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ADVENTURE

For 4-6 players, levels 1-3

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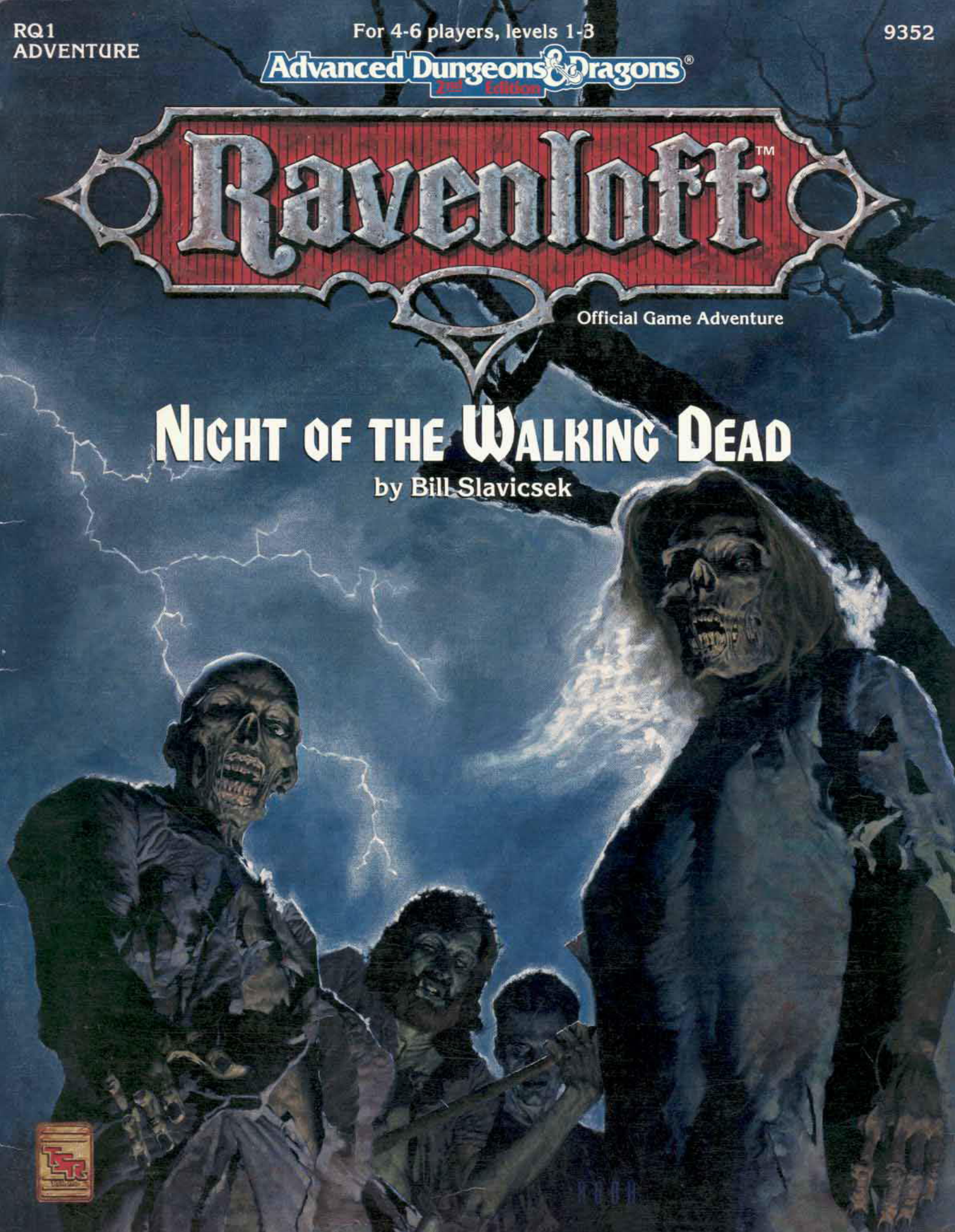
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
2nd Edition

Ravenloft™

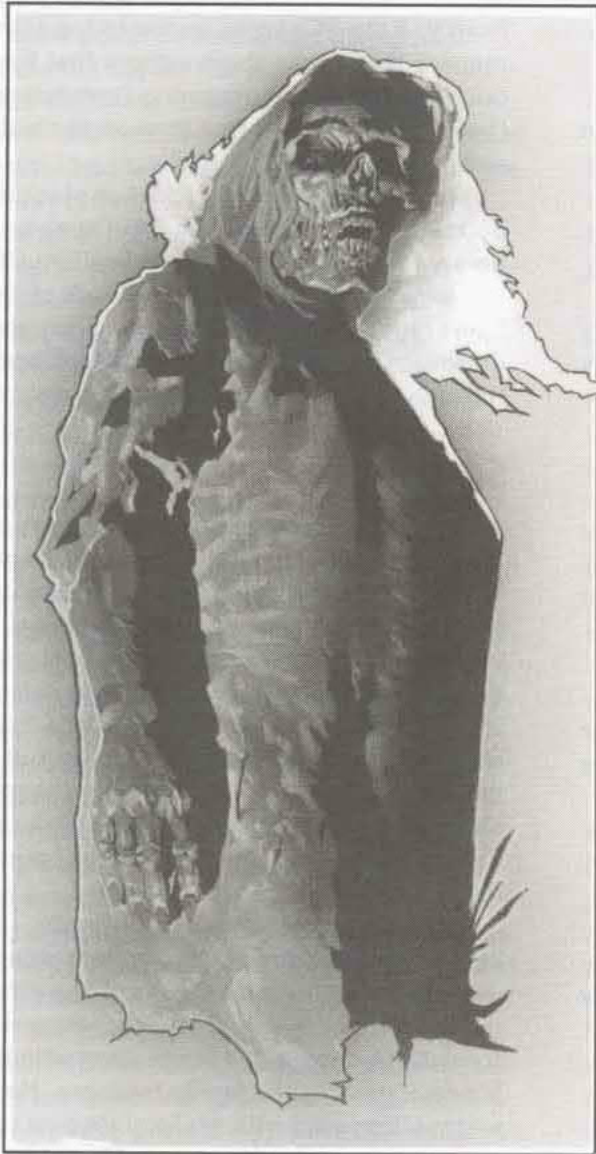
Official Game Adventure

NIGHT OF THE WALKING DEAD

by Bill Slavicsek



NIGHT OF THE WALKING DEAD



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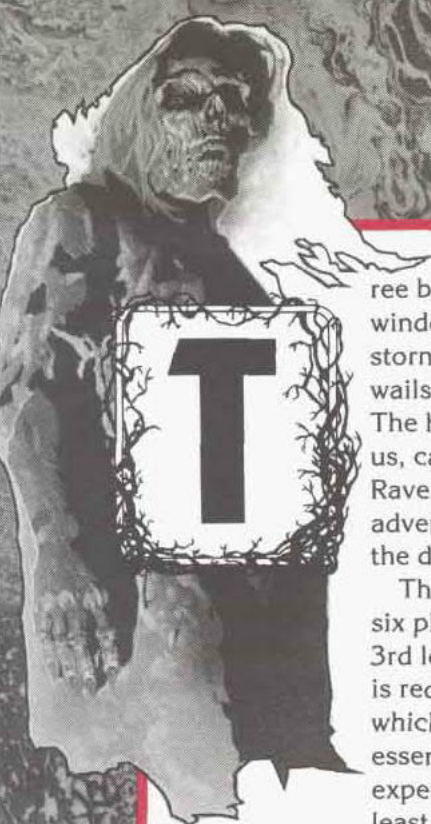
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ISBN 1-56076-350-7

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INTRODUCTION



Tree branches claw across the window pane, lights flicker as the storm intensifies, and the wind wails like a banshee in the night. The hour of fear is once again upon us, calling us back to the shores of Ravenloft for another terrifying adventure. Are you ready to enter the demiplane of dread?

This is an adventure for four to six players with characters of 1st to 3rd level. A good mix of characters is required to survive the events which unfold herein. A cleric is essential. Further, the party's experience levels should total at least nine.

Be forewarned! The RAVENLOFT™ campaign setting is no place for the weak or squeamish. We have done our utmost to make this adventure suitable for starting-level characters, but the denizens of the demiplane remain ready, willing, and eager to end heroic careers before they've even had a chance to begin. Do you and your players still wish to continue? Then step forward and enter the Mists . . .

For the DM

The material that follows is for the DM only. Players should stop reading now!

As DM, you should read the entire adventure at least once before attempting to run it for your gaming group. The players and their characters should enjoy being surprised and mystified during game play; you should not. You need to know what's happening in order to best utilize pacing, tension, and mood—the prime elements of any RAVENLOFT adventure. The better you prepare, the better you and your players will enjoy the gaming session.

This is an introductory-level adventure, designed specifically to open the demiplane to new players, new characters, or both. That

doesn't mean the adventure is a cake walk—far from it. If the PCs try to go toe-to-toe with every menace that awaits them without first finding out all they can and preparing themselves thoroughly, then feel free to show them the error of their ways.

Night of the Walking Dead takes place in Souragne (pronounced *soo RAW nya*), an island domain first introduced in the RAVENLOFT boxed set. (See Chapter XII, "Islands of Terror.") Don't reveal this to your players. They should discover where the adventure takes place through the actions of their characters.

Story Background

Marais d'Tarascon is a small village on the southeastern edge of Souragne's great swamp. Pierre Tarascon founded the village many generations ago to support his vast plantation (no one can remember exactly how old the settlement is, but it has existed at least two centuries). Today the village is fairly prosperous, and the Tarascon family still runs the nearby plantation. But nothing escapes the shadows forever in the demiplane of dread. Recently a darkness has descended upon Marais d' Tarascon.

Until three weeks ago, the Tarascon plantation was administered by Marcel and Jean Tarascon, twin brothers and the direct descendants of Pierre. Both brothers were formally in charge, but it was Jean who spent his days running the family business. Marcel was too intrigued with his family's past to offer much help to Jean. Years ago, Marcel found Pierre Tarascon's tattered journal locked in an old trunk. After reading the journal, Marcel could not stop thinking of the details within.

Pierre's words painted a picture of the early days in Marais d'Tarascon. Moreover, they told of a strange visitor named Hyskosa, whom Pierre had befriended. According to Pierre, Hyskosa was a famous Vistani seer whose visions of the future were remarkably accurate, especially since most gypsy seers were then (as now)

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women. The last entry to mention Hyskosa told of his most powerful revelation, a prescience called the Six Signs. The journal did not describe the vision in detail, but Marcel's forefather did record a tantalizing notation: that the Vistani had left behind a scroll on which the vision was recorded. Pierre hid the scroll, but the journal did not say where.

As years passed, Marcel became increasingly obsessed with finding that scroll. He was sure it contained the secrets of power and immortality. The demiplane fueled his obsession, filling Marcel's dreams with visions of the power he craved, night after night.

Jean and Marcel had a brother, Luc, nearly 15 years younger. (Their mother died giving birth to him.) Luc was exceedingly devoted to Marcel. A few months ago, Luc joined Marcel in his quest to find the scroll of Hyskosa. Luc cared nothing for power or visions of the future, but he idolized Marcel and wanted to help his brother in any way he could. Jean attempted to sway them both. He warned Marcel that his obsession would lead to nothing but despair and death. Jean did not, however, foresee how truly horrid the future would become.

Three weeks ago, Luc saw a Vistani wagon parked on a road just outside the village, and he paid a young gypsy named Valana to tell his future. She recited a cryptic verse which guided Luc to a hidden passage at the edge of the village. The passage led into the old cemetery. Together Luc and Marcel followed the tunnel into the ancient burial grounds. There, hidden within an above-ground crypt, the two brothers found the scroll of Hyskosa.

Luc was reading the ancient verses aloud when zombies emerged from the shadows between the overgrown burial chambers. As the young man watched in horror, the foul undead struck down and mutilated his older brother. Luc was shattered. The dreadful scene, combined with the knowledge that he had led his brother to his death, drove Luc into a trancelike state. He became what many inhabitants of Ravenloft call a "lost one." (See

"Men" in the RAVENLOFT™ *Monstrous Compendium Appendix*.)

As Luc stood helpless in the old cemetery, Jean Tarascon arrived, saving young Luc from the zombies. After driving off the undead, Jean lifted Marcel's mangled form and carried it through the cemetery's secret passage. Luc followed, but his vacant stare never altered, and he never let go of the scroll.

Jean took Marcel straight to the village shaman, who attempted to raise Marcel, but failed. Jean cried out in pain and left with his brother's body. The shaman did not understand the true outcome of his failure, but Jean did, for his bond with his twin was strong. Instead of regaining life, Marcel had become an undead creature of the foulest sort. Marcel Tarascon had become a zombie lord!

Jean blamed himself for the fate which had befallen Marcel and Luc. He became mad—not in the mindless fashion of his younger brother, but in the way of intelligent fiends who carefully hide their insanity from others. In his twisted mind, Jean felt he still needed to "protect" his twin from the obsession which led to this terrible event. (Though Jean knew Marcel was a zombie lord, in his madness he still felt the scroll would bring Marcel further misery.) First, Jean took the scroll from Luc and hid it. Then, when he noticed that the only words Luc spoke were twisted versions of the Hyskosa scroll, he sent the youth into the swamp. Jean promised to locate the scroll for Marcel, swearing to search for it as long as he drew breath. Never did he reveal to Marcel that he had hidden it, nor did he reveal to anyone what his brother Marcel had become.

Marcel now resides in the old cemetery, intent on creating undead servants while Jean continues to search for the scroll. For three weeks Marcel has used his powers to kill villagers; when they rise, they become zombies under his control. Though Marcel does not have the scroll, he believes that an army of undead will help him take over this island of terror. (To date, the true lord of Souragne has not intervened.)

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The village has to contend with more than just Marcel, however. Jean has become a murderer as well as a madman. He takes victims to the zombie lord as both an offering and a sign of his growing affection for the undead.

The Hyskosa Scroll

Despite Marcel Tarascon's delusions, there is no power to be gained by finding the Hyskosa scroll. The scroll only portends a time of terror—a time which is fast approaching the demiplane of dread.

As noted above, Hyskosa was a Vistani seer who lived more than two centuries ago. At the peak of his power, Hyskosa foresaw a cataclysm and the six signs which would mark its coming. He wrote a cryptic and dissonant verse about the signs, and recorded it on many scrolls. Throughout the rest of his life, he left copies in every domain he visited. The scrolls are often called "The Six Signs" or "The Hex Signs of Hyskosa." Many of the scrolls were destroyed, but a few, like the one in this adventure, still survive. Men of power throughout Ravenloft have sought to unravel his verse over the years. Some, like Marcel Tarascon, erroneously believe the verse holds the key to untold power.

See page 15 for a copy of Hyskosa's verse. The first paragraph is written in a different style than the others. The verse ends abruptly because the paper has been torn away. Only five signs remain intact; one is missing.

Each sign has been (or will be) revealed in a separate RAVENLOFT™ adventure. The first sign of Hyskosa refers to the Crown of Souls found in *Feast of Goblins*. The second sign was revealed in *Ship of Horror* as the child ghost of Charlotte Stern. The third came to pass in *Touch of Death* with the seventh rising of the pharaoh Anhktepote. The fourth sign appears in an adventure set in Sri Raji ('93 release). The fifth sign, a lunar eclipse which occurs while the dead walk the land, is an event in this adventure. (The sixth sign will be revealed in another product.)

In *Night of the Walking Dead*, the scroll of Hyskosa is important because of Marcel's obsession. While one of the signs does come to pass in this adventure, the scroll has no direct impact on the adventure's outcome. Together the signs foretell a future event in Ravenloft, which will be featured in another product.

Adventure Synopsis

As the adventure begins, the PCs find themselves lost in a swamp (presumably in whatever campaign world they call "home"). Soon the Mists of Ravenloft transport them into the eerie swamps of Souragne, where they encounter a crocodile, giant frogs, and mysterious Vistani. After days, when in all likelihood they are feeling hopelessly lost, the PCs happen upon a house on stilts. In the house they meet Luc Tarascon, a young man in a trancelike state, who has severed his link to reality. The only clue to this youth's identity is a book of poetry that he holds, which bears the following inscription: "To Luc, my beloved brother." The note is signed "Marcel."

Luc is not completely silent. From time to time, he spouts nonsensical rhymes, which are actually twisted verses from the Hyskosa Scroll. If the PCs leave the little house, Luc follows them. (He is not completely oblivious to his surroundings.) If they wait at Luc's house, Shaman Brucian arrives in two days, bringing more food for the young man, and leading everyone back to the village.

During their entire journey through the swamp, a strange storm is building. Eventually the PCs reach the small village of Marais d'Tarascon, just as the storm seems about to break. However and whenever they get to the village, the PCs arrive in time to witness a bizarre funeral procession in the village square. A coffin wrapped in heavy chains is being carted toward a nearby cemetery. Though every villager seems to be ignoring it, the PCs can clearly hear a noise coming from inside the coffin, as if someone is trying to get out. The

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village adventure (Part II) has begun.

After dealing with the zombie in the coffin—or watching the coffin be interred—the PCs may try to find someone who knows Luc, or they may decide to ask questions about the strange burial. The storm continues to threaten as the PCs explore the village and talk to its inhabitants, but no rain falls. Through investigation, the PCs learn of the strange events that have gripped the village in recent weeks. Tales of gruesome murders, mysterious disappearances, even word of the walking dead—all are soon whispered in the PCs' ears. What's worse, someone tries to murder poor Luc (who follows the PCs from place to place like a faithful hound).

Before long, the PCs should deduce that the troubles began with the Tarascon family. By searching Jean Tarascon's house in the village, the PCs can find the Hyskosa scroll as well as evidence of foul murders. From the local shaman, the PCs can learn of Marcel's death roughly three weeks earlier. They can even discover that many of the recently deceased are becoming zombies. This portion of the adventure, "Marais d'Tarascon," comes to an end when the PCs encounter the madman and murderer that Jean Tarascon has become. Snuffed out by the bold player characters, Jean's reign of terror comes to an end.

At this point, the player characters probably think the worst is over. They have a chance to rest and heal. As Part III begins, the storm finally breaks, battering the village with large, slimy drops of rain. From out of the storm comes an army of shambling shapes—Marcel's zombies! They seek the scroll and young Luc, both of which happen to be in the PCs' care (provided, of course, the PCs have been successful so far).

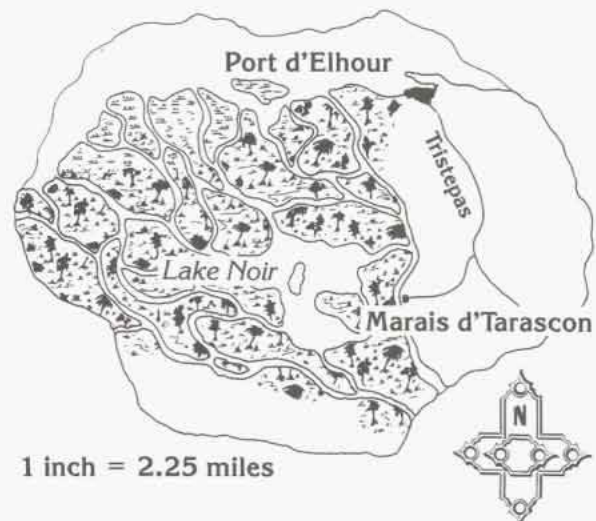
As the zombies attack, Luc prattles through his verses. He has added a few new lines to the repertoire which by now is familiar to the PCs. Luc finally reveals the clue which led him and Marcel to the secret passage behind the cemetery's hill.

The PCs must enter the old cemetery to confront Marcel before the entire village is destroyed. They must deal with zombies, rats, and skeletons to reach the zombie lord's lair in the ancient Tarascon mausoleum. Can they stop Marcel, or will the PCs be forced to submit to the zombie lord's will and become members of his undead army? To find out, you must bear witness to the Night of the Walking Dead.

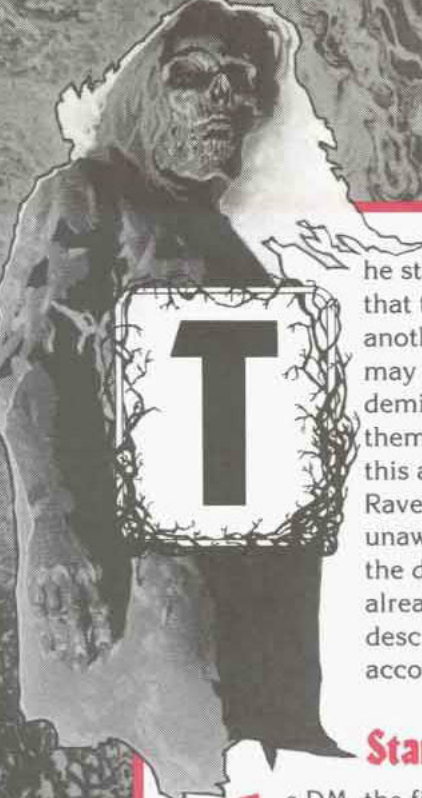
Center Pages

Pages 15 to 18 in the center of this booklet contain props and references for use during play. To remove them from the book, carefully bend the staples open, lift the pages, and then bend the staples back. You may wish to photocopy the Hyskosa scroll and give the copy to players when their PCs discover the scroll. (Or you may simply show them that page, and allow them to copy the text by hand.) Never show the players page 18, the clue sheet. That's your guide to information revealed during the course of the adventure.

SOURAGNE



Part I: THE SWAMP



The startup presented here assumes that the PCs enter Ravenloft from another realm. While a PC or two may have heard legends about the demiplane of dread, ideally none of them will have visited it prior to this adventure. (The Mists of Ravenloft should catch them unaware.) If your PCs have visited the demiplane before, or are already in Ravenloft, adjust the descriptions in this section accordingly.

Starting the Adventure

As DM, the first thing you must do is arrange for the PCs to enter a swamp. Any swamp in any realm will do, for the Mists of Ravenloft can penetrate even the most distant lands. How do you arrange this startup? Perhaps the PCs must cross a swamp to reach their "true" destination. Or perhaps the PCs are just looking for someone or something, and their search leads to a swamp. It doesn't really matter how they get there; what matters is that they do.

Travel through a swamp is difficult. In some places the water is several feet deep, concealing roots, pits, and even more sinister dangers. The opening of this adventure assumes that the PCs are navigating the swamp in their original location by poling a raft. If your PCs decide to make the trek on foot, you'll have to alter the descriptions below. (Later on, you might arrange for them to find a broken and battered raft in the swamp of Souragne.)

Whatever their reason for being in the swamp, it shouldn't take long for the PCs to become hopelessly lost—especially with the help of Ravenloft's mysterious mists. Nightfall approaches. Describe the scene as follows:

Night begins to settle over the swamp, cloaking the dense undergrowth in darkness and turning the water's surface to black. With it comes a clinging, creeping fog, rising from the water like spectral steam. The fog surrounds you, its dampness caressing you like cold, dead hands. The swamp seems to retreat from the mists, its sights and sounds disappearing into some unseen distance. All that remains visible is the cold, choking fog. Even your companions seem far away. For a moment, everything is quiet. What few sounds you can hear are amplified by the surrounding mists: your own breathing, your beating heart. Then the fog begins to dissipate, fading away as quickly as it appeared, leaving you and your companions alone in the dismal swamp.

If the PCs react suspiciously to the mysterious fog or ask about the swamp, each should make a Wisdom check (1d20 roll). Successful PCs notice the following:

The swamp seems even darker than it did before. The nearby trees have become twisted shadows with clawlike branches reaching out, and a foul odor rises from the murky water. Overhead, through the tangled branches, the sky also appears strange. The stars have subtly changed positions, and the moon is closer, nearly full. Menacing clouds begin to roll across the western sky like a curtain of black smoke. In but a few moments, the clouds blot out the feeble starlight completely.

A storm is brewing—a very *bad* storm.

The PCs may try to retrace their path and find a way out. Of course, they're in Ravenloft now, and here they will stay until the demiplane decides to release them. Though fog cloaks the swamp, player characters can readily discern that their surroundings are no longer those of the realm they left behind.

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Swamp Encounters

The Mists of Ravenloft have deposited the PCs in the great swamp of Souragne, just five miles from Marais d' Tarascon. The Mists are disorienting; whatever route the PCs take, they remain lost in the swamp for four days, often traveling in circles. On day five, they reach the village (the mysterious mists stop interfering).

While many dangers lurk in the swamp, only a few take notice of the adventurers. This section outlines four swamp encounters: a crocodile, giant frogs, a Vistani camp, and Luc Tarascon in his "floating" house. The adventure is designed so that one encounter occurs each day. If this pacing is too slow for your players, you may wish to modify the adventure and run the crocodile and frog encounters on the same day. Or you may skip one of those encounters entirely, perhaps saving the other in case the PCs return to the swamp later. However, the Vistani and the floating house encounters must occur during the two days immediately preceding the PCs' arrival in Marais d' Tarascon. In any case, don't dwell on the time between encounters; proceed swiftly and smoothly from one day to the next.

While the PCs are in the swamp, the storm (noted earlier) continues to brew. With the approach of each nightfall, the sky becomes black and boiling, yet it is strangely silent: no thunder booms, no lightning flashes, and no rain falls. When morning comes, the sky has cleared somewhat, but it is still overcast, and grows darker throughout the day. After a string of such days and nights, when at last the PCs leave the swamp to enter Marais d' Tarascon, the storm seems ready to break. "The Gathering Storm" (at the end of this section) describes that event.

It is assumed that the PCs travel through the swamp by day and set camp at night. With the ever-thickening clouds overhead, it is too dark to navigate after nightfall, regardless of torchlight. Even during the day, the nature of

the swamp and the building storm make everything shadowy and gray.

Feel free to add events to "flesh out" the adventure in the swamp. All of these supplementary events should be atmosphere and tension builders—not outright combat with more swamp creatures. For example, the PCs may hear something slide through the water just beyond a nearby clump of trees. Or perhaps something bumps up against the bottom of their raft from time to time—and while they're shoving a pole into the water to investigate, a snake (nonpoisonous) drops onto the raft from the trees overhead. Paint a scene with mood-setting adjectives, imply that danger is imminent, and then go on with the adventure outlined here. Don't reveal that nothing is really waiting to consume the PCs. Let the players think that something which they don't fully understand has occurred, or that their characters have just narrowly escaped some dreadful event. In this way, you can enhance tension and suspense without throwing wave after wave of creatures at the player characters.

The Crocodile

The day is dark and dismal, painted gray by the mist and clouds. The sun has not shown its face since you arrived, and the air is clammy and cold. The water below the raft is several feet deep. To one side, black logs drift lazily atop the stagnant water. To the other, shadows slip through the trees and the underbrush, moving in time with the raft. The eyes of the swamp are upon you.

A hungry crocodile is lurking on the surface of the water among the drift of dark logs. If the PCs decide to poke at the logs, they have a 20 percent chance of spotting the crocodile. If they ignore the logs, the crocodile surprises them after they move past (–2 penalty to the PCs' surprise roll). The crocodile targets one PC who is near the edge of the raft. It tries to pull its

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victim into the water, content to grab one meal and flee before the others can react.

Crocodile: AC 5; MV 6/12; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; SD surprise; AL N; XP 65 each; THACO 16.

The Giant Frogs

The raft slips through a tangle of tall reeds growing up from beneath the black, murky water. The fog has dissipated, but the surroundings are still gloomy. Overhead, branches entwine to form a dense canopy. The sounds of the swamp are louder now, and they echo through the trees. Unseen creatures slide through the reeds below the water's surface. A chorus of croaks and *ribbits* begins, as if to greet you, growing so loud that every other sound is drowned out by their raucous song. Then, all at once, the chorus stops.

The PCs must make surprise rolls with a -3 penalty. Characters who are successful can see a trio of giant frogs a split second before the creatures strike. Characters who fail the surprise roll can hear something large moving through the vegetation before the frogs emerge from the shadow-filled swamp.

Each giant frog weighs 150 pounds and measures 4 feet long. It uses its long, sticky tongue to catch prey. While the tongue causes no damage, it does receive a +4 attack bonus. Characters struck by a tongue are reeled in toward the frog's deadly bite. With an attack roll of 20, a giant frog can swallow a small-sized victim whole (including demihumans under four feet tall). The PCs have inadvertently wandered into the frogs' feeding ground, and have been mistaken for today's meal.

An old flat-bottomed boat lies hidden in this area, concealed by reeds and nearly submerged. The boat has a gaping hole in its side just above the waterline. After defeating

the frogs, any PC who decides to look around can find the wreck by making a successful Wisdom check. All that remains of any interest in the boat is a locked chest. The chest contains water-logged food, clothes, and two +1 *short swords* wrapped in soaking wet cloth.

Giant Frogs (3): AC 7; MV 3/9; HD 2; hp 5, 8, 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA tongue; AL nil; XP 175 each; THACO 16.

The Vistani Camp

Time is beginning to lose meaning for the player characters as gray, sunless days merge into black, moonless nights. Each night the sky blackens and boils, but still no rain falls.

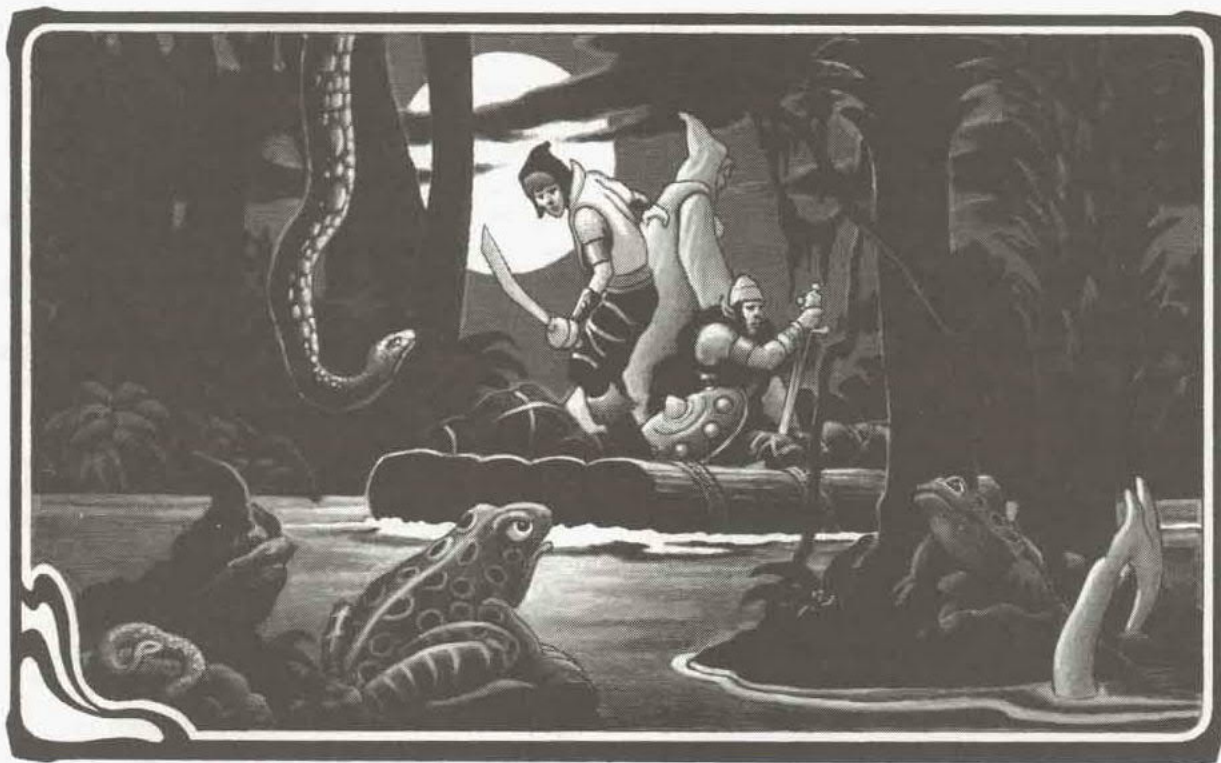
When this encounter occurs, twilight is nigh. In the distance, the PCs see a light. Describe the scene as they draw near to investigate:

A little island of dry land rises out of the stagnant water. The light comes from a fire that forms the center of a small camp. In the flickering light, you can clearly see a colorful gypsy wagon, two old mares, three gaily-clad children, and an old woman. A moment later, two men step into view. One is old and thin, the other young and strong. They settle themselves beside the fire. Then the old man looks up, directing the gaze of his good eye upon you. The other eye is milky and blank. The man smiles and motions with his withered hand, inviting you to join his group.

How this wagon, called a *vardo* by its owners, made its way to this spot is unclear; the PCs may be suspicious or nervous. The ways of the Vistani are strange, however, and the Mists often help them travel where they want to go.

This *vardo* is the same one Luc Tarascon visited roughly three weeks ago, receiving the clue which led him and his brother to the Hyskosa scroll. Now, with increasingly horrid events occurring in Marais d'Tarascon, this

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small Vistani clan has decided to move on. The gypsies are here to pass on a warning to the PCs (though even the gypsies may be unaware of that fact at the start of this encounter).

Of the seven Vistani in the camp, three are small children. Old Scarengi, the ancient Vistani with one blind eye, is the leader of this small brood. His wife, Ryana, a plump woman with silver hair and laughing eyes, is almost as ancient. Their son, Carloni, is a strong young man with black hair and a matching mustache. The three small children are his. (Their mother is deceased.) Carloni drives the horses, and he is eager to put as much distance as he can between his family and Marais d'Tarascon. It is Carloni's sister, Valana, who should catch the PCs' attention. This young woman's enchanting black eyes and red lips can set a man aflame. She is gifted with the power to see the future, and it was her vision which led to the recent Tarascon tragedy. She remains in the wagon for

a time after the PCs arrive.

If the PCs approach this clan in a friendly manner, Scarengi responds in kind, though Carloni remains distant and makes no effort to hide his desire to resume their journey. Scarengi and his wife tell the PCs that a village called Marais d'Tarascon lies at the edge of the swamp. "It is not far," Scarengi says, "but it is not a place to visit on a night such as this." Under his breath, Carloni adds, "Better to stay in the swamp." Scarengi refuses to reveal more. His wife, Ryana, agrees and says, "To speak of evil is to invite it to dinner."

Scarengi invites the player characters to join his family for dinner and to share their fire until morning comes. "Perhaps," he says with a sparkle in his eye, "there will even be time for a fortune." After dinner, when the children have been put to bed, Valana emerges from the back of the wagon with her pouch of runes. It is the first time the PCs have seen her.

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The door at the back of the wagon opens to reveal a shapely young woman with dark, expressive eyes. She smiles shyly, then settles nearby, beside the fire. "This," Scarengi proclaims proudly, "is my beautiful daughter Valana. She will tell your fortune."

Valana gazes at each of you in turn, with the firelight shining in her large, black eyes. "The trouble began when I cast the runes for that quiet and lost young man," she explains sadly. "Perhaps it will end with another casting." She holds a flat pan in her lap and stone tiles in her hands. Then, after gazing once again into your eyes, she drops the tiles into the pan.

"The lost one has called you!" Valana gasps. Each member of her family hastily makes a protective gesture. "The dead will walk with the coming storm, and you must find a way to put them to rest. If you cannot, the rain will turn to blood! It will drown you—you and all of Marais d'Tarascon."

Scarengi quickly ushers his wife and daughter into the wagon. "No charge for your fortune," the old man adds hastily. "It is time to rest after the adventures of the day. Be our guests and sleep beside the fire."

Nothing the PCs do can stop Scarengi and his family from retiring. Only Carloni remains outside, settling upright into the driver's seat of the wagon with a heavy cloak around him. He closes his eyes as if to sleep.

As the PCs begin to settle for the night, they see Valana's shapely form outlined in the wagon doorway. She speaks barely above a whisper, but the PCs can hear her clearly. "Beware the madman," she says. "Beware his blood." (This is important; be sure to say the words slowly so the players remember this clue.) Then the door closes and Valana is gone.

Valana's final words refer to Jean Tarascon (the madman) and Marcel the zombie lord (his blood, as in kin). If the PCs set a watch, sometime before morning the watch falls

asleep, no matter how hard he or she tries to avoid it. When the PCs awake, they are alone. Their raft remains where they left it, but no trace of the Vistani family remains.

If the PCs decide to battle the Vistani at any time during this encounter, Ryana puts a curse on them. "Until the blood has been washed by a like number of kind acts," she proclaims, "you will wander these lands of mist, these lands you so desperately seek to escape."

In other words, until the PCs have done seven good deeds for other Vistani, they will wander the demiplane of dread. Removing Ryana's curse will have to be the subject of future adventures, for the PCs have other things to do in the village of Marais d'Tarascon at this time. Note that attacking (and possibly killing) an innocent Vistani family is an evil act; in addition to suffering the curse, PCs are required to make a Ravenloft powers check (described in Chapter III of the RAVENLOFT™ boxed set).

Vistani (7): AC 6; MV 12; HD 4×4, 1×3; hp 21×4, 4×3; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL NE; XP 105×4, 7×3; THAC0 17.

The Floating House

At some point during their fourth day in the swamp, the PCs come across the house in which Luc Tarascon resides. The house should be as mysterious and threatening as any unknown location in Ravenloft.

The trees in this part of the swamp close in around the raft, forming a thick tangle of branches and exposed roots, making progress slow and difficult. Sharp, broken limbs scratch your arms and legs as you push the raft forward, and the wind whistles an odd, lifeless tune as it rushes through the leaves overhead. As you break through a clump of foliage, a light appears in the distance. It is brighter than a single lantern,

THE SWAMP

warm and inviting in the cold, damp air. The light is not at eye level. It hovers in the dark so that you must look up to see it.

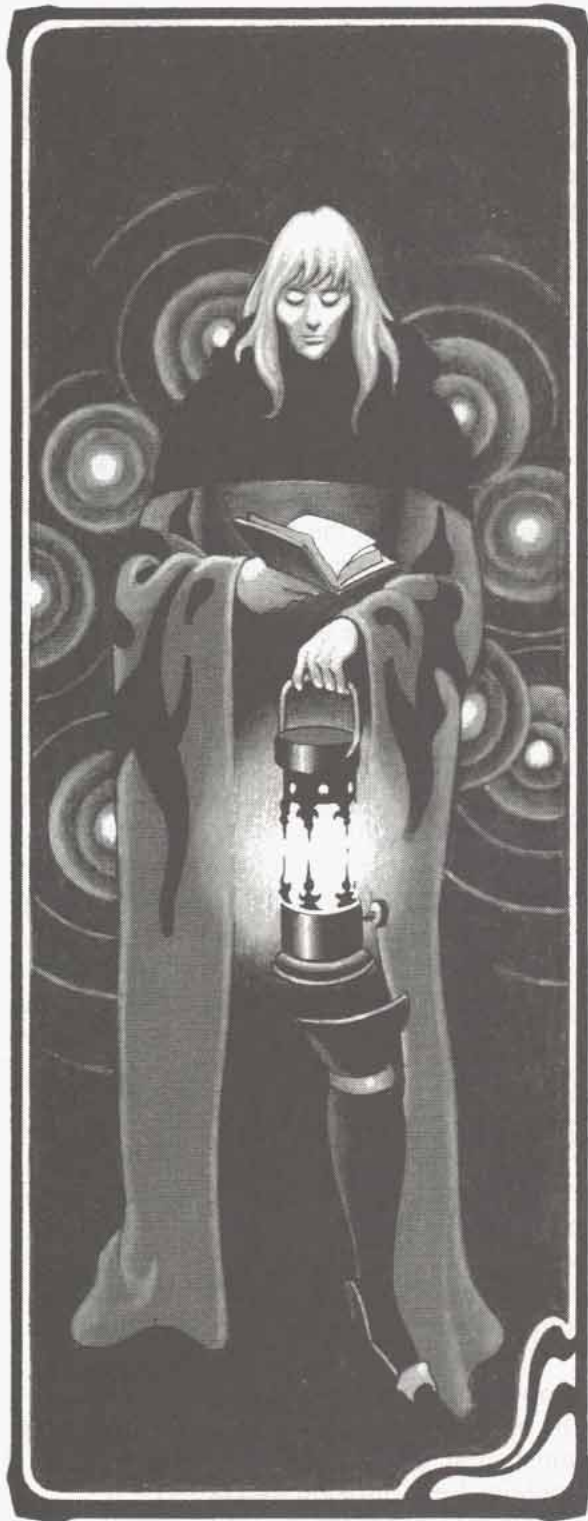
Like moths to a flame, you and your raft slide easily toward the source of the light. It is a small wooden house, hardly larger than a shack. Light spills from its two front windows and a wide open door. The house appears to be suspended in the air above the surface of the swamp, its reflection shimmering in the dank pool before it.

The house isn't actually floating in the air; it just looks that way in the darkness. Four stout poles rise from the swamp, lifting the house some 8 feet above the water. The poles obviously serve to protect the house from rising water and the creatures of the swamp. Other than an occasional croak or cricket song, the swamp around the house is still.

The PCs can approach the small house in any manner they choose. As noted, the front of the shack has two windows and an open door. No curtains cover the windows. From the angle the PCs have, they cannot see inside. There are no windows or doors on the sides of the structure, and the back wall holds only a single window, also bare. The water beneath and around the house is no more than 4 feet deep; in most places, it measures about 2 feet. The house has no porch. There is no sign of a boat.

Any attempt to get the attention of someone inside the shack results in failure. After the PCs are about to declare the house deserted or look inside, the following occurs:

Suddenly a rope ladder drops from the doorway. No figure steps into the light to greet you, and not even a shadow passes the open door. The ladder, constructed of wooden steps and thick rope, simply rolls out with a brief clatter of knocking wood. The last step hangs just above the surface of the fetid water, inviting you to climb up into the warm light.



THE SWAMP

The ladder waits patiently for the PCs to climb it. No one appears at the doorway to encourage (or discourage) them; Luc just sits inside the shack, unmoving. The ladder gently sways above the black water of the swamp. When a PC has climbed the rope ladder, read the following aloud:

The little house has only one room. All told, more than two dozen lanterns hang from pegs on the wall and sit on the warped wooden floor, flooding the shack with light. To the right of the door, unopened boxes have been neatly stacked against the wall. An open-topped barrel sits beside the boxes.

In the center of the room, facing the door, is a young man. He sits within a circle of five burning lanterns, with his large, blank eyes fixed in place. The young man is unusually thin and pale, and his long, blond hair hangs limply to his shoulders. His features are tortured. The simple shirt and pants that he wears are clean and fresh. He clutches a small book in his lap, but makes no move to get up or greet you—except to slowly struggle out an incomprehensible phrase: “The on descend shall evil of night the land, at near is signs of hexad this when hand.” Then he returns to his quiet state, neither speaking nor responding in any way.

The youth is Luc, youngest of the Tarascon brothers. He has become one of the shattered, broken souls known as the “lost ones.” He has retreated into himself to block out the terrors that have occurred in Marais d’Tarascon. The phrases he sometimes speaks are twisted verses from the Hyskosa Scroll, the last thing he was reading when his brother Marcel was killed by zombies and he shut out the world.

The unopened boxes contain fresh food brought out to the swamp by Shaman Brucian, the priest of Marais d’Tarascon. The stores are substantial; the PCs can eat heartily. The barrel contains fresh drinking water.

The book upon Luc’s lap is a collection of children’s poems. He gives it up without a struggle. Every poem is a short rhyme, similar to the confused verses which the youth utters. The first page contains an inscription: “To Luc, my beloved brother.” It is signed “Marcel.”

Luc does not communicate in any way, except for the occasional verse (see page 18). The youth will neither fight nor defend himself, though he will fly into a rage if someone extinguishes one of his lanterns. Even then, Luc only poses a danger to himself as he bashes his head and body against a wall or the floor. To calm him, the lantern must be relit.

The PCs can spend the night safely within Luc’s shack. In the morning, they see the smoke of a nearby village and can journey to Marais d’Tarascon. If they decide to stay at the shack for more than two days, Shaman Brucian arrives with fresh food and clothing for Luc. He can lead them to the village. (See area 9 in Part II for information on Brucian.)

However the PCs wind up heading for Marais d’Tarascon, Luc follows them like a faithful dog. Nothing the PCs do short of killing the youth can stop him from accompanying them. If they do kill Luc, the youth returns later as a ghost (see “Luc the Ghost” on page 18). Killing Luc is an evil act and requires a powers check.

Luc Tarascon (lost one): AC 10; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA rage; SD nil; AL N; XP 7; THACO 20.

The Gathering Storm

As the PCs begin to leave the swamp and approach the village of Marais d’ Tarascon, the sky fills with roiling black clouds. For the first time, lightning plays across the heavens. Still, no rain falls. The storm simply hangs over the swamp and the village, occasionally sending a bolt of lightning toward the ground or letting loose a clap of ominous thunder. When it finally breaks, the storm promises to be spectacular.

Part II: MARAIS D'TARASCON



Marais d'Tarascon is located approximately two-and-a-half miles from Port d'Elhour, on the eastern edge of Souragne's vast swamp. The PCs approach the village from the west, emerging from the swamp on the afternoon of day five. The storm clouds continue to build; despite the early hour, it seems like dusk. As noted,

if the PCs have not harmed Luc, he travels with them. He walks just a few steps behind the last PC, carrying his book of poetry and an ever-blazing lantern.

This portion of the adventure is divided into two sections: a guide to Marais d'Tarascon (see the map on the inside cover), and a list of events that take place in and near the village. All events are keyed to a certain time; some are also keyed to a location. For example, "The Funeral" occurs near the church as the PCs enter the village; it is assumed that the activity will draw them to that area. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the events in Marais d'Tarascon before the PCs explore the town.

As soon as the PCs enter the village, Jean Tarascon learns of their arrival. If Luc is with the party, Jean begins to plan how to "protect" Marcel from the knowledge the youth has retained about Hyskosa's scroll. If the PCs have killed Luc, Jean doesn't become overly concerned with the party until they try to find the murderer (him), get too close to Marcel, or until Luc appears as a ghost (see page 18).

The Village

Marais d'Tarascon is a cluster of small wood-and-thatch buildings at the edge of the swamp, housing about 300 people. A cemetery is perched on a hill overlooking the village. The graveyard is divided into two sections, one old (area 11 on the map), the other new (area 10). The old graveyard contains Marcel's lair. East of the village is the Tarascon plantation. From a distance it looks impressive, but on closer inspection, it is obvious that the fields have not been tended in weeks.

The PCs can wander freely, speaking with whomever they wish. Murders, zombies, disappearances—the events of the past weeks have caused a fearful mood to settle over the village. (Assume that Marcel died three weeks ago, regardless of how long the PCs have spent in the swamp.) Everyone is nervous and more than a little afraid. Some have even spoken of fleeing to Port d'Elhour, but at the moment such a course of action is still only talk.

Charisma Checks: To gain any personal information about the village, its inhabitants or recent events, the PCs must make successful Charisma checks. It's easiest to deal with shopkeepers; no modifier to the check applies. Dealing with common villagers is more difficult; a Charisma check with a -5 modifier is required to entice them to open up. Only one PC is allowed to make a Charisma check at a given shop or cottage. If the PC fails the check, another character can return to try later, but with a -2 cumulative modifier for each failure.

Some of the clues that PCs can obtain are noted in the guide to the village below. To fill out encounters in other locations, see "What Villagers Say" on page 18.

1. Full Moon Inn. The PCs are likely to take a room here during their stay in Marais d'Tarascon. (Certainly the villagers will recommend it.) A fence surrounds the inn, which is a large, two-story building with an attached stable. The Full Moon Inn serves as a

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meeting place for the villagers, especially during these dark times when everyone seeks comfort and the protection of others. A large common room features a bar and a dozen tables. Food is served from early morning until a respectable night hour, and rooms can be rented by the day.

Jerald Bascolm and his wife, Henrietta, run the inn. Their daughter Lillin heads a staff of four barmaids, and their son Jerald, Jr. tends the stable. One of the barmaids is a chatty young woman named Katha. If she warms up to a PC, she tells an interesting story:

"Over a week ago, Francois, a local fellow, well he fell dead right here in the common room. I was taking a break in the kitchen at the time, resting my weary feet near the back door. I remember, just before people started hollering in the common room, I got a whiff of some awful odor blowing in from outside. It was kind of like rotten meat—not that we serve any here, mind you—but worse. Luckily, I've got quite a strong stomach. In fact, I was just about to go outside to find out what could be causing that odor when the screams began. Then I saw Francois being carted off to be buried. You know, I forgot all about that awful odor until just a few days ago when old Fiora mentioned that she had smelled it, too. I'd lock your door while you're sleeping if I was you. Everybody in the village does now."

Though Katha doesn't realize it, she experienced the odor of death that surrounds Marcel Tarascon—the odor which surrounds every zombie lord. Fiora lives in the village (see location 12). Katha will point the way to Fiora's house should the PCs ask, with this precaution: "Fiora doesn't speak to anyone much lately, not even me."

Currently, the Full Moon Inn has only one guest other than the PCs: Duncan d'Lute. Duncan travels to Marais d'Tarascon every few

months to conduct business. He's an agent for several businesses in Port d'Elhour, making deals and trades between the two towns. He knows nothing of use about recent events here. He only knows that he wants to finish his business and leave as soon as he can.

2. Bakery. Louise d'Cann operates the bakery, turning out cakes, rolls, and candies. Her specialty is red licorice. Her best customers are Mordu, Jean Tarascon, and the Bordell children (all of whom like licorice). Besides this juicy tidbit, she can offer the PCs one piece of information from the list on page 18.

3. Carpenter. Marcus Bordell, the village carpenter, builds cabinets and furniture here. A half-dozen children—Marcus's sons and daughters—run around outside the shop during the day. He can offer the PCs one piece of information from page 18.

4. Pierot's Cottage. Pierot is the cemetery caretaker. By day, he's in area 10. When night falls, he comes home, locks the doors, lights a lantern, eats supper, goes to bed, and hopes to wake in the morning. He believes that Marais d'Tarascon is cursed by all of this death, and he is seriously considering leaving the village after the coming storm has passed.

5. Constable's Cottage. Constable Gremin maintains an office and a home in this cottage. He does not like strangers, and he distrusts the PCs because of their untimely arrival. His village is in the grip of some terrible evil, and he does not know how to protect it. What's worse, about two weeks ago his son fell prey to the mysterious ailment that kills its victims and then quickly turns them into zombies.

His son's death, combined with grisly murders and missing people, has pushed the constable toward the edge. He believes the murders and some of the missing people are connected, for he has found the same item at

SCROLL OF HYSKOSA

These signs were foreseen by Hyskosa, a Vistani most gifted with the Sight. Spread word of these wherever you travel. Only the true hearted can stop the fall of the night of evil.

The night of evil shall descend on the land
When this hexad of signs is near at hand.

In the house of Daegon the sorcerer born
Though life, unlife, unliving shall scorn.

The lifeless child of stern mother found
Heralds a time, night of evil unbound.

Seventh time the son of suns doth rise
To send the knave to an eternity of cries.

Inajira will make his fortunes reverse
Dooming all to live with the dreaded curse.

The light of the sky shining over the dead
shall gutter and fail, turning all to red.

MARCEL TARASCON, ZOMBIE LORD

Zombie Lord: AC 6; MV 6; HD 6; hp 39; #AT 2; Dmg 2-4/2-4; SA see below; SD see below; AL NE; THACO 15; XP 650.

Marcel has all the powers of a normal zombie lord (see the RAVENLOFT™ *Monstrous Compendium Appendix*). Some of these powers have been enhanced by the Land of Ravenloft, as noted below.

Special Attacks

Like any zombie lord, Marcel delivers crushing blows with his fists (two attacks per round, 2d4 damage each). In addition, the odor of death that surrounds Marcel affects all living beings who come within 30 yards of him. Characters must save vs. poison or suffer one of the following effects:

1d6 Roll	Effect
1	Weakness (as the spell)
2	Cause Disease (as the spell)
3	-1 Point of Constitution
4	Contagion (as the spell)
5	Character unable to act for 1d4 rounds due to nausea and vomiting
6	Character dies instantly and becomes a zombie under zombie lord's control

Three times per day, Marcel can cast *animate dead* to create zombies. By using this power on living beings, he can also turn *them* into zombies. In either case, the range of this innate power is 100 yards. If a living target fails a saving throw vs. death, he is instantly slain and rises in 1d4 rounds as a zombie under Marcel's control. (Marcel's ability to create zombies has been enhanced.)

Special Defenses

Like zombies, Marcel is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, death magic, poison and cold-based spells. He can be turned as a vampire, however, and suffers 2d4 points of damage from direct contact with holy water or holy symbols.

Special Abilities

Marcel can converse freely with the living dead through a mystical, telepathic ability. He can also speak to dead (per the spell) by merely touching the corpse. Further, Marcel can control zombies within a one-mile radius, including monster and ju-ju zombies, and he can use their senses to know what is happening in the area. (This is an enhanced ability.)

Background

Marcel Tarascon was obsessed with finding the Hyskosa scroll when he was alive. Although he was not evil, his morals did become increasingly twisted as he searched for the legendary scroll.

As noted in the introduction, Marcel still believes the Hyskosa scroll holds the key to untold power—even now that he is a zombie lord. Marcel's mad twin brother, Jean, has promised to find the scroll. (He has no intention of doing so, however.) In the meantime, Marcel is building his zombie army by animating corpses and slaying villagers with his special powers. Jean helps. He has already murdered many villagers and has given some of the corpses to Marcel.

The PCs battle (and probably kill) Jean as Part II of the adventure comes to a close. As Part III begins, Marcel unleashes his zombies on the village, ordering them to find the scroll at all costs. When the PCs approach Marcel's lair in the old cemetery, the zombie lord calls some of his minions back to aid him.

Combat

Marcel refuses to fight hand-to-hand until an opponent steps upon the platform of bones in his lair. He prefers to direct his undead servants and use his special abilities. When the PCs reach his lair, he has already used his *animate dead* power once that day. He can use it twice against the PCs if he desires.

JEAN TARASCON, MADMAN

4th Level Fighter/Madman: AC 6; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 or 1-4 + 1; SA surprise; SD nil; AL CE; THAC0 17; XP 210. Str 14; Dex 10; Con 12; Int 11; Wis 9; Cha 9.

Equipment: Studded leather armor, *ring of protection +1*, *dagger +1* in walking stick, pocketful of red licorice pieces, two *potions of healing*, black cloak with hood.

Special Attacks

Jean is a convincing actor. If he attempts to give the PCs a false sense of security, they suffer a -2 penalty to their surprise rolls. Victims thus surprised take triple damage, as if they had been backstabbed by a 5th-level thief.

Background

Jean Tarascon was driven mad by the events of recent weeks. When he found his twin brother Marcel murdered by zombies, his grief knew no bounds. He knew that his brother's obsession with that ancient scroll would lead to sorrow and death, and his prediction held true. Still, he hoped the village priest, Shaman Brucian, could perform some kind of miracle on Marcel. For a moment, it looked as if he did.

But the priest's use of a *raise dead* scroll failed. Jean knew what Marcel had become. He took his brother's body to the old cemetery, where Marcel soon rose as a zombie lord. These events drove Jean toward the brink of insanity. When he watched his brother feast on carrion, Jean became more than just mad, he became a murderer.

As noted in the introduction, Jean has pledged himself to "protecting" Marcel from his obsession. Jean has hidden the scroll of Hyskosa in his townhouse, and has sent his brother Luc into the swamp to hide him from Marcel. Jean also dons a black, hooded cloak in the dim hours of the night and stalks victims for Marcel to feast upon. In his mad state of mind, Jean has taken to leaving a piece of red licorice behind at every murder scene.

To fully participate in Marcel's new state of existence, Jean has ordered the family servants to feast on dead human flesh as well. This has turned

his servants into ghouls. He himself, however, has yet to partake in the nightly feasts.

The villagers still see Jean Tarascon as he was—a wealthy villager and leader of the community. His recent lapses of violent outbursts and signs of foul temper are excused due to the tragedies which have befallen his family.

When Luc returns to the village, Jean becomes furious. He immediately decides to kill the interlopers who have befriended the youth, but he will not attack them in public. Instead, he stalks them at night. He also tries to kill Luc so that his beloved brother Marcel will forget about his obsession with the cursed scroll. He hates Luc and the scroll, blaming both for what has happened to Marcel. He hid the scroll and sent Luc away before the madness fully took him, but now he will kill Luc if he has the opportunity. If the scroll should appear before Jean, he will attempt to destroy it. He holds Shaman Brucian responsible for Marcel's current state, but has not yet fallen so deeply into madness that he would attack a holy man.

Combat

Jean prefers to stalk and attack his victims through surprise. He normally runs from superior numbers. If pressed into direct battle, he uses his healing potions to replace lost hit points and fights savagely with his wicked dagger. He tries to attack single individuals away from crowds. If necessary, he will call on his servants-turned-ghouls to aid him against the player characters.



CLUES

What Luc Says

The following twisted verses are spoken by Luc throughout the adventure. Do not use verses before the proper time.

Chapter One

The on descend shall evil of night the land, at near are signs of hexad this when hand.

In sorcerer the Daegon of house the born, though shall unliving, unlife, life scorn.

The mother stern of child lifeless found, heralds evil of night a time unbound.

Chapter Two

Seventh doth suns of son the time rise, to of eternity an to knave the send cries.

Inajira fortunes his make will reverse, dooming the dreaded with live to all curse.

The over shining sky the of light the dead, shall to all turning fail and gutter red.

Chapter Three

(This is the clue given to Luc by the Vistani.)
Look for the scroll where the old rest fine, behind the stone where six stars shine. The finding, however, will cause much pain, beware the time of the falling rain.

Luc the Ghost

If Luc is killed anytime during the adventure, his ghost returns to haunt the PCs. (The first time he appears, PCs should make horror checks with a +4 bonus.) His state as a lost one does not change, nor does his desire to see the evil of his family stopped. There is only one key difference between Luc alive and Luc dead: the ghost does not follow the PCs around with a lantern. Instead, the spirit appears from time to time to recite a verse or give the PCs a clue. Luc's spirit cannot rest until the evil of his brothers, Jean and Marcel, comes to an end.

What Villagers Say

The following clues, both true and false, can be gathered from conversations with the villagers.

1. In the past three weeks, the villagers know of nine "sudden" deaths that have occurred. (True. This is Marcel's work.)
2. Of the nine who died suddenly, seven were buried in sealed coffins, and two escaped into the night as zombies. (True.)
3. Six villagers are missing. (True. This is Jean's doing.)
4. Red licorice pieces were found along with articles belonging to four of the missing people. (True. This is Jean's work.)
5. Lady Grissim, one of the missing, was seen walking in front of the cemetery. (False.)
6. Besides licorice, there is always lots of blood at the scene of a murder or disappearance. (True.)
7. Three weeks ago, Hogarth the field worker fell dead, quickly decayed, and rose as a zombie. (True.)
8. Just over three weeks ago, Marcel Tarascon died. Some say he was killed by the undead, too. (True.)
9. Jean Tarascon has taken full control of the family business. (True.)
10. If Marcel was given a funeral, none of the villagers attended. (True.)
11. Cultists loyal to the Lord of the Dead are operating in the village. (False.)
12. The old cemetery is haunted by wraiths. (False.)
13. The constable's son was the second to die, simply falling to the ground inexplicably. (True.)
14. The Vistani told Old Fiora that the night of the dead was fast approaching. (True. The night is nigh.)
15. Shaman Brucian worships the Lord of the Dead. (False.)
16. The night Marcel died, villagers saw Jean carry him to the church. (True.)
17. Shaman Brucian has gone into the swamp frequently since Marcel died. (True.)
18. A vampire has been stalking the village streets. (False.)
19. Many people are missing. (True.)
20. The Old Cemetery was sealed long ago, and no one has entered it in decades. (True, until Luc and Marcel found the secret entrance.)

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many of these scenes: a piece of red licorice.

If the PCs give Gremin any trouble, he threatens to arrest them. A *charm* spell or a very convincing argument can prevent the arrest (Charisma -5). With the second provocation, however, Gremin locks them in the small stone jail/storage shed next to his cottage—at least overnight.

Escape from the jail is fairly simple: the lock can easily be picked by a thief, and the door can be broken with a successful bend bars/lift gate attempt. A wiser tactic is persuasion; with a successful Charisma check, modified by -10, the jailed PCs can convince the constable that they can help the town. In this way, they avoid being known throughout town as “escaped convicts.” When the zombies attack in Part III, the constable releases the PCs, no matter what may have transpired between them.

Constable Gremin (2nd-level fighter): AC 4 (chain mail and shield); MV 12; HD 2; hp 15; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (long sword); AL LG; THAC0 19.

6. Mordu's Cottage. Mordu, the town eccentric, lives alone in this small cottage. Unlike most other villagers, Mordu welcomes the PCs with open arms and friendly greetings. He does not seem the least bit nervous or upset by recent events. To the contrary, he seems quite excited by it all. He offers them red licorice from an earthen jar, then asks what they know about the happenings in Marais d'Tarascon.

Mordu, of course, has his own theories about the mysterious deaths and disappearances. He believes they have something to do with an ancient swamp god that has been called to Souragne by a group of cultists. (He is wrong, but he should sound credible and sincere to the PCs.) He promises to find proof, and asks the PCs to return the next day to talk further. Before the PCs leave, Mordu shares two other pieces of information from page 18.

Mordu has long been an amateur scholar. He

has dozens of scrolls and books concerning the Souragne and “lands beyond.” (Like most inhabitants of the demiplane of dread, he is unaware that he is trapped in a realm called Ravenloft.) Few of Mordu's books are serious works. In fact, only one contains any pertinent information. It concerns the history of Anton Misroi, lord of Souragne. Unfortunately, it is written in an ancient language which Mordu cannot read. The others are more fanciful than scholarly, including Mordu's favorite, a book titled *The Cult of the Swamp God*.

7. General Store. This large, cluttered building is the village's general store. It is run by the dwarf Deruno and his family, who happened upon Marais d'Tarascon much like the PCs and decided to stay. Deruno sells traveling equipment, foodstuffs, household goods, and dairy (goat's milk) products at fair prices. He buys items for the store at half market price.

Deruno has a few items that may interest the PCs, kept hidden and locked away. The dwarf will only bring them out once he gets to know and trust the PCs. If they have been openly helping the village, he offers the items for free. These include three *potions of healing*, six +1 *arrows*, *bracers of AC 6*, and a *long sword +1*.

8. Blacksmith. The blacksmith is a large, powerful man named Jordi. He is quiet and shy, and initially refuses to talk about anything but business. If Luc is with the PCs (and he will be unless something has happened to him), Jordi clutches his hammer and backs away. He fears the young man. Any kind of racket will bring Jordi's wife, Nadine, running.

Nadine is deeply saddened by the disappearance of Colin, her only son, who worked for the Tarascons. (Colin is now a ghoul, but she doesn't know it.) If persuaded, Nadine explains that Colin never returned from work five days ago, and any inquiry at the plantation has met with indifference. The constable has been too occupied with other happenings, including the death of his own son, but he has

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promised to check with Jean Tarascon as soon as he is able.

Jordi can provide the PCs with one piece of information from page 18. His wife responds to questions with tears and pleas for help, but otherwise she knows nothing helpful.

9. Church. Shaman Brucian is the village priest. His church honors the gods of good, paying equal service to law, neutrality and chaos, though Brucian himself is neutral good. His residence is the adjacent cottage, but lately he stays in the church.

If persuaded, Brucian reluctantly describes recent events in the village. He says that villagers have been dying suddenly, even those who appeared strong and healthy a moment before. The first such death, about three weeks ago, was a field worker named Hogarth. Only minutes after falling dead to the ground, Hogarth rose as a zombie. Now Brucian always seals the coffins of the recently dead.

The priest does not tell the PCs about the Tarascon family on their first meeting, even if Luc is with them. If the PCs did not meet Brucian in the swamp, he appears surprised to see Luc now. He goes to the youth to make sure he is all right, and Luc responds by reciting a twisted verse. During this first meeting with the PCs, the priest is rather curt in response to questions about Luc. He says Luc is a "lost one" from the village, but reveals no family ties. Brucian also explains that he took pity on Luc, occasionally venturing into the swamp to deliver food and fresh water.

The priest is secretive because he does not trust the PCs yet. If they return later and confront him with things they have learned, or if they manage to convince him through subsequent actions that they are willing to help the village, Brucian nervously explains more. He says that Marcel Tarascon was the first to die in this string of horror. He also describes the unfortunate changes which this death wrought in Jean Tarascon, as well as in his younger brother Luc. Brucian does not, however,

mention that Jean brought Marcel's body to him. Nor does he describe his failure to revive Marcel until Part III of this adventure.

The priest has the normal complement of spells. In a locked chest in the church, Brucian also keeps a scroll with four *cure serious wounds* spells, a scroll with two *cure disease* and two *cure light wounds* spells, and a scroll with two *raise dead* spells. Because of his failure to restore Marcel, he is reluctant to use the *raise dead* spells.

Shaman Brucian (2nd-level priest): AC 10; MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 2 (*footman's mace* + 1); AL NG; THACO 20.

10. The Cemetery. The village cemetery sits atop a small rise overlooking the town, appropriately dubbed "Cemetery Hill" by the villagers. A 10-foot-high stone wall surrounds the entire graveyard, and an iron gate on the south side provides access. The original graveyard is sealed shut and overgrown with vines. (See area 11.) In contrast, the new cemetery is well tended and open to the public. A single path leads to the gate.

If the PCs visit the new cemetery during the day, they can walk freely among the dead. Because of the high water table, bodies are interred above ground. Instead of headstones, the cemetery is filled with mausoleums (stone buildings containing numerous vaults). The cemetery also holds several dozen stacked vaults, not housed in any building, providing affordable interment for common villagers.

The vaults containing those who recently died have been sealed and locked (the villagers know them to be undead). If the PCs enter the Tarascon mausoleum—the most prominent in the new cemetery—they discover that it does not hold Marcel's body. The most recent addition to the mausoleum is Claudine, mother of Marcel, Jean, and Luc. She died years ago.

During the day, Pierot, the groundskeeper and caretaker, can be encountered. (By night,

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he resides at area 4.) Pierot never enters the old cemetery, and he doesn't know what happened to the keys for the heavy locks on the old gate. In fact, he's sure those locks are rusted shut. If a PC persuades him to talk, Pierot offers one clue from page 18. In addition, if they ask him about the Tarascon family, he says that Marcel's body was never brought to him at the cemetery for interment.

After Dark: No one, not even Pierot, goes to the new cemetery (or old) at night. If the PCs visit after dark, they encounter two ghouls. The ghouls are opening up the most recently sealed vault: Jeremiah's if the PCs allow him to be buried (see "Village Events"); Jazeel Toreng's if the PCs stopped Jeremiah's burial. If the PCs pause to watch the disinterment, then they must deal with the newly-freed zombie as well as the ghouls. If the PCs act before the vault is opened, they need only battle the ghouls.

Both ghouls flee if they lose more than half their hit points or if they are turned. If the creatures escape, one leaves behind a bit of cloth, which the village tailor can later identify. If the PCs defeat one of the creatures, the constable can identify him as Colin, son of Jordi the blacksmith. If the PCs defeat the other ghoul, too, the constable knows her as Teresa, daughter of Fiora. Both were servants at the Tarascon plantation.

If the ghouls prove to be too much for the PCs, Shaman Brucian arrives and turns the creatures before the party is killed.

Ghouls (2): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 6, 9; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD as undead; AL CE; XP 175 each; THACO 19.

11. The Old Cemetery. This ancient graveyard has been sealed for more than 100 years. Whatever caused such drastic action has been lost to legend, but the villagers remember enough to avoid it at all costs. The only known ways into the old cemetery are to climb over the 10-foot-high stone wall or to break the heavy chains and locks that hold the iron gate.

A secret passage leads from beneath a statue ("A" on the village map) to an opening in the hillside ("B"). Only the Tarascon brothers and the zombies know of this passage.

By looking through the gate or over the wall, the PCs see an overgrown forest of vines and trees. They can barely make out crypts through the wild growths, and the path is almost nonexistent. The villagers and Pierot discourage the PCs from exploring the old cemetery. Ideally, the PCs won't enter this area until Part III begins, but you should not overtly prevent them from doing so. During the day, Constable Gremin might arrive and forbid them from trespassing. At night, strange rustling and slavering noises might discourage them from entering the pitch-black area.

If the PCs decide to explore the old cemetery before all the "Village Events" have occurred, go to Part III and run the encounters listed there. You'll have to make two changes. First, the zombies have not yet been unleashed upon the village. As a result, there will be more at Marcel's side; double the amount of zombies listed in each encounter. Second, Jean is still on the loose. He comes to Marcel's aid and fights alongside him in the final battle unless the PCs have dealt with him beforehand.

12. Fiora's Cottage. The old woman known as Fiora lives here. She has been badly frightened by recent events, and usually refuses to deal with anyone, villagers and strangers alike. She has barricaded herself in her home, and adorned the doors and windows with clumps of garlic, wolfsbane, and holy symbols.

At times, Fiora can be heard calling for her daughter, Teresa. If the PCs convince Fiora to speak with them, she says that foul flesh eaters (ghouls) have been rummaging through the cemetery each night. She has not seen Teresa for nearly two weeks; she never returned home from work at the Tarascon plantation.

13. Tarascon Townhouse. In addition to the plantation manor (area 15), the Tarascon family

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maintains this two-story home in the village. Jean spends much of his time hiding here, planning ways to improve his family's present situation. Jean is mad; all plans now revolve around murder and joining Marcel as a member of the undead. During the day, there is an 80 percent chance that Jean will be here. At night, the chance drops to 20 percent.

The townhouse is locked up tight, and heavy curtains cover every window. All locks are of masterful quality (–60 open locks modifier). If he is home, Jean Tarascon refuses to answer knocks, pretending to be gone. He has nothing to say to the PCs or anyone else. Any attempt to force entry could be noticed by villagers (50 percent chance, with bonuses for "caution and quiet" as the DM sees fit). If the PCs are spotted, the constable arrives in 1d6 rounds. Breaking into a locked home is a crime; the PCs may be carted off to jail. (See area 5.)

If they do manage to break in while Jean is home, he avoids the PCs. He knows where to hide and how to move to keep ahead of them. He does not attack even if he has the opportunity to kill them one by one. But he will remember this transgression, and will go after the PCs elsewhere at the earliest opportunity.

The house is well-appointed and full of expensive (albeit dusty) furniture. Downstairs there is a parlor, dining room, sitting room, kitchen, and cook's room. Upstairs are three bedrooms and Jean's study. If the PCs search for a secret door in the study, they find a small space hidden behind a bookshelf. In the hiding place is a black, hooded cloak and a scroll tube containing the Hyskosa scroll. The pockets of the black cloak are filled with red licorice.

14. Tailor Shop. Tomas Levi is the proprietor. He and his family make and repair all types of clothing. Tomas tries to interest the PCs in the latest fashions from Port d'Elhour, showing off gaudy fabrics and foppish patterns.

If the PCs make the necessary Charisma check (no modifier), Tomas provides one piece of information from page 18. In addition, if the

PCs show him the cloth ripped from a ghoul in the cemetery, he identifies it: the cloth is from a uniform worn by all servants at the Tarascon manor house. (Tomas made the uniforms.)

15. Tarascon Plantation (not shown). The manor house and servant quarters beside it are in excellent repair. The stately manor house is a white, two-story building with tall columns at the front. The servant's house has but a single floor. If the PCs arrive during the day, both houses are locked tight (masterful quality locks, –60 modifier). If the PCs stop by in the evening, go to "The Dinner Party" event.

Village Events

The following events occur over a number of days, starting with the afternoon on which the PCs arrive. Speed or slow the events to match the pace of your players.

Day One: The Funeral

Upon arriving in the village, the PCs can go wherever they choose. Activity in front of the church should catch their attention, however. An outdoor funeral is being conducted (despite the threatening sky). Until it ends, every shop in town remains closed. Signs in the windows proclaim "Closed for Funeral" and "Gone to the Church." Even the cottages are locked up tight.

If the PCs wait in front of one of the shops for the funeral to end, they watch from a distance as a small crowd follows a wagon up to the cemetery. After a short period of time, the crowd emerges and the shops reopen. If the PCs decide to approach the churchyard to get a closer look, proceed with this event.

Solemn faces gaze at you suspiciously, but no one says a word. The villagers soon return their attention to the priest who stands over a coffin wrapped with heavy chains.

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The priest's booming voice echoes throughout the churchyard. "Friends and family, we mourn the untimely death of Jeremiah d'Gris," he laments. "Let us take comfort in the fact that he goes to a better place, and let us pray that his eternal rest is peaceful and without incident. Jeremiah, you will be missed, but you will not be welcome here again. Depart this plane and go to the next world with our blessing."

The priest continues his liturgy, even though a muffled bang causes him a moment's pause. The villagers flinch but quickly regain their composure. The bang sounds again from within the coffin. The coffin rocks back and forth, but the priest and the crowd ignore it.

If the PCs simply watch, the priest directs the mule-drawn cart up the hill toward the cemetery. The crowd follows. All the way up the hill, sounds of something trying to escape emerge from the shaking coffin. The villagers ignore it, but the priest waves his holy symbol over the box and whispers, "Jeremiah, be still." At the gate, Pierot, the cemetery keeper, meets the cart. He directs the procession toward an open vault. The attendants slide the coffin inside and quickly seal the vault. Then, without a word, the crowd returns to the village.

If the PCs decide to set the "poor man" in the coffin free, the priest and village constable implore the characters to stop, and to reconsider their rash actions. Neither man fights, however, and if the PCs insist, the attendants reluctantly move aside. Once they start to break the chains, the crowd disperses. Even the constable flees. Only the priest remains, watching with sad eyes.

Inside the coffin is Jeremiah d'Gris, who died last night and has now risen as a zombie. Once free, he attacks the party and tries to escape into the fields east of the village. (PCs should make horror checks.) The zombie battles to the death if no escape is possible.



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Zombie (1): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA nil; SD as undead; AL N; XP 65; THACO 19.

Following Zombies and Ghouls: If at any time the PCs decide to follow a fleeing ghoul or zombie, they can easily track the undead creature to the fields beyond the Tarascon plantation. After that, the creature loses them in the rows of crops and backtracks to the passage in the side of the cemetery hill. Do not allow the PCs to discover this passage yet.

Day Two: Scene of the Crime

If the PCs are exploring the village, they notice the constable kneeling in an alley, peering at the ground. Read the following:

The constable regards you sternly. Spattered all around him on the ground and walls are flecks of reddish brown. Before him is a large stain of the same substance, apparently dried blood. In the center of the stain is a single piece of bright red licorice.

During the early hours of the night, Jean Tarascon stalked one of the barmaids from the inn as she made her way home. She never got there. The only proof of her passing is the drying blood. If the PCs offer to help the constable, he reluctantly accepts. This event serves to alert the PCs to the presence of a murderer; it does not reveal who the killer is, however, or even who the victim is.

Jean took the body to the old cemetery as carrion for his brother. The murderer always cleans the blood from his hands and clothes before returning to his townhouse to rest.

Night Two: The Odor of Death

While the PCs are at the inn, a vile stench wafts into the building. It is the odor of the zombie lord; all PCs must save vs. poison (see

page 16). Successful PCs can investigate the odor's source. If the PCs are in the common room, at least one other patron succumbs.

Marcel is stalking the village streets this night, seeking to turn the living into zombies. If the PCs rush into the street, they find bits of flesh and ichor on the dirt path behind the inn. There is no other sign of Marcel, however. He has fled to his lair.

If the PCs check on Duncan d'Lute, who was in his room when Marcel passed, they arrive in time to find him rising as a zombie. If they do not think to check on the man, he is missing when morning arrives. Duncan the zombie has the same statistics as the zombie in the funeral event, but roll to determine his hit points.

Night Three: The Madman Strikes

Late in the afternoon, as the sky grows black with storm clouds, the PCs get a chance to stop a murder. Pick an opportune time to stage this event. The PCs could be relaxing at the inn or talking with some of the villagers. In the midst of this relative quiet, terror strikes.

A scream shatters the quiet afternoon, echoing throughout the village streets.

Nothing more occurs; there's only a scream. Secretly make a Wisdom check for each PC. Those who fail think that the scream came from the wrong direction. Those who succeed can identify the direction from which the scream really came, but nothing more. The players have no way of knowing for sure who is correct; let the PCs discuss their impressions.

If the PCs choose the wrong way, a second scream alerts them to their mistake. They arrive too late and find Lillin, the innkeeper's daughter, lying dead in a pool of her own blood. Red licorice pieces have been scattered around her corpse—one piece for each PC.

If the PCs choose the correct way, they arrive in time to encounter Tarascon, and surprise the

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platter, revealing tonight's meal: the remains of a freshly dead young man. Dried blood covers much of his pale flesh, and a wicked cut stretches from ear to ear. Suddenly, a face appears in the window, staring with malevolent eyes—the eyes of a ghoul!

Jean Tarascon's servants have all become ghouls, turned into the foul creatures by eating carrion at the madman's insistence. (The PCs should make horror checks.) Jean wants to emulate and please his brother Marcel, who now exists by eating rotting flesh. But Jean himself has yet to muster the courage to eat dead flesh; he simply kills and then feeds his victims to his servants. He now he has a pack of ghouls at his beck and call.

The ghouls notice the PCs and move to attack. All three have game statistics matching the ghouls in the cemetery (area 10), but you should roll each creature's hit points separately. The ghouls battle to the death. As in the cemetery encounter, if the PCs are losing, Shaman Brucian can show up to aid them.

After the battle, the PCs can look around the house. Except for the silver platters, all that remains of much value is furniture. The PCs also can find a number of the missing villagers—all dead at Jean's hands. Clumps of dirt lie in some of the rooms, but no other trace of the undead exists. Given this scant evidence, the PCs will probably think the ghouls are responsible for the murders. Nothing here points to Jean Tarascon himself. The PCs may even think that Jean has been murdered, too, though no physical remains can be found.

Day Four: Facing the Madman

After talking to villagers for four days and experiencing the events above, the PCs should be close to connecting Jean Tarascon with some of the village woes. Even if they haven't made this connection, Jean thinks they have. Plus, he believes the only way to keep Marcel

safe is to kill young Luc. On day four, Jean kills his younger brother and the PCs.

Jean follows the party around town. His goal is to pick them off one by one, so he strikes when the best opportunity to attack a single character presents itself. If no such opportunity arises, the madman attacks in desperation when the PCs enter a concealed or out-of-the-way location (such as his townhouse).

Jean goes after a wizard or cleric first, attempting to use his surprise bonus to eliminate the spellcaster. Then he turns his attention on Luc, though he will fight others who get in his way. If Luc is already dead for some reason, his ghost appears beside the PCs. (See "Luc the Ghost" on page 18.)

When Jean first attacks, read the following:

The madman stands before you, completely enshrouded by a black, hooded cloak. Only the curved dagger in his pale right hand is visible. Then he tosses back the hood, revealing a face twisted by madness and eyes lit by the fire of insanity. That fire is clearly consuming him, burning away what is left of his mind and his humanity.

"You should not have come to Marais d'Tarascon," the madman hisses. "And you should not have brought that whelp of a brother with you!" he shouts, waving his dagger at Luc. "You have forced this confrontation! Let the blood be on your hands as you taste the blade of Jean Tarascon!"

With that, the madman attacks.

Jean Tarascon battles to the death. During the fight, the constable and Shaman Brucian conveniently arrive if the PCs need assistance. After the battle, Brucian offers whatever spells and scrolls he has left to heal the party.

Part III: LAIR OF THE ZOMBIE LORD



If the PCs have made it this far, they probably believe they have stopped the menace and saved the village. (After all, Jean Tarascon is dead.) The menace still exists, but don't destroy their illusions just yet.

Let the PCs spend the rest of the day healing at the inn, learning spells, and then gathering supplies for their

journey away from Marais d'Tarascon. Luc continues to follow them around, but he has fallen silent since the day before, spouting no more nonsense verses.

All the villagers are friendly toward the PCs, and willing to strike some excellent deals for supplies and equipment. Of course, no one can provide directions to places larger than Port d'Elhour, but most people are sure the PCs can learn what they need to know about escaping Souragne there. The villagers are anxious to celebrate; they invite the player characters to spend one more night at the inn. That allows the PCs a fresh start in the morning, and after all, the weather is poor for travel.

All through the day on which Jean Tarascon dies, storm clouds hover over the village, just as they have for days. Thunder booms on occasion, followed by a flash of lightning, but otherwise this day is as dark and dismal as those preceding it. Still no rain comes.

If the PCs decide to leave before nightfall, Luc accompanies them. The farther they travel, the more agitated he becomes. Finally, he begins to repeat a new verse, the one which the gypsy Valana gave him (see page 18). If Luc is dead at this point, he comes to the PCs as a ghost to direct them back to the village.

Finally, night covers the land and the rain begins to fall.

The Storm

With the coming of night, thunder shakes the village. It starts as a low rumble in the distance and builds to a terrible, long-lasting explosion that rocks cottages and knocks items from shelves. Lightning dances wildly across the sky, casting stark shadows in its skittering flash. Then the rain begins, falling in large, foul drops that soon become a deluge. The streets quickly turn to mud; small streams form in the cracks and depressions. Vision is obscured by the unending sheets of dark water, and the rain falls with such force that it hurts those who venture into its fury. Through it all, the thunder continues to roll above the village, and the lightning intensifies. The storm has arrived.

As the storm batters the small village, the time for telling stories around the fire has begun. The PCs are probably in the inn's common room, sitting before the large fireplace with villagers who are waiting out the storm. As everyone sips their drinks, listening to the thunder and torrents, Luc begins to recite his verses. Now, however, he is saying them correctly, quoting directly from Hyskosa's scroll. (If Luc died earlier, his ghost appears to ramble through the verses.)

If the PCs have not found the scroll in the Tarascon townhouse, one of them may wish to write down Luc's words. After a moment, Shaman Brucian speaks up. As the priest begins to talk, Luc lowers his voice, but he does not stop reciting. "I have a story to tell you," the shaman begins. "I do not think the worst is over in Marais d'Tarascon."

He describes the stormy night on which Jean brought Marcel to him about a month ago. Marcel was quite dead, torn apart by undead

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hands. "I retrieved a scroll from my small collection and attempted to raise poor Marcel," Brucian continues, "but something went wrong. Marcel remained dead, and Jean cried out in anguish. He spirited away the corpse of his brother. That was the last I saw of Marcel, and the last time I saw Jean alive." (Presumably, Brucian knows the PCs killed Jean.)

Brucian does not know what his failed miracle wrought; Marcel did not rise as a zombie lord until later. However, the priest has suspected all along that some undead agency has been at work in his village. Until now, he thought that Marcel fell victim to the same agency as the other villagers. Now he realizes that the time of trouble began after Marcel died—and not a moment before. Brucian doesn't know what that means, but he is sure the events are connected, and he shares his suspicions with the PCs.

Two things occur just as the shaman finishes his tale. First, another villager falls over dead. In 1d4 rounds he rises as a zombie and rushes to capture Luc (if he is alive) or the PC holding either the Hyskosa scroll or the copied verses that Luc recited. The zombie has the same statistics as the one in "The Funeral" (see Part II), but roll its hit points randomly. (Horror checks may not be required, depending on the number of previous zombie encounters and the outcome of those checks.) Second, Luc stops reciting the Hyskosa text. Instead, he recites the prophecy which was given him by the gypsy Valana. He repeats her prophesy over and over until the PCs get the hint.



Zombies on the Move

After the PCs have dealt with the newly-created zombie, the door to the inn bursts open. A villager, soaked to the bone despite the cloak he wears, rushes into the common room. He is out of breath and obviously very frightened. "The dead are approaching Marais d'Tarascon!" he manages to say between shivers and coughs. "An army of the walking dead!" The villager succumbs to a racking fit of coughs, and all he can manage in response to questions is to point toward the eastern fields.

The constable decides to investigate. If the PCs follow, they witness the scene described below. If they don't, the constable returns to tell about it.

You make your way through the pounding, slimy rain like blind men. You can barely see a foot in front of you unless lightning flashes, briefly illuminating the area. Even then, the houses and trees are nothing more than vague shapes obscured by a shimmering curtain of rain. Walking is difficult, for the dirt paths have become muddy and slick. Finally, you reach the eastern path. The fields beyond remain hidden by darkness and the storm. Peels of thunder and the driving rain muffle nearly every sound.

Then, in a spectacular crack of lightning, the figures come into view—dark forms moving slowly toward the village. They look like misshapen humans, but it's hard to tell. A flash of lighting illuminates the entire field. The dark shapes are everywhere! The closest are but 50 feet away, shambling forward. Darkness returns. It seems as if an eternity passes, or maybe just a heartbeat, and then a brilliant flash lights the sky. Now you can see the figures clearly, if only for a second. They are zombies, a literal army of them, and they are marching on Marais d'Tarascon!

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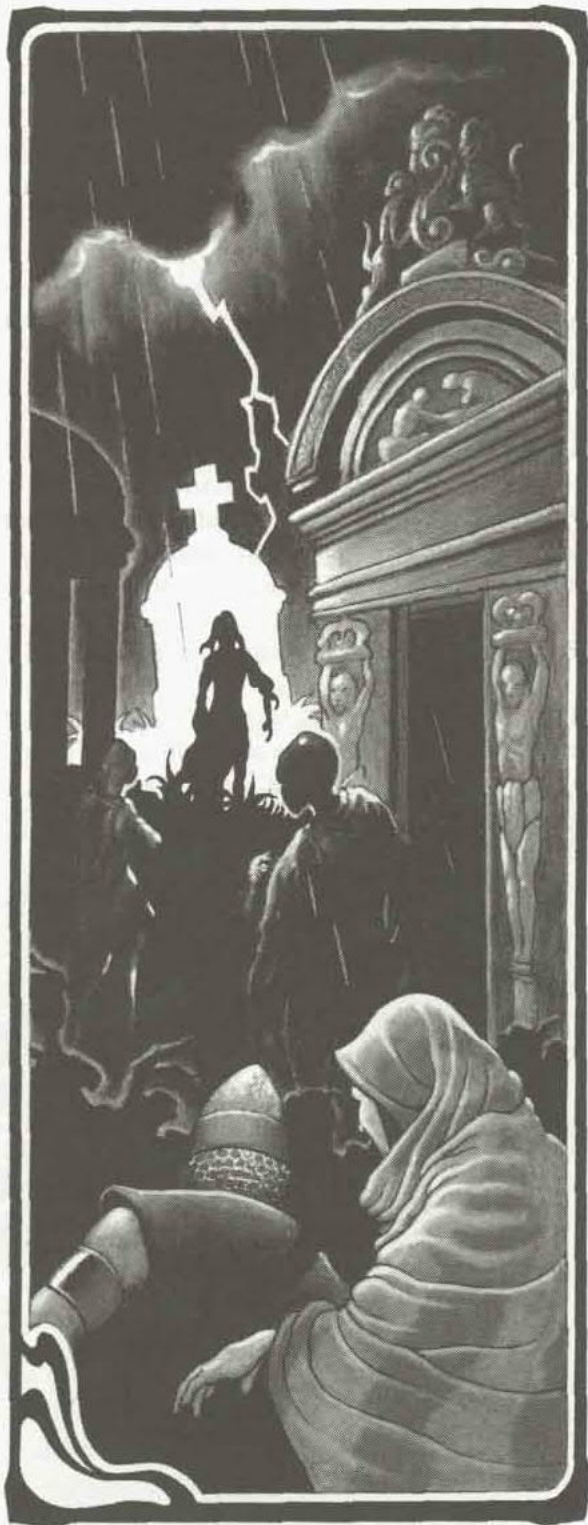
This is the Night of the Walking Dead, when no fewer than 25 zombies march on Marais d'Tarascon. (Each PC should make a fear check with a +2 bonus.) With the death of Jean, Marcel has decided to search for the Hyskosa scroll himself. Even if he can't find it in the village, his efforts will be rewarded; he wants to demonstrate his total control over the undead. The zombies have been ordered to lay siege to the village, killing defenders and tearing apart cottages as they search for the scroll Marcel desires.

The constable asks the PCs to return to the village to help him prepare a defense. Almost before they can respond, Luc begins repeat the Vistani verse that led him and Marcel to the old cemetery. This is his way of urging the PCs to go after Marcel, for they must destroy the zombie lord to defeat his army. If the PCs decide to help the constable and the villagers set barricades, Shaman Brucian urges them toward a different course. "Find Marcel's body," he pleads, adding his voice to Luc's. "I am certain that it holds the key to the terrors which have befallen us!"

If the PCs head for the old cemetery immediately upon seeing the zombie army, they can reach it without incident. If the PCs first return to the village, and later head toward the cemetery, they must battle zombies to reach it. The rain helps to hide the PCs, but it also hides zombies. Have the players trace the path the PCs wish to take on the village map. (Conceal the secret passage if necessary.) For every 60 feet of progress, roll 1d6. If the result is 1 or 2, 1d4 zombies surprise the party. If the result is 3 or 4, the PCs surprise 1d4 zombies and can avoid them if they wish. If the result is 5 or 6, no encounter occurs.

Lair of the Zombie Master

Near the old cemetery, all is quiet. If the PCs search the hillside carefully, they can find a secret passage behind a stone slab with six stars carved upon it. (See "B" on the village



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map. The passage leads to "A" in the cemetery.) The PCs can also enter the old cemetery by climbing over the wall or breaking through the gate. Once the characters are inside, refer to the map titled "The Zombie Lord's Lair" (inside cover). The numbers below match those on the map.

1. Ancient Gate. Two grotesque gargoyles guard this gate. (They are no more than statues, but don't reveal that.) In every flash of lightning, the statues appear to move.

The gate can be opened with a successful bend bars roll, or by shattering the heavy chains that secure it. To break the chains, the PCs must inflict 25 hit points of damage. Either way, the resulting noise alerts Marcel to their presence, despite the pounding rain.

2. Empty Mausoleum. Only dust lies within.

3. Zombie Mausoleum. If the PCs explore this mausoleum, two zombies shamle out of open vaults and attack. If the PCs walk past the building without entering, the zombies follow and attack from behind. Use the zombie statistics from "The Funeral" in Part II, but roll for hit points.

4. Decrepit Mausoleum. This crumbling building has become the home of giant bats. If the PCs disturb the tomb, the bats attack.

Giant Bats (1d6 appear): AC 8; MV 3/18; hp 1d4 (roll randomly); #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA nil; SD -3 from missile attacks while flying; AL nil; XP 35 each; THACO 20.

5. Flooded Mausoleum. The roof of this mausoleum is cracked, allowing rainwater to form a pool several feet deep upon the fractured stone floor. The pool ripples as drop after drop falls from above, echoing throughout the chamber. If any PC enters the flooded tomb, roll 1d6. On a result of 5 or 6, the PC bumps into a submerged skeleton. The skeleton stands

up, placing its grinning skull face to face with the PC.

Any PC who bumps into a skeleton must make a fear check. Failure indicates that the character drops whatever he is holding and runs quickly toward the exit. There is a 50 percent chance that a dropped item is lost forever beneath the water and mud.

Skeletons (3): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3, 4, 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA nil; SD as undead, edged weapons do half damage; AL N; XP 65 each; THACO 19.

6. Tomb of Rats. Giant rats inhabit this mausoleum, and they defend it from any invaders. If the PCs enter the tomb, the rats leap out of open vaults and attack.

Giant Rats (3d6 appear): AC 7; MV 12/6; hp 1d4 (roll randomly); #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SD nil; AL NE; XP 15 each; THACO 20.

7. Crypts. These above-ground burial vaults contain the ancient remains of long-dead villagers. Little more than dust and bones, none has been raised by Marcel, and they pose no danger to the PCs.

8. The Crypt of Stars. One of the vaults in this crypt is open when the PCs approach it. The door to the vault has six stars carved into it—the sign that designates it as a depository for Hyskosa's scroll. This is where Luc and Marcel found the scroll weeks ago. It is also where Marcel met his death at the hands of the old cemetery's zombie guardians. The main guardian is a ju-ju zombie. Like the other zombies, it now serves Marcel.

When Luc approaches this spot, he becomes extremely agitated. He remains beside the PCs, but obviously it's a great effort to do so.

9. The Tarascon Tomb. Stained-glass windows are located high upon the wall at the front of the tomb, spilling a sickly yellow light onto the

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cracked stone steps below. The stairs lead to a pair of stone doors. Once the PCs ascend the stairs, the rain suddenly stops. The "Final Battle" is about to occur.

The Final Battle

Read this text when the PCs are about to open the doors to area 9, the zombie lord's lair.

As the doors creak open, the yellow light from within bathes you in its pale glow. A vile, fetid air flows out the doorway in a gust. The huge chamber before you is littered with a carpet of bones and half-eaten carrion. The ceiling is a glass dome, through which you can see the storm clouds parting to unleash a stream of moonlight.

A platform of bones lies in the middle of the chamber, flanked by two flaming braziers that are fashioned from stacked skulls. Atop the platform is a finely-crafted throne.

Seated there is a hideous creature who resembles Jean Tarascon, but with rotting, pale gray skin.

"Welcome to my domain," intones the figure with a cold, rasping voice. "I am Marcel Tarascon, lord of the undead. Give me what I seek. Give me the scroll of the six signs . . . or join the rest of Marais d'Tarascon in living death!"

With that, large shapes shamble out of the dark recesses that line the chamber walls. As they step into the light cast by the foul braziers, you see that they are zombies—and they are moving toward you!

First things first: each PC must immediately make a saving throw vs. poison or fall victim to Marcel's odor of death. (The scent is so well-concealed by the tomb that the usual 30-yard range does not apply.) After that, the final battle can proceed normally. Be sure to study Marcel's background sheet on page 16



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for details on his enhanced powers.

Three regular zombies move to protect their master. They have the same statistics as the zombies in Part II, but again, roll to determine their hit points. A fourth zombie—actually the ju-ju zombie that killed Marcel—also stands ready to fight. Even if the PCs agree to turn over Luc or the scroll, Marcel still orders his zombies to attack. (He knows that adventurers can become valuable soldiers in his army.)

Marcel's regular zombies engage the PCs first, while the ju-ju zombie waits to see which character appears to be the most powerful. That is the character it attacks. Marcel battles any PC who climbs onto his platform of bones.

On the sixth round of combat (or just before the zombie lord is destroyed, whichever comes first), a special event occurs which momentarily stops the battle. Go to "The Eclipse."

Ju-Ju Zombie (1): AC 6; MV 9; HD 3 + 12; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA strike normally in round, hurl spears (one each); SD +1 or better weapon to hit, blunt and piercing weapons do half damage, turn as spectres, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, death magic, poisons, cold-based spells, mind-affecting spells, electricity, magic missiles, and fire does half damage; AL NE; XP 975 each; THACO 15.

The Eclipse

In the midst of the battle, a great thunder shakes the chamber. Then lightning strikes the dome overhead and the glass explodes, showering the chamber with glittering shards. The full moon above fills the room with a pale red light. Immediately, Luc begins to drone repeatedly, "The light of the sky, shining over the dead, shall gutter and fail, turning all to red. . . ."

The zombie lord shrieks and looks into the sky. The moon is indeed red, and

it is slowly disappearing—shrinking as though some unseen monster were swallowing it bite by bite.

The eclipse is one of the six signs of Hyskosa's vision. Throughout the rounds which follow, Luc continues to recite the verse over and over, and the moon continues to shrink until it disappears completely from the clear night sky. (After a time, the moon will slowly return, as the unseen monster is releasing it from its mouth bit by bit.)

When the eclipse first starts, Marcel and his zombies pause for 1d4 rounds. During this period of time, the PCs can attack freely. When the momentary pause ends, Marcel screams in primal rage and joins the battle in earnest.

The battle ends when the zombie lord is destroyed. When that occurs, all zombies under his command lose direction and wander off.

The Sun Returns

With the coming of dawn, Marais d'Tarascon tries to return to normal. There are many dead, but the zombie army lost its drive before the entire village could be destroyed. If Luc is alive, he comes out of his trancelike state. If he is dead, the destruction of Marcel puts Luc's spirit to rest.

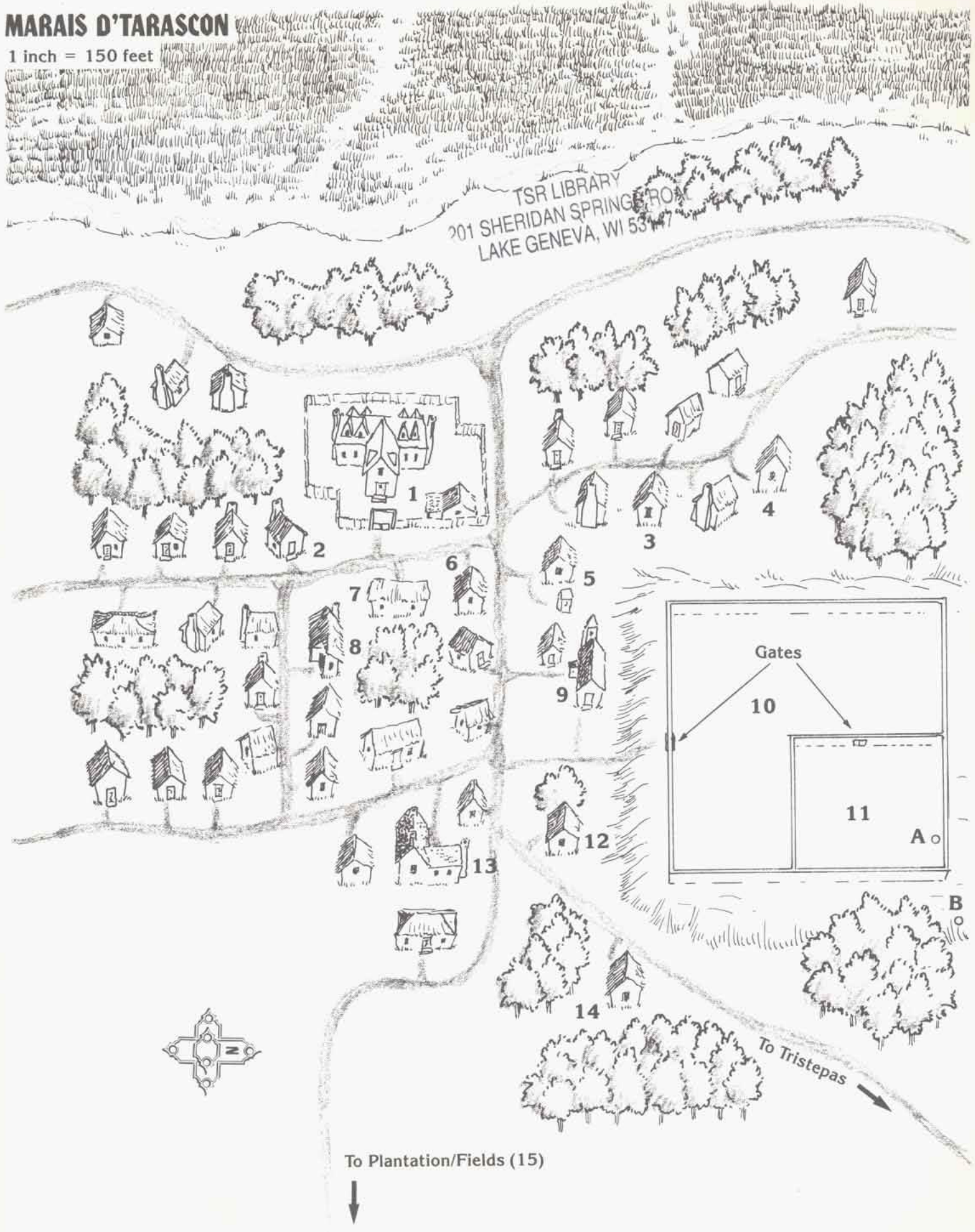
The PCs are given supplies and equipment to replace what they have lost. The villagers thank them for their help, but do not ask them if they want to stay. The PCs are a reminder of dark times, and the villagers simply want to put this period behind them.

With the warmth of the welcome sun shining down upon them, the party leaves the village. What happens to them next is largely up to you. They can either return to the world from which they were plucked, or journey to another island domain in the foul sea of mists. Whatever lies ahead, the Mists rise up somewhere upon the road. When the tendrils of fog fade away, who knows what adventure awaits?

MARAIS D'TARASCON

1 inch = 150 feet

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Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
2nd Edition



NIGHT OF THE WALKING DEAD

By Bill Slavicsek

In a rain-soaked graveyard, a small group of men stands round a coffin bound with heavy chains. "We are here to mourn the passing of Jean de Cardeau," intones the village priest. "Let us pray that his rest is eternal, and that he never returns."

As the pallbearers lift the coffin, something scrapes on the wood from inside. Quickly and without emotion, the attendants slide the casket into a crypt. Then they seal the door and flee. Behind them, unheard, a dull thudding begins, growing louder with the onset of twilight. There can be no peace for those who linger

in the earthly realm after death. And there can be no sanctuary on the Night of the Walking Dead!

Set in a zombie-infested swampland, *Night of the Walking Dead* is an ideal first-time RAVENLOFT™ adventure. Players must unravel the mystery behind a string of murders and disappearances in a village plagued by ambulant undead—and all is not as simple as it seems!

The hour of fear is upon us. Are you ready to face the demiplane of dread? For 4 to 6 players, levels 1 to 3.

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ISBN 1-56076-350-7



\$6.95 U.S. £4.50 U.K. CAN \$8.50