will find their efforts just as effectively blocked.



The Baron

Business Hours

If the heroes wish to call on the Baron or his clinic during business hours, they are greeted cordially by his staff. These people will recognize the heroes from sketches sent to them by the staff of Heinfroth's asylum. As such, they will attempt to recapture them and return them to the sanitarium.

When the heroes enter, they are asked their business. If they say that they are in need of medical care, they are told to sit and, after a wait of 1d6x10 minutes, instructed to go to one of the examination rooms (either area 3 or 4). As a rule, only one or two people are permitted to enter an examination room at a time. All others must wait in the lobby.

During this time, all of the staff will casually vanish to one of the offices (either area 5 or 6). By means of hidden switches there, they'll lock the doors that lead to area 2 from outside (area 1) and the hallway (area 7). When that is done, they'll flood the lobby and examination rooms (areas 2, 3, and 4) with an odorless, colorless gas that requires a saving throw vs. poison each round. A failed saving throw results in unconsciousness. If all heroes fall victim to the gas, the party regains consciousness in their cells back on Dominia.

If the heroes claim to have business with Metus, they are told that he is unavailable, and they are given an appointment to see him sometime within the next 1-4 days. When they arrive for that appointment, they will again be put off. In truth, Baron Metus will never see them at the clinic. If he decides that there is some reason he should see them, he will seek them out in the evening and contact them at their lodgings. Should he determine that they are escaped prisoners of the asylum, as he certainly will when they meet face to face, he'll invite them to come to his clinic the next day.

While the heroes wait to be summoned into a meeting with Metus, they'll be gassed (as above) and shipped back to Dominia.

Map Key

The following descriptions provide the Dungeon Master with all the information he needs to referee the heroes' exploration of the tower. When they reach the top of the tower and enter the dome, this adventure can be continued with the chapter entitled "Final Vengeance."

Standards

All of the rooms in the tower are assumed to be fifteen feet high with sturdy wooden rafters and a white plaster finish. Breaking through the ceiling or one of the interior walls of the tower will require inflicting 30 points of damage to it. This will create a hole large enough for a dwarf, gnome, or halfling to squeeze through. A larger gap, one that will permit a man or elf to pass, requires 50 points of damage. The outer walls of the tower are solid stone and should be very difficult to breach, probably requiring the players to use the siege rules presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* or the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics* book.

Baron Metus keeps his tower clean and in good repair, as one might expect of an important citizen. The likelihood of finding various items in a given room should be calculated by the Dungeon Master based on the assumption that Metus keeps his house as well stocked as any in Martira Bay.

Ground Floor

1. The Entrance

The entrance to the tower, a massive pair of iron-reinforced oak doors, stands squarely before you. A pair of demon-faced knockers, cast from an unusually red-tinted bronze, hang at eye level. Are they simply decorative, or do they offer some indication of the evil that lies within? On one door is a plate, fashioned from the same metal as the knockers and secured to the door with four thick bolts. It would be difficult to imagine a less inviting doorway.

As mentioned before, getting past this door when the clinic is closed requires a key or a successful open locks roll. During business

The Baron

hours, however, one can simply knock or walk in. In the latter case, the heroes will find themselves in the lobby (area 2). If the heroes opt to knock, however, the Dungeon Master can read them the text below. It should be noted that this text assumes that the heroes can speak the language of Darkon. If they can't, Van Richten will translate.

As the booming echoes of the knocker die down, the hinges of the great doors creak under the weight that they bear, and the portal swings open before you. A slender young woman in the clean white garb of a nurse smiles at you and motions for you to enter. "There is no need for you to knock," she says. "The clinic is open to all. Won't you come in?"

If the heroes come to the door after hours, they will receive no answer to their knocks. Indeed, the only thing they will accomplish by pounding on the door when the clinic is closed is attracting the attention of the neighbors, and possibly some of the neighborhood's rougher inhabitants.

2. The Lobby

A checkerboard floor of light and dark hardwoods, as well as an assortment of comfortable looking chairs and tables, gives this room an understated feeling of elegance. A pair of crystal chandeliers, ornate without being gaudy, hang from the center of the raftered ceiling. A large desk and several file cabinets stand along the western wall.

If the clinic is open, a handful of patients sit scattered about the room. These range from the middle class citizens of Martira Bay who come here to save a few coppers to the poorest of the poor who have no place else to turn for health care. As a rule, the former are treated after the latter, for Metus has no tolerance for those who abuse his charity.

After hours, entering heroes find the lobby deserted, and they may explore at their leisure. The desk and files are locked, but these safeguards are nothing that a skilled thief can't overcome.

Inside the desk, the heroes will find a letter from Heinfroth Daclaud (or one of his minions if

the heroes were able to destroy him). This document is in the language of Gundarak, but may be read by Van Richten if he is with them. Otherwise, they may have to revert to magic or other means to read it. The letter has accurate sketches of some of the heroes with it. Its text can be found on the inside back cover of this book as "Player's Aid #4." The Dungeon Master should give the players a copy when they find it.

In the files, the heroes will find little of importance. Quite clearly, Metus's clinic is a genuine charity facility. There is no incriminating evidence to be found here and no mention of the Thinker.

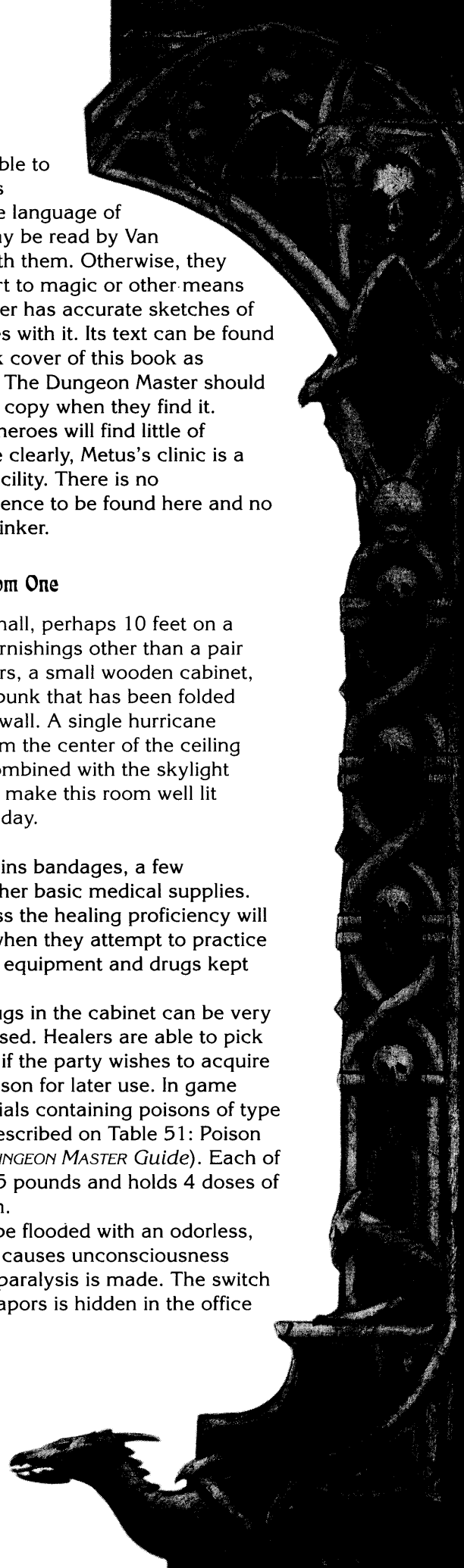
3. Examination Room One

This room is small, perhaps 10 feet on a side, with no furnishings other than a pair of wooden chairs, a small wooden cabinet, and a wooden bunk that has been folded down from the wall. A single hurricane lamp hangs from the center of the ceiling which, when combined with the skylight above it, would make this room well lit throughout the day.

The cabinet contains bandages, a few chemicals, and other basic medical supplies. Those who possess the healing proficiency will gain a +2 bonus when they attempt to practice their art using the equipment and drugs kept here.

Some of the drugs in the cabinet can be very dangerous if misused. Healers are able to pick out a few of them if the party wishes to acquire a few doses of poison for later use. In game terms, there are vials containing poisons of type D, J, and O (as described on Table 51: Poison Strength in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*). Each of the vials weigh 0.5 pounds and holds 4 doses of the indicated toxin.

This room can be flooded with an odorless, colorless gas that causes unconsciousness unless a save vs. paralysis is made. The switch to release these vapors is hidden in the office (area 6).



The Baron

4. Examination Room Two

This room is identical to area 3.

5. Operating Theater

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are covered with clean, white tile, while a skylight and half-dozen large oil lamps assure that it will always be brightly illuminated. At the center of the room is a long, metal table with leather restraints.

Glass cases line all the walls, some of which hold clean, crisply folded linen. Others are stocked with a gleaming array of medical instruments, while a single cabinet near the door is filled with an assortment of glass vials and jars, each clearly containing some manner of drug or chemical. Whether the latter cabinet leaks or not is impossible to say from a casual examination, but the sharp, acrid odor that hangs in the air here certainly make you suspect that this is the case.

The characters are not allowed to freely explore this area during the clinic's business hours. Should they somehow manage to do so anyway, there is a 5% chance that an operation is in progress at any given time. The Dungeon Master is free to decide the details of such an encounter, but should remember that all of Metus's medical work is above board.

The chemicals and instruments in the various cabinets are all medical in nature. Indeed, anyone who has the healing proficiency will receive a +4 bonus to their rolls when attempting to treat patients if they have ready access to these supplies.

In addition to their beneficial effects, skilled healers are able to identify some of these chemicals as deadly toxins. If a player thinks to ask, the DM can assume that there are 4 doses of each of the injected and ingested poisons listed in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* (Table 51). These are stored in stoppered glass vials that weigh 0.5 pounds each. They must be treated with care, however, for they are easily broken.

The DM should keep this in mind if anyone carrying one of the vials is subjected to a sudden impact or falls any great distance.

6. Private Office

You have entered a well furnished office dominated by a large, hardwood desk and an elegant, plush chair. A trio of smaller chairs face the desk which, although they look comfortable, fall well short of the standard established by their counterpart behind the desk.

Two suits of armor flank the door, clearly far more ornamental than functional. Each holds a gleaming sword as if to strike someone passing through the portal into the room. This theme is repeated on the walls of the room, where a dozen ornate paintings of various knights and warriors hang proudly. These paintings are of high quality and it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that several of them are quite valuable.

This is the office from which Metus runs the clinic. He does his work here after the clinic closes, for he spends the daylight hours sleeping in his coffin. The door to the office is not kept locked, for it is here that the staff will come if they recognize the heroes and need to flood the lobby and examination rooms with gas.

As with the desk and files in the lobby, there is nothing incriminating to be found here. All of the papers in the desk are directly related to the business of running the clinic. Even the most in-depth examination of these documents will reveal nothing out of the ordinary. About the worst thing that the heroes will find here is a spelling error or a minor miscalculation in the account book. Even these, however, are rare.

This is not to say that there is nothing to find here. If the visors on the suits of armor are opened, the heroes will note a large switch inside each one. Throwing the switch in the armor on the left causes all of the doors in the lobby (area 2), except those to the examining room, to lock. The mechanism in the other suit will release an odorless, colorless gas that causes everyone in the lobby or examination rooms to make a saving throw vs. paralysis or fall unconscious. Details on these devices and the role that they can play in the adventure were given at the start of this scene.

In the event that the heroes decide to help themselves to some of the paintings, they will note (if they think to ask) that the signatures on

The Baron



each of these is that of Metus himself. The Baron is apparently a very talented painter. On the open market, any one of these paintings would bring between 300 and 600 (1d4+2 x 100) gold pieces. They are, however, very bulky (making them the equivalent of a 50 pound item for encumbrance concerns) and delicate.

One of the paintings is rigged with a trap, just in case someone decides to do exactly what the heroes are doing. Every time they remove one of the paintings from the wall (or check one for traps), the DM should roll 1d10. If the roll is a 1, the painting in question is trapped. If no trap has been found by the time the heroes get to the last one, then that painting is automatically trapped.

Unless the trap is detected and disarmed by a thief or other such adventurer, it is triggered when the weight of the painting is removed from the nail on which it hangs. The instant that the trap goes off, a panel will open in the center of the ceiling and a glass ball some six inches in diameter will fall out. All of the heroes in the room should make a saving throw vs. paralysis. Those who fail are unable to act before the

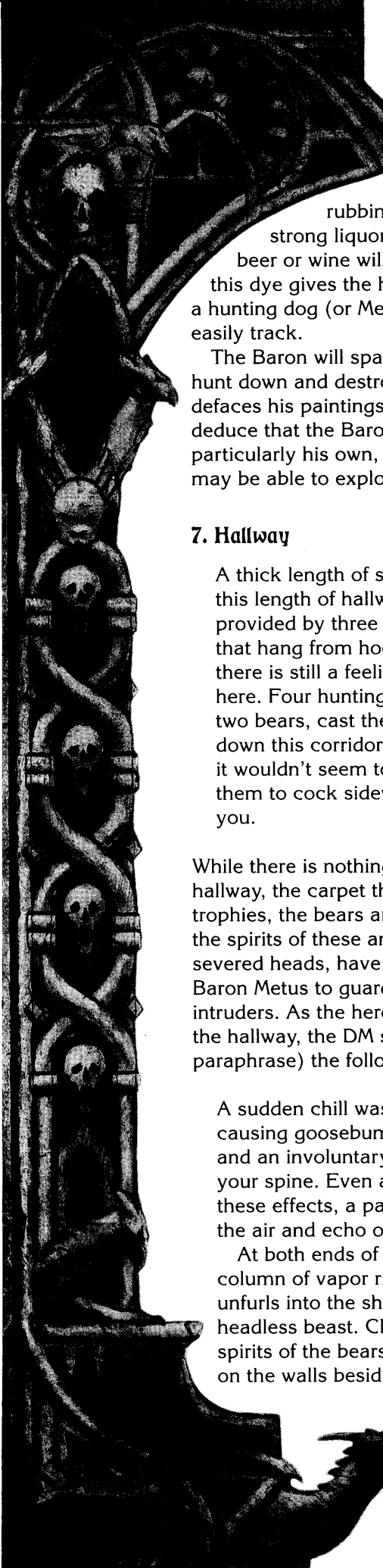
globe hits the floor and shatters. Those who succeed may attempt one action (including trying to catch it) before the orb hits the floor.

Inside the glass sphere is a highly compressed green vapor. When the bulb hits the floor and shatters, the pressure inside hurls shards of glass throughout the room. Everyone not in armor must make a saving throw vs. breath weapons or suffer 1d4 points of damage from these knife-edged fragments.

In addition to the hazard presented by the flying glass, the green vapor inside will fairly boil into the room. Almost instantly, the whole place is filled with a churning emerald cloud. Just as quickly, however, the vapors will dissipate and be gone. At this point, just to keep things interesting, the DM should make everyone in this room attempt a saving throw vs. breath weapons with a -4 penalty.

In truth, this roll is meaningless. The green cloud has merely deposited a chemical residue on the exposed skin of the heroes. Over the course of the next few hours, it gradually causes their flesh to darken and, in about 12 hours, turn jet

The Baron



black. The only way to wash this dye off is with rubbing alcohol (vodka or other strong liquor will work as well, although beer or wine will do nothing). In addition, this dye gives the heroes an unusual odor that a hunting dog (or Metus in his wolf form) can easily track.

The Baron will spare no expense or effort to hunt down and destroy anyone who steals or defaces his paintings. Clever heroes may deduce that the Baron's love for paintings, particularly his own, is a weakness that they may be able to exploit at a later time.

7. Hallway

A thick length of scarlet rug runs along this length of hallway. Adequate lighting is provided by three pairs of hurricane lamps that hang from hooks on the walls, but there is still a feeling of gloom and shadow here. Four hunting trophies, two deer and two bears, cast their glass-eyed gazes down this corridor, looking so lifelike that it wouldn't seem too surprising for one of them to cock sideways for a better look at you.

While there is nothing unusual about the hallway, the carpet that adorns it, or the deer trophies, the bears are less mundane. In truth, the spirits of these animals, which cling to their severed heads, have been commanded by Baron Metus to guard this area against intruders. As the heroes begin to move down the hallway, the DM should read (or paraphrase) the following text:

A sudden chill washes across the hallway, causing goosebumps to rise on your flesh and an involuntary shiver to race down your spine. Even as you try to shake off these effects, a pair of deep, feral roars fill the air and echo off the paneled walls.

At both ends of the hall, a twisting column of vapor rises from the floor and unfurls into the shape of a towering, headless beast. Clearly, these are the spirits of the bears whose heads now hang on the walls beside you.

These are animal ghosts (as described in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*). They attack at once, seeking to destroy those who have trespassed in their territory.

If the heroes think to destroy the hunting trophies that hang on the wall, they can be rid of these creatures without having to battle them. While simply smashing the heads will do nothing more than anger the ghost bears, a *bles*, *remove curse*, or *atonement* spell cast upon them will free the spirits from their servitude. When this happens, the ghosts simply fade back into swirls of vapor and dissipate, never to menace the living again.

Ghost Bears (2): Int Semi-; AL N; AC 0 or 8; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 35 each; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (claws); SA fear, aging touch (5d4 years), and bear hug (2d6); SD ethereal; SW turn undead (as spectres), holy water does 2d4 damage; MR nil; SZ L (9' tall); ML Fearless; XP 2,000 each.

The very sight of these horrors causes all heroes to make an immediate fear check. Heroes of 7th-level or higher gain a +2 bonus to this check. In addition to the fear check, the aura of the animal ghost causes those who fail their checks to lose 1 point of Strength while battling them. Priests of at least 5th level or paladins of at least 7th level are immune to this effect (but not to the fear check).

When they first appear, these creatures are ethereal (AC 0) and cannot be physically harmed by anyone who is not in a similar state. Magic and similar special attacks may still affect them, depending upon the nature of the attack. After they have used their fear attacks, however, they will materialize (becoming AC 8) and attack a single opponent with their claws. In addition to the 1–3 points of damage that these inflict on a victim, anyone who is hit by them ages 5d4 years. Because they are headless, these creatures have no bite attack.

If both of their claw attacks hit, however, they scoop up their victim and inflict a crushing hug. In addition to the 2d6 points of damage that this attack does, anyone caught in the embrace of one of these beasts is aged 5d8 years.

It is worth mentioning that the statistics given for these creatures here are similar, but not identical, to those listed in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*. This is

The Baron

intentional. There is no better way to shake heroes than to have the creatures they encounter vary from the traditional statistics that they may have memorized. For those who are aware that the claws of the average ghost animal do not harm the living (unless they, like it, are ethereal), the sudden pain of bear claws ripping into their flesh will come as a terrifying surprise.

With the bears either destroyed or released from their servitude, the heroes may continue to explore the rest of the tower. There are no treasures or other hazards in this hallway.

8. Library

This chamber is lined with fine oak shelves, which are in turn filled with countless tomes and books. A single square table and the pair of comfortable chairs that flank it are the only furnishings here. A trio of lamps hang from hooks on the ceiling, although only one glows as you enter. An elegant porcelain and crystal hurricane lamp rests on the table.

Those who explore this library will find that it is well stocked with a great variety of works on many subjects. Clearly, Baron Metus is an individual who takes an interest in a great diversity of subjects.

The portion of this collection which seems to be largest and most frequently used are works detailing the lives, careers, and talents of a great many painters and other artists.

Another unusually large section of the library is devoted to arms and armor. As there is not much information about other military matters, however, it would be logical (and correct) to assume that Metus has an interest in armor, swords, knights, heraldry and the other trappings of military life only because of their aesthetic value. In truth, he has no love of warfare or battles, which he considers dirty, messy things. Death and killing, he believes, should be intimate and personal.

Metus has taken steps to keep thieves from looting his library, for many of the volumes that he keeps here are rare and quite valuable (2d4 x 10 gp). The moment that someone enters this room without holding a special catch on the door, Metus's guardian is drawn to the area. It takes the adventure 1d4 rounds to reach the room from wherever it is in the tower at the

time. When the creature arrives, it will burst in on the heroes and attack them at once. The following text describes the arrival of the stalker:

Suddenly, with a boom like thunder, the door to the library bursts open. For the briefest second, you have the faintest impression of a transparent humanoid figure standing in the opening, but then it is gone and the door slams shut again. The sound of a roaring gale fills the room, although the air remains still, and you cannot escape the feeling that something beyond human understanding has joined you in the library.

The monster menacing the heroes is an invisible stalker who was trapped in the Demiplane of Dread several months ago. In exchange for help in finding a way back to the elemental plane of air, the creature has agreed to serve Baron Metus for a time.

Invisible Stalker (1): Int High; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 8; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4 (battering vortex); SA surprise; SD invisibility; SW nil; MR 30%; SZ L (8' tall); ML Elite; XP 3,000.

Because it is, as its name implies, invisible, the stalker is difficult to attack. Anyone who tries to do so suffers a -2 penalty to their attack roll. In most situations, the creature imposes a -6 penalty to the surprise rolls of its opponents. In this case, however, it lost the chance to surprise the heroes when it burst dramatically into the room.

The stalker attacks by creating a swirling vortex of air around one of the heroes which twists and batters him for 4d4 points of damage. He is careful not to use this attack on those near the edges of the room, however, for fear of damaging the Baron's precious books. As a result, the person nearest the center of the room will always be the target of his attacks.

After the invisible stalker has been dealt with, the heroes are free to search the area. They will find no magical or otherwise unusual tomes here. Anyone who is called upon to make a proficiency check in heraldry or artistic ability while they have

The Baron

access to this library receives a +4 bonus to their roll because of the wealth of information on those subjects.

9. Parlor

This is a well-appointed sitting room, with a comfortable divan, a pair of plush armchairs, and a low table of well-polished teak. A stoppered, crystal decanter of crimson liquid and a half-dozen fluted glasses stand on the table. A large fireplace stands is set into the wall in one corner of the room. Although wood and kindling have been placed in it, no blaze burns at this time.

This room is exactly what it appears to be, a parlor for entertaining guests. From time to time, after all, the Baron must receive visitors who have business to discuss with him.

The crimson liquid on the table looks very much like blood, although it isn't. In truth, it is an unusual brand of mead that Metus has acquired a taste for. It is brewed exclusively in distant Kartakass. Anyone who tastes it will know instantly that it is not what it appears to be. Should the heroes opt to steal the decanter, they may sell it and the mead in it for 25 gp. Each of the wine glasses will sell for 10 gp.

Anyone who successfully searches the fireplace for traps or hidden compartments will discover that one section of the bricks is false. It swings open to reveal a small safe. Getting into the safe requires a successful open locks roll, although the safe is not trapped in any way. Inside the safe are a number of items that are quite valuable to Baron Metus. These are a teak box, a sheet of glass, and an ivory disk.

The Teak Box: First, there is a small box made from dark pine with a brass latch and hinges. A small metal plate on it bears an inscription which reads as follows:

With thanks and admiration

The inside of the box is lined with scarlet velvet and has several recessed areas. The largest of these holds a small flintlock pistol.

A small leather pouch in another compartment contains a

quantity of gunpowder, while another holds a small wooden box. Inside the box are a half-dozen gleaming silver bullets (balls, actually).

A *detect magic* or similar spell will reveal that an enchantment hangs about the bullets, although the gun itself is not magical. When fired from this (or a similar weapon, but not hurled by a sling or thrown) these projectiles are deadly to lycanthropes and other creatures with special vulnerabilities to silver. In addition to their normal damage, any such creature hit by one of these bullets must make a saving throw vs. magic or be instantly slain. Despite common misconceptions to the opposite, vampires (like Metus) have no unusual vulnerability to silver. After a bullet is used once, the enchantment on it fades.

In combat, this flintlock can be most effective. It is considered to be a small, piercing weapon that weighs 3 pounds (6 when carried in the box). It has a speed factor of 6 (or 1 if the weapon has been loaded and readied). The flintlock can be readied and fired once per combat round and has a short range of 15 yards. Its medium range is 30 yards and its long range is 45 yards.

A successful hit from the gun does 1d8 points of damage to large or small opponents alike. A natural roll of 8 indicates that the weapon has scored a critical hit. When this happens, the damage die is rolled again and the new result added to the 8. In the event that this additional roll also comes up an 8, the numbers are totalled and the die rolled again. This process is repeated until the damage die does not come up as an 8.

This firearm is very advanced for the typical AD&D® campaign, although such weapons are not unknown in Ravenloft. If the heroes take it, they will have difficulty in finding gunpowder of high enough quality to make the pistol work. A skilled alchemist might be able to supply them with some, but only at a high cost and with a sample of the original material to use as a model. As it is, there is enough gunpowder to fire the gun three times.

The Dungeon Master will have to decide if an individual character is able to figure out how to load and fire the weapon. As a rule, only someone with a proficiency slot allocated to the arquebus (or a similar weapon) should be allowed to make instant and proper use of it.

The Baron

The Ivory Disk: This disk is not nearly as interesting as the heroes might expect it to be. Cut from the tusk of some great animal, it is about half an inch thick and three inches in diameter. On one side, a groove runs straight across the center of the disk, cutting about halfway through it and dividing it evenly into two half-circles.

In truth, this is just a holder for the next item.

The Viewing Glass: Also in the safe is a velvet pouch that holds what appears to be a rather ordinary sheet of glass some three inches wide, five inches long, and half an inch thick. Those with the ability to do so can sense that the glass is heavy with divinational and necromantic magic.

This is the device that Metus uses to keep in touch with Madame Radanavich. When the glass is paced in the holder, the ivory disk described above, it begins to glow faintly. In a lighted room, that's as much as the heroes are able to make of it.

If the heroes look into the glowing glass while in a darkened room, however, they will see something that Van Richten would rather he had never laid eyes upon: the face of Madame Radanavich.

If Van Richten does not look into the glass, the face that appears in the glass should be described only as that of an old, gypsy woman. Ripples in the image will make it impossible for the heroes to realize that they are looking at the transparent image of a ghost. As soon as Radanavich sees the heroes, who she does not recognize, she spits out a few guttural syllables in a language unknown to the heroes and the glass instantly shatters into a thousand razor-edged shards.

If, on the other hand, Van Richten is on hand and has a chance to look into the glass, he and Radanavich will recognize each other instantly. Should that happen, the DM can read his players the following scene:

"Radanavich!" gasps Van Richten in a voice so near silence that it doesn't even qualify as a whisper.

"Van Richten, you old fool," laughs the image of an aged gypsy woman. "I see that you have found me out. No matter, you may have escaped my curse, but you have yet to experience my vengeance!" She lets out a wild laugh and spits out a few magical words. The glass shatters.

Van Richten is both shaken and steeled by this encounter. Now that he knows the nature of his enemy, he is able to accept all that has happened to him. The dream, or most if it, begins to make sense to him. He will share this with the heroes, as well as his history with Radanavich, if he has not already done so.

10. Lower Stairwell

The twisting coils of a great, circular stairway wind upward from the marbled floor of this room and vanish through the crisp, white plaster ceiling. From the gleaming metal handrail to the plush, red carpet on each of the steps, every aspect of this structure speaks of solid elegance.

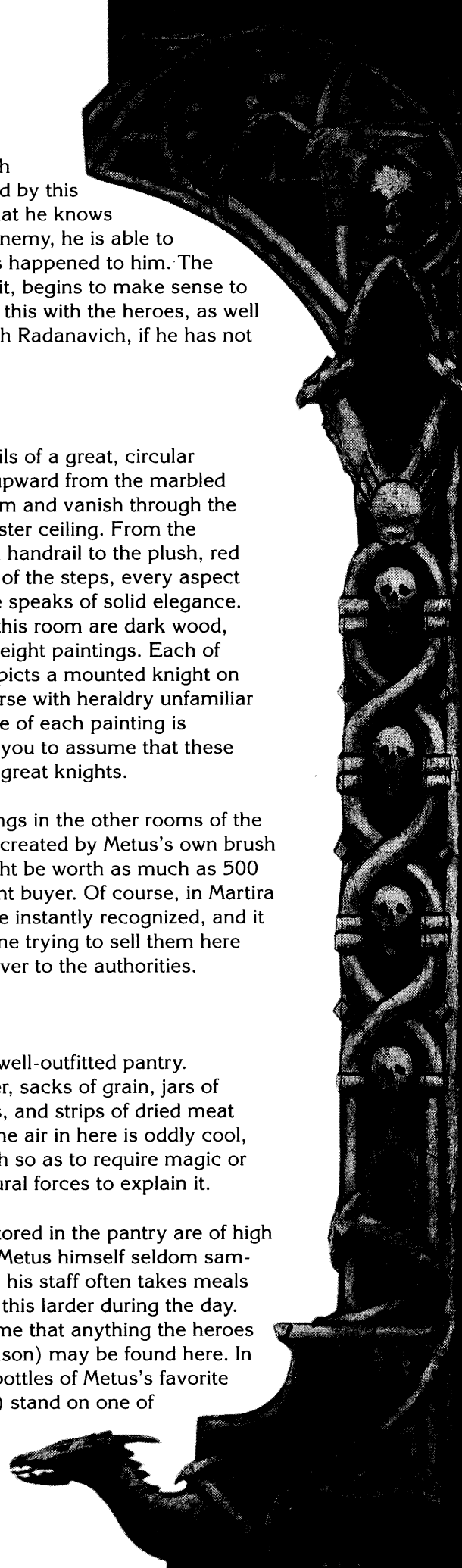
The walls of this room are dark wood, decorated with eight paintings. Each of these works depicts a mounted knight on a heavy war horse with heraldry unfamiliar to you. The tone of each painting is heroic, leading you to assume that these are portraits of great knights.

As with the paintings in the other rooms of the tower, these were created by Metus's own brush and each one might be worth as much as 500 gp each to the right buyer. Of course, in Martira Bay, they would be instantly recognized, and it is likely that anyone trying to sell them here would be turned over to the authorities.

11. Pantry

This room is a well-outfitted pantry. Barrels of flour, sacks of grain, jars of preserved fruits, and strips of dried meat fill the place. The air in here is oddly cool, but not so much so as to require magic or other supernatural forces to explain it.

All of the things stored in the pantry are of high quality. Although Metus himself seldom samples mortal foods, his staff often takes meals from the stores in this larder during the day. The DM can assume that anything the heroes ask for (within reason) may be found here. In addition, several bottles of Metus's favorite mead (see area 9) stand on one of the shelves.



The Baron

12. Den

This room is a den or private office. One wall has been made into a bookshelf which towers above a delicate, but obviously functional, desk. A plush, high backed chair stands next to the desk. Atop the desk are several sheets of parchment, a quill pen, an inkwell, sealing wax, and all of the other things that you would expect to see in such a place.

Searching through the books in this room will reveal only an assortment of texts about economics, medicine, and other topics that have proven important to Metus in the daily operation of his clinic. There is nothing there that of much interest to anyone but an accountant.

The papers on the desk are of little importance. There are no unfinished letters or other documents that might be of value to the heroes. Should anyone cast a *detect magic* spell, they will discover that the quill next to the inkwell is, in fact, magical.

The Forger's Quill: Shortly after coming to Martira Bay, Baron Metus came into possession of this unusual item. Whenever it is used to sign someone's name, it remembers that name and can be commanded to duplicate the signature at any time. The quill only remembers the last name that was signed with it. In order to make it function, someone need only place it on a document that lacks a signature and speak the name of the person whose autograph is desired. If the pen knows it, it will sign it.

At the moment, the pen knows Baron Metus's signature.

13. Kitchen

A more elegant and well equipped kitchen than this one would be hard to imagine. Hanging above a large, cast iron stove is an array of cooking utensils, pots, and pans the scope of which is almost impossible to appreciate. An iron pump stands at the center of a circular basin which holds half a foot of cool, clear water. Everything here is spotlessly clean. Even the dipper that hangs beside the pump gleams.

This room is exactly what it appears to be—a well stocked and well maintained kitchen. Those who search for specific items will almost always, within reason, find them here (as determined by the DM). Without exception, this kitchen has been outfitted with materials that are of such high quality that they are worth 150% of their common counterpart.

14. Dining Room

This room is dominated by a brightly polished, dark pine table which, although not overly large, is as elegant and tasteful as one is likely to find anywhere. Fine porcelain plates and dishes have been set out around a delicate floral centerpiece of roses and lilies. These flowers are clearly fresh, for their delicate perfume hangs lightly in the air.

While this room may appear safe, it is actually quite deadly. The flowers on the table are of a rare type that grows only on the south slope of Mount Gries in Borca and whose fragrance is a lethal poison. Anyone who spends more than one turn (10 minutes) in this room runs the risk of being overcome by them. At the end of each turn, all heroes in the dining room must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or lose consciousness. If victims are not removed from the room promptly, they die at the end of the next turn.

Baron Metus removes these blossoms from the room before entertaining mortals here, although he himself is unaffected by their odor.

First Floor

15. Middle Stairwell

You stand near the middle of a beautiful staircase that curls like the bit of drill into the pine floor below. At its top, some fifteen feet above you, the stairs come to an end before an ornate wood and metal door.

This area is not particularly important, save for the fact that it allows the heroes to reach the great dome above them, where they will confront Baron Metus and, with luck and skill, complete this part of the *Bleak House* campaign.

The Baron

The door at the top of the stairwell is all but vulnerable. Like the dome itself, the door is well constructed and laced with both magical and psionic power. While truly powerful magic, like a *wish* spell, might force it open, the only other way to enter the dome is with the silver key that can be found in Baron Metus's bedroom (area 18).

Anyone who attempts to pick the lock on the door or break it down will trigger a deadly, defensive spell. The second that they attempt to defeat the portal, a great stroke of electrical energy will leap out to strike them. Unless the character is immune to electrical damage, he will suffer 4d8 points of damage. A successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half.

16. Studio

This is clearly the place where Baron Metus allows his creative side to run free. The heady odor of oil paints and solvents is almost overwhelming here. A large easel near the center of the room supports a broad canvas with an unfinished painting on it. The work in progress, like two completed paintings that hang on the walls, depicts a mounted knight in highly ornate armor. Although the heraldry in these renderings is unfamiliar to you, the manner and depiction of the central heroes leads you to assume that they are paladins.

As with the other rooms of the tower, Baron Metus has made sure that his studio is well equipped. There are shelves full of pigments, dozens of various brushes, many pristine canvases, and just about any other art supply that the heroes might think to look for. Underneath a tarp in one corner of the room are two wooden barrels. Each holds 25 gallons of turpentine.

Apart from the potential value of the latter in burning the tower to the ground, there is little of value to the players here. Of course, setting fire to the tower is certain to create an inferno that will spread to neighboring buildings. It would be almost impossible to start such a blaze without giving birth to a fire that would consume most of the neighborhood. Kind Dungeon Masters will allow heroes who decide to burn the tower to make an Intelligence check. If the check is successful, the heroes realize that this act might well cause much of the West District to catch fire.

17. Gallery

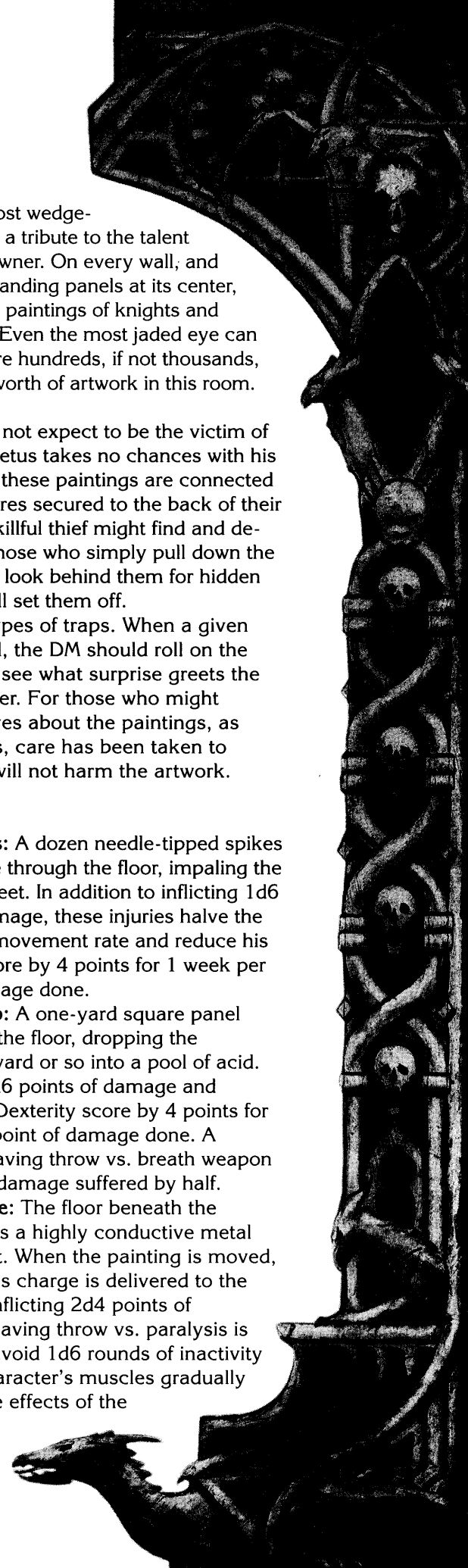
This large, almost wedge-shaped room is a tribute to the talent of the tower's owner. On every wall, and on a few free-standing panels at its center, hang wonderful paintings of knights and barded horses. Even the most jaded eye can tell that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of gold pieces worth of artwork in this room.

Although he does not expect to be the victim of burglars, Baron Metus takes no chances with his artwork. All 18 of these paintings are connected to traps by thin wires secured to the back of their frames. While a skillful thief might find and defeat these traps, those who simply pull down the paintings or try to look behind them for hidden safes and such will set them off.

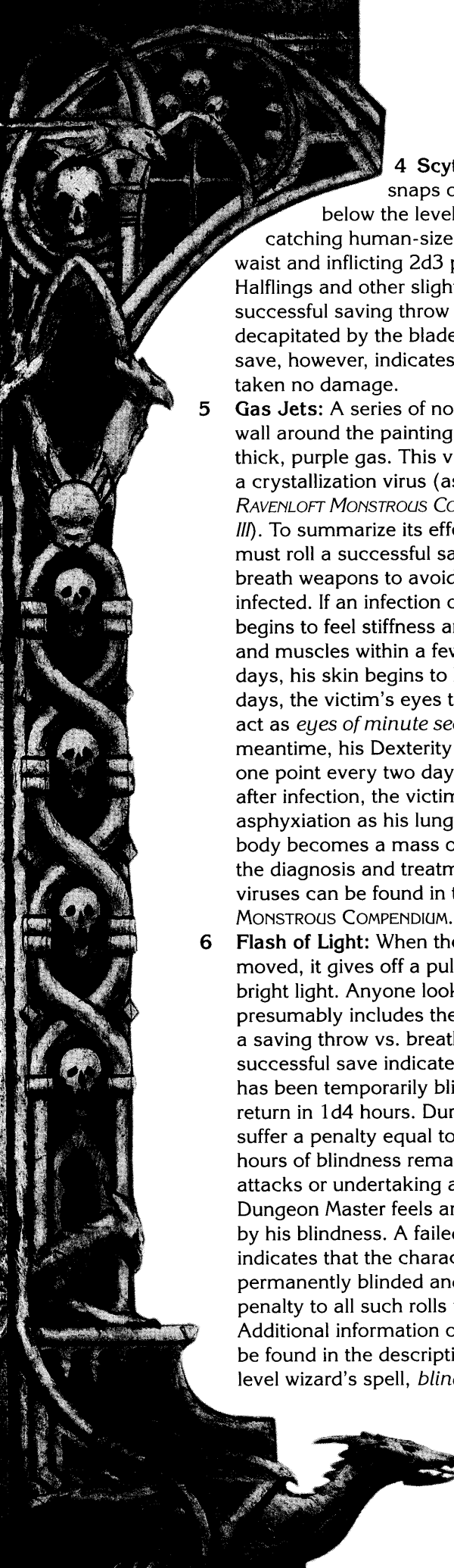
There are six types of traps. When a given painting is moved, the DM should roll on the following table to see what surprise greets the offending character. For those who might concern themselves about the paintings, as Baron Metus does, care has been taken to install traps that will not harm the artwork.

Roll Trap

- 1 Floor Spikes:** A dozen needle-tipped spikes sudden drive through the floor, impaling the character's feet. In addition to inflicting 1d6 points of damage, these injuries halve the character's movement rate and reduce his Dexterity score by 4 points for 1 week per point of damage done.
- 2 Mini-Pit Trap:** A one-yard square panel opens up in the floor, dropping the character a yard or so into a pool of acid. This does 2d6 points of damage and reduces his Dexterity score by 4 points for 1 week per point of damage done. A successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage suffered by half.
- 3 Electric Plate:** The floor beneath the character has a highly conductive metal plate set in it. When the painting is moved, a tremendous charge is delivered to the characters inflicting 2d4 points of damage. A saving throw vs. paralysis is required to avoid 1d6 rounds of inactivity while the character's muscles gradually shake off the effects of the attack.



The Baron



4 Scythe: A deadly blade snaps out of the wall just below the level of the painting, catching human-sized heroes in the waist and inflicting 2d3 points of damage. Halflings and other slight races must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell or be decapitated by the blade. A successful save, however, indicates that they have taken no damage.

5 Gas Jets: A series of nozzles hidden in the wall around the painting unleash a cloud of thick, purple gas. This vapor is heavy with a crystallization virus (as described in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*). To summarize its effects, the victim must roll a successful saving throw vs. breath weapons to avoid becoming infected. If an infection occurs, the victim begins to feel stiffness and pain in joints and muscles within a few hours. In three days, his skin begins to harden. In eight days, the victim's eyes turn to crystals that act as *eyes of minute seeing*. In the meantime, his Dexterity drops by 4 points, one point every two days. Eighteen days after infection, the victim dies from asphyxiation as his lungs crystallize and his body becomes a mass of crystal. Details on the diagnosis and treatment of magical viruses can be found in the aforementioned *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*.

6 Flash of Light: When the painting is moved, it gives off a pulse of blindingly bright light. Anyone looking at it, which presumably includes the thief, must make a saving throw vs. breath weapons. A successful save indicates the the character has been temporarily blinded. His sight will return in 1d4 hours. During that time, he'll suffer a penalty equal to the number of hours of blindness remaining when making attacks or undertaking any action that the Dungeon Master feels are greatly affected by his blindness. A failed saving throw indicates that the character has been permanently blinded and will suffer a -4 penalty to all such rolls until cured. Additional information on this subject can be found in the description of the second level wizard's spell, *blindness*.

18. Master Bedroom

This room is a magnificent bedroom with dark, hardwood floors, ornate wooden panels on the walls, and a smooth, white-plaster ceiling. A large dresser, several free-standing wardrobes, and a pair of comfortable chairs occupy the room, each carefully selected to enhance the atmosphere of elegance and style. Where one would expect to see a great bed, however, there is only a large coffin lying upon a beautiful flowered platform. The perfume of these flowers is heavy and sweet, almost to the point of being nauseating.

For a brief second, a curious feeling washes over you. It seems as if the air has become thick, like honey or molasses, and your every movement is impossibly difficult. Then, as quickly as it began, the sensation passes.

The unusual feeling that the heroes experienced upon entering the room was a unique variation of a permanent *time stop* placed on this room by a powerful female wizard who was Baron Metus's lover for a time. He has since fed on her and destroyed her.

If the player heroes have somehow managed to reach this room during daylight hours, they trigger a magical spell that freezes them for several hours. It is now after sunset, and Metus is free to act. If it was already night, then they were frozen for only a few hours, just long enough to throw their sense of time off.

These flowers, like the ones in the dining room on the floor below, are quite deadly. Anyone who spends at least one turn in this area must make a saving throw vs. poison or be overcome by their odor and fall unconscious. If not removed from the room within ten minutes (one turn), unconscious heroes will die. DMs should note that time spent under the influence of the spell does not count toward this total.

Whether the heroes entered during the day or at night, the Baron is waiting for them in his coffin. As soon as the effects of the time distortion fade from the room (since he is also affected while in this room), the Baron will make his move.

It is important to note that Metus does not wish to battle the heroes here. It is his plan to confront them beneath the dome where he can

The Baron



The Baron

call upon the Thinker's psionic powers to aid him.

Thus, he will spar with them for only a few rounds here before assuming a vaporous form and drifting out of the room. If the players follow him, they will see the incorporeal Metus drift up the spiral staircase (area 15) and through the cracks around the door to the dome (area 23).

If the heroes search the Baron's coffin, they will find a silver key hidden inside it. This is the key to the door at the top of the stairs which leads to the dome.

Elsewhere in the room, the heroes will find a wealth of personal effects, all of which show the Baron to be a man of exquisite taste and refinement. All told, the various items in this room constitute Treasure Type F (save that there are no magical items in the Baron's horde).

19. Bedroom

Although this bedroom is clearly well kept, it is fairly obvious that it has not been used in some time. A large, four-poster bed stands along one wall beside an iron-barred window. A single raven sits on the sill, but your entrance has apparently disturbed him for he utters a harsh squawk and quickly flaps out of sight. Something about the look in his dark eyes disturbs you, but it is impossible to say why.

Not long ago, Baron Metus murdered a young woman in this room. At the time, he was new to the city and had not yet established the subtle feeding patterns that he now employs. So terrified was the innocent lass that her ghost still haunts this room, attacking any male heroes who enter. Lacking the time (or need) to deal with this problem, Metus himself has simply taken to avoiding this room for the time being.

In game terms, the spirit in this room can be considered a banshee, although the young maiden was neither evil nor an elf. Also, instead of attacking with her *wailing*, it is the sobbing cries of this spirit that threaten intruders.

Sobbing Spirit: Int Exceptional; AL CN; AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 35; THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (touch); SA *fear* aura, sobbing (saving throw vs. death magic or die); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, and cold or electrical attacks; SW holy water (2d4), *dispel evil* (fatal), turn as "special" undead; MR 50%; SZ M (6' tall); ML Elite; XP 4,000.

When the heroes enter, the sobbing spirit is invisible. Only when they move deeper into the room will she become visible and attack. During battle, she cannot turn invisible again.

20-21. Bedroom

This room is the same as area 19, save that it is not haunted.

22. Armory

You have discovered a wondrous armory which, although small for such a place, holds eight of the most ornate suits of plate armor you have ever seen. Each stands in a glass display case which has been kept as bright and shining as the armor within it. A dozen swords, also in glass boxes, hang at various points on the walls.

Baron Metus has often been challenged by paladins and other knights. The weapons and armor of those who presented him with the greatest challenges are displayed here. This room is Baron Metus's way of tipping his hat to fellow warriors who have earned his respect.

Two of the armor suits are magical, one being a suit of *plate mail of command* and the other having the properties of *plate mail of fear*. Two of the swords are magical, these being a *sword +4, defender* and a *sword of the planes*.

While these treasures might be considered a great boon to adventurers who find them, the truth is that they are haunted.

Any character who claims one of these items for his own will attract the attention of the restless spirit of the weapon's former owner. While this will not come into play during this adventure, the Dungeon Master should keep it in mind for future games. Whenever the moon (or a moon, in lands with more than one) is full,

The Baron

a character wearing a suit of haunted armor or carrying a haunted weapon is attacked by a creature who has statistics and abilities identical to a death knight. These creatures are fully described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome. This attack will come without warning, with the monsters seeming to spring from a patch of darkness. While fighting the death knight, a character who makes a successful Wisdom check will notice that the weapon or armor (as appropriate) of his foe is the same as that which he took from the tower of Baron Metus.

Being free of the ghost requires that the PC seek out the tomb or grave of the warrior who owned the weapon in life and return it to its rightful owner. A character who travels to the grave and beseeches the spirit to allow him to keep and use the haunted item will have his wish granted if he is of lawful good alignment. Magical means of freeing the character from his haunting may be possible as the Dungeon Master desires.

Second Floor

23. The Dome

If the heroes have found the key in Baron Metus's bedroom or otherwise found a way to bypass the door at the top of the stairs, they are free to enter the great dome. When that happens, the DM should read them the following text, show them the illustration of this area presented on page 32 of the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book, and then conclude the adventure with "Final Vengeance."

With a loud creak, the great door swings open, revealing the incredible room that stands beneath the golden dome.

Your first impression is one of a painfully intense light that flashes wildly and changes color constantly. The source of this glow is a great sphere of luminescence some ten feet in diameter hanging fifteen feet above you, directly beneath the apex of the dome. Patterns on the scintillating surface of the sphere give you the impression of a distorted face as it might appear in a crystal ball.

Jagged streamers of lightning leap out randomly from the sphere to dance chaotically along the inner surface of the dome or floor before they flicker out of

existence and leave behind only the bitter scent of burnt air. The thunderous cacophony created by this artificial storm is deafening.

Four metal shafts, two anchored to the floor and two secured to the inner surface of the dome, bury themselves in the sphere. It is impossible to see if they touch inside the blinding radiance, but it seems likely that they do, forming a great metal "X" beneath the center of the dome.

A tall, elegantly clad man with a red carnation on his lapel stands casually near the edge of the room, taking no notice of the spectacle above him. He holds a saber in each hand and raises one in a salute.

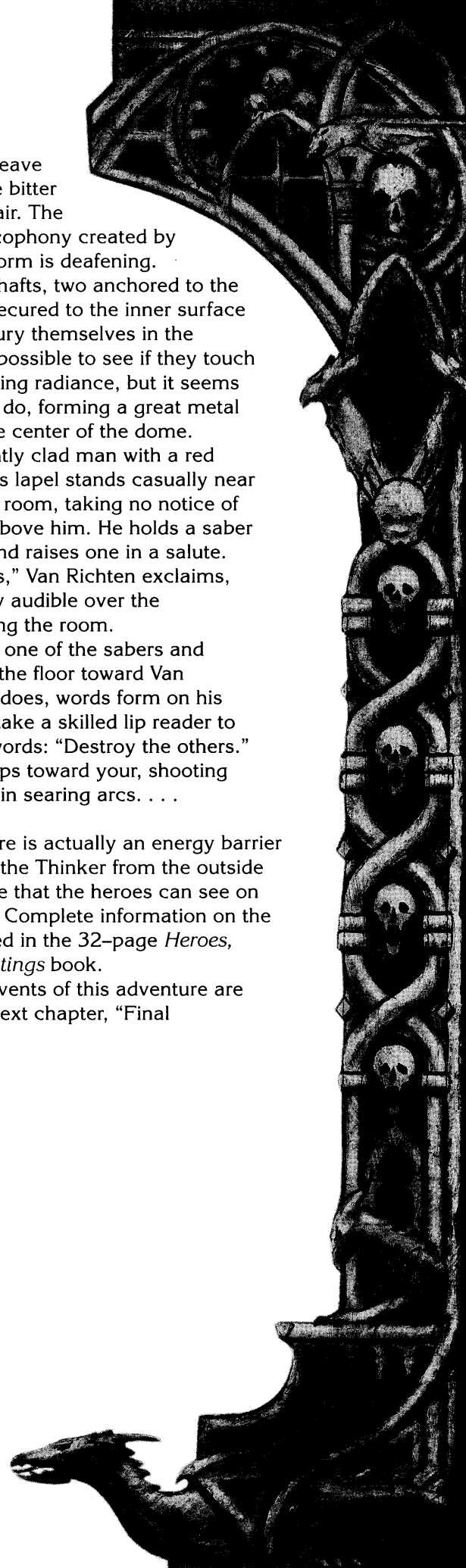
"Baron Metus," Van Richten exclaims, his voice barely audible over the cacophony filling the room.

Metus drops one of the sabers and kicks it across the floor toward Van Richten. As he does, words form on his lips. It doesn't take a skilled lip reader to make out the words: "Destroy the others."

Lightning leaps toward your, shooting from the globe in searing arcs. . . .

The glowing sphere is actually an energy barrier erected to isolate the Thinker from the outside world. It is his face that the heroes can see on the outer surface. Complete information on the Thinker is provided in the 32-page *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

The climactic events of this adventure are described in the next chapter, "Final Vengeance."



The Baron

Final Vengeance

R

evenge proves its own executioner.

—John Ford,
The Broken Heart

As soon as the heroes enter the Golden Dome, they come under assault by the Thinker. Metus wants them occupied, so he can face Van Richten one-on-one. According to his deal with Madame Radanavich, he was to see to it that Van Richten was sent to her, but he holds the Vistani people in low regard, and the opportunity to face his old enemy in single combat is more important to him than his word to a "lesser being." While the Thinker might be able to destroy the heroes with ease, Dungeon Masters should keep in mind the fact that he serves Baron Metus unwillingly. Because of this, he will do as little as possible to aid his master's cause. Indeed, if he is given the chance to betray him, he may well take it.

The Thinker's Attack

At Metus's command, the Thinker unleashes a furious psychic attack. This consists of both psionic assaults directed at the minds of the heroes and physical attacks on their bodies.

Psionic Force

The former are powerful lances of psionic energy designed to destroy the minds of their targets. Each turn, the DM should instruct the character with the highest combined Intelligence and Wisdom score to make a madness check. If two or more heroes have the same totals, each must attempt the saving throw. A failed saving throw results in 2d6 points of damage and a loss of 2 points each from

the character's Intelligence and Wisdom scores. A character reduced to zero or less in either of these categories is killed. Survivors regain one point in each attribute for each day of rest.

If the character being attacked is a psionicist (as defined in the *Complete Psionicist Handbook* or the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* book) who is able to employ one or more psionic defense modes will suffer only 1d6 points of damage and lose only 1 point of Intelligence and Wisdom. There is, however, no way to completely block the Thinker's mental attacks.

Physical Force

In addition to his psionic attacks, the Thinker will continue to lash the inside of the dome with electrical charges. Each round, the character with the best armor class is targeted by one of these strikes. If two or more heroes have equally low armor classes, both are attacked. These heroes must each make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 4d8 points of damage. If the saving throw is successful, the character suffers only half damage.

Baron Metus

While the heroes are trying to survive the hail of attacks unleashed upon them by the Thinker, Baron Metus will leap into combat with Van Richten. The Thinker has been instructed not to harm Van Richten, and Metus even allows the doctor to pick up the sword (which is a *saber +2*) he slid across the floor to him as the heroes entered.

While battling the doctor, Metus leaves himself open to attack by other heroes. Of course, he assumes the Thinker is covering his back

The Baron

so that anyone who attempts to exploit this weakness is subject to both of the attacks described above.

However, heroic acts and other actions on the part of the player characters may turn Metus's revenge into his ultimate defeat.

Victory and Betrayal

A quick review of the Thinker's statistics in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book will reveal that he is not a willing participant in Baron Metus's scheme. He has been forced to serve the vampire and will gladly betray the Baron if the opportunity presents itself. In order to do this, however, a few things must happen.

Collapsing the Sphere

The energy globe in which he is trapped must be destroyed. This is not an easy thing to do, but the heroes may manage it with luck and logic. Because of the electrical nature of the aura, it can be defeated in many ways. Among the most obvious is dousing the sphere with water. If the heroes are able to bring at least 28 gallons of water into contact with the sphere (a *create water* spell cast by a 7th-level priest will do the job), the sphere will explode in a shower of sparks.

Another possible way of dispersing this field is by grounding it. In order to do this, the heroes will have to bridge the space between the floor or walls of the dome and the sphere with a conductive material (like metal wire or chain). The metal shafts that hold the Thinker in place are assumed to be non-conductive. As soon as the sphere is grounded, a stroke of lightning will race down the conductor, and the sphere will vanish.

There may be other ways to defeat the sphere, but these are the most obvious. As a rule, the Dungeon Master should reward clever plans with success and poorly thought out ones with failure.

The instant that the globe is destroyed, the Thinker will cease his attacks, both mental and physical, on the heroes. The Dungeon Master should read the following text to the players to describe what they see at that time:

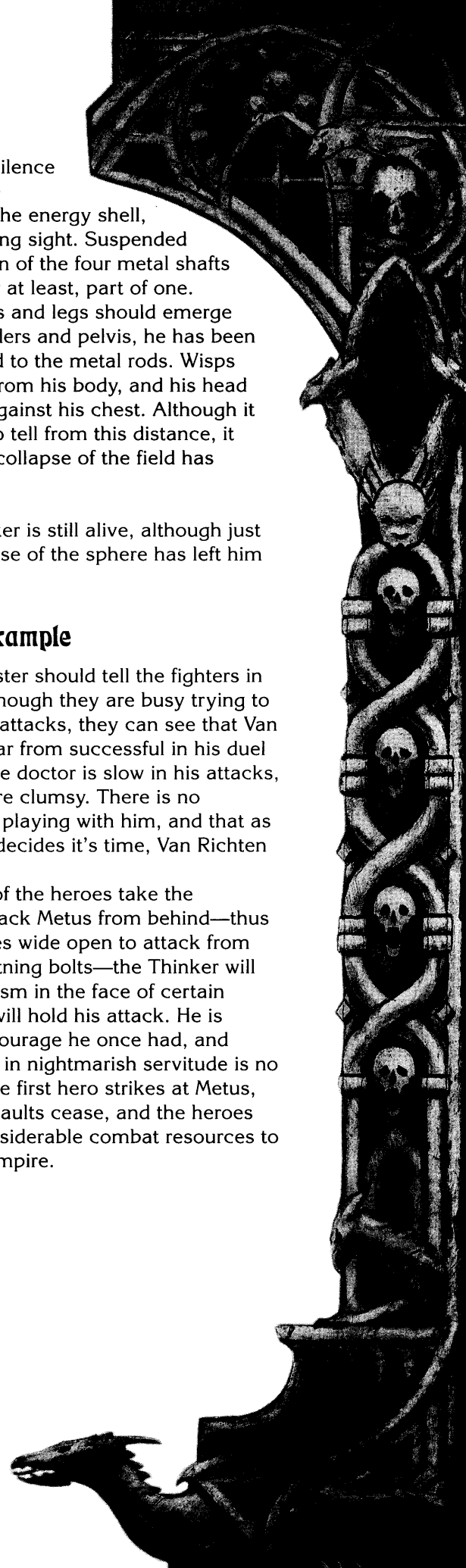
In the sudden silence that follows the destruction of the energy shell, you see a chilling sight. Suspended and the junction of the four metal shafts is a man . . . or at least, part of one. Where his arms and legs should emerge from his shoulders and pelvis, he has been somehow fused to the metal rods. Wisps of smoke rise from his body, and his head hangs limply against his chest. Although it is impossible to tell from this distance, it looks as if the collapse of the field has killed him.

In truth, the Thinker is still alive, although just barely. The collapse of the sphere has left him stunned.

Leading By Example

The Dungeon Master should tell the fighters in the group that although they are busy trying to avoid the psionic attacks, they can see that Van Richten is being far from successful in his duel against Metus. The doctor is slow in his attacks, and his parries are clumsy. There is no question Metus is playing with him, and that as soon as vampire decides it's time, Van Richten will die.

If one or more of the heroes take the opportunity to attack Metus from behind—thus leaving themselves wide open to attack from the Thinker's lightning bolts—the Thinker will admire their heroism in the face of certain destruction, and will hold his attack. He is reminded of the courage he once had, and decides that a life in nightmarish servitude is no life at all. Once the first hero strikes at Metus, all the psionic assaults cease, and the heroes can turn their considerable combat resources to destroying the vampire.



The Baron

Victory

As the heroes begin to combat Metus, read the following text:

"You'll pay for this, you cur," the vampire bellows at the crackling sphere overhead as he parries your attacks. "I don't know where you suddenly found a spine, but these whelps are no match for me! Once they have been destroyed, I'll have you regret your betrayal!"

Metus dodges another strike, stepping back a few paces. He straightens his back, and raises his sword in a salute to you. He sneers, "You cowards have robbed two old enemies of the chance to settle their differences like gentlemen. You will not only die, but you will serve me in death."

What follows should be a pitched battle. Although outnumbered, Metus (who is double-specialized with the saber) should present a formidable challenge. The key here is drama. The heroes should be able to save Van Richten and defeat Metus, but it must not be a cheap victory. Depending upon the personalities of the players, the Dungeon Master should decide whether he wants to allow the heroes or Van Richten to deliver the death blow to Baron Metus. It is vital that this final showdown not end up with the player heroes watching as Van Richten drives a stake through the vampire's heart. It might be that Van Richten will put the finishing touches on the vampire's demise, but the players must feel that it was their efforts that brought down Baron Metus.

This point is especially true if the heroes manage to bring the Thinker in on their side of the battle. Because of Metus's undead nature, and the fact that the Thinker has learned to fear him greatly, it should be impossible for his psionic powers to bring down the vampire.

Aftermath

Once the battle is over, and (if the Dungeon Master chooses) Van Richten has dramatically cut Metus's head from his body with the vampire's own blade, a voice is heard. If the sphere is still intact, the voice will seem to issue from the walls of the dome. If the sphere has been destroyed, then it is a weak, hoarse sound coming from the broken bit of humanity impaled on the shafts.

"My thanks for showing me the path to freedom, and my apologies for all the pain I have caused you, Dr. Van Richten. I could feel you were a man of pure heart and noble spirit, but I felt powerless to resist the Baron and the monster who held his leash. Now I am free, and my final act in this life is to show my gratitude by showing you the path to lair of the mastermind behind all your tribulations—the witch known as Radanavich."

If Madame Radanavich's involvement was as of yet unknown to the heroes, Van Richten will gasp at the sound of her name. He will tell the heroes of his dealings with her, as they are presented in the detailed information on Van Richten in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

If the heroes wish to speak with the Thinker, detailed information on him can also be found in the "Heroes" section of the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book. He will share what he knows about Radanavich's plan against Van Richten, which is very little. All the Thinker knows is that he was to send nightmares to the doctor that would cause him to seek out mental treatment, and then to continue the assaults to break his will. He refuses any offers of assistance, saying that his life was over long ago and that this one last act will hopefully serve to wipe at least a small portion of the slate clean.

When you think the heroes have finished interacting with the Thinker (or if they decide to attack him or force aid on him), he bids them farewell. They feel the air around them get charged with energy, and then there is a bright flash. When their vision clears, the heroes find themselves in the sense-numbing Mists of Ravenloft.

The campaign continues in Book Two, "Homecoming."

The Baron

Traveling the Mists

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat, the mist in face.

—Robert Browning, *Prospice*

As all Dungeon Masters of the RAVENLOFT game world know, mist navigation is a means of moving characters across large expanses—and perhaps even across time—in a matter of moments. However, the Mists can be much more than just a transportation device. They can also be a frightening setting for adventure.

Mistbound Heroes

One of the unnerving things to both the players and their characters is the unpredictable, and the Misty Border is one of the most unpredictable locations in all of the AD&D campaign worlds. It cannot be mapped because what lands that exist there are constantly moving and changing shape, and no place can be considered safe because domains may form without warning and creatures may be drawn in from the prime material plane at any time.

Any monster appropriate to the Demi-plane of Dread may be encountered in the Mists, but mist ferrymen and mist horrors (see the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix I and Appendix III*) are among the most common. Creatures inappropriate to Ravenloft may be encountered on rare occasions as well. By using such creatures, the DM can play on the surreal nature of the Mists. Keeping things bizarre, grotesque, and unpredictable is the key to running an extended sojourn in the Mists.

The Islands of Terror, the free-floating domains of minor dark lords, are also potential encounters. Most of those lands are as dark and sinister as any place in the Core because their isolation allows the evil and insanity of their lords to run unchecked. Heroes who wander into the Mists hoping to escape may find realms worse than anything the Core has to offer.

The Journey to Bleak House

When the Thinker deposits the heroes in the Mists at the end of "The Baron," he placed them as close to Madame Radanavich's lair as he could. Now the party must, depending on the will of the DM, travel a certain distance to get there. Even if the heroes decide they are lost and just stay in one place, as many encounters as the DM wants to expose them to (and, eventually, even the House in the Mists) will come to them.

Horrors and Ferrymen

There are at least two types of creatures that are unique to the Mists. These are the mist horrors and the mist ferrymen, and where one is discovered, the other is not far away.

The mist ferrymen are described in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*, but the mist horrors were featured in the original *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*, which has been out of print for some time. Here is a brief description of the mist horrors, in case a DM without access to the out-of-print collection wishes to use them

Mist Horrors: Spawned from the spirits of beings not evil enough to warrant their own domain, these creatures can assume any form they wish, but it always consists of mist. They have telepathic abilities, and use these to either make travelers in the Mists feel safe (as they are about to attack), or feel fear (once the attack has begun). They are also able to sense what their intended victim fears most through this ability. Mist horrors can only be hit by magical weapons of +2 or better enchantment and have an innate magic resistance of 50%. They are 5 Hit Die creatures and can attack victims twice per round, inflicting 2d6 points of damage each attack. They are worth 3,000 XP if successfully destroyed.



I have often thought upon
death, and I find it the
least of all evils.”
—Francis Bacon,
“An Essay on Death”



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Ravenloft[®]

Campaign Adventure



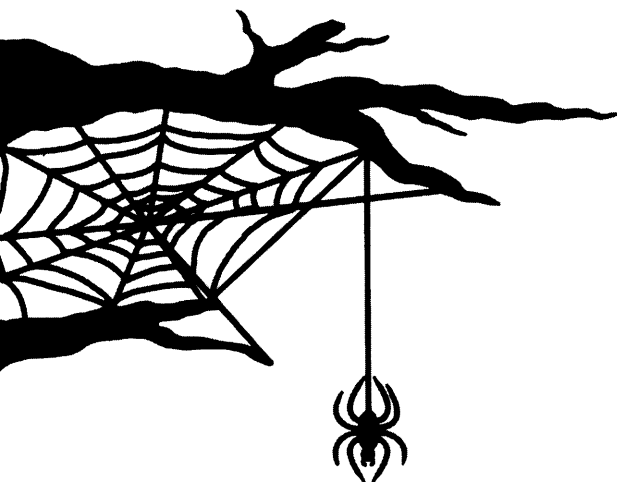
Bleak House

Book Two: Homecoming

"Fortunes of Ravenloft" Reference Sheet

Use this sheet to track the information determined by Madame Radanavich's tarokka reading, as well as the manifestation status of the rooms of Bleak House. The Encounter Notes section is useful for noting target heroes, the location of objects, and the appearance of the enslaved spirits.

| Master Card | Hero Name | Room No. | Manifestation | | Encounter Notes |
|-------------|-----------|----------|---------------|-------|-----------------|
| | | | Minor | Major | |
| The Warrior | _____ | 1 | • | • | _____ |
| The Wizard | _____ | 2 | • | • | _____ |
| The Rogue | _____ | 3 | • | • | _____ |
| The Priest | _____ | 4 | • | • | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 5 | • | • | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 6 | • | • | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 7 | • | • | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | 8 | • | • | _____ |
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| | | 40 | • | • | _____ |



Bleak House

Book II: Homecoming

Credits

Design: Dave Gross
Development and Editing: Steve Miller
Project Coordination: Harold Johnson
Box Cover Art: Dana Knutson
Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian
Interior Art: Valerie A. Valusek
Border Art: Dana Knutson
Graphics: Dawn Murin & Greg Kerkman
Art Director: Bruce A. Zamjahn
Typography: Angelika Lokotz
Proofreader: Cindi Rice

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TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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Homecoming

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Adventure Background | 3 |
| Adventure Summary | 4 |
| Fear, Horror, and Madness Checks | 4 |
| Bleak House and Gothic Earth | 4 |
| Chapter One: The Hauntings | 5 |
| Daylight Ghosts | 5 |
| The Fated Day | 7 |
| Spirits of the Night | 8 |
| The Spirit of Bleak House | 13 |
| Chapter Two: Fortunes of Ravenloft | 14 |
| The Tarokka Reading | 14 |
| Chapter Three: The Van Richten Estate | 18 |
| Arrival from the Mists | 18 |
| Arrival on Gothic Earth | 18 |
| The Mists | 18 |
| Night & Day | 18 |
| The Weather | 19 |
| Daytime Wandering Encounters | 19 |
| Nighttime Wandering Encounters | 20 |
| The Grounds | 21 |
| Chapter Four: Bleak House | 30 |
| Entering Bleak House | 30 |
| Ground Floor | 31 |
| First Story | 41 |
| Second Story | 49 |
| The Attic | 53 |
| The Cellars | 54 |
| Chapter Five: The Last Mile | 57 |
| Storm of Vengeance | 57 |
| The House on the Fourth Night | 57 |
| The Final Confrontation | 58 |
| Conclusions | 60 |
| Dénouement | 63 |



Introduction

I had worked so upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity—an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn—a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

—Edgar Allan Poe,
“The Fall of the House of Usher”

This adventure is set in the Van Richten estate, a free-floating realm in the Mists of Ravenloft. It is designed for 4–6 characters of levels 7–12.

While this scenario serves as the conclusion to the other adventure included in this boxed set, it can also stand alone with relatively minor modifications. Removing most of the monsters and emphasizing the intangible supernatural phenomena makes this adventure especially apt for a *Masque of the Red Death* campaign. Regardless of where it is set, you may play this adventure many times without it unfolding exactly the same way twice.

Adventure Background

Of the many enemies Rudolph van Richten has made in his years of opposing the supernatural, none has hated him so fiercely as his first enemy.

Madame Radanavich was a leader of a Corvara Vistani tribe that kidnapped Van Richten’s son. Van Richten pursued the Vistani caravan, and, unleashing powers he didn’t understand and couldn’t control, he brought about the slaughter of Radanavich and her tribe. As Radanavich died, she cursed Van Richten: “Live you always among monsters, and see everyone you love fall beneath their claws, starting with your son!”

Although she died that night, Madame Radanavich’s hate sustained both her and her tribe. The vengeful spirit lingered among the *reanimated* remains

of her relatives, and she took charge of them in death as she had in life. The disembodied Radanavich guided her followers through the Mists, and, a decade after her death, she discovered Van Richten’s ancestral home, Richten Haus. Abandoned by Van Richten himself, the estate only awaited new tenants.

There Radanavich made her lair and used her powers as a Vistani seer to watch Van Richten’s triumphs and tragedies from afar. Over the years, Radanavich has delighted herself in capturing the spirits of those who have died as a result of the curse she placed on Van Richten. Many are now prisoners in the house. Eventually the dark powers took notice, and the Mists descended upon the Van Richten estate.

Eight years ago, the last living Radanavich forgave Van Richten for his crimes against the Vistani. Van Richten in turn purged himself of the hatred he felt toward Ravenloft’s nomadic people. From her domain, Radanavich fumed. Van Richten could not be allowed to escape her revenge so easily. As she desperately sought a way to reclaim her revenge, a handsome stranger appeared in the crumbling manor house. He never divulged his identity, but his dusky skin marked him a Vistani. So when he offered her the means of revenge, Radanavich seized it. The gentleman caller reclaimed Baron Metus from beyond the veil of death and showed Madame Radanavich how she could do the same to the spirits of those slain by her curse on Van Richten. Then, as suddenly as he had arrived, the nameless stranger was gone.

With the aid of Baron Metus, Madame Radanavich recruited Declaude Heinfroth to destroy Van Richten’s mind and will. Once the doctor was completely broken, the plan was to send him through the Mists to Richten Haus, and Radanavich’s final revenge. However, the intervention of a group of heroes spoiled that scheme. Now those heroes have come in search of her.

Adventure Summary

When the heroes and Van Richten first arrive, they will most likely be in need of rest and

Introduction

healing. However, they have only one day of relative peace. The longer Madame Radanavich can torture Van Richten with twisted reminders of the lives lost in his war on the supernatural, the more powerful she becomes. Within four days, she grows strong enough to destroy her enemies utterly. However, all is not lost, for a spirit that has awakened in the house recognizes its true master. It is struggling against the overpowering evil of Madame Radanavich, so the heroes must take specific steps to strengthen this separate supernatural force and bring allies to their side.

Fear, Horror, and Madness Checks

As with all RAVENLOFT® adventures, rolling on the fear and horror check tables should be reserved for players who don't role-play their characters' reactions to scenes of terror.

Players should always roll madness checks when they are called for. If a character suffers a form of madness and the player role-plays the affliction well, then you might consider granting some leniency in the penalties that the madness inflicts. For instance, if a character is stricken with amnesia and the player acts out the condition, allow a saving throw vs. paralyzation after one full day of madness. Success indicates that the hero has forced his insanity into remission for one hour per point of Wisdom and Intelligence combined. This occurs once per day.

Bleak House and Gothic Earth

More so than any other adventure intended for the Demiplane of Dread, this adventure can be easily adapted to the world presented in the *Masque of the Red Death* accessory, although a few minor alterations are in order.

First, Bleak House won't be floating detached from reality, although a sense-numbing fog can certainly roll across the estate. Second, all references to demihumans should be ignored. Third, the DM may have to modify Van Richten's background and history a bit in order to make the adventure work. For example, Van Richten could be replaced with Professor Abraham van Helsing. The DM could also use any of the interesting characters presented in the *Gothic Earth Gazetteer* accessory. The key thing, however, is that the character who replaces Van Richten be a leader in the battle against the minions of the Red Death.



The Hauntings

R

est, rest, perturbed
spirit!

—William
Shakespeare,
Hamlet

There are three types of spirits within the domain of Bleak House: those who were brought here as slaves of Madame Radanavich, the manifestations of dead servants, and finally the spirit of Bleak House itself. These spirits perform varying roles throughout this adventure.

Daylight Ghosts

The daylight ghosts of Bleak House are corporeal spirits who endlessly repeat the day of their demise. They are the servants who worked in the house during Van Richten's childhood, and they died during a night of passion, madness, and terror. They are not controlled by Madame Radanavich but have been given existence by the spirit of the house which, recognizing that its true master has come home, is attempting to help Van Richten.

The ghosts of the house do not initially know that they are undead. Their bodies are solid and substantial, just like normal humans. They suffer damage, react to scenes of fear and horror, and act in all ways as living beings.

With the exception of Josef, the only supernatural powers these corporeal ghosts manifest are that they do not truly die when their bodies are killed. If "slain" one day, the ghost's body vanishes at dawn, and reappears immediately in its own bed. The ghost awakens with the belief that its death was but a dream. No amount of persuasion can convince a corporeal ghost that it is undead. However, certain events can "awaken" these beings, imbuing them with full ghostly powers and making them powerful allies of the heroes. Full details on these powers are included in Chapter Five, as it is during that

section they become important.

Josef Bierce

Steward and chief servant of Richten Manor, Josef was father to Elise and Gretta Bierce. When he began working for Otto van Richten, Josef was a pleasant and faithful servant, as well as a warm and loving father and husband.

When his wife, Marlene, died soon after the birth of their second daughter, his demeanor changed for the worse. While he remained diligent in his duties, Josef became aloof and cold. Where once he commanded the other servants through respect, now he ruled with terse orders and veiled threats of punishment or dismissal. Where once he had seen Richten Haus as his home, he now viewed it as a prison from which he would never escape unless he took steps to ensure his own and his daughters' futures.

In the later years of his life, Josef failed his duty in one shameful way: He began to embezzle money from his master's estate. He never took much at one time, adjusting the ledgers carefully to conceal his theft by overstating legitimate purchases. With luck and careful investment, he believed he could give his daughters a life of advantage and privilege.

Unfortunately for Josef, his own guilt over his crimes made him increasingly paranoid. He suspected everyone of watching him, especially the half-breed Vistani. When Josef found his ledger missing on his last day of life, he was certain Casimir had stolen it to blackmail him. He sought out Casimir and murdered him.

Josef appears as a solid, slightly portly man of about 40 years. Years of responsibility and bitterness have left sorrowful tracks upon his face. His hair and eyes are leaden gray. When he talks, it is with a rich and controlled voice. If he were not so terse and

The Hauntings

aloof, he could be a commanding speaker. Josef treats Van Richten and the heroes with polite respect; he is not an unctuous lackey, but a competent steward.

Josef Bierce: Int High (12); AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon; SD cannot be slain.

Elise Bierce

Modestly beautiful with her pale blond hair and striking gray eyes, Elise became the object of more than one young man's fancy during her life. Unfortunately, she also became the object of Karl Mueller's obsession. While usually quite aware of the interest of her admirers, Elise remained oblivious to Karl's lingering eyes.

Casimir, on the other hand, was fascinating to Elise. Much older than she had fancied her future suitor to be, he still enthralled her with his Vistani mystique and his romantic tales of the wandering life. Elise was half in love with him, or at least with her romantic ideal of him.

Like her father, Elise treats Van Richten and the heroes with polite respect. She is even more proud than he, however, dreaming that one day she will marry a man who works as something other than a servant. Her pride never turns to haughtiness, and she is quick to obey the reasonable commands of Van Richten, her father, or the heroes.

Elise Bierce: Int Very (11); AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon; SD cannot be slain.

Like the other daylight ghosts, Elise cannot be permanently slain. Elise always wakes the next day in her bed, reality having reset itself for her.

If saved from her murderer, Elise realizes that she is actually dead, and assumes her full ghostly aspect and can counter abilities of the captured spirits aiding Radanavich. See Chapter Five for details.

Casimir

Before his death, Casimir had been employed as the estate's gatekeeper for only three years. He loved to daydream of a vagabond life he would never actually lead.

Handsome and vital even in his late 40s, Casimir stood out among the male servants of Richten Haus. Never married, Casimir often joked that he was looking for the perfect woman, and so would never find a wife. That never stopped him from hinting to any and every woman of his class that he suspected his search might be at an end whenever he gazed into her eyes. Ironically, he always looked upon Elise Bierce as a favorite niece, despite his flirtations. Neither Josef's protective nature nor Karl's unbridled jealousy were ever justified.

Casimir's steadfast companion in life was his hound, Thane, who watched the gate at night while his master slept. Karl poisoned the dog a few hours before he planned to "elope" with Elise. Casimir spent his last living hours searching for his canine friend. Instead, he found death at the hands of Josef.

Casimir: Int High (14) AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 5; #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon; SD cannot be slain.

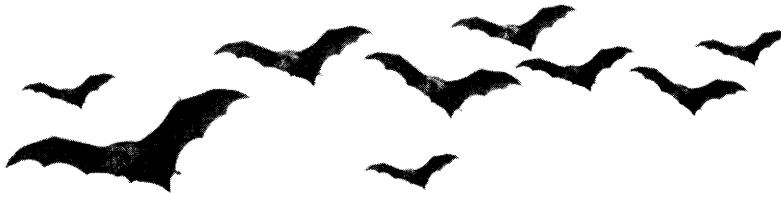
If reunited with Thane, Casimir realizes his true nature. He appears at the climax as a fully realized ghost. See Chapter Five for details.

Karl Mueller

A big and powerful man with penetrating blue eyes, Karl worked as a porter for several years before taking service at Richten Haus. Even on the docks of Martira Bay, he had an aura of danger about him; if he never found himself in a drunken fight, it was because none of the other porters ever became so drunk as to challenge him.

When he came to Richten Haus, Karl took an immediate dislike to Josef, who had grown somewhat imperious and heavy-handed among the servants since his wife's death. Perhaps it was Karl's animosity for Josef which so fueled his attraction to Elise; to win her love would be a

The Hauntings



blow to the man he despised. Karl persuaded himself that Elise loved him and that he had only to “rescue” her from her life as a maid to win her as his wife.

When the fateful day came, Karl presented himself to Elise and was dumfounded when she rejected him. He forced his way into her room to argue with her, but when she tried to scream he clapped a heavy hand over her mouth. He squeezed her throat so tightly and for so long that she never made another sound.

Karl Mueller: Int Average (9); AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; F3; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (strangling) or by weapon; SA Strangulation; SD cannot be slain.

Karl is a naturally talented strangler, with long fingers and large, powerful hands. Unlike Radovan (see page 21), Karl has had little practice with his “art.” Still, his hands are no less deadly for his lack of experience.

If accused of wanting to murder Josef or Elise, Karl protests strongly. In fact, he did not enter the house intending to murder Josef, and he never intended to kill Elise. The one misdeed he will acknowledge, if presented with an accusation and at least the suggestion of evidence, is having abandoned Gretta on the island. When it becomes apparent that she died because of him, he will be wracked with guilt.

Unlike the other daylight spirits, Karl is not a help to the heroes in their final encounter . . . unless clever heroes are able to persuade him that one of the spirits under Madame Radanavich’s control is the object of Elise’s love. Karl’s obsession with Elise makes him highly vulnerable to suggestion. See Chapter Five for details on Karl’s impact on the conclusion.

Additionally, the ghost of little Gretta Bierce appears from 5 a.m. until Noon. She spends the morning playing in the house and ventures outside after lunch. She is a 0-level human with 2 hit points, long blond hair, and piercing eyes. She is somewhat shy and will hide whenever a hero pays her mind. However, if the hero is

persistent, she warms to him and is revealed to be a very insightful little girl.

Once Karl abandons her on the island in the lake, she disappears from the domain; this is because the area of the island she went to has been cut off by the Mists.

The Fated Day

The daylight spirits are trapped in a repeating cycle of murder and revenge. Each day of their undead existence begins as they wake in their own rooms, none of them aware of what happened the day before—or of what is fated to happen again this day. Unless the heroes can break this pattern, the spirits are doomed to repeat their tragedy.

Interfering with the Cycle

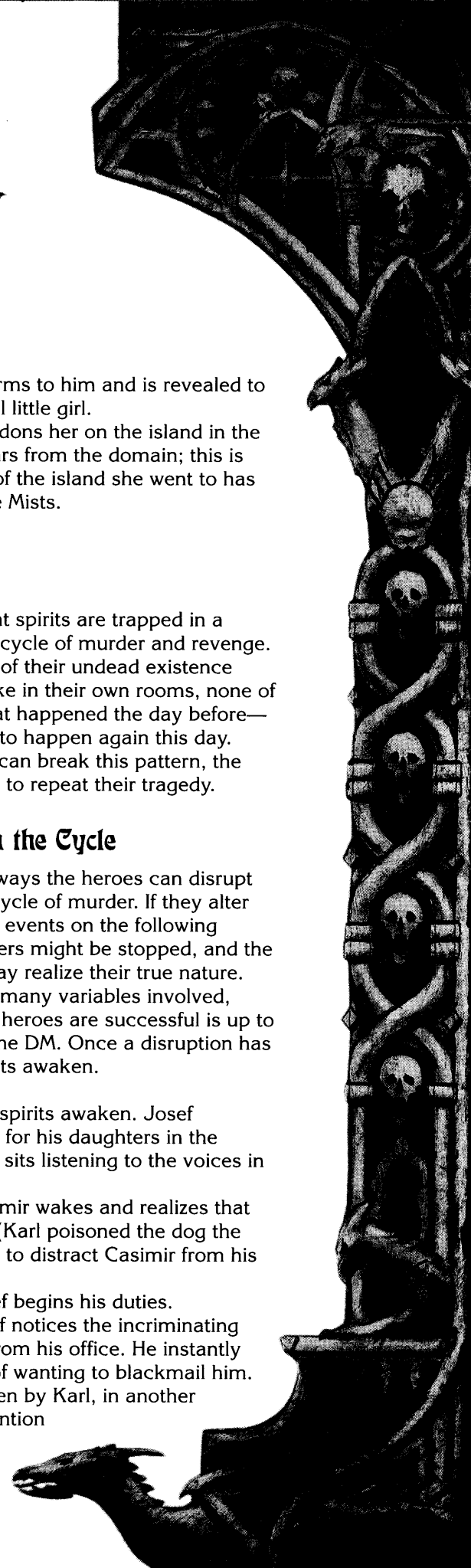
There are several ways the heroes can disrupt the never-ending cycle of murder. If they alter one or more of the events on the following timeline, the murders might be stopped, and the ghosts involved may realize their true nature. Since there are so many variables involved, whether or not the heroes are successful is up to the judgement of the DM. Once a disruption has occurred, the ghosts awaken.

5:30 a.m.: The spirits awaken. Josef prepares breakfast for his daughters in the kitchen, while Karl sits listening to the voices in his cottage.

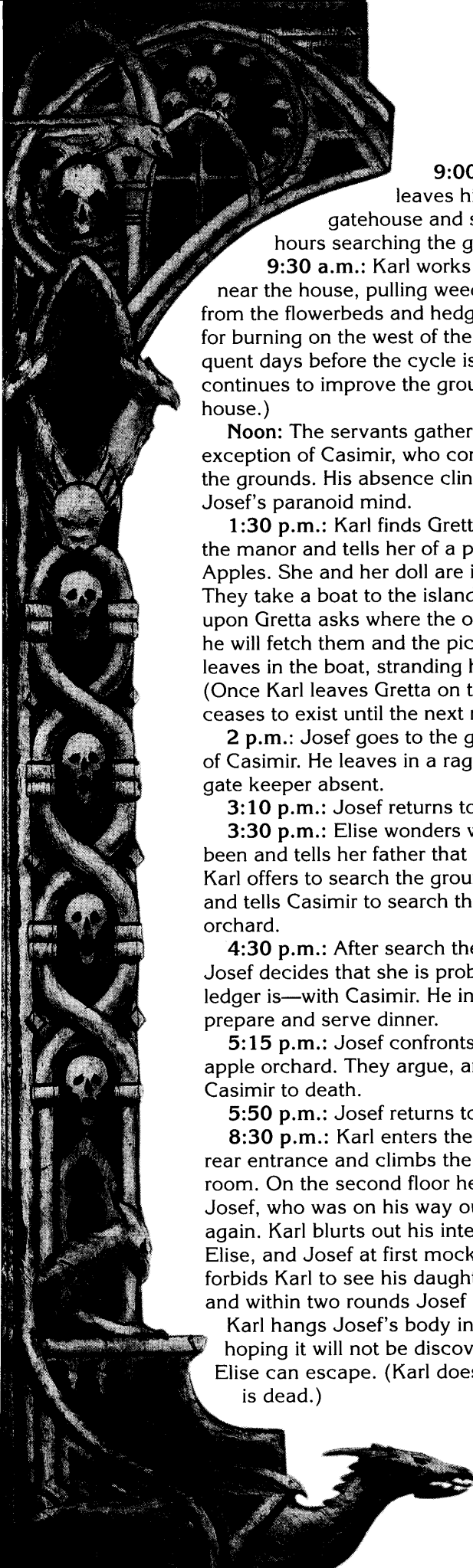
7:00 a.m.: Casimir wakes and realizes that Thane is missing. (Karl poisoned the dog the day before, hoping to distract Casimir from his plan to elope.)

7:30 a.m.: Josef begins his duties.

8:30 a.m.: Josef notices the incriminating ledger is missing from his office. He instantly suspects Casimir of wanting to blackmail him. (In fact, it was stolen by Karl, in another effort to divert attention from the elopement.)



The Hauntings



9:00 a.m.: Casimir leaves his post at the gatehouse and spends the next few hours searching the grounds for Thane.

9:30 a.m.: Karl works on the grounds near the house, pulling weeds and detritus from the flowerbeds and hedges, building a pile for burning on the west of the house. (On subsequent days before the cycle is broken, Karl continues to improve the grounds nearest the house.)

Noon: The servants gather for lunch, with the exception of Casimir, who continues to wander the grounds. His absence clinches his guilt to Josef's paranoid mind.

1:30 p.m.: Karl finds Gretta playing behind the manor and tells her of a picnic on the Isle of Apples. She and her doll are invited, he says. They take a boat to the island at 2 p.m., whereupon Gretta asks where the others are. Karl says he will fetch them and the picnic basket and leaves in the boat, stranding her on the island. (Once Karl leaves Gretta on the island, the ghost ceases to exist until the next morning.)

2 p.m.: Josef goes to the gatehouse in search of Casimir. He leaves in a rage when he finds the gate keeper absent.

3:10 p.m.: Josef returns to the manor.

3:30 p.m.: Elise wonders where Gretta has been and tells her father that the girl is missing. Karl offers to search the grounds near the lake, and tells Casimir to search the far side of orchard.

4:30 p.m.: After search the house for Gretta, Josef decides that she is probably where his ledger is—with Casimir. He instructs Elise to prepare and serve dinner.

5:15 p.m.: Josef confronts Casimir in the apple orchard. They argue, and Josef stabs Casimir to death.

5:50 p.m.: Josef returns to the house.

8:30 p.m.: Karl enters the manor through the rear entrance and climbs the stairs to Elise's room. On the second floor he is stopped by Josef, who was on his way out to look for Gretta again. Karl blurts out his intention to marry Elise, and Josef at first mocks, then angrily forbids Karl to see his daughter. Karl attacks, and within two rounds Josef is dead, strangled.

Karl hangs Josef's body in the linen closet, hoping it will not be discovered before he and Elise can escape. (Karl doesn't know Casimir is dead.)

9:10 p.m.: After Josef's murder, Karl goes to Elise's room. She rejects his advances. Inflamed with passion, he attacks and kills her. At last horrified by his own actions, Karl flees the house to seek refuge in his own cottage, arriving at a few minutes before 9:30 p.m.

9:45 p.m.: The realization that he has slain the one person he thought would make his life whole is too much for Karl to bear. He hangs himself from the rafters. His body remains here until shortly before dawn.

Spirits of the Night

Madame Radanavich has captured the spirits of nine people who were close to Van Richten's heart. These spirits serve as her primary weapon against the heroes, as she revels in the idea of his old companions slaying her hated enemy. None of these spirits really hold any hatred for Van Richten, so none of them really have any interest in harming him. However, they must obey the commands of Madame Radanavich, who summoned them to this place, but sometimes their own wills shine through.

The ghosts can manifest themselves only at night and are each initially confined to a single room of Bleak House, though on Day Four all remaining ghosts become free to pursue the heroes anywhere in the domain.

Drawing the Spirits

To determine where the spirits appear within Bleak House at night, you can use the tarokka deck or a normal deck of playing cards. Alternately, you could leave nothing to chance and simply assign the spirits to the rooms you feel appropriate. Shuffle all of the cards together, and keep the deck behind your DM's screen. As night descends upon Bleak House and the spirits begin to manifest themselves, draw one card for each room the heroes enter.

A card numbered 1–9 indicates that a ghost appears, and the suit of the card indicates its demeanor. (Record the ghost in that room on the "Fortunes of Ravenloft" record sheet on the inside cover of this booklet.) Any time the result is a Master card or one of the High deck, one of the ghostly manifestations of a room is triggered. As soon as this happens, draw an additional card. If it's another Master card or card from the High Deck, or the card of a ghost that has already been assigned to another

The Hauntings

room, then a Minor Manifestation takes place in the room; in other circumstances, it's a Major Manifestation, with the appropriate ghost confronting the heroes at one point. The manifestations are caused by the house itself as it struggles against Radanavich. Each ghostly manifestation occurs only once per room, except for the night of Day Four, at which point every manifestation is of Major proportion.

If you don't have a tarokka deck but still wish to use cards to determine ghost encounters, read aces through nines for their numbers. For the master cards and face cards, use the following equivalents:

| Tarokka Deck | Standard Deck |
|--------------|-------------------|
| The Priest | Ten of Hearts |
| The Rogue | Ten of Diamonds |
| The Warrior | Ten of Clubs |
| The Wizard | Ten of Spades |
| Artifact | Knave of Hearts |
| Beast | Knave of Diamonds |
| Broken One | Knave of Clubs |
| Darklord | Knave of Spades |
| Donjon | Queen of Hearts |
| Esper | Queen of Diamonds |
| Ghost | Queen of Clubs |
| Hangman | Queen of Spades |
| Horseman | King of Hearts |
| Innocent | King of Diamonds |
| Marionette | King of Clubs |
| Mists | King of Spades |
| Raven | First Joker |
| Temptriss | Second Joker |

Once you've exhausted the draw pile, reshuffle the cards and start over.

Spirit Aspects

As each ghost appears, Madame Radanavich may exert more or less effort in commanding it as she struggles to control the house and grounds as well as the ghosts. Thus, the reaction of a particular ghost varies each time it is encountered. While the number of a card determines which ghost appears, the suit determines its demeanor:

| Suit | Demeanor |
|----------------|----------|
| Swords/Clubs | Attack |
| Glyphs/Hearts | Aid |
| Coins/Spades | Ambushes |
| Stars/Diamonds | Parley |

Attack: This suit indicates that the spirit immediately attacks (Van Richten or the target hero, depending on Radanavich's secondary goal). If it speaks at all, it threatens and blames Van Richten for its death.

Aid: Glyphs or hearts indicates that the spirit resents its servitude and wishes to thwart Radanavich by helping Van Richten and his new companions. In fact, the spirit might want this for itself, never having truly blamed Van Richten for its death. Spirits under this aspect offer helpful clues or advice for the heroes.

Ambush: These spirits do not immediately attack, but watch the heroes carefully, waiting for an opportunity to attack one character (Van Richten, or a hero who has proven particularly resourceful) when the situation is best. For instance, a ghost may wait to appear on a stairway when the heroes are already under assault by another spirit.

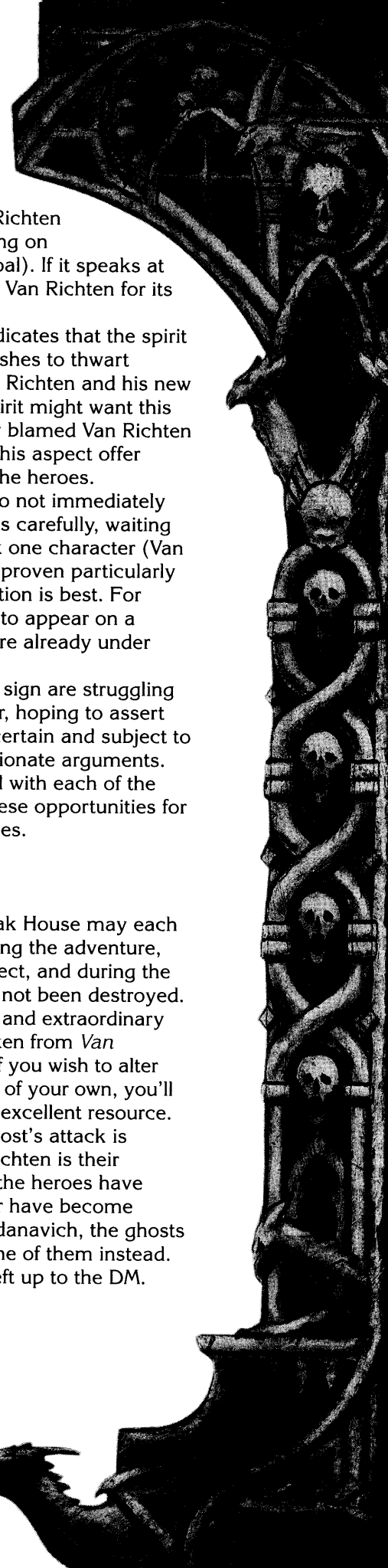
Parley: Spirits under this sign are struggling against Radanavich's power, hoping to assert their own will. They are uncertain and subject to influence by logical or passionate arguments. Role-playing notes included with each of the spirits give ideas on how these opportunities for parley may benefit the heroes.

The Ghosts

The captured ghosts of Bleak House may each appear up to five times during the adventure, each time in a different aspect, and during the final encounter if they have not been destroyed.

The magnitude notations and extraordinary powers of the ghosts are taken from *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*. If you wish to alter these ghosts or create more of your own, you'll find *Van Richten's Guide* an excellent resource.

Unless the target for a ghost's attack is identified in its entry, Van Richten is their primary target. However, if the heroes have proven highly resourceful or have become annoyances to Madame Radanavich, the ghosts may be ordered to attack one of them instead. The adjudication of this is left up to the DM.



The Hauntings

1. Alanthir

With other brave heroes, this half-elven druid aided Van Richten in tracking the lich known as Bloody Hand. Before the band ever reached the monster's lair, Alanthir was slain during a struggle with Bloody Hand's familiar, an undead redtailed hawk.

Alanthir (third magnitude ghost):

Int Avg (9); AL N; AC -2/4; MV 9/Fl 12; HD 9; hp 48; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA *charm animals, keen*; SD ethereal, +1 weapon to hit, spell immunities; ML special; XP 7,000.

Alanthir appears as he was at the moment of his death: as a normal sparrow. As a ghost, he appears as an ordinary bird unless situated between the heroes and a light source, in which case he is semi-transparent. His preferred method of attack is his deadly keening shriek, which he can use only once in a 24-hour period. If the cards indicate that Alanthir attacks or ambushes the heroes less than 24 hours after he has used his keen, then he assumes semi-corporeal form to attack.

Attack: Alanthir flies down from a high perch (or out from a closet), first using his keen as he flies through the midst of the heroes. Afterward, he attempts to *charm* any animals that accompany the heroes. Otherwise, he assumes semi-corporeal form and attacks for three rounds before vanishing.

Aid: Alanthir appears perched on a piece of furniture. At first he chirps at the heroes, then his black eye fixes on Van Richten, and he says in a clear human voice, "Like Bloody Hand, your enemy has a familiar. But not a bird! He watches you!" Alanthir refers to Madame Radanavich's son, Radovan. After delivering his warning, Alanthir flies straight into the face of any cleric or druid (or Van Richten, if none of these characters are here). At the moment of impact, the ghostly bird vanishes without a trace, leaving the victim shivering with unearthly cold.

Ambush: Alanthir waits on a high perch. If the hero opens the window or otherwise approaches within 5' of the bird, it emits its keening shriek and flies to the attack.

Parley: Alanthir transforms into a slightly wild-looking half-elf dressed in forest leathers. "Did you stop Bloody Hand?" he asks of the group in general. Regardless of the answer, Alanthir explains his servitude to Madame Radanavich, though he does not know her name or her goal, except to say that she hates Van Richten. He asks the heroes and Van Richten to leave this place of the damned.

2. Davvyd

The only time Van Richten was utterly and totally defeated was when he faced the fiend known as Drigor. Davvyd, a devout young priest of Tyr, a god of justice, was among those who fell. Drigor took particular delight in killing Davvyd, taunting him with the fact that his god was doing nothing to save him.

Davvyd (second-magnitude ghost): Int High (13); AL NE; AC -1/6; MV 9, Fl 12; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA *cause despair, cause wounds*; SD spell immunity, ethereal; ML special; XP 7,000.

Davvyd first appears as a vital, handsome man with blond hair and brown eyes in clerical vestments of superior quality. When he attacks, his face and body transform to show the terrible raking wounds he suffered at the hands of Drigor, while his eyes give way to two bloody, gaping holes.

Attack: Davvyd laments the state of the godless universe, enacting his 50' radius *cause despair* aura. He then moves to attack any clerics in the party, screaming that he will stop them from spreading the kind of lies he spent his life spreading. If no cleric is with the party, he attacks Van Richten.

Aid: Davvyd states that while the gods do not care a whit about mortals, he still respects Van Richten for his dedication to what is right. He warns the heroes that Radanavich is growing stronger every day, and that soon the captured spirits won't even be able to resist her for even a moment. Then he fades away.

Ambush: Davvyd sinks into the floor, lurking just below the floorboards. When a target draws near, he reaches up and grabs his ankles (+4 on his attack rolls with two attacks) and uses his *cause wounds* ability. Then he shoots from the

The Hauntings

floor and into the room, attacking as described above.

Parley: Davvyd attempts to engage a hero in a philosophical debate about the lack of compassion and respect for mortals on the part of deities. If the hero debates with him, he becomes sorrowful for the bitterness that now resides in his heart, and he promises to try to resist Radanavich as best he can. In this case, his next appearance is automatically aid, regardless of the suit. If the hero attacks, Davvyd responds in kind.

3. Dr. Harmon Ruscheider

Once a brilliant scientific mind, Harmon Ruscheider was corrupted by the influences of a lich and died in Van Richten's arms. Like most of the other ghosts, Ruscheider bears Van Richten no ill will but attacks him because he has no choice.

Harmon Ruscheider (second-magnitude ghost): Int Genius (17); AL NE; AC -1/6; MV 9; HD 5; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA *drain intelligence, drain memories*; SD spell immunity, ethereal; ML special; XP 7,000.

Harmon appears as he did at this time of death, like a man who hasn't slept in weeks. His hair is disheveled, and his eyes stare with glittering insanity within black circles.

Harmon ignores the player characters unless they address or attack him first.

Attack: Harmon approaches Van Richten or the target character and reaches out as if to embrace a friend. "Oh, Dolf! Better that we had never delved into such mysteries. Come, let me unburden you of the troubles in your mind." He attacks first with his *drain memories* power, then with his *drain* ability.

Aid: Harmon reveals that before Van Richten and the heroes arrived, there were no servants in this house. There is a separate supernatural force at work, and he believes it is the house itself.

Ambush: Treat as an attack result.

Parley: Harmon offers to defend Van Richten and the heroes against the house if they promise to destroy him just before dawn. (Of course, Harmon is incapable of protecting the party, as the house is stronger than even Radanavich at times.)

4. Erasmus van Richten

The abduction of this innocent lad is what started Van Richten down the road that has led to the current adventure. Sold to a vampire and put to final rest by his own father, even his spirit has been trapped here.

Erasmus (fourth-magnitude ghost): Int Average (10); AL N; AC -3/2; MV 9; HD 10; hp 54; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA *cause wounds, drain energy*; SD spell immunity, ethereal; ML special; XP 10,000.

Erasmus appears as a fair-haired boy in his early teens—but the prominent vampire fangs jutting from his mouth show him to have been a creature of the night even before his present ghostly state.

Attack: Erasmus begs Van Richten for one last hug, and then uses his *drain* ability.

Aid: Erasmus has nothing useful to tell the heroes. He will tearfully ask his father's forgiveness for what he has become—he loves Van Richten, and wishes he were dead so he wouldn't be forced to hurt him. He offers Van Richten another chance to destroy him, which prompts a madness check for the good doctor. The DM should draw another card to see if Madame Radanavich regains control over Erasmus.

Ambush: Treat as attack result.

Parley: Treat as aid result.

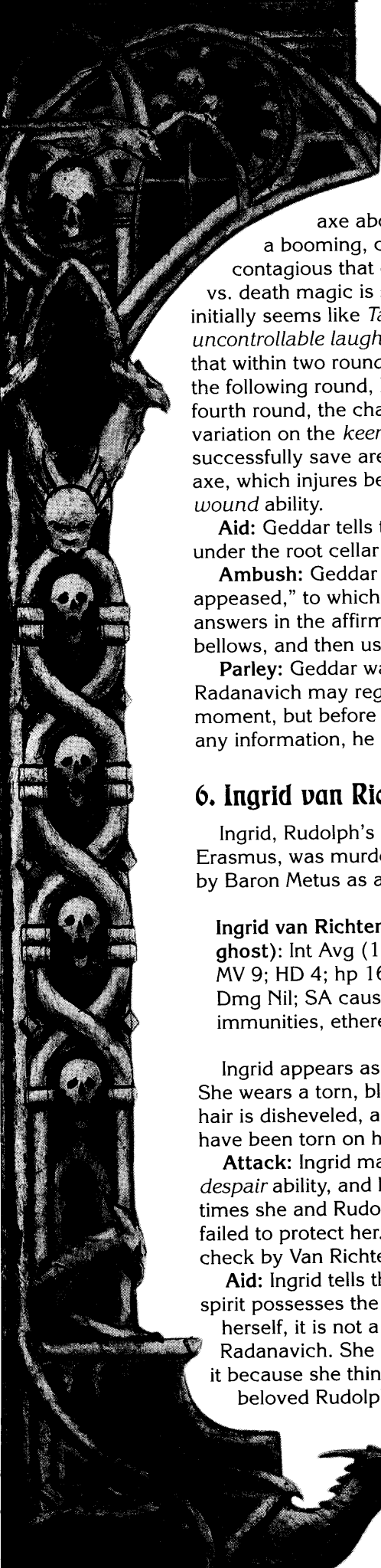
5. Geddar

Geddar the Dwarf was a retired watchman who ran an inn in Mordentshire. When a scoundrel died with stolen burial goods in his common room, Geddar joined Van Richten in a quest to return the items to their rightful place and mollify the angry spirits. The mission was successful, but not without the cost of Geddar's life.

Geddar (third magnitude ghost): Int High (12) AL CE; AC -2/4; MV 9; HD 8; hp 44; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA *cause wounds, death laugh*; SD *resist magic*; ML special; XP 8,000.

Geddar appears as a stout dwarf who is well past middleage, his beard all but white. He wears chainmail and ironshod boots, and carries a large dwarven war axe.

The Hauntings



Attack: Geddar materializes and swings his axe above his head while uttering a booming, contagious laugh. It is so contagious that everyone who doesn't save vs. death magic is subject to an affect that initially seems like *Tasha's hideous uncontrollable laughter*. Victims laugh so hard that within two rounds they begin to choke and, the following round, begin spitting blood. On the fourth round, the character dies. (This is a variation on the *keen* ability.) Those who successfully save are attacked with the spectral axe, which injures because of Geddar's *cause wound* ability.

Aid: Geddar tells the heroes of the caverns under the root cellar where the ghouls dwell.

Ambush: Geddar asks if the "ghosties were appeased," to which Van Richten tearfully answers in the affirmative. "Good," Geddar bellows, and then uses his *death laugh*.

Parley: Geddar warns the party that Madame Radanavich may regain control of his will any moment, but before he has a chance to provide any information, he is forced to attack.

6. Ingrid van Richten

Ingrid, Rudolph's wife and mother to his son, Erasmus, was murdered in a most brutal fashion by Baron Metus as a retaliatory gesture.

Ingrid van Richten (second-magnitude ghost): Int Avg (10); AL NE; AC -1/6; MV 9; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA cause despair; SD spell immunities, ethereal; ML special; XP 7,000.

Ingrid appears as she did at the time of death. She wears a torn, bloodstained nightgown, her hair is disheveled, and deep, bleeding gouges have been torn on her cheeks, neck, and chest.

Attack: Ingrid materializes, uses her *cause despair* ability, and begins to talk of all the good times she and Rudolph never shared because he failed to protect her. This prompts a madness check by Van Richten.

Aid: Ingrid tells the heroes that a powerful spirit possesses the entire house, and that unlike herself, it is not a slave of Madame Radanavich. She urges the heroes to befriend it because she thinks it is the only hope her beloved Rudolph has for survival.

Ambush: Treat as an attack result.

Parley: Ingrid asks Van Richten to speak with her about the happy times they shared together to help her throw off Radanavich's evil influence. They speak for 10 rounds before she fades away. If a hero disturbs them at all, she becomes angry, Radanavich regains control, and she attacks the offending hero, triggering a Major Manifestation as she does. (See Chapter Four.)

7. Ottelie Farringer

After the death of his wife, Rudolph van Richten lived for many years without any thought of love or companionship—until he met the brilliant and enchanting Ottelie Farringer. A scholar rivaling Van Richten's own skill and experience, Ottelie stood with him in the fateful confrontation with Drigor. Had she lived, Van Richten may have led a far different life.

Ottelie Farringer (third-magnitude ghost):

Int Genius (17); AL NG; AC -2/4; MV 9; HD 9; hp 44; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA entrance victim, lure victim; SD spell immunities, ethereal; ML special; XP 9,000.

Ottelie appears as she did in life—a slender woman in her early thirties with auburn hair and brilliantly green eyes. She is dressed in the practical clothing of an adventurer.

Regardless of the suit drawn, Ottelie never attacks or ambushes the party. In fact, the first time she appears is the only time she appears, except when she reveals herself as detailed in the description of Bleak House itself.

Unique among all the ghosts, Ottelie's love for Van Richten has allowed her to fight off Madame Radanavich's control, and although she is not strong enough to truly aid Van Richten and the heroes, she does not attack them. She can tell the heroes all the information that might be provided by the other ghosts, but does not know the nature of the spirit of the house, or what it wants.

Additionally, if the tarokka cards indicated that Ottelie has taken control of the artifact, she gives it to the heroes on the condition that they defend Van Richten with their lives; she wants him to leave Bleak House and return to the world of the living.

Ottelie uses her ghostly powers only on player characters who are distrusting or who attack her.

The Hauntings

8. Samuel

A young man from Mordentshire, Samuel generally tended Van Richten's herb shop when the doctor was on the road. In the end, he took up arms and stood at the Doctor's side against Drigor.

Samuel: (second-magnitude ghost): Int Avg (10); AL LN; AC -1/6; MV 9; HD 4; hp 23; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA *cause wounds, cause revulsion*; SD spell immunities, ethereal; ML special; XP 7,000.

Samuel appears as he did when Drigor was done torturing him. His gruesome appearance is call for a horror check when he is first seen.

Samuel is firmly in Madame Radanavich's control, yet he still wishes he could be at Van Richten's side. Regardless of the suit drawn, Samuel always attacks Van Richten or the target hero, weeping and apologizing the whole time: "I can't refuse her! Forgive me, oh, by Hala, forgive me!"

9. Claudia DeShanes

Before she met Van Richten, Claudia looked forward to being happily married and bearing healthy children some day. When her powerful psychic abilities were awakened by Van Richten and his comrades during a ghost hunt, she joined his crusade, but fell victim to the child vampire Merilee.

Claudia DeShanes (third-magnitude ghost): Int Very (13); AL NE; AC -2/4; MV 9; HD 9; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SA *cause wounds, accelerate aging*; SD spell immunities, ethereal, +2/+1 weapons to hit; ML special; XP 7,000.

Claudia appears as she did in life—a woman in her late teens or early 20s with pale skin and long dark hair pulled back into a single braid. Her face is either sorrowful or twisted with horrible anger.

Attack: Claudia is consumed with envy for the living. Her attacks are focused on female party members, and she uses her *accelerate aging* ability on them exclusively. Male party members get targeted with her *cause wounds* power.

Aid: Claudia sits weeping on the floor. If approached, she will beg forgiveness for hating the party for living lives she will never have. She then warns them of Madame Radanavich's growing ability to animate objects on the estate.

Ambush: She materializes behind her target and attacks without warning.

Parley: Treat as aid.

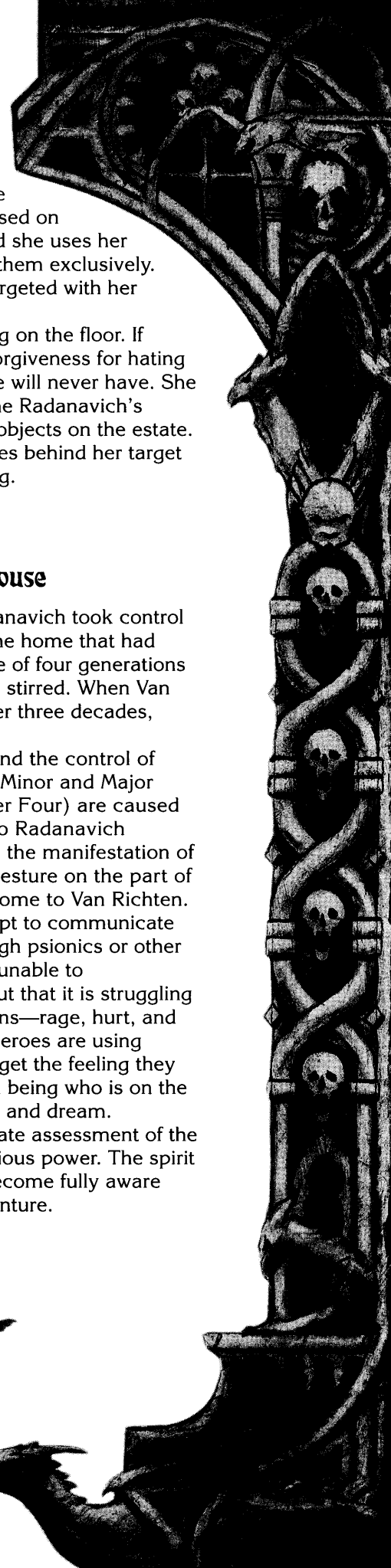
The Spirit of Bleak House

When Madame Radanavich took control of the lands and the home that had been the residence of four generations of Van Richtens, something stirred. When Van Richten finally returned after three decades, something awoke.

Whatever it is, it is beyond the control of Madame Radanavich. The Minor and Major Manifestations (see Chapter Four) are caused by the house in response to Radanavich exerting her influence, and the manifestation of the daylight spirits was a gesture on the part of the powerful spirit—a welcome to Van Richten.

Should the heroes attempt to communicate with this spirit (either through psionics or other means), they find that it is unable to communicate with them, but that it is struggling with wildly different emotions—rage, hurt, and exuberance. In fact, if the heroes are using psionics to contact it, they get the feeling they have reached the mind of a being who is on the edge between wakefulness and dream.

That is, in fact, an accurate assessment of the current state of this mysterious power. The spirit of Bleak House does not become fully aware until the climax of the adventure.



Fortunes of Ravenloft

Future, n: That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true, and our happiness is assured.

—Ambrose Bierce,
The Devil's Dictionary

In the tradition of the original Ravenloft adventure (revised as *House of Strahd*), *Bleak House* includes a simulated fortune telling.

The DM should read this section carefully before play. The more natural and realistic the tarokka reading seems, the more exciting it will be for the players. If you can avoid referring to the adventure as you explain the meaning of each card, you will make the scene far more dramatic and effective.

The tarokka reading in this adventure determines which one of four objects can cause the spirits of the house to aid the heroes, as well as certain aspects of the adventure's finale. By making these key elements somewhat random, the adventure can be played several times and be different each time. You can use the tarokka deck from the revised RAVENLOFT campaign setting (or from the earlier *Forbidden Lore* boxed set) or a standard deck of playing cards with jokers.

The Tarokka Reading

Since her death, Madame Radanavich has been unable to cast the tarokka for herself or any other undead being, yet with the arrival of the heroes she has the perfect opportunity to predict the future of her conflict with Van Richten.

At one point during the adventure (when the heroes enter Area 3 of Bleak House), Radanavich attempts to possess one of the heroes and performs a tarokka reading for their company. By knowing their fate, she hopes to gain insight into her own. She does not think the heroes smart enough to

divine the meaning of the cards, but with skill and luck, the heroes will prove her wrong. As the reading begins, the possessed hero states, "This is the journey's final mile. Let us see where the road will end." He then cackles madly.

Madame Radanavich performs her own variation on the tarokka patter known as *the basic cross*. The first card drawn is placed face up at the center of the cross, the second card below it, and the three remaining cards are placed to its left, top and right. However, she separates the High and Lesser decks into two different piles before beginning. (If you are using a normal playing deck, there is no need to separate the cards. Just shuffle and draw from the top of the deck.)

The Object's Location

The first card determines where the item of power is hidden. Draw a card from the High Deck, and check it against the following list. The italicized sentence should be read to the players during Madame Radanavich's fortune telling. (The locations can be found on the color map sheet.)

2 & 3/Beast & Broken One Fearweed Patch (K)

The servant seeks his master but can find the key.

Casimir's hound has buried the artifact on the grounds. Heroes who befriend the dog or follow him at night may find his cache. However, the undead Vistani will be hunting the dog every night.

4 & 5/Horseman & Ghost Cemetery (I)

Seek among the bones of fallen loved ones.

The object lies within the family mausoleum, inside the cemetery. However, Radovan removes it to the ghoulish warrens an hour after dusk, the day of the tarokka reading.

Fortunes of Ravenloft

6 & 7/ Hangman & Esper Orchard (D)

The oldest servant stands over the object you seek; seek him among the ranks of his children.

The object is buried under the roots of the Gnarled Lad. Radanavich impels the death's head tree to attack if the heroes try to retrieve the object at night. During the day, she cannot do so.

8 & 9/ Mists & Raven Spring House (G)

That which you seek can be found where you quench your thirst.

Inside the covered reservoir of the spring house, beneath the bats' roost, lies the object. On the night after the reading, Radanavich commands the ghouls to move the item to their lair, so if the heroes don't fetch it immediately, it will be found in Area 40 of the house.

10 & Knave/Innocent & Marionette Boy's Bedroom (23)

Go to where the innocent at the root of evil slept.

The item is under Erasmus van Richten's bed. Radanavich commands any spirit in this room to attack should the heroes try to retrieve the item at night.

Queen & King/ Temptress & Darklord Women's Withdrawing Room (3)

Where no man will tread, there lies power.

The object is under one of the chairs. As soon as she has completed the reading, Madame Radanavich causes one of the captured spirits to appear in the room, hoping to chase the heroes from the room before they claim the item.

Ace & Joker/Artifact & Donjon Variable

With strength born of love, she has claimed what you should seek.

The object has been seized by the ghost of Ottelie Farringer, and it can be found wherever she is encountered.

The Object

The second card determines what the important object is. Draw this card from the Lesser Deck, and check its suit against the following list.

Each item serves a different purpose, and its nature dictates certain parts of the adventure.

Clubs/Swords: Casimir's Knife.

Once it carved wood, then it stole a life. Now it waits to be retrieved and wielded once more.

A long, thin, curved blade with a handle carved of a stag's antler, this is a tool rather than a weapon. The estate's gate keeper, a half-Vistani named Casimir, used this dagger to whittle as he told romantic stories of Vistani life. This knife was the weapon used to murder him. Presenting the knife to Casimir or Josef causes them to fully manifest their ghostly powers.

Unbeknownst to all, the knife is actually a powerful magical item. Against living creatures, the weapon causes normal knife damage (1d3 points of damage). When used against the undead, however, the blade acts as a +3 weapon and inflicts double damage, for a total damage value of 2d3+3.

To Van Richten, this blade represents happy memories of sitting outside the gatehouse with Casimir. It causes him to realize that Madame Radanavich has no power over him, because he has made peace with her people and is no longer cursed. After the knife has been found, Van Richten is lucid and forceful, but he will remain prone to being lost in memories of happier times until then.

Spades/Stars: Van Richten's Satchel

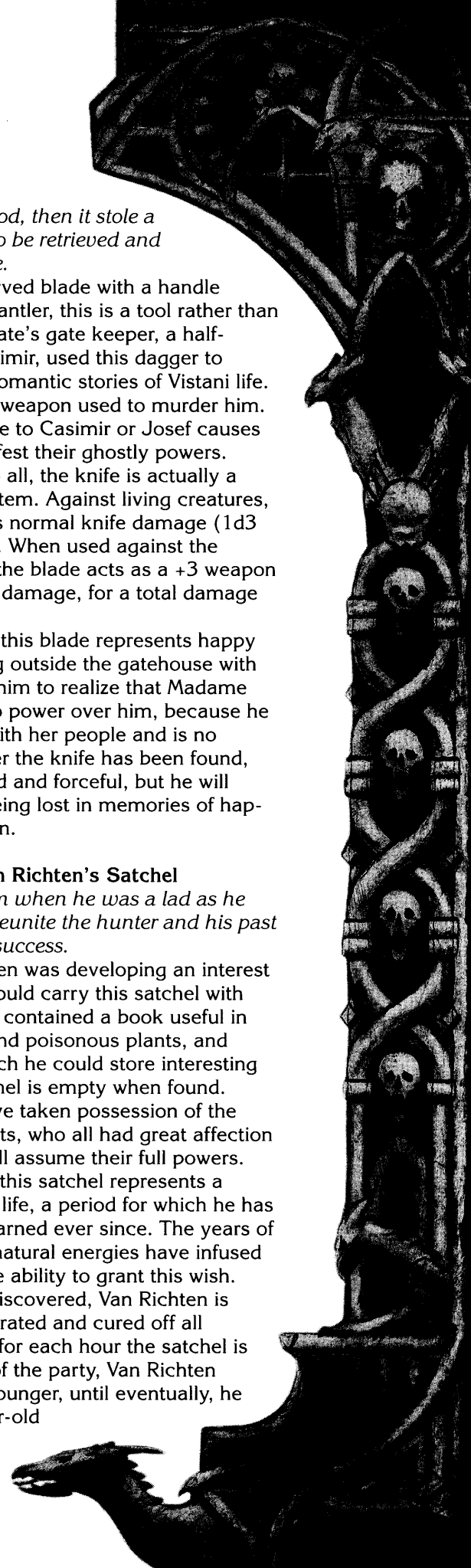
It traveled with him when he was a lad as he hunted his prey. Reunite the hunter and his past if you are to have success.

When Van Richten was developing an interest in herbalism, he would carry this satchel with him everywhere. It contained a book useful in identifying herbs and poisonous plants, and small boxes in which he could store interesting samples. The satchel is empty when found.

If the heroes have taken possession of the satchel, the servants, who all had great affection for Van Richten, will assume their full powers.

To Van Richten, this satchel represents a simpler time in his life, a period for which he has subconsciously yearned ever since. The years of exposure to supernatural energies have infused the satchel with the ability to grant this wish.

When it is first discovered, Van Richten is seemingly reinvigorated and cured off all insanity. However, for each hour the satchel is in the possession of the party, Van Richten grows 1d4 years younger, until eventually, he is a 0-level 12-year-old human. Each hour, lower Van



Fortunes of Ravenloft

Richten's base level by one, then roll 1d6 and add the result to determine his exact level. (This represents his rise and fall in levels as he combatted level-draining undead over the years.)

Also, each time he grows younger, Van Richten thinks that he has been transported to Bleak House his location at that age. The various *Van Richten's Guides*, the *Chilling Tales* adventure anthology, and the descriptions of the ghosts of his former companions later in this chapter can provide inspiration for what Van Richten thought he was just doing when "transferred" here.

Once the satchel has been discovered, there is no halting Van Richten's age regression.

Diamonds/Coins: Josef's Ledger

A true account of days and checks. Hold it to the lie, break the cycle, and allies you will receive.

The steward's ledger is a large, leather-bound book. It is almost two feet high, one foot wide, and four inches thick. Of its 900 heavy pages, over 500 are filled with dated notes in a meticulous hand. These are the true ledger entries for the household purchases and deliveries.

A careful comparison (requiring successful Reading/Writing proficiency and Intelligence checks) of this ledger with the false one found in area 2 of the house reveals Josef's duplicity. During his years as the family's trusted steward, Josef embezzled nearly 1,000 gp. He kept this record to make sure he could cover up any inconsistencies discovered in the official ledger.

Confronting Josef with his crime causes him to confess and relinquish his belief that Casimir has stolen it for blackmail. Casimir forgives him, and both assume full ghostly powers and aid the heroes in their final confrontation against Madame Radanavich. (See Chapter Five.)

To Van Richten, the ledger represents the strength of facts in the face of the unknown. Once this ledger has been uncovered, the capable old Van Richten reemerges and starts trying to take charge of the efforts to defeat Madame Radanavich and her minions. Once it is clear to him that the heroes are knowledgeable and capable, he backs off, offering nothing more than advice until the final showdown.



Fortunes of Ravenloft

Hearts/Glyphs: Gretta's Doll

Beloved of a child long gone, it carries secrets and may help you reach victory.

This porcelain doll is dressed in a fine Victorian gown. When found, its otherwise serene face is marred by a deep crack from her ear to her nose, and the gown is caked with mud.

This doll was Gretta's only solace and companion after Karl stranded her on the Isle of Apples. She spoke continually to it, speculating on the relationships among the servants. Precocious and remarkably perceptive, Gretta already knew that Karl fancied Elise, though the young girl had no way of understanding the violent bent to the groundsman's desires.

Once the doll is in the hero's possession, one of them begins to hear "echoes" of the things Gretta confided in her "friend" while stranded on the island. The clues she provides, however, could be crucial to the heroes.

If there is a psionicist in the party, ask for a Wisdom check from this character at random intervals. If no psionicist is part of the group, ask for the check from the hero with the highest Wisdom. A successful check means the hero hears the faint whisper of a young girl's voice, coming from nowhere in particular.

The DM should adlib the doll's comments, but examples of the comments include:

- *Karl wants to marry Elise, but she likes Casimir.*
- *Father hates him because he is a half-breed.*
- *When will Karl come back? It's getting dark.*

Time the doll's comments to create the most suspense in the heroes. Also, keep them cryptic but enticing, guiding the heroes only so much as they require to pursue the adventure.

If Karl is confronted with the doll, he feigns guilt over having left Gretta on the island, but he is actually waiting for the heroes to drop their guard so he can kill them.

To Van Richten, the doll represents the sister he hasn't seen in almost 40 years. It fills him with the desire to overcome the evil in the house so that he may live to seek her out and reunite with her. He begins to fight actively against Madame Radanavich but remains befuddled until the final confrontation in Chapter Five.

The Final Confrontation

This card dictates where Madame Radanavich will confront the heroes on the fourth day. Draw a card from the Lesser Deck. Depending on

whether the last card (the one after this one) indicates that a battle at this location will go either for or against the heroes, Radanavich either orders her minions to force the party to this spot on the fourth day or tries to prevent them from making their stand there.

Clubs/Swords: The Trophy Room (33)

Among momentos of battles, final defeat will be dealt.

Spades/Stars: Van Richten's Clinic (30)

The conflict will end where healer turned oathbreaker.

Diamonds/Coins: Smoking Room (28)

Amidst the heady tobacco, the battle will end.

Hearts/Glyphs: The Temple (9)

In the house of worship one will know defeat.

Whom Fate Would Destroy

The final card reveals the state of the battle of wills between Madame Radanavich and the House during the final confrontation. This card is drawn from the Lesser Deck.

Hearts/Glyphs

A power thwarts your nemesis, and you may emerge victorious.

Heroes gain a +4 bonus to all saving throws, and attempts to turn undead. Note that this offsets the nighttime penalty of -2, resulting in a +2 bonus.

Diamonds/Coins

In this place, you strike hard and true.

The heroes gain a +2 bonus to damage and attack rolls.

Clubs/Swords

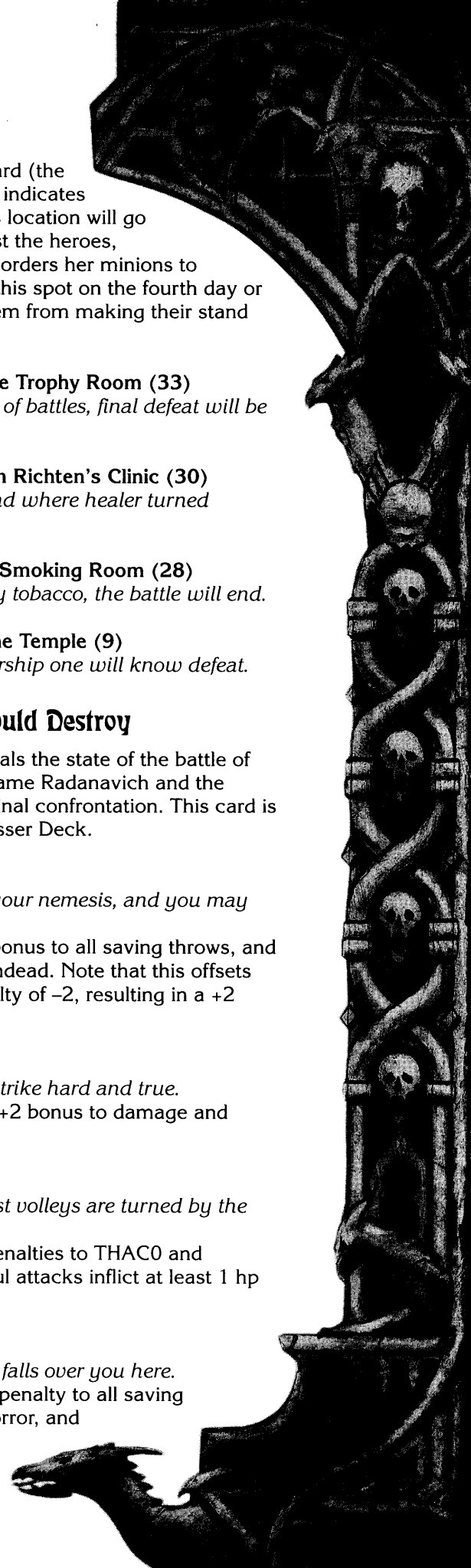
And there your best volleys are turned by the wind.

Heroes suffer -2 penalties to THAC0 and damage (successful attacks inflict at least 1 hp damage).

Spades/Stars

A baneful shadow falls over you here.

Heroes suffer a -2 penalty to all saving throws and fear, horror, and madness checks.



The Van Richten Estate

This be the verse you
grave for me:
'Here he lies where
he longed to be;
Home is the sailor
from the sea,

And the hunter home from the
hill.'

—James Stephens, "Requiem"

This chapter describes the domain of Bleak House and the locations within it, with particular emphasis on the manor at its heart. This chapter is the heart of the adventure.

Arrival from the Mists

When the heroes and Van Richten emerge from the Mists, they find themselves on a road just outside the great wall surrounding the estate on which Van Richten was born and raised. At its center stands Richten Haus. The road turns left, to the west. Passing through well-tended trees, it passes the groundsman's cottage before reaching a fork. The left branch leads to the family cemetery and the boat house, while the right branch leads up the hills toward the manor.

Especially in the west, thick woods creep onto the rolling hills of the estate, and even where they fail, tangled copses rise up to interrupt the green sward. In the east, the woods surrender to orderly rows of an apple orchard. North of the house, the Lake of Apples laps gently against a mossy bank. In addition to the manor itself, the estate contains a gate house, stables, the groundsman's cottage, the cemetery, a spring house, and the boat house and pier.

Arrival on Gothic Earth

If this adventure is adapted to the Masque of the Red Death setting, the heroes should have

traveled with Van Richten (or the character who has replaced him) to the isolated country estate where he was born. Their companion, who is a famed scholar of the occult, has been plagued by horrible nightmares for weeks now, and they all seem to feature his family estate, which he hasn't visited in many years; in fact, it has been more or less abandoned by the family, maintained by a handful of servants and used only for important galas.

As they approach the manor in a horsedrawn carriage, it becomes apparent that the mansion is in a state of disrepair. The character the heroes have come here with is dismayed at the irresponsibility of the servants. (In fact, the servants are all dead and have been for quite some time; when Madame Radanavich took over the house, she caused them to murder each other, as described on the timeline.)

The Mists

The domain of Bleak House floats freely among the Mists. None may escape the misty boundaries of the estate before Madame Radanavich has destroyed Rudolph van Richten or has been herself destroyed. The Mists return any who attempt to leave back toward the estate and Bleak House to the exact place they left the estate.

Night and Day

By the light of day, the Van Richten estate is a beautiful place despite years of obvious neglect. Summer breezes gently toss the boughs of the apple trees, spreading the scent of their fruit across the western grounds. Where the orchard gives way to untamed woods, bright wildflowers grow unhindered near the treeline.

The Van Richten Estate

Near the Lake of Apples, thick rushes form a natural fence marking the water's edge. Richten Haus itself is a grand mansion, surrounded with little plots of flowers and shrubbery. Even the faces of the gargoyles seem clear and noble as lions. All saving throws; attempts to turn undead; and fear, horror, and madness checks are made at normal chances for success.

At night, however, the entire face of the Van Richten estate changes. The sun sets at 6:30 p.m., and full darkness covers the estate by 7:15. In the gloom, tree limbs twist and gnarl, some shedding their leaves so quickly that an observer would think a thousand sparrows had suddenly taken flight from the bare branches, only to flutter dead and weightless to the ground. The sweet scent of apples changes, growing more pungent and vaguely sour. Many of the flowers and other plants become dangerous and malign. Most impressively, Bleak House changes dramatically. Where the shutters once stood firm and straight, now they tilt and shed their painted coats like snakes. Every corner of the stonework slumps heavily, shifting with a clatter of falling stones. The windows crack or shatter, and shingles scrape across the roof before tumbling onto the backs of the gargoyles, who cast sidelong glances at the moon. All saving throws; attempts to turn undead; and fear, horror, and madness checks are made at a -4 penalty.

With the return of the sun, the horrible transformations reverse themselves. The eastern sky grows light at about 5:30 a.m., and dawn breaks at approximately 6:00. Those who watch outside at dusk or dawn may witness the slow changes over the course of 30-40 minutes. The transformation is subtle, as the fallen leaves melt into dew, the tree branches gradually relax, and the shadows on the house right themselves to show straight lines where sinister crooks lay before. No obvious force causes these transformations, unless the sun and moon themselves vie for the grounds.

Weather

When the heroes first arrive at Bleak House, the weather could not be more pleasant. Fine white clouds drift high above, and a cool breeze from the lake blows soothingly across all the grounds. Even the misty borders of the estate seem like cool morning fogs, except that even the warm afternoon is not sufficient to burn them away.

Over the course of the heroes' stay, however, the weather gets progressively worse.

Two days after the heroes arrive, the temperature gradually drops from a balmy 80° Fahrenheit to a cool 55°. The clouds grow heavy and gray, and the wind shakes the boughs with rough blows.

On the third day, the temperature drops to 40°, and with the night comes a terrible thunderstorm. Shrieking winds and punishing rain beat branches from the trees and sunder shutters from the face of the mansion. At midnight, a wicked lightning strike destroys the boat house, leaving smoldering wreckage in its place.

Heroes who brave the storm between midnight and 3:00 a.m. on the third day run the risk of lightning strikes. Each turn, Madame Radavich may attack one hero who remains outside with the equivalent of a *call lightning* spell for 12d8 damage. Because her control is not yet fine, victims may make two saving throws vs. spell. If the first save succeeds, the victim suffers no damage as the lightning strikes the ground 10'-30' away causing no damage to the hero. If it fails, then the second saving throw determines whether the victim suffers full or half damage.

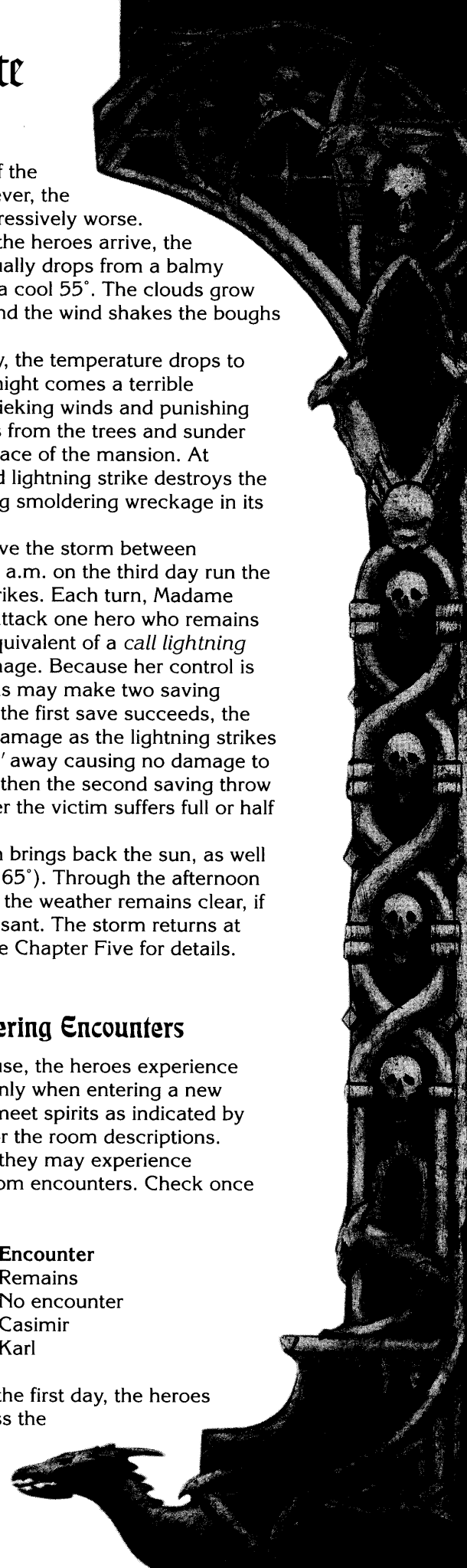
The fourth dawn brings back the sun, as well as a little warmth (65°). Through the afternoon and early evening, the weather remains clear, if not especially pleasant. The storm returns at night, however. See Chapter Five for details.

Daytime Wandering Encounters

Inside the house, the heroes experience encounters only when entering a new room. They meet spirits as indicated by the tarokka deck or the room descriptions. Outside, however, they may experience wandering or random encounters. Check once each hour.

| Roll 2d6 | Encounter |
|----------|--------------|
| 2-4 | Remains |
| 5-8 | No encounter |
| 9-10 | Casimir |
| 11-12 | Karl |

Remains: After the first day, the heroes may stumble across the disgusting remains of a devoured



The Van Richten Estate

cannibal zombie. Roll for surprise when the heroes make this discovery. If the hero in the lead is surprised, he must make a horror check. Casimir and Karl never make this discovery unless they are ordered to patrol the grounds and the heroes do not also do so.

Casimir: See Chapter One for Casimir's statistics. If discovered as a wandering encounter, Casimir is roaming the grounds, whittling an apple branch as he walks. Occasionally he pauses to scan the area as if searching for something. If asked about his behavior, Casimir explains, "My dog's been missing. It's not like him to take off like that. I'm afraid something has happened to him." In fact, Casimir's dog, Thane, has been dead for decades. At night, however, Thane searches for his master, just as Casimir searches for him during the day.

Karl: See Chapter One for Karl's statistics. When encountered on the grounds, Karl is performing some act of maintenance, mowing the grass with a great scythe, pulling weeds from one of the flower beds, raking leaves in the cemetery for burning, or collecting groundfall from the orchard. He complains bitterly if the heroes stop to talk with him, saying that the master really should hire more men to work the grounds. "I can't keep up with the work. Maybe the house servants have it easier, but the grounds need just as much attention as when the family is home." Of course, Karl has no idea just how long the house has been uninhabited.

Nighttime Wandering Encounters

The creatures who wander the grounds at night do not, as a rule, pursue the characters into buildings. The zombies and ghouls do not enter the mansion unless ordered by Radovan, but they do not hesitate to assault any other building, including the gate house (area A) and the Groundsman's Cottage (area H). Radovan pursues the characters anywhere, so long as he is achieving his goal (terrorizing or murdering the heroes).

| Roll 2d6 | Encounter |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 2-4 | Cannibal zombies |
| 5-6 | Ghouls |
| 7 | No encounter |
| 8-9 | Distant barking (Thane) |
| 10-12 | Thane Radovan |

Cannibal zombies (31): Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or 1-2; SA poison; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and *poison*; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 270.

Radovan releases the zombies every night, and they shuffle across the grounds in search of flesh. When met as a wandering encounter, the cannibal zombies are in groups of 3-12 (3d4). They never enter the house unless ordered, but they pursue heroes into the other buildings, beyond the wall (if the gate is left open), or even into the lake. They cannot climb walls or trees, however, and stand patiently below any such hiding place waiting for their intended victim to descend.

At the end of any evening in which the zombies capture no victims, they devour one of their own just before dawn. After their grisly meal, they return to the cemetery, leaving the horrid remains behind.

Ghouls (24): Int Average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp varies; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; Hide in Shadows (55%); SD special; SZ M (5'-6'); ML 12; XP 175.

The ghouls of the Corvara tribe are an unusual band of such undead. Somewhat more intelligent than typical ghouls and capable of labored speech, these creatures delight in terrifying their prey before devouring them. Furthermore, their fear of and obedience to Radovan normally prevents them from hunting on their own. The move in packs of 2d4.

When met as a wandering encounter, the Corvara ghouls stalk the heroes, using their ability to Hide in Shadows to full effect in order to surround them. Most of them carry tambourines, finger bells, or rattles which they have carefully muffled until they have circled the heroes. Then they take turns making noises with their old instruments. At first, one produces a barely-discernable rattle before retreating into the darkness. Then another from the opposite direction shakes a tambourine briefly before muffling it and fading into the night. Those

The Van Richten Estate

without instruments shake the branches of trees, scrape their nails along the sides of buildings, or croak out, "No! This way." Their plan is to harry the heroes from all sides.

If the heroes manage to chase down one of the ghouls (quite possible, considering their Movement rate), then the others move in to attack. After half of the members in a pack have been slain, the remainder must make morale checks each round or flee.

Thane (phantom hound): Int Animal (2); AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA fear check & poison; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175.

On a wandering encounter roll of 8 or 9, the heroes hear distant barking. If they follow it to its source, they encounter Thane. On a roll of 10, Thane bounds silently into view 10-40 yards away. He growls warningly at anyone but Casimir, and he attacks anyone who shows fear or who attempts to dig on the grounds or approach the cemetery. However, if faced with four or more opponents who do not show fear, Thane stays at bay so long as he is not attacked and he sees no heroes digging.

If spoken to in Vistani, or if approached by a Ranger using his ability to befriend wild animals, Thane can be calmed and even approached without danger. If reunited with Casimir, Thane leads him and any heroes present to his hiding place. If one of the artifacts of the house is guarded by Thane (see "Fortunes of Ravenloft"), it is here, buried under about a foot of earth. Otherwise, heroes who dig at the hiding place discover an old, decaying leather strap tied to a short length of rope—a favorite toy of Thane's in life.

For other effects of reuniting Casimir and Thane, see their descriptions in Chapter Two.

Radovan Radanavich (fourth-magnitude corporeal ghost): Int High; AL CE; MV 12; AC -3/2; HD 11; hp 60; THACO 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA metamorph body -3 to opponents' surprise rolls; SD +1 weapon to hit (otherwise, ghost statistics). XP 5,000

While he is always corporeal, Radovan can stretch, twist, and flatten any or all of his body with complete elasticity. He can "pour" himself through the crack of a door, insert a finger into a keyhole to pick the lock (100% chance), or reach through a tiny crack in a window to claw

at an enemy. He can so sharpen and harden his fingers that he rakes opponents with two attacks each round, inflicting 1-6 hp damage with a successful strike.

Radovan was the son of Madame Radanavich. In life, Radovan was not an evil man. Had events been different, he would never have hated Dr. Van Richten for failing to save his life. The corrupting influence of his transformation into an undead creature forced to lead an enemy to his own tribe broke Radovan's undead mind.

On a wandering encounter roll of 11, Radovan is spying on the party from a distance of 10-60 yards. If the heroes have discovered one of the artifacts of the house, he tries to creep forward and steal one of them without entering combat. If a hero carrying such an object is separated from the party, Radovan does not hesitate to attack him by surprise to slay the hero and take the artifact.

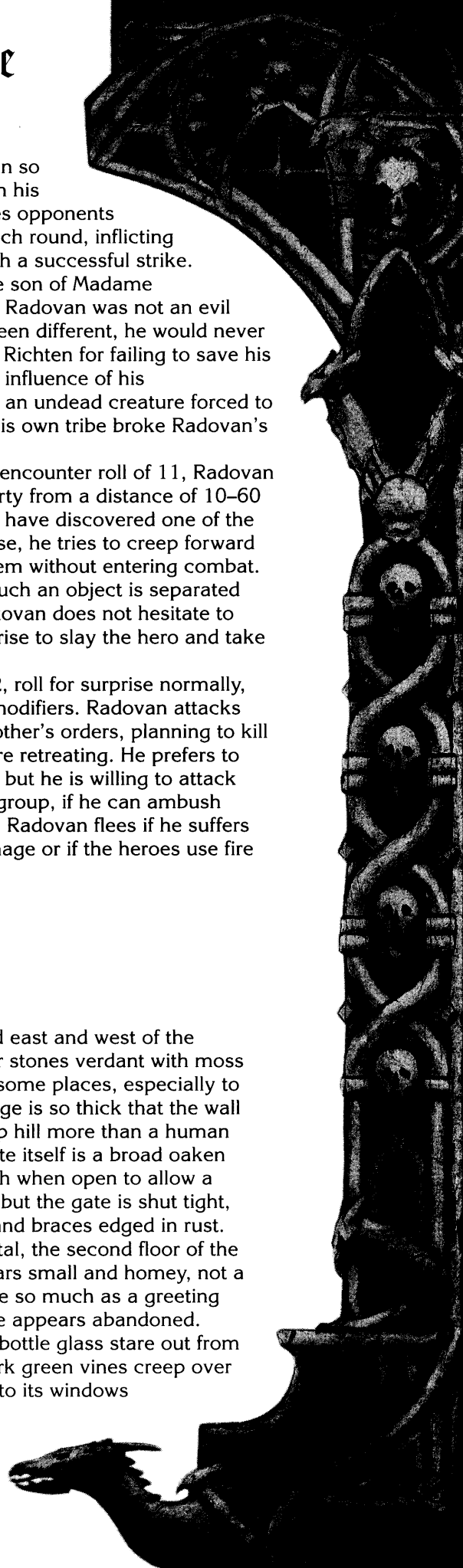
On a result of 12, roll for surprise normally, noting Radovan's modifiers. Radovan attacks the party on his mother's orders, planning to kill one character before retreating. He prefers to attack lone heroes, but he is willing to attack one character in a group, if he can ambush them. In any event, Radovan flees if he suffers 10 or more hp damage or if the heroes use fire against him.

The Grounds

A. Gate House

High walls extend east and west of the central gate, their stones verdant with moss and creepers. In some places, especially to the east, the foliage is so thick that the wall resembles a steep hill more than a human structure. The gate itself is a broad oaken door, wide enough when open to allow a carriage to pass, but the gate is shut tight, its black hinges and braces edged in rust.

Above the portal, the second floor of the gate house appears small and homey, not a bastion of defense so much as a greeting station. The place appears abandoned. Broken panes of bottle glass stare out from the walls, and dark green vines creep over the stones and into its windows unhindered.



The Van Richten Estate

When the Van Richten estate thrived, servants always watched for approaching visitors from the southern window. When they recognized a frequent guest, they hurried to open the gates and lead him to Richten Haus. In the last years of the Van Richten estate, the family fortune had dwindled such that it could support only one gate keeper. And though the gate house and the rest of the estate has been abandoned for decades, a servant nonetheless greets Van Richten and the heroes.

Casimir the gate keeper awaits the heroes inside the gate house. Like all the daylight spirits, he has no idea that he is undead. To him, the Van Richten family has been away for only a few weeks. (See Chapter One for Casimir's history and statistics.)

When the heroes arrive, Casimir is asleep in his bedroom. Any sustained shouting (2 rounds or more) wakes him, and he emerges from the gate house 3 rounds later to open the main gates. He does not respond verbally to any calls until he sees the heroes with Van Richten. Then Casimir's eyes widen in surprise, as he did not expect any of the family to return so soon.

Casimir greets Van Richten incongruously as "Young Master Rudolph." Even if corrected, Casimir accepts Rudolph's much greater age as natural and correct. "It has been longer than I realized." If asked about the state of the wall and gate house, Casimir apologizes, "We did not realize you would return so soon. I am ashamed to say we have been lax in our duties." Casimir is simply unaware of the great time that has passed since the Van Richtens left on holiday. Like the rest of the day spirits, he accepts the great changes to the estate and to Rudolph simply as slightly odd incongruities.

If the heroes have brought horses, Casimir leads them to the stables. Otherwise, he simply closes the gate behind them and excuses

himself to tidy up the gate house "before the rest of the family returns." If asked or ordered, Casimir agrees to lead the heroes to the house, summon the other servants (he assumes correctly that Karl is in his cottage, Josef, Elise, and Gretta in the manor itself), or perform any other reasonable task the heroes might imagine.

Van Richten himself remains far too disoriented and astounded to think of tasks for Casimir. In fact, to Rudolph, the return to his ancestral home seems far more like a dream than reality.

41. Servants' Receiving Room

A simple but sturdy maple table surrounded by six chairs stands in the middle of this small room. Five porcelain cups hang on pegs above a little painted cabinet. Nearby, a washbasin and pitcher stand upon a tall stool.

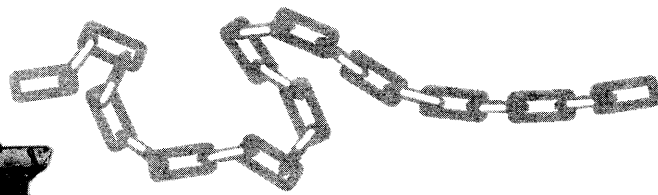
A pair of simple portraits hang on the eastern wall, one of a handsome young man, the other of a darkly beautiful woman. The other walls are covered in wooden carvings of stags, horses, dogs, hunters, and other figures.

Note that if the heroes enter the gate house before Casimir has had a few hours to clean it, everything appears dusty and disused.

Long ago, visiting servants—coachmen, guards, etc.—would rest in this room while their masters proceeded to the manor. If the visitors remained for only a few hours, the servants would remain in this room, drinking cider and eating bread and cheese while sharing the latest gossip with Casimir. When the guests remained longer, then one or two visiting servants could sleep in the ground floor bedroom while the rest found quarters in the servants quarters of the manor.

Casimir carved the figures on the wall, as he often spends his time whittling or carving. Once he bought some paints from a Vistani peddler, and with them he fashioned the portraits. He has a raw talent for artwork. If he had ever pursued it vigorously, he could have been a formidable artist.

The portraits are somewhat idealized depictions of Casimir's father, a native of Darkon, and his mother, a Vistana who left her tribe for love of Casimir's father. Casimir often spoke of his parents' courtship as a romantic and tragic affair, regaling the visiting servants with stories of his daring father's adventures



The Van Richten Estate

before their marriage, and his mother's brave endurance of her tribe's disapproval of her paramour. Any hero who acts more like a commoner than a noble, and who approaches him away from Van Richten, may engage Casimir in such talk, perhaps learning a little of the gate keeper's romantic ideals. If the hero is especially friendly, the gate keeper may even speak of Josef's disdain for Casimir's Vistani blood.

A2. Kitchen

Casimir's kitchen consists of a small, a black iron stove, a little table, two narrow cabinets, and a wash basin set in a wooden cabinet. In one of cabinets rest pots, skillets, and dishes enough to serve eight. The other cabinet serves as Casimir's larder, but when the heroes arrive, there is no food within. On the evening of the first day, Casimir fetches some (spectral) food from the manor's larder. "I am becoming forgetful in my old age," jokes Casimir if asked about his lack of stores.

Characters who rely on food provided by Casimir believe each meal to be nourishing, but in fact there is nothing that can sustain a mortal body in it. They become hungry and thirsty much quicker after the meal than they would expect.

A3. Lower Bedroom

Three simple beds stand here, each slightly less than 5' long. Good but old quilts cover each bed. Beneath the covers, however, the stuffing has become slightly mildewed and lumpy. Two plain tables and chairs stand against the wall between the beds.

Under the foot of one bed rests a pair of very old leather boots once forgotten by a visiting servant who broke both his legs while climbing a tree in the orchard and returned home. Anyone examining the boots can see that they have lain here for decades. If questioned, Casimir remembers the incident as occurring 18 months ago.

A4. Casimir's Bedroom

A large bed (over 6' long), a wooden chair padded with tooled leather, a chest of drawers, a tall but narrow wardrobe, and a tiny nightstand with a small, empty lamp are all the contents of this bedchamber.

The bottle glass in this room is cracked, allowing the vines from outside creeping a few inches into the room.

Those who examine the room before Casimir has had a chance to clean up see the gate keeper's figure impression on the bed, where he awoke (appeared) as the heroes arrived. The lamp oil evaporated years ago.

In the wardrobe and chest of drawers are Casimir's clothes, all dusty and disused until he launders them on the afternoon of the first day. Other than these simple belongings, the room holds nothing of interest.

A5. Gate Keeper's Watch

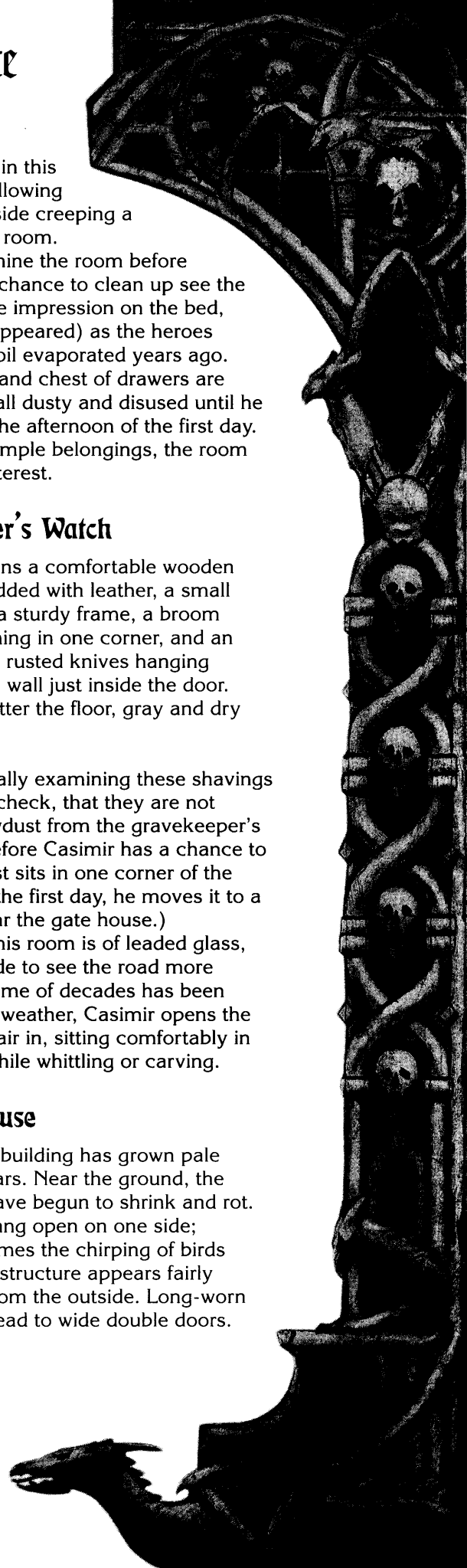
This room contains a comfortable wooden rocking chair padded with leather, a small whetstone upon a sturdy frame, a broom and dustpan leaning in one corner, and an array of peculiar, rusted knives hanging from pegs on the wall just inside the door. Wood shavings litter the floor, gray and dry with age.

Anyone specifically examining these shavings realizes, without a check, that they are not identical to the sawdust from the gravekeeper's shack (area I2). Before Casimir has a chance to clean, a robin's nest sits in one corner of the window. (Later on the first day, he moves it to a bough of a tree near the gate house.)

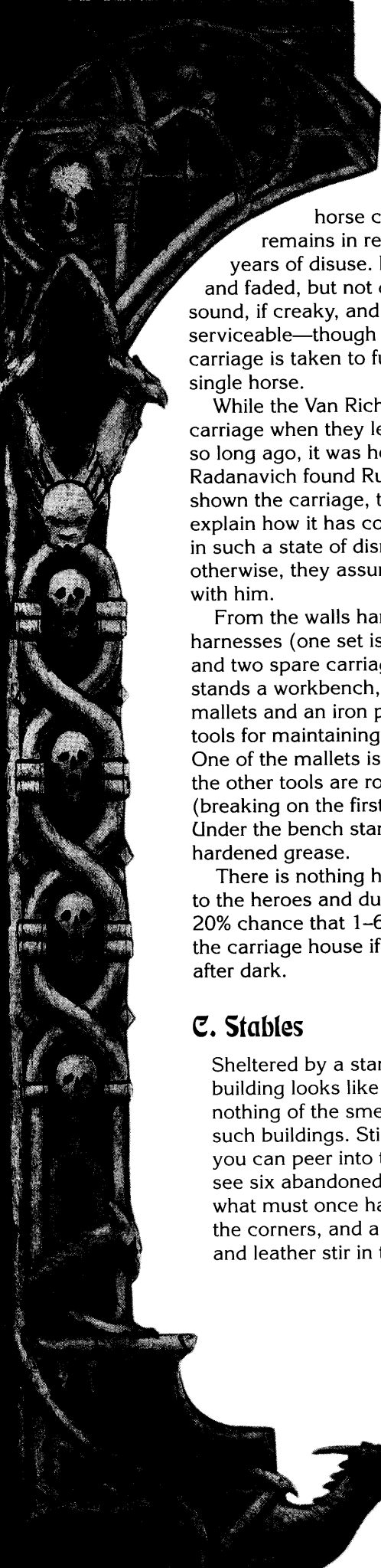
The window of this room is of leaded glass, allowing those inside to see the road more clearly once the grime of decades has been wiped away. In fair weather, Casimir opens the windows to let the air in, sitting comfortably in his favorite chair while whittling or carving.

B. Carriage House

This tall wooden building has grown pale gray over the years. Near the ground, the muddy boards have begun to shrink and rot. Large shutters hang open on one side; through them comes the chirping of birds from inside. The structure appears fairly sound, at least from the outside. Long-worn ruts in the road lead to wide double doors.



The Van Richten Estate



Inside the carriage house stands a small, one-horse carriage. The vehicle remains in relatively good repair, despite years of disuse. Its leather seats are dusty and faded, but not damaged. Its frame is sound, if creaky, and its wheels are all serviceable—though one breaks the moment the carriage is taken to full speed when drawn by a single horse.

While the Van Richten family took the carriage when they left for the ill-fated holiday so long ago, it was here when Madame Radanavich found Rudolph's family home. If shown the carriage, the corporeal ghosts cannot explain how it has come to be here—especially in such a state of disrepair. Unless told otherwise, they assume that Rudolph brought it with him.

From the walls hang two sets of tack and harnesses (one set is a spare), a bulky trunk, and two spare carriage wheels. Along one wall stands a workbench, on which rest two heavy mallets and an iron prybar, along with other tools for maintaining and repairing the carriage. One of the mallets is still serviceable, but all of the other tools are rotted or rusted beyond use (breaking on the first attempt to use them). Under the bench stands a covered bucket of hardened grease.

There is nothing here of particular usefulness to the heroes and during the night on, there is a 20% chance that 1–6 cannibal zombies are in the carriage house if the heroes investigate it after dark.

C. Stables

Sheltered by a stand of elms, this long building looks like a stables, but you detect nothing of the smell usually associated with such buildings. Still, nearer the structure you can peer into the wide, open doors to see six abandoned stalls. Colorless lumps of what must once have been straw huddle in the corners, and a few dry scraps of fabric and leather stir in the autumn breeze.

By day, the stables are an innocuous ruin, devoid of any important clues. The place has stood abandoned for so long that it has even lost the persistent smells of horses. After dusk of the first day, however, any hero who specifically asks about the smell of the place may attempt an Intelligence check (Rangers or characters familiar with horses gain a +4 bonus). Success indicates that the character detects the very faint odor of horse sweat, fresh as if a beast had just walked through after a hard run.

At night, there is more than just the smell of a sweating horse here. Should the heroes approach the stable after dark, a fully saddled riding horse, lathered as if from a hard gallop emerges from the building and whinnies. The horse is Tasha, the mount Van Richten rode when he hunted down Radanavich and her tribe.

The appearance of Tasha requires a madness check from Van Richten. Failure indicates that he flashes back to the fateful night in which he tracked Madame Radanavich through the mists. He sees the heroes as the undead minions of Lord Azalin of Darkon. No matter what the heroes say to him, Van Richten "hears" the words Azalin spoke to him so many years ago. Of course, all the heroes can hear is Van Richten's side of the conversation:

"L-lord Azalin? . . . I am Rudolph van Richten. . . . Thank the gods you are here! . . . They came yesterday and demanded that I treat one of their tribe: Radovan Radanavich—that man there. But he was too sick. I couldn't save him.

"He was the son of their leader. She accused me of letting him die, and she threatened to curse me. I told them they could have anything of mine if they would withhold their terrible powers, and when I awoke this morning, I found that they had taken my son!"

When Van Richten reaches this point in the "conversation," he sobs incoherently. The rest of his monologue consists of a few rounds of unintelligible muttering, then a terrible scream.

Tasha (animal ghost): Int Animal (2); AL LE; AC 0 or 8; MV 24; HD 2+2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA age; SD ethereal; SZ L (8' long); ML 20; XP 975.

Like most animal ghosts who died serving their masters, Tasha is restless because she did

The Van Richten Estate



not manage to carry Van Richten all the way to his destination. She perceives the heroes and any other living creature near Van Richten as threats to her task, attacking relentlessly by kicking with her forehooves and biting.

Since she is not trained as a warhorse, Tasha's physical attacks are not daunting, though the heroes must overcome her *aura of fear* upon first seeing her. The moment she is struck, however, she assumes ethereal form and continues to attack, this time with the danger of aging her opponents.

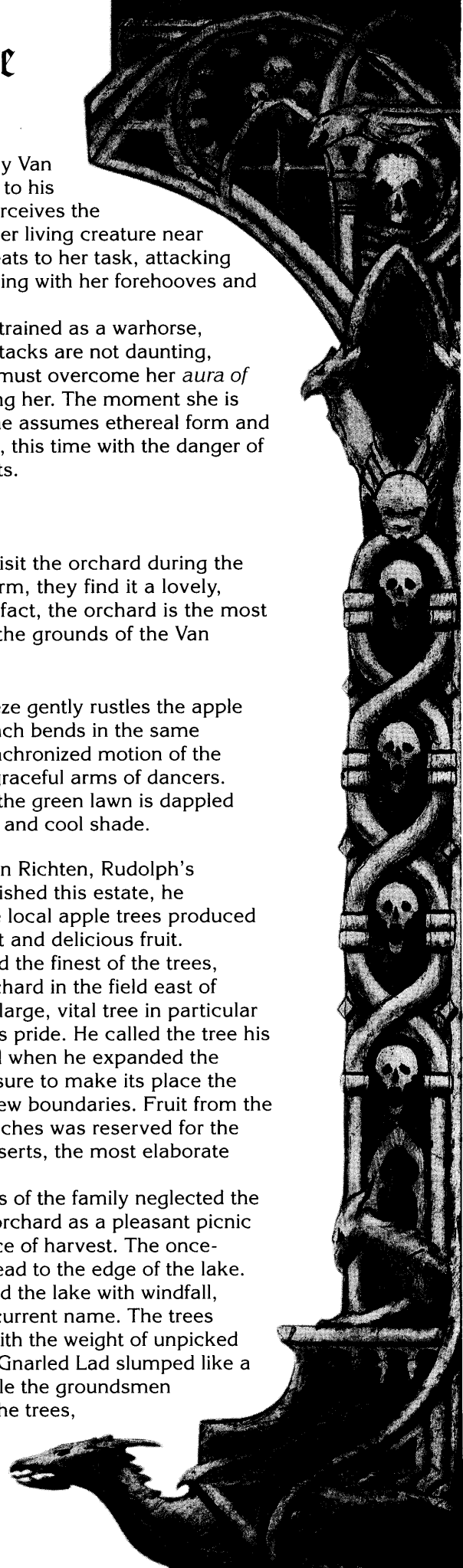
D. Orchard

When the heroes visit the orchard during the day, before the storm, they find it a lovely, peaceful scene. In fact, the orchard is the most pleasant place on the grounds of the Van Richten estate.

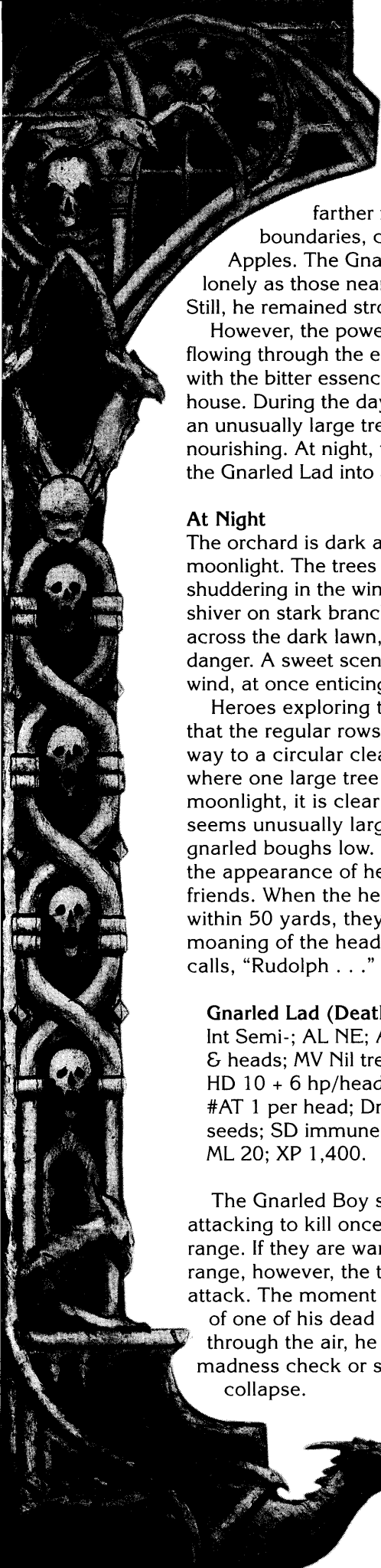
The autumn breeze gently rustles the apple trees. Every branch bends in the same direction, the synchronized motion of the boughs like the graceful arms of dancers. Below the trees, the green lawn is dappled in bright sunlight and cool shade.

When Frederick Van Richten, Rudolph's grandfather, established this estate, he discovered that the local apple trees produced an especially sweet and delicious fruit. Frederick cultivated the finest of the trees, forming a large orchard in the field east of Bleak House. One large, vital tree in particular became Frederick's pride. He called the tree his "Gnarled Lad," and when he expanded the orchard, he made sure to make its place the very heart of the new boundaries. Fruit from the Gnarled Lad's branches was reserved for the most exquisite desserts, the most elaborate ciders and wines.

Later generations of the family neglected the trees, treating the orchard as a pleasant picnic ground, not a source of harvest. The once-tamed orchard spread to the edge of the lake. Each autumn dotted the lake with windfall, giving the lake its current name. The trees seemed to droop with the weight of unpicked fruit, and even the Gnarled Lad slumped like a dejected child. While the groundsmen continued to tend the trees, the loving care once lavished



The Van Richten Estate



upon the orchard was gone. The trees spread farther from their original boundaries, crowding the Lake of Apples. The Gnarled Lad grew dark and lonely as those nearest him eventually died. Still, he remained strong in his solitude.

However, the powerful supernatural energies flowing through the estate have suffused the tree with the bitter essence of the neglect felt by the house. During the day, the Gnarled Lad remains an unusually large tree, his apples sweet and nourishing. At night, the evil rises to transform the Gnarled Lad into an agent of vengeance.

At Night

The orchard is dark and labyrinthine in the moonlight. The trees crouch beneath the sky, shuddering in the wind. Dry, rustling leaves shiver on stark branches, while more scatter across the dark lawn, fleeing some invisible danger. A sweet scent of decay lingers on the wind, at once enticing and repugnant.

Heroes exploring the orchard at night notice that the regular rows of the trees have given way to a circular clearing near the center, where one large tree stands alone. Even in the moonlight, it is clear that the fruit of the tree seems unusually large, bending the already gnarled boughs low. In fact, the apples take on the appearance of heads of Van Richten's lost friends. When the heroes have approached within 50 yards, they begin to hear the moaning of the heads and the hoarse, repetitive calls, "Rudolph . . ." and "Van Richten. . . ."

Gnarled Lad (Death's Head Tree):

Int Semi-; AL NE; AC 10 trunk, 7 branches & heads; MV Nil tree, Fly 6 (E) heads; HD 10 + 6 hp/head; hp 50 tree; THAC0 11; #AT 1 per head; Dmg 1d4 bite; SA spit seeds; SD immune to fire; SZ H (25' tall); ML 20; XP 1,400.

The Gnarled Boy simply awaits its prey, attacking to kill once the heroes have come in range. If they are wary and stay just out of range, however, the tree lets its heads fly out to attack. The moment Van Richten sees the head of one of his dead companions floating through the air, he must make a successful madness check or suffer a complete mental collapse.

E. Boat House

The quiet lapping of the water against the pier is the only sound near this simple structure. A faintly sour odor of apples mingles with the green scent of algae and water rushes, and near the shore bob the green and red fruits. The boat house itself is gray with rot.

The smaller room of the boat house is a stone-floored work area surrounded by coiled rope, woodworking tools, and other equipment hanging on pegs. In several places, darker outlines show where tools are missing, including a long, sharp chisel. (In fact, the chisel is long lost, but the heroes can worry about its absence.)

In the larger chamber, a wooden floor extends to join the pier on one side, while the other half opens to the water of the lake. Drawn up onto the floor is a boat. The heroes can use it to reach the island in the lake.

F. Lake

The Lake of Apples once stretched nearly a mile away from the shore nearest Bleak House. Now the Mists give it only a few hundred feet of freedom before swallowing it up. Where once a pleasant little island provided a convenient picnic ground, only a tiny fragment remains, a single apple tree standing lonely at the Misty Border.

Here is where Karl left the innocent Gretta on the day of the murders. Eventually, the girl gained the courage to attempt to swim to shore, but she drowned. Otto van Richten, Rudolph van Richten's father, found her body floating in the lake when he and his family returned to find the dead servants. He buried her on the island rather than bring her body back to the house.

Should the heroes choose to swim or wade out to the tiny fragment of the island, they risk attack by a submerged choke creeper. They may also fall prey to Radovan's mischief. Upon spying any boat approaching the island, Radovan enters the water (like all the plants on the estate, the choke creeper leaves the undead alone) and swims quietly out toward the heroes. He waits until they disembark, then swims close to shore and tries to steal their boat. He remains underwater, towing the boat back to shore by its mooring line.

Should the heroes set a guard on their boat, then Radovan bides his time during daylight. At

The Van Richten Estate



night, or under the gloom of the storm, he is more bold, attacking lone characters if necessary to steal the boat. If all else fails, Radovan lurks in the water for the return trip, planning to tip the boat and strangle a single hero while the others fight off the choke creeper.

To tip the boat, Radovan must make a successful attack roll vs. AC 5, subtracting one for each character in the boat. Thus, if the boat contains five passengers, Radovan must successfully hit AC 0 to tip the boat. Living characters in the water are at once attacked by the choke creeper.

In all cases, Radovan flees the moment he has strangled a single character or faces likely destruction (after suffering 10 hit points of damage or witnessing powerful magical attacks).

Choke creeper: Int Nil; AL N; AC 6/5; MV 1/2; THAC0 7; #AT 8 or more; Dmg 1-4; SA strangling; SD special; SZ G (120' long); ML 14; XP 18,000.

3. Spring House

A strong smell of water comes from this small stone building. Tiles cover the roof, though irregular gaps appear in two places, perhaps the result of nesting birds. The air grows cooler as you approach.

The spring house contains a large reservoir of spring water, as well as a covered access to the spring itself. There is nothing here to threaten the heroes unless the target artifact is hidden here. In that case, they may find themselves facing Radovan and his ghoulish minions. (There is a 10% chance they beat the heroes here following the tarokka reading.) Four wooden pails stand to one side of the chamber. Two are still capable of holding water.

The spring house remains mostly unchanged at night, except that the water turns murky.

The Van Richten Estate

H. Groundsman's Cottage

A simple cottage rests in a tiny dell surrounded by elm trees. Dirty white boards rise above an aged stone foundation, and two little windows peek out from the overhanging roof. To either side of the red wooden door sprawl weed-choked flowerbeds.

This is the home of Karl Mueller, groundsman to the Van Richten estate. In life, he resided alone, presumed by all to be a staunch bachelor. Unknown to any, Karl harbored a secret desire for Elise, Josef's elder daughter. Karl's lust for the girl, twisted by his own brutal and pathetic nature, eventually caused the deaths of all the servants on the estate while the Van Richten family was away.

At night, the cottage undergoes no dramatic transformation, unlike the mansion. If the heroes come here during the day, Karl comes out and greet them nervously, behaving guiltily. He denies knowledge of Casimir's hound or Gretta.

Should the heroes come here after Karl has murdered the other servants, they find him hanging from the rafters, his tongue lolling from his twisted mouth. However, like the other day time ghosts, Karl will return in the morning, until the cycle of death is broken.

I. Cemetery

Well before you arrive at the iron gates, you see the cemetery upon a hill northeast of the manor. White stones dot the gentle slopes of its hills, and plentiful elm trees provide cool shade among the graves. On the far hill stands a stone building.

This cemetery was here before the Van Richtens established their home on these grounds. Many of the headstones bear the names of centuries-old forbearers of the region. All of the most impressive monuments, however, are to Van Richten ancestors. The family mausoleum stands near the center of the cemetery, overlooking the less impressive monuments.

When Madame Radanavich led her undead followers to this place, the ghoulish Vistani made a home within the mausoleum. Soon after, they discovered the limestone caverns near the spring house and burrowed into them, eventually extending the passages to both the mausoleum and the root cellar beneath Bleak House. Now the ghouls dwell in the cool, damp cave.

II. Gates

Twin pillars frame the iron gate to the graveyard. The legend "Van Richten" is carved upon a copper plaque, now greened with age. Beyond the gate you see a trio of hills. Upon the farthest stands the mausoleum, briefly veiled by a leaf-choked breeze. Between the others, almost hidden by a stand of elms, crouches a rude wooden shack. Faintly you hear the monotonous clack of its door as the wind opens, then slams it shut. Between the buildings sprawls a low forest of headstones.



12. Gravekeeper's Shack

This simple wooden structure smells of freshly hewn pineboards. An iron tripod stands over the smoldering remains of a fire about 10' from the front door. Nearby stands a rain barrel with a large tin dipper.

Inside the shack, a number of coffins equal to the number of heroes lines the wall. One additional coffin remains half-finished, its pieces lying across two sawhorses and propped against the workbench. Sawdust covers the floor, but no footprints track through it.

In addition to nails and screws kept in wooden boxes, the workbench holds a wooden mallet, a hammer, two handsaws, a plane, and an awl. An iron bucket of pitch stands in one corner, ice cold.

If questioned about the coffins, Karl or Casimir do not know who made them.

The Van Richten Estate

The coffins were created by the Bleak House spirit in an attempt to warn the heroes. Although the heroes will likely interpret this as a threat, the house is trying to tell them that this is what Madame Radanavich has planned for them and Van Richten.

13. Sundered Grave

Each of these graves lies seemingly undisturbed during the day. A few hours after dusk, however, a hungry cannibal zombie claws its way out from within. Just before dawn, the creatures return to their homes, digging themselves back into the sundered coffins to escape the daylight. Each dawn, the sundered ground heals itself, sealing the undead beneath the soil until they claw their way to freedom the next night.

The only signs that these graves are home to undead are the scattered bone fragments and dry scraps of old clothing common to this area. A ranger or another character with the tracking proficiency can, on a successful check, follow the tracks left by the zombies to this area and to the mausoleum (Area 14).

14. Mausoleum

The marble surface of this building stands out among the crumbling stone monuments of the rest of the cemetery. Its bronze door is tarnished with age, but it looks sturdy and secure behind a padlocked iron gate.

The Van Richten mausoleum was once reserved for direct descendants of Frederick van Richten, who founded the estate 113 years ago. If asked about the keys to the gate or vault, neither Josef nor Karl can account for them, explaining that each thought the other had them. (Karl is lying, but does not wish to admit he may have lost them.) In fact, Radovan took the keys from Karl's cottage soon after arriving at Bleak House.

At first, Radovan used the mausoleum as a lair for his ghoul minions. Now the zombies dwell here.

Inside, the mausoleum is a wall of mortared vaults and four free-standing tombs. Ten of the 16 vaults have never been used, as indicated by the lack of a nameplate. The other six have been broken open, the occupants gnawed and scattered by the undead. Throughout the chamber lie broken bones and a few personal belongings including a fine onyx ring (worth 75 gp).

Two of the four tombs are sealed tightly; Radovan and his minions have been unable to open them. A combined Strength of 30 as well as stoneworking tools (a prybar, hammer, and chisel) are required to remove the heavy lids. Inside are the remains of Rudolph's grandparents, Frederick and Ella van Richten. There is nothing valuable within the tombs.

The last tomb is broken open and the floor beneath it torn up to reveal a ragged, earthen tunnel. The stench of ghouls is strong here, and the tunnel leads to the ghoul warrens (area 40 of the house.)

The zombies defend their lair against intrusion, retreating to the ghoul warrens (if possible) when they fail a morale check at night.

J. Bloodrose Patch

During the day, beautiful white roses rest in these overgrown gardens. Despite the years of neglect, the flowers have thrived here. To all examination, the roses are perfectly normal.

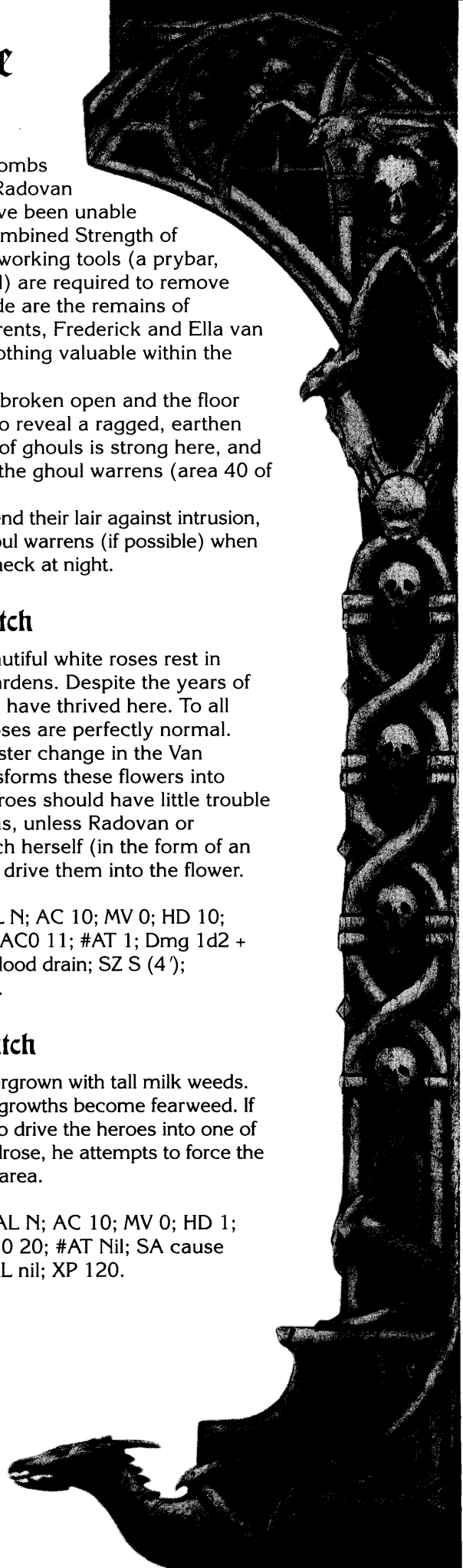
At night, the sinister change in the Van Richten estate transforms these flowers into bloodroses. The heroes should have little trouble avoiding these areas, unless Radovan or Madame Radanavich herself (in the form of an animated carriage) drive them into the flower.

Bloodrose (3): AL N; AC 10; MV 0; HD 10; hp 58, 48, 43; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 + target's AC; SA Blood drain; SZ S (4'); ML n/a; XP 2,000.

K. Fearweed Patch

These areas are overgrown with tall milk weeds. At night, these wild growths become fearweed. If Radovan is unable to drive the heroes into one of the patches of bloodrose, he attempts to force the heroes through this area.

Fearweed (30): AL N; AC 10; MV 0; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT Nil; SA cause fear; SZ S (2'); ML nil; XP 120.



Bleak House



Dark house, by
which once more I
stand
Here in the long
unlovely street.

—Lord Tennyson,
In Memorium

Bleak House is a three-story manor with two cellars and an attic. Constructed 113 years ago by Frederick Van Richten, the house was the finest example of its kind. Rudolph van Richten left the estate unmanaged after his wife's death. Yet, even after decades of neglect, the manor awaits him, standing proud and firm—during the day.

Just as the grounds,

Bleak
House
itself

transforms at dusk from a grand old mansion to a creaking, twisted edifice. The changes inside, however, are far more subtle than those without. Floors creak and windows shiver, even when no mortal touch falls upon them. The halls seem to narrow and lengthen, and all the angles of the walls seem slightly wrong, slightly too severe.

Each of the room descriptions assumes the heroes explore the house during the day. For night-time encounters, modify the description based on the **At Night** notes and the **Minor Manifestation** and **Major Manifestation** descriptions. These sections detail the supernatural phenomenon created by Bleak House itself, as it struggles against Madame Radanavich. Each manifestation is particular to a room, but each is triggered only at night when the tarokka draw indicates. Once a ghost has been destroyed, a Minor Manifestation occurs instead when its card is drawn.

The heroes can learn the history and purpose of any of the rooms by questioning either Van Richten or Josef.

Entering Bleak House

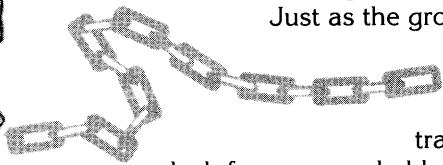
Whether entering from the main entrance or another, the heroes may begin to hear Josef's activity as he hurriedly cleans the many rooms of the manor. Allow any character who listens for noise to roll an Intelligence check (characters with the Hear Noise ability may add +2/10% ability to the check). Those who succeed hear the snapping of sheets, the faint clink of glasses restored to their places, or a quick flurry of light footsteps from 1–3 rooms away (direction determined randomly, or lead the heroes toward whichever rooms you choose).

Because of his special ability, Josef spends no more than two rounds cleaning any room while the heroes are not present. Assuming that the first time the heroes hear him he is almost finished cleaning a room, Josef moves 1–3 rooms away to clean another. No matter which course they choose, however, the heroes find all the rooms in their path recently dusted. They won't catch Josef "in the act" unless they split up to enter several rooms at once.

This chase should not tax the heroes' abilities, but it should give them at least a hint of the special qualities of the servants of the manor.

Once the heroes confront Josef, he greets them apologetically. The steward is desolated that he hasn't cleaned the grand foyer yet, and he promises to have Karl remove and beat the carpet at once while he attends to the rest of the room. Josef recognizes Van Richten and greets him as "Master Rudolph." After greeting the heroes, Josef escorts them to the parlor, where Elise will bring refreshments.

Josef is deferential and polite to all of the heroes, unless one is presented to him as a servant. In that case, he treats the other servant as a subordinate.



Bleak House

Ground Floor

1. Grand Foyer

Elegant sliding doors stand to either side of the elaborate grand entrance, light maple accents contrasting with dark walnut through a light coat of dust. Between them, the floor lies half-covered in rich but dusty carpets. Above, a tarnished brass chandelier turns gently upon its chain, cobwebs swelling like gossamer sails at every revolution.

Shafts of daylight stab through the dusty air, past the chandelier and down toward the grand fireplace on the west wall. Even in full illumination, the red-veined marble hearth remains black as a midnight pool. Upon the mantle rests a trio of elegant statuettes flanked by a pair of small candelabra.

From the fireplace, dust motes swirl across the foyer, up an eastern staircase toward the source of the light. Past the staircase, a lesser foyer sprawls to the east, and a wide doorway stands open on the west. Between them, is a narrow musician's nook. Colorful spots of light dance slowly under the bottle-glass window above the harpsichord.

Note that if the heroes entered the manor from another entrance and have already encountered Josef, this room may have been cleaned, and Karl may have taken the carpets outside to clean them on the clotheslines behind the servants' rooms.

The statuettes upon the hearth are individual pieces of a matched set. The center figure is of a huge boar trampling a careless hunter. Another depicts a magnificent horse bearing another hunter who looks shocked but helpless to aid his friend. The third figure shows a hunter raising a spear to strike the boar, while two dogs crouch at his side, ready to spring at the boar.

At Night

With the exception of the fourth night, pale moonlight to falls upon the windows, and the slow dance of the clouds casts shadows upon the glass, sometimes forming a manlike shapes. Should the heroes light the fireplace, they find that the flames never quite illuminate the hall. Even when the chandelier and candelabra are lit, the corners of the hall remain dark, full of slowly shifting shadows from the ever-twisting chandelier.

During the storm on the fourth night, special conditions apply to this room, and they are described in Chapter Five.

Minor Manifestation

All heroes can hear the faint, distant sound of a man screaming. Heroes with the Hear Noise ability, or the Alertness nonweapon proficiency also hear the grunting and squeals of a boar, as well as barking dogs and the shouts of two other men. Successful Intelligence checks at -2 penalties will let heroes realize the sound seems to be coming from the hearth. The sounds persist for 1d4 rounds before fading. Heroes examining the figure of the hunter trampled by the boar find the figuring slick with blood for 1-6 rounds after the sounds stop. Afterward, the figurines all seem perfectly normal.

Major Manifestation

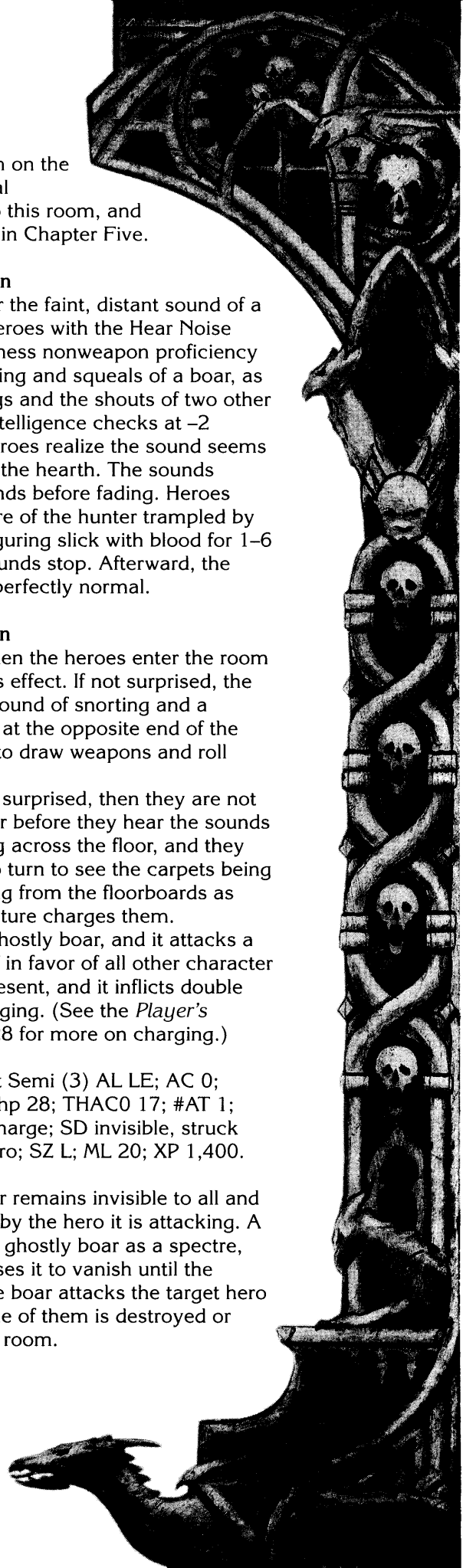
Roll for surprise when the heroes enter the room while triggering this effect. If not surprised, the heroes detect the sound of snorting and a repeated stamping at the opposite end of the room. Allow them to draw weapons and roll initiative.

If the heroes are surprised, then they are not aware of the danger before they hear the sounds of hooves clattering across the floor, and they barely have time to turn to see the carpets being torn and chips flying from the floorboards as some invisible creature charges them.

The threat is a ghostly boar, and it attacks a ranger, druid, or elf in favor of all other character classes or races present, and it inflicts double damage when charging. (See the *Player's Handbook* page 128 for more on charging.)

Ghostly Boar: Int Semi (3) AL LE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA charge; SD invisible, struck only by target hero; SZ L; ML 20; XP 1,400.

This ghostly boar remains invisible to all and can only be struck by the hero it is attacking. A priest may turn the ghostly boar as a spectre, and *dispel evil* causes it to vanish until the following night. The boar attacks the target hero relentlessly until one of them is destroyed or the hero leaves the room.



Bleak House

2. East Foyer

Light filters through the dust on the heavy, beveled-glass windows on the eastern wall. A thick carpet runs from the entrance, parallel to a wide stairway descending toward the grand foyer. Above, more windows permit the sunlight to suffuse the hall. Beneath the staircase is a tiny office. The walls are all of dark oak, trimmed with mahogany. Elegant lamps, their glass dim with dust, jut from the paneled walls six feet above the floor.

Outside, the eastern entrance is a covered porch with short flights of stone steps rising from north and south. At the outer corners of the porch stand heavy stone pots containing soil. Once these pots held well-tended plants; now one is barren and the other, which stands in the shade, is dotted with tiny white (non-poisonous, but bad-tasting) mushrooms. The door is smaller than that at the grand entrance, but sturdy and secured by an excellent lock (-20% penalty to Open Locks attempts).

The small chamber beneath the stairs harbors a simple wooden chair and a tiny desk built into the wall. Beneath the desk are three drawers, the narrow top drawers locked, the tall lower drawer latched but not locked.

The top drawer is secured with a good lock. (Josef has the key, which he willingly gives to Van Richten if asked, or to a hero who makes a convincing argument and a successful Charisma check.) Inside rests thick ledger, its heavy pages resistant to all effects of time except the faintest discoloration at the edges. Inside the book is an interminable list of deliveries. Josef will be shocked to find that someone has added dozens of pages of forged entries. (These are the records of the stewards that followed him.)

The second drawer is secured with a superior lock (-40% to Open Locks). The drawer is now empty, though it once held Josef's ledger. (See Chapter One for the importance of this book.) If asked about this drawer, Josef pretends that he has lost the key; later, he surreptitiously goes to move his ledger to another hiding place. When he finds that it is missing, he fears blackmail.

The third drawer is the largest. It is comprised of eight narrow shelves, each containing an extra leaf for the dining room table (see Area 8). If more than four heroes accompany Van Richten, Josef removes one leaf for every two additional heroes, expanding the dining table to accommodate them.

The grand stairway rises to the herald's balcony, then doubles back to reach the second floor. It is richly carpeted, its walls decorated with paintings ranging from tiny portraits of Van Richten family members to vast, sweeping landscapes and dramatic hunting scenes. One painting depicts a teenaged Rudolph, his parents, and his sister.

At Night

The west wind gently rattles the windows, making it seem like someone is gently rapping on them. See Chapter Five for conditions on the fourth night.

Minor Manifestation

Figures in the paintings seem to watch the heroes, so much so that the portraits actually change, shifting a figure's eyes or way the head is turned from one direction to another. These movements never occur when a hero is watching the paintings.

Major Manifestation

All of the figures in the portraits appear as corpses, except for the painting of Rudolph himself. His image, which has aged to resemble his present self, shrinks in horror from his own dead family, whose dead hands clutch at his own hands and shoulders. Assuming Van Richten has not yet recovered from the ordeals suffered at

Bleak House

the hands of Daclaud Heinfroth and the Thinker, viewing this portrait causes him to bolt screaming from the foyer, and back into Area 1. When the heroes pursue, they find him laying in a fetal position under the harpsichord, tears running down his face as he mumbles, over and over again: "They got them. They got everyone, everyone I've ever cared for. And it was my fault. It was all my fault."

The heroes may coax Van Richten out from under the harpsichord with soothing words, but he will be even more distant and withdrawn than before.

3. Ladies' Withdrawing Room

Sumptuous quilted fabric covers the walls of this chamber, delicately painted in subtle floral patterns upon a tasteful rose-and-gold fabric. The ceiling is sculpted in white plaster trimmed with gold paint, its elegant designs marching toward the center like the players in a masque. There, a small but elaborate crystal chandelier glitters even through the cobwebs in the faint light. Below, carpets form a soft path around delicate chairs and small tables.

Leaded-glass windows stand sheltered by sun-faded draperies on the south and west walls, each forming an intimate little nook from which one could look out onto the grounds, were the panes not coated with dust. Between the western windows stands a small marble fireplace.

On all four walls hang paintings ranging in size from tiny cameos to a huge landscape larger than a bed. Most depict elegant ladies. Some are in repose on a sunny terrace, others stroll through a utopian grove, and still others sit on a boat that drifts lazily on a quiet pond.

This was a sitting room reserved exclusively for womanly social gatherings and after-dinner conversation. The men, when they visited, entered no further than the first carpet, where they stood to pay their respects before retiring to their own withdrawing room (Area 6).

The furniture includes six armless chairs decorated with the same fabric and in the same motif as the wall fabric; two larger, stuffed chairs upholstered in a pastel blue velvet; a thickly cushioned bench near each of the southern windows; three small tables, each large enough for three or four cups of tea; and one slightly larger round table suitable for a

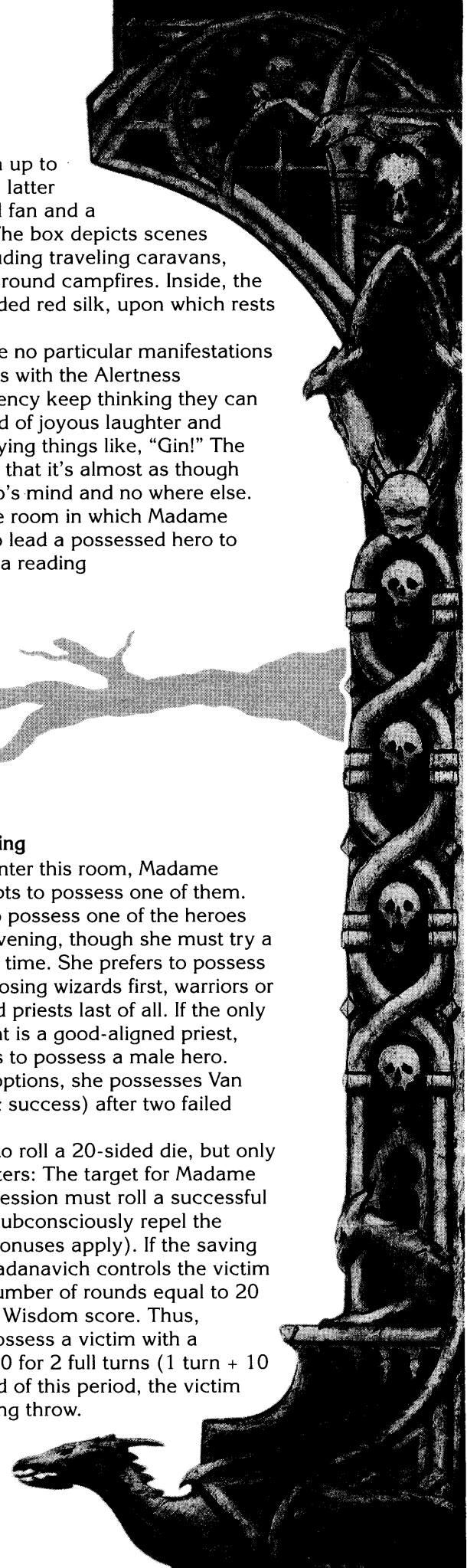
game of cards with up to six players. On the latter table rests a folded fan and a carved teak box. The box depicts scenes of Vistani life, including traveling caravans, and wild dancing around campfires. Inside, the box is lined in padded red silk, upon which rests a tarokka deck.

Though there are no particular manifestations in this room, heroes with the Alertness nonweapon proficiency keep thinking they can hear the faint sound of joyous laughter and feminine voices saying things like, "Gin!" The sounds are so faint that it's almost as though they are in the hero's mind and no where else. However, this is the room in which Madame Radanavich tries to lead a possessed hero to perform the tarokka reading

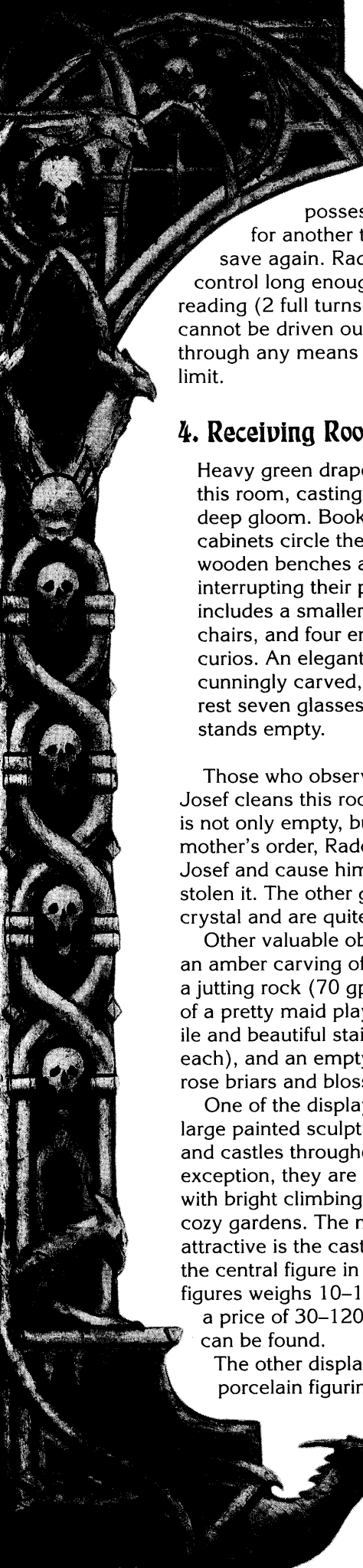
The Tarokka Reading

When the heroes enter this room, Madame Radanavich attempts to possess one of them. She can attempt to possess one of the heroes three times each evening, though she must try a different hero each time. She prefers to possess a female hero, choosing wizards first, warriors or rogues second, and priests last of all. If the only female hero present is a good-aligned priest, Radanavich prefers to possess a male hero. Regardless of her options, she possesses Van Richten (automatic success) after two failed attempts.

Ask all players to roll a 20-sided die, but only one roll really matters: The target for Madame Radanavich's possession must roll a successful save vs. spells to subconsciously repel the assault (Wisdom bonuses apply). If the saving throw fails, then Radanavich controls the victim for 1 turn plus a number of rounds equal to 20 minus the victim's Wisdom score. Thus, Radanavich can possess a victim with a Wisdom score of 10 for 2 full turns (1 turn + 10 rounds). At the end of this period, the victim gains another saving throw. Success ejects Radanavich



Bleak House



immediately; failure indicates that the possessing spirit retains control for another turn before the victim can save again. Radanavich tries to retain control long enough to perform the tarokka reading (2 full turns). Madame Radanavich cannot be driven out of the possessed body through any means until her powers reach their limit.

4. Receiving Room

Heavy green draperies cover the windows in this room, casting the entire chamber into a deep gloom. Bookshelves and display cabinets circle the walls, two modest wooden benches and a long couch interrupting their procession. Other furniture includes a smaller couch, three stuffed chairs, and four end tables bearing various curios. An elegant central table bears a cunningly carved, two-level rack on which rest seven glasses; the eighth depression stands empty.

Those who observe the glass rack before Josef cleans this room notice that the eighth slot is not only empty, but also free of dust. At his mother's order, Radovan stole the glass to vex Josef and cause him to suspect Casimir had stolen it. The other glasses are made of fine crystal and are quite valuable (8 gp each).

Other valuable objects on the tables include an amber carving of a lion standing nobly upon a jutting rock (70 gp value), the ceramic figurine of a pretty maid playing a lute (8 gp), four fragile and beautiful stained-glass lamps (20 gp each), and an empty walnut box carved with rose briars and blossoms.

One of the display cabinets contains nine large painted sculptures of magnificent manors and castles throughout Darkon. With one exception, they are buildings of fairy-tale beauty, with bright climbing ivy, wide open windows, and cozy gardens. The most foreboding and least attractive is the castle of Lord Azalin, though it is the central figure in the display. Each of the figures weighs 10–15 pounds and can command a price of 30–120 gp, if an interested buyer can be found.

The other display cabinet contains six glazed porcelain figurines: A young boy in peasant clothing, scrambling barefoot over a fallen log; two

beggar children playing dice; a boyish satyr sitting on a broken pillar and playing his flute for a family of rabbits; a beautiful Vistana dancer, frozen in mid-spin, her arms raised and her skirts billowing; and a slender nymph embracing a gentleman and placing a kiss on his cheek. Each figurine is worth 100–300 gp, if an interested buyer can be found.

The six bookshelves contain four or five dozen books each. Many of the books are histories, often in sets of 8–20 volumes, dull chronicles of historical figures who never quite rise to full heroism or villainy, and whose greatest moments are at best mild melodrama. The rest are books of secular and religious poetry, mostly quite bad but bound in excellent materials. The entire collection of 280 books could fetch as much as 1,200 gp to a wealthy buyer in Darkon.

At Night

This room remains a comfortable haven during the night, although the stained-glass lamps cast unusual shadows, especially in the corners of the room and upon the rich draperies. When the ghouls and zombies approach the house, they rap on the windows of this room as a taunting warning, then retreat into the darkness.

Minor Manifestation

Both display cabinets shudder as if from a small earthquake. The effect lasts 1–3 round. Any hero who looks at them sees see lights flicker in the tiny windows of the castles, while the satyr rocks back and forth as he plays his flute, and the Vistana spins in a seductive dance. Touching or opening the cabinet causes the figurines to revert to normal.

Major Manifestation

So long as they remain in the display cabinet, the miniature castles and manors all transform into eerie, twisted versions of themselves, mirroring the change in Bleak House. A hero who successfully uses the Hear Noise ability can discern a howl of wind from within the glass cabinet.

Two things can happen if a hero tries to open the cabinet, depending on DM preference. First, the glass may shatter, flying outward into the room, requiring all within 5' of the cabinet to make a successful saving throw vs. petrification or be slashed for 1–4 points of damage. Second, touching the glass may cause all in the room to be transported into a twisted version of the castle or manor depicted by the sculpture.

Bleak House

The second option presents extra work for the DM, as it will require a side adventure to be created for the heroes. However, if the idea seems appealing, the DM can turn to other RAVENLOFT material for inspiration. The adventure *From the Shadows* details Azalin's fortress, while the *Darklords* accessory features Shadowborne Manor and the House of Lament, which may provide excellent starting points for creating a haunted house within the haunted house. The escape methods presented in those adventures will be the same required for the heroes to escape the nightmare versions of Darkon's famous estates. Once the heroes free themselves, they discover that hardly any time has passed in the real world.

5. Terrace

Flat stones of gray, blue, and rose cover the porch floor, and wrought-iron chairs and a table stand upon them. At the corners of the terrace rest huge stone pots from which jut the withered stalks of long-dead plants. Dry leaves skitter across the stones, fleeing through the web of ivy-covered rails to fall gently to the ground below.

As the hill falls away from the main entrance, it leaves a 10' drop from the terrace to the soft ground below. Thick vines creep up the stone walls here, twining around the rails of the terrace fence. During the day, and after Josef has cleaned the furniture, the terrace is a pleasant, sunny spot.

At Night

The night wind stirs the ivy to strange, almost intelligent movements. While the vines remain normal plants until triggered by a major manifestation, heroes observing their undulating motions may suspect otherwise.

When Radovan leads his minions to the house, several of them come here to tap at the receiving room window and rattle the dining room door.

Minor Manifestation

Heroes touching the wrought-iron chairs or table find the metal excruciatingly cold and suffer 1-3 hp damage to any bare flesh that touches the furniture. Anyone watching the ivy more than casually (for instance, if a hero watches the ivy to see whether something is in it, or whether it seems alive), must make a successful save vs. spells or suffer the effects of a *forget* spell.

Major Manifestation

The crawling ivy attacks any hero who moves within 3' of the railing. This is the same patch which rises to enter the Van Richten's Surgery (Area 31) on the second story. If the heroes move into this area to fight undead, the ivy attacks only the living.

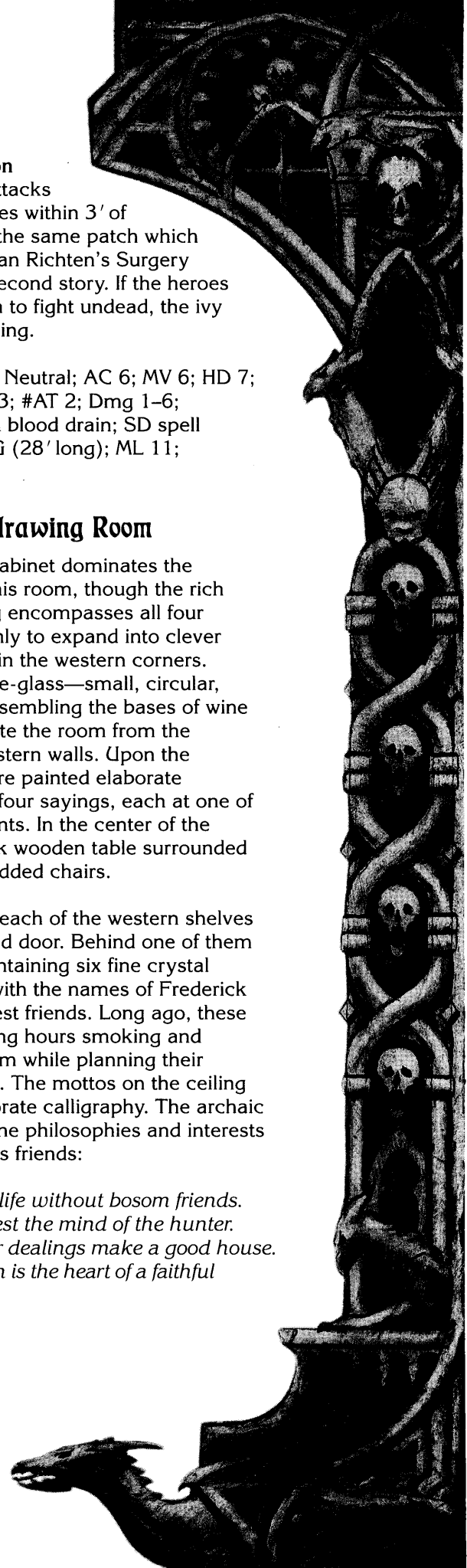
Crawling Ivy: AL Neutral; AC 6; MV 6; HD 7; hp 34; THACO 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6; SA Entangle and blood drain; SD spell immunities; SZ G (28' long); ML 11; XP 1,400.

6. Men's Withdrawing Room

A huge built-in cabinet dominates the eastern wall of this room, though the rich wooden paneling encompasses all four walls, pausing only to expand into clever shelved alcoves in the western corners. Windows of bottle-glass—small, circular, colored plates resembling the bases of wine bottles—illuminate the room from the northern and western walls. Upon the smooth ceiling are painted elaborate designs framing four sayings, each at one of the compass points. In the center of the room rests a dark wooden table surrounded by six leather-padded chairs.

The paneling of each of the western shelves harbors a concealed door. Behind one of them are two shelves containing six fine crystal goblets engraved with the names of Frederick van Richten's closest friends. Long ago, these comrades spent long hours smoking and drinking in this room while planning their hunting excursions. The mottos on the ceiling are written in elaborate calligraphy. The archaic aphorisms reflect the philosophies and interests of Frederick and his friends:

*Cold and bare is a life without bosom friends.
The prey knows best the mind of the hunter.
Hospitality and fair dealings make a good house.
The warmest hearth is the heart of a faithful spouse.*



Bleak House

If one of the objects is here, it is hidden behind the other concealed panel. Otherwise, the heroes may find a painted pasteboard box containing two dozen stale cigars stashed inside.

The central drawers of the large cabinet are shallow but wide and long. Inside the heroes find the original plan for Richten Haus and its grounds (you may give the players a copy of the floor plans for Richten Haus that appear page 64 of this booklet), as well as an exhaustive series of maps showing game trails for more a hundred miles of the surrounding terrain. Among the maps are flat, paper-bound ledgers which Van Richten can explain are hunting notes, detailing the successes and failures of hunting club members. In one of these books are tiny remnants of cloth pasted beneath names of the hunting club members, a date (ranging from nearly 200 years ago to 50 years past) and a location. The hunting club noted the occasions on which its members missed a shot by cutting a strip of cloth from the unfortunate hunter's coat and using it to mark the event.

In the taller, outer cabinets the heroes find minor trophies and souvenirs of the hunting club, including three sets of antlers, a broken hunting knife, a set of three hunting horns (one cracked), wooden duck calls, carved decoys, tooled leather pouches, and four ivory pipes carved with the faces of old men (worth 30 gp each).

At Night

Except that the room is dark unless the heroes or one of the servants brings candles into the room, this room changes little at night. The cabinet seems to loom taller and more imposing, and the shadows cast by the antlers may appear to climb the walls like serpents.

Minor Manifestation

Heroes detect the faint odor of cigar smoke and whiskey. Those who listen may, on a successful Hear Noise check, detect the faint voices of five or six men. The voices sound friendly and are often punctuated with laughter.

Major Manifestation

Any lamps or other sources of fire begin to smoke furiously, the black plumes rising to obscure the mottos on the ceiling. After one round, the smoke clears to reveal changed letters:

*Cold is the hand of a false friend.
Every hunter takes the place of his prey.
Uninvited guests never leave by the front door.
No fire ever warms the heart of a disloyal spouse.*

7. Musician's Nook

This tiny alcove holds a harpsichord. Below the keys stands a small padded bench, which opens. The lid is currently lifted, and inside is sheet music.

At Night

This area is unchanged by the night.

Minor Manifestation

Faint, ghostly music can be heard for 2d6 turns. If the heroes place a piece of sheet music in the stand above the keys, the ghostly fingers play always that piece. If, upon discovering this phenomenon, a hero intentionally changes the sheet music, the trick works . . . once. After the first time, changing the sheet music angers the House, and an ominous dirge whispers through the room.

Major Manifestation

As above, except that any character who changes the sheet music while the harpsichord plays perceives the music growing ever louder, rising in a painful crescendo that eventually causes the same effects as a *shout* spell, but only to the target hero and to the grand foyer—not to any other heroes or NPCs who are present.

8. Dining Room

A long walnut table stands upon a dark carpet in this rectangular room. Nearly twenty feet of empty space at either end of the table suggest that extra leaves can be added to accommodate many more guests. Currently, three chairs line either side, with a seventh at the head of the table by a fireplace.

Rich paneling rises from the hardwood floor to stop two feet from the ceiling,

Bleak House



above which fine porcelain plates rest in wire racks. They are adorned with elegant paintings of old-style houses and villages suggest that these were never used to serve meals. In the western corners of the room stand glass-covered cabinets full of excellent dinner service and good crystal.

Exquisite bass-wood carvings encircle the plain white plaster ceiling. Harvest nymphs smile down upon the dinner table through sheafs of wheat. Between them all hangs a wide brass chandelier.

Josef and Elise serve breakfast, dinner, and supper in this room. If more than six heroes have accompanied Van Richten to the house, Josef adds additional table leaves.

At Night

Should any heroes look up at the wood carvings, a saving throw vs. paralyzation is required. If it is failed, the character sees the beautiful figures of nymphs dancing around the top of the room, and is treated as though affected by a *hypnotic pattern*, regardless of level. The hero stands enthralled until shaken out of his stupor. At this time, a saving throw vs. spell is required. If the saving throw fails, the character behaves as

though under the influences of a *confusion* spell. Successful saves means the hero avoids the affect.

Minor Manifestation

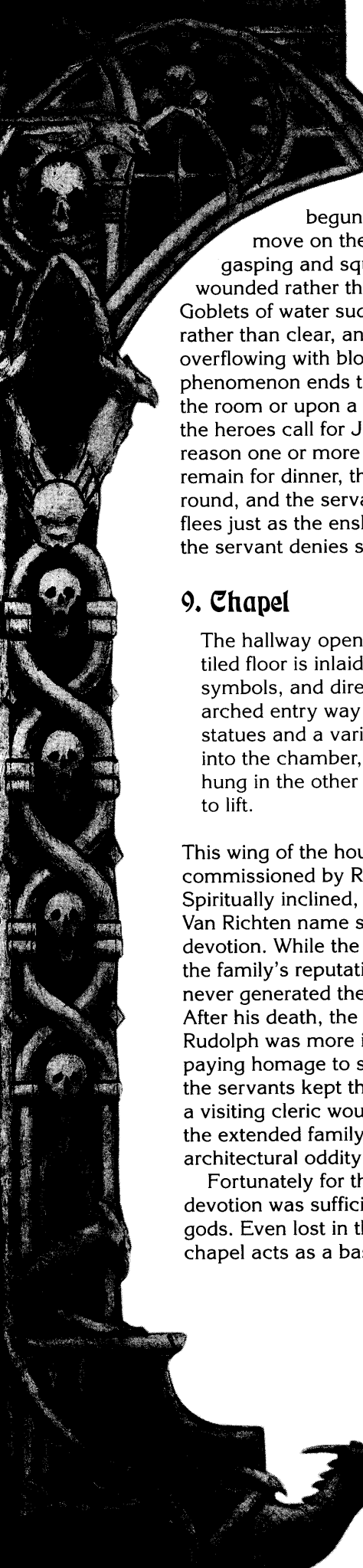
The minor ghostly effect of this room is not triggered like the others but is automatically in effect. When the cards indicate a minor manifestation here, simply mark the event sheet to indicate the next manifestation will be major.

Whenever the heroes eat and drink here, they feel they have had delicious and filling meals. But in fact the dinners are not real. Those living beings who depend on the meals provided by the servants wake hungry the next morning. After a full day without real food and drink, the heroes begin to suffer penalties to their Ability scores.

Major Manifestation

This effect can be triggered only the first time the heroes have dinner in this room, even if the tarokka deck indicates a major manifestation earlier. For that first meal, the servants serve a roast pig, complete on a platter with an apple in its mouth.

Bleak House



Just as the servants leave, and the heroes have begun to eat, the pig begins to move on the platter, rolling its eyes and gasping and squealing pitifully as if it was wounded rather than slain and cooked.

Goblets of water suddenly appear to be murky rather than clear, and glasses swell to overflowing with blood rather than wine. The phenomenon ends the moment the heroes leave the room or upon a servant's arrival, assuming the heroes call for Josef or Elise. If for any reason one or more servants are required to remain for dinner, the effect lasts for only one round, and the servant stares in horror, then flees just as the enslaved spirit appears. Later, the servant denies seeing anything.

9. Chapel

The hallway opens into a circular room. The tiled floor is inlaid with curious patterns and symbols, and directly across from the arched entry way stands an altar with small statues and a variety of icons. As you cross into the chamber, the oppressive air that has hung in the other rooms of this house seems to lift.

This wing of the house was an addition commissioned by Rudolph's father, Otto. Spiritually inclined, Otto had hoped to make the Van Richten name synonymous with piety and devotion. While the chapel certainly enhanced the family's reputation among the clergy, it never generated the effect that Otto had hoped. After his death, the chapel fell into disuse for Rudolph was more interested in science than paying homage to supernatural entities. While the servants kept the place tidy and on occasion a visiting cleric would perform ceremonies for the extended family, the chapel became more an architectural oddity than an active religious site.

Fortunately for the heroes, Otto van Richten's devotion was sufficient to attract the favor of the gods. Even lost in the mists of Ravenloft, the chapel acts as a bastion against darkness.

At Night

Even at night, this room is safe from the influence of Madame Radanavich. Her enslaved spirits cannot enter here.

Ghostly Manifestations

No ghostly manifestations occur here. However, all of the corporeal spirits may enter the chapel.

10. Kitchen and Pantry

Three steps descend to a smooth wooden floor while the ceiling remains at the level of the hall, making this room tall and airy. Colorful tiles cover the lower half of walls, giving way to the simple floral patterns of the wallpaper above. White cabinets above long counters encircle and a plain table with six wooden chairs. A black iron stove and a bank of ovens stand upon the far wall, and near them is a door which must lead to a pantry.

A block of knives rests upon one of the counters, along with pans, cake forms, trays, and all variety of kitchen utensils. The room smells faintly of baked bread and fried meat, but the odor is new and masks an older, indistinct scent.

Any hero with unusually keen olfactory senses (such as a wizard with a weasel familiar) can detect a faint stench of decay in the room. The odor comes from the pantry. Investigation before the servants are questioned reveals that the stores are completely empty, and there is no apparent source for the odor. Once Josef or Elise is questioned about the lack of stores, or once the heroes have been served a meal, the pantry appears full of all variety of foodstuffs. Even if the heroes stand watch over the pantry, Josef (or Elise) enters and points, "There. We have some flour left." Indeed, when the heroes turn to look where he points, there is a bag of flour. "And over here is some pickled herring." The pantry provides the stores the servants expect to find. None of the food is real, however, and those living beings who consume it gain no sustenance from it. See Area 8 for more on this effect.

The icebox (Area 11) undergoes a similar phenomenon if examined before and after the heroes question the servants.

Bleak House

At Night

The large windows of this room seem to grow even wider and taller at night. The glass panes allow little visibility to those from the inside, but create the feeling that those inside are vulnerable to those watching from the outside.

Minor Manifestation

The ovens flare to life, burning hotly for 1–6 rounds before extinguishing themselves with a sudden rush of air. If a hero opens one of the doors during this time, he must save vs. breath weapon or suffer 1–3 hit points of damage from a sudden gout of flame.

Major Manifestation

Madame Radanavich animates multiple knives in this room, attacking the target hero or Van Richten, depending on her goal. She continues her attack until the knives are thwarted or the heroes flee the room, shutting a door behind them.

Animated Knives (8): Int Exceptional (14); AL CE; AC 2; MV 15, FI 18 (C); HD 1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; MR Nil; SZ S; ML 20; XP 120.

The knives are normal kitchen knives, and whirl through the air, apparently of their own power. Once a hero inflicts 9 points of damage the knife clatters to the floor, the blows having ripped it from Radanavich's control. The knives are not destroyed.

11. Icebox

This large cabinet seems out-of-place with its undecorated wooden surface. Near the base of the cabinet is a large panel secured by a metal latch. Small doors on one side are also secured with a latch.

Once, the content of this cabinet was kept cold by placing large blocks of ice in the lower chambers. Heroes who open the side panel see a pair of long, empty metal cabinets strewn with sawdust once used to absorb the melting ice. The sawdust is decades old now, clumped and rotted by moisture.

As in the pantry (Area 10), no food is found here until the servants look for it. Then they discover freshly cleaned duck, pork, and trout kept cool inside. Likewise, the heroes find no ice in the lower chambers unless one of the servants is asked to open it in their presence.

Minor Manifestation

Despite the seeming cold of the icebox, the area begins to smell of rotting meat. The stench persists for 1–6 rounds, then abruptly goes away.

Major Manifestation

Heroes opening the icebox see not the refrigerated meat they might expect, but horrid mounds of rotting flesh that are crawling with maggots. The scene is cause for a horror check if the heroes have previously eaten food prepared in these kitchens.

12. Butler's Kitchen and Silver Vault

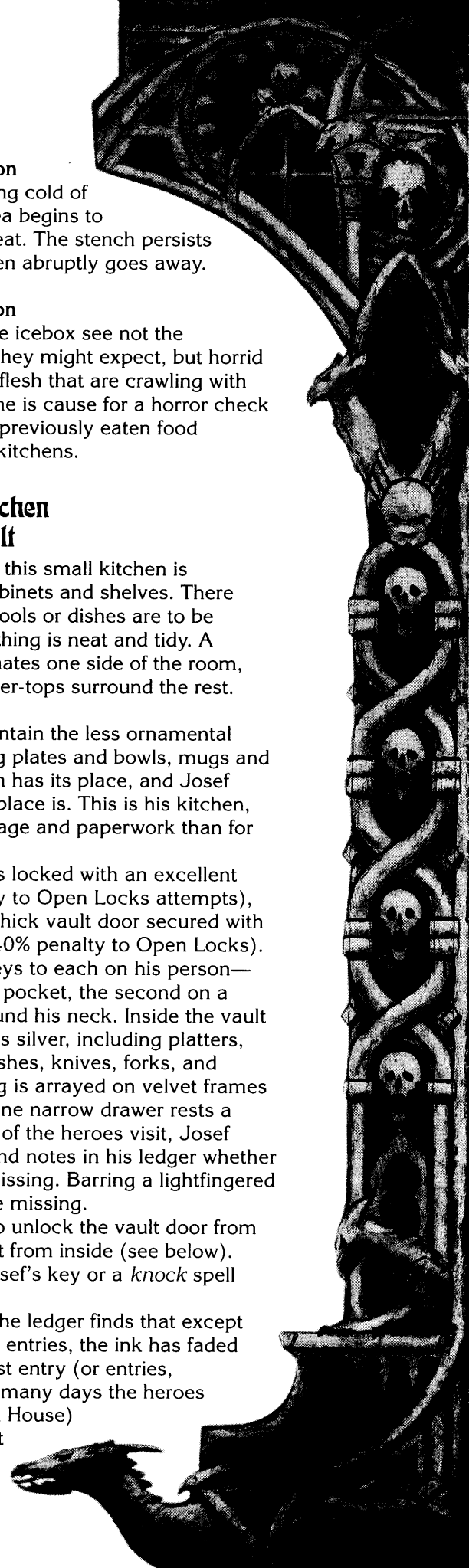
Cozy and warm, this small kitchen is crowded with cabinets and shelves. There are no cooking tools or dishes to be seen, and everything is neat and tidy. A wide door dominates one side of the room, while bare counter-tops surround the rest.

The cabinets contain the less ornamental dishware, including plates and bowls, mugs and glasses. Every dish has its place, and Josef knows where that place is. This is his kitchen, used more for storage and paperwork than for preparing food.

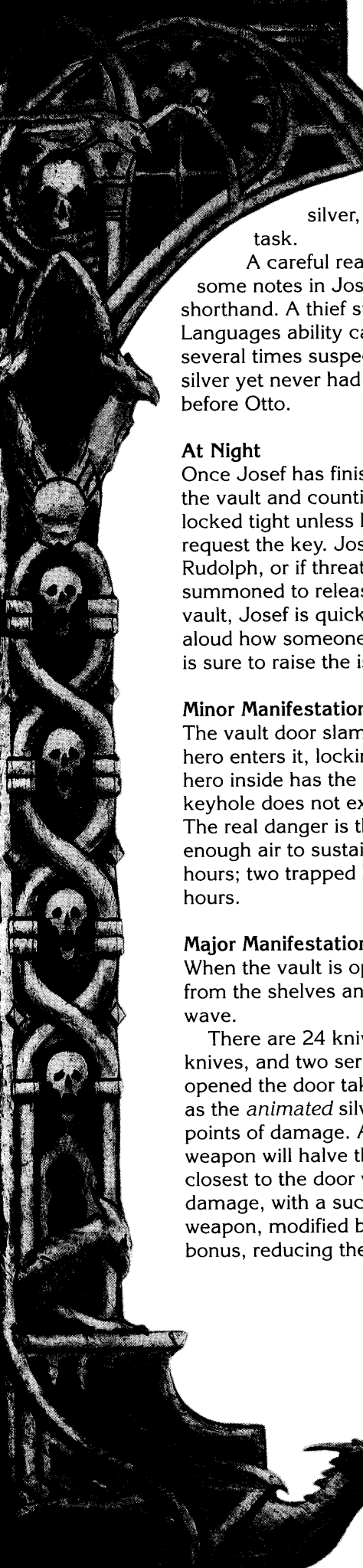
The wide door is locked with an excellent lock (–20% penalty to Open Locks attempts), and behind it is a thick vault door secured with a superior lock (–40% penalty to Open Locks). Josef keeps the keys to each on his person—the first in his vest pocket, the second on a delicate chain around his neck. Inside the vault lies the household's silver, including platters, goblets, dessert dishes, knives, forks, and spoons. Everything is arrayed on velvet frames and trays, and in one narrow drawer rests a ledger. Each night of the heroes visit, Josef counts the silver and notes in his ledger whether any pieces were missing. Barring a lightfingered hero, none shall be missing.

A thief can try to unlock the vault door from the outside, but not from inside (see below). Otherwise, only Josef's key or a *knock* spell opens the door.

A hero reading the ledger finds that except for the most recent entries, the ink has faded with time. The latest entry (or entries, depending on how many days the heroes have been in Bleak House) are in fresh ink, but in the same hand.



Bleak House



Josef's murder put an end to the habit of counting the silver, but now he has resumed his task.

A careful reading of the ledger reveals some notes in Josef's own peculiar form of shorthand. A thief successfully using his Read Languages ability can determine that Josef several times suspected Casimir of stealing silver yet never had sufficient evidence to bring before Otto.

At Night

Once Josef has finished returning the silver to the vault and counting it, the place is kept locked tight unless heroes pick the lock or request the key. Josef surrenders the key only to Rudolph, or if threatened with violence. If summoned to release a hero trapped inside the vault, Josef is quick to respond, but he wonders aloud how someone managed to get inside and is sure to raise the issue with Master Rudolph.

Minor Manifestation

The vault door slams shut 1–6 rounds after any hero enters it, locking itself automatically. If the hero inside has the key, he is in trouble, as the keyhole does not extend through the vault door. The real danger is that the small chamber has enough air to sustain one hero for only four hours; two trapped heroes can survive for two hours.

Major Manifestation

When the vault is opened, the silverware flies from the shelves and through the air in a lethal wave.

There are 24 knives, 24 forks, two carving knives, and two serving forks. The hero who opened the door takes the brunt of this attack, as the *animated* silver ware slashes him for 2–40 points of damage. A successful save vs. breath weapon will halve the damage. The next hero closest to the door will suffer 2–16 points of damage, with a successful save vs. breath weapon, modified by the character's Dexterity bonus, reducing the damage to half.

13. The Lift

This little room might be a closet, but it lacks shelves and is surrounded by metal screens rather than normal walls. Moreover, the chamber stands within a frame of four stout pillars, and its own ceiling ends several feet before that of the hallway. Over it, there are an assembly of wheels and ropes, apparently designed to raise or lower the closet.

If the heroes have seen a lift before, the purpose of the room may not be obscure to them. Dwarves and characters with the Engineering proficiency can immediately comprehend its purpose and function.

When Richten Haus was constructed, Frederick realized the need for some device to move heavy furniture to the upper floors. Fortunately for him, the architect he employed was an innovator. When the manor was complete, it included the first (and only) mechanical lift in Darkon. Whenever Frederick hosted parties, guests would inevitably persuade him to allow "rides" in the delightful contraption. Otherwise, the lift was used by the servants and, in his later years, by Frederick himself when climbing the stairs became too great a trial for his disease-ravaged legs.

The lift operates by counterweights rather than by any power source. Once inside, the heroes must close the doors and push the single lever forward in order to rise; backward to descend. Van Richten is, of course, familiar with its workings. Any servants can also show the heroes how to use the lift.

The lift is the only means of access to the attic (Area 37) where Madame Radanavich awaits.

At Night

The ropes which support the lift are old, but they remain sturdy. At night they creak threateningly, though they do not break unless cut.

Minor Manifestation

Heroes riding the lift experience a brief shudder before the lift returns to normal operation. The apparatus remains safe and sound.

Major Manifestation

All heroes riding the lift must save vs. spells or be thrown against the walls as the device suddenly falls with alarming speed. It moves so quickly that it must be traveling far into the

Bleak House



earth. At this point, heroes who attempt to disbelieve that the lift is moving so fast may save vs. spells to realize that they are not moving at all. Otherwise, all within the lift suffer 2–12 hit points of damage as the lift finally “crashes” to the ground—on the first story. The ghost appears immediately afterward.

First Story

14. Herald’s Balcony

This small platform is large enough for only one person, but it commands an excellent view of the grand entrance below, as well as the paintings along the stairs.

Traditionally used by heralds to announce the arrival of the master and mistress of the house when entertaining guests, this tiny balcony served no such purpose to the Van Richtens. Frederick and, later, Otto enjoyed standing here to watch their guests arrive, but neither employed a herald.

At Night

After sunset, no one can stand upon this balcony and look down into the entrance hall without the overwhelming feeling of cold eyes upon his back from the east windows. Anyone caught here when the window is shattered (as described in Area 2) is automatically slashed for 2–12 points of damage by the falling fragments.

If a spirit is drawn to this location, it appears without any other manifestations heralding its arrival.

15. Parlor

This chamber is well appointed with attractive furniture, several large paintings, and rich carpeting and tapestries, much like the withdrawing rooms downstairs. Unlike the rooms below, this area is surrounded by doors and hallways. It seems more like a passage than a retreat. Dark shadows move across the walls and the paintings.

Bleak House



At Night

Standing in this room at night, the heroes can hear sounds from all over the house. No sooner does one turn to listen to the creak of a footfall from the servant's quarter than the sound of the front door shutting comes from downstairs. The room seems large and vulnerable amid all the distant noises.

Minor Manifestation

A powerful *darkness* spell surrounds this room, obscuring all the exits but not the parlor itself. Slowly, the area of *darkness* contracts, moving in to envelop all within the parlor over the course of a turn. The darkness has no other effect, nor does it harbor any other dangers—unless Radovan chooses this time to steal an object or attack a hero.

Major Manifestation

All within the room are subject to sudden, inexplicable fits of anxiety and inexplicable fear. For the rest of this night, each hero entering the room must make a fear check.

16. Master's Bedroom

A huge canopied bed is the centerpiece of this room, which must belong to the master of the house. Fine embroidery decorates the two matching chairs, and a fine lace covers the lamp table. The wardrobe is vast and elegantly carved, matching the dressing table with woodland scenes. Windows on the north and western walls look past the brilliant leaves of a nearby tree to view the northern grounds.

This bedroom and the connecting bath were last inhabited by Van Richten and his wife. Its wardrobe is empty except for a clean chamber pot. If the heroes examine the carpet and the mattress on the bed, they notice dark stains on both.

The bath room is a simple tiled chamber including a washbasin, a towel cabinet, and a large white bathtub with a built-in drain. The cabinet is empty but smells faintly of soap.

At Night

The sound of tapping on the windows persists throughout the night, as the branches of a nearby tree sway in the wind and strike against the glass.

Minor Manifestation

The sound of a woman weeping and pleading for her life can be heard faintly in the room. Her cries grow louder and eventually end in shrieks of pain. Van Richten must make a madness check upon hearing the voice, since it is that of his wife begging Baron Metus to spare her.

Major Manifestation

In addition to the ghostly voice, the sheets and blankets on the bed twist and thrash as if two invisible people are struggling on the bed. Suddenly, blood sprays from thin air, hitting any character within 2' of the bed across the face. If Van Richten is present, he automatically fails a madness check. Pools of blood form on the bed and carpet where the stains were. The ghost rises from one of the pools.

17. Servant's Chamber

The lone bed in this room is bare but for a single sheet upon the thin mattress. A small wardrobe stands open in one corner, empty. The narrow window lets in the daylight, though there is precious little to illuminate.

Long abandoned, this was the bedroom for the steward's assistant, back when the family retained one. Nothing of interest remains within.

At Night

If a hero chooses to sleep here, he finds the room inexplicably drafty and cold. At first the

Bleak House

breeze seems to come from the window (whether it is opened or closed). Then it moves to blow from the door, thwarting all efforts to block it.

Ghostly Manifestations

Unless one of the trapped spirits confronts the heroes here, no manifestations occur in this room.

18. Maid's Chamber

Like most of the servants' quarters, this room is simple but homey. The quilt covering the bed is not nearly so fine as those found elsewhere. The wardrobe contains four identical gray dresses with white aprons, along with two prettier dresses and undergarments and laced boots. A clean chamber pot stands in one corner.

At Night

Elise retires here soon after dinner each night. If the heroes are in the house during Karl's murderous visit, at 9:12 p.m., they hear Elise cry repeatedly for her father, and then utter a shriek of terror that is abruptly stilled.

If the heroes are on the second story when she cries out, they can prevent the murder if at least one hero who says he is rushing to Elise's aid rolls a 1 on a 20-sided die. If they are on the second story when the murder happens, they have a one-in-six chance of encountering the fleeing Karl, at which point he attacks them in a blind rage. Should they kill or otherwise subdue him, he vanishes at dawn and awakens in his cabin.

Should the heroes fail to either prevent the murder or stop Karl, the following sight greets them as they enter Elise's bedroom:

Elise is sprawled across the bed on her back. Her nightgown is torn, and there is a look of terror frozen on her face as her dead eyes stare at the ceiling. Ugly purple marks are forming on her neck.

The heroes suddenly hear running footsteps from the direction of the stairs. If all the heroes give chase, they return without catching the murderer, to find that Elise's body has vanished without trace. (The body will disappear as soon as it is left unwatched, or at dawn, when she reappears in her bed.) On the first night, the heroes will presumably try to round up all the servants once the murder occurs and will

discover them all dead. They will soon learn that the deaths aren't permanent.

Ghostly Manifestations

Unless one of the trapped spirits confronts the heroes here, no manifestations occur in this room.

19. Cook's Chamber

This room is secured by a poor lock (+15% bonus to Open Locks rolls). If asked for the key, Josef protests that the room is "sealed." If the heroes insist upon seeing it, he reluctantly accompanies them to the door and opens it for them.

Opening the door causes a small swirl of dust to rise from the floor. A shaft of light descends from the high window, seeming to draw the whirling motes up into its warmth.

A well-made quilt covers the double-bed here, and matching night tables flank it. A large wardrobe and dressing table appear on one side of the room, while a pair of comfortable-looking chairs stand on the other. Several examples of needlepoint are displayed upon the walls, all apparently created by the same skilled hand.

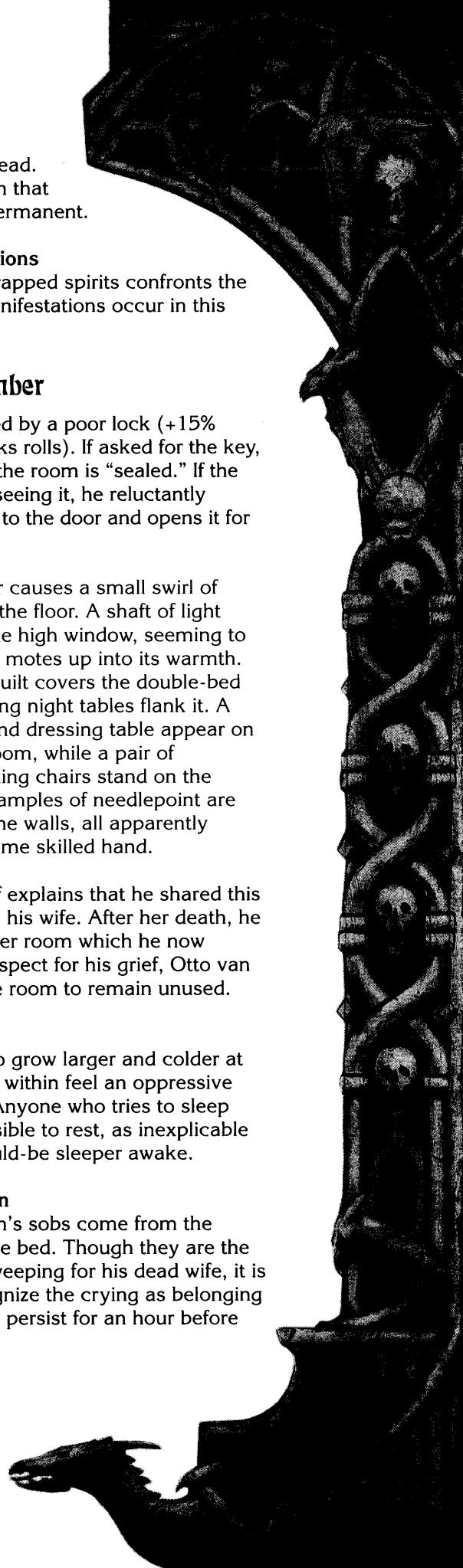
If prodded, Josef explains that he shared this large bedroom with his wife. After her death, he moved to the smaller room which he now occupies. Out of respect for his grief, Otto van Richten allowed the room to remain unused.

At Night

This room seems to grow larger and colder at night, and all those within feel an oppressive sense of sadness. Anyone who tries to sleep here finds it impossible to rest, as inexplicable grief keeps the would-be sleeper awake.

Minor Manifestation

The sound of a man's sobs come from the empty air beside the bed. Though they are the echoes of Josef's weeping for his dead wife, it is impossible to recognize the crying as belonging to him. The sounds persist for an hour before fading away.



Bleak House

Major Manifestation

The bawling of a newborn babe mingles with the grief-stricken sobs of the minor manifestation. All characters who remain in the room for more than a turn must save vs. spells or themselves begin weeping. Any weeping hero suffers a penalty of 1 on both initiative and attack rolls. If the cards indicated an appearance by one of the trapped spirits, it reveals itself after one or more of the heroes have started to cry.

20. Staging Room

This bare-walled room is empty except for long tables lining two walls. The doors to the south slide into the walls rather than opening on hinges.

Here, the servants of the manor would prepare refreshments for the guests of the house, bringing them out to Area 15 when they were ready. During especially large events, the room would be decorated and buffets arranged on the tables.

At Night

The corners of this chamber appear especially acute at night, actually bending to physically "wrong" angles. The effect causes mild dizziness in those who remain for more than one turn.

Minor Manifestation

The floor grows soft and spongy at night. Anyone even walking across the room must make a Dexterity check (+2 bonus) or trip over his own feet. Afterward, heroes who remain for more than a turn must save vs. spells or suffer mild vertigo, causing all attack rolls and proficiency checks to suffer a -2 penalty for the next 1-4 turns.

Major Manifestation

Heroes walking through this room must save vs. spell or experience overwhelming vertigo. Those who fail the saving throw suffer a -4 penalty to all attack rolls and proficiency checks for 2-8 turns.

21. Linen Closet

Three wide shelves bear stacks of bed linen, blankets, pillows, and dustcloths. On the floor beneath the lowest shelf lie three clean chamber pots, a wide, black polishing brush, a dustpan, and a broom.

At Night

When Karl murders Josef, he hangs the body from the ceiling brace of this closet, removing the upper shelf to make the steward fit. If the heroes search here for Josef before dawn, they find him hanging head-down, tied at the ankles though apparently strangled. If the heroes do not find him, of course, Josef's spirit rises the next dawn, believing its murder to have been nothing more than a nightmare. (See Chapter Two.)

Whenever Josef's body hangs within the closet, heroes in rooms 13, 20, and 21 can hear a faint creaking sound from this room (no check required).

Minor Manifestation

All of the linen is tangled and caked with mud and stained with blood.

Major Manifestation

The closet door slams shut on any hero who steps within, whether to search among the linen or to remove Josef's body. Once the door slams shut, those on the outside see a brilliant light shine through the keyhole and at the bottom edge of the door. Attempts to pick the lock suffer a -40% penalty as the mechanism struggles against the lockpicks like a living thing. Breaking the door down requires a successful open doors roll against a locked door. A wild, deafening howl fills the air.

Inside, the linen animates to attack, wrapping around the trapped character to smother him. The victim may fight back with a short weapon (like a dagger) if he had one in hand at the time. Once "slain," the linen falls harmlessly to the floor.

Animated Linen: Int non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 1; HD 10; hp 49; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA constriction; SZ H; ML 20; XP 2,000.

Bleak House



22. Music Room

On tables and in cabinets, musical instruments fill this room. Flutes and pipes, lap-harps and lutes, and all variety of wind and string instruments appear here. Several appear to be of exceptional quality, and those are displayed in glass cases. Others range from simple tambours or finger-cymbals to elaborate haut-boys and keyboards.

The chairs, couches, ottomans, and lamp tables in this room seem almost an afterthought to the myriad instruments.

Frederick van Richten's wife, Leora, was a great lover of music. She passed this affection down to her children and grandchildren, encouraging it with frequent gifts of instruments and sheet music. Rudolph fondles the instruments lovingly and waxes nostalgic about the happy hours he and his sister spent here with their grandmother. Then with a sorrow-filled voice, he comments that he wishes he had practiced more. He picks up a flute, and blows a couple of sour notes before returning it to its stand, visibly distraught.

At Night

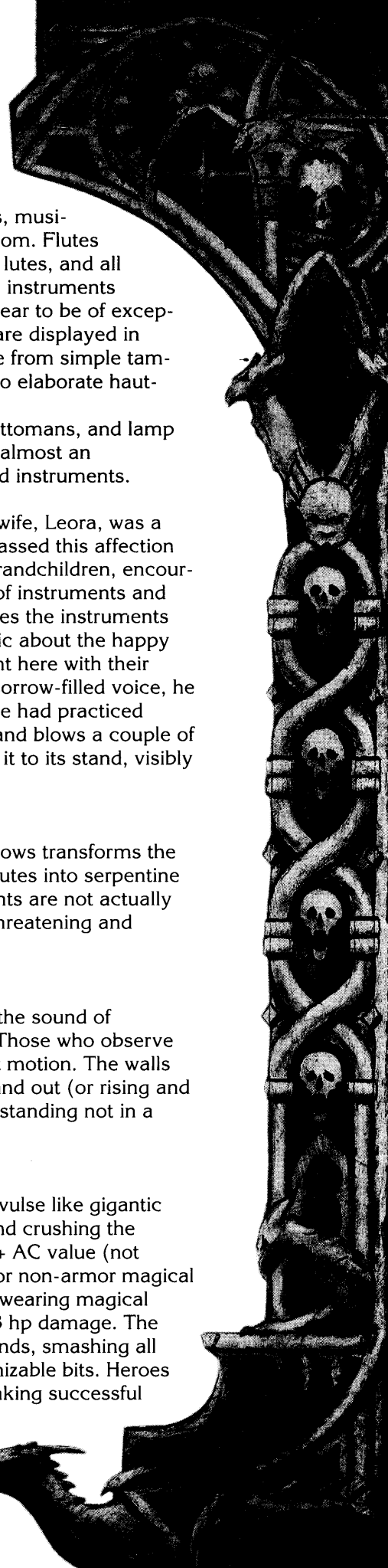
Moonlight through the windows transforms the shadows of the pipes and flutes into serpentine figures. While the instruments are not actually transformed, they appear threatening and unpredictable.

Minor Manifestation

Heroes in this room notice the sound of breathing from all around. Those who observe the walls may notice a faint motion. The walls themselves are moving in and out (or rising and falling) as if the heroes are standing not in a room, but in a lung.

Major Manifestation

Walls, ceiling, and floor convulse like gigantic folds of flesh, smothering and crushing the heroes for 1d4 hp damage + AC value (not including shield, Dexterity, or non-armor magical adjustments). Thus, a hero wearing magical *chain mail* +2 suffers 1d4+3 hp damage. The room convulses for 1–6 rounds, smashing all the instruments to unrecognizable bits. Heroes can escape the room by making successful Strength and Dexterity checks in the same round.



Bleak House

23. Boy's Bedroom

The small bed suggests that this was a child's room. An empty pitcher nests within a porcelain basin on a washtable. On one wall stands a tall wardrobe. Against the other stands a child-sized desk, over which hangs a painting of a ship at sea. At the foot of the bed is a leather-covered chest.

Upon the plain white plastered walls hangs a larger painting depicting a magnificent horse leaping over a stone fence as its rider clings desperately to its mane.

This was Rudolph's bedroom when he was a child, and it later became his son's. Since Erasmus' abduction, no one else has slept here. In the wardrobe are shelves and pegs still containing Erasmus' clothes. Within the desk are papers and a few basic math and grammar texts. The chest is latched but not locked, and inside are a pair of small boots, a heavy oilcloth rain cloak, a long leather thong tied to a carved whistle, and various other knick-knacks from both Rudolph's and Erasmus' childhood.

At Night

Whoever sleeps here—probably Rudolph, for whom Josef designates the room, unless the heroes object—must save vs. spell or see the room from the perspective of a child. The bed seems more than large enough, and all the furniture seems taller. In fact, the hero (or Van Richten) has not shrunk; only his perception has changed. In addition, all fear checks made in this room are at a -2 penalty, as childhood fears return to undermine the courage of anyone who enters here.

Minor Manifestation

No matter where the cards indicate that the spirit of Erasmus appears, a vision of the dead boy appears here. Translucent and intangible, the image of Erasmus stands by the window, looking out as if expecting to see someone arrive. Regardless of the heroes' actions, the image does not react to their presence.

No matter how well he has resisted the horror of seeing previous spirits, Van Richten weeps uncontrollably at seeing his son here. He begs forgiveness, but the image does not even



Bleak House

acknowledge him. It fades away within 2–8 rounds.

Major Manifestation

As in the minor manifestation, an image of Erasmus stands and gazes out the window. As soon as a character addresses the image, however, it turns suddenly, a look of shock on its face. Protruding from its chest is a wooden stake. Dark blood runs down the white shirt but vanishes rather than pooling on the floor. After croaking “Why?” the image fades.

This scene forces a horror check and a madness check from Van Richten.

24. Bath

Pale blue tiles line the floor and lower walls of this room. The stucco ceiling and upper walls are painted in bright swirling patterns suggesting sunny skies and bright clouds over a calm lake. One small cabinet and a long, low closet line the walls, and a claw-footed bathtub rests next to an elaborate bathing chair. A pair of large windows rise from the floor to the ceiling in the southern wall, serving as a door to the balcony without while letting plenty of sunlight in during the day.

In the closet hang a half-dozen slips and simple dresses for the women of the house, who normally dressed themselves here rather than in their rooms. On the closet floor lie two old pairs of dressing slippers, one of them moth-eaten and rotted beyond use. The small cabinet holds bath towels, old cakes of lye soap, scrubbing brushes, combs, and similar toiletries.

At Night

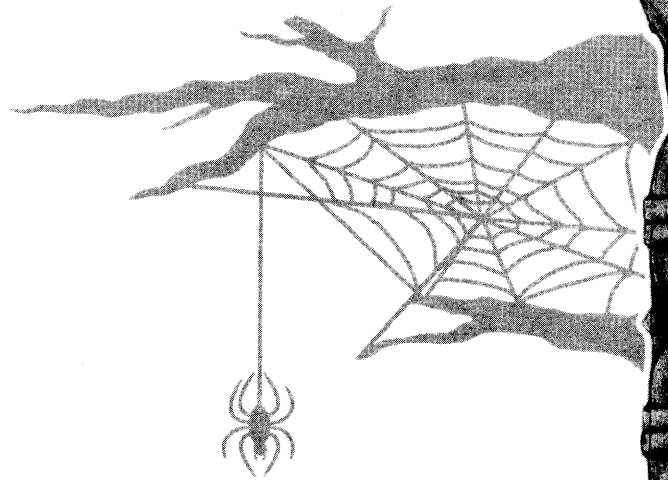
If any hero accepts Josef’s offer of drawing a bath here, he finds the water to be tepid—even if he watched the steward pour pitchers of steaming water into the tub.

Minor Manifestation

The room is filled with steam, completely obscuring normal vision and infravision. Heroes exploring the room discover the bathtub filled with scalding hot water that causes 1–2 hp damage to those rash enough to touch it with bare flesh. Opening the window clears the steam from the room in one turn.

Major Manifestation

Whether or not Josef drew a bath, the heroes can hear dripping before entering this room. Water overflows the tub, and spills onto the tile floor. As the heroes watch, the water turns blood-red, as though someone under its surface had suddenly been stabbed. Those bold enough to thrust their hands into the bloody water find nothing within, though one can pull the stopper to drain the tub.



25. Large Closet

Long rows of pegs and a gallery of shelves flank either side of this spacious closet. A thick dowel runs the length of one side, but whatever clothes were stored have been long since removed.

At Night

Despite its size, this room becomes quite claustrophobic at night. Upon passing through the room, the target hero feels the touch of clothing as they walk past the pegs and rails. Turning, they discover nothing there . . . not even invisible clothing.

Minor Manifestation

Upon entering the room, the heroes find the closet much smaller than expected from outside (or a previous visit). Those who stay inside for more than one round see the walls closing in around them. The effect causes no harm and lasts only two rounds.

Bleak House



Major Manifestation

As above, but also the doors slam shut and the room grows uncomfortably warm. The heroes feel the press of invisible clothing from all around, smothering them. Each round the heroes remain inside, they must make successful fear checks or panic. Those who panic suffer 1–3 points of damage from smothering, and must roll a Constitution check. If the check fails, the hero passes out from fright.

26. Girl's Bedroom

A bed with a canopy that is fringed with fine lace, and the feminine patterns on the wallpaper suggest that this was once a young girl's bedroom. A maple wardrobe and dressing table stand to one side of the bed, while a delicate writing table and two chairs stand on the other.

The most impressive feature of the room is an enormous doll house. The back of the house has no wall, allowing a clear view of twelve elaborately detailed rooms. Inside the tiny chambers are over a dozen beautifully crafted dolls, knitting, cooking, washing, resting before a fireplace, and performing all variety of domestic tasks. A half dozen larger dolls sit propped at the base of the house.

This room was typically for the youngest daughter of the family, and Van Richten's sister was the last little girl to live here. Josef's daughter Gretta always admired this bedroom and doll house, though as the daughter of the steward she was housed in the servant's quarters. When the Van Richtens left on holiday,

Josef allowed Gretta to sleep here among the dolls. The little girl was quick to adopt one of the dolls as her special friend (see Chapter Two), and she spent many happy hours playing here.

At Night

The dolls, while not changing substantially, look frightened and vulnerable in the house.

Minor Manifestation

The sound of a lone child weeping comes from outside the window. Those peering out discover that the sound has changed location, seeming to come from inside the doll house. Examining the doll house reveals nothing unusual. The weeping continues through the night.

Major Manifestation

The sound of a child crying are heard, but six of the larger dolls from outside the house become animated and attack those who enter the room.

Golem, Doll (6): Int Non-; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 10; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA *Tasha's hideous laughter*; SD spell immunities; SZ T; ML 20; XP 6,000.

27. Balcony

This wide balcony affords a splendid view of the estate, particularly of the approaching road. Beyond the roof of the gatehouse, which can be seen above the tree tops, the mists rise like a pulsating wall, and in unnerving contrast to the clear sky. The balcony holds a small stone table and three wrought-iron chairs.

At Night

The balcony seems cold and lonely at night and the shadows of its railing turning odd angles in the moonlight.

Manifestations

This balcony never experiences manifestations. If a spirit is drawn, it appears to the heroes without any fanfare.

Bleak House

Second Story

28. Smoking Room

Velvet wallpaper and thick, overlapping carpets give this room a lush, warm atmosphere. Upon the small tables that flank the stuffed chairs are humidors and cigar boxes, as well as three fine wooden pipes.

Rudolph's father and grandfather were great lovers of fine tobacco, as were many of their friends. During larger affairs, when the gentleman's withdrawing room was too secluded, most of the men and a few of the women would congregate here to smoke cigars and pipes while enjoying brandy or sherry. The room's decor lacks the paintings of much of the rest of the house, as the Van Richtens found the smoke quickly stained them. In lieu of portraits, busts and small sculptures stand on pedestals and tables throughout the room, and mounted on the walls. Each bust is worth 5 + d100 gp to interested buyers.

At Night

Lights carried by the heroes seems to disperse on a haze of smoke in the room, though no smoke can be seen.

Minor Manifestation

The smell of burning tobacco grows stronger. At first the scent is not unpleasant, but after two rounds it grows powerful enough to offend even those who enjoy the stuff. The phantom smoke has no other harmful effects.

Major Manifestation

As above, but the phantom smoke grows so strong as to cause eyes to water and bring on fits of coughing. Affected heroes cannot effectively use missile weapons and have a -1 penalty to their attack rolls. Those remaining in the room for more than one round must save vs. poison or suffer 1-3 points of damage each round.

29. Library

The walls of this room are covered from floor to ceiling by shelves that are packed with books. A step ladder that has wheels on the bottom, and is attached to a track at the top, can be pushed all the way around the room, allowing access to the highest

shelves. A small desk stands before two large windows, allowing someone to read at it with plenty of natural sunlight.

This library reflects the academic interests of three generations of the Van Richten family. As shelf space grew tight, many of the volumes were moved to the Receiving Room on the Ground Floor. The end result was two libraries in Richten Haus, with this being the superior one.

The subjects featured most heavily are history and biographies of important peoples of the Demiplane from 100-200 years ago, musical theory, religion, theology, anatomy and medical texts, and catalogues of herbal healing methods and poisons. Other topics are mixed in, but contrary to what the heroes might expect, this is not a vast repository of monster lore. When Van Richten live here, he knew very little of such grim topics.

Any of the above-mentioned subjects can be researched here by the heroes. If the DM rules the information they seek might be well-known among the scholars of Ravenloft, then a hero can find it in a number of rounds equal to his Intelligence score subtracted from 20. Each volume here is also worth 1d4 x 5 gp to an interested buyer.

At Night

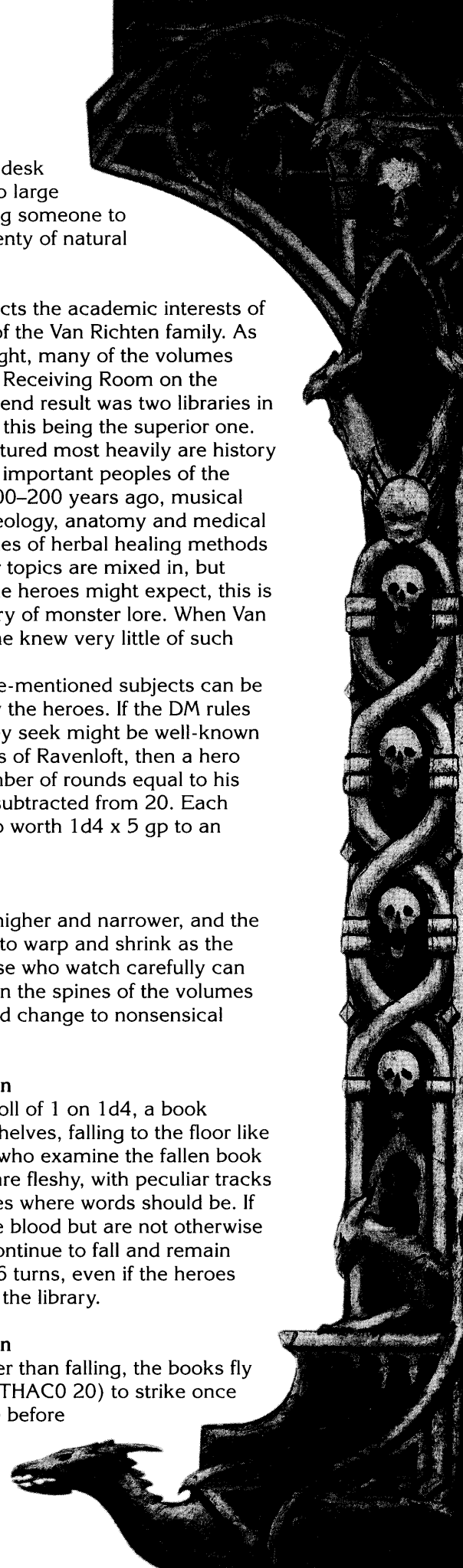
The shelves loom higher and narrower, and the book covers seem to warp and shrink as the heroes watch. Those who watch carefully can observe the titles on the spines of the volumes seem to wriggle and change to nonsensical words.

Minor Manifestation

Each round, on a roll of 1 on 1d4, a book tumbles from the shelves, falling to the floor like a dead bat. Those who examine the fallen book see that its pages are fleshy, with peculiar tracks of veins on its pages where words should be. If cut, the pages ooze blood but are not otherwise alive. The books continue to fall and remain transformed for 1-6 turns, even if the heroes remove them from the library.

Major Manifestation

As above, but rather than falling, the books fly at a random hero (THAC0 20) to strike once for 1d3 hp damage before falling to the ground.



Bleak House

31. Work Room

A long table stands along the eastern wall of this room, with three large windows above it. Two of the windows are broken, and the ivy has

forced its way a few feet into the room, overlapping the far end of the table. It stops before falling to the floor, perhaps because of insufficient sunlight.

The rest of the room is filled with cabinets and tables, all arrayed with heavy jars and glass containers filled with the dry remains of herbs and plants. A small bookshelf stands in the corner, but most of the books lie on the tables.

This is where Van Richten experimented with herbal medicines and conducted other research.

The ivy growing in through the window is perfectly ordinary during the day and before a ghostly manifestation is triggered in this room. Once the cards indicate that the room is activated, however, it becomes dangerous crawling ivy.

Crawling Ivy: Int Semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 8 hp 38; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA *Entangle* and blood drain SD spell immunities; SZ G (4' per Hit Die); ML 11; XP 2,000.

At Night

The room smells of ivy, and if the heroes enter in darkness for whatever reason, the place seems much more like a forest grove than the interior of a house. Regardless of closed windows, a refreshing breeze ruffles the papers and leaves in the room.

Minor Manifestation

Even if the ivy has been trimmed back or pushed out during the day, it invades the room again at night, breaking through repaired windows or insinuating itself through the cracks. It does not move from its place at the table, however, attacking only if a hero approaches within five feet.

Major Manifestation

The ivy spreads as far as the door and attacks. Once the battle is over, the spirit of Otelie Farringer appears to offer her plea to the heroes. If she has already appeared, she is here to

30. Van Richten's Clinic

The walls in this room are covered with wallpaper featuring a vine motif, lush leafy vines that wind their way across a pale yellow background. Thick carpets cover the floor. Near the door, stands a desk with two easy chairs before it, giving the impression this is some kind of office or receiving room. At the far end of the room, beyond a curtain that has been drawn halfway across it, you can see a bed and some shelves containing medical equipment and small jars.

The books are basic medical and anatomy texts and treatises on medicinal herbs and the recognition of symptoms of poisonings. The medical equipment is in good condition, and worth 50 gp to an interested buyer. Van Richten will once again slip into memories of happier times upon entering this room.

At Night

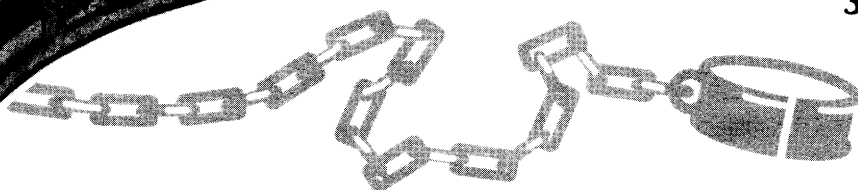
The wallpaper seems to crawl and twine, its vine designs actually moving as the heroes watch. Vague figures appear behind the vines, watching the inhabitants of the room carefully.

Minor Manifestation

Not only does the wallpaper seem to move, but in places it tears as if clawed at by invisible hands. At first the tears are small, and the heroes may hear them without seeing them. Eventually, the damage expands to cover the walls, and by near-dawn the walls are completely stripped.

Major Manifestation

The target hero must make a successful madness check or suffer the delusion that he is trapped in the creeping vines. Nothing can persuade him that he is not bound by living vines for the next 1-6 rounds, and he attacks the walls and anyone who comes near, cutting and tearing his way to freedom.



Bleak House

reinforce her request. (This is the only ghostly appearance in this room.)

32. Blue Room

The walls of this room are painted rather than papered, and though it still seems decades old, it appears to have been finished more recently than the other bedrooms. Blue velvet curtains cover the windows, and a pale blue comforter lies over the four-poster bed. Walnut chairs, wardrobe, and washtable circle the bed.

Normally designated for guests, this room was where Rudolph's visiting great-aunt Helga died of a horrid disease she contracted while traveling across Darkon. Rudolph's skills as a healer were still maturing, and despite his efforts, the afflicted woman died painfully. The experience did much to propel Rudolph even more fervently into the study of medicine.

At Night

All light brought into this room blazes hot and twice as bright as normal, even if it is normally cool (as with a magical sword). Heroes without special protection against heat begin to sweat profusely, and each must save vs. poison or feel a tickling cough develop in his throat (with no other ill effects).

Minor Manifestation

The covers on the bed seem discolored at first glance. Anyone pulling them away sees that the sheets below are sweat-stained and spotted with blood.

Major Manifestation

As above, but each hero remaining in the room must save vs. poison or contract a non-magical, debilitating blood disease. The affliction causes the victim violent coughing spasms, diminishing Strength and Constitution, and eventually death. Each day the victim remains diseased, he loses one point of Strength and Constitution and must make a successful Constitution check or lose 1-6 more points of both. After Constitution falls by three points, the victim begins coughing blood. After the loss of six points, the victim develops weeping sores and bleeds from joints and other soft tissues.

This horrible disease is curable by magical or normal means (such as successful application of the herbalism and healing proficiencies).

33. Trophy Room

The walls of this room are covered with the white skulls of dozens of deer, along with the mounted heads of boars, deer, and other woodland prey. A grand stag stands upon a pedestal in the far corner, and to the left of the door you came through is a fox in mid-stride, running nowhere now, forever.

Between the stuffed animals are mounted spears, crossbows, and other implements of the hunt.

At Night

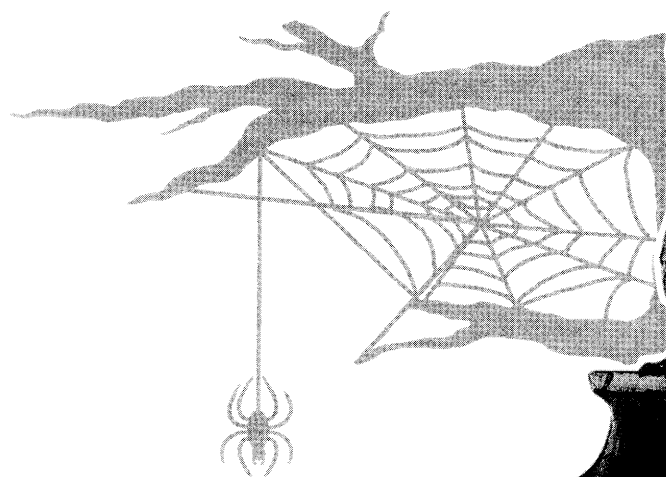
The trophies are grim enough during the day, but at night they stare accusingly at all those who enter.

Minor Manifestation

While the heroes may watch the mounted heads carefully to see if their eyes move, they do not. Nor are there hidden passages covered by any of them. But heroes who possess clairsentient or telepathic talents or wild talents can hear the distant cries of animals slain during the hunt. Most are brief, pitiful bleats, but some are angry snorts, painful wails, or frantic warning cries.

Major Manifestation

The wailing of the dead animals grows louder, so much that the heroes must save vs. spells or be deafened for 1-4 turns. Blood runs from the ears and mouths of the mounted heads. This effect continues for 2-12 turns after the manifestation is triggered.



Bleak House

34. Steward's Chamber

Unlike the other bedchambers of the house, this one is stark in its simplicity and lack of decoration. A bed, a small wardrobe, and a modest writing table with chair are the only furnishings here. The walls are bare. Even the small window is curtainless, and its high placement on the wall gives this room the feel of a jail cell.

This simple bedroom belonged to Josef in life and is once again his. His personal belongings remained undisturbed after his death, for the servant who replaced him refused to sleep in the bed of a murdered man.

Under the narrow bed is a locked chest containing 240 gp in a leather pouch, a thick stack of letters tied with a ribbon, and a personal diary.

The letters are brittle, the ink faded by time. The earliest of them are trite but heartfelt love letters from Josef's wife, who died soon after Greta was born. Later letters are from distant relatives, beginning with condolences on his wife's death and ending with apparently unheeded suggestions that Josef send his daughters to visit their cousins. From reading the letters, the heroes can deduce that Josef became a very rigid, unhappy man after his wife's death.

Reading the diary takes several hours. Comparing the dates of the letters with those of the diary reveals that Josef stopped writing in his diary on the day his wife died, returning to it only after a period of three months. Those later entries consist of nothing more than notes on goods and services provided for the house, disciplinary action taken against the other servants, and similar businesslike entries. A careful reading (spending at least three turns studying the diary and making a successful Intelligence check -4) allows a hero to infer that Josef distrusted Casimir, considering him a worthless vagrant for his Vistani blood.

At Night

Unless he has specific duties (requested by Rudolph or the heroes), Josef sleeps here at night. Nothing changes about the room.

Ghostly Manifestations

Except that Josef is a corporeal ghost who reappears here at dawn if he is slain, this room experiences no supernatural phenomenon.

35. Steward's Withdrawing Room

Despite its comfortable furniture and tasteful decor, this room lacks the cozy atmosphere of the other sitting rooms. The small couch and padded chairs stand like timid strangers at a market. One overstuffed chair and a tiny lamptable stand apart from the other furniture. Near them, a small bookshelf forms a nook separating them from the rest of the chamber.

In its heyday, Richten Haus had a much larger staff of servants. As a matter of status, the steward had his own withdrawing room, into which he would invite the other servants once a week as his own means of "holding court." Josef ended that tradition once the household staff dwindled to include only his immediate family. He would never think to invite Karl or Casimir into this room. He retires to it only when all in the house have settled into their rooms for the night, and then he sits and reads for exactly one hour before going to bed.

Six books rest on the shelf, two legendary histories of great feudal empires, three heroic



Bleak House

romances, and a highly distorted biography of Lord Azalin, *Protector of Darkon*. Any of the books could fetch 10–40 gp if sold to a scholar or sage.

At Night

Despite the nature of the room, Josef is never found in this place unless the heroes summon him while they are here. At night it changes only as does the rest of the house: the shadows seem alive, the corners look distorted, and the air seems unusually still.

Minor Manifestation

As the heroes enter the room, Josef's chair seems to move away from them, the room stretching to become dozens of feet long—much farther than the boundaries of the house should logically allow. Anyone approaching the far side of the room finds that the distance grows greater rather than shorter with every step. A hero who persistently tries to run to the other side of the room may make a successful *save vs. spells* to overcome the spatial distortion . . . but must then make a successful *Dexterity* check to avoid throwing himself into the far wall and suffering 1–3 hp damage.

Major Manifestation

As soon as someone sits in Josef's easy chair, they and the chair itself are suddenly covered so thoroughly in blood that they are soaked through to the skin. This is call for a *horror* check. The blood vanishes within 1–6 rounds or when a character covered with it leaves the room.

Anyone opening one of the books finds nothing but blank pages smeared with bloody fingerprints.

36. Balcony

This sturdy balcony encircles the third floor, allowing a grand view of the grounds. At each corner of the railing stands a large stone pot, which once must have been used for planting decorative plants and flowers in the summer. All are still filled with earth, though nothing grows in them now.

Note that the eastern balcony is entwined with the crawling ivy from area 31. Characters venturing past this area at night are subject to attack.

When Radovan and the ghouls attack the house, half of them climb the walls to enter on

this level. The ivy never attacks the ghouls.

At Night

Madame Radanavich can cause the balcony railing to tip, letting one of the heavy stone pots fall. Any hero walking beneath one of the corners of the balcony must make a successful *save vs. petrification*. Success indicates that the hero detects a faint scrape of stone on stone as the pot tips, and the hero may make a successful *Dexterity* check to leap clear of the falling pot. Failing the check means that the hero suffers 6–36 hp damage.

Minor Manifestation

The straight stone pillars of the railing twist and bend like serpents, giving the entire place a sinister look. Heroes touching the rail feel as though they are touching skin that is clammy with sweat.

Major Manifestation

Radanavich causes the balcony to buck and crumble, pitching heroes over the edge. Victims may make successful *Dexterity* checks to avoid falling to the ground below and suffering 3–18 hit points of damage.

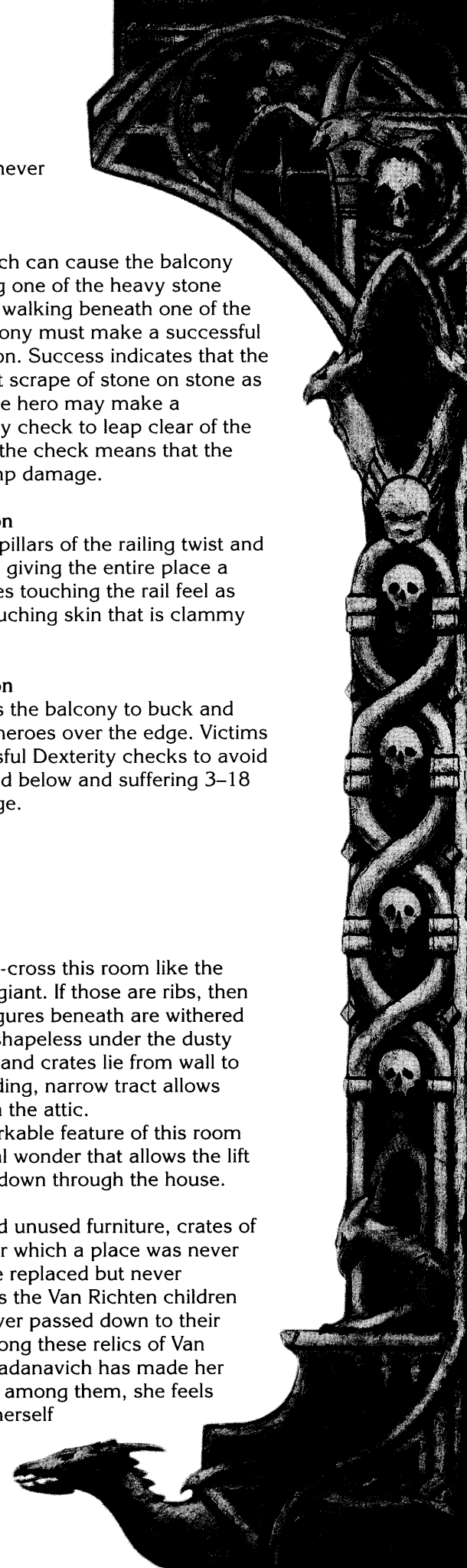
The Attic

37. Attic

Low beams criss-cross this room like the broken ribs of a giant. If those are ribs, then the dull, squat figures beneath are withered organs. Almost shapeless under the dusty sheets, furniture and crates lie from wall to wall. Only a winding, narrow tract allows progress through the attic.

Another remarkable feature of this room is the mechanical wonder that allows the lift to travel up and down through the house.

In the attic is stored unused furniture, crates of hunting trophies for which a place was never found, old furniture replaced but never discarded, and toys the Van Richten children grew out of but never passed down to their own offspring. Among these relics of Van Richten's family, Radanavich has made her home. By dwelling among them, she feels she is insinuating herself into her enemy's past. More



Bleak House

importantly, she expects that the attic, once explored in daylight, will be left alone by the heroes.

Items stolen by Radovan are brought here. Heroes must search for 2–8 turns to find an item here.

At Night

The lift provides the only access to this level, but after sun set, Madame Radanavich can cause it to stop on the third story. Heroes may still try to climb up into the attic. If they do, the adventure continues with the section in Chapter Five called, "The Final Confrontation."

Ghostly Manifestations

Until the fourth night, and the final confrontation, no ghostly manifestations occur here. For details, see Chapter Five.

The Cellars

38. Wine Cellar

Chill air swirls like water around your ankles as you descend this narrow passage. After dozen feet, the sturdy wooden staircase gives way to rough stone steps without a railing. The air is uncomfortably cool at the bottom.

Huge wooden casks rest in stone recesses on one side of this low chamber. Along two of the other walls stand wine racks, about a third of them home to dark glass bottles. Upon the third wall rests a cluttered shelf. A handful of paper labels lie scattered in the room.

A century ago, the Van Richten wine cellars were the envy of the region. However, after an especially torrential storm, the walls of the wine cellar burst and were never sufficiently repaired. From that day forward, the wine cellars were perpetually damp. What remained in Rudolph's time was still a formidable stock, but an often disappointing and rarely replenished one.

The easternmost cask is empty, its seams split and the stone below it stained a deep burgundy. The others contain white or red wine of passable quality. Each remains sealed, but on the shelf rest three sturdy spigots and a mallet for tapping the casks. Also on the shelf are a half-

dozen wooden bungs (each smelling faintly of a fine wine), a rusted corkscrew, two small metal pails, a soft brush, a cracked crystal carafe, and a pair of dusty wine glasses that the servants once used to "sample" the wine.

Upon the wooden racks rest 58 bottles of wine from estates and wineries throughout Darkon. Most of the bottles are labeled with simple family or estate names and styles, such as Von Lengstein Dry, or Black Tarn Special. Thirteen of the bottles have lost their labels, which came off due to the long-term affects of moisture. Despite the damp, the racks themselves remain largely sound, though a trifle soft from rot near the bases.

Should the heroes wish to sample the wines, they find the vintages of wildly varied quality. About 10% of the wines are soured and undrinkable, 25% poor (worth only 1–4 sp), 50% are good or fine (2–12 gp), and 15% are excellent vintages (10–100 gp).

At Night

This room changes very little at night, growing about 10° cooler. The dripping condensation continues to form dull tracks in the powdery entire, but observant heroes (those who specifically look at the walls) notice that the previously random lines in the pottasium nitrate now seem to form almost coherent glyphs and characters. Anyone who tries to decipher the figures by means of the rogue's ability, Read Languages, or a *comprehend languages* spell must make a madness check. Success indicates that the hero realized an undefineable danger just in time to look away.

Minor Manifestation

The heroes hear a bubbling, gurgling sound from one of the wine casks. The sound grows louder for 1–6 rounds before subsiding. Opening the cask during the bubbling shows the wine roiling and churning as if it was boiling. It is cool, however, and the motion stops the moment a hero touches the liquid with bare flesh.

Major Manifestation

The smell of wine becomes increasingly strong, growing to an almost intangible cloud. Heroes must save vs. poison or become intoxicated, suffering a –4 penalty on AC, attack rolls, proficiency checks, and saving throws relating to mental strength or Dexterity. This effect lasts for 1–6 turns after the heroes leave this room (roll separately for each affected hero).

Bleak House



39. Root Cellar

Any character who makes a successful tracking proficiency check near the house can find the prints of bare humanoid feet (the tracks of ghouls and zombies). While the tracks lead in all directions, most of them eventually return to the outside entrance of the root cellar.

A musty, earthy odor emerges from the cellar as you open the doors. Stone steps descend into the darkness, where your light reveals little more than deep shadows and craggy, unfinished walls. When your eyes adjust to the weird gloom, you see a low-ceilinged chamber over-filled with dirty crates and tables. Here a great lump of earth has fallen from the ceiling to create a little mushroom garden upon a workbench, nearly burying the tools beneath. There a crate has dissolved into the earthen floor, its outline only barely discernable amid the shapeless mass.

Moldering baskets and web-thin bags hang limply from their hooks in the wooden rafters. Something chitters beneath a rotting wheel-barrow before scurrying away.

There are a few fresh prints on the steps. A successful tracking proficiency check identifies the prints as belonging to humanoid creatures with slightly scaly skin and long, sharp nails. The prints can be followed to a large crate which hides the entrance to the ghoulish warrens (area 40).

40. Ghoul Warrens

Since their last conflict with Rudolph van Richten, the Corvara tribe have wandered as cannibal zombies and ghouls. Those who were transformed into the latter creatures consider themselves superior to the zombies, taking more scorn than pity on their less intelligent kin. The ghouls lair under the earth, where they enjoy the cool darkness of the limestone caverns. The zombies are not permitted to join them.

40a. Cellar Entrance

This long, narrow tunnel is damp and filthy. In several places it dwindles to a mere crawlspace, low enough that even dwarves and halflings must crouch to pass.

Human-sized characters must

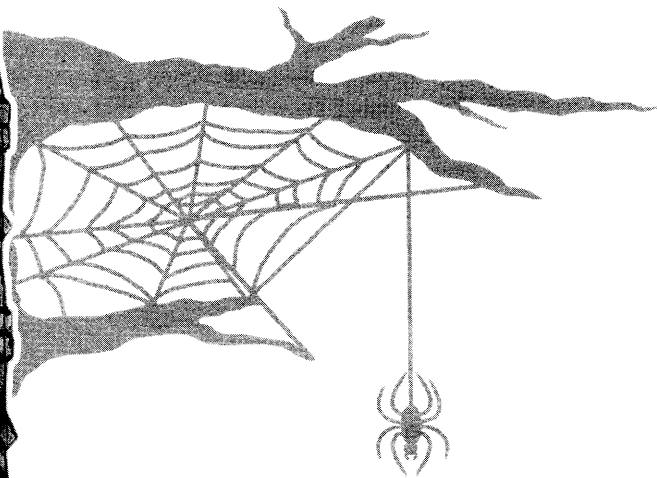
Bleak House

crawl through these stretches.

The place stinks of ghouls, the stench growing stronger as the heroes move closer to area 40c.

40b. Secret Way

Here the tunnel grows large enough for a human-sized hero to walk at a slight crouch. It is also the site of enormous spiderwebs filling the entire tunnel. Mice, insects, and other small creatures hang suspended in the webs. Any disturbance near them summons dozens of



normal hairy spiders. Heroes walking or cutting through the webs are soon covered in the little arachnids, suffering only minor bites (1 hp of damage for the entire encounter), and whatever fearful reaction the character may have to being blanketed with spiders (no fear check required, unless the hero developed arachnophobia while in the "care" of Dr. Heinfroth). Clever heroes will realize that neither ghouls nor any other creatures pass this way. Even if the heroes destroy the webs to pass, they find that the tunnel winds another 40' through the earth before ending.

About 15' before the webs is a narrow, naturally hidden passage connecting area 40c. Any characters turning back to look for such a passage may find it. Once spotted, the secret path can always be found by those who carry light sources.

40c. Lair

During the day, the Corvara ghouls rest on the cold, damp floor of the cavern. Unless the heroes arrive quietly and without light, the ghouls quickly rise to defend themselves. Those forced to flee the battle retreat to the mausoleum or the root cellar, depending on where the heroes appeared. Radovan always seeks to escape toward the house, where he can find many hiding places to wait until night.

At night, the ghouls leave this lair to perform Radovan's bidding.

Ghouls (22): Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16, 15, 13, 12 (x2), 10 (x3), 9, 8 (x2), 6; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD special; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175 each.

There are a limited number of ghouls. The DM should adjust the number encountered in this area according to how many of these creatures have been destroyed in wandering encounters.

Unlike their master, the Corvara ghouls are nearly mindless creatures, driven almost equally by their unnatural hunger and their fear of Radovan. They attack in groups of 3-4 when possible, pausing to devour those victims they paralyze unless immediately attacked. The ghouls inflict maximum claw and bite damage on paralyzed victims each round they are not prevented.

40d. Cemetery Entrance

The sundered tomb in the mausoleum (area I4) opens into a relatively dry, bare stone vault. This unfinished chamber was left by the stonemasons as an easy means of expanding the mausoleum when necessary. When the ghouls discovered the limestone caverns beneath the grounds, they soon created their own passage from the mausoleum to those natural chambers. The first 60' of the tunnel from the mausoleum is small and damp, burrowed through the rocky soil. Afterward, the tunnel opens to a limestone cave large enough for a human to walk through.

The Last Mile

This is my play's last scene, here heavens appoint My pilgrimage's last mile.

—Jonh Donne,
Holy Sonnets, VI

By the fourth day, Madame Radanavich has inspired so much hatred or fear in Rudolph van Richten that her own powers are at their peak. The domain is now under her total control, and she is ready to end her cat-and-mouse game. This chapter chronicles the climactic confrontation of the *Bleak House* campaign.

Storm of Vengeance

On the fourth morning, it's already clear that something is changing on the Van Richten Estate. The blue sky is hidden behind dark clouds, flashing erratically with white electricity. The sun barely manages to beat the night back to twilight. Throughout the day, the winds grow stronger; by the middle of the afternoon, showers of twigs are raining from the trees, and even branches are breaking and tumbling off the trees. Any heroes who venture into the apple orchard have a 10% chance per turn to be struck by a falling branch that inflicts 1–4 points of damage. This damage can be halved with a successful Dexterity check.

As the day comes to an end, Madame Radanavich's remaining ghouls and zombies wander the grounds openly. They travel in groups of 1–6, circling the house, and peering in the windows. While they do not enter yet, they no longer skulk in the shadows. Should the heroes exit the house to fight them, the creatures flee toward the apple orchard.

By the time the heroes have chased them down and fought the undead, total darkness has descended upon the domain, and they can hear a mad

cackle over the wild howling of the wind. Moments later, lightning streaks down from the clouds above. A streak of lightning explodes off one of the trees, and moments later a second bolt strikes one of the heroes, randomly determined by the DM. All within 10' of the target character suffers 6–48 points of electrical damage, but if they make a successful save vs. spell, they suffer only half damage. If the heroes don't return to the house, one of them gets struck by lightning each turn. (The target is never Van Richten.)

If the heroes seek shelter in a building besides the manor, lightning strikes the structure, lighting it on fire, and reducing it to rubble. Madame Radanavich is ready for the final battle, and the heroes must confront her. The storm does not abate until either Madame Radanavich or Doctor van Richten has been destroyed.

As they head back toward the manor, a torrential downpour starts. The drops are whipped so hard by the ever-increasing winds that they feel like sharp needles against exposed skin. Further, the characters can see only a few feet through the downpour.

The House on the Fourth Night

If the heroes were having a hard time of it in Bleak House during their first three nights there, they may find themselves wishing their final night here were but a nightmare. Madame Radanavich is at her strongest, the ghostly manifestations are in full force, and a storm of cataclysmic proportions is sweeping through the domain. Whenever a manifestation occurs, it is a Major Manifestation. Additionally, the following special conditions occur, beginning five turns after sundown at which point the storm is at its strongest:

The Last Mile

Area 1: Wind howls down the chimney, making a sound reminiscent of a banshee's lethal *wail*, but it is actually harmless. Anyone standing within 10' of the fireplace when the wind blows through must save vs. petrification to avoid his or her hair, clothes, or other flammable items catching fire.

Anyone opening the front door during the storm must make a successful Strength check, or have it ripped from his grasp by the wind. The wind throws the door open, pounding it against the outside, and then immediately slams the portal shut. The hero in the opening must make a successful Dexterity check to leap out of the way. If he fails, the door strikes him with tremendous force, inflicting 1–6 hp damage.

Area 2: The wind blows so hard that the window on the second story (at the top of the staircase leading to area 28) shatters and rains lethal shards down upon this area. Heroes standing anywhere in the foyer or on the stairs leading to the first floor must save vs. petrification or suffer 2–12 hp damage from the falling glass.

Area 5: As the storm rages, a titanic wind knocks over one of the great stone pots and smashes open the door to area 8. Afterward, the ghouls and zombies can open the door and enter the house freely. They then do their utmost to force the heroes toward the room where Madame Radanavich waits.

Area 9: The chapel shudders under the impact of dozens of lightning bolts as Radanavich focuses some of the storm upon the one part of the domain that is not under her control. The structure eventually gives way, with parts the walls and the entire ceiling caving in. If the heroes have sought refuge here, the DM should play up the pounding lightning, and point out that dust is falling from the ceiling. After two turns, part of the back wall and the ceiling collapse, burying the altar. Any hero within 10' of it suffers 3–30 hp damage from the falling structure and must roll saving throws vs. breath weapon or be buried in the rubble. A successful save means the character jumped to safety. Buried characters suffer an additional 2–12 hp damage. Until Madame Radanavich's storm breaches the temple vault, none of her minions nor any other evil creature may enter the chapel.

Area 10: If a hero gets too close to the kitchen windows, cannibal zombies come crashing through, attempting to grab him and pull him outside.

Area 27: Three of the ghouls climb to this balcony and try to enter through first-story rooms. They will leap through the windows of any room in which heroes have sought refuge. If the party not in any of the rooms on this level, then the ghouls attack at an opportune moment as part of the effort to drive the heroes and Van Richten to Radanavich.

Any rooms with windows on the second and third stories: Five rounds after total darkness descends, the winds are so strong they shatter all the upstairs windows, sending lethal showers hurtling into the rooms. Heroes in any of these areas must make saves vs. breath weapon or suffer 2–16 hp damage.

The ghouls and cannibal zombies: Madame Radanavich's evil is so strong now that once the remaining corporeal undead confront the heroes in the house, they can't be destroyed or turned. Whenever a hero strikes one of the creatures down, it rises again two rounds later with half the number of hit points it had when the battle first began. (A ghoul who had 18 hit points upon entering the house, rises with 9 hit points to attack the heroes again.) Each ghoul and zombie must be slain three times before the corpses are so damaged then cannot reanimate again. The exception to this is Radovan, who always rises with full hit points, but only after 4 rounds. He cannot die as long as his mother's spirit exists. The ghouls and cannibal zombies attack in separate packs, each group banding together to pose the greatest threat to the heroes. Any time the heroes retreat in the desired direction, the undead follow just slowly enough to allow them to flee.

The Final Confrontation

Once the surviving ghouls and cannibal zombies have invaded the house, they attempt to drive the heroes and Van Richten into the room identified in the tarokka reading. However the reading turned out, Madame Radanavich will have to confront them at the foretold locations—the spirit of the house will allow nothing else. The heroes will most likely fight the undead initially, but when they realize the creatures aren't staying down, they will probably try to retreat to safety and straight into Madame Radanavich's waiting arms.

The Last Mile

Madame Radanavich's statistics and powers are detailed in the *Heroes, Monsters, and Settings* book.

Should the heroes prove too strong for the remaining undead Vistani, Madame Radanavich sends some of the spirits after the heroes with orders not to harm them, but to lure or force the heroes toward her. Once the heroes reach the foretold room, the following scene confronts them:

The door slams shut even before you have a chance to bar it against the pursuing undead. Suddenly, the room that was empty is crowded with translucent figures, many of whom you recognize as the spirits who have either helped or hindered you in this hellish place. They all have their spectral weapons drawn, and their eyes gleam with malevolence. Kneeling near the center of the room is the ghost of Ottelie Farringer. Her arms and legs are bound with pulsing bands of black energy. She looks at Rudolph with tears in her eyes. "Don't give in, my love. There is still hope."

"Ottelie?" Van Richten whispers.

Then the voice of an old woman comes from everywhere at once: "There is no hope here, at least not for a Van Richten, and those who would be his saviors. Attack, my pets! Destroy them!"

With that command, the remaining spirits attack with full force, focusing their efforts on the heroes. They cannot be turned, but they can be attacked and destroyed, since they have all become semi-corporeal. As the heroes battle, Radanavich takes the final step she hopes will shatter Rudolph's mind beyond repair.

As you fight the ghosts, another spirit appears in the room, a translucent image of an aged crone dressed in Vistani garb. Although the spirit that is attacking you probably needs to be your main focus, you know this new ghost is perhaps the most evil creature you have ever encountered. You can feel power radiating from her like heat from a camp fire. You know that this can only be Madame Radanavich. She says: "This foolish spirit thought she could resist me. Now she knows just how mistaken she was. Now, Rudolph van Richten, watch the spirit of your beloved Ottelie be eradicated forever!"

Regardless of what the heroes do, Madame Radanavich pulls the ghostly dagger across Ottelie's throat. Van Richten, who recognizes Ottelie even if he has regressed back to his childhood, lets out an anguished shriek and rushes at Radanavich with hatred flashing in his eyes. He drops any weapons he might have been carrying.

In the event that one of the heroes isn't engaged by one or more spirits, they may attempt to stop Van Richten from what appears to be a suicidal act, considering the immunities and powers of ghosts. If a hero tries to stop him, Van Richten attacks that character, screaming, "I'm going to kill her, kill her once and for all!" In his rage, his fists inflict 1-6 points of damage.

Should no hero be able to stop Van Richten, they see his hands close around Madame Radanavich's neck, who seems tangible despite her translucent appearance. Wild laughter sticks in her throat.

Undead Allies

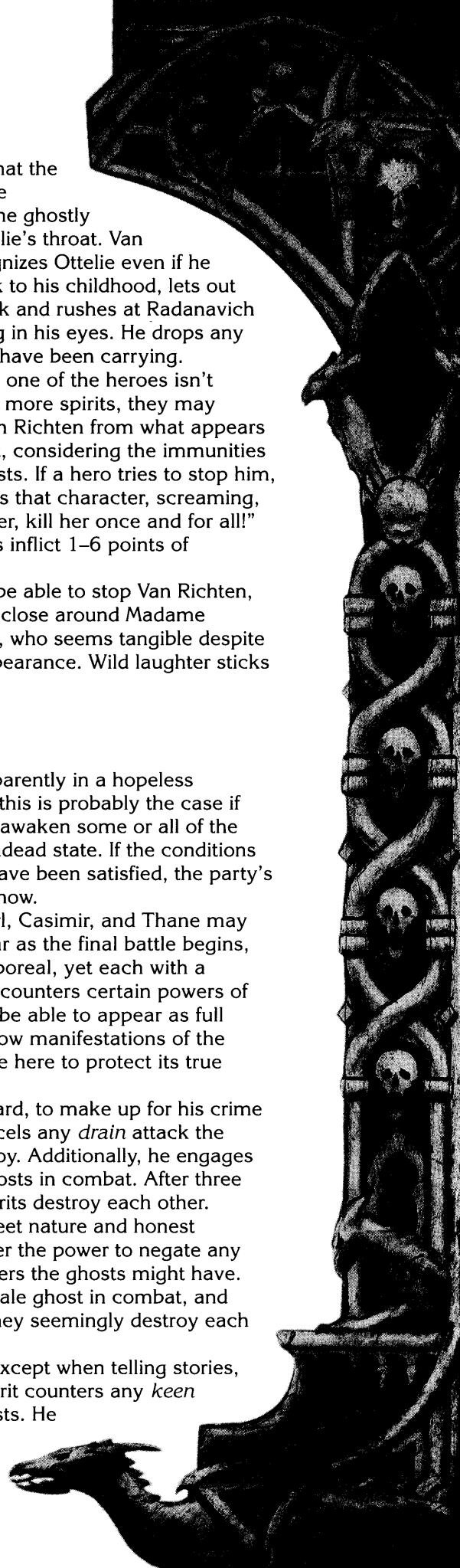
The heroes are apparently in a hopeless confrontation, and this is probably the case if they have failed to awaken some or all of the servants to their undead state. If the conditions to gain their help have been satisfied, the party's kindness is repaid now.

Josef, Elise, Karl, Casimir, and Thane may each (or all) appear as the final battle begins, still seemingly corporeal, yet each with a special ability that counters certain powers of the trapped spirits be able to appear as full ghosts. They are now manifestations of the house, and they are here to protect its true master.

Josef: The steward, to make up for his crime of embezzling, cancels any *drain* attack the ghosts might employ. Additionally, he engages one of the male ghosts in combat. After three rounds, the two spirits destroy each other.

Elise: Elise's sweet nature and honest disposition gives her the power to negate any mood-altering powers the ghosts might have. She engages a female ghost in combat, and after two rounds, they seemingly destroy each other.

Casimir: Silent except when telling stories, the half-Vistani spirit counters any *keen* attacks by the ghosts. He also engages a spirit in melee,



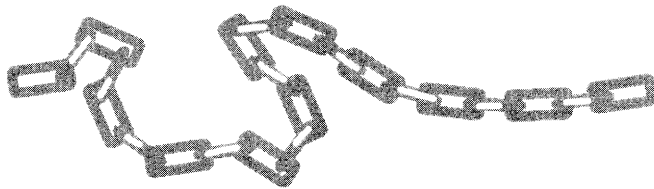
The Last Mile

and after one round, he and the ghost seemingly destroy each other.

Karl: The groundskeeper arrives three rounds after combat has begun but rushes into the fray with a mighty bellow. He engages any ghost that might be battling a female player character, snapping its ethereal neck with his mighty hands. Karl then turns to a second ghost, battles it for two rounds, and then the spirits destroy each other.

Thane: The hound dog fights alongside Casimir until that spirit is destroyed. Then, he turns his attention to a hero who is doing poorly in the battle (due to bad die rolls rather than bad play), should the DM wish to show some mercy. If not, Thane lets out a pained howl and vanishes as Casimir does.

Once the heroes are on the verge of dealing defeat to their ghostly foes, run the appropriate scene from the following section. The final moment of the *Bleak House* campaign is at hand, and so is the last stand of Rudolph van Richten.



Conclusions

In Chapter Two, an artifact that awakened some of the daylight ghosts to their true natures and had an affect on Van Richten was selected by random draw. However, that same card draw also selected one of four possible endings to this adventure.

The Knife

If Casimir's knife was the item of power, then Madame Radanavich grabs Van Richten's wrists, and smoke rises from the Doctor's arms. He screams in pain and collapses to the floor. She moves through his body toward the heroes, who should be just finishing pitched battles against the ghosts and other undead.

"You're pathetic, Van Richten," the old Vistani shouts in a shrill voice. "I am stronger than you can ever imagine, because mine is a strength fed by the anger of one who has been wronged! You lay there and cower, but know the blood of these new friends of yours are on your hands as well!"

As she speaks, the ceiling and walls above you explode in a shower of crackling energy and splinters.

Lightning engulfs the heroes, inflicting 12d8 points of damage. Those who make successful saving throws vs. spell suffer only half damage. If there is a female hero among the characters, she is thrown clear of the rest of the party; Madame Radanavich doesn't want to kill her, as that will be her new body. If there is no female, then the DM can pick a character at random. Radanavich's shrieking laughter fills the room, and she raises her arms to call down another bolt of lightning when she is suddenly interrupted:

"No." Van Richten's voice is forceful and calm, and as he gets to his feet and stands straight and firm, there is a glint in his eye. "Enough. This ends here." All of the undead cease their attacks, standing or floating silently around you.

Van Richten continues: "I will not let you fill my heart with hatred again. I refuse to let you have that victory. I renounced my hatred and revoked my curse years ago. No longer are you my sworn enemy, Madame Radanavich, seer of the Corvara. You are nothing to me but another wretched victim of her own evil."

"How dare you! I have already suffered the full measure of your malice. It is too late to unsay your evil words. Too late to save yourself, or your friends!"

Radanavich starts to possess the chosen hero. If the character's player fails to save vs. spell, the possession is complete, and his spirit is destroyed. The hero's body cackles wildly. A successful save means Radanavich failed to possess the character, much to her surprise.

Moments later, Van Richten's body begins to glow. He closes his eyes, and if Radanavich possessed a hero, she is thrust from the body and the now-mindless character collapses on the floor. In a blind rage, she begins to attack the remaining heroes, but with each passing round now, she diminishes one magnitude, with a

The Last Mile

commensurate decrease in THACO, AC, Hit Points, and all other abilities. It is possible and even likely that her diminishing power allows the heroes to destroy her in combat before she dwindles away to nothing, shrieking the last breaths of her now-futile hatred.

At the moment Madame Radanavich is destroyed or vanishes, all of the Corvara ghouls and cannibal zombies suddenly stop moving, staring wide-eyed a moment before falling truly dead to the ground. All of the captive ghosts of Van Richten's former allies are freed from their servitude, and without fanfare they fade from sight.

The glow fades from Van Richten's body. He falls to his knees, and stares at you, eyes wide. "She's still here," he says. "The house has taken her. Someone needs to stay and see that she never again leaves. The house has spoken, and it needs its rightful master."

The aged doctor pitches forward. His body trembles and then lies still.

"Master Rudolph will be indisposed for a time," a voice comes. You see Josef standing there, looking as prim and proper as he ever did. "Allow me to show you to the door."

There is nothing the heroes can do at this point. Van Richten is gone, absorbed by the house.

The Satchel

As the young Van Richten squeezes Madame Radanavich's throat, there is a bright flash. The heroes are momentarily blinded, and when their vision clears, the ghostly Vistana is gone and all the ghouls stand with bewildered looks on their faces.

Young Van Richten looks around, a deep frown on his face. Then he says, "Yes . . . yes!"

He looks at you, a strange smile spreading across his face. "Destroy them, my pets," he says.

Madame Radanavich has entered Van Richten's body and is now in total control of it. She can't be turned or otherwise driven from the body. As the heroes battle the renewed onslaught of undead, she laughs gleefully.

As you fend off the claws of the dead, the voice that once belonged to your companion comes, "You may have killed me, but with your body I will live again!"

"You can't have him, not as long as I'm here."

The new voice comes from a dark-haired girl in her early teens who has suddenly appeared in the attic. You recognize her from the family portrait downstairs as Rudolph's sister—or at least as she looked 30–40 years ago. Van Richten (or Madame Radanavich) takes a step back, a look of horror on her face. "You! No! I won't let you save him!" Van Richten gestures, and the elevator suddenly plummets down the shaft. "I'll destroy this body before I let you win!" He suddenly charges toward the open shaft.

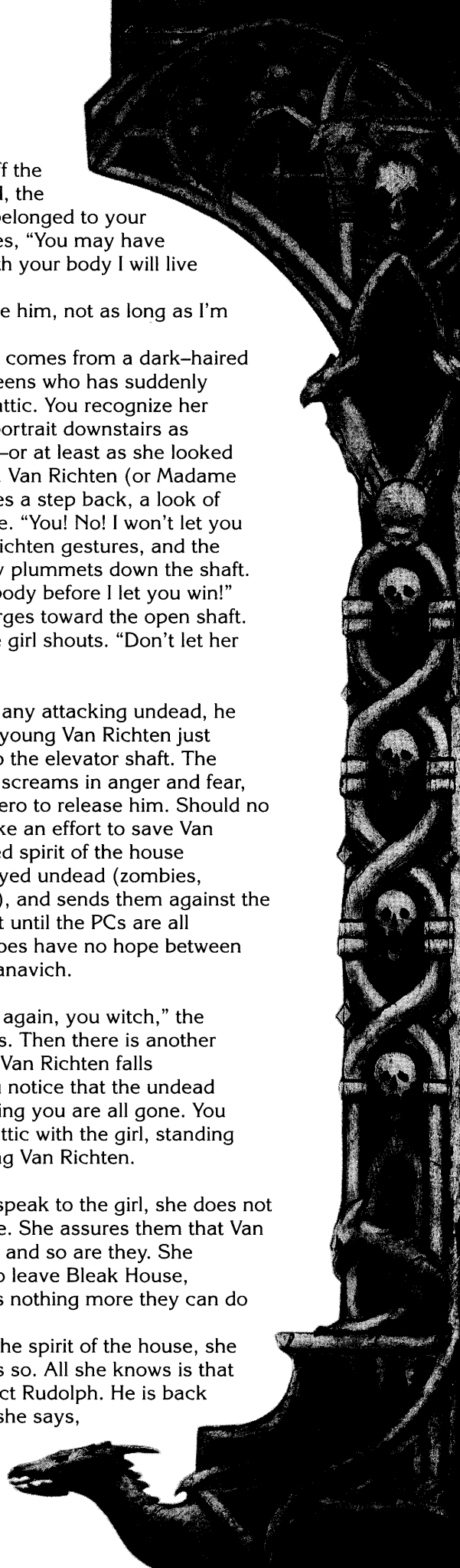
"Stop him," the girl shouts. "Don't let her kill him!"

If a hero ignores any attacking undead, he manages to tackle young Van Richten just before he leaps into the elevator shaft. The young Van Richten screams in anger and fear, pleading with the hero to release him. Should no hero choose to make an effort to save Van Richten, the angered spirit of the house recreates all destroyed undead (zombies, ghouls, and ghosts), and sends them against the party. It will not rest until the PCs are all destroyed. The heroes have no hope between the house and Radanavich.

"You'll not live again, you witch," the girl's voice comes. Then there is another flash, and young Van Richten falls unconscious. You notice that the undead who were menacing you are all gone. You are alone in the attic with the girl, standing over the unmoving Van Richten.

Should the heroes speak to the girl, she does not give them her name. She assures them that Van Richten is safe now and so are they. She encourages them to leave Bleak House, however, as there is nothing more they can do here.

If asked if she's the spirit of the house, she says that she thinks so. All she knows is that she is here to protect Rudolph. He is back where he belongs, she says, and she will see to it that no harm



The Last Mile

comes to him. What has happened here was fated to happen, and when the heroes see what Van Richten will become—25 years in the future, after he has grown up again—they will understand all. The girl says that she foresees a time of unparalleled darkness, and in a quarter century it will be Van Richten who will stop it, but only if he is properly prepared.

The elevator returns to the attic, and Josef steps out. "Let me attend to Master Rudolph," he says, bending to pick up the unconscious boy. "He has been through a great deal. I shall return momentarily and escort you to the door."

"Thanks for helping us," the girl says. "I like you. Please come and visit us some time. Rudolph could use your guidance as well as mine."

The Ledger

The ghostly Vistana coughs as Van Richten's hands grasp her throat, but then she reaches out, her transparent hands thrusting into his chest. Van Richten screams, stumbling backwards, clutching his shirt over his heart.

"You're dying, old fool! You're facing the one thing my curse denied you, and it terrifies you, doesn't it? Know that your fear is making me stronger!"

With a wild cackle, she gestures in your direction.

Lightning leaps from Radanavich's hands, and each hero must roll a successful save vs. spell or suffer 12d8 points of damage, with a save resulting in only half damage. All the ghouls are destroyed, and the remaining ghosts fade away. It's just the heroes and Radanavich now, and she attacks them with wild abandon.

"I have won, Van Richten! Go to the unknown! Your friends will follow you soon enough!"

"No fear," Van Richten says, sinking to his knees with the slow grace of a sleepwalker. "I have no fear. I understand completely now. You have no power over me, witch. No one has power here, no one but I."

At that, Radanavich's determination seems to falter. If the heroes continue combat, they gain automatic initiative. What follows is a battle to the death.

Once the heroes have dispatched the evil ghost, they turn their attention to Van Richten. His mortal form is dying, and no power within the heroes' grasp can save him. Within a turn, his body fails and his ghost rises from it. The heroes may question him both before and after his death (though they may not realize the latter). Van Richten has become one with the spirit of Bleak House, and he has become aware that some great purpose awaits him. What that purpose is, he does not know. Van Richten accepts his fate . . . even though he does not understand it.

The Doll

"No more!" Van Richten shrieks, his hands tight around a throat that he should not even be able to touch. "No more killing! You're dead! We're alive, and you can't hurt us!"

The walls, the floor, and your very bones shudder as a booming voice seems to issue forth from everywhere: "Die!"

Around you, ghouls and zombies start to scream. They are being drawn into the floor, but they are not sinking as though they were being drawn into quicksand—it's more like they are being drawn through the very boards: You hear their bones crunching and ichor spurts from their legs as they writhe and claw at the air. [At the DM's option, this sight may be call for a horror check.]

"You old fool! You'll not win like this!" Madame Radanavich closes her own hands

The Last Mile



around Van Richten's flesh-and-blood neck, and flesh proves fragile to Radanavich's powerful supernatural form. You think you can hear the snap of Rudolph van Richten's neck as she breaks it. His head twisting at a sickening angle, Van Richten tumbles away from the Vistana spirit, and falls to the floor.

"Die!" the thunderous voice roars.

"Yes," you hear Madame Radanavich's voice faintly over the screaming undead and the roar from the walls. "They will die, for with Van Richten dead, I am the undisputed master of Bleak House!"

Madame Radanavich attacks the heroes with full force, as well as commanding any remaining spirits to attack. However, the heroes notice that those spirits don't obey. Instead, joyous expressions spread across their faces. Most look to the fallen Van Richten with expressions of gratitude on their faces, then fade away.

Madame Radanavich still remains a threat, however. She attacks a hero, targeting a character who has been particularly clever in opposing her minions. If Radovan is able, he attacks the highest level good-aligned priest among the heroes. The animated remains of the Corvara tribe continue to shriek, and the voice continues to bellow, and the stench of ghoulish ichor grows so strong that the heroes get sick to the stomach by breathing it.

Run the battle with Radanavich with no mercy. She fully intends to destroy every single hero. As the battle progresses, the bellows of "Die!" grow louder and louder. After four rounds of combat, the DM should make a die roll. This roll is meaningless, and is simply for appearances. With a concerned look, he should say that the heroes suddenly feel as though they *must* retreat. A hero who looks for Van Richten's body finds that it has disappeared.

Once the heroes begin their retreat, allow a portion of the house collapse, cutting Radanavich off from following them. The last hero looks back as the collapse happens, and it seems as though a figure had stepped in front of Madame Radanavich to stop her from following them—and that figure appeared to look a lot like Rudolph van Richten.

Indeed, when the heroes reach the exit of the shuddering and trembling manor house, the booming voice stops its chant. A split second later the shriek of a woman is heard over the ringing in their ears.

Seconds later, Van Richten appears before them, semi-transparent. He is clearly a ghost. He explains to them that Madame Radanavich and her tribe of undead have been absorbed by the house. He says that it is now up to him to ensure that none of them ever escape. He thanks the heroes for all they've done for him and requests that they perform one last favor for him: Please locate Maria Van Richten, his sister, and apologize for him. He didn't want to draw her into the ugly world that he had discovered following the death of his family, but he had never expected to die without seeing her one last time.

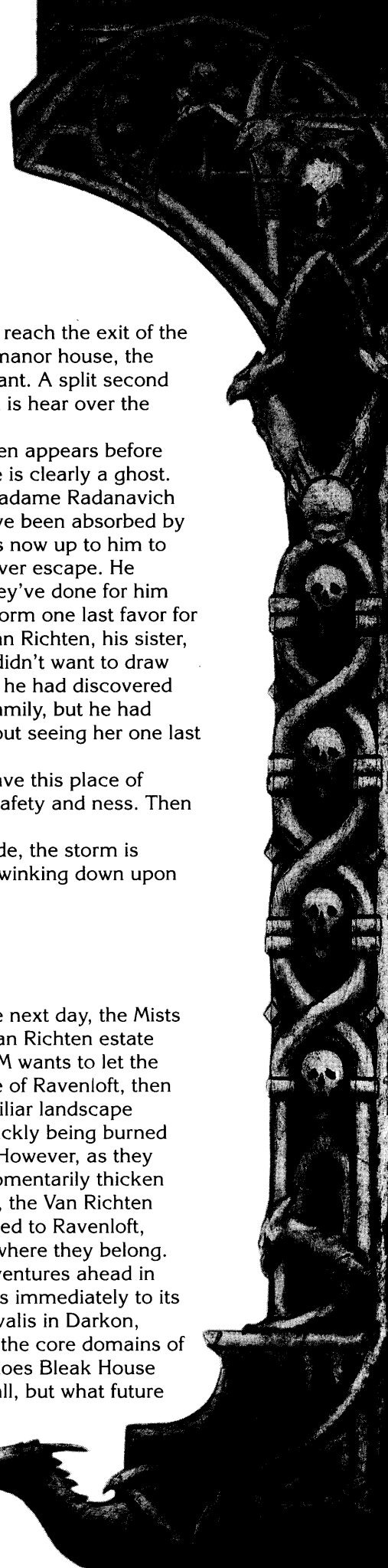
He then asks them to leave this place of tragedy, and wishes them safety and peace. Then he fades away.

As the heroes step outside, the storm is breaking up, and stars are winking down upon the estate.

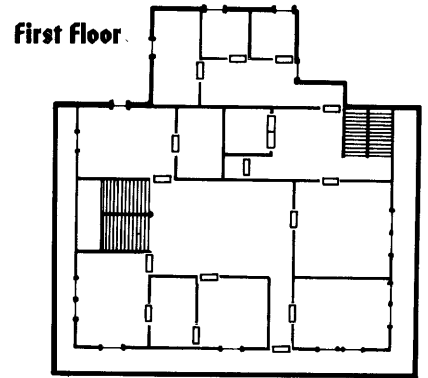
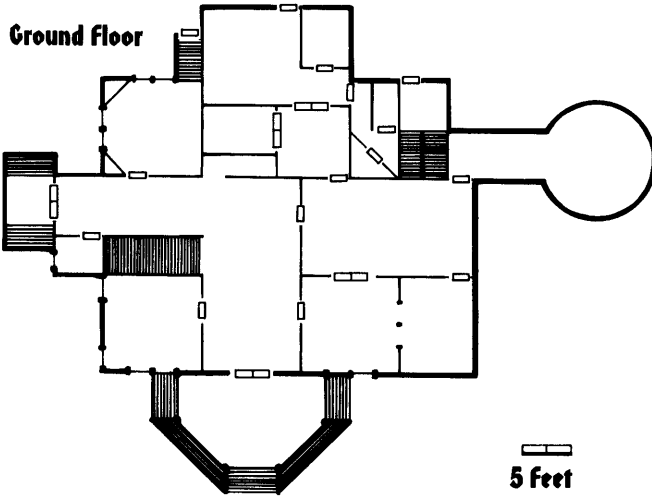
Dénouement

With the dawn of the next day, the Mists surrounding the Van Richten estate finally lift. If the DM wants to let the heroes leave the demiplane of Ravenloft, then the heroes recognize a familiar landscape through the haze that is quickly being burned away by the morning sun. However, as they head into the mist, they momentarily thicken again, and when they clear, the Van Richten estate is gone. It has returned to Ravenloft, leaving the heroes behind where they belong.

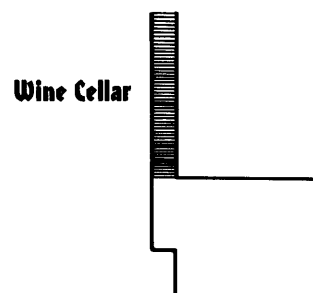
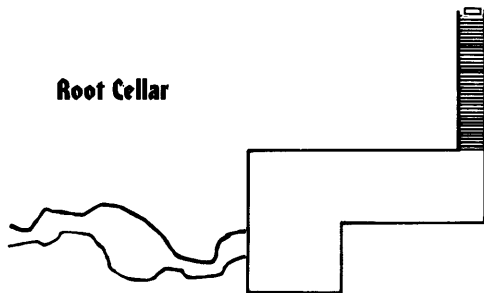
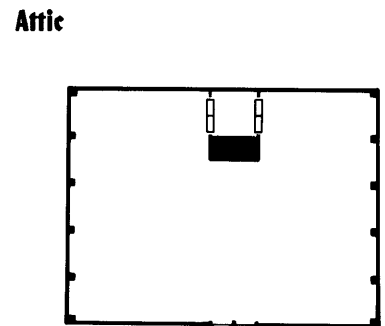
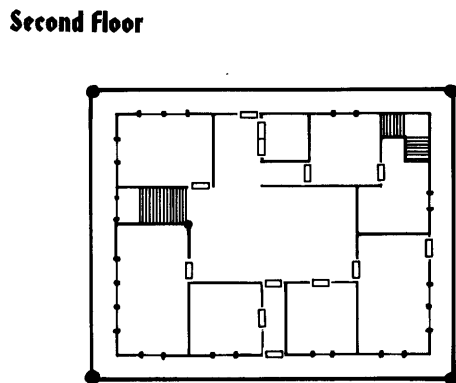
If the DM has further adventures ahead in Ravenloft, the estate returns immediately to its original location outside Rivalis in Darkon, once again firmly a part of the core domains of the demiplane. No longer does Bleak House transform with each nightfall, but what future fate awaits it and Rudolph van Richten, no one can say.



Richten Haus Diagram



5 feet



“Richten Haus diagram”



**All spirits are enslaved to
serve things evil.**
— P.B. Shelley,
Ozymandias



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Ravenloft[®]

Campaign Adventure



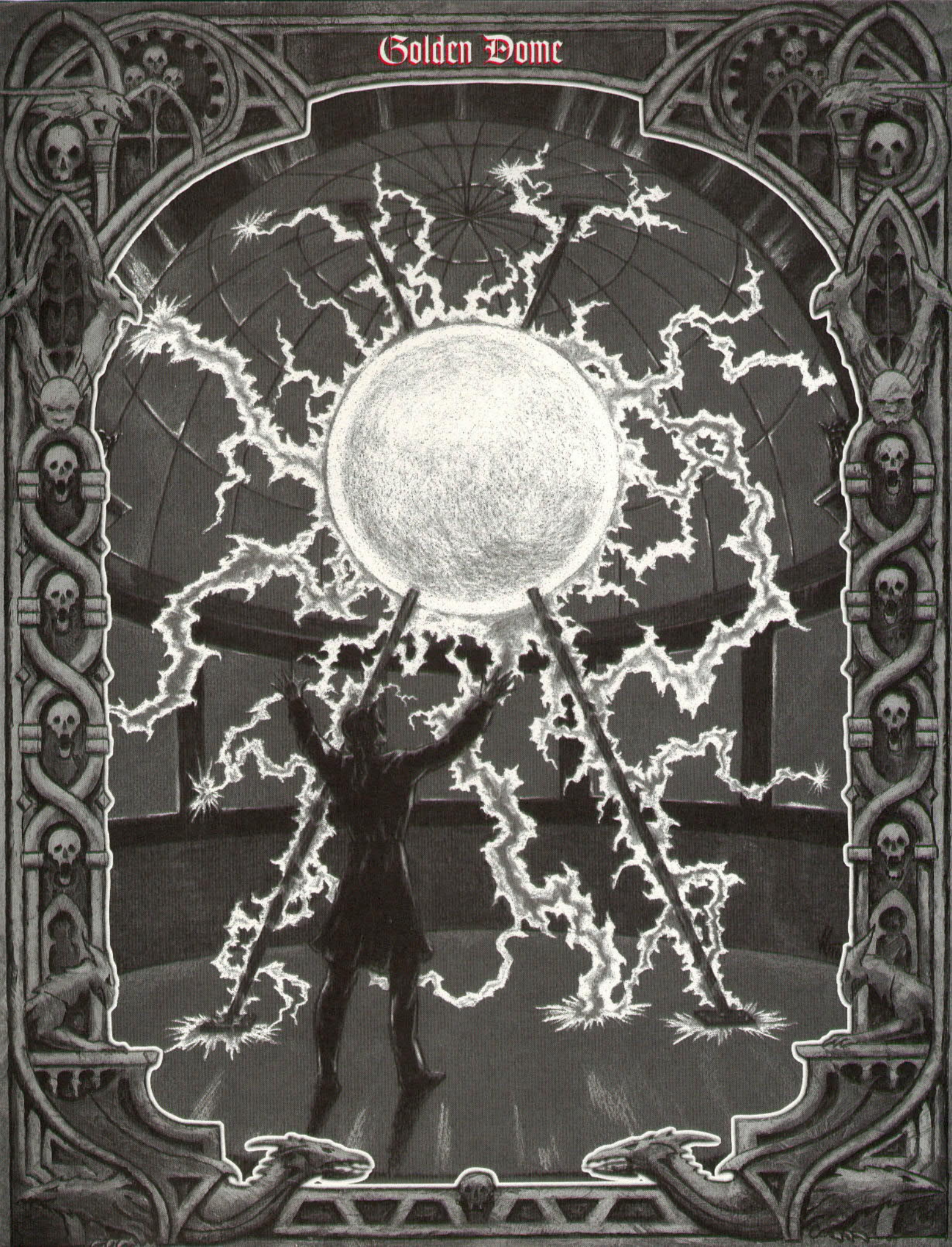
Bleak House

Book Three: Heroes,
Monsters, and Settings

Asylum Grounds



Golden Dome



Bleak House

Book III: Heroes, Monsters, & Settings

Credits

Design: William W. Connors
Additional Design and Editing: Steve Miller
Project Coordination: Harold Johnson
Box Cover Art: Dana Knutson
Booklet Cover Art: Stephen Fabian
Interior Art: Valerie A. Valusek
Border Art: Dana Knutson
Graphics: Dawn Murin & Greg Kerkman
Cartographer: Dennis Kauth & Rob Lazzaretti (Kau-Lazz)
Art Director: Bruce A. Zamjahn
Typography: Angelika Lokotz
Proofreading: Cindi Rice
Special Thanks: David Wise, Bruce Heard

TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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Table of Contents

Introduction Page 3

Heroes Page 4

Dr. Rudolph van Richten. 4
The Thinker 6

Monsters Page 7

Cerebral Vampires 7
Daclaud Heinfroth 9
Captain Ridg Baykur 11
Dr. Piotr Rehner 12
Young Colin 13
Baron Metus. 14
Madame Radanavich 15

Settings Page 17

Map of the Caravel *Mercy* 18
The Island of Dominia 19
Map of Dominia 20
Asylum Grounds 22
Asylum Ground & First Floor 23
Asylum Basement & Attic 24
Martira Bay 25
Map of Martira Bay 26
Map of Martira Bay Jail 31
The Black Tower Map. 32
The Asylum. Inside Front Cover
The Golden Dome Illustration. Inside Back Cover

Introduction



penetrating so many secrets, we cease to believe in the unknowable. But there it sits nevertheless, calmly licking its chops.

—H.L. Mencken,
Minority Report

The pages of this book are filled with material that the Dungeon Master will find invaluable in the running of the *Bleak House* campaign.

The material in this book is used throughout the course of the *Bleak House* adventures. This is most true of the character sheets, especially that of Dr. Van Richten.

It perhaps goes without saying, but like most other material in this set, the information contained within these pages is for the DM's eyes only.

Using This Book

Some DMs may find it easiest to use this book by pulling the staples from it and carefully cutting it into loose sheets. If this is done, care must be taken not to lose a single sheet, however, for most of them are vital to running the adventures.

Either intact or separated, this book should always be kept close at hand during play. All of the keys to the maps that follow are presented in the 64-page and 96-page adventures that compose the rest of this boxed set.

When preparing to run the *Bleak House* campaign, we recommend that DMs study the maps of the various locations as they read the area descriptions. In a game of suspense and horror, keeping the players' imaginations focused on the story and their characters is all-important, and

botched room descriptions disrupt the flow of the game, and thus the mood. Ad-libbing during play is expected and encouraged, but sometimes an encounter or location sets the stage for future events. If the DM misses a detail, then it might become necessary to go back and revise events. Careful reading of Books I & II and examination of this book will minimize the chances of that happening.

Maps and Diagrams

Most of the pages in this book contain maps, diagrams, and other illustrations of the places that the heroes will explore during play. These range from the island of Dominia, where the diabolical Daclaud Heinfroth maintains his sanitarium, to the city of Martira Bay in Darkon, where Baron Metus has taken up residence.

Heroes and Villains

Another large portion of this book is allocated to the description of the major NPCs, both good and evil, who appear in *Bleak House*. These range from the noble but tormented Dr. Rudolph van Richten to the sinister Madame Radanavich, the force behind all the dark happenings in this tale.

Setting Information

Also included in these pages are brief descriptions of the island of Dominia, which has undergone some changes since it was described in the RAVENLOFT® *Campaign Setting*, and the city of Martira Bay in Darkon. The details on Martira Bay have been provided to help DMs create adventures beyond those included in this box and are also helpful in establishing the flavor of the city.

Dr. Rudolph van Richten

Sage and Monster Hunter
Lawful Good 10th-level Thief

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----|---------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 10 | Str | 11 (7) |
| MOVEMENT | 12 | Dex | 16 (7) |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 13 | Con | 10 (7) |
| HIT POINTS | 76 | Int | 17 (12) |
| THACO | 16 | Wis | 16 (10) |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 10 (7) |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | By weapon | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Nil | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | Nil | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |
| Thieving Skills | Pick Pockets | 15% | |
| | Open Locks | 40% | |
| | Find/Remove Traps | 85% | |
| | Move Silently | 40% | |
| | Hide in Shadows | 45% | |
| | Detect Noise | 65% | |
| | Climb Walls | 70% | |
| | Read Languages | 80% | |

The parenthetical entries for Van Richten's Ability Scores indicate the effects of his stay on the island of Dominia. These scores will return to their normal levels at a rate of 1 point per week after he leaves the island.

As Ravenloft's greatest monster-hunter, Dr. Van Richten is as feared by the dark lords and minions of the land as they themselves are by the average adventurer. For many of them, he is a troublesome bane who defies all their attempts to be rid of him. For some, he has even been the cause of an early death.

Description: Rudolph van Richten is slightly past middle age, although several encounters with ghosts and other undead creatures have left him looking older than that. He wears his blonde hair short on top and long in back. In recent years it has become shot through with streaks of gray. Van Richten's pale blue eyes have always been said to have the sparkle of youth in them.



In recent months, as Baron Metus has filled his nights with terrible dreams, Van Richten's appearance has changed. His hair tends to be tangled and unkempt. His face, normally clean-shaven, is almost always covered with stubble that, like his blonde hair, has given way largely to gray. His eyes, although still pale blue, are bloodshot and watery, giving him the look of a long-suffering vagrant. Lastly, his once lean and catlike physique has deteriorated to the gaunt and sickly frame of a broken man.

Combat: Van Richten believes that his greatest weapon is his mind. He knows that his best hope for defeating the powerful creatures that stalk Ravenloft's dark night is to study and then outwit them. On many occasions, the only thing that saw Van Richten through tough situations was his quick mind. Dr. Van Richten never engages in battle without extensive study of his potential enemies and their weaknesses.

Unfortunately, the trio of evil that has descended on him has all but destroyed that keen mind. The sparks that remain only occasionally flare up.

Heroes

Background: Rudolph van Richten was born in the city of Rivalis, Darkon. Like most inhabitants of the Demiplane of Dread, he grew up without any knowledge of the true nature of the land in which he lived. He had kind, loving parents, and both Van Richten and his younger sister Maria grew up safe and happy. The educational benefits of attending a boarding school in Nartok and the university in Il Aluk developed his keen analytical skills.

As he matured, Van Richten found himself drawn to the healer's craft. By the time he had become an adult, his interest had grown into a career. Although he had little skill in the art of surgery and knew nothing of the healing magics so common on other worlds, Van Richten began to apply a scientific method to his herbal medicine. Through testing and experimentation, he became one of the most skillful herbalists in all of Darkon. When he inherited the family estate upon the death of his father, he outfitted two rooms in the manor house to serve his medical practice.

Having established himself as a healer, Van Richten's happiness seemed assured when he married and became a father. Sadly, Van Richten's fortune was destined to change.

One gloomy night, a tribe of Vistani came to his shop. One of their number had been gravely injured, and the tribe ordered the famed Dr. Van Richten to heal him. The young man's injuries were beyond Van Richten's power to heal, and fearful of the gypsies, he begged them to take what they would and let him be. He had no idea that the thing they would claim was his son, Erasmus.

Enraged, Van Richten pursued the gypsies and confronted them, only to discover that they had sold the lad to the vampire, Baron Metus. Furious, and with the aid of powers he did not then understand, Van Richten destroyed the gypsies and started tracking down Baron Metus.

When he arrived at the Baron's tower, Van Richten was greeted by the son he feared lost. At first relieved, Van Richten was horrified to discover that he had been too late to save his boy. Erasmus had been transformed into a vampire. Erasmus begged his father to destroy him to free him from an eternity of suffering as an undead creature. Van Richten wept as he complied, for he knew that he had no choice.

Heartbroken, Van Richten returned to his home to find that Baron Metus had beaten him there. In return for the destruction of Erasmus, whom Metus had claimed as his companion, the baron had slain Van Richten's wife. This grief of this discovery almost destroyed Van Richten.

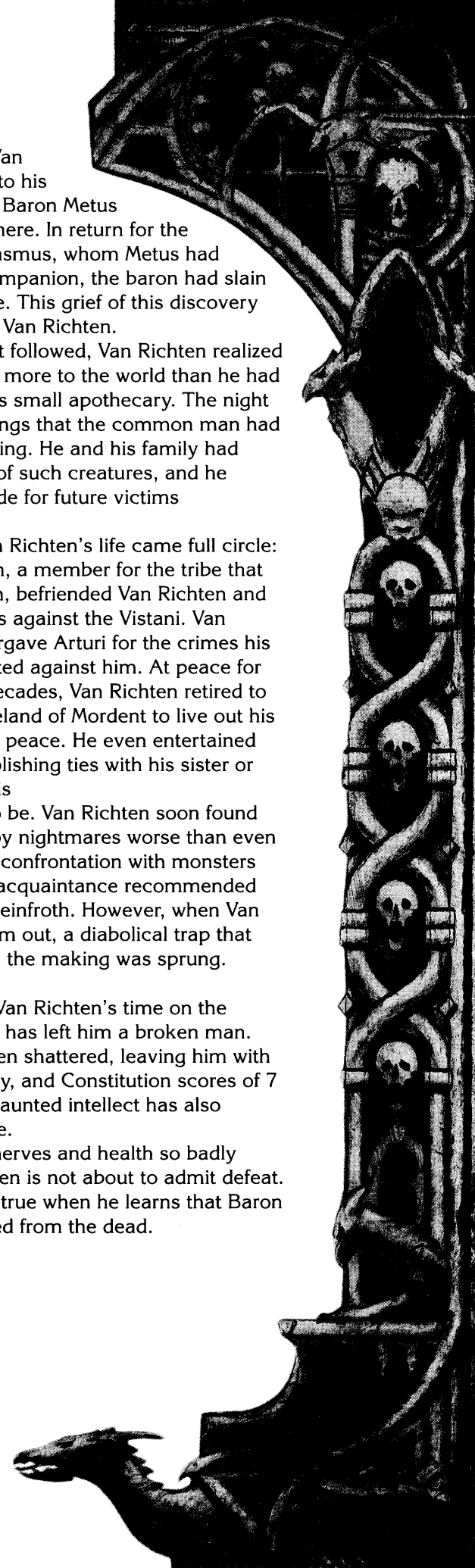
In the days that followed, Van Richten realized that there was far more to the world than he had ever seen from his small apothecary. The night was full of evil things that the common man had no hope of defeating. He and his family had been the victims of such creatures, and he launched a crusade for future victims everywhere.

Eventually, Van Richten's life came full circle: Arturi Radanavich, a member for the tribe that had stolen his son, befriended Van Richten and forgave his crimes against the Vistani. Van Richten in turn forgave Arturi for the crimes his tribe had committed against him. At peace for the first time in decades, Van Richten retired to his adopted homeland of Mordent to live out his declining years in peace. He even entertained notions of reestablishing ties with his sister or returning to Rivalis.

This was not to be. Van Richten soon found himself plagued by nightmares worse than even the most horrible confrontation with monsters had inspired. An acquaintance recommended the eminent Dr. Heinfroth. However, when Van Richten sought him out, a diabolical trap that had been years in the making was sprung.

Current Sketch: Van Richten's time on the island of Dominia has left him a broken man. His health has been shattered, leaving him with Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores of 7 each. His much-vaunted intellect has also started to crumble.

Even with his nerves and health so badly beaten, Van Richten is not about to admit defeat. This is especially true when he learns that Baron Metus has returned from the dead.



The Thinker

Vistani Psionist, Neutral Good

| | | | |
|------------------|----------|-----|----|
| ARMOR CLASS | 10 | STR | 8 |
| MOVEMENT | 0 | DEX | 0 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 12 | CON | 10 |
| HIT POINTS | 20 | INT | 18 |
| THACO | N/A | Wis | 18 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 0 | CHA | 10 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 0 | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Psionics | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | Psionics | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

| | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---------|-------|------|
| LEV | DIS.SCI/DEV | ATT/DEF | SCORE | PSPs |
| 12 | 4/6/19 | All/All | 18 | 250 |

TELEPATHY - SCIENCES: All; Devotions: All.

Basically decent, the Thinker has been forced into doing the bidding of Baron Metus and Madame Radanavich, and he has paid a terrible price for it.

Appearance: As a young man, the Thinker was considered quite handsome. He had, of course, the olive complexion so common to his people, but there was a certain fire in his dark eyes. His jet black hair, perfect smile, and natural radiance enabled him to win the heart of every woman he might desire. Now, he is a limble shadow of his former self, having been brutalized by Metus in the name of vengeance.

Combat: The Thinker is physically helpless. Having been robbed of his arms and legs, he is utterly unable to move about. As such, he is easily attacked and quickly slain.

The true power of the Thinker, however, is that of his mind. Having almost inexhaustible telepathic abilities, he can unleash devastating assaults on the minds of his enemies, often destroying them without any physical combat.



Background: The Thinker is a tragic figure born of the evil machinations of Madame Radanavich. Lured into the service of Baron Metus, he was heavily sedated one night, and the Baron amputated his arms and legs, leaving him physically helpless.

With that done, Metus took him to the top of the Black Tower and impaled him at the intersection of four metal shafts. These had been heated until they glowed red, causing them to fuse solidly into the tissues around them. Now, the Thinker hangs suspended from these metal bars, unable to move or to resist the demands of Baron Metus.

Current Sketch: The Thinker would gladly break his ties with Metus and Radanavich if given the chance to do so. He feels, however, that he would be worse off without them. He believes he is a freak who would be rejected by his people. In fact, he is so disgusted by the things that have been done to him that he will not even reveal his true name. If shown kindness by the heroes, however, he will rethink matters and turn on his enslavers.

Monsters

Vampire, Cerebral

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| CLIMATE/TERRAIN: | Dominia |
| FREQUENCY: | Common |
| ORGANIZATION: | Varies |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE: | Day |
| DIET: | Cerebral fluids |
| INTELLIGENCE: | Very (11-12) |
| TREASURE TYPE: | Varies |
| ALIGNMENT: | Chaotic evil |
| NO. APPEARING: | 1-4 (1d4) |
| ARMOR CLASS: | 1 |
| MOVEMENT: | 12, Fl 18 (A) |
| Hit Dice: | 8+3 |
| THACO: | 11 (+1 for Strength) |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 1 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | 1d6 (+3 for Strength) |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | See below |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | See below |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | Nil |
| SIZE: | M (6' tall) |
| MORALE: | Champion (15-16) |
| XP VALUE: | 8,000 |



Of all the evil, undead creatures that stalk the world, few are more terrible than the dread cerebral vampires of Dominia. They do not feed upon blood, but sustain themselves by absorbing the mental energies of their victims. Only the lord of Dominia, Daclaud Heinfroth, knows the secret behind their creation.

Cerebral vampires share some traits with the standard vampire described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* tome and *Van Richten's Guide to Vampires*: The creatures appear as normal human beings but cast no reflection in a glass, throw no shadows, and move about in complete silence. However, holy water has no effect on them, nor are they harmed by sunlight or immersion in running water.

Combat: When engaging in combat, cerebral vampires are savage and fearsome opponents. They are physically very powerful, with a Strength score of 18/51, receiving a bonus of +1 on their attack rolls and +3 to their damage rolls. Thus, the crushing blows of a vampire's attack are so fierce that they inflict 4-9 (1d6+3) points of damage.

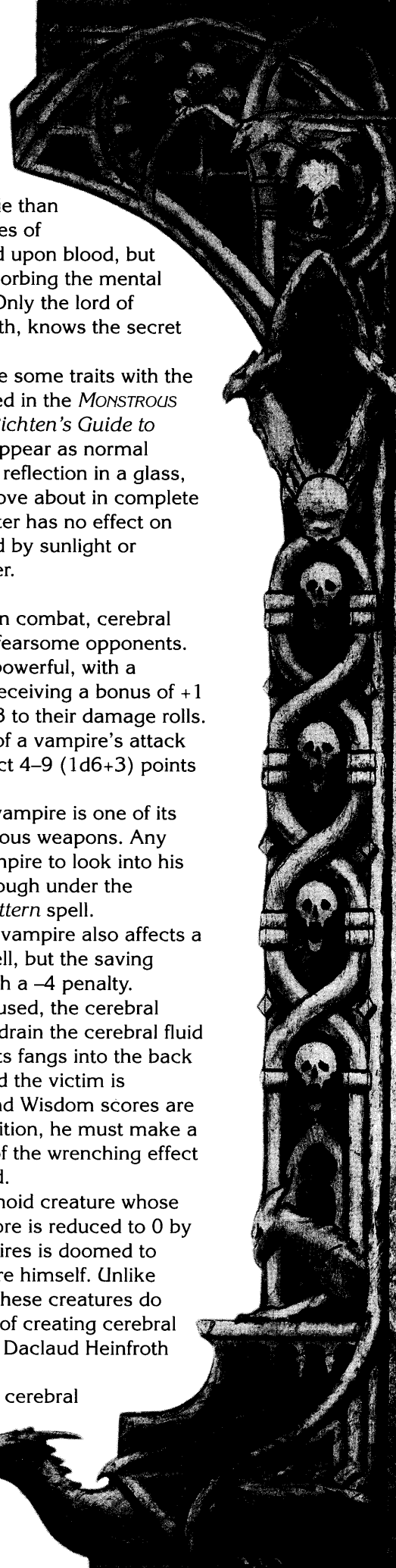
The gaze of a cerebral vampire is one of its most powerful and dangerous weapons. Any person who allows the vampire to look into his eyes will be affected as though under the influence of a *hypnotic pattern* spell.

The touch of a cerebral vampire also affects a victim like a *confusion* spell, but the saving throw vs. spell is made with a -4 penalty.

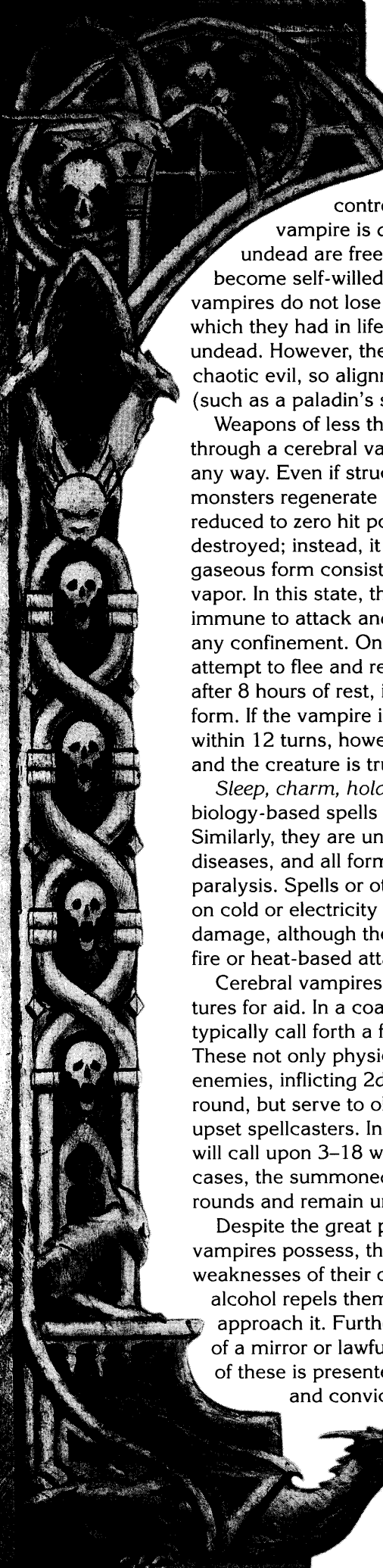
While the victim is confused, the cerebral vampire will attempt to drain the cerebral fluid from his brain by sinking its fangs into the back of his skull. For each round the victim is drained, his Intelligence and Wisdom scores are reduced by 1 point. In addition, he must make a Madness Check because of the wrenching effect this attack has on his mind.

Any human or humanoid creature whose Intelligence or Wisdom score is reduced to 0 by the drain of cerebral vampires is doomed to become an undead creature himself. Unlike other vampires, however, these creatures do not breed true. The secret of creating cerebral vampires is known only to Daclaud Heinfroth himself.

Instead, the victims of a cerebral vampire rise as ghouls. The



Monsters



newly created ghoul is under the complete control of its killer. If that vampire is destroyed, the controlled undead are freed from its power and become self-willed creatures. In most cases, vampires do not lose the abilities and knowledge which they had in life when they become undead. However, the new vampire becomes chaotic evil, so alignment-dependent abilities (such as a paladin's special powers) are lost.

Weapons of less than +1 enchantment pass through a cerebral vampire without harming it in any way. Even if struck by magical weapons, the monsters regenerate 3 hit points per round. If reduced to zero hit points, the creature is not destroyed; instead, it is forced to assume a gaseous form consisting of clouds of elemental vapor. In this state, the creature is all but immune to attack and can escape from almost any confinement. Once in this state, it will attempt to flee and return to its coffin where, after 8 hours of rest, it regains its corporeal form. If the vampire is unable to reach its coffin within 12 turns, however, its essence breaks up and the creature is truly destroyed.

Sleep, charm, hold, and other mind- or biology-based spells do not affect vampires. Similarly, they are unharmed by poisons, diseases, and all forms of natural or magical paralysis. Spells or other attacks that are based on cold or electricity cause them only half damage, although they suffer full damage from fire or heat-based attacks.

Cerebral vampires can summon lesser creatures for aid. In a coastal environment, they will typically call forth a flock of 10–100 seagulls. These not only physically attack the vampire's enemies, inflicting 2d4 points of damage per round, but serve to obscure their vision and upset spellcasters. In the wilderness, a vampire will call upon 3–18 wolves for assistance. In all cases, the summoned animals arrive in 2–12 rounds and remain until driven off.

Despite the great powers which cerebral vampires possess, they are not without weaknesses of their own. The odor of pure alcohol repels them, and they will not approach it. Further, they recoil from the face of a mirror or lawful good holy symbol if either of these is presented to them with courage

and conviction. It is important to understand, however, that this does not

actually harm the vampire or drive it off. Alcohol prevents the creature from attacking or entering the area, while mirrors and holy symbols force the vampire to find some means of removing the offending object before it can be bypassed. Another point to keep in mind is that a lawful good holy symbol affects the vampire regardless of the vampire's original religious background.

In addition to its aversion to items like alcohol and holy symbols, the vampire acts under other limitations. The most powerful of these is the creature's inability to enter a home without being first invited by a resident of the dwelling. This restriction does not apply to public buildings and places of business which, by their very nature, extend an "invitation" to all. Once a vampire has been invited to enter a residence, it may come and go freely afterward.

Further, while cerebral vampires are not harmed by the rays of the sun, they must spend 8 hours out of every 24 sleeping in the coffins within which they were buried, for their unnatural existence is sustained by such slumber.

Lastly, a vampire can be killed by having a wooden stake driven through its heart. In this case, however, the creature can be restored simply by removing the stake if further measures are not taken to ensure the fate of the creature. In order for it to be completely destroyed, the vampire must be bound in a straitjacket, its head cut off, and its mouth stuffed with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

Habitat/Society: Cerebral vampires are found almost exclusively on the island of Dominia. When encountered elsewhere, they are always on some mission for their master, Daclaud Heinfroth.

All of Heinfroth's minions are burly young men. Because of their role as orderlies in his asylum, they move among the patients in gray robes and masks painted with unnervingly happy faces. They never go armed, depending upon their vampiric powers and abilities to overcome their enemies.

The most commonly spoken language among these folk is the guttural tongue of Gundarak, a land that was absorbed by Barovia. Most cerebral vampires speak two or three other languages.

Ecology: Vampires have no place in the natural world and serve no ecological function.

Monsters

Daclaud Heinfroth

Lord of Dominia,
Chaotic Evil Cerebral Vampire

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|-------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 1 | Str | 18/91 |
| MOVEMENT | 12, Fl 18 (A) | Dex | 12 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 9+3 | Con | 18 |
| HIT POINTS | 45 | Int | 18 |
| THACO | 11 (+1 Str) | Wis | 17 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 9 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 1d6 (+4 Str) | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Confusion, Int & Wis Drain | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to hold, sleep, or charm spells, and half-damage from cold or electricity attacks. | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

Description: Heinfroth is 5'10" and weighs about 160 pounds. He has dark hair which he wears, along with his clothes, rather in the manner of a Victorian doctor. In fact, he claims to be a medical man—a psychologist and mesmerist to be precise. His island domain, which began as little more than the building and grounds of a sanitarium, has grown with the enormity of his dreadful acts.

Although Dr. Heinfroth is a vampire, he is often suspected of being a werewolf, for his features are distinctly lupine. He has extraordinarily bushy eyebrows, a heavy beard, and long, knobby-knuckled fingers.

To further blur his true nature, he is not bothered by garlic, and he openly displays his love for the spice to baffle those who are wary of him. Similarly, the rays of the sun do not harm him.

Combat: Heinfroth has all the strengths and weaknesses of a cerebral vampire (described earlier in this book), although his exceptional strength is slightly higher due to his unique nature. He is also, however, a brilliantly creative man with a keen sense of strategy and timing. As such, it is highly unlikely that any battle with Heinfroth will take place unless it is on his terms.

Background: The origin of Heinfroth's interest in dementia dates to his childhood in Gundarak (a domain directly west of Barovia before the Grand Conjunction). As a boy, he watched his mother lose her grip on sanity and, in the end, die in screaming fits of madness. From start to

finish, the whole affair did not take six months.

Research on his part revealed that insanity and the agonizing death that accompanied this unusual brain fever ran in his family. For generations, it seemed, all of his ancestors had fallen victim to it. Heinfroth saw his own fate and, to say the least, did not care for it.

From that time on, Heinfroth devoted his keen intellect to the study of madness. It became an obsession to find a cure for this dreadful disease before he too was taken by it. As the years passed, however, he found himself no nearer to the solution than he had been when he began.

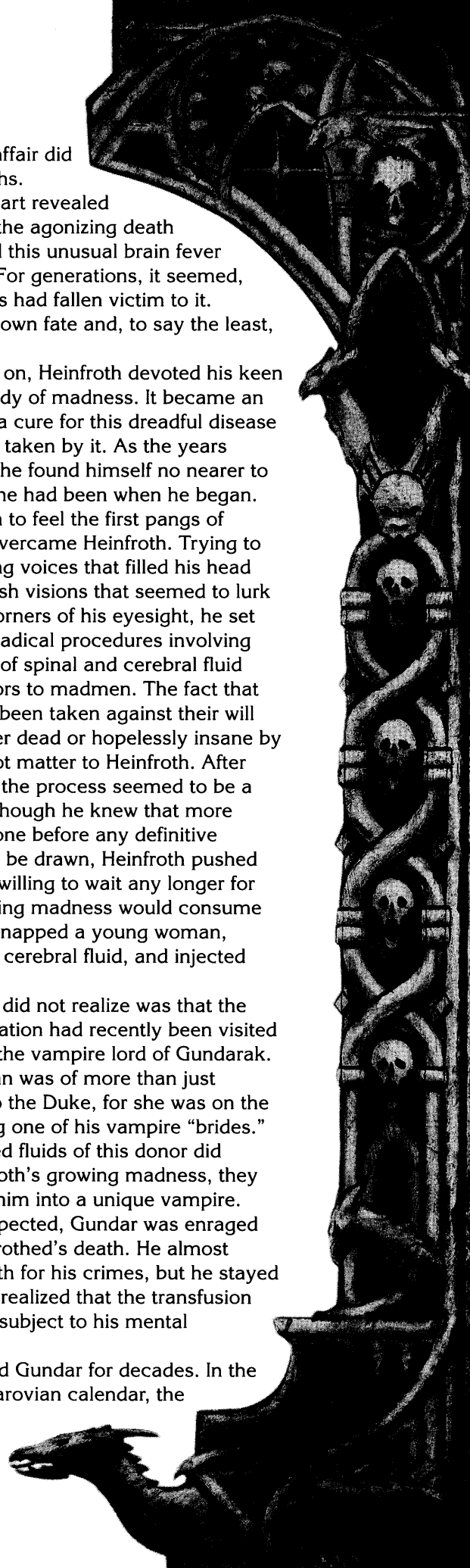
When he began to feel the first pangs of madness, panic overcame Heinfroth. Trying to ignore the haunting voices that filled his head and the nightmarish visions that seemed to lurk just beyond the corners of his eyesight, he set about a series of radical procedures involving direct transfusion of spinal and cerebral fluid from healthy donors to madmen. The fact that these donors had been taken against their will and were left either dead or hopelessly insane by the process did not matter to Heinfroth. After some refinement, the process seemed to be a great success. Although he knew that more work should be done before any definitive conclusions could be drawn, Heinfroth pushed ahead. At last, unwilling to wait any longer for fear that the growing madness would consume him, Heinfroth kidnapped a young woman, drained her of her cerebral fluid, and injected into himself.

What Heinfroth did not realize was that the donor for his operation had recently been visited by Duke Gundar, the vampire lord of Gundarak. Indeed, this woman was of more than just passing interest to the Duke, for she was on the verge of becoming one of his vampire "brides."

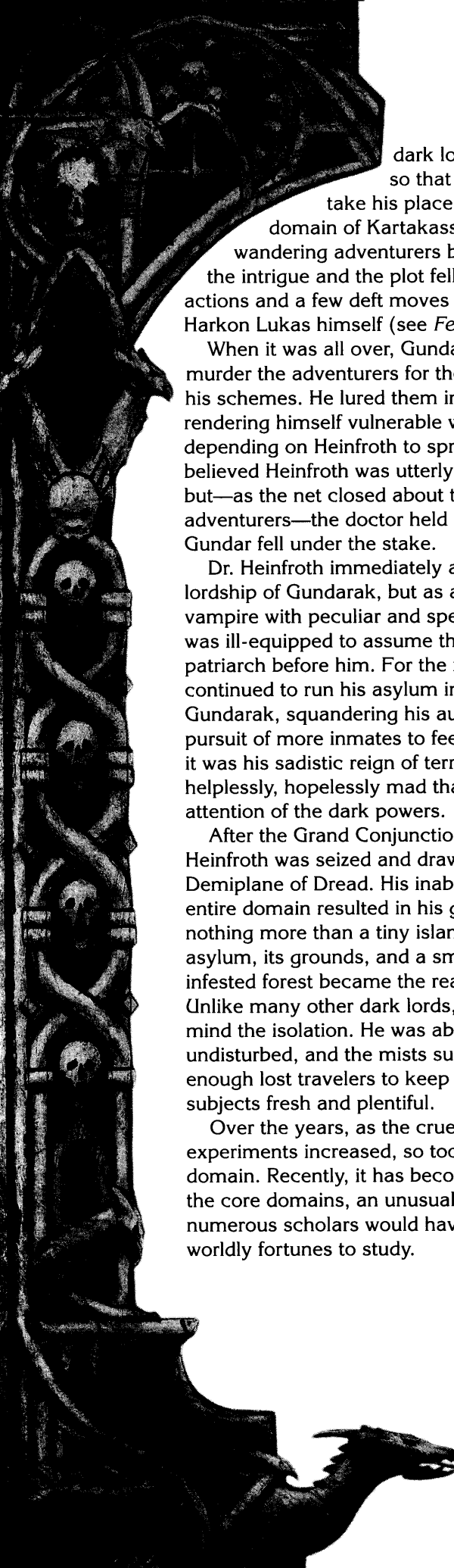
While the tainted fluids of this donor did indeed halt Heinfroth's growing madness, they also transformed him into a unique vampire.

As might be expected, Gundar was enraged to learn of his betrothed's death. He almost destroyed Heinfroth for his crimes, but he stayed his hand when he realized that the transfusion had left Heinfroth subject to his mental domination.

Heinfroth served Gundar for decades. In the year 735 of the Barovian calendar, the pair plotted to overthrow the



Monsters



dark lord Harkon Lukas so that Heinfroth could take his place and rule the domain of Kartakass. A group of wandering adventurers became involved in the intrigue and the plot fell apart due to their actions and a few deft moves on the part of Harkon Lukas himself (see *Feast of Goblins*).

When it was all over, Gundar attempted to murder the adventurers for their part in foiling his schemes. He lured them into his clutches by rendering himself vulnerable while secretly depending on Heinfroth to spring a trap. Gundar believed Heinfroth was utterly loyal to him, but—as the net closed about the adventurers—the doctor held his hand, and Gundar fell under the stake.

Dr. Heinfroth immediately assumed the lordship of Gundarak, but as a relatively young vampire with peculiar and specific interests, he was ill-equipped to assume the power of the patriarch before him. For the most part, he continued to run his asylum in the south of Gundarak, squandering his authority in the pursuit of more inmates to feed upon. In the end, it was his sadistic reign of terror over the helplessly, hopelessly mad that drew the attention of the dark powers.

After the Grand Conjunction collapsed, Heinfroth was seized and drawn back into the Demiplane of Dread. His inability to govern an entire domain resulted in his gaining control of nothing more than a tiny island of terror. His asylum, its grounds, and a small patch of wolf-infested forest became the realm of Dominia. Unlike many other dark lords, Heinfroth didn't mind the isolation. He was able to work undisturbed, and the mists supplied him with enough lost travelers to keep his pool of test subjects fresh and plentiful.

Over the years, as the cruelty of his experiments increased, so too did the size of his domain. Recently, it has become anchored to the core domains, an unusual event that numerous scholars would have given their worldly fortunes to study.

Current Sketch: While Heinfroth threw off Gundar's power, he has never escaped from his fear of madness. The fact that all of the other patients who benefited from his cerebral fluid operations eventually regressed and died as frothing lunatics has left him convinced that his own sanity is a fleeting thing. The spectral laughter that haunts him, the insidious voices that speak to him in the night, and the countless shapes that seem always to be ducking out of his sight drive him onward in his quest to understand not only the mind but also the madness that can destroy it.

To this day, Heinfroth is the only person who knows how to create cerebral vampires. As mentioned in the general description of these monsters, victims slain by other cerebral vampires rise as ghouls. As such, if heroes manage to destroy Heinfroth, they stop the spread of this new breed of creatures, possibly for all time.

Heinfroth doesn't often create additional cerebral vampires. Generally speaking, he reserves the honor for those he admires and those he believes will remain loyal to him—he doesn't want to suffer the fate of Duke Gundar.

Heinfroth has no personal interest in the schemes of Madame Radanavich, but he was delighted to have Ravenloft's greatest mind delivered to him for study. Likewise, he finds the heroes fascinating study subjects as well. He plays the congenial host until he has their trust . . . and then the experiments begin.



Monsters



Captain Ridg Baykur

Captain of the *Mercy*
Lawful Evil Cerebral Vampire

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|-------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 1 | Str | 18/51 |
| MOVEMENT | 12, Fl 18 (A) | Dex | 14 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 8+3 | Con | 17 |
| HIT POINTS | 45 | Int | 12 |
| THACO | 11 (+1 Str) | Wis | 10 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 10 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 1d6 (+3 Str), or by weapon +3 | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Confusion, Int & Wis Drain | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to hold, sleep, or charm spells, and half-damage from cold or electricity attacks. | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

Baykur is a loyal minion of Heinfroth, who rescued the seaman from the brink of death and showed him a new existence beyond life itself. He now serves Heinfroth by commanding the caravel *Mercy*. The crew of this ship, which varies between 15 and 20 on any given voyage, obeys more out of fear than respect.

Description: Baykur is a dark-complected, stout fellow who looks as much like a dwarf as he does a man. He dresses like a typical buccaneer or mariner, with a warm jacket and feathered cap. His heavy beard is tangled, and his generally unkempt appearance makes him look animalistic and dangerous.

Combat: As a cerebral vampire, Baykur is a dangerous opponent. He enjoys using brute strength to destroy his enemies, often crushing windpipes and breaking bones.

Baykur carries a cutlass, which he favors in combat over any other weapon (except his bare hands). This is a magical blade, forged from steel scavenged from a shipwreck years ago. In most situations, this weapon is a *cutlass +1*, but when used aboard a ship at sea, it becomes a *cutlass +3*.

Monsters

Background: Shortly after Dominia joined the Core, Baykur was a common seaman who served as a hand aboard the *Wailing Spectre*, a merchant ship that plied the waters of the Sea of Sorrows. When his ship was attacked by pirates, Baykur and a half-dozen companions were set adrift in a life raft.

With no supplies, Baykur was forced to kill and devour his companions to survive. Even that, however, barely kept him alive. By the time his raft fetched up on the shores of Dominia, he was little more than a skeleton. Further, his wounds had become infected, and both his arms were gangrenous. Still, Baykur clung to life.

Daclaud Heinfroth respected the spirit of this man who seemingly refused to die. He saved him by turning him into a cerebral vampire. Since that time, Baykur has served Heinfroth loyally, although his gruff manner often leads him to complain and grumble about his treatment.

Current Sketch: Baykur is a brutal, sadistic creature who demands absolute obedience from his crew. While the heroes are aboard his ship, Baykur will do his best to be congenial. He isn't a very good actor, so the heroes will sense that he is far from a pleasant fellow. However, his truly monstrous face is never seen before it is too late.

Dr. Piotr Rehner

Physician

Chaotic Evil Cerebral Vampire

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|-------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 1 | Str | 18/51 |
| MOVEMENT | 12, Fl 18 (A) | Dex | 16 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 8+3 | Con | 12 |
| HIT POINTS | 45 | Int | 17 |
| THACO | 11 (+1 Str) | Wis | 14 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 9 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 1d6 (+3 Str) | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Confusion, Int & Wis Drain | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to hold, sleep, or charm spells, and half-damage from cold or electricity attacks. | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

Description: Rehner is very much the civilized city physician. He dresses in conservative, proper clothes, keeps his sandy hair neatly trimmed, and has impeccable personal hygiene. He is seldom encountered without his physician's bag close at hand.

Combat: Rehner is not a fighting man. He tries to avoid combat at all times and is not yet comfortable with the great strength that has come with his vampiric transformation. Because of this, Rehner suffers a -2 penalty on all initiative, surprise, and attack rolls.

Background: A professional acquaintance of Daclaud Heinfroth, Dr. Piotr Rehner has accepted a position on the asylum staff in order to conduct his own twisted experiments. Rehner's expertise is in pain and its effects, both physical and mental, on the human body. Proof of Rehner's dedication (or madness) may be found in the fact that he agreed to be transformed into a cerebral vampire in order to continue his work.

Current Sketch: During the events in "Sea of Madness," Rehner is still new to Dominia. In addition, his recently acquired vampiric powers remain something of a mystery to him. While he isn't a bumbling idiot, he may make mistakes and leave himself vulnerable to attacks.

When the characters are first brought aboard *Mercy*, Rehner examines them and tends to their injuries. Although he sets bones, sutures

Monsters

wounds, and otherwise plays the role of the dedicated physician, he has a morbid fascination with any unusually severe injuries, and he tends to avoid taking any steps to lessen the pain he causes his patients.

Young Colin

Cabin Boy of the *Mercy* Chaotic Evil Cerebral Vampire

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----|-------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 1 | Str | 18/51 |
| MOVEMENT | 12, Fl 18 (A) | Dex | 10 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 8+3 | Con | 12 |
| HIT POINTS | 45 | Int | 9 |
| THACO | 11 (+1 Str) | Wis | 8 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 15 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 1d6 (+3 Str) | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Confusion, Int & Wis Drain | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to hold, sleep, or charm spells, and half-damage from cold or electricity attacks. | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

Description: Young Colin is perhaps the most disturbing members of *Mercy's* crew. He was in his early teens when he was transformed into a cerebral vampire, and now he eternally wears the smile of an excitable lad. However, behind the innocent facade lurks a beast as foul as Rehner and Baykur.

Colin dresses in a loose-fitting shirt and a pair of ragged trousers. He generally scampers about the boat barefoot, performing minor duties for the captain and Rehner and seeing to the needs of the heroes. Freckles are scattered across the bridge of his nose and his cheeks, and he is constantly pushing his unruly, auburn bangs from his eyes.

Combat: Young Colin isn't much of a fighter, and has never received any training in weapon use. While he does carry a dagger, this weapon is

used more as a handy tool than an armament.

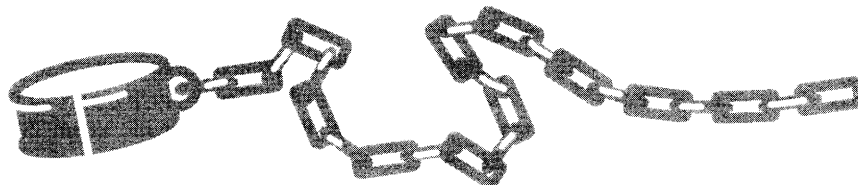
However, his youthful, innocent appearance makes him one of the deadliest foes on the ship, for a hero may perceive him as a victim rather than a predator.

Background: Young Colin was a wide-eyed, 13 year old boy who thought that a life on the sea would be exciting and glamorous. He decided to start his career by stowing away on a merchant ship and then revealing himself once they had cleared port. Unfortunately, he picked the wrong ship to sneak aboard. After being beat within a inch of his life, as well as having been fed upon by Captain Baykur, Colin was brought before Heinfroth. The master of *Dominia* saw the use for evil wearing a mask of innocence and turned the boy into cerebral vampire

Current Sketch: Despite the fact that he has been the Captain's whipping boy for the past 18 months, Colin enjoys his existence. He tends to get the worst jobs on the ship, but he hopes that will change on future cruises.

When the heroes come aboard, Colin will be assigned to befriend them. He'll become something of a side-kick for one of the characters (preferably a fighter), claiming that he wants to get away from the mariner's life. Of course, the whole time he'll be telling Captain Baykur everything they do.

The one hint that something is wrong with Colin may come through the fact that his mind was damaged when Baykur fed on him. He has been left with a split personality. His second personality is deathly afraid of Baykur, and—should it emerge—he will come to the heroes in a panic and reveal the true nature of the ship's crew. This other personality only emerges on a roll of 1-3 on a d100, and the DM should roll a check for it whenever Colin witnesses a conversation between a hero and Baykur.



Baron Metus

Lawful Evil Mature Vampire

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----|--------|
| ARMOR CLASS | 10 | Str | 18/61) |
| MOVEMENT | 15, Fl 18 (C) | Dex | 17 |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 9+3 | Con | 18 |
| HIT POINTS | 76 | Int | 16 |
| THACO | 11 (+2 for Str) | Wis | 14 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 15 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 1d6 (+5 for Str) | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | as Vampire | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | as Vampire | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | 5% | | |

Baron Metus is best known for the role he played in the death of Erasmus van Richten.

Description: Baron Metus is a tall, slender man with dark hair, cold blue eyes, and handsome, sleek features. He is athletic without being overly muscular and always dresses in the finest clothes. He has a fondness for fencing and usually goes about with an ornate rapier on his hip.

Combat: Metus fancies himself an honorable man. He never refuses a duel and favors settling matters in a one-on-one fashion. Thus, Metus always offers foes the chance to defend themselves before he attacks. He never uses his energy draining touch in combat but instead relies on his fencing skills. A more noble foe than Metus would be hard to find. He has all the abilities of a mature vampire.

Background: Baron Metus was born the bastard son of a noble on a distant world. He was denied the power and privileges that he thought should be his, but he resolved to adopt the manners and style of a nobleman to show them that "legitimacy" and a noble heart do not always go hand-in-hand.

Shortly after his seventeenth birthday, Metus fell in love with a young woman named Andrianna. He did not know that she was a Vistani who had been thrust from Ravenloft.

Eventually, Andrianna found a way back to her people. By accident, Metus was drawn along with her into the Demiplane of Dread. Once in Ravenloft, she



cast Metus aside, not wanting to be known as the consort of a *giorgio*. To remove him, she accused him of having enslaved her. As he fled from Vistani retribution, Metus came under the protection of a member of the Kargat, the secret police force of Darkon. He also soon found himself transformed into a vampire by his supposed protector.

When Metus' vampiric master was destroyed, Metus took over his home outside Rivalis. He wanted the companionship of his own kind, but he did not want to get involved with the Kargat again. That is how he came to purchase Erasmus van Richten and enter into conflict with Rudolph van Richten.

Current Sketch: After his resurrection, Metus traveled to Martira Bay, where he established himself as a philanthropist and gained the respect he has always wanted. However, he is also in debt to Madame Radavich and has dutifully executed his part of her plan to drive Van Richten insane. The appearance of Rudolph in Martira Bay will delight Metus, as it will be an opportunity to face the doctor in honorable combat.

Monsters

Madame Radanavich

Lord of Bleak House

Neutral Evil 4th Magnitude Ghost

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-----|----|
| ARMOR CLASS | -2/4 | Str | - |
| MOVEMENT | 9 | Dex | - |
| LEVEL/HIT DICE | 8 | Con | - |
| HIT POINTS | 65 | Int | 17 |
| THACO | 13 | Wis | 15 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS | 1 | Cha | 9 |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK | 2d6 | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS | Cause wounds, command undead, control weather, dominate victims, inhabit objects | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES | Immune to spells that affect biological processes and the mind | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE | Nil | | |

Madame Radanavich is a creature consumed by hatred. She blames Van Richten, and all who have stood by his side, for the ill that has befallen her. She is the hidden hand behind the plot against him.

Description: Madame Radanavich appears as she did in life: an elderly Vistani woman in flowing skirts and a loose-fitting white shirt. Large earrings hang from her ear lobes, and several bracelets rattle on each of her wrists. Thin wisps of gray hair sometimes slip from underneath the colorful scarf tied around her head. Her face is wrinkled and world-worn but somehow still youthful in appearance. However, she is not corporeal and is obviously translucent.

Combat: Madame Radanavich will not confront the heroes directly until her power is at its peak, on the fourth night they are in Bleak House. Even then, she will face them only if her tarokka deck indicates the time is right. Until that time, she sends her undead minions against the heroes, ranging from the shambling, reanimated remains of her tribe to the tortured spirits of Van Richten's friends and loved ones. Also, as her hatred grows, her ability to dominate victims, inhabit objects, and control the weather surrounding Bleak House grows even more fearsome. When she finally faces the heroes in combat, she unleashes all of her abilities at them, with the exception of her cause wound power, which is reserved for Rudolph van

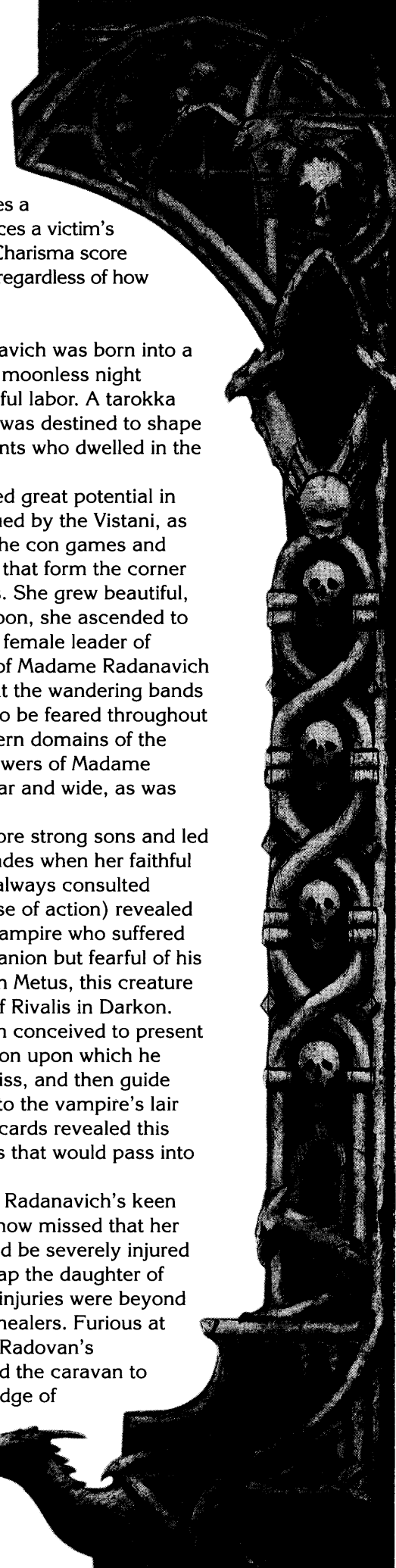
Richten. For each blow she lands, she inflicts 2d6 points of damage and leaves a scar so horrible that it reduces a victim's Charisma by 1. When the Charisma score reaches 0, the victim dies, regardless of how many hit points remain.

Background: Irena Radanavich was born into a Corvara Vistani tribe on a moonless night following 13 hours of painful labor. A tarokka reading revealed that she was destined to shape the lives of many inhabitants who dwelled in the land of Mists.

As she grew, she showed great potential in the fortunetelling arts valued by the Vistani, as well as a strong taste for the con games and base robberies of *giorgios* that form the corner stone of Corvara activities. She grew beautiful, and she grew powerful. Soon, she ascended to the position of *raunie*, the female leader of Vistani bands. The name of Madame Radanavich became known throughout the wandering bands of Vistani, and she came to be feared throughout the central and northwestern domains of the Core. The precognitive powers of Madame Radanavich were known far and wide, as was the amorality of her tribe.

Madame Radanavich bore strong sons and led her tribe for over two decades when her faithful tarokka deck (which she always consulted before deciding on a course of action) revealed to her the existence of a vampire who suffered alone, longing for a companion but fearful of his own kind. Known as Baron Metus, this creature had settled near the city of Rivalis in Darkon. Sensing profit, Radanavich conceived to present Metus with a suitable person upon which he could bestow his cursed kiss, and then guide local priests and warriors to the vampire's lair for additional profits. The cards revealed this plan would result in events that would pass into legend.

Unfortunately, Madame Radanavich's keen sight into the future somehow missed that her eldest son, Radovan, would be severely injured in a failed attempt to kidnap the daughter of Rivalis' baron. Radovan's injuries were beyond the abilities of the Vistani healers. Furious at her own oversight, and at Radovan's incompetence, she ordered the caravan to travel to an estate at the edge of Rivalis, where there lived a healer of



Monsters

some renown, a certain Van Richten, who some claimed worked miracles with his herbs and salves.

Madame Radanavich felt contempt for Van Richten the moment she laid eyes on him. She found him to be a simpering, whining, foolish *giorgio*, and when Radovan's life slipped away, and the doctor said in a trembling voice, "Take whatever you want from my home, but by all that is holy, don't hurt me," she took him on his word. When the Radanavich caravan left Richten Haus, the doctor's son Erasmus was held captive in one of their vardos.

The caravan traveled directly to Baron Metus, presented Van Richten's son, and then traveled onward toward Barovia where the tarokka deck had said would-be heroes were questing against vampires.

But before the heroes could be located, an enraged Van Richten descended upon the tribe, supported by a ravenous horde of undead creatures that were led by the reanimated corpse of her own son. As Madame Radanavich fell beneath Radovan's claws, she uttered the curse that would fulfill the prophesy made at her birth: "Live you always among monsters, and see everyone you love fall beneath their claws, starting with your son!"

By kidnapping his son and then cursing him to live among monsters, Madame Radanavich had set Van Richten firmly on the path he would follow for 30 years, and had thus affected countless residents of the Mists, for good and ill. Also, in the moment of her death, Madame Radanavich was so filled with hate for Van Richten that she lived on. Even in death the Corvara tribe followed her, their shattered bodies

rising as ghouls and zombies to walk with her as she entered the Mists in search of Van Richten.

Disembodied and personally powerless, Radanavich guided her followers through the Mists. Almost two decades after her death, she happened upon Van Richten's ancestral home, Richten Haus. Abandoned by Van Richten himself, the estate only awaited new tenants.

There Madame Radanavich made her lair, and used her powers as a Vistani seer to watch Van Richten's triumphs and tragedies from afar. Her hatred of Van Richten grew so strong that the Dark Powers took notice, and Richten Haus was engulfed by the Mists. Madame Radanavich became the lord of Bleak House island of terror.

Over the years, Radanavich has delighted herself in capturing the spirits of those who have died as a result of the curse she placed on Van Richten. Many of them are now prisoners in the house.

Eight years ago, the last living Radanavich forgave Van Richten for his crimes against the Vistani. In her domain, Radanavich fumed. Van Richten would not escape her revenge. She revived Baron Metus, who—with the aid of Daclauid Heinfroth—set about destroying Van Richten's mind. Once he was completely broken, the plan was to send him through the Mists to Richten Haus and Radanavich's final revenge.

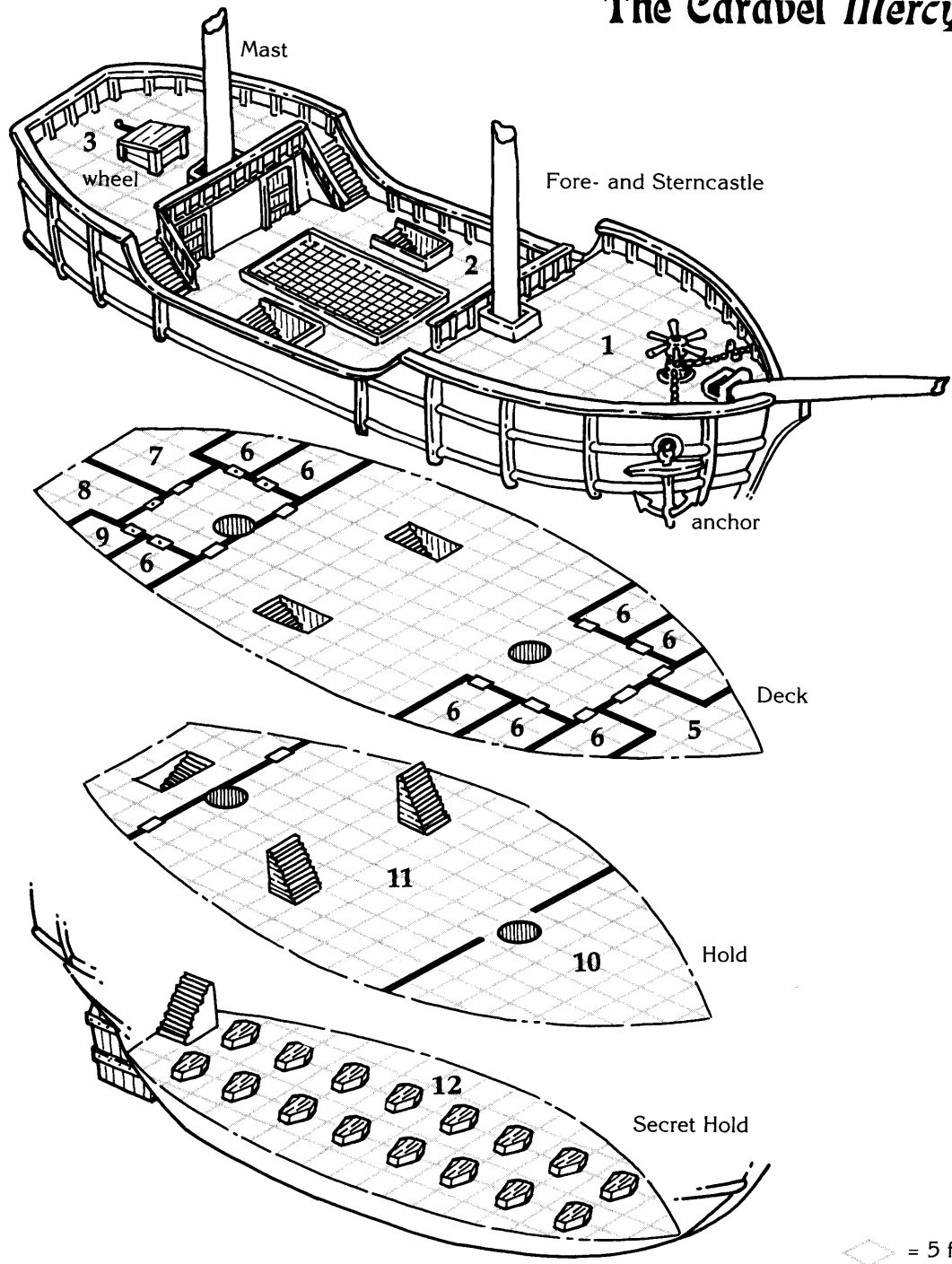
Current Sketch: In short, Madame Radanavich is consumed with hatred and desire for revenge. Her curse tormented Rudolph Van Richten for 30 years, but she is not done with him yet. The closeness of Van Richten is causing her hatred and resolve to grow stronger, and she will soon end the cycle of revenge for good.

Monsters



Settings

The Caravel *Mercy*



Settings

The Island of Dominia

Dominia is located in the Sea of Sorrows. It once drifted freely in the Mists that surround the Core, but the enormity of its lord's evil has caused it to meld with the heart of the demiplane.

Perhaps the most diabolical aspect of Daclaud Heinfroth's evil is the fact that he hides it so well. Beyond his domain, Heinfroth is respected as the demi-plane's greatest authority on mental illness and the treatment of madness. Within the confines of his sanitarium, however, Heinfroth conducts foul experiments designed to test the limits of the human psyche.

The Lord

Dr. Dominiani, whose real name is Daclaud Heinfroth, is a scientist and vampire who has a special taste for cerebral fluid instead of blood. His victims are left mad and become permanent inmates of Dominia, his asylum-domain.

Heinfroth was once a vassal of Duke Gundar, vampire lord of Gundarak, but he plotted against and successfully overthrew his master. Dr. Heinfroth proclaimed himself the lord of Gundarak—yet compared to Duke Gundar's, his was a petty and weak evil. During the Grand Conjunction, the mystical borders of Gundarak faded, other realms absorbed it, and the dark powers rewarded Heinfroth with a tiny island domain.

Thus, Heinfroth's dream of lordship is fulfilled, yet his domain is pitifully small. It is said that Heinfroth always hears laughter in the wind, echoing like the maniacal hysterics behind the walls of his sanitarium, mocking his small achievement. At the time of this adventure, Heinfroth's power extends not only to the edges of his island, but also some two or three miles out to sea. Within the borders of this terrible land, Heinfroth is truly the master of the mind.

The Land

Dominia is a tiny island positioned in at the extreme western edge of the Sea of Sorrows, some 50 miles west-south-west of Markovia. The island rises sharply from a narrow, rocky beach, with the sheer cliffs approaching nearly 500' in height. A dock, built to hold a ship of caravel-size or smaller, juts into the choppy sea.

An elaborate set of ropes and weights serve to raise and lower a manually-operated elevator, but the crank is at the top of the bluff.

The asylum rests at the island's center, surrounded by an acre or so of neatly kept grounds. This estate is bordered by a high, stone wall with broken glass embedded into every inch of it. Beyond the wall, packs of wolves course through the forest, always on the brink of starvation and searching for flesh upon which to feed.

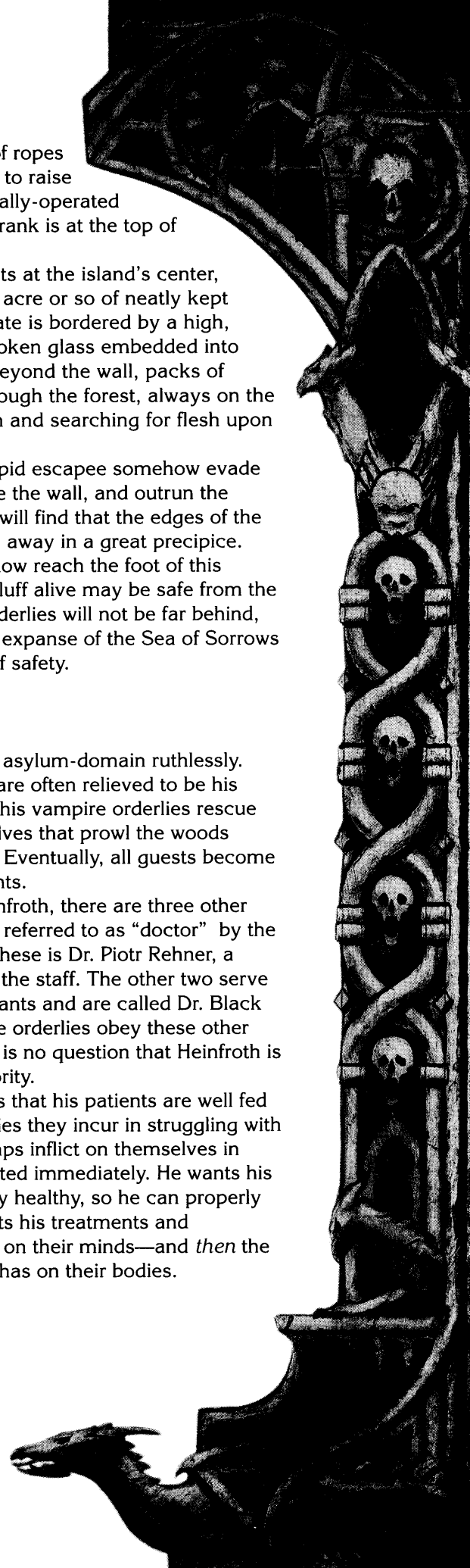
Should an intrepid escapee somehow evade the orderlies, scale the wall, and outrun the wolves, he or she will find that the edges of the forest abruptly fall away in a great precipice. Those who somehow reach the foot of this extremely stony bluff alive may be safe from the wolves, but the orderlies will not be far behind, and the merciless expanse of the Sea of Sorrows offers little hope of safety.

The Law

Heinfroth runs his asylum-domain ruthlessly. Unwary travelers are often relieved to be his guests at first, for his vampire orderlies rescue them from the wolves that prowl the woods around his estate. Eventually, all guests become the doctor's patients.

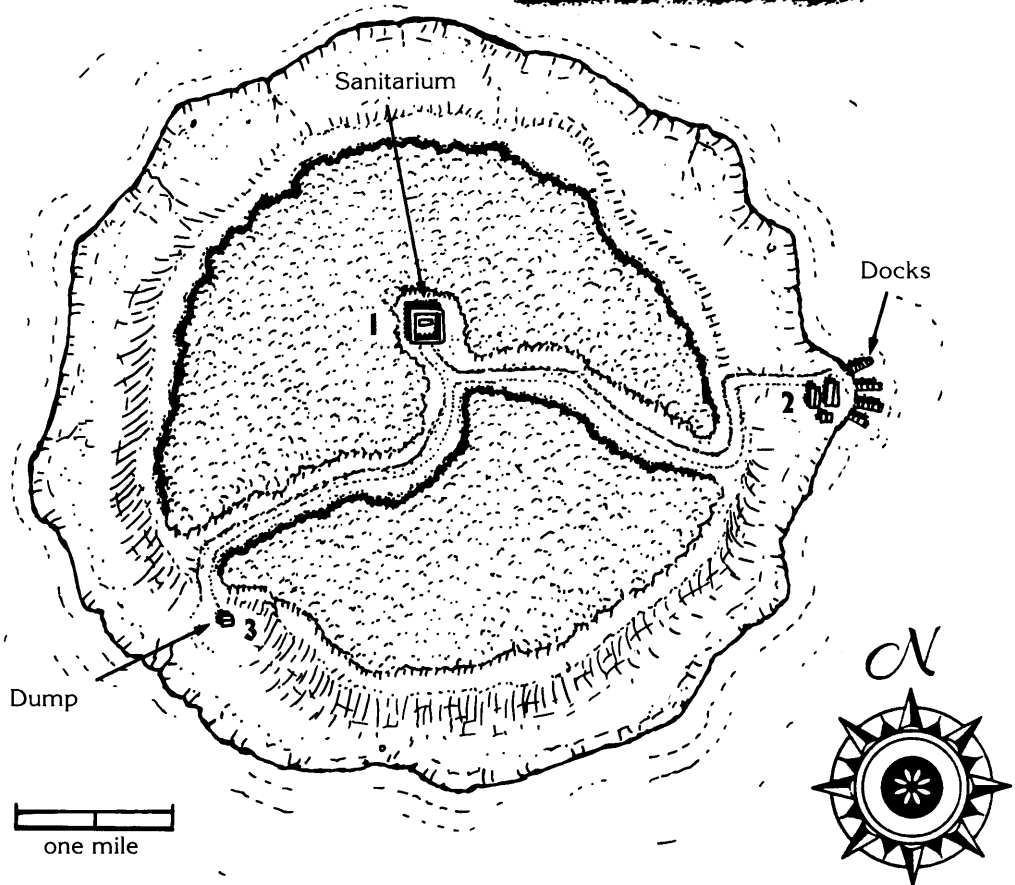
Aside from Heinfroth, there are three other vampires who are referred to as "doctor" by the orderlies. One of these is Dr. Piotr Rehner, a recent addition to the staff. The other two serve as Rehner's assistants and are called Dr. Black and Dr. White. The orderlies obey these other doctors, but there is no question that Heinfroth is the ultimate authority.

Heinfroth insists that his patients are well fed and that any injuries they incur in struggling with orderlies, or perhaps inflict on themselves in madness, are treated immediately. He wants his subjects physically healthy, so he can properly evaluate the effects his treatments and experiments have on their minds—and *then* the effect that in turn has on their bodies.



Settings

The Island of Dominia



Settings

Closing the Borders

When Heinfroth wants to seal his domain, a curtain of absolute blackness falls upon the ocean some three miles out to sea. Those who enter this nothingness suffer 1d10 points of frostbite damage until they withdraw. There is a 5% chance each round that a character exploring the mists may become disoriented and lose the way back, however, making escape impossible.

The Folk

The staff of Heinfroth's asylum consists entirely of cerebral vampires (a new type of vampire, described in detail earlier in this book). They serve as orderlies, doctors, groundskeepers—some even masquerade as inmates to keep any patients from getting rebellious ideas. Even the ship that carries supplies and patients from the mainland is crewed entirely by vampires.

The only mortals in Dominia are patients in the asylum. Originally, Heinfroth was forced to depend upon the mercies of the Mists in order to keep his asylum full. Ever since the island of Dominia anchored itself to the core, however, Heinfroth has had a much more direct means of finding subjects for his accursed experiments. His agents have traveled to the domain of Darkon and established a so-called clinic in the port city of Martira Bay. This clinic offers free medical and menial health treatment to the poor of Martira Bay and is co-funded and operated by Baron Metus, who has a reputation

as a warmhearted philanthropist. Every two or three months, Heinfroth's caravel, the *Mercy*, calls there and transports the patients from the clinic to Dominia for "more intensive treatment."

Encounters

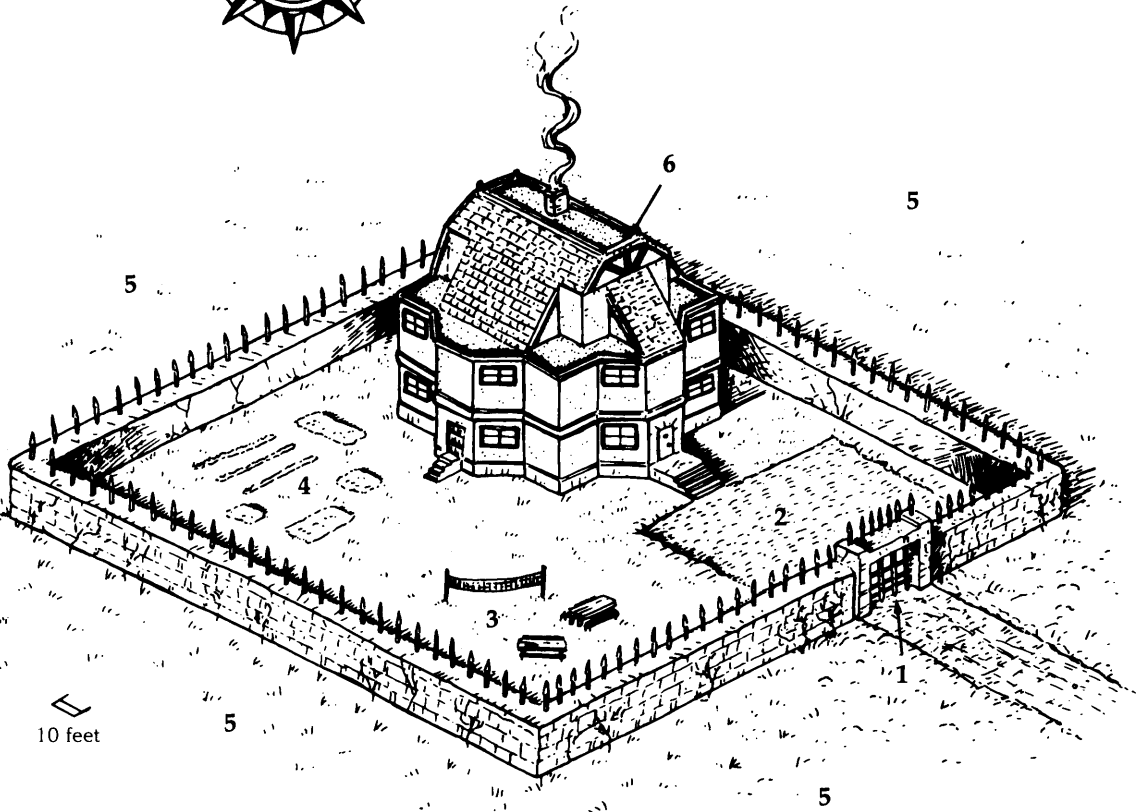
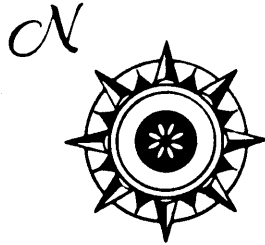
Player characters outside the sanitarium grounds have a 50% chance per turn to encounter 1d8 wolves. These creatures are always running with two larger animals who have the same statistics as worgs. The growls and snarls of an attacking wolf pack will always draw a group of patrolling vampire orderlies, who come to investigate. If the heroes are attempting to escape, the vampires will allow the wolves to weaken the party and then move in to recapture them. Otherwise, the vampires will intercede on behalf of the adventurers and take them to the asylum.

Inside the asylum, almost all encounters will be with what appears to be patients: men and women in hooded robes, with clay masks fastened to their faces with leather straps. The only way they can be told apart is the number that is painted on the forehead of each mask. Visitors, or prisoners, of Heinfroth must be careful, however, because the asylum's orderlies frequently disguise themselves as patients. The fellow inmate a hero reveals her great escape plan to might actually be one of her vampire jailers.



Settings

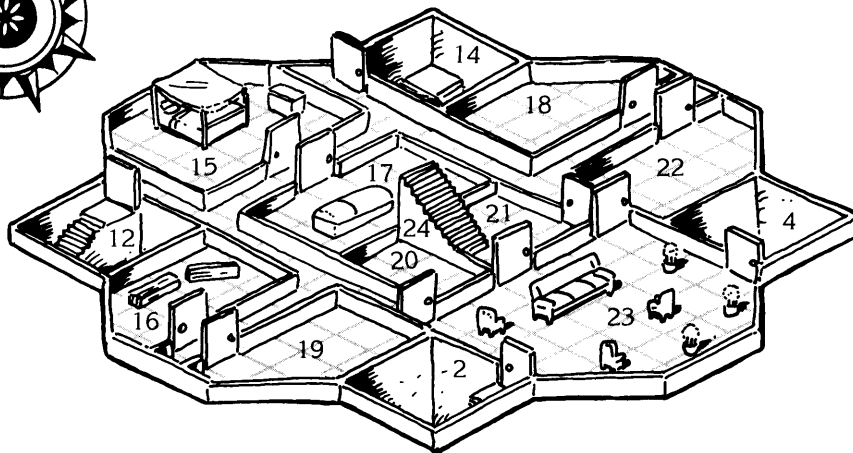
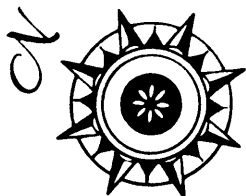
The Asylum Grounds



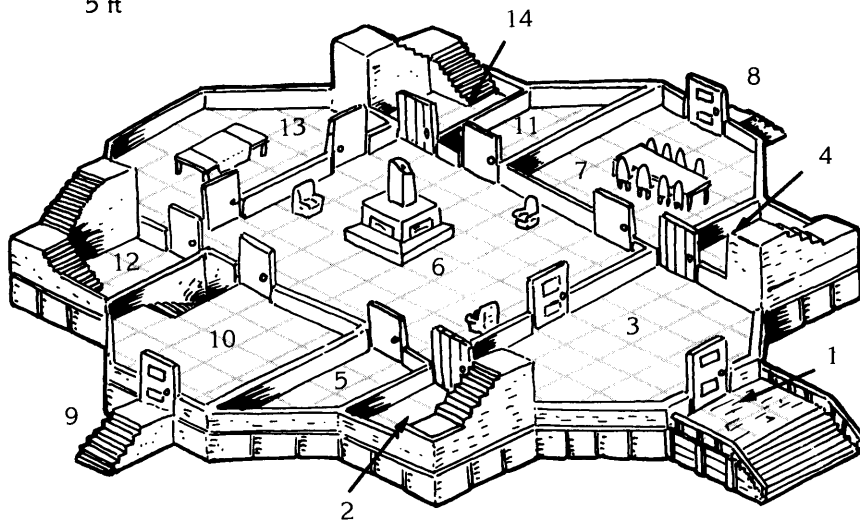
Settings

Declaud Heinfroth's Sanitarium

Ground and First Floor

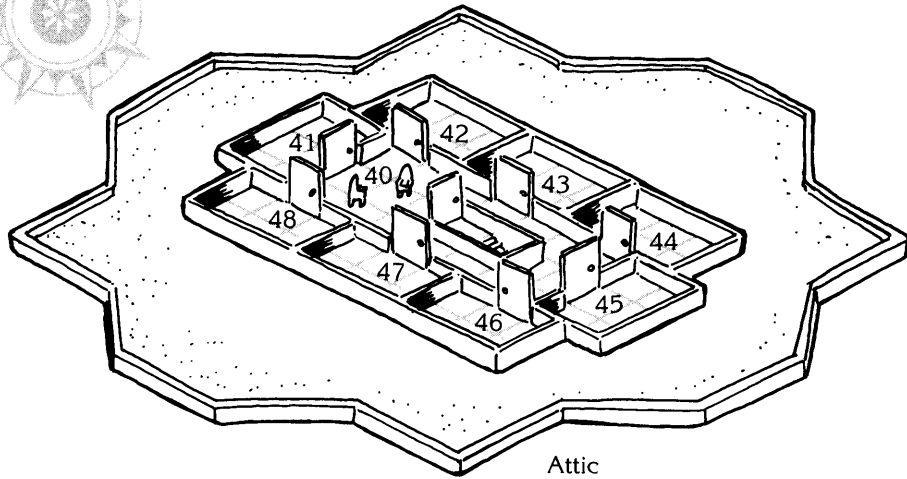
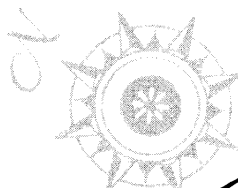


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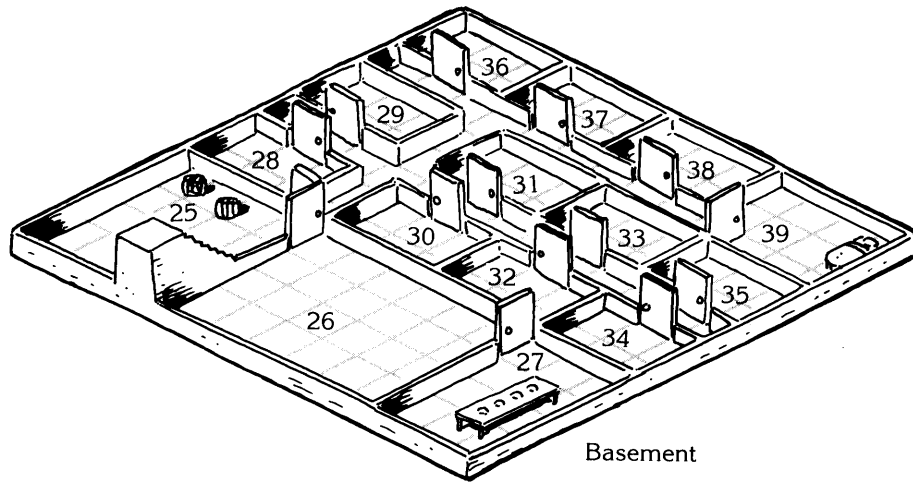


Settings

Asylum Basement and Attic



Attic



Basement

Settings

The City of Martira Bay

Martira Bay is Darkon's second largest city and its most important trade center, followed closely by Rivalis and Il Aluk. It is a young city, having grown rapidly from a small fishing village to a home for 10,000 in the space of only two centuries. It is marked more by opulent mansions and squalid slum areas than by crumbling fortresses and ivy-covered walls. Like other cities in Darkon, it feels like a cosmopolitan place, and although humans are in the majority population-wise, members of other races are not an uncommon sight.

Baroness Karimana Reldkasen is Lady Mayor of the city. She assumed the position three years ago after exposing corruption on the part of her husband to Lord Azalin. She has made it a routine practice to consult with the heads of the city's powerful Merchant, Trader, and Weaver's Guilds. Sometimes, foreign merchants who maintain warehouses or shipping offices in Martira Bay assume this is a sign of weakness on the part of the Baroness, and may try to circumvent city taxes by paying bribes to the guilds. If Reldkasen is informed of this, the merchant is shown the error of his ways with an extended visit to the City Jail. If Lord Azalin's secret police are the ones who hear of the infraction first, the merchant seldom lives to regret his error.

Aside from trade, the city is also home to what is reputed to be the greatest shipyard on the Demiplane. Rumor holds that ships built in Martira Bay are more likely to travel the dark waters of the Sea of Sorrows unscathed, and that when they do encounter the fell creatures, the ship knows its way back to port even without a live crew. Another major export—and another thing the city is known across the Core for—are the fine rugs and tapestries that are produced at several mills.

The skyline of the city is fairly flat. Few buildings are higher than three stories, so three stand out clearly: the Government Palace, the Cathedral, and the Black Tower.

The Layout of the City

Residents of the city refer to various neighborhoods as "quarters," although unlike older cities, there is no clear dividing line (such as a wall) between one quarter and the next.

The Waterfront

This is the neighborhood that is most likely to be the heroes' first impression of Martira Bay. This quarter is active even in the dead of night, when most Darkonites retreat in their homes to remain safe from what they know wanders the shadows of their land. Sailors and traders hailing from Lamordia, Dementlieu, Mordent, and other realms, however, are rarely so prudent.

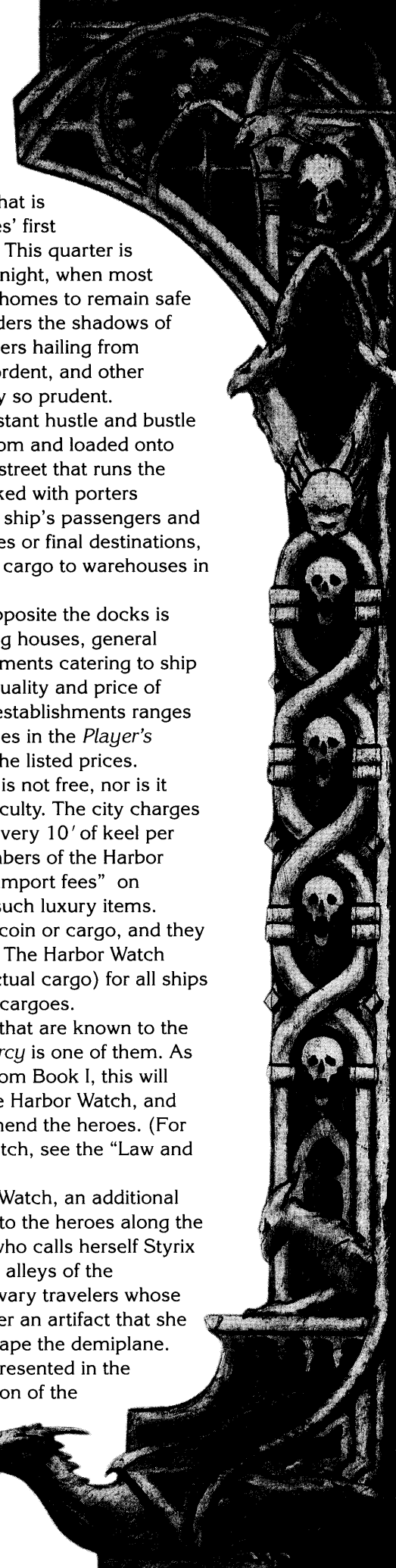
The Waterfront is a constant hustle and bustle of cargo being removed from and loaded onto ships. During the day, the street that runs the length of the docks is choked with porters carrying the belongings of ship's passengers and captains to boarding houses or final destinations, as well as wagons moving cargo to warehouses in the North District.

The side of the street opposite the docks is lined with taverns, boarding houses, general stores, and other establishments catering to ship crews and travelers. The quality and price of service or goods in these establishments ranges from one-half of listed prices in the *Player's Handbook* to three times the listed prices.

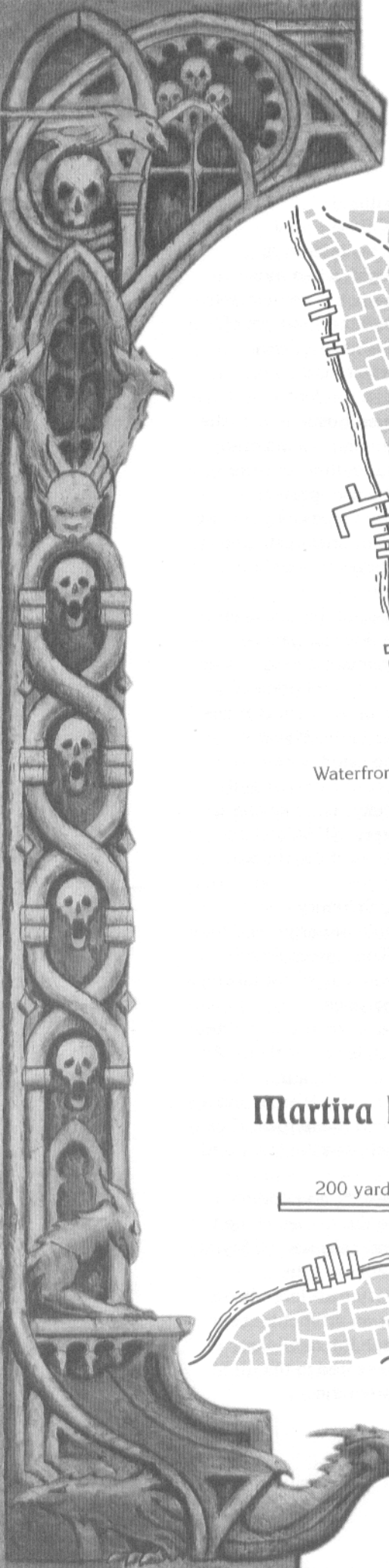
Docking at Martira Bay is not free, nor is it accomplished without difficulty. The city charges a berthing fee of 2 sp for every 10' of keel per day. Additionally, the members of the Harbor Watch frequently charge "import fees" on Invidian wines, and other such luxury items. These fees are payable in coin or cargo, and they consist of 1% of the value. The Harbor Watch checks the manifest (or actual cargo) for all ships docking in search of such cargoes.

There are certain ships that are known to the Harbor Watch, and the *Mercy* is one of them. As detailed in "The Baron" from Book I, this will arouse the suspicion of the Harbor Watch, and they will attempt to apprehend the heroes. (For more about the Harbor Watch, see the "Law and Order" section below.)

Aside from the Harbor Watch, an additional threat might present itself to the heroes along the Water Front. A night hag who calls herself Styrix creeps through the narrow alleys of the Waterfront, looking for unwary travelers whose lifeforce she needs to power an artifact that she hopes will allow her to escape the demiplane. Full details on Styrix are presented in the soon-to-be released revision of the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*®



Settings



Martira Bay

200 yards

Settings

Appendices I & II (available April 1996), or in the original *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix II*.

Styrix, the Night Hag: INT Exceptional (13); AL NE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 (bite); SA disease (save vs. poison to avoid effect), sleep; SD spell immunity, +3 magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 10; XP 12,000

West District

Although Martira Bay is wealthier than many cities in Ravenloft, a substantial number of people still live in squalid conditions in the West District. The neighborhood is noted for twisting, shadow-filled alleys, violent cutthroats, beggars, and cheap brothels. An odor of filth and decay is ever-present. Unlike other poor neighborhoods, there are no swarms of filthy urchins to beg coppers from the heroes. Most poor children of Martira Bay have been "apprenticed" as weavers in the carpet mills of the North District.

The thieves guild is generally not active in the West District, but a band of independent cutthroats menace those who walk here, despite the frequent City Constabulary patrols (25% chance for an encounter with constables every 2 rounds).

The cutthroats consist of five 1st-level fighters, and are led by a psychopathic half-elf whose face and body appear to have been horribly scarred by a fire some time ago. He is known as Wick. Due to his urging, these thugs never leave victims alive. Wick takes particular delight in slitting the throats of victims and watching their blood flow freely as they breathe their last breath.

Wick, half-elf bandit leader: INT High (14); AL CE; AC 8 (Dexterity bonus); MV 9; F4/T4; hp 40; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1-6 short sword or 1-4 dagger); SA backstab (x3 damage); SD resistant to sleep and all charm-related spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP 650. Wick carries 6 gp and 3 sp.

Wick's Gang (5 human 1st-level fighters): INT Average (10); AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 6 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 10; XP 15. Each warrior carries 1-6 sp.

The most noteworthy feature of the West District is the residence of Baron Metus, the Black Tower. Its golden dome can be seen above the grubby buildings that surround it. The only health care the people of the West Quarter can afford is that offered by the Baron, and virtually anyone asked will sing his praises. (Baron Metus' tower is described in "Sea of Madness.") If the DM wishes, Van Richten and the heroes might encounter Wick and his killers as they head for the Black Tower.

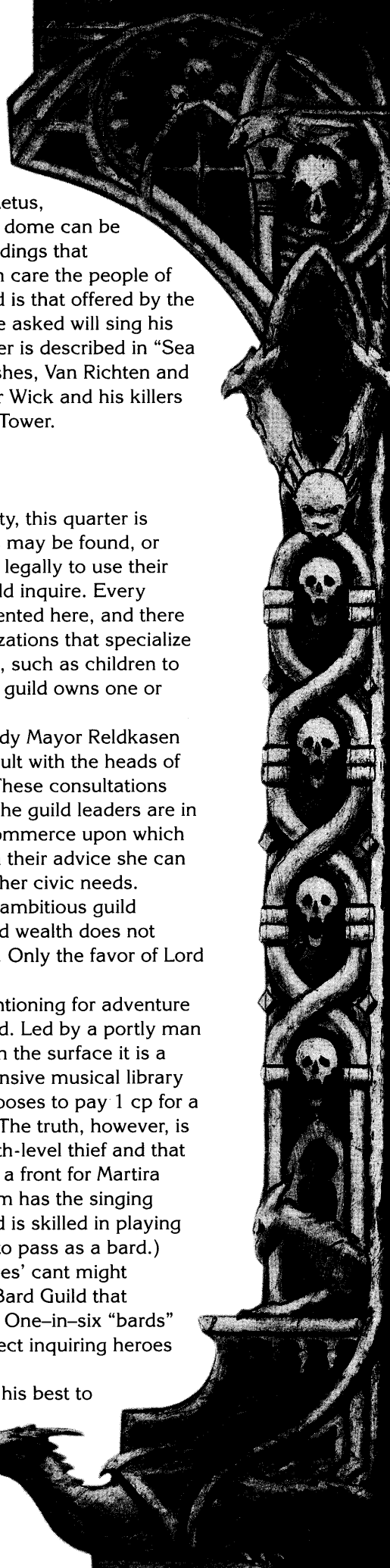
Guild's Quarter

The center of craft in the city, this quarter is where most skilled workers may be found, or where characters who wish legally to use their skills to make money should inquire. Every skilled profession is represented here, and there are even one or two organizations that specialize in securing menial laborers, such as children to work in the rug mills. Each guild owns one or more buildings here.

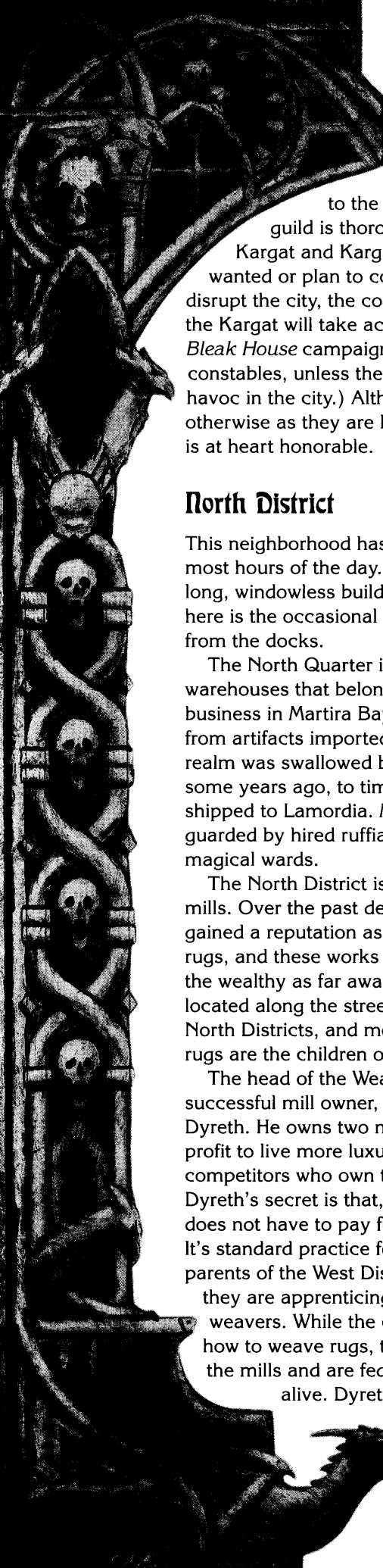
As mentioned above, Lady Mayor Reldkasen has made it a habit to consult with the heads of the most powerful guilds. These consultations serve two purposes. First, the guild leaders are in touch with the trade and commerce upon which Martira Bay is built, so with their advice she can better plan for taxes and other civic needs. Second, it is a reminder to ambitious guild masters that commerce and wealth does not equate to power in Darkon. Only the favor of Lord Azalin can bring that.

The one guild worth mentioning for adventure purposes is the Bard's Guild. Led by a portly man named Slenem Delurian, on the surface it is a union of poets with an extensive musical library that is open to whoever chooses to pay 1 cp for a full afternoon of browsing. The truth, however, is that Slenem is actually a 7th-level thief and that the Bard's Guild is actually a front for Martira Bay's thieves guild. (Slenem has the singing nonweapon proficiency and is skilled in playing the harp, hence his ability to pass as a bard.) Characters who know thieves' cant might recognize symbols on the Bard Guild that identify it as a "sanctuary." One-in-six "bards" here are thieves, but all direct inquiring heroes to Slenem.

The guild master will do his best to assist brothers or "sisters" in the



Settings



art” for a price (to be set by the DM). Unbeknownst to the aging thief, however, his guild is thoroughly infiltrated by the Kargat and Kargatane. If the heroes are wanted or plan to commit actions that might disrupt the city, the constables will be notified, or the Kargat will take action themselves. (In the *Bleak House* campaign, the Kargat notifies the constables, unless the heroes have wreaked havoc in the city.) Although the heroes may think otherwise as they are being dragged off, Slenem is at heart honorable.

North District

This neighborhood has a deserted feel to it at most hours of the day. The streets are lined with long, windowless buildings, and the only traffic here is the occasional wagon carrying crates to or from the docks.

The North Quarter is home predominantly to warehouses that belong to the merchants doing business in Martira Bay. They hold everything from artifacts imported from G’Henna before that realm was swallowed by a mysterious cataclysm some years ago, to timber that is waiting to be shipped to Lamordia. Most warehouses are guarded by hired ruffians, but a few also have magical wards.

The North District is also home to several rug mills. Over the past decade, Martira Bay has gained a reputation as a source of fine, beautiful rugs, and these works of art grace the homes of the wealthy as far away as Nova Vaasa. Most are located along the street that divides the West and North Districts, and most of those who weave the rugs are the children of the poor.

The head of the Weaver’s Guild, and the most successful mill owner, is a man named Stefan Dyreth. He owns two mills yet makes enough profit to live more luxuriously than his competitors who own three or even four mills. Dyreth’s secret is that, unlike his competitors, he does not have to pay for his laborers continually. It’s standard practice for the mill owners to give parents of the West District 5–10 gp and claim they are apprenticing their children as rug weavers. While the children do indeed learn how to weave rugs, they are kept prisoners in the mills and are fed only enough to keep them alive. Dyreth, however, need not even do that. He is a

necromancer who

slays the children he “apprentices” and animates them as zombies.

Heroes who spend any time in Martira Bay might be approached by a distraught mother who wants to recover her child from one of Dyreth’s mills. Rather than going on a rescue mission, the heroes will find themselves walking into what should be a nightmare, though it is all too horribly real. The undead in Dyreth’s mills total 210. They are treated as zombies, with the exception that they only have one Hit Die since they are the animated bodies of children.

Master of the Weavers Guild Stefan Dyreth, 10th-level necromancer: INT Genius (17); AL LE; AC 8 (*ring of protection* +2); MV 12; W10; hp 30; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or spell; SA & SD Spells; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000. Stefan’s hair and eyes are milky white, the result of failed power checks, and he wears a *ring of spell storing* with two *animate dead* and a *teleport* spells. Spells typically memorized: *Chill touch* (x2), *magic missile* (x2), *read magic*, *spectral hand* (x4), *ESP*, *dispel magic*, *eyes of the undead*, *hold undead*, *vampiric touch*, *contagion*, *enervation* (x2), *polymorph other*, *animate dead* (x3).

Stefan Dyreth lives in a mansion in the East District. This is where he keeps his spellbook and most of his considerable fortune.

Merchant’s Quarter

Shops selling virtually anything that strikes the DM’s fancy can be found in this neighborhood. Prices are the same as those listed in the *Player’s Handbook*.

There is a high percentage of foreigners in this quarter, since this is where most merchants from outside Darkon keep offices, as well as a fair number of inns. For heroes trying to get lost in Martira Bay, this would be the ideal place to hide.

Government Square

Martira Bay’s government is housed in the opulent palace that was built by the baron who ruled the area when the city was but a fishing village and small shipyard. The combination of a peasant uprising and Azalin’s realization that the baron was, indeed, mismanaging the resources of

Settings

the area resulted in new nobles being appointed, and Martira Bay's future prominence was secured.

The Government Palace is a four-story building that houses most of the city's major administrative offices. It is guarded by six patrols of four Town Constables. (See the "Law and Order" section for statistics.) The fourth floor is reserved for the family of the mayor, and Lady Mayor Reldkassen lives there with her second husband and three young children.

Reldkassen is an ambitious woman, yet still a loyal servant of Azalin. Her wish is to make Martira Bay the most efficient city it can be, and between her duties as mayor and her studies to build on the arcane foundation Lord Azalin was kind enough to provide her with, she has little time for her family.

Another building at Government Square that looms large on Martira Bay's skyline is an ornate structure known simply as "the Temple." Locals believe it is a place of worship devoted to a good and lawful being known as "the Overseer," and the aged High Cleric Derakoth and the beautiful, raven-haired young woman who is being groomed to be his successor, Tavelia, have a reputation of generosity that is second only to Baron Metus. Heroes searching for a haven might be directed here by well-meaning citizens.

However, the true nature of the Temple is in almost diametric opposition to what is commonly believed. There is no entity known as the Overseer, and the Temple is, in fact, the headquarters of the local Kargat. Tavelia, who is actually the highest ranking Kargat agent in Martira Bay invented the faith about a century ago, as a lure to would-be rebels and self-styled "champions of good." While well-attended regular services are held, most of the clergy of the place are Kargat vampires and lycanthropes. The one exception to this is the grandfatherly Derakoth, who is in fact just a senile lunatic that was found wandering the countryside, and convinced that he has a "great and holy message" to deliver to the masses. (Statistics for the Kargat members can be found in the "Law and Order" section.)

Finally, Martira Bay City Jail is located in the shadow of the Temple. A map of the building is included in this book, and it is here that heroes who run-afoul city law will be brought, as detailed in "Sea of Madness."

East District

This is where the wealthy citizens of Martira Bay dwell. The district is well patrolled, with a 15% chance to encounter a pair of constables every two turns. Rather meager mansions are located in the northern part of the quarter, but the buildings and plots expand into sprawling estates of the wealthy further inland.

South District

Martira Bay's middle-class and common folk reside in this area. Many of those who labor on the estates of the nobles beyond the edge of the city live here, hoping for safety-in-numbers from the night-horrors of the countryside.

The city's famed shipyard lays at the southwestern edge of this quarter, clustered around a small inlet.

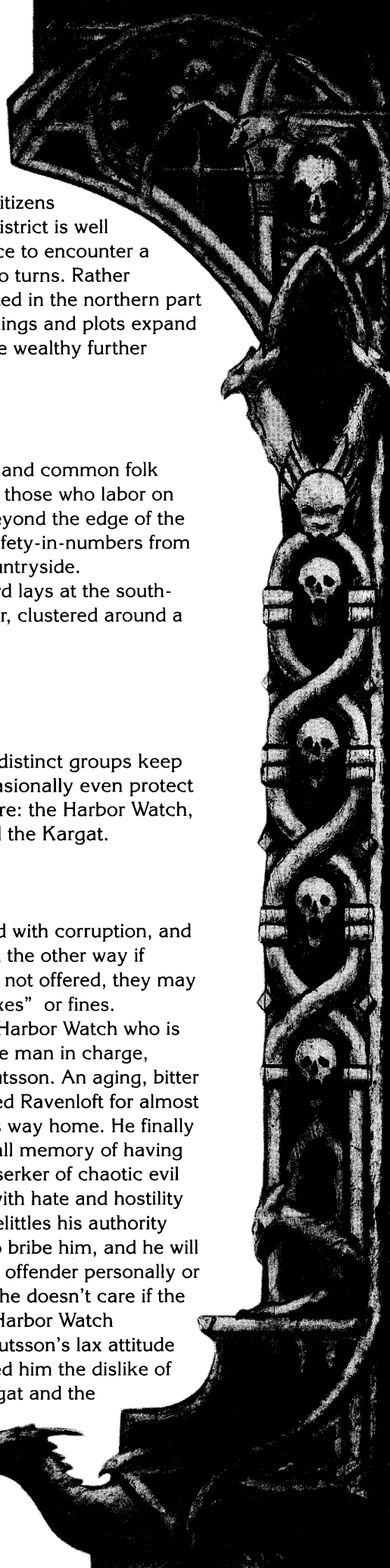
Law and Order

In Martira Bay, three distinct groups keep the peace—and occasionally even protect the innocent. They are: the Harbor Watch, the City Constabulary, and the Kargat.

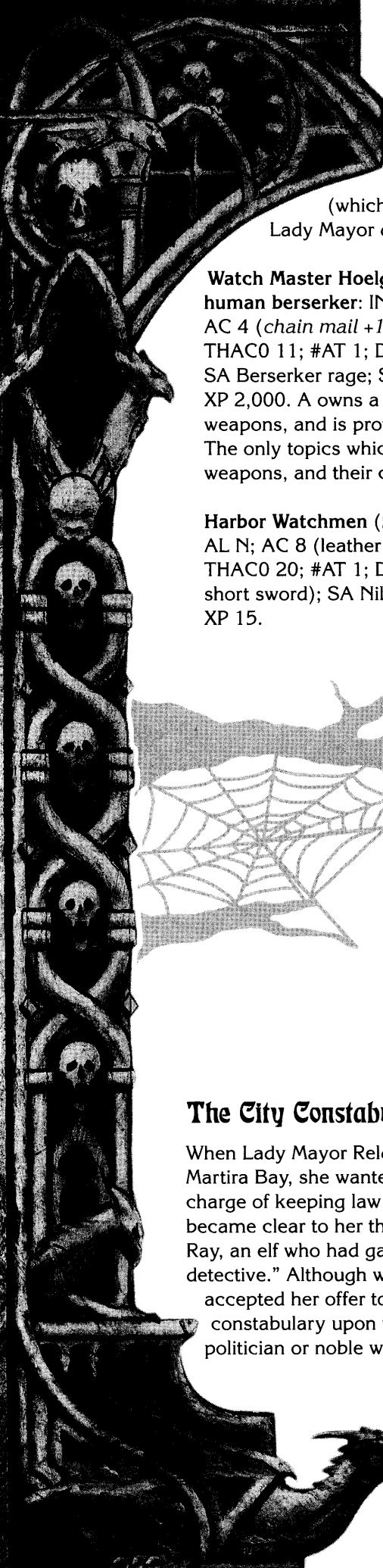
The Harbor Watch

The Harbor Watch is riddled with corruption, and most of the watchmen look the other way if suitably bribed. If a bribe is not offered, they may extract it in the form of "taxes" or fines.

The one member of the Harbor Watch who is not bribable, however, is the man in charge, Watch Master Hoelgar Amutsson. An aging, bitter human, Amutsson wandered Ravenloft for almost 20 years, hoping to find his way home. He finally settled in Darkon and lost all memory of having been anywhere else. A berserker of chaotic evil alignment, he is too filled with hate and hostility to trifle with anyone who belittles his authority and honor by attempting to bribe him, and he will do his best either to kill the offender personally or see him hanged. However, he doesn't care if the 50 thugs that pass for the Harbor Watch augment their income. Amutsson's lax attitude toward discipline has earned him the dislike of the leaders of both the Kargat and the City Constabulary, but he has managed



Settings



to bring down the rate of crime on the Waterfront (which is his jurisdiction), the Lady Mayor dismisses their complaints.

Watch Master Hoelgar Amutsson, 8th-level human berserker: INT High (13); AL CE; AC 4 (*chain mail +1*); MV 12; F8; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA Berserker rage; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000. A owns a wide selection of weapons, and is proficient in all of them. The only topics which he ever discusses is weapons, and their care.

Harbor Watchmen (50): INT Average (10); AL N; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1–6 short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil.; SZ M; ML 15; XP 15.



The City Constabulary

When Lady Mayor Reldkasen assumed control of Martira Bay, she wanted the best of the best in charge of keeping law and order in the city. It became clear to her that the “best” was Alanik Ray, an elf who had gained fame as a “consulting detective.” Although well-known as a loner, Ray accepted her offer to assume control of the constabulary upon the guarantee that no politician or noble would interfere with his duty.

Ray and his men perform their duty with dedication and stiff-necked honesty. Where the Harbor Watch is riddled with corruption, the City Constabulary is virtually incorruptible, and Ray leads by shining example. More often than not, he personally handles cases that involve “hot potatoes,” and he always brings the evil-doer to justice. He has two lieutenants, five sergeants, and 100 rank-and-file constables under his command.

Ray’s obsession with seeing justice done has caused him to be viewed by the Kargat as a threat whose goals involve “order” rather than justice. Sooner or later, they will have to remove him, even if the ranking Kargat agent holds a great deal of respect for the tenacious, sharp-minded elf.

As mentioned in “Sea of Madness,” Ray is an old associate of Van Richten, and is a source of aid for the heroes. However, this very assistance may be the excuse Tavelia needs to move against him.

Chief Constable Alanik Ray, 10th-level elfen investigator: INT Genius (17); AL LN; AC 7 (Dexterity bonus); MV 12; T10; hp 8; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA backstab; SD immune to *sleep* and charm-related spells; SZ M; ML 18; XP 3,000.

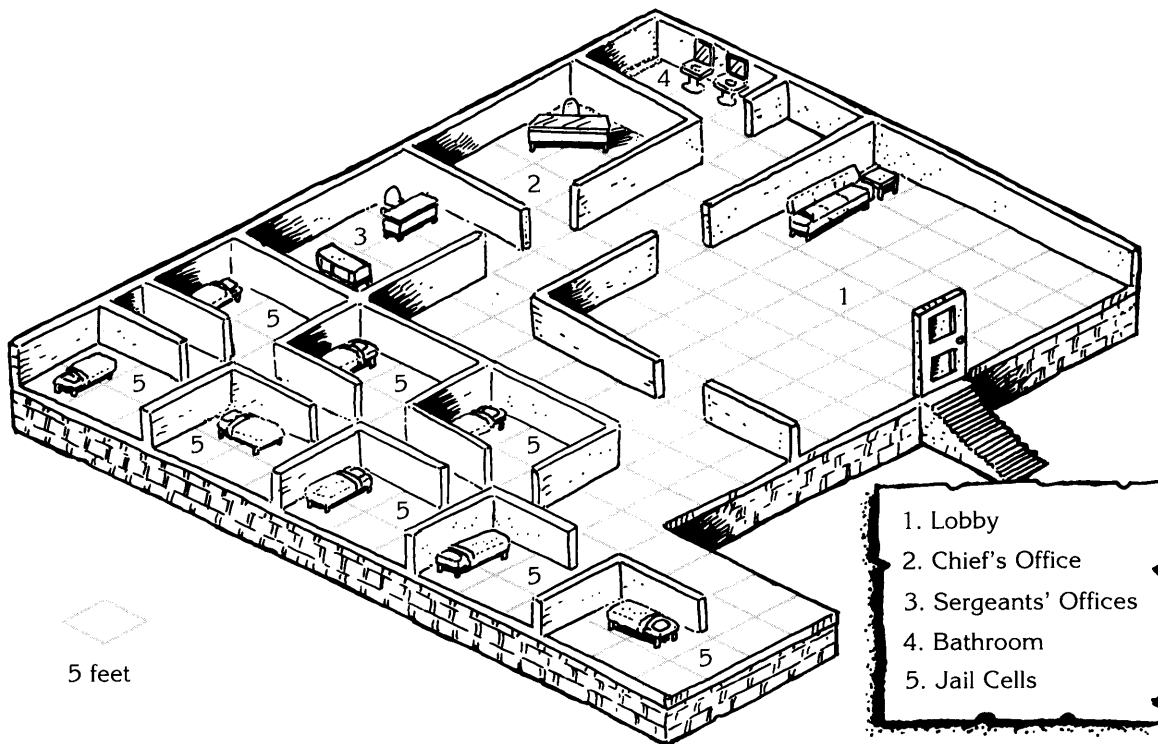
Chief’s Lieutenants (2): INT High (13); AL LG; AC 5 (*chain mail*); MV 12; F5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d6 short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 16; XP 175.

Sergeants (5): INT High (12); AL LN; AC 7 (studded leather); MV 12; F3; hp 24; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d6 short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 16; XP 65.

Constables (100): INT Average (11); AL LN; AC 7 (studded leather); MV 12; F2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d6 short sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 16; XP 35.

Settings

Martira Bay Jail House



The Kargat

Martira Bay serves as a training ground for the Kargat. Between Lady Mayor Reldkasen keeping the merchants on a short leash and Alanik Ray's incorruptible police force, the only subversives they have to worry about are the clumsy Harbor Watch and those who might be drawn to the Temple. This is where the secret police whose name is whispered throughout the demiplane get their training.

The ranking Kargat agent is a stunningly beautiful vampire named Tavelia. She is a cunning, ambitious, and intelligent operative. While training Kargat recruits, she recruits the cream of the crop for the Kargat branch in the Martira Bay area. In recent months, she has become less subtle with her recruiting efforts, and it's becoming clear that she is building a network that is loyal to her, not to Lord Azalin. Her purpose is known to no one but Tavelia, and no one knows why Lord Azalin hasn't taken action against her apparent efforts to take total control of part of the domain's secret police.

The number of Kargat agents in Martira Bay fluctuates, but there are a number of human and

vampire operatives that form the heart of Tavelia's organization within the organization.

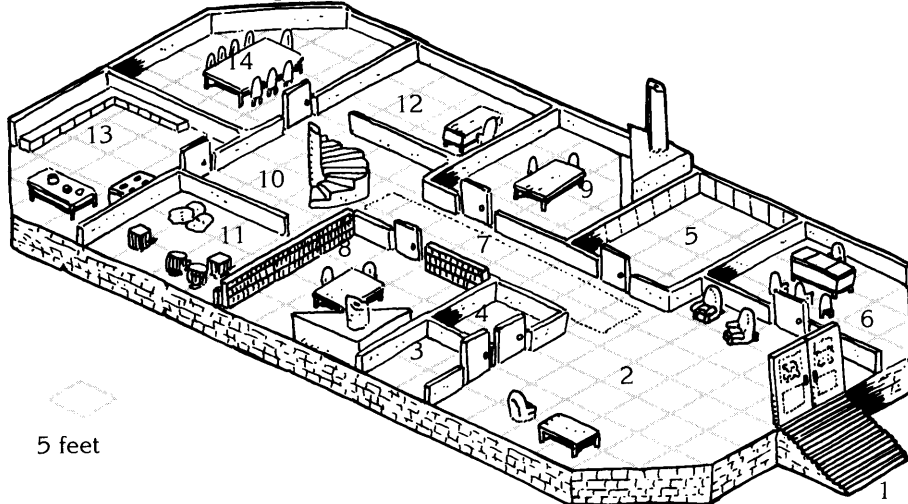
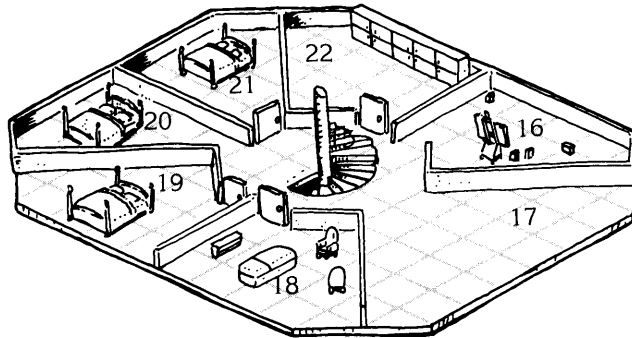
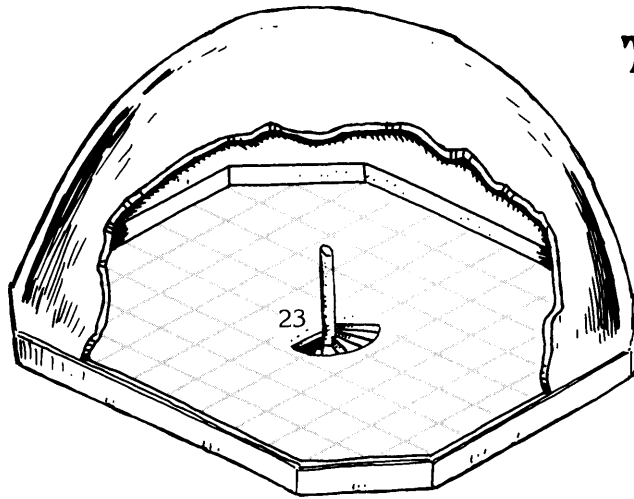
Tavelia of the Kargat, mature vampire: INT Exceptional (16); AL NE; AC 1; MV 15, FI 18 (C); HD 9+3; hp 69; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4; SA Energy Drain; SD +1 or better to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells, regenerates; MR 5%; SZ M; ML 16; XP 14,000.

Human Kargat agents (8): INT High (12); AL LE; AC 4 (banded mail); MV 12; F5; hp 28; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (1d8 long sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 16; XP 175; 5% chance of possessing a magical item.

Vampire Kargat agents (6): INT Exceptional (15); AL CE; AC 1; MV 15, FI 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 57; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4; SA Energy Drain; SD +1 or better to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells, regenerates; MR 5%; SZ M; ML 16; XP 9,000.

Settings

The Black Tower



5 feet



“Farewell happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells:
Hail, horrors, hail!”

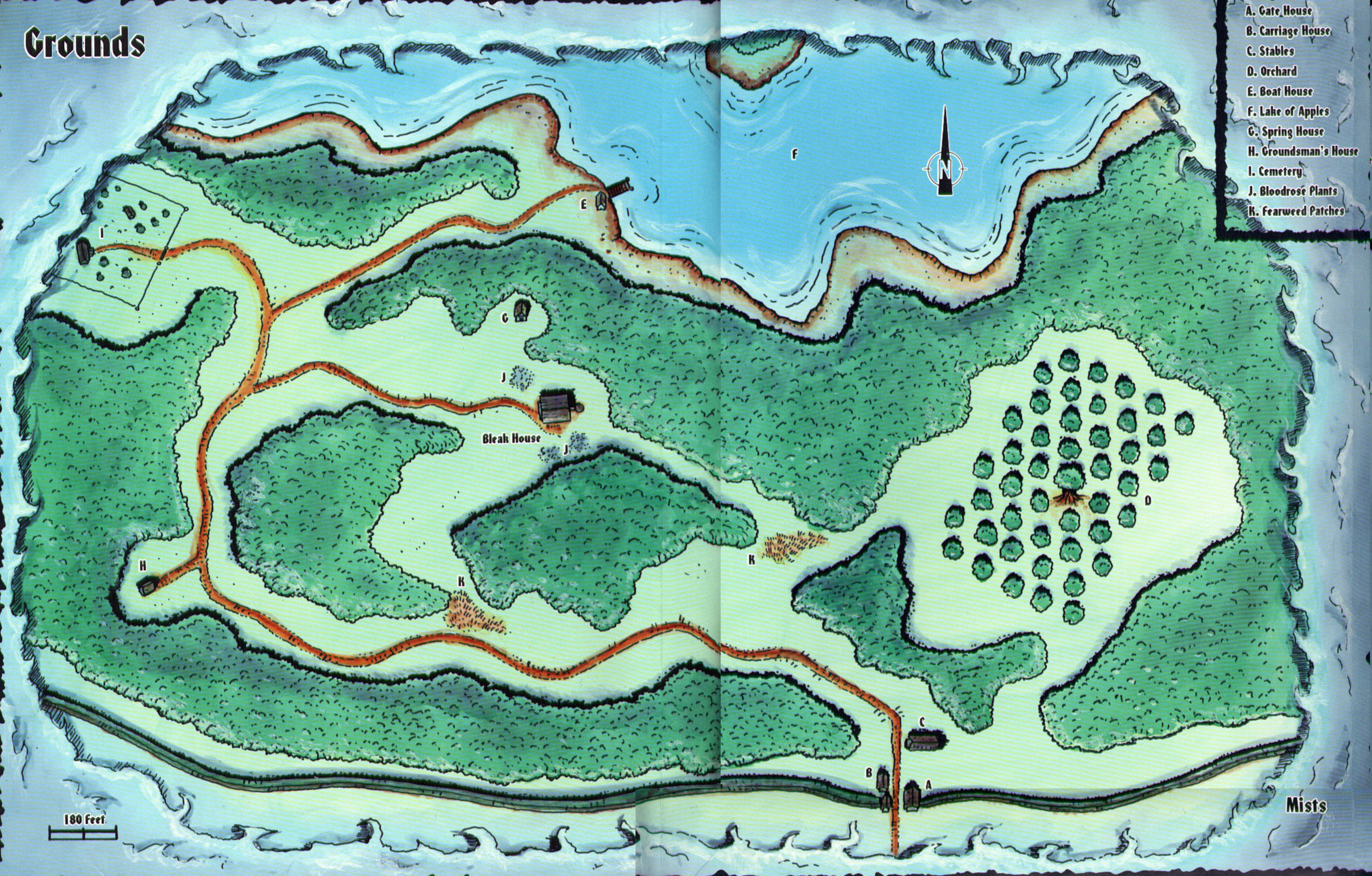
—John Milton,
Paradise Lost



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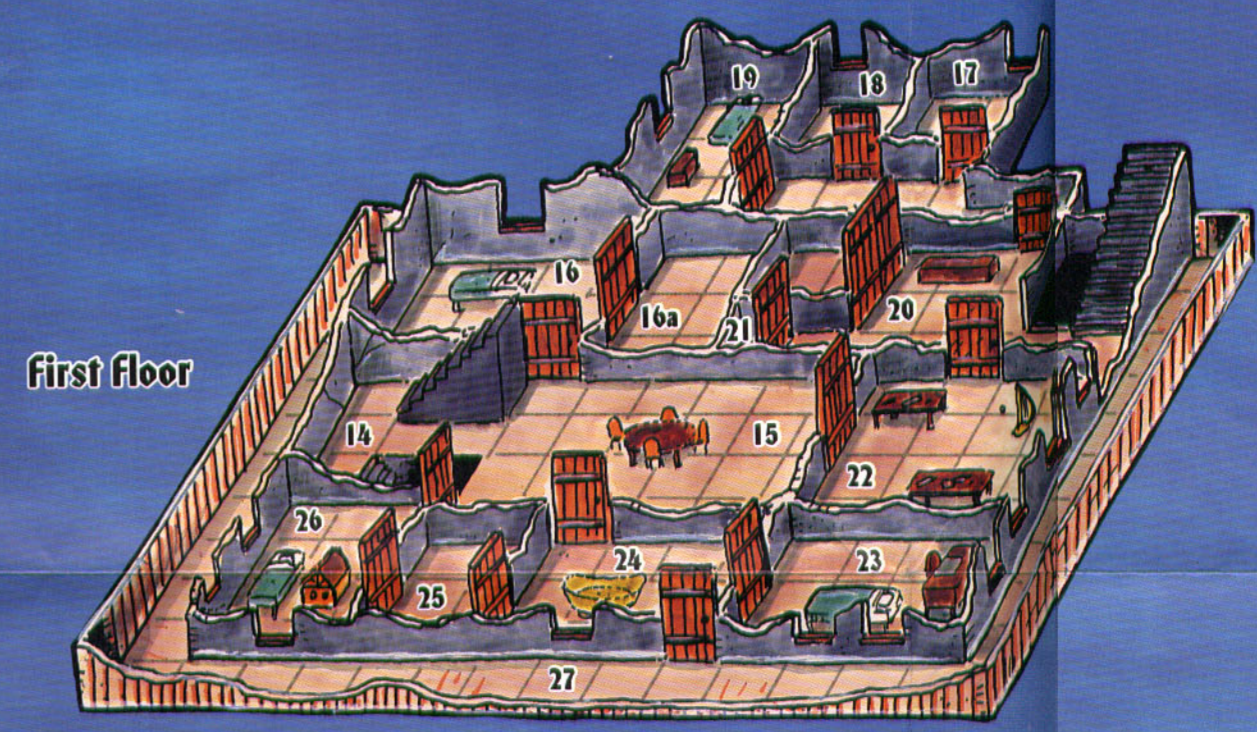
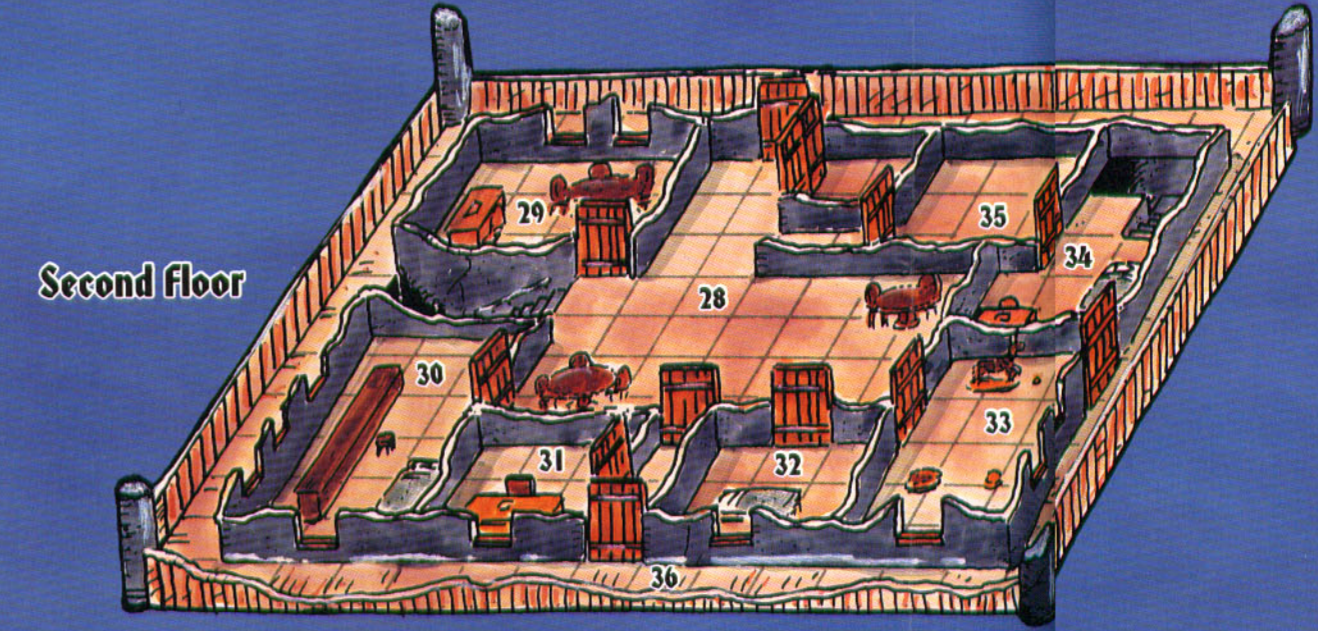
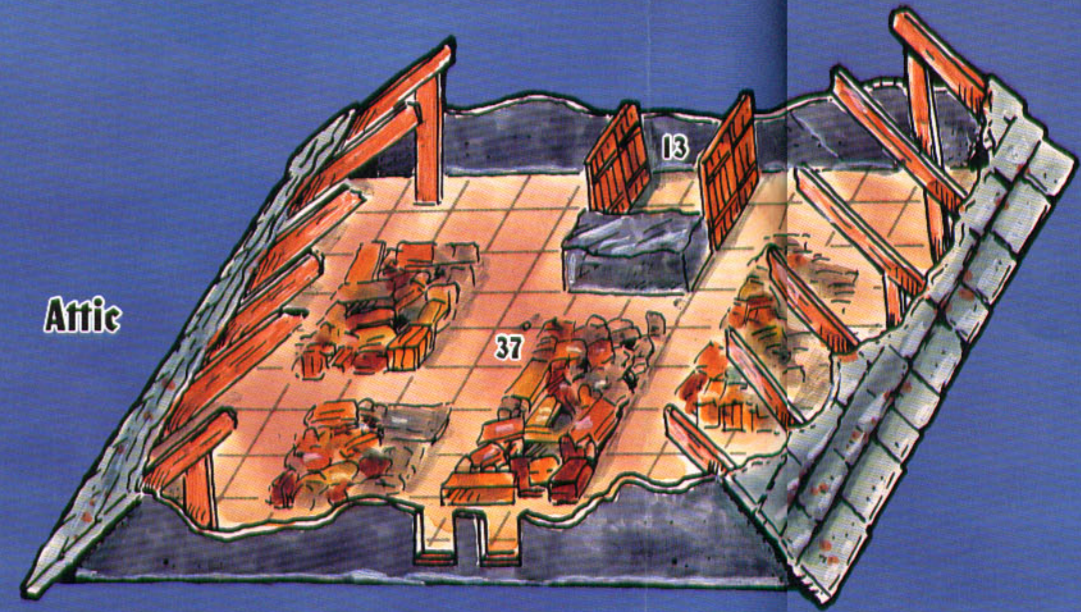
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Grounds



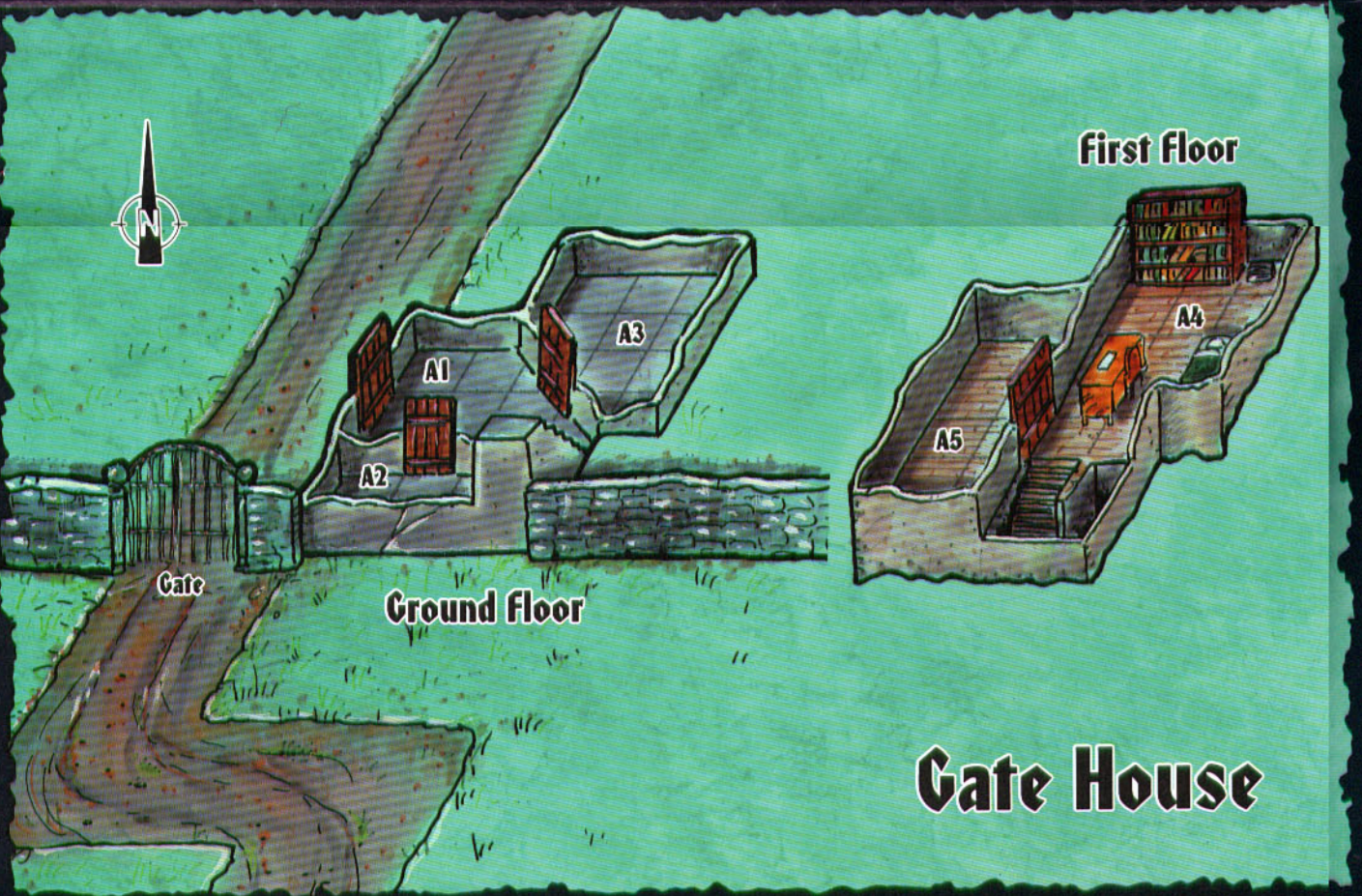
- A. Gate House
- B. Carriage House
- C. Stables
- D. Orchard
- E. Boat House
- F. Lake of Apples
- G. Spring House
- H. Groundsman's House
- I. Cemetery
- J. Bloodrose Plants
- K. Fearweed Patches

BLEAK HOUSE

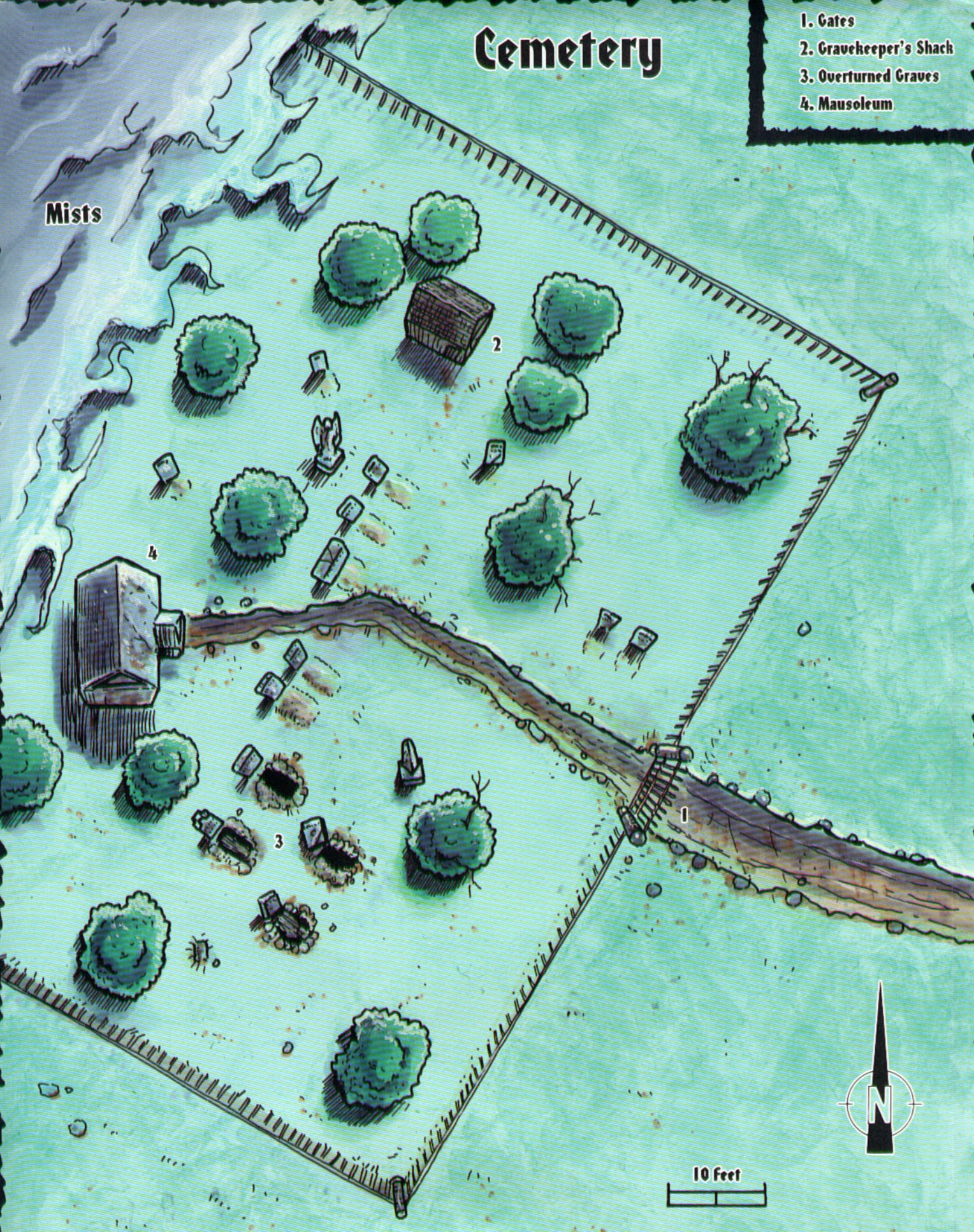


Key

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| door | doll house |
| concealed door | stairs |
| barrels | altar |
| wardrobe | bath tub |
| table | harpicord |
| ovens | |
| book shelf or display cabinet | N |
| window | |
| fireplace | |
| bed | 3 feet |



Gate House

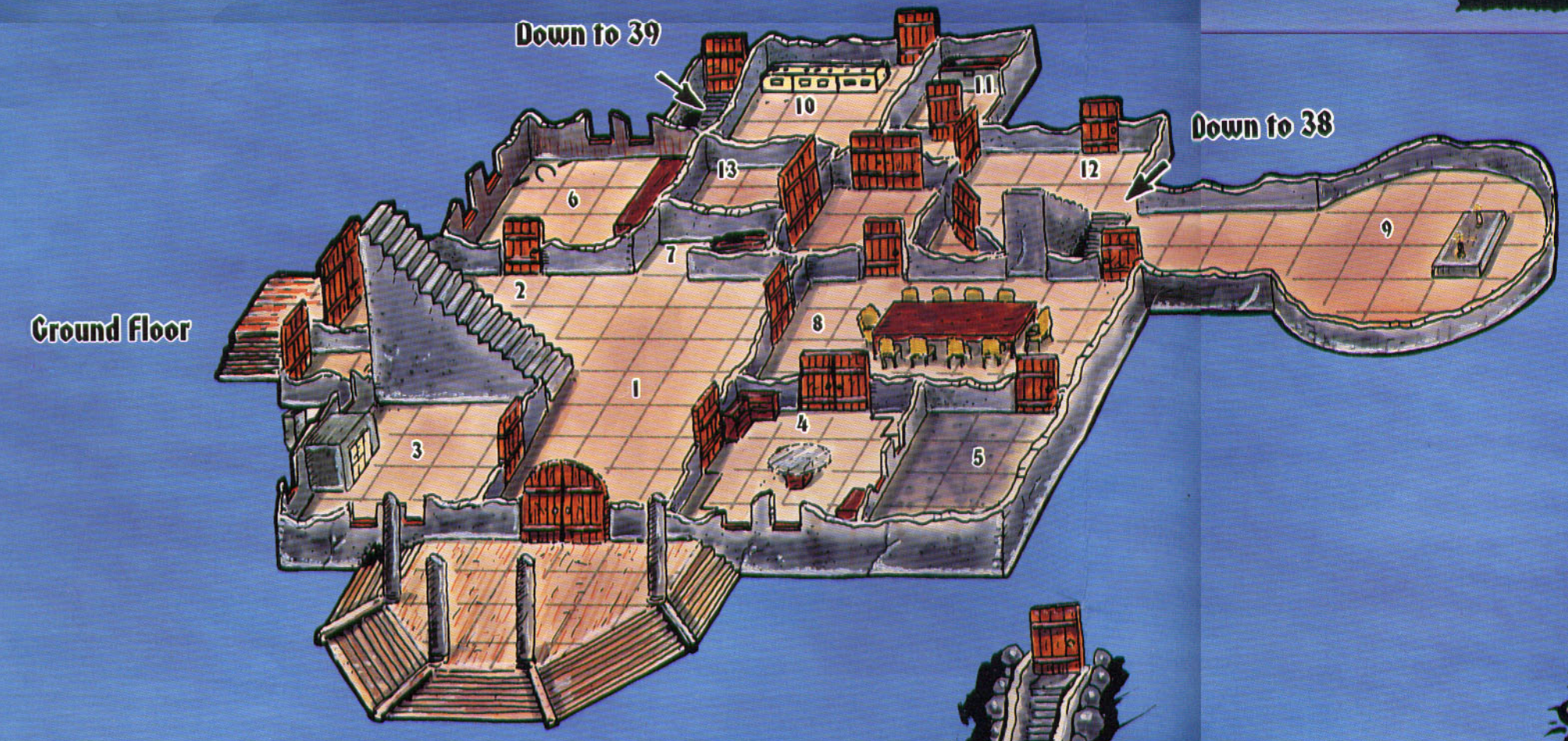


Cemetery

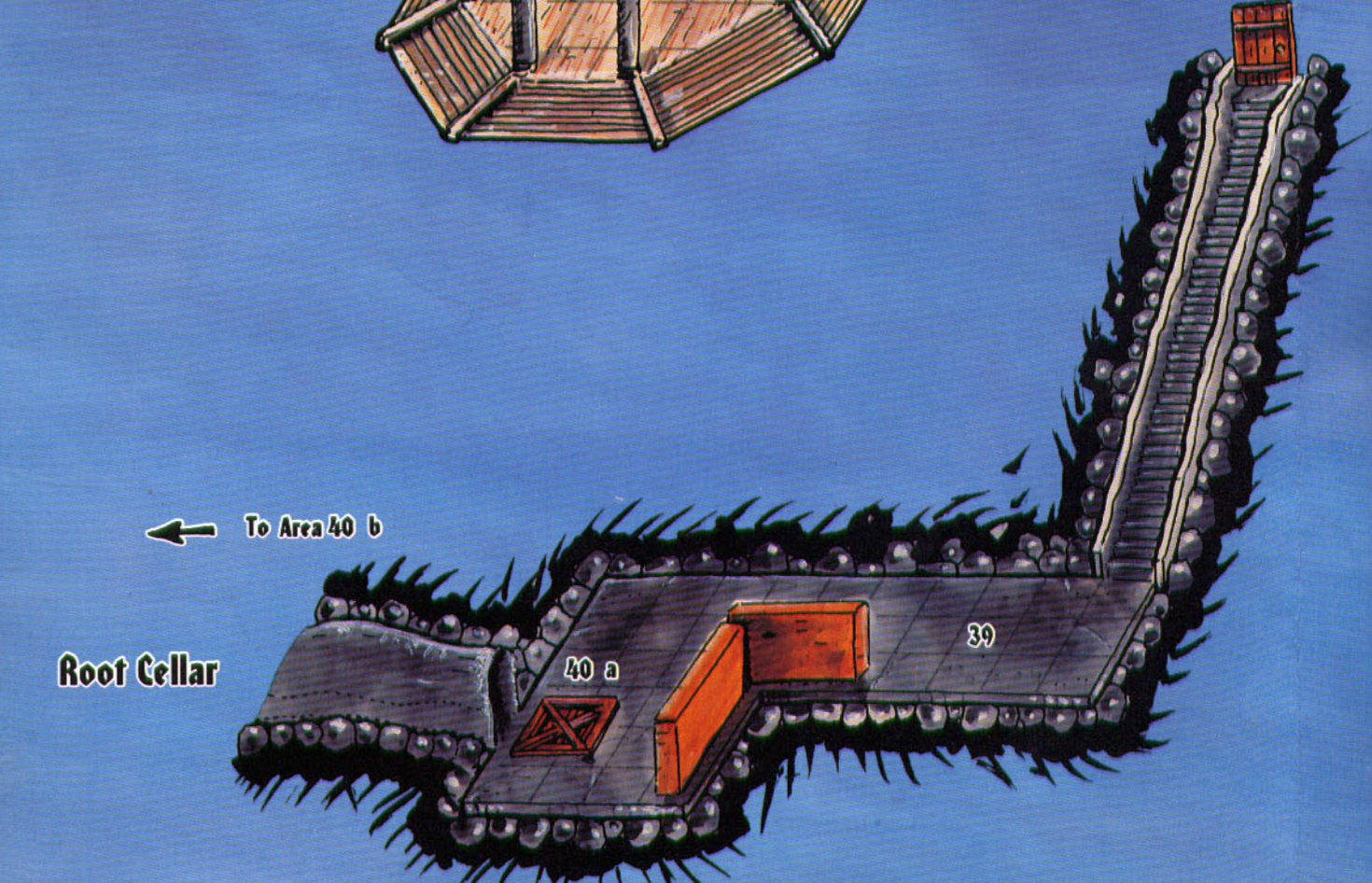
- 1. Gates
- 2. Gravekeeper's Shach
- 3. Overturned Graves
- 4. Mausoleum



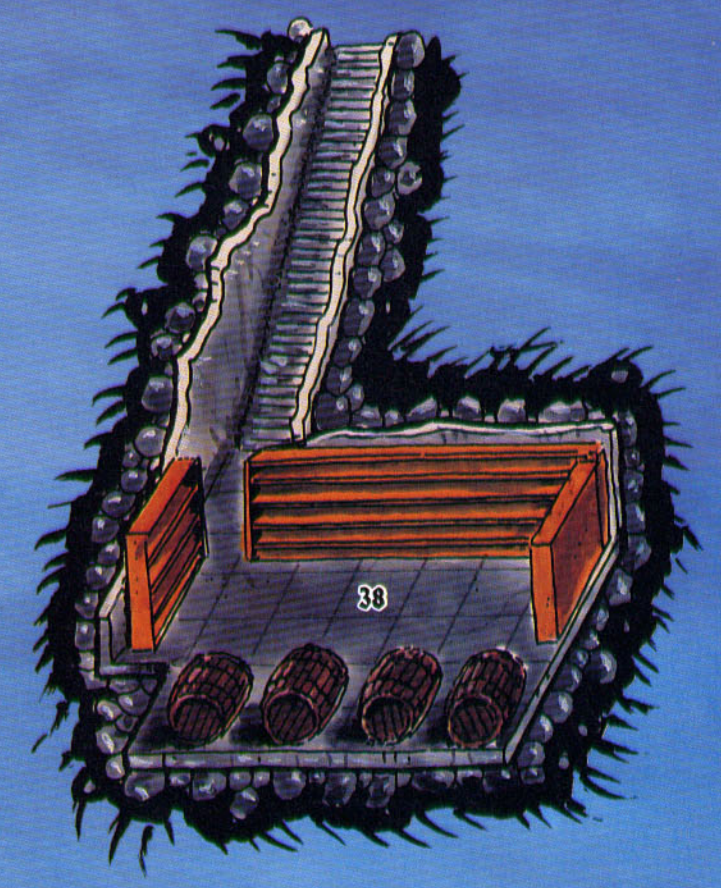
Choul Warrens



Ground floor



Root Cellar



Wine Cellar



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Boxed Adventure Set

Bleak House

The Death of Rudolph van Richten

by William W. Connors and Dave Gross
with Steve Miller

Old soldiers never die . . . SCANNED BY: JACK D. KNIGHT

For more than three decades, Dr. Rudolph van Richten stood against the forces of darkness, and hunted their servants in the far corners of the land of Mists. Now he had thought his long battle over, had thought he could spend his declining years in quiet enjoyment with old friends.

But for some, a tragic end is inevitable.

Dark forces have been gathering in the Mists. Their objective is to see Ravenloft's foremost expert on the supernatural destroyed, shattered in spirit as well as in body. From the crumbling edifice of Van Richten's childhood home, an enemy long thought vanquished spins a web of powerful evils and lost souls, drawing Van Richten to his doom. And then a group of heroes gets trapped in the web as well. . . .

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- † **Heroes, Monsters, and Settings**, a 32-page book containing game statistics for some of Ravenloft's best known, yet never detailed, villains; a new type of vampire; information on Martira Bay in Darkon; and maps intended for use with the *Bleak House* campaign.
- † **A color map** revealing the layout and secrets of Bleak House itself.

TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
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