

Encounters In Castle

Ravenloft

By **CHRIS MASSEY**



**Make Castle Ravenloft an
Unforgettable Experience!**

Ravenloft



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FOREWORD

I first worked with Chris Massey when he served as a lore consultant on my two previous Ravenloft releases, *Encounters in Barovia* and *Encounters with the Dark Powers*. His excellent insights helped ensure the best quality in both products, and I knew immediately there was more we could accomplish with this partnership.

This time around, I invited Chris to fully author *Encounters in Castle Ravenloft*, and I think you'll immediately discover what a fantastic decision that was. I am thrilled with the scenarios he put together and excited to help share them with you here. I hope you enjoy these amazing encounters as much as I do; may they turn Castle Ravenloft into a truly unique experience for you and your table!

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RPG

INTRODUCTION

Wherever you go in Barovia, Castle Ravenloft is just over the ridge. The fortress stands tall, a looming symbol of Count Strahd von Zarovich's dominion over his country. The castle is home to centuries of history, a menagerie of horrors, and the corpses of dozens of adventurers foolish enough to believe they could stand against Barovia's dark ruler.

Lately, the castle has grown more active as old ghosts and long-forgotten horrors awaken from their slumber. Barovia's newest batch of adventurers has grown strong—stronger than the old defenses of Castle Ravenloft can handle. Strahd, no longer content with bats and vampire spawn, has pulled out all the stops to give his intruders a *fight*. So when they storm his castle to put an end to the Count once and for all, they'll find new, more devious enemies waiting for them!

But not all is lost for the brave heroes; there still remain a few beacons of hope in Ravenloft's dark corridors—people and powers that can be turned to Strahd's downfall—should the explorers be clever enough.

"Rahadin, my dear friend, I wish to fortify Ravenloft's defenses. I grow tired of watching these foreigners tear through the castle like importunate vermin. Let us transform my domain into an experience they will carry with them into the afterlife! Care to help me step up my game?"

OVERVIEW

Encounters in Castle Ravenloft contains ten encounters and two events designed for one of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS's most famous dungeons. Each event and encounter listed in this product comes with a detailed explanation of how to run it in your *Curse of Strahd* adventure and a tactical guide for controlling the encounter's monsters in combat.

ENCOUNTERS

Encounters serve as supplements or replacements for the random encounters listed in Chapter 4 of *Curse of Strahd*. When you wish to use them as replacements, consult the table below when a Random Encounter is triggered:

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d10	Encounters' Name
1	Mother Night's Blessing
2	The Nursemaid, Rejected
3	Brooms and Dustpans
4	Cyrus's Sack of Wonders
5	They've Got Your Scent
6	A Long-Delayed Wedding Guest
7	Songs of the Dead
8	The Lone Revenant
9	Puppets on Crimson Strings
10	Here Comes The Bride(s)

These encounters are typically balanced for characters of 7th–10th level. If you wish to use these encounters at lower levels, bear in mind they were built assuming the party has retrieved most (if not all) of the "Fortunes of Ravenloft" (*Curse of Strahd* chapter 1) treasures. That said, reducing the number of creatures in the encounter or reducing the strength of their abilities can make the encounters easier to handle.

EVENTS

Events are encounters that should only occur in specific areas of Castle Ravenloft. They are a bit more complex than most Encounters, but have greater rewards as well. Use these at your discretion; both events included in this product are intended as challenges to bolster the spirits of your players and their characters amidst the horrors of Ravenloft. If you find that your group is succumbing to despair or indifference in the face of the Ravenloft's challenges, these can serve to give the dash of hope and support they need to keep going.

RUNNING ENCOUNTERS

To run *Encounters in Castle Ravenloft*, you will need the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Monster Manual*, as well as the *Curse of Strahd* adventure. In addition, a few encounters use content from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*, which are noted in their entries. Creatures new to this supplement are listed in appendix.

ENCOUNTER CHALLENGE

If the adventurers stumble upon an encounter that's too challenging, remind them not every foe can (or should) be fought. Other tactics, like fleeing, hiding, or negotiating, can lead to more exciting outcomes.

When the "Rewards" section of an encounter includes an experience points (XP) reward, refer to the XP Thresholds by Character Level table (chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to award the correct amount of XP based on the characters' levels and the provided difficulty.

CONTENT WARNING

Some elements in this product may be triggering to some players. The most notable elements would be: body horror, indirect references to the genocide of women, an animate, amputated hand, amputated heads/beheading, suffocation/smothering, a dead character being puppetered by another being, and indirect references to abuse.

CHAPTER I

ENCOUNTERS

SONGS OF THE DEAD

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat/Social

Encounter Overview: A group of dusk elf spirits ambushes the party.

BACKGROUND

The victims of Rahadin's dusk elf genocide still haunt Barovia years after the horrors that have befallen them. The party may need to fight them or, with the right information, may be able to direct the spirits' fury to their advantage.

"These foolish worms roam the castle thinking that they can best me. I am the Land!"

THE ENCOUNTER

During the party's exploration of Ravenloft, they may hear an eerie, distant singing echo coming from another room. Ask the party how they respond, then read the following after their interaction:

Out of the wall behind you coalesces a trio of ghostly women. Long hair, matted with blood, is swept over pointed ears, and you can see their eyes are dark and full of rage. One of them raises her hand and whispers, "Make them pay." By her command, the other three sweep toward you!

The leader of the trio, a **banshee**, orders her ghostly companions (two **wraiths**) to focus their attacks on a single party member while she flies thirty feet into the air and uses her *Wail* ability. On her next turn, the banshee activates her *Horrifying Visage* before flying down to join melee combat. The spirits attack any male elves in the party first and foremost (mistaking them for their true target, Rahadin), then set their sights on anyone holding a source of sunlight (like the *Sunsword*

or the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*).

A character with a passive Perception score above 13 or who succeeds a DC 13 Intelligence (History) or Wisdom (Insight) check can notice that these ghosts match the descriptions of the dusk elves killed during Strahd's genocide many years ago. The party may convince the women that they're not allied with Strahd with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception) check, rolling with advantage if they invoke the name of Kasimir or another dusk elf they've met on their travels.

If the women are convinced that the characters are not aligned with Strahd, they phase through the floor and disappear; otherwise, they fight to the death. Additionally, if the women are appeased instead of killed, the next encounter with Rahadin will have 1 banshee enter the fight after 1d4-1 rounds, acting as an ally to the players (though remember that *Wail* hits friend and foe alike!).

REWARDS

If the party defeats the spectral women, award them the XP for a hard encounter.

THE LONE REVENANT

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat

Encounter Overview: A traitor to the Order of the Silver Dragon attacks.

BACKGROUND

When the Order of the Silver Dragon fought Strahd's forces, one member of the order turned traitor, feeding information to Strahd's spies. When Vladimir's hatred called the other revenants back to life, the traitor arose as well, forever patrolling the castle to keep his new lord and master safe.



THE ENCOUNTER

If anyone in the party has a passive Perception score above 11, read the following:

From the next room, you hear the gentle clanking of metal boots on stone rapidly approaching your location.

Roll initiative and give the party one round to prepare for what's to come. After the preparation round (or if no one in the party has a passive Perception score above 11), read:

A tall, decrepit figure clad in splint armor, flanked by three animate corpses wearing castle guard uniforms, bursts through the door. The figure raises a black-headed halberd and yells, "Alright, men! Pin them to the floor!"

The **blackguard revenant** (detailed in the appendix) is accompanied by three **wights**. The revenant is a former knight by the name of Fredrick Cantemir—a greedy man swayed from his oath by the promise of great fame and fortune working under Strahd. The wights stay in the back lines to pepper the party with arrows while Fredrick charges into the fray. He focuses almost exclusively on offense, freely using his spell slots for his smite spells and *hellish rebuke*. If he finds himself surrounded, Frederick uses his Dreadful Aspect to clear himself some space. Once he falls to 80 hit points or below, Frederick yells, "Form up, men!" and beckons the wights forward into melee combat. The wights then fight using a mix of their Life Drain attacks and their longswords. The wights and Fredrick fight until they are destroyed.

REWARDS

If the party defeats the blackguard revenant and his wights, award them the XP for a hard encounter. Fredrick is wearing a set of splint armor and wields a halberd emblazoned with the von Zarovich crest (worth 50 gp when sold).



A LONG-DELAYED WEDDING GUEST

Encounter Level: 8th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat

Encounter Overview: A sorrowsworn has been wrapped by the mist, disguised as an old wedding guest, lurking for desperate people fool enough to venture the castle.

BACKGROUND

Barovia's position in the Shadowfell has made it a nesting ground for the creatures that haunt that plane—the sorrowsworn. One particular sorrowsworn, attracted to the feelings of despair within Castle Ravenloft, has latched onto the lingering horror of one of Sergei and Tatyana's wedding guests and uses his face to lure in future prey.

"I am delighted with this imitation trick, Rahadin. This sorrowsworn will prove very useful, I am sure. Its shadow jump ability impresses me greatly; I can somewhat relate to it."

THE ENCOUNTER

From another area, a desperate-looking man runs toward you, his white suit spattered with blood. He croaks, "Help! Please, anyone, I can't find where anybody's gone—" before toppling to the floor. You can see long, red claw marks raked across his back.

The mists have wrapped around this creature, disguising him as one of the guests at Sergei and

Tatyana's wedding. The *detect magic* spell does not reveal the disguise, but a creature who makes a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check can see that the blood on his suit is long-dried, and that the skin of his face is oddly bunched and saggy. If the party approaches—either to help the man or to examine his body—read the following text:

As you approach the man, he haltingly reaches up to you, putting his hand around your wrist. "I found you!" he says, and a beatific smile crosses his face. His skin begins to tear like an ill-fitting costume, and a horrible, six-limbed monster begins to crawl out of it—though his ecstatic grin remains.

The creature is **The Lost**, with the following modifications to its statblock:

- It has 160 hit points, replacing the usual 78.
- It may make two Arm Spike and one Sorrowful Embrace attacks as part of the same Multiattack action.
- Its Armor Class is 17, replacing the usual 15.
- It gains the Shadow Step feature. As a bonus action, it can teleport itself and any grappled targets 30 ft.

The Lost attempts to Sorrowful Embrace the first creature it can, using its Arm Spike attacks to attack other party members who might try and separate it from its meal. It will then use its movement to drag the grappled character along with it, trying to get a degree of distance from the rest of the party. It will never use its Arm Spike attacks on a creature it has grappled unless that creature is actively attacking it.

REWARDS

If the party searches the pockets of the man's suit, they find a golden pocket watch engraved with the words "From your darling Lovina." It is worth 150 gp—300 if sold to Lady Wachter, who recognizes it as belonging to an ancestor of hers.

THEY'VE GOT YOUR SCENT

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat

Encounter Overview: Monsters from Strahd's menagerie ambush the party.

BACKGROUND

Strahd has collected a sizable menagerie during his years as lord of Barovia—including a group of **slithering trackers** (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*), whose thirst for revenge and unique capabilities he's found many a use for. Hearing that there are intruders in his castle, Strahd sets the beasts loose to track down the adventurers and exterminate them.

THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter varies depending on where the party is located when you roll it. If the group is in an area of





the castle where standing water would be unusual (such as the more furnished, well-kept areas), the trackers cling to the ceiling and wait for the characters to pass underneath them before striking. If the adventurers are in an area where a puddle of standing water is commonplace, the trackers disguise themselves as one of said puddles, hiding in plain sight.

Roll a group stealth check for the trackers and compare it to the characters' passive Perception scores. If the trackers' stealth check is above a character's passive Perception, that character is surprised. If the trackers are coming from the ceiling, read the following aloud:

You feel a drip of water land on your shoulder. And then another. Looking up, you see a transparent, unctuous mass clinging to the ceiling. The roiling liquid forms into a cluster of horrible, snakelike heads—which then drops right toward you!

If the trackers are encountered on the floor instead, read the following:

The puddle on the floor boils as a cluster of horrible, snakelike heads begin to form out of the murky water—before lunging toward you!

There is one slithering tracker for each party member, and each has been trained to target that character specifically. The trackers occupy the character's space and use their Life Leech ability on the first turn of combat (unless the character already has very few hit points remaining, in which case the tracker uses their Slam ability instead). If the Life Leech fails, the trackers try it again the next round, but will thereafter resort to

using Slam attacks.

If a tracker knocks out its intended target, it immediately begins to assist the other tracker. If the other characters leave the area where their ally lies unconscious, however, the trackers use their Life Leech ability on their intended target until the victim is dead, gorging themselves on fresh blood.

REWARDS

If the party defeats the trackers, award them the XP for a medium encounter. Once the monsters are dead, the group can find a scrap of their clothing or a piece of their hair or skin floating in the remains of the tracker that was attacking them. If you've had Strahd or his minions steal a possession from a character for the purpose of his *scrying* spell, this is an excellent time to return it.

BROOMS AND DUSTPANS

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat/Social

Encounter Overview: A Barovian witch runs into the characters, possibly conversing, screaming, or assaulting them with animated cleaning supplies.

BACKGROUND

Strahd employs many Barovian witches in his castle. Though these men and women serve the Devil, they are by far the lowest rung of the castle's hierarchy and perform most of the menial tasks neither Strahd nor his brides want to handle. The characters can take advantage of this or end up locked in combat with the witch's retinue.



THE ENCOUNTER

A warty, sour-faced woman in black robes approaches—trailed by a small parade of magically animated brooms sweeping and dusting the floor as they march along. You can hear her muttering, “I don’t know what they expect me to do with this place. Fight past the giant spiders guarding the cobwebs? Duel the zombies in the torture room hand to hand? Ungrateful bas—”

Her gaze flicks upward, making eye contact with you, and her mouth gapes open in a perfect “O” as she stands there in shock.

The woman is a **Barovian witch** named Aggie Witherwiggles, and she is followed by three **swarms of animated brooms** (see appendix). The group may use her momentary shock to determine how they react to her arrival.

If the party moves aggressively or draws their weapons, Aggie screams, throwing her hands up in the air and fleeing as quickly as she can, using her swarm of brooms to cover her retreat. The brooms fight until destroyed—primarily targeting any PCs that were attacked by the animated broom in the Death House chapter of the module, if present. If Death House was not used, or if the animated broom was not encountered, the brooms target the character with the dirtiest armor/clothes. Aggie’s scream also draws unwanted attention to the group’s current location—immediately roll to see if a random encounter is triggered.

If the group doesn’t take aggressive action or otherwise presents a neutral stance, Aggie raises a finger to her lips, makes direct eye contact with each character, and whispers, “I didn’t see you.” She then leaves the room, taking her brooms with her and concluding the encounter.

A successful DC13 Charisma (Persuasion) check proves the group means no harm, calming the frightened witch.

She knows little about the castle aside from its layout, but will happily point the party in the right direction if they ask for directions to a specific area. If asked for information about Strahd, she looks about fearfully (checking the ceiling for bats or other spies) and then declines, telling them, “I’m sorry, but I have more to lose than you do.”

On a failure, the encounter proceeds as if the group had reacted neutrally.

The witch will under no circumstances travel with the party, and will depart quietly after the conversation is concluded. If the party later runs into the Barovian witches in area K56, Aggie will be one of them, and attempts to negotiate a truce before hostilities start.

REWARDS

If the party defeats the witch and her brooms in combat, award them the XP for an easy encounter. If they resolve the situation non-violently, award them the XP for a medium encounter.

THE NURSEMAID, REJECTED

Encounter Level: Any

Encounter Type: Exploration

Encounter Overview: A memory of Baba Lysaga’s time as Strahd’s nursemaid presents itself to the characters.

BACKGROUND

Many years ago, before she was the terror of Berez, Baba Lysaga was a nursemaid for the infant Strahd. While Strahd was born in another castle, many miles from Barovia, the echo of Baba’s possessiveness lingers in Ravenloft—preserving the memory of a time when she had everything she wanted.

“Lysaga seemed to care a great deal for me. I wonder what she thinks of me after all this time...”



THE ENCOUNTER

From the next room over, you hear the sound of a woman's voice singing—though it's too muffled to discern the words from here.

This encounter triggers from a room adjacent to the party's current location. If they try and eavesdrop to hear the words to the song, read this:

A conqueror, a warrior, a mage, that is you,
Laying waste to what er' you see to.
Know that the world will be yours to run,
Once you are ready, (here the voice grows quiet)
my darling son.
Once you are ready, my darling son.

If the group enters the room where the singing is coming from, read this:

You see a elderly woman in a faded grey servant's uniform gently rocking a baby in her arms, blissfully unaware of your presence. The baby is pale-skinned with a single shock of midnight-black hair atop his head. Both the woman and child are ever-so-slightly transparent, like a faded veil.

This image is a memory of a younger Baba Lysaga and an infant Strahd conjured by the Mists-. Attempts to interact with the memory are futile. Shortly after the characters enter, read the following:

You hear the woman yelp, and the infant is suddenly snatched out of her hands. A tall, imperious-looking woman with the poise and dress of royalty is holding him now—looking at the woman in the servant's uniform with simmering rage.

"I told you to never come back here."

"Please, I just wanted to see him." The woman in the servant's uniform gives a sickly smile. "He's grown so large—is he on solids now?"

"Whatever he is, he is not your son. Get out, and make speed, before I sic the hounds on you, Lysaga."

REWARDS

Award the party the XP for an easy encounter.

A PUPPET ON CRIMSON STRINGS

Encounter Level: 6th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat

Encounter Overview: One of Strahd's monstrous creations ambushes the party with the aim of draining them of every drop of blood.

BACKGROUND

Strahd has performed many alchemical experiments over the years; though some were successful (the creation of the Strahd zombie, for instance), others

weren't nearly as effective at their intended purpose. Take, for instance, the Blood Elemental: a creature meant to streamline the process of acquiring blood to feed his legions of vampire spawn, the elemental turned out to be more trouble than it was worth. Strahd decided to keep it, however, finding that it had some splendid uses for a particularly perverse kind of necromancy...

THE ENCOUNTER

There's the sound of quick, uneven footsteps and a squelching noise behind you. Turning around, you see a macabre sight—a dragonborn man, his scales a pallid grey color, staggering toward you, swaying. Behind him, an enormous mass of blood, roiling and bubbling, slides along the ground.

In the center of the dragonborn's chest, where his heart should be, there's a hole torn through his armor. You can see blood swirling and churning in the crevasse, and it begins to seep out of his mouth and nose, staining his scales. He locks his empty eyes on yours, draws a rusted shortsword, and lurches toward you—the mass of blood not far behind him.

The man is a master thief (*Volo's Guide to Monsters*) who fell to Strahd about ten years ago. The **blood elemental** (see appendix) behind him has kept him "alive," in a fashion, and under its control as a useful puppet for hunting prey. The thief has no cognitive function but fights like he did in life—albeit with the stiff, unnerving movements of a marionnette. If the blood elemental is killed before him, the thief gives a half-whispered, "thank you," to the party before dying as well.

The blood elemental tries to envelop as many targets with its Whelm ability as possible, preferring it over all



other attacks. If the ability does not recharge that turn, or if it already has two characters grappled, the elemental uses its Slam attack against the other characters—preferring those who’re trying to pull people out of its grasp.

The master thief, meanwhile, focuses his attacks on characters adjacent to or grappled by the blood elemental to trigger his *Sneak Attack* ability. If no such targets present themselves, the thief attacks spellcasters first, especially if they’ve dealt cold damage to the elemental.

REWARDS

If the party defeats the blood elemental and the master thief, award them the XP for a hard encounter.

The master thief is wearing a suit of +1 *Studded Leather* and carries a dagger with adamantine edging. The dagger sheath is inscribed with the phrase “Happy Birthday -R.”.

CYRUS’S SACK OF WONDERS

Encounter Level: Any

Encounter Type: Social

Encounter Overview: Strahd’s other butler bargains with the party for strange treasures and information.

BACKGROUND

If the Barovian witches occupy the lowest level of Strahd’s hierarchy, then Cyrus Belview is just above them in the pecking order. The crazed mongrelfolk fancies himself as Strahd’s butler, chef, and valet, and makes a habit of searching the castle for morbid “curiosities” to add to his collection or meat to throw into his stews. A clever party can bargain with Cyrus to gain a few “curiosities” of their own or, of course, take them by force.

“Cyrus’s jokes are so bad that I find them funny. He is a good fellow. Twisted, but good.”

THE ENCOUNTER

You see the light of a hooded lantern and hear the telltale jingle of an overloaded pack. A squat, bizarre-looking man with the ears of a panther and lizard scales on his face trundles toward you, croaking, “Excuse me! Do you folk happen to have any fresh spider eggs on hand? Can’t be poached, the Master can’t stand poached.”

Cyrus Bellview (see area K62 in the “Castle Ravenloft” chapter of the module for a full profile) has a full sack of macabre “curiosities”, and is looking to trade. If a character can offer him anything sufficiently gross, weird, or terrifying to add to his collection or put into his stew, Cyrus happily lets that character reach into

the sack and draw for a prize (see the table below). If a character can come up with an especially unusual or creative trade item, Cyrus snaps it up—perhaps even offering to let them choose their own prize instead of a random draw.

CYRUS’S “TREASURE”

d6	Treasure
1	A single crawling claw named “Mr. Springy”. The claw’s alignment is Chaotic Neutral instead of Neutral Evil. A bag of copper marbles that emit a foul smell when knocked together. Anyone standing within 10 feet of the marbles when this occurs must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of their next turn.
2	A beautiful model ship with a wind-up propeller. When placed in water, the ship immediately capsizes, and inch-tall models of sailors throw themselves from the decks as a mournful dirge faintly plays. On the bottom of the toy, the phrase “Is No Fun, Is No Blinsky!” is stenciled.
3	A tiny, shriveled purple pepper. The pepper has the effects of a Potion of Fire Breath when eaten.
4	A bottle of Cyrus’ “special soup” with the properties of a potion of resistance (necrotic). Is the necrotic resistance because the soup’s so good or because it puts the character a little closer to the grave? Your choice.
5	A small onyx statue of a horse. Cyrus has drawn skeleton bones on its side and clumsily attempted to paint flames on its mane, but it is still very clearly a regular horse. This statue is a <i>figurine of wondrous power</i> . Instead of summoning a nightmare, it simply summons a large black riding horse. The name “Binky” is embroidered into the saddle.
6	

Cyrus knows a great deal about the castle and its inhabitants, but is unwilling to share this information for free. Instead of receiving a gift, a character can barter a macabre item for a small piece of information. Alternatively, they can wheedle or bully it out of him with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. However, Cyrus only divulges one piece of information, muttering that he’d be in awful trouble for giving away details of the master’s private life to strangers!

If attacked or otherwise threatened, Cyrus lets out a deafening rooster crow and flees.

If any of Ravenloft’s many traps are nearby, Cyrus attempts to lead the party into it while fleeing. Otherwise, he focuses entirely on survival; If caught, Cyrus bargains for his life with his possessions or information.

REWARDS

If the party makes a bargain with Cyrus, award them the XP for an easy encounter.

MOTHER NIGHT'S BLESSING

Encounter Level: Any

Encounter Type: Exploration

Encounter Overview: The party finds a small shrine from hundreds of years ago.

BACKGROUND

Along with the religion of the Morninglord, Barovian peasants have long practiced the covert worship of Mother Night, a goddess of secrets, mystery, and the dark. This worship was frowned upon in Strahd's day and is no more accepted now. While Mother Night is often seen as a bringer of evil—as seen in her worship by the Barovian Werewolves and Baba Lysaga—she is often also a protector of those wandering in the darkness. The characters may find this trait to be of use to them, if they pay their respects.



THE ENCOUNTER

Your footsteps dislodge a stone from the wall, revealing a small alcove hidden behind it.

Should the party investigate, they see the following:

There's a tiny shrine in here, tucked away from the world. The centerpiece is a crudely carved statue of a raven standing atop a crescent moon, surrounded by dried purple flowers. On the back wall of the shrine, someone's engraved a simple poem into the stone with a careful hand:

"If the dawn will not come, if the sun will not rise,
Then shield me, Mother, from the dark's evil eyes."

The statue has the effects of an amulet of proof against detection and location, if taken by a character and attuned to. If the characters do not take the statue but in some way still show their respect or veneration for the shrine (carefully hiding it again to ensure it remains undisturbed, offering a prayer or word of thanks to its goddess, etc.), read the following:

As you turn away from the shrine, a chill wind blows through your hair. For a moment, the musty scent of age and decay that permeates

Ravenloft is absent, and you can smell something else: cedar and a hint of dew. And then, just as quickly as it came, it is gone.

Following this event, all characters in the party receive the benefits of the nondetection spell for 24 hours, and any Dexterity (Stealth) checks they make during that time have advantage.

REWARDS

If the party finds the shrine, award them the XP for an Easy encounter.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE(S)

Encounter Level: 8th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat

Encounter Overview: Strahd's brides confront the party for a battle.

BACKGROUND

While Strahd's eternal romantic focus has always been the women he believes to be reincarnations of Tatyana, they're far from the only interest he's taken. Four of Strahd's lovers currently inhabit Castle Ravenloft as vampire spawn—answering only to Rahadin and the Devil himself. And while one of Strahd's lovers—a man known only as Escher—prefers to stay out of combat, his other three companions are happy to leap into the





fray. If your party encounters one of these women in their exploration of Ravenloft, they better be prepared for a nasty fight...

“My brides, I know that you yearn for action; I can feel your boredom in every waking moment. You have honed your skills for so long that it seems only fair let you have a taste of the intruders. Have fun!”

THE ENCOUNTER

Roll a d4 and consult the table below to determine which bride the party encounters:

THE BRIDES

d4	Bride
1	Ludmilla Vilisivec
2	Anastrasya Karelova
3	Volenta Popofsky
4	DMs choice

If a bride has been killed, treat her result as “No encounter” going forward.

LUDMILLA

A woman in black, gleaming armor steps forward, her hand resting on a massive battleaxe and a quiet smile playing on her lips. “He’s been looking for you, you know.”

Ludmilla (see appendix) is a confident fighter who’s happy to exchange a barb or two with the characters before starting combat—like Strahd, she’s got a certain flair for the dramatic. She’s accompanied by two **silver dragon wyrmlings** crafted by Strahd from Argynvost’s scales as a gift for Ludmilla’s loyalty.


Ludmilla cares little for traditional vampire abilities, preferring instead to rely on the strength of her axe and her tactics. She tasks her wyrmlings to fly above the characters and hold them in place with their Paralyzing Breath while she engages with those that’re the most threat to her—namely, anyone producing sunlight or radiant damage.

Once reduced to 85 hit points or below, Ludmilla’s Blood Rage feature kicks in as she fights all the more desperately to kill the party before they kill her. She fights to the death.

ANASTRASYA

There’s a whistle as an arrow flies just above your heads, shattering against the stonework. Turning, you see a tall woman in red, nocking another arrow to her bow. She regards you with a cold stare. “Apologies. This is just business.”

Anastrasya (see appendix) is trailed everywhere she goes by her personal pack of six **dire wolves**. They will move in to engage the party once initiative starts. Ana prefers to use her Spider Climb feature to climb onto a wall or ceiling at the start of combat, clinging to that surface with her feet and keeping her arms free to



shoot. She focuses on shooting low-AC targets, such as spellcasters and rogues, while letting her wolves harry harder foes.

Her Trick Arrows are a valuable asset—she’s particularly fond of the Smoke Arrow to inflict disadvantage to characters’ actions while still allowing her wolves to attack normally thanks to their Pack Tactics feature. Anastrasya will attempt to flee combat once she is reduced to 30 or fewer hit points, using her Smoke Arrows to aid in her escape.

VOLENTA

You can see your breath. The temperature in the room plummets as you see a woman with her face concealed by a mask in the shape of a grinning skull. She cocks her head at you, like a curious animal, and then raises a wand, a swirl of black mist beginning to surround her. Her hostile intentions are clear.

Volenta (see appendix) is a warlock, and a powerful one at that. She’s accompanied by two **wraiths** and two **specters**, which attempt to get within melee range of the party once combat starts. Volenta, meanwhile, changes her approach based on the situation. If the party decides to attack her directly,, she primarily focuses on offense, hitting the characters with spells like *synaptic static* and *circle of death* to wear them down. Otherwise, she’ll use spells like *fear* and *hypnotic pattern* to keep the characters divided and ineffectual while her allies pick at them.

Unlike the other brides, Volenta is not looking for a kill—she recognizes that these intruders are likely not going to fall to her hand alone. Instead, she stays wary, and once she is reduced to 50 or fewer hit points, she casts *dimension door* and leaves. However, since she is a Warlock, her spell slots refresh after a short rest—meaning that an hour or two later, she returns to wear down the party just a little bit more whether they roll her random encounter again or not. She is not accompanied by her allies on subsequent encounters.

REWARDS

If the party defeats a bride, award them the XP for a hard encounter. Each bride has the treasure they are stated to have in Area K86 (Strahd’s Tomb) in the Castle Ravenloft chapter of the module.

In addition, Ludmilla is wearing a suit of *+1 half plate*, Anastrasya is wielding a *+1 longbow*, and Volenta has a *+1 rod of the pact keeper*.

CHAPTER 2

EVENTS

PASSING THE TORCH

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat/Social

Encounter Overview: The spirit of one of Barovia's last great warriors is looking to pass on her legacy.

Encounter Locations: K84, inside Crypt 6, eventually K57

BACKGROUND

Saint Markovia, revolutionary, firebrand, and cleric, was one of Strahd's first challengers. When the mists swept over Barovia, Markovia rallied the populace and stormed the castle—fighting so fiercely as to give Strahd an injury he couldn't immediately heal. Now her spirit languishes in Ravenloft's tombs, waiting for a worthy successor to come and carry on her legacy.

THE ENCOUNTER

The crypt smells of roses. The remains atop its marble slab have disintegrated, except for one thighbone.

A ghostly form appears above the dust—a tall, haggard woman with fire burning in her eyes. Her voice is deep and raspy as she says, "The vampire's life has lasted far too long. Are you here to end it?"

Saint Markovia (see appendix) is looking to pass on her legacy—and her burning, holy fury—to one of the characters. But she will not simply accept anyone; if a character wishes to gain a weapon against Strahd, they must defeat her in a duel.

Markovia only accepts a one-on-one duel and would heavily prefer it to be the person who would eventually wield *Saint Markovia's thighbone*, a special *mace of disruption*. She suggests a simple set of rules: the fight continues until one fighter is knocked unconscious or yields, with no outside interference from the rest of the party (though she will not take offense to any support or healing spells the party wishes to cast on their challenger before the actual battle starts).

Once a character agrees to the duel, read the following:

Markovia gives you a nod, and then takes her thighbone off of the plinth and holds it aloft. There's a flash of light, and suddenly you and your companions are somewhere else.

You're on the roof of one of Ravenloft's towers—a storm rumbling overhead and the wind howling in your ears. Markovia stands at the opposite edge of the tower, her hair billowing around her, and extends her thighbone at you like a weapon. "If you are strong enough to free this land, to cast the tyrant from his dark throne, then show me. Show me if the dark has broken your spirit, or forged it into something new."

"For my Abbey, for my sisters, for Barovia... Be on your guard!"

Markovia has transported the characters to area K57. They are physically there, but will not be interrupted by random encounters or by Strahd until after the duel concludes.

Markovia fights like a whirlwind, preferring to use her other abilities to confuse and misdirect before striking with her mace. She does not simply use her Multiattack every turn—she's testing the character dueling her, not searching for a quick kill. Fight for dramatics, not for victory, and encourage the challenger to do the same. Markovia is a skilled opponent, but also a hot-headed one—if the character fighting her wants to set up a trick or trap of some kind, there's very good odds she'll charge right into it.

Should the challenger character lose, Markovia will transport the party back to her tomb, letting them stabilize that character and telling them to come back when they have the fire inside them that they need to defeat the vampire. She will not fight a duel more than once in the same 24-hour period and will decline a rematch unless the character can convince her of what's changed since their last fight.

Should the challenger character win, Markovia will congratulate them before transporting the party back to her tomb. When they return, Markovia will be gone (her spirit now at rest), and her thighbone will be



resting on the plinth, glowing with a fierce golden light.

REWARDS

Award the character who participated in the duel the XP for a Hard encounter. In addition, they gain *Saint Markovia's thighbone* (see appendix C of the module). The thighbone no longer has the property "If it scores one or more hits against a vampire or vampire spawn, it crumbles to dust when that battle concludes." if obtained by winning the duel.

THE HORSEMAN RIDES!

Encounter Level: 7th–10th

Encounter Type: Combat/Puzzle

Encounter Overview: A spirit of mischief plays a dangerous game with the party, rewarding them if they play along..

Encounter Locations: This encounter is best used when the party's in a part of the castle that has a lot of room to maneuver. Ideal areas for this would be K15 (Chapel), K57 (Tower Roof), K67 (Hall of Bones), and K84 (Catacombs).

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, Strahd had the leader of a bandit gang beheaded in the process of conquering Barovia. Now, that bandit's taken on a new life as The Headless Horseman—a spirit of chaos and mischief. All is not hopeless, however, as once the spirit's minions are dealt with, there may be a reward waiting at the end.

THE ENCOUNTER

Fog rises all around you in a great ring, seemingly from nowhere. You hear a distant neigh and a canter of hooves, and a spectral, headless rider suddenly bursts from the mist. With a maniacal laugh, it flings a bag full of severed heads at your feet—which, as you watch, begin to grow wings. "Strahd's sneaks and spooks are a fearsome tide, but tonight's the night *The Horseman Rides!*"

"Face your fears, and find me out—or just weather the storm, if you're not so stout. But if you find me before we're through, then perhaps I'll have a gift for you!"

The party immediately begins combat with the six **vargouilles** the Horseman pulled from his sack (they each have 18 hit points instead of the usual 13). The room they're in is now surrounded by fog, with only a 15-square-foot area where the characters were standing remaining visible. The Horseman acts on initiative count 20 every round, riding through and producing one of the effects below before "disappearing" into the fog until the next round.

THE HORSEMAN ACTIONS

Round	Action
1	The Horseman hurls a yellowish pumpkin, which creates a horrible, brimstone-smelling cloud with a 15 foot radius. Creatures caught within the cloud must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (3d12) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, they are also poisoned until the end of their next turn.
2	The Horseman throws a jack-o-lantern into a character's arms, which opens its mouth and yells, "BOO!" The character must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of that particular jack-o-lantern for one round. They are, of course, free to smash it into pumpkin juice, ending this effect preemptively.
3	The Horseman slashes with his ghostly sickle, making one attack against a character with a +8 bonus to hit and dealing 20 (4d10) slashing damage on a hit.
4	The Horseman hurls a blazing pumpkin, which has the effect of a Fireball spell- save DC 15.
5	The Horseman cackles. "Alright. Now, I want you to see the true meaning of fear! Spitfire!" His horse whinnies and rears as the horseman charges, the sickle glowing with horrible green light. He makes an attack against one character with a +15 bonus to hit, dealing 1 bludgeoning damage as he taps the character lightly on the skull and says, "Boo."

not affected by damage. However, the party does have a means to cut off his assault early before the fifth round is reached.

At the beginning of each round, place a Large token representing the Horseman somewhere in the room





that's covered by fog (changing the location each round). As an action, characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check discern whether the Horseman is in the north or south end of the room. On a score of 20 or higher, they can tell which direction he's in: north-west, north-east, south-west, or south-east. And on score of 25 or higher, they determine his exact location.

Once the Horseman has been located, a character may end the encounter by ending their turn in the Horseman's space—"tagging" him. If a character tags the Horseman or five rounds have passed, read the following:

You blink, and the fog is gone. The Horseman slows to a stop, applauding. "You faced your fears in a land without sun. In return I can only say—well done!"

The Horseman tosses the characters a gift basket carved from a pumpkin as a reward for entertaining him. In addition, if the party found the Horseman before the five rounds were up, he offers to take the party to any location in the castle they wish, saying only that the "Winding Road" will take them there. If the characters accept this, he invites them to mount his horse. Read the following:

Spitfire breaks into a gallop, charging straight at the nearest wall. As you brace yourselves for impact, a torrent of mist swallows you all. When it clears, you find yourselves standing at your destination with no trace of the horse or its rider. There's mud on your clothes and flecks of gravel in your mouth.

REWARDS

However this encounter ends, award XP for a Medium Encounter. In addition, the gift basket the Horseman awards has quite a few items in it. It contains:

- 4 bottles of pumpkin juice with the properties of *potions of greater healing*
- A +1 whip, made from a human spine
- A candle that, when lit, activates the *magic circle* spell, centered on itself. The circle is inscribed to keep out fiends and undead, and it lasts the normal duration. Once the spell begins, it immediately ends if the candle is moved or extinguished.

APPENDIX

ANASTRASYA

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)

Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14(+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +6, Perception +7, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Regeneration. Anastrasya regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Anastrasya takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn.

Spider Climb. Anastrasya can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Anastrasya has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. Anastrasya can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Anastrasya takes 20 acid damage when she ends her turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. Anastrasya is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into her heart while she is incapacitated in her resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Anastrasya takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in

sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Trick Arrow. Once per turn, when Anastrasya hits with a longbow attack, she may apply one of the following options to that attack.

Firework Arrow. The target hit by the arrow must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be blinded until the start of Anastrasya's next turn.

Net Arrow. The target hit by the arrow must make a DC 15 Strength save or be restrained. The net can be removed with a DC 15 Strength check or by dealing at least 10 slashing damage to it (AC 10).

Smoke Arrow. The area in a 10-foot radius around the target becomes heavily obscured until the start of Anastrasya's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Anastrasya makes her choice of four longbow attacks or two claw or bite attacks (only one of which can be a bite attack).

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Anastrasya can grapple the target (escape DC 12).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Anastrasya, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Anastrasya regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

BLACKGUARD REVENANT

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 17 (splint armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Regeneration. The Blackguard Revenant regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Blackguard Revenant takes fire or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Blackguard Revenant's next turn. The Blackguard Revenant's body is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Rejuvenation. When the Blackguard Revenant's body is destroyed, its soul lingers. After 24 hours, the soul inhabits and animates another humanoid corpse on the same plane of existence and regains all its hit points. While the soul is bodiless, a *wish* spell can be used to force the soul to go to the afterlife and not return.

Spellcasting. The Blackguard Revenant is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *compelled duel*, *hellish rebuke*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *crown of madness*

3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse*, *blinding smite*

Turn Immunity. The Blackguard Revenant is immune to effects that turn undead.

Vengeful Tracker. The Blackguard Revenant knows the distance to and direction of any creature against which it seeks revenge, even if the creature and the Blackguard Revenant are on different planes of existence. If the creature being tracked by the Blackguard Revenant dies, the Blackguard Revenant knows.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Blackguard Revenant makes two pike attacks.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The revenant exudes a dark menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the revenant must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the revenant, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Pike. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 16 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature against which the revenant has sworn vengeance, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) piercing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the Blackguard revenant can pin the target in place, reducing its speed to 0 (escape DC 15) provided the target is Large or smaller.

Vengeful Glare. The revenant targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it and against which it has sworn vengeance. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target is paralyzed until the revenant deals damage to it, or until the end of the revenant's next turn. When the paralysis ends, the target is frightened of the revenant for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if it can see the revenant, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success.

BLOOD ELEMENTAL

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 +48)

Speed 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan, Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Fluid Form. The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Freeze. If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage

Whelm (Recharge 4-6). Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage. If it is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

The elemental can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time. At the start of each of the elemental's turns, each target grappled by it takes 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage. A creature within 5 feet of the elemental can pull a creature or object out of it by taking an action to make a DC 16 Strength check and



LUDMILLA

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (+1 half plate)

Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8, Wis +6

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Blood Rage. While Ludmilla is below half of her maximum Hit Points, she makes attack rolls with advantage, but attack rolls against her also have advantage.

Indomitable (2/day). Ludmilla rerolls a failed saving throw.

Regeneration. Ludmilla regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Ludmilla takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't

function at the start of her next turn.

Spider Climb. Ludmilla can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Ludmilla has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. Ludmilla can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Ludmilla takes 20 acid damage when she ends her turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. Ludmilla is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into her heart while she is incapacitated in her resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Ludmilla takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ludmilla makes three greataxe attacks or two claw attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Ludmilla can grapple the target (escape DC 13).





SAINT MARKOVIA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 10+the challenger's level
Hit Points Nine times the challenger's level
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +7, Persuasion +6, Religion +5

Damage Resistances radiant

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Markovia's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
 3/day each: *guiding bolt* (2nd level), *blindness/deafness*, *searing smite*, *shield of faith*
 1/day each: *spirit guardians*, *dispel magic*

Holy Mark. When Markovia hits a challenger with an attack, she may use a bonus action to mark them for divine punishment, outlining them in golden light. While marked, Markovia deals an extra 1d6 radiant damage to that target whenever she hits it with an attack. If the target has already been marked, she may mark it again to intensify the effect, increasing the

damage by 1d6 for each time the mark has been applied (up to a maximum of 4d6). This mark lasts until Markovia or the challenger falls unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Markovia may make any combination of two thighbone or shield bash attacks.

Thighbone. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 bludgeoning damage, and Markovia may either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from her.

Saint's Flame (1/day). Markovia raises her mace before striking forth with divine flame. Any challenger within 30 feet of Markovia is pulled up to 25 feet straight toward her, and then must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. The challenger takes 9 (2d8) fire damage and 9 (2d8) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of their next turn on a failed save. The challenger takes half damage and is not blinded on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Warding Flare (4/day). When Markovia is attacked by a creature within 30 feet of her, she can use her reaction to momentarily disorient her attacker with a flash of light, imposing disadvantage on the attack roll.

SWARM OF ANIMATED BROOMS

Large swarm of Small constructs, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d10)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	5 (-3)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The Swarm of Animated Brooms is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the swarm must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

Constructed Nature. An animated object doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

False Appearance. While the swarm remains motionless and isn't flying, it is indistinguishable from a bundle of cleaning supplies.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small broom. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Pummel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 20 (8d4) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (4d4) bludgeoning damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.



VOLENTA

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14(+2)	10(+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +7, Cha +8

Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidation +8, Perception +7

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Contingency. Volenta has a *contingency* spell active to immediately cast *shadow of moil* on herself if she is attacked or forced to make a saving throw (this does not consume a spell slot). Once this effect is triggered, it cannot be triggered again.

Innate Spellcasting. Volenta's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
1 /day each: *circle of death*, *finger of death*

Regeneration. Volenta regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Volenta takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn.

Spider Climb. Volenta can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Spellcasting. Volenta is a 14th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to

hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *toll the dead*, *shocking grasp*

1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *antilife shell*, *dimension door*, *hypnotic pattern*, *fear*, *negative energy flood*, *shadow of moil*, *synaptic static*.

Vampire Weaknesses. Volenta has the following flaws:
Forbiddance. Volenta can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. Volenta takes 20 acid damage when she ends her turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. Volenta is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into her heart while she is incapacitated in her resting place.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Volenta takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Volenta makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. **Hit:** 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Volenta can grapple the target (escape DC 12).

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Volenta, incapacitated, or restrained. **Hit:** 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Volenta regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.





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