

# RAVENLOFT

# GAZETTEER

A 5TH EDITION RAVENLOFT ATLAS



## BAROVIAN NIGHTS

101 REGRETTABLE ENCOUNTERS



# BAROVIAN NIGHTS

by Oliver Clegg

Barovian Nights is a compilation of extended and auxiliary mechanics for use with your *Curse of Strahd* campaign. You can mix and match these features as best you like to fit in with your particular Ravenloft game.

This volume contains:

## I. IOI RANDOM BAROVIAN ENCOUNTERS

*arranged by environment and including creatures from Volo's Guide to Monsters and Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes.*

## 2. UNFAMILIAR FAMILIARS

*A list of flavourful ideas for familiars conjured inside Barovia, including an all new familiar - the Wisp*

## 3. DUSK UNTIL DAWN

*Some divine Charms to better show the power and influence of Barovia's divine forces*

## 4. WHISPERS OF THE SOUL

*Short, Medium and Long term madness effects tailored to Barovia.*

## 5. VICIOUS CIRCLES

*Advice on using the option Honor ability score in Ravenloft and the return of Dark Powers checks.*

## 6. DEATH WISH

*Guidance on returning to life by the will of the Dark Powers, and the changes that wreaks on characters*

## 7. JINXED

*Handling Barovia's inherent misfortune in play, and how to expand that to include curses, hexes and other misfortunes*

## 8. GIFTS UNGIVEN

*Expanded Dark Gifts for the Amber Temples*

## 9. DEALING WITH THE DEVIL

*Advice for handling Strahd in combat*

## 10. BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

*A re-imagining of the Vistani*

## II. STRAHD MAGIC TRICKS

*Advice for handling Strahd's spell lists and nasty tricks*

## 12. DINNER WITH A VAMPIRE

*A higher challenge version of Strahd's statblock*



# 101 RANDOM BAROVIAN ENCOUNTERS

Encounter	d100				
	Road	Woods	Lake/River	Mountain	Wetlands
1. The Banderhobb	1-2	1-2			
2. The Woman In Black	3-4				
3. Grim	5-6	3-4			
4. Yegraw the Abominable				1-10	
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7. Deadly Nightshade		7-8			
8. Red Riding Hood	9-10	9-10			
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22. Lazy Eyed Susan	21-22				

**d100**  
**Barovia Encounters**

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24. The Weeping Wolf		23			
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**d100**  
**Barovia Encounters**

Encounter	Road	Woods	Lake/River	Mountain	Wetlands
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<b>87. Ancient Grave</b>		88			
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<b>89. "S"</b>	95				
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<b>95. Hidden Cache</b>	97-98	97			
<b>96. Mislaid Memories</b>	99			96-99	
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<b>101. None of our Business</b>		100			

## 1. The Banderhobb

Shadows coalesce in the near distance as something corpulent lumbers past, the face of a huge froglike ape bumbling parallel. "Ho ho ho" it croaks to itself "I am the Banderhobb, and I hobb banders. Ho ho ho." It doesn't seem interested in you.

This **banderhobb** has been summoned by the witch Baba Lysaga (area U3), and is on a goat hunting mission. When encountered, there is a 50% chance that it is carrying (or has swallowed) 1d4 small goats which is transporting back to the old woman. The Banderhobb is not a particularly intelligent creature, but can talk (unlike most examples) in stilted common. It becomes hostile only if someone attacks it or threatens harm on Baby Lysaga.

## 2. The Woman In Black

The road ahead falls still, and the wind dies. A lone silhouette, all in black, stands alone on the path. She raises her hand, and points at you. A moment later, she is gone, and the wind blows leaves across the path once more.

This spectral manifestation is a bad omen, and her appearance heralds death. Choose a character at random - that character has disadvantage on death saving throws until they die.

## 3. Grim

Yellow eyes stare at you from the undergrowth. A huge black dog stares at you, unblinking. Those bright and terrible eyes see right through you, deep into your soul.

This is a **death dog**. The first creature to see the death dog is cursed, and on the third sunset after seeing the dog, the cursed creature drops to 0 hit points in a sudden heart attack. Even if the afflicted character recovers, they suffer a permanent level of exhaustion from the ordeal. A *remove curse* spell or similar magic can dispel the effects of the curse before it strikes the unhappy victims down, and a *greater restoration* spell can remove the level of exhaustion resulting from it.

## 4. Yegraw the Abominable

A rumbling roar echoes across the mountain. A snow drift is rising to its feet and shaking off the snow. Grizzled white fur and slabs of muscle indicate you have trespassed onto the wrong turf,

This **abominable yeti** is in a bad temper, having been interrupted from a long nap by the intrusion of the characters. It roars and tries to frighten them away - in the absence of this, it attacks with lethal intent.

## 5. Trapper

There is little warning to the party as they approach the haunt of the **trapper**. Characters who are traveling at a slow pace may make Investigation or Nature checks as dictated in the trapper's statblock to detect its presence. Otherwise, it unfurls quietly and attacks a rear member of the party, ideally a halfling for a gnome for digestibility.

## 6. Signpost

There's a signpost in the road, buried at what looks to be a disused intersection. It looks old, and rotting.

This signpost is a **mimic**, which delights in sending travelers the wrong way, ideally into the woods or towards known threats in the area. If discovered (somehow) it lets off a big cackle and tries to hide by transforming into something minuscule. If this encounter occurs multiple times, the signs point to different places (but are never correct).

## 7. Deadly Nightshade

This surprise encounter occurs as the character pass by innocent looking foliage. Lurking in the bushes is an evil belladonna plants that lunges at the nearest potential victim (use the statistics for an **assassin vine**). A werewolf hit by an attack from the plant is cured of their lycanthropy.

## 8. Red Riding Hood

On the road ahead, there's a corpse covered in blood, which has pooled around it and began to sink into the mud. A small childlike figure in a red riding hood hunches over the body, clutching it tight.

The small figure in the red hood is actually a red-cap, which is busy harvesting the dead man's organs to drape over itself gaudily. It turns on anyone who disturbs it, girning gleefully at the prospect of more murder.



## 9. Tendrils in the Mist

Mist rolls across your path, familiar fog draping you in obscurity. Strangely, ribbons of red flicker at the edges of your vision...ribbons of blood? The vessels in your arms begin to rupture, spilling out into the air. What fresh horror is this?

This **vampiric mist**, the remains of one of Strahd's erstwhile consorts, prowls the roads and woods of Barovia looking for food. If Ireena Kolyana is with the party, it prioritizes her as a target out of petty jealousy and vengeance.

## 10. The Hanged Man

A crude wooden post has been hammered into the ground by the side of the road. A skeleton has been nailed to it by the hands, and hangs down, feet barely scraping the floor. Ravens pack at the bones, perhaps hoping to uncover some remaining morsel of flesh from the remains.

This poor soul was nailed to the post after being falsely accused of witchcraft by neighbours. The **specter** still lingers around the body, but cannot be roused unless someone tries to disturb the remains, at which it reacts with unreasoning violence.

## 11. Friendly Stranger

A stranger is approaching down the road. They seem sallow and tall, carrying a small backpack and dressed in big boots. They wave on seeing you, gesturing for you to approach.

This **dybbuk** is looking for a new body to inhabit and sees the party as a fresh pool to recruit from. It begins by asking for supplies, or perhaps to share a fire together. It doesn't hold up this facade for long before using its Violate Corpse ability and launches into a massacre.

## 12. Pumpkin Patch

Someone has curated a small vegetable patch out here in middle of nowhere. Pumpkins are littered everywhere - one has to wonder whether they ever go out of season in this valley.

The pumpkin patch is a delicious source of food, in theory, but is guarded by a fierce and evil pumpkin called His Squashiness (use the statistics for a **rop-er**). His squashiness, a gigantic pumpkin with many vines and creepers, lashes out at anyone who dares wander too close to the patch.

## 13. The Old Magic

The woods part, revealing a perfectly circular clearing with a single tree at the center. Ravens crowd around the trees, but not a single one will enter the circle.

This circle retains a trace of the druidic power once used to guard and tend to it. Beasts loyal to Strahd, such as wolves or bats, cannot enter the circle willingly. The tree is home to a sleeping **wood woad**, which remains dormant unless the tree is damaged, whereupon it emerges with a vengeance.

## 14. Shrine to Mother Night

Someone has painted a face onto a jagged rock in blood. At the foot of the shrine, tiny skeletons of woodland creatures are piled up in an unpleasant display.

This shrine is sacred to the night, and all those writhing, unseen things that shun the light of day. Characters who approach the shrine can seek the night mother's blessing, with a sacrifice. Characters blessed in this fashion gain inspiration. Clerics of good aligned gods that approach the shrine are attacked by a **swarm of rot grubs** that burrow up from underneath the rock. Destroying the shrine brings down the wrath of Mother Night onto the perpetrator - all mindless creatures of darkness (beasts, undead and so on) attack that creature first above other concerns until the curse is lifted.

## 15. Not Waving, But Drowning

There's someone struggling under the water...they look like they might be drowning. It doesn't look like they can keep treading water for much longer.

This **zombie** accidentally wandered into the water and occasionally floats to the top, where it flounders. If it is approached, it rather mindlessly attacks the closest visible source of food and attempts to drag them down to a watery grave. Depending on the distance from the characters to the zombie when they see it, it might be easier or harder to deduce the true nature of the corpse from a distance.

## 16. Mongrel

A small woman is wearily carrying a heavy looking basket, and she is struggling. She hears a heavy brown monastic hood, and the basket is covered. A faint gurgling comes from inside.

This **mongrelfolk** is called Lissa, and she has fled the Krezk monastery in the hopes of giving her litter of children a better life. Lissa has eight spider eyes (the *darkvision* Extraordinary Feature) which she keeps concealed under her hood. She has three levels of exhaustion from hunger and thirst. Her litter of five mongrelfolk show various similar mutations, but she only reveals them if she feels she has no choice - she is scared something might happen to them.

## 17. The Bogwitch

A hunched little man with a goatee is raking through the mud with his bare hands. At his feet, a toad croaks grumpily. He doesn't seem to notice your approach.

This **barovian witch** was once the town healer for Berez, but after its destruction made a pact with the Dark Powers for longevity and power. He's here looking for a material component root, but is not having any luck. Self centered to the core, he lies through his teeth for no other reason than to cause inconvenience to strangers. His toad familiar resentfully grumbles at people.

## 18. Hands of the Master

Crawling, creeping sounds rustle at your feet. Something is under the dead leaves, and it's heading in your direction.

2d6 **crawling claws** sometime dismembered from strahd zombies attack the party from beneath the foliage. The hands have a limited intelligence, and focus on choking victims to death. 1d4 rounds after the claws arrive, 1d6 **strahd zombies** arrive, missing a number of hands (collectively) equal to the number of crawling claws present.

## 19. The Fruits of Labour

A foul smell is the first sign of trouble. Then, it appears, floating towards you like a particularly putrescent balloon made of flowers and rot. Wolf legs and fur stick out from the inside, and the plant's odour is stomach-turning.

This **corpse flower** is a gruesome working by the druids of Yester Hill in decades past. The casters lost control of it, however, and the plant ate them before wandering off into the woods. This corpse flower has a fly (hover) speed of 20 feet.

## 20. The Ghost Hunter

Bells tinkle on the breeze as a small cart rolls ponderously into view. Astride it, a tiny old lady with a blindfold over her eyes is sat on a large cushion, lavishing encouragement on a donkey which seems disinclined to pick up speed regardless.

This rather noisy cart belongs to Agatha, a self-professed ghost hunter and student of the occult. She is blind, and actually incredibly ill informed about the workings of the spiritual world, with none of her charms, poultices and myriad bells having any supernatural potency whatsoever. Agatha has the statistics of a **commoner**.

## 21. Skittering Sticks

All around you, dead trees and withered vines bear testament to the hostility of these woods. Twisted wooden claws seem to bend and creak on the wind, snagging on your clothes as if you hold you back.

The characters wander into a grove of hostile **needle blights**, which launch into a snapping, splintering attack as soon as the moment presents itself. They aim their needles for squishy spots in the cracks of armor, but prefer to attack weaker foes, or non combatants. Fire terrifies them, and causes them to flee into the dark.





## 22. Lazy Eyed Susan

There's a discarded, life-size doll lying in the middle of the road made of sackcloth and patchwork rags. A smile is painted on its burlap face, and one button eye stares up at you blankly.

This **scarecrow** is called Lazy Eyed Susan, and it is looking for company. Discarded by Baba Lysaga due to its strange lack of homicidal impulses, Susan is inhabited by the spirit of Queen Ravenovia, conjured inadvertently from the mists by the dark arts of the witch. Susan can't speak, only point, but follows the party at a distance unless they deign to allow her to travel with them, but truly wishes to return to Castle Ravenloft to see her son. Depending on how she is treated, she could be an asset or a foil.

## 23. Priest of the Old Gods

A grizzled face emerges from the underbrush, expression riddled with hatred and burning with magic. Plants all around you are stiffening to attention, advancing on you with evil intent.

This **druid** is a priest dedicated to the primordial forces of nature, and the darkness within Barovia has polluted their soul. They are accompanied by 2d6 **twig blights** which groan and crack as they lurch to life. The druid sings dark psalms in druidic to the earth and sky, and rain begins to fall from above, obscuring visibility and turning the forest floor into thick mud.

## 24. The Weeping Wolf

A wolf is lying across your path. It whimpers, and holds up a paw, through which a large wooden spine is sticking. It opens large, puppy dog eyes in your direction, as if to ask for aid.

All around this clearing, 2d6 **wolves** circle at a 30 ft distance. They are waiting on the signal from the **werewolf**, who is feigning injury. Should some foolish soul attempt to help the wolf, it lunges for their throat as soon as they get close enough, triggering an attack by the rest of the wolves.

## 25. THE DEVIL ON THE WATER

As the water laps against the shore, a shadow falls over you from above, Descending from grey skies, trailing mist like a shroud, the stern figure of Strahd von Zarovich glides down to hover above the water, cloak billowing in the wind. The wind rises, and the water churns.

Strahd is here to test the characters, as is his wont. He has the following wizard spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, shield, magic missile*  
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind, mirror image, warding wind*  
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, tidal wave*  
4th level (3 slots): *control water, watery sphere*  
5th level (1 slot): *control winds, mislead*

The vampire descends from the sky using his *fly* spell, which he maintains without concentration. As he does so, watching intently, the surface of the lake or river churns as 5d6 **strahd zombies** emerge near the shore, charging the adventurers. If Ireena Kolyana is with the party, Strahd uses this as an opportunity to acquire her, otherwise remaining aloof and watching the conflict from above, using his magic to prevent himself from being engaged. If the zombies reduce a characters to 0 hit points, Strahd orders them to retreat into the lake, whilst he himself transforms into a bat and returns to the castle to ponder the party tactics and abilities.

## 26. Bloodrose

As you travel, you begin to see bright dots of colour scattered in the foliage. Red rose blooms are an unusual sight, and a vivid contrast to the faded, bleak woodlands you've been traveling through. The thorny stalks are streaked with red veins, which thrum to some unheard melody beyond your power to perceive.

This is a **Bloodrose** plant (use the statistics for an **assassin vine**) which uses a 1/day *plant growth* ability to inhibit escape as it advances on its prey. After it has drained a single victim dry, the bloodrose retreats into the woods to digest.



## 27. Nosferatu

The smell of blood hits you first, a metallic tang that alerts you to the presence of a predator. Crawling towards you on all fours with stilted, unnerving jitters, it was perhaps a human once. Bleeding from large fangs that curve over its lower lip, the wretched monster leaps to attack with a joyous screech.

This **vampire spawn** is conventionally known as a Nosferatu, or 'feral' vampire occasionally but rarely found in the reaches of Barovia, hunting near the borders for food. Turned aside by Strahd out of cruelty or some perceived slight, Nosferatu have long lost sight of their sanity, governed entirely by their own hunger.

## 28. Drowned Murmurs

At the water's edge, black ripples lap against the shore. Pallid faces emerge from under the water, vacant eyes and rotting flesh begging silently for release. They reach for you, fingers grasping and clutching you, perhaps to steal some small spark of warmth and strength from your living form.

These 3d6 **strahd zombies** have been placed near the water's edge as a sadistic trap for travelers foolish enough to stray near. They stumble slowly out of the water towards their targets, and drag anyone they can reach into the lake where they attempt to drown them. The zombies do not inflict hp damage, instead preferring to grapple and drag foes into the water.

## 29. Surface Recollections

A young woman sits alone at the water's edge. She's singing to it, and touching the surface gently with one hand. She seems so engrossed in this that she may not notice you approach.

The young woman is a **ghost** trapped at the scene of her death by her grief. Beneath the surface of the water, buried beneath the mud, are the bones of two humanoids, one full sized and the other child-like. Until the bones are recovered and reburied on sanctified ground, the ghost will never willingly leave the area.

## 30. Night of the Living Dead

The groans and shuffling feet of the living dead reach your ears on the wind. It seems to come from all directions, the creaking steps and bustling stench indicating the arrival of peril.

This encounter only occurs at night. Undead converge on the party location in vast numbers, and the wise would do well to flee quickly. The round after the noises start, 2d6 **zombies** appear through the darkness 100 feet away from the party, spread

out across all directions. Each round thereafter, 1d4 additional zombies appear from random directions. This continues infinitely, until the characters flee, are rescued, or perish.

## 31. The Nameless Knight

The tread of mailed feet crunches towards you out of the mist. An figure clad in ceremonial armour tinged with a spectral hue, steps out of the fog. It salutes you.

This **phantom warrior** was defeated by trickery and magic long ago, and the angry spirit remains tied to the material plane as a result. Defeating the phantom warrior in single combat without the use of magic allows the spirit to pass on to whatever awaits it in the next life.

## 32. Dream Pastry Addicts

A roving band of villagers is headed in your direction with scowls and pitchforks. They seem angry, and desperate. Pale skin, wide eyes and shaking hands suggests they are unwell.

These 2d6 **commoners** are suffering from an addiction to Morgantha's Dream Pastries, and have turned to banditry to fund their habits (something which delights the witch to no end). The villagers aren't killers by nature, but are desperate enough to incapacitate strangers who don't hand over some pennies when threatened. The commoners have disadvantage on all attack rolls and saving throws due to their advanced state of withdrawal.

## 33. Full Moon

The moon rises high above, shedding light down onto the valley. Pure white light shines down, cleansing away hexes and washing away deception.

Characters that are afflicted by hexes, curses or Dark Gifts are temporarily alleviated of those conditions until sunrise. The sole exception to this is werewolves, who immediately transform and enter a murderous rampage attacking the nearest creature they can see until sunrise.



### 34. The Temple's Bounty

A dark shadow is trailing the mountainside, flesh branded with symbols that twist and writhe in the perpetual half light. Their eyes are writ large with spiders, and their hands raise thirteen prayers to gods unknowable. They reek of secrets best left buried.

This is a **deathlock**, enslaved by the vestiges of the temple and cursed to eternally wander the mountains, inflicting death or madness on anyone foolish enough to search for the temple's secrets. A character that slays a deathlock from the temple hears the whispers of a vestige from far away, like an echo just out of earshot.

### 35. Truth and Madness

Shrieks and whispers form from nothing. Whirling words and deadly sighs reach for you with mouths uncountable and teeth of vicious lies. What dark truths lie in the mountains? What fool would be craven enough to seek them out?

The **allip** here fled from the Amber Temple after discovering the vestiges trapped there. The knowledge tainted it, and drove it mad, whence it has haunted the mountain ever since. It approaches characters and tries to tell them awful truths, and becomes enraged when it is unable to communicate effectively. There is a 10% chance that in the gibberings of the allip it reveals the location of an item or ally mentioned in the Fortunes of Ravenloft, if they have not already been discovered.

### 36. Sudden Storm

Rain begins to pour down from the grey skies, blurring your vision. Thunder booms overhead, and the downpour threatens to soak you through. Then, a translucent hand snaking through the water towards you.

The **water elemental** has been hiding in the storms and clouds for centuries, and craves the sweet taste of life from living sources.



### 37. Cast offs and Castaways

A leering, contorted body shuffles across the ground nearby, snuffling and snorting. It looks semi-human, with long stitch marks down the creases between limbs, head and torso, as if some mad seamstress has patched it together from miscellaneous corpses. It has the head of a pig, which stares blankly at you as it approaches.

This monstrous, but otherwise benign monstrosity is a **flesh golem** constructed by the Abbot as one of his prototypes for Vasilka. It is friendly, and traumatized from having been abandoned by its creator. If shown any kindness, it bonds to its new friend and defends them to the death against anything it perceives to be a threat,

### 38. Jealousy

A pallid, gaunt figure drops down from above you like a cat on all fours. They bare razor sharp pointed teeth, and their pupils are deep crimson. "You took him from me!" the creature screeches. "He doesn't want me anymore, and it's all your fault!" They lunge.

This is a **vampire spawn** and late consort of Strahd, who discarded them in favour of some new prettier thing many years ago. The spawn, driven by a desire to be connected to their sire, became delirious and confused. Now, they hunt down any strangers that attract the attention of the Darklord, in a misguided attempt to win back his favour. If they succeed in defeating the characters, there is a 50% chance they leave them unconscious and return to Strahd to crow over their victory.



### 39. The Demon in the Wood

There is a whiff of brimstone in the air, and the stench of sulfur soon afterwards. A black stone, riddled with green copper, lies in a scorched earth clearing nearby. It is graven with a green devil face, mouth gaping wide open. Inside the mouth, there is only a void.

The stone in the wood is inhabited by a powerful extraplanar entity that touches on Barovia here like an ink stain spilling over parchment. Placing a hand or arm inside the stone's cavity results in the user being offered a Dark Gift (see Chapter 11, the Amber Temple), the gift of Astaroth-Diabolus. The gift of Astaroth-Diabolus is the ability to conjure your inner fire. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient gains the ability to cast the produce flame cantrip, using Charisma as their spellcasting ability modifier. The beneficiary of this dark gift has their arm warped to aesthetically resemble that of a demon, with twisted green flesh, long yellow nails and small barbs. The stone is guarded carefully by a corrupted fire elemental that attacks any character who approaches bearing sunlight, or a holy symbol of good. Destroying the stone releases an aspect of the demon (use the statistics of a **balor**) which destroys anyone and anything it can see until Barovia is a smoldering cesspit of hubris, a lesson to anyone who thinks with their sword hand.

### 40. His Master's Voice

The sound of screaming hits your ears before anything else. Piercing cries and muffled sobs invade your mind, pushing aside other thought. Leaping for you from a shadowy location, a long nosed elf with blade drawn.

Strahd has sent **Rahadin** to test the prowess of the adventurers. If possible, he hides to surprise them, but this is made difficult by his aura of screaming telepathic psychopath voices. Rahadin targets a character who is alone, or at the rear of the group, incapacitating one person as quickly as possible before retreating. Meanwhile, Strahd attempts to watch through a scrying spell. If Rahadin is faced with overwhelming odds or a concerted defense, he falls back anyway and returns to the castle.

### 41. Something in the Water

A lilting refrain meets your ears, carried across the waves. Walking on the surface of the water, a dirty figure in grey rags is singing at the sky. The words are guttural and harsh.

The **druid** is singing a song in abyssal. Those who understand the language can decipher phrases of it, revealing it to be a distorted incantation of summoning. If allowed to finish his working, whatever he is attempting to summon does not appear. Then, he is dragged below the surface of the waves with a shriek by something unseen. He does not resurface.

### 42. Death from Above

Circling overhead, swarms of bats are converging on your location. For a brief, beautiful moment, the stars are blotted out by their number. Then, they descend.

The characters are attacked by 4d6 **swarms of bats** that harry them from place to place. The bats nip and chase adventurers rather than seeking to outright destroy them, driving them in a direction of Strahd's preference by blinding and disorientating them. There is a 10% chance that Strahd himself is hiding in one the swarms as a bat, observing directly.

### 43. The Pack

Growling lupine faces emerge into view, jaws dipping with saliva. They seem happy to meet you, but it might be safe to suggest the feeling is not mutual.

The characters are attacked by 3d6 **wolves** and 1 **dire wolf**. Strahd is hidden amongst them, masquerading as a regular wolf. If the dire wolf is slain or Strahd is injured, the entire wolf pack retreats before the ruse is discovered. Strahd uses the information he gathers during this fight to inform future struggles.



#### 44. Brood of Sangzor

A bleating to the side of you alerts you to danger. Lined up in an intimidating array, a tribe of angry looking mountain goats are preparing to charge you. They look unusually hirsute.

This gaggle of 2d4 **giant goats** are some of the many descendants of Sangzor, the goat who rules the Tsolenka pass like a tiny, horned god emperor. The goats charge and shove anyone they can see off the mountain, or die heroically in the attempt.

#### 45. Abandoned Wagon

A strange blotch of colour mars the landscape, in the form of an abandoned Vistani wagon, left to rot here in the wind and rain. One wheel is broken, and it rests wonkily against a tree.

This wagon is in a severe state of disrepair, but a character proficient in an appropriate tool might be able to set it to rights with an hour's work. The cart (whilst not in the best condition) could easily pass itself off as current Vistani property to the casual observer. Needless to say, Vistani that discovered any such ruse would be unimpressed. The cart can be pulled by loadbearing animals as per the usual guidelines in the Player's Handbook and Dungeon Master's Guide.

#### 46. Babysitting

A child approaches you from the undergrowth. They are naked, and holding a small doll. They snifle, and point to the doll. "Blinsky" they say, in a sulky manner,

The child is a **werewolf** who has wandered away from the werewolf camp to find some more toys. Originally born in Vallaki, the toy was given to them by parents who were killed in a werewolf attack. The toymaker was kind to the child, who wants (with a child's logic) to go back. The child tries to express this as best they can, otherwise following behind the party on their tiny legs until they can't keep up, at which point they morph into a wolf. The werewolf-child is not immediately homicidal, but may become so if treated poorly (or refused something it wants). The werewolf's size is Small. The doll is a sackcloth wolf that turns inside out to a human, and bears a tag with the slogan "Is no fun, is no Blinsky!"

#### 47. Book Club

Humanoids in dark robes wander past in the near distance. They appear to be clutching themselves tightly as if cold, and their faces suggest they are thoroughly miserable.

These **cultists** are on a book club field trip from Vallaki, in service to their 'devil masters' (who are demonstrably absent). The members are thoroughly lost, and are cursing Fiona Wachter for ever getting them into this in the first place. All the cultists have 1 level of exhaustion, and wish to return home.

#### 48. Arrigal

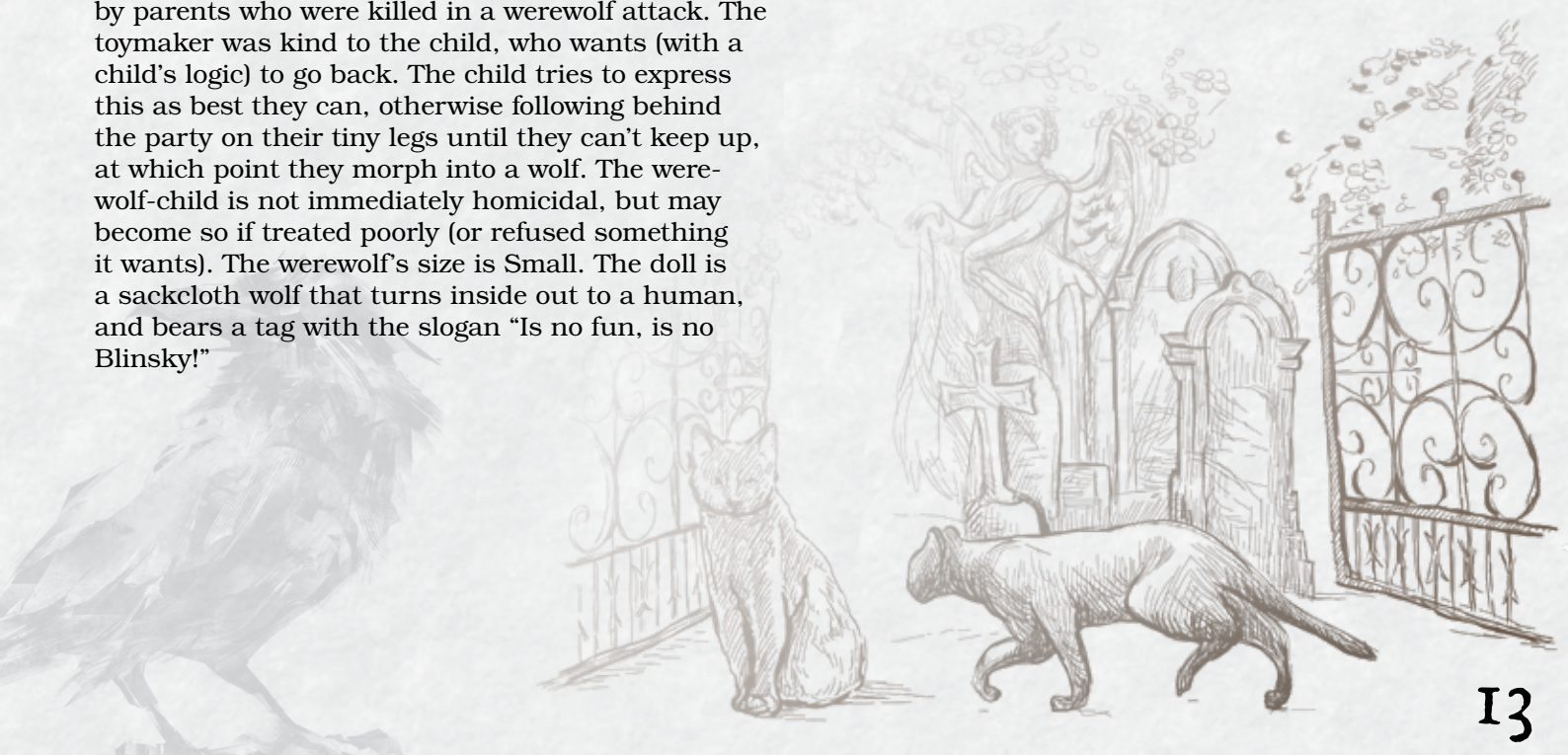
An old man stumbles down the road towards you. His kindly expression is a ray of sunlight in a troubled world. Then, a blade protrudes through his neck, and he falls to the earth, dead. A Vistani dressed in black stands behind him, in a hero pose. "Arrigal," he says, definitively, with the air of a flourish.

Arrigal is just here to be a massive pain in everyone's backside. The old man was a humble tailor from Vallaki who inexplicably survived to a ripe old age only to serve as an easel for Arrigal's artistic, but homicidal impulses.

#### 49. MAGIC

There is a rumble, and then an eruption. Through the earth, a crazed old man in a battered wizard hat bursts with giant mole hands. "MAGIC" he cries, before turning into a centipede and scuttling off northwards.

The Mad Mage of Mount Baratok can turn into any animal he desires, but prefers ones that cause an impact, so he can shout MAGIC and then leave to cause trouble elsewhere.



## 50. The Devil Rides Out

Fire blossoms through the night. Streaks of flame burst through the air, shattering the quiet with shuddering explosions. The smoke and flame cannot conceal a shadow looming up above, riding shadow and flame.

**Strahd von Zarovich** has mustered his forces, and has arrived once more to test the resolve of the characters and learn their tactics. He is riding his **nightmare** about 100 feet above the ground.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, shield, absorb elements*

2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray, levitate*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *wall of fire, blight*

5th level (1 slot): *animate objects*

Strahd bombards the characters from above, whilst the smoke from the burning wood lightly obscures him to onlookers below. He uses the nightmare's innate traits to escape to the material plane if necessary, and returns to Castle Ravenloft once he is satisfied with the information he has gathered on their response times and emergency tactics

## 51. Scarecrows on Parade

Jerking, shuffling figures of sackcloth and wire are capering in a rude mass, straw falling out from holes in their motley clothing. Razor sharp claws hang at their sides, mottled with rust.

These 2d4 **scarecrows** are on reconnaissance duty for Baba Lysaga, and are in the middle of moving to a new location for spying. If they notice the adventurers, they perform a comical double take, and then turn stock still, pretending to be inanimate scarecrows (even if the ruse is obvious). From this point onwards, they refuse to move for any aggravation short of fire, which drives them into a violent frenzy.

## 52. The Skulk

The adventurers attract the attention of a wandering **skulk**, which begins to follow them out of curiosity and malice. It does little, merely preferring to keep a safe distance and watch characters as they sleep. It even follows them into town, treading softly so as to cause as little noise as possible. Children under 10 can see skulks, and thus likely react to it with terror, at which it cringes and flees only to return a short while later.

## 53. The Magic Cow

An ugly old woman is arguing loudly with her cow, which is blocking the path ahead with a bovine expression. "Oh, move, you wretched creature," she snaps at it. "I didn't bring you out here to get eaten by wolves, did I? Not that it'd do them any good, they'd just get indigestion from your stubbornness!"

The old woman, a hedge witch who calls herself Mother Haggie, is passing through Barovia on other business, but her **cow** (which she claims is magic, for no discernible reason) has decided to take a recalcitrant position in the road. Adventurers can easily pass around the cow, or attempt to aid old woman if they are particularly generous, for which she will reward them with a **bag of beans**.

## 54. Gaze of Tenebrous

The mountains, ever cold and forbidding, gain a new aspect of hostility in the forms of a corpse dragging itself across the rocks and ice. Its skin is midnight, eyes stretched into bottomless pits, mouth transfixed in an endless scream. As it approaches, the mountain resonates with an unspeakable name, a secret locked in a mountain's heart.

This **bodak** was once an arcanist, who found the amber temple and sought the vestiges inside. They found the vestige of Tenebrous, but failed the transformation into a lich, becoming instead a hideous mockery of life and undeath. The bodak is a mad force of destruction and kills anything it can reach, but is slow moving and vulnerable to trickery.

## 55. Lost Soul

Noise travels differently up here in the mountains, echoing over itself and reverberating through the heights. It is therefore, startling when all around you a plaintive voice begins to sound from somewhere nearby. "Lost," it cries. over and over. "Lost."

The party are being stalked by **the lost**, a traveler in the mountains who died of exposure and became twisted into a monster. It appears in 1d4 hours, following their tracks until it comes across them. Then, it chooses a party member, and attempts to lock them in an embrace before hurling them both off the mountain edge.

## 56. Quiet Watcher

There's someone watching you. Pale grey skin, knife-point elven ears. Clothing grey as the dol-drums - they almost seem to fade into the background.

This is Barathial, a **gloom weaver** emissary of the Raven Queen, sent to the domain to record the tragedy of Strahd von Zarovich. As a historian, Barathial (they/them) is keen to explore the domain and learn as much as they can about Barovia. They have no interest in defending or aiding the characters, but if permitted travels with them for as long as it seems convenient, all the while affecting them with its Burden of Time ability.

## 57. Papa Feather

A scabrous, birdlike monstrosity is perching on the mountainside, smoking a pipe. It looks up with piercing yellow eyes. "Hello," it says, and the word is laced with curiosity. "Care to join me?"

This **nagpa** (which calls itself "Papa Feather" is searching for the Amber Temple, in an attempt to slay the lich Exethanter and retrieve the library of dark magic held under its protection. It tries to convince characters to help it find the temple, and to claim the contents for its own. Once there, it betrays them at the worst possible moment and heads off to find the library.

## 58. The Bogfather

Despite the mud, rain and grime, the sudden gout of bogwater from behind you alerts you to the presence of danger. A gigantic crocodile, eyes bleeding ichor, crashes down onto wet earth, rotting flesh falling away from green-stained bones.

This **giant crocodile** lived in the swamp before the adventurers put an end to it. Several decades in the mud passed, until Baba Lysaga brought back the gemstone to her crawling hut. The magic of the stone has begun to imbue the swamp with corrupted vigor, and this crocodile is a symptom of that. It has the undead creature type, and is no more agreeable now than it was in life. If destroyed, it reconstitutes itself with a blaze of green light in 2d4 hours, and begins to follow the party's trail. If the stone is retrieved from Baba Lysaga, the Bogfather stops reanimating.

## 59. Unbearable

Your journey is abruptly interrupted by the characteristic rumble of ursine displeasure. A monstrous black bear is standing in your way, tiny black eyes a reminder to all nature conservationists that the feeling is probably not reciprocated.

This is a **black bear**, with a mean temper and a bone to pick with adventurers. The bear's cubs (1d4 noncombatant tiny bears) are located in a cave 500 meters away, and the bear is attempting to warn away the trespassers. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can discern the likely reason for the bear's aggressive behaviour.

## 60. Woodbreaker Dryad

A tree just ahead of you suddenly cracks near the base, and tumbles forward with a sickening lurch, threatening to crush you flat.

Characters in the way of the tree (a 60 ft long, 5 feet long line from the base of the tree) must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or 2d6 damage on a successful save. This tree falling is caused by the evil tricks of a woodbreaker Dryad, once a helpful forest spirit corrupted by the druids of Yester Hill into a murderer. The **dryad** follows the party through the woods, breaking a tree in a similar manner every hour.

## 61. Witch hunter

An arrow streaks by you close enough to whisper in your ear. Hooded figures emerge around you, bows drawn.

These 2d4 **archers** are witch hunters from Vallaki, bounty hunters who hope to claim a handsome prize from Baron Vallakovich for bringing him the heads of those engaged in nefarious occult activities.



## 62. Corpse Brides

A hand bursts up through the soil, remnants of a white dress hanging loosely off it. A putrid head emerges from the soil some feet distant, bearing a veil.

These 3d6 **zombies** all bear a striking resemblance to Ireena Kolyana (and thus, Tatyana), being the bodily remains of those incarnations that failed to survive a wedding with Strahd, usually by taking their own lives. Many wear their wedding regalia. Rahadin took the corpses and buried them in a secret discreet location, which the adventurers have inadvertently trespassed on.

## 63. Feed the Birds

The woods open into a clearing, where an old woman sits on a log, surrounded by ravens. The trees are weighed heavily down with hundreds of birds all around. "Feed the birds," the crone croons to the ravens, as she throws them colourful garments.

This **druid** is feeding the birds clothes - children's clothes, by the look of it. She buys them from the hags at the Old Bonegrinder, and then brings them into the woods to feed the **ravens**, who take them away to flesh out their nests.

## 64. Swamp Surprise

The adventurers wander too close to a bog pit, which uses the same rules as Quicksand from the Dungeon Master's Guide. If the party is traveling at a slow pace, the navigator can make an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check DC15 to notice the pit in time. Otherwise, the character at the front of the marching order walks into the pit. In the pit, 2d6 malevolent **boggles** are surprised but gratified by the interruption and emerge with the sole purpose of stealing items and pushing people into the pit.

## 65. Deathpit

*Simple trap (level 1–4, moderate threat)*

Deathpits consist of a 10-foot-deep hole in the floor, concealed by tattered canvas that's covered with leaves and dirt to look like solid ground. This type is set by the mad druids of Yester Hill to inconvenience and discourage woods trespassers.

**Trigger.** Anyone who steps on the canvas might fall into the pit.

**Effect.** The triggering creature must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature catches itself on the pit's edge or instinctively steps back. On a failed save, the creature falls into the pit and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage

from the fall. The bottom of the pit is filled with green slime, as per the Dungeon Hazards section of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

**Countermeasures.** A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the presence of the canvas and the 1-foot-wide ledge around the edges of the pit where it is safe to travel.

## 66. Hunter's Trap

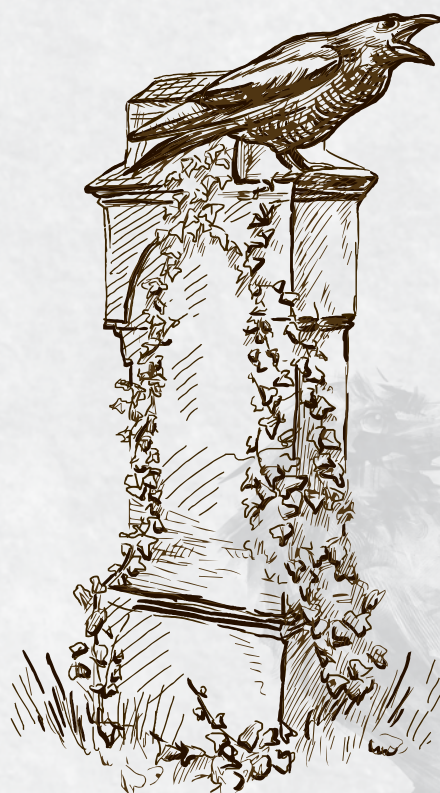
*Simple trap (level 1–4, dangerous threat)*

This trap resembles a set of iron jaws that springs shut when stepped on, clamping down on a creature's leg. The trap is spiked in the ground, leaving the victim immobilized. Worse, the points are covered with poison.

**Trigger.** A creature that steps on the hunting trap triggers it.

**Effect.** The trap makes an attack against the triggering creature. The attack has a +8 attack bonus and deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage on a hit. A creature that takes any piercing damage from this attack must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 poison damage on a failed saving throw. This attack can't gain advantage or disadvantage. A creature hit by the trap has its speed reduced to 0. It can't move until it breaks free of the trap, which requires a successful DC 15 Strength check by the creature or another creature adjacent to the trap.

**Countermeasures.** A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the trap. A successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables it.





## 67. Mist Tendrils

Mist drifts into your way, a familiar sight which turns to a disturbing manifestation when tendrils of it reach for your throat..

This patch of hungry mist is not a creature, just an avatar of some dark and terrible power from beyond the misty border. Use the statistics of a **roper**, with the following changes -

- It is a gargantuan creature.
- It has the undead creature type
- It is resistant to all types of damage except fire and radiant
- It deals necrotic damage instead of any other type
- Creatures can move through its space, and it can move through other creatures

Mist Tendrils can also be banished by a *gust of wind* spell or any other magic that affects gaseous hazards.

## 68. Siren Fog

A gloomy fog gloams in your direction, accompanied by a coercive melody that worms and writhes around you looking for a way inside your head. "Come to me" it sings. "Sink below and dream for-bidden dreams in my embrace."

Characters which can see the water must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become Charmed by the water. For the purposes of spells that defend against supernatural entities, this effect is treated as if produced by an undead creature. Creatures Charmed in this way must use their full movement and action each turn to move closer to the water, submerging themselves beneath it until the effect is lifted. Creatures receive another saving throw against the effect if another creature uses an action to shake them awake, or if they are damaged, but the act of drowning does not lift the Charm.

## 69. Storm

Rain lashes down from above in a sudden storm, whipping itself into a frenzy in a matter of minutes. Trees bend and groan, thunder booms overhead, and the clouds roil with lightning.

This torrent lasts for 12 hours, producing an immense amount of rain, wind, and lightning. The downpour has the following principal effects:

- The adventurers can't finish a long rest unless they are indoors.
- All overland travel takes twice as long.
- Vision is heavily obscured past 100 feet.
- The DC to avoid becoming lost increases to 15.

## 70. Frozen Hell

The wind rises, bringing with it an impossible chill. Ice and snow crunch underfoot, and the blizzard threatens to stop your heart entirely.

Creatures traveling in the mountains have disadvantage on all saving throws against Extreme Cold. In addition resistance to cold damage no longer immunizes creatures to Extreme Cold for the duration of Frozen Hell. Frozen Hell lasts 2d6 hours.

## 71. Barovian Lice

It starts with an itch, and then a scratch. Lice, in your boots, your food, your hair, your clothes. Lice everywhere. They make life a misery.

Barovian Lice are easy to contract by walking through the wrong area, but difficult to shake. Characters who are flying or wearing plate armour when this encounter occurs do not gain lice. A casting of *purify food and drink* can rid one character's supplies of lice, and an effect that removes disease can kill all lice present on a single character. The lice transfer back to a character (and their gear) on touch, including the touch requirement of spells or abilities. A character infested with lice suffers disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks due to the constant distraction. A character that bears the lice for 7 or more days is also Poisoned by the lice, as they feed off the blood of the host.

## 72. Bones

Stones have been shoved into the earth here, haphazardly marking graves long untended. On the surface, bones are scattered, as if perhaps the patrons of this cemetery gave up on digging holes entirely.

There are 3d6 graves in this long forgotten cemetery, and at least one raven perching on the tombstones. The area is desecrated ground (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) and each grave has a 10% chance of containing a **wight**, which claws its way free to engage intruders.



### 73. Warning

A wooden sign has been clumsily hammered into the wet soil, reading "DO NOT APPROACH."

The sign is a poor attempt at privacy engineered by a **barovian witch** who likes to take naps in a near-by ditch. The witch is fast asleep just over the rise, with her hat tipped over her eyes. Her familiar, the obese tabby **cat** "Claws" is dreaming happily by her side.

### 74. Screaming Lunatic

A ragged man walks down the road. He's screaming at the top of his voice over and over again. He's paying no mind whatsoever to where he's going.

This **commoner** has had just about enough with the vampires, and skeletons and mist and sadness and everything else that makes Barovia such a miserable place to live. He is one of the few Barovians with a soul, and that soul is damaged from hundreds of years of ignominious deaths to horrible creatures. One morning, whilst out for a walk, he snapped, and he's been walking all day ever since, screaming. If he dies, he becomes a **banshee**, which wails in the area of his death until he dies.

### 75. The Devil Dances With Wolves

The howling startles you into action. Wolves, converging on you as if manifesting from the darkness itself. The dark seems oppressive, masking their numbers, but the shuffling of paws and hungry growling suggests you are in for a deadly fight. From the inky darkness, a male voice laughs quietly.

**Strahd von Zarovich** has mustered his forces, and has arrived once more to test the resolve of the characters and learn their tactics. He is at ground level, and is accompanied by 4d6 **wolves** and 1d3 **dire wolves**.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud, disguise self, expeditious retreat, silent image*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, dust devil, misty step*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *blink, fear, slow*
- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, confusion*
- 5th level (1 slot): *maddening darkness, wall of force*

Strahd tests the characters' resilience against sustained assault, using his spells to confuse and frustrate attempts to co-ordinate. If he gets the chance, he uses darkness or wall of force to conceal him whilst he takes a character to one side and gets a taste of their blood, preferably a character he is considering as a possible consort. When half of the wolves are slain, he retreats to Castle Ravenloft.

### 76. Recognition

There is a pale, translucent hand on your shoulder. A rotting, flickering face is peering intently into yours. "Don't I know you?" it says, with a hopeful tone.

This **ghost** is lost, and hoping someone can tell it who or what it is. The ghost is very gullible and believes whatever it is told. Each morning, it has to be re-informed of its 'identity'. Failing to give it an identity causes it to become angry.

### 77. Gulthias Seedling

You see ragged figures in the forest, carefully transporting a small sapling with withered dead branches through the undergrowth. They seem furtive.

These three **druids** are transporting a seedling of the Gulthias tree at Yester Hill. The druids are taking the evil seedling to the villager of Barovia, where they intend to find Father Donavich and plant it in his corpse. If the druids are attacked, the forest provides them aid in the form of 1d6 **twig blights** and 1 **vine blight**.

### 78. Wolf Spy

Strahd has sent one of his lupine servants to spy on the party and return news of their whereabouts. He also commands the **wolf** to ascertain their general state of readiness and health. The wolf sneaks up on the party to check this information as quietly as it can. Compare the wolf's Dexterity (Stealth) check to the party's highest passive perception score to determine if the wolf is caught. If the wolf successfully returns to Strahd, which takes roughly 2d4 hours, Strahd uses this to inform a staged attack within the next 24 hours.

### 79. Danger Puddle

As you splash through the bleak landscape, your foot lands in something you didn't expect. Furthermore, your shoe is rapidly disintegrating. Bother.

The party member at the front of the marching order steps in a **grey ooze** pretending to be a puddle. The ooze, understandably irked, proceeds to try and eat them.

## 80. The Devil Wears Prada

The road ahead is suddenly filled with a prismatic glare, which fades slightly to reveal a dark silhouette embedded in the center of the light like an eclipse over the sun. The illumination continues to fade, revealing the Byronic figure of Strahd von Zarovich, wearing a rich velvet cloak and clad in a three piece suit. He is accompanied by three gaunt, scantily clad butlers who seem overwhelmed by his attention. Von Zarovich smiles, and the force of his charm surges like a physical force.

**Strahd von Zarovich** has mustered his forces, and has arrived once more to test the resolve of the characters and learn their tactics. He is at ground level, and is accompanied by three commoners who are completely subject to his Charm.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *disguise self*, *shield*, *color spray*

2nd level (3 slots): *suggestion*, *alter self*, *mirror image*, *pyrotechnics*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *hypnotic pattern*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *sickenening radiance*

5th level (1 slot): *dominate person*, *wall of light*

Strahd tests the characters' resilience against being Charmed and bribed, offering them riches, companionship, a place by his side - anything he thinks might cause them to take a step towards him. He doesn't honor any such deal immediately, promising to return at a later date. During this encounter, he uses the full force of his Charm on anyone that meets his gaze, and blocks attacks using the commoners, who he leaves behind on his retreat to Castle Ravenloft.

## 81. Lost Cat

A small kitten mewls helplessly in the road. It seems bedraggled and alone - there is no owner in sight.

This kitten has been left by Strahd to tempt the characters into rescuing it. This provides two purposes - one reveals which party members are emotionally vulnerable, and the other is to provide an easy target for *screaming* spells that will reliably be at the party's location.

## 82. For The Wisest

There's a small golden box lying in the mud. It seems that someone has dropped it...or discarded it. Its small enough to fit in the palm of your hand.

The box is made of wood with gilt leaf decoration. It is locked, and on the top the words "For The Wisest" are engraved. The box has no key, is secured by an *arcane lock*, and requires a DC30 appropriate ability check to break or pick open. This is reduced to DC20 if the *arcane lock* is dispelled. Inside the box is nothing whatsoever, and opening it triggers a *symbol (death)* spell (DC15) which activates centered on the box as soon as it is opened.

## 83. Phantom Disagreement

Two ghostly warriors are standing two feet apart, bickering. Moldering skeletons lie at their feet. "You go," barks one. "No, YOU go," responds the other wearily. It seems they may have been stuck in this rut for some time.

These two **phantom warriors** have been arguing for centuries about who should be the first to leave their bodies behind and pass onto the afterlife. Eventually this argument became rote, then habit, then the only thing they remembered. Neither can recall the reason for their row, just that it's the only thing they have left.

## 84. Sin Dolly

A ragdoll has been discarded in the mud. It looks like it's been trodden into the dirt and forgotten.

This **tiny servant** (see the spell) was created by Morgantha in a moment of idleness, and given to a family who failed to pay their bills. The doll, a poorly woven burlap poppet, was built to lure the children of the family away from their parents towards the windmill. The doll, once it has been picked up, tugs and pulls (weakly) any humanoid it meets in the direction of the Old Bonegrinder.

## 85. Dripping Trees

The rain begins to beat down from above, cascading through the branches and drenching your clothes. Then, a burst of pain. Scalding pain from above.

Grey oozes, which had been hunting birds up in the pines, are dissolving in the rain and showering unfortunate creatures below. Creatures caught in the deluge must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 acid damage from the falling slime. Any metal equipment carried by the characters takes a permanent -1 to its functionality (AC, attacks, checks) until it can be mended.

## 86. Demon Baby

Something is shuffling towards you on the trail. It's small, no larger than a baby, with a bleached bone skull sporting a large single large eye socket. It reaches up hands plaintively, and rasps "Mama?"

This Tiny **skeleton** is all that remains of a deformed child left to the wolves by a heartless mother unwilling to care for it. The skeleton has wandered the outskirts of Barovia ever since, and wants only to be cared for.

## 87. Ancient Grave

Water runs down the faces of angelic statues looming over this hidden graveyard. Swords and heraldic emblems are emblazoned on these long forgotten graves.

These graves have forgotten the touch of their makers, and the bodies within are held in stasis by the angelic influence that still lingers here. This area is treated as if under the effects of a *forbiddance* spell against undead, DC13.

## 88. Rain

The sky opens. Rain pelts down, drowing the valley in a torrential storm that beats down on you like the eyes of the devil himself. Somewhere in the rain, out there beyond the rumble of the thunder, someone is laughing softly.

This torrential rainstorm lasts for 24 hours. Whilst it is in effect, the rules for heavy precipitation apply, as detailed in chapter 5 of the Dungeon Master's Guide. Substantial bodies of water in the area flood after 2d10 hours of heavy rain, rising 10 feet above its banks and inundating the surrounding area. The flood advances at a rate of 100 feet per round, moving away from the body of water where it began until it reaches the edge of the area of effect; at that point, the water flows downhill (and possibly recedes back to its origin). Light structures collapse and wash away. Any Large or smaller creature caught in the flood's path is swept away. The flooding destroys crops and might trigger mudslides, depending on the terrain.

## 89. "S"

A quiet voice interrupts you from behind. "May I intrude?" a demur looking scholar in travelers garb chances. How did they get so close? "I have a few questions, if I may" they assert. It's hard to see their face under that hood.

The scholar "S" (LE **noble**) is currently working on a new edition of the Ravenloft Gazetteer on the orders of their 'benefactor'. They interrupt only for long enough to ask a few banal questions about the

characters' experiences in Barovia, what they think of the place and what they might do to improve it. If they have any opinions of Strahd von Zarovich, S notes those down too, before leaving to continue their journey. S would die before divulging any secret information, but can be persuaded into helping decipher a tricky prophecy clue if lured into it with the promise of a fun puzzle to solve

## 90. Pauper's Grave

The disturbed earth here suggests something large, or perhaps many small things, are buried here. The place smells strongly of rot.

6d10 bodies are buried here, of which roughly one third are children. These bodies were buried after a plague epidemic, and the village was destroyed shortly afterwards. That it should smell so strongly after all this time is a testament to Barovia's fell influence. 2d6 **skeletons** are hidden in the earth, ready to attack anyone foolish enough to dig them up. Searching all the bodies reveals 1d6 barovian silver coins, and 2 trinkets.

## 91. Songs of the Dead

A pure song breaks through the air, a lure to break the strongest of wills. It calls over the water, and in the mist beautiful silhouettes leap from the water, arcing through the air with heartstopping grace.

These 2d4 **sirens** have the undead creature type, and are skeletons from the waist up. They prey on fishermen and travelers, luring them into the water and holding them under until the bubbles stop.



## 92. Soul of the Forest

Plants begin to wither, and the air seems far too still. There are no woodland creatures here, and the sun hides itself behind a cloud. Watching you from a rocky outcrop, a skeletal horse with a spiral horn protruding from its skull stamps one hoof in a manner that suggests you are unwelcome.

This unicorn was slaughtered during Strahd's invasion of the valley. It uses the statblock of a standard **unicorn** with the following changes:

- It has the undead creature type
- It loses the Healing Touch ability
- It loses all regional effects and lair actions

The undead unicorn holds a particular hatred for Strahd and what it has become. If it determines that the characters are enemies of the Vampire, it attempts to accompany them and viciously attacks the **nightmare** Beucephalus if it ever spots it.

## 93. Shrine to Death

Someone has propped up a ram's skull here on top of a pile of rotting bodies. It has been draped around with beads, flowers and daubed in blood.

This hideous shrine is covered in druidic markings reading "Death, o promised scion of the end, bring us your many blessings. Take me. Take me, O Death, and end this suffering." The bodies have the look of unfortunate trappers, perhaps from Vallaki, killed not two days past.

## 94. Batman

There is a flutter of a cloak, and something emerges from the shadow of a tree. He is ragged and wearing only a thick black cape. He is also hanging upside down from a branch with a wild-eyed expression.

This **druid** lives in the tree with a **swarm of bats** he likes to think of as family. Alas, he is quite mad, and believes his true form to be that of a bat (he just hasn't quite figured out how to transform into one yet). He mostly asks for berries or other fruit from passers-by.

## 95. Hidden Cache

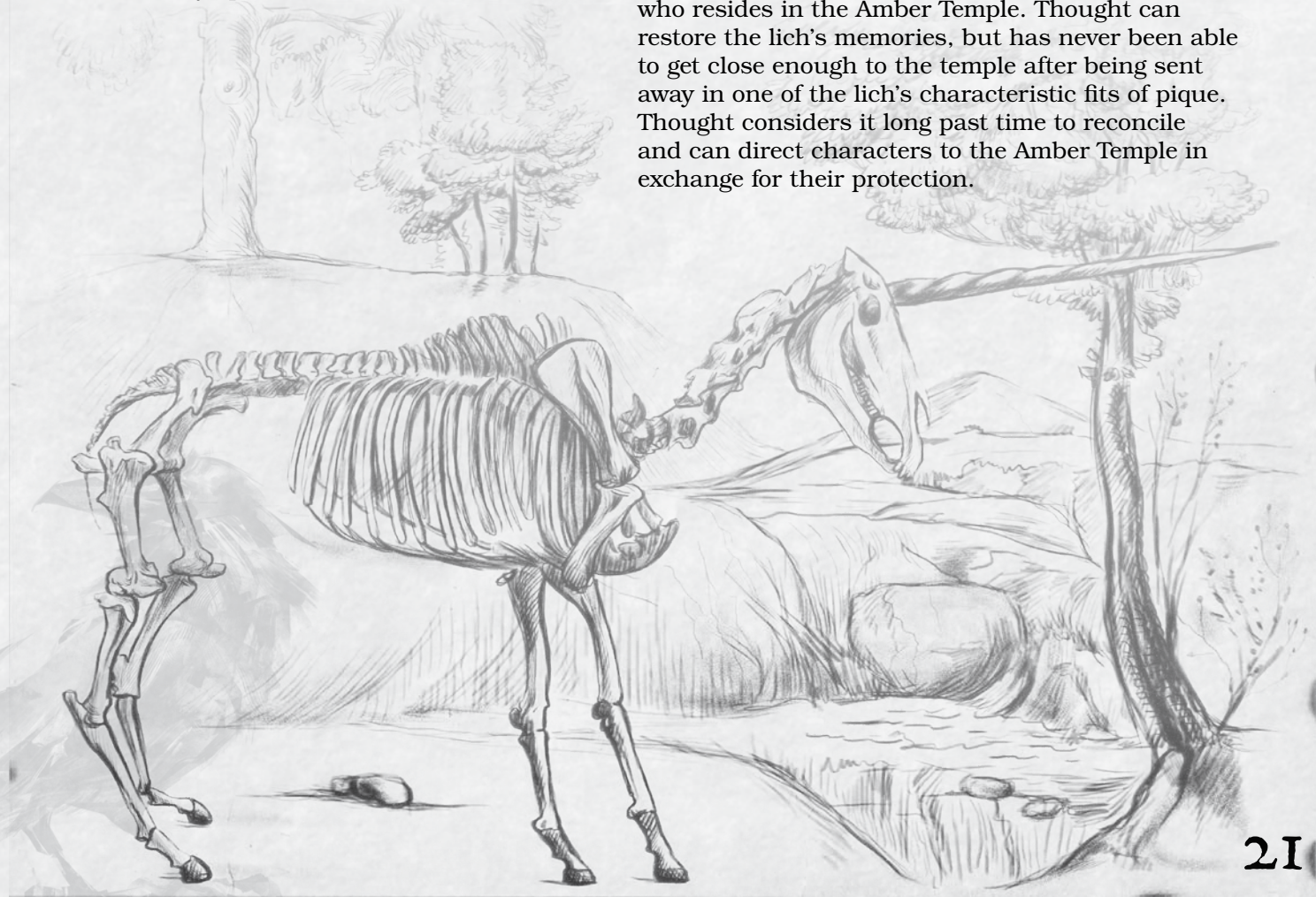
A barrel has been wedged in here behind a rock, perhaps in the vain hope it would be hidden from prying eyes.

This is a barrel of Red Dragon Crush, a fine wine made at the Wizard of Wines winery. The barrel is guarded by a **water weird** that was imprisoned inside it by a mage who was rather fond of his wine.

## 96. Mislaid Memories

A toad ribbits up to you, eyeing you suspiciously. "Oy" it says, irritably. "I need a ride. Anyone going up in the mountains?"

This is Thought, the familiar of Exethanter the lich, who resides in the Amber Temple. Thought can restore the lich's memories, but has never been able to get close enough to the temple after being sent away in one of the lich's characteristic fits of pique. Thought considers it long past time to reconcile and can direct characters to the Amber Temple in exchange for their protection.



## 97. Bonespeaker

A strange sight greets you as you crest a rise. A strange, demonic looking creature is leaning nearby a skeleton, listening and nodding intently. It seems enraptured by the conversation and is smiling cheerfully.

This is Tarquin the **berbalang**, who made his way into Barovia after being summoned by a careless wizard, but is having the time of his life listening to all the stories the graves of Barovia have to tell. It is very happy to tag along to wherever the characters are going, on the presumption that bodies are likely to turn up sooner or later.

## 98. Caterwauling

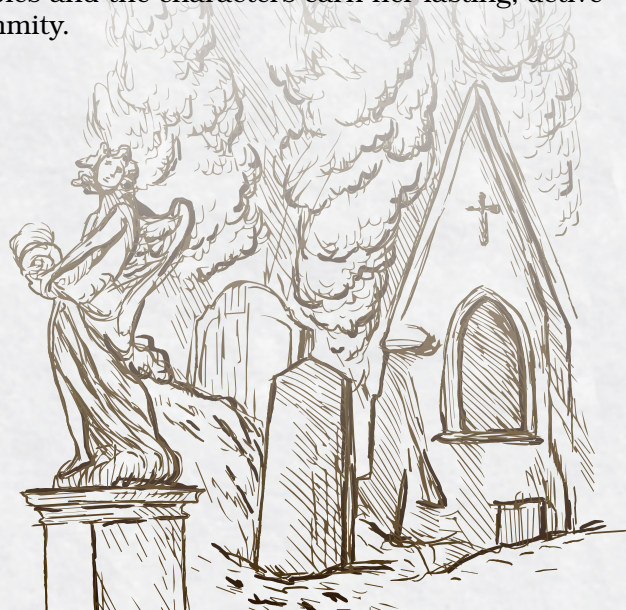
Your trek through the forest is proceeding quietly when a wail echoes out through the trees. All around you, purple fungi are opening their stalks and wailing in a trilling, constant alarm.

These 6d6 **shriekers** are grown by druids to alert them to strangers in the woods. The druids never take this path for this reason, but keep an outpost nearby. In 1d4 rounds, 1d8 **twig blights** and 1 **vine blight** arrive to destroy intruders.

## 99. Honker

A pootling-rumpety-harrumph sound parps out over the swamp, just before vile smell washes over you in a wave. A long necked, bovine seeming creature is rising from the marshland, and it has a tiny bell collar around its neck that tinkles gently when it moves.

This **catoblepas** is owned by Baba Lysaga, who comes out to visit it when she gets a chance, bringing it goat leftovers and generally doting on it like she might a baby. The catoblepas attacks characters who approach it with clear hostility, and otherwise mooches about half-heartedly. If the catoblepas is killed, Baba Lysaga learns of it from her spies and the characters earn her lasting, active enmity.



## 100. Devil's Advocate

"Would you like a glass of wine," Strahd von Zarovich asks. He's luxuriating in a large gold armchair he must have had carried out here, and drinking a rather large glass of wine. "I feel we should talk."

**Strahd von Zarovich** has mustered his forces, and has arrived once more to test the resolve of the characters and learn their tactics.

He has the following wizard spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *fog cloud*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *silent image*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *misty step*, *detect thoughts*, *magic aura*

3rd level (3 slots): *blink*, *major image*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *dimension door*

5th level (1 slot): *mislead*

Strahd uses his best diplomatic wiles to present the airs of a man interested in pursuing a truce. He lies and wheedles and manipulates everyone present as far as they will allow him to. If this encounter occurs early in the campaign, Strahd tells believable lies about his political enemies and how misunderstood he is, seeking to gain information about the characters and their mission. If this encounter occurs late on, Strahd focuses on using what he already knows to remind characters of the hard choices they may have had to make, and keeps driving home the implied question - what makes Strahd more monstrous than anything else in Barovia (or, for that matter, the characters themselves)?

If attacked, Strahd immediately flees using his defensive magic.

## 101. None of our Business

Raised voices carry through the woods. Seven blue skinned figures are arguing over the corpse of a young dwarf. She seems almost asleep. They appear to be bickering about fruit, and glare at your approach. "Get lost," one growls. "Go on. Shoo. We don't need any more gods cursed strangers around here, thank you." Up close, you can see they are all rotting to various degrees.

The seven **wights** react badly to interfering strangers. Baba Lysaga poisoned their friend with an apple, and killed her. The wights aren't so much upset about this as they are about the impracticality of lugging the body around. It doesn't take long for characters to determine the wights are completely mad, and looking for a replacement mortal to fill out their cabal.



## UNFAMILIAR FAMILIARS

### BAROVIAN FAMILIARS

Magic works in strange, unsettling ways, and nowhere is this more true than within the confines of Barovia. When a character casts a find familiar spell within Barovia, consider having one of the following critters show up to the call instead. Spirits trapped in Barovia were likely called to the demiplane by previous (now deceased) masters, and may have stories of their own to tell, or strange quirks inspired by the long years spent brooding over their failures.

**Lumara, the Wisp.** A small, glowing ball of light, Lumara is a friendly spirit of luminosity and playfulness. Summoners of Lumara often prefer to keep her hidden under a hat or a cloak until they need her light.

**Sinbad, the Imp (Fiend).** Nasty little **imp** who turns into a parrot and makes mean quips at people. Adores shiny things like gold and likes cracking nuts.

**Crawley, the Claw (Undead).** A **crawling claw** which has likes to sit on its master's head like a skullcap.

**Rattigan the Psionic rat (Aberration).** A **cranium rat** which steals cheese and can't stop humming. It once heard a piper play a tune, and now it can't forget it.

**Nimue the Frog (Fey).** Croaks a lot and tries to kiss people who look rich and like princes, to little avail.

**Otto the Owl (Fey).** Gives withering looks and likes to ambush small creatures (and other familiars) by swooping down from above

**Mara, the Raven (Fiend).** Despises music and caws loudly to disrupt it. Likes to sit in the shoulder of her summoner.

**Sabnock the Scorpion (Fiend).** Enjoys hiding in shoes and stinging people who put their feet in without looking. Loathes spiders.

**Balthamel the Boggle (Fey).** Likes to chew on arcane foci, and enjoys making everything sticky.

**The Grey Fairy (Undead).** An undead **sprite** that enjoys playing with dead bodies and stealing bits of their skin for clothing.

**Mr. Niblets, the Cat (Fiend).** Rumour has it that Mr. Niblets is just the passing aspect of a more powerful fiend, but no-one has ever been able to prove anything. Loves belly rubs and salmon.

#### WISP

*Tiny celestial, chaotic good*

Armor Class 19  
Hit Points 2 (1d4)  
Speed oft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	28 (+9)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Senses** Passive Perception 12

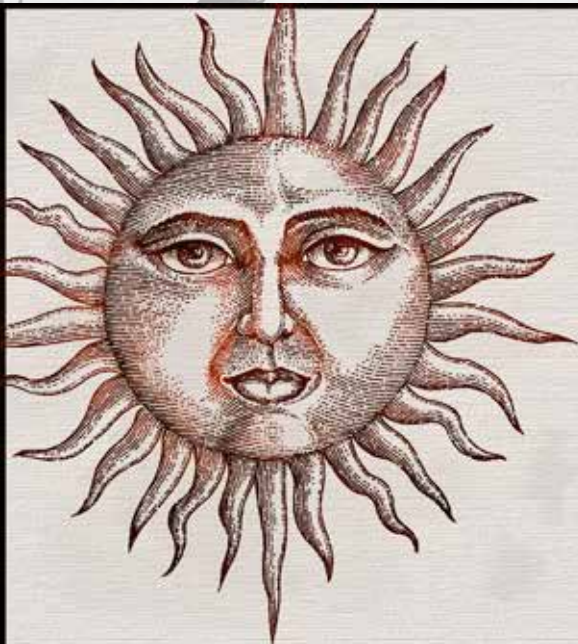
**Languages** Understands common and celestial, but doesn't speak

**Challenge** 1/4

**Variable Illumination.** The Wisp sheds bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The Wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

#### ACTIONS

**Shock.** Melee Spell Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 2 (1d4) lightning damage.



# DUSK TO DAWN



## CHARMS AND BLESSINGS

The gods of Barovia are distant, enigmatic entities shrouded in mystery. Their presence is capricious and unpredictable, but their favour can be earned and lost. On occasions where characters act in ways that please the mysterious Morninglord or the vicious Mother Night, you may choose to reward them with Charms to represent the favour of their god. See *Dungeon Master's Guide - Charms*.

### CHARMS OF DAY

#### **Charm of Final Rest**

This charm has 1 charge. You can use an action to spend a charge and touch a corpse - that body can never be raised as undead.

#### **Charm of Exorcism**

This charm has 1 charge. You can use an action to expend a charge and cast *dispel good and evil* (DC15).

#### **Charm of Dawn's Splendour**

This charm has 1 charge. At dawn, you can expend a charge to increase the potency of the daylight - for the next minute, the sunlight affects vampires and other creatures affected by sunlight as it normally would outside of Barovia.

#### **Charm of Day's Corona**

The bearer of this charm can use an action to shed bright light in a 10 foot radius and dim light for a further 10 feet, lasting 1 hour. This charm vanishes after three days.

### CHARMS OF NIGHT

#### **Charm of the Moonless Sky**

This charm has 1 charge. When used, the sun does not rise the next morning, and Barovia spends the entire 24 hours in a moonless night until the sun rises again the next day.

#### **Charm of Black Hearts**

The bearer of this charm cannot be frightened or charmed by undead. This charm vanishes after three days.

#### **Witchcraft**

The bearer of this charm can cast the *find familiar* spell as a ritual. Once this charm has been used three times, it vanishes.

#### **Servants of Night**

This charm has three charges, you can expend a charge to summon on swarm of rats as an action. This swarm sees you as an ally, but otherwise attacks the nearest creature it can see until slain.





# WHISPERS OF THE SOUL

## 1d6 Short Term Madness (1d10 minutes)

- 1 I lose all ability to understand the emotions of others
- 2 I become obsessed with one creature I can see, and crave their undivided attention
- 3 I see the ghost of a lost loved one
- 4 I am consumed by jealousy towards someone I know
- 5 I become very sensitive about my age and won't stop trying to appear young
- 6 My heart yearns for someone who will not have me

## 1d8 Long Term Madness (2d10 hours)

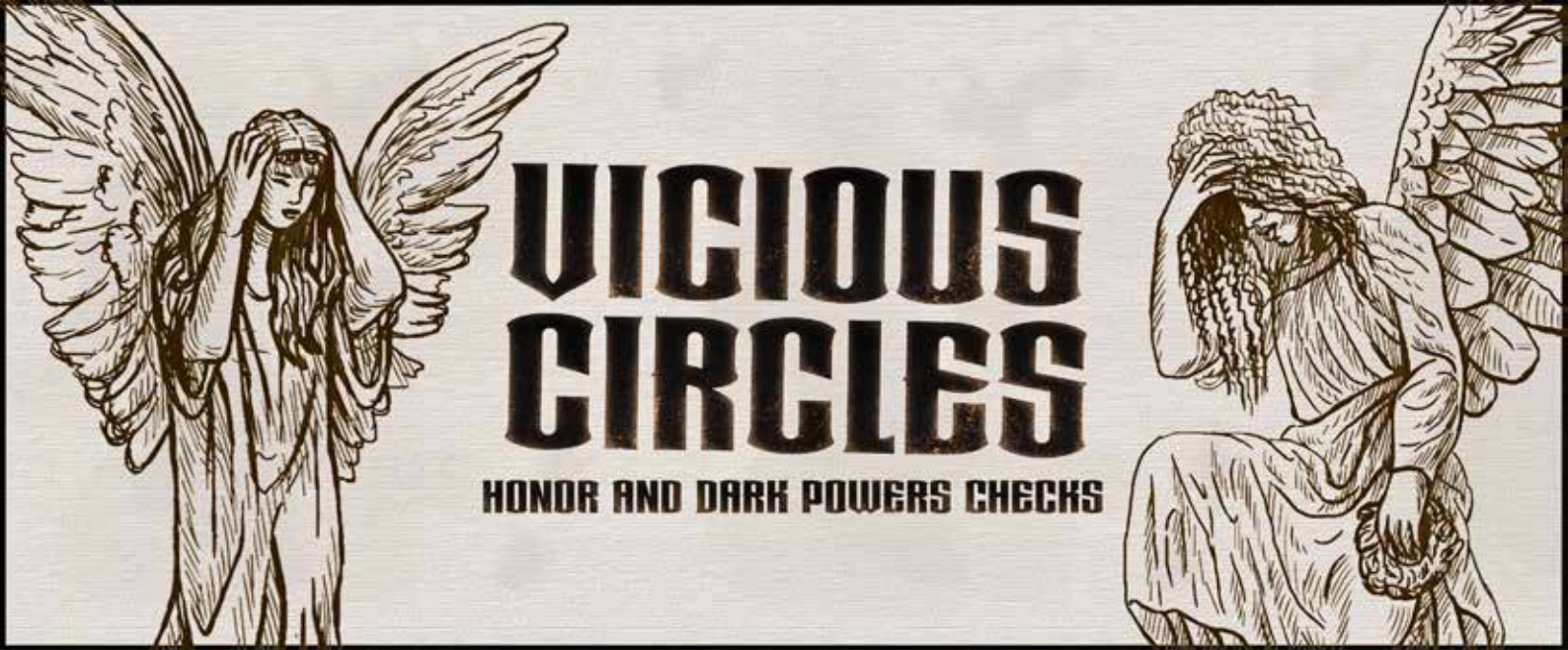
- 1 I am blind to the waking world. I can only see the Ethereal plane.
- 2 I can hear the clamouring of dead spirits. I have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.
- 3 The ethereal mists cling to me and waylay me. My speed is halved.
- 4 The land is tortured and I hear it screaming. I cannot regain hit dice through resting.
- 5 I fear the light, it burns me. I am Frightened of sources of bright light.
- 6 My mind is lost in the mists. I am always Surprised in the first round of combat.
- 7 My blood is drying to ash inside me, I am convinced of it. I have disadvantage on ability checks.
- 8 Whenever I close my eyes, I hear the screams of a woman falling a great distance. I cannot sleep.

## BAROVIAN MADNESS

The souls trapped in Barovia often suffer as a result of their eternal imprisonment. Harrowed and tormented, the mind can slip into dark places, and develop strange quirks. See the Dungeon Master's Guide, Chapter 8: Running the Game for guidance for how to introduce Madness to your game.

### 1d8 Indefinite Madness (Until Cured)

- 1 "I hear voices calling to me from the mountains. Calling me to come home"
- 2 "Death almost had me once. I will not ever die again."
- 3 I am the count Strahd von Zarovich in disguise, and the pretender must be destroyed"
- 4 "I am cursed. Everything I touch turns to failure, I must not touch anything."
- 5 "There is no heaven or hell. This is hell, and we are the demons."
- 6 "Everybody is lying to me to protect my feelings"
- 7 "I have returned from death. I am... invincible."
- 8 "My kin howl to me from the woods. One day I will join them and run free."



# VICIOUS CIRCLES

HONOR AND DARK POWERS CHECKS

## DARK POWERS CHECKS

Consider using **Honor** in your Curse of Strahd campaign as a way of determining the sway the Dark Powers have over any character as a result of their actions. Honor is a barometer for how tightly the dark powers cling to any particular soul. If creating new characters for a Ravenloft campaign, you may allow characters to roll an extra ability score/spend some of their points on increasing their starting Honor score. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter 9: *Dungeon Master's Workshop* for rules on Honor.

In Ravenloft, an Honor Saving throw is called a **Dark Powers check**.

Consider having a character make an Honor saving throw when:

1. They give in to a dark impulse or temptation
2. They commit a murder, theft or another act of pre-meditated evil
3. They intentionally contribute to the suffering of other

Set the DC in accordance with the severity (by your estimation) of the moral transgression.

On a failure, reduce that character's current Honor score by 1. If a character shows exceptional moral fibre, mercy or compassion in the face of evil, consider increasing that character's Honor score by 1.

A character's current Honor score affects how they are affected by and influenced by Barovia's fell magic. If a character falls below a certain Honor score, the Dark Powers begin to mold them externally to suit their inner darkness. These afflictions cannot be removed by any means short of regaining Honor. Rising to a higher Honor score can remove dark traits gained in this way

See the Appendices for a list of Minor, Moderate and Major changes inflicted by Dark Powers checks.

Honor Score	Title	Effects
14+	Pure	The character is a bright flame in the darkness. They have advantage on Dark Powers checks. Undead creatures can sense their location from up to 1 mile away.
10-13	Clean	No change,
6-9	Tainted	The character has gained the attention of the Dark Powers. They gain one Minor change.
4-6	Corrupted	The character has slipped further towards their own destruction. They scare animals and children. They gain one Moderate change and lose a Personality Trait from their character sheet.
2-3	Cursed	The character sours milk and small plants wither at their approach. They gain one Moderate or Minor change, and lose any Bond from their character sheet.
1	Monster	The character is openly and obviously imbued with supernatural evil. They gain one Major change, and lose any Ideals from their character sheet.
0	Soulless	The character becomes an NPC under the Dungeon Master's control. They are wholly a creature enslaved to their own evil, and the Dark Powers have claimed them for Ravenloft.

# DEATH WISH



## RETURNING TO LIFE

Characters trapped in Barovia have additional options for being brought back from the dead. When a character under 5th level dies, the player can choose to have the Dark Powers of Ravenloft resurrect the character for free. If the player chooses resurrection, the character returns to play at the start of the next round with full hit points and spells. However, this dark resurrection leaves the character tainted by shadow. A few examples of the form this taint might take were provided in the Adventurer's League guidelines for the Curse of Strahd storyline season. Below are alternative ideas of templates to inflict on characters pulled back from the brink. A character can only benefit from being brought back from the dead in this way once (barring the DM's discretion) after which alternative means must be pursued to resurrect them.

All creatures raised from death by the Dark Powers forever more detect as an evil undead to effects that discern creature type or alignment. This effect cannot be removed by any means. In addition, creatures raised in this way cease to breathe, eat or sleep. They must still rest for 8 hours each day to gain the benefits of a long rest.

### ZOMBIE

You return to life with the following changes:

- 1 **Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces you to 0 hit points, you must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, you drops to 1 hit point instead.
- 2 Your flesh appears sickly and is covered in lesions. You always smell like rotting food, and your movement speed is reduced by 10 ft.

### SKELETON

You return to life with the following changes:

- 1 You gain resistance to piercing and slashing damage.
- 2 Your flesh falls from your bones and you are obviously, horrifyingly, dead. People react to this as you might expect.

### GHOST

You return to life with the following changes:

- 1 **One Foot In The Grave.** Your spirit exists in the ethereal plane, and can see into the material plane out to 60 feet. You cannot affect anything in the material plane, and neither can it affect you.
- 2 **Possession (1/day).** One humanoid that you can see you must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by you; you then disappear, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. You now control the body but the target remains aware and can talk telepathically to you. You can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and you retain your alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma scores and class features. You otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but don't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, you end it as a bonus action, or you are turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, you reappears in the ethereal plane within 5 feet of the body.

# JINKED



## BAD LUCK

Barovia is a superstitious place. People in Barovia believe that acting in certain ways can cause the fates to turn on you, and curse your every endeavour. This mechanic allows you to represent this bad luck in a general sense, without having to keep track of an ever increasing stack of specific curses.

**Bad luck** is a stacking, incremental value, which means you start at 0, and each time you gain Bad Luck, that value increases by 1.

In Ravenloft (see *Curse of Strahd*, Introduction: Running the Adventure) rolling a natural 1 causes an unfortunate (but amusing) event to occur as part of the action the character was attempting. Bad Luck increases the range of this effect by a number equal 1 + your Bad Luck value. For instance, if your Bad Luck is 1, then you'll be triggering unfortunate incidents on a roll of 1 OR 2. If your back luck is 5, then you'll be triggering unfortunate occurrences on natural 1s through to 6s.

You can use this mechanic anywhere in Barovia, whenever a character contravenes a custom. Ie, if a character killed a raven, you might increase their Bad Luck by 1. If a character broke a mirror, you might increase their bad luck by 1. If a black cat crossed their path...well, you get the idea. In Extreme cases, such as smashing a hall of mirrors with a black cat under a ladder shop, it might be suitable to increase Bad Luck by more than one point at once.

### Removing Bad Luck

Bad Luck is highly intractable, but can be removed (point by point) by making amends for mistakes, either by replacing broken items, adopting an orphaned raven, or any other act of genuine contrition. Alternatively, the casting of a remove curse spell can alleviate some forms of supernaturally inflicted Bad Luck, and a *wish* spell can remove all instances, wiping the slate clean.

## CURSES

It can be deflating when a well deserved curse falls on a character who would love to play out that story arc, only for the Cleric to pipe up "I have Remove Curse? Shouldn't I just magic that away?" The *remove curse* spell, whilst a useful tool in any adventurer's arsenal, may cause a little trouble when trying to engage with Barovia's aesthetic of creeping dread. Before you consider altering or adding rules, keep the following in mind:

- Remove Curse is a 3rd level spell, and remains a significant investment until the last quarter of the module. You can de-centivize wasteful expenditure of spell slots with a rigorous encounter schedule. One remove curse is one fewer fireball or revivify, after all.
- Remove Curse does not remove the curse from a cursed object. It merely breaks attunement to the object (where relevant) so that the item can be discarded.

If these limitations don't satisfy your need for suffering, you might consider making an adjustment to the spell within the boundaries of Barovia.

For example, you might rule that *remove curse* requires a specific material component (ie. the feather of an angel) that it is possible to acquire in Barovia, to encourage characters to explore. You might even decide that each curse has a different material component based on the nature of the curse. Ie. A curse of endless sleep laid by a night hag might require the hag's hair as a material component.



# GIFTS UNGIVEN



If you've played through Curse of Strahd before, or simply fancy more choice in which evil deals you offer to gullible characters, you may find these alternative Dark Gifts useful. Use them to replace any of the Dark Gifts offered in the Amber Temple - these gifts follow the same guidelines detailed in that chapter.

The Gift of **Desharis, the Sprawling Soul** is the power to infiltrate the bodies and emotions of others. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient gains the ability to cast the *magic jar* spell as an action. After it has been used three times, the gift vanishes. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains the following flaw: "People are toys to me, and I like to play games."

The gift of **Zceryll, The Star Spawn** is the power to walk through mirrors. Upon receiving this dark gift the recipient gains the ability to enter a mirror and move from inside it to inside another mirror within 500 feet. Whilst inside any mirror, the user is visible as a reflection in that mirror. The beneficiary must use 5 feet of movement to enter a mirror and appears in a spot of their choice within 5 feet of the destination mirror, using another 5 feet of movement. If they have no movement left, they appear within 5 feet of the mirror they entered. They must end their turn outside a mirror. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains reflective skin.

The gift of **Ronove, the Iron Maiden** is the ability to seclude oneself from the world. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient gains the ability to cast the *demiplane* spell as an action. Only the recipient of this dark gift can enter or leave this demiplane. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains the following flaw. "The concerns of this world are nothing to me."

The gift of **Otiaz, the Key to the Gate**, is the ability to open paths that would otherwise be closed. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient gains the ability to cast the *knock* spell as an action. The beneficiary of this gift is trapped in the ethereal plane from sunrise to sundown each day.

The gift of **Orthos, the Howling Dark**, is the ability to control the wind. Upon receiving this gift, the recipient gains the ability to cast the *control winds* spell as an action. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains the following flaw "I am afraid of the dark."

The gift of **Naberius, the Grinning Hound**, is the ability to dissemble. Upon receiving this gift, the recipient gains adds triple their proficiency bonus to any Deception based ability check. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains the following flaw "I believe I am cleverer than everyone around me."

The gift of **Ipos, Prince of Fools**, is absolutely nothing. Upon receiving the gift, the recipient becomes immune to all powers bestowed by a Dark Gift (including Strahd's vampiric gaze, but not his physical attacks), and cannot benefit from any Dark Gifts other than that bestowed by Ipos. The beneficiary of this dark gift gains the following flaw "My curiosity is overpowering."

The gift of **Haures, the Dreaming Duke**, is the inability to be affected by spells of 6th level or lower. The beneficiary of this gift has their hands turn backwards, so their palms are where the backs of their hands should be.

The gift of **Chupoclops, Harbinger of Forever**, is the ability to walk hidden paths. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient gains a climb speed equal to their walking speed. The beneficiary of this gift sprouts seven hideous, purple furry spider legs from their spine.

The gift of **Khala, the Eternal Winter**, is freedom from pain. Upon receiving this dark gift, the recipient's body changes aesthetically to translucent ice and they become immune to cold damage, as well as piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons. The beneficiary of this gift also gains the following flaw "I feel no emotion for anyone. Emotion only causes pain."



## WHO ARE THE VISTANI?

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The Vistani are, simply, storytellers. Linked to the domains of dread in ways unfathomable, these enigmatic folk travel from place to place enabling and recording the memories of each domain for posterity. In many domains of dread, tainted by evil, it benefits the various lineages of Vistani to adopt different guises and personas, to best blend into the background. The dark powers that oversee the domains of dread keep a tacit covenant with their chosen scions, allowing them to move between domains at will (a privilege reserved for precious few). Vistani frequently adopt the lost and disenfranchised into their communities, making for a riotous amalgam of fractured cultures and ideologies united by the same call to pursue legends in the making wherever they occur.

## A WAY OF LIFE

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The Vistani act in isolated bands far removed by distance, some of which act very differently from each other and pursue different agendas. Three tenets unite these disparate roving bands into a cultural whole.

1. **Blood of the Covenant** is thicker than the Waters of the Womb. In other words - we choose our family. You are a Vistani if the Vistani choose to accept you - you are given a new name, a new purpose, and are inducted into your new life, leaving the old one behind.
2. **Remember the Past** or lose it forever. Many Vistani died in both the Grand Conjunction and the events that followed. Newer members inducted into the fold don't remember how it used to be - we must all remember the darkness of history or be doomed to repeat it.
3. **The Wheel Turns**, and must one day come to a stop. To truly live, you must one day die. All that really matters is the journey, and how you get there. Embracing this tenet requires the Vistani to pursue a nomadic existence.

## A SHARED CULTURE

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**Oral Tradition.** The Vistani are the proud owners of a long oral tradition stretching back into the mists of history. Vistani are trained from a young age to remember stories, ballads and lays of dark times. The telling of these stories gains them food and board where necessary, convinces strangers to loosen their tongues, and is a silent promise to the future.

**Colour and Life.** The Vistani are a flickering flame in the darkness, filled with life and light - a bright reminder that despite the rain and fog and gloom, there are things worth living for.

**Foresight.** Perhaps one in 100 Vistani are talented enough to train in the Second Sight, methods passed down for generations that grant the ability to see beyond the veil and part the skeins of the future. Divination is a talent that the Dark Powers are wont to corrupt, but Vistani methodology seems impervious to this interference. Some Vistani tell the future using tools, such as Tarokka cards or knucklebones, but all these trinkets are just an aide-memoire, or are provided for the benefit of spectators. When Vistani travel in groups, it is this power that allows them to evade the clutches of scheming Darklords and hungry monsters of the night, always keeping half a step ahead of danger.

## THE RULE OF THREE

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In addition to their talents and customs, the Vistani are have the dubious honor of being favoured by the dark powers that be. This protection rebounds harm or insult - to offend the Vistani is to reap suffering threefold, or so the folklore goes. At its worst, insulting the hospitality of the Vistani might result in a sprained ankle, or losing your favourite shirt. The consequences for killing a Vistani, however, might range from blinding the perpetrator for life to striking them dead in a series of freak accidents. This 'curse' is not necessarily intentional on the part of the Vistani - the dark powers are jealous, and fiercely protective of their own.



# DEALING WITH THE DEVIL

So, you've trekked the length and breadth of the Barovian valley, and you're ready to face off against the party with your No.1 vampire pal. But how to make it a challenge? Going toe to toe with 5 level 10 characters is a surefire way to get your vampire turned to dust quicker than you can say Ireena Kolyana. Below is some guidance to help you get the most out of the Counts abilities and resources.

## MODUS OPERANDI

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1. Isolate characters from one another to make them vulnerable
2. Drag out the fight and send in minions to exhaust resources
3. Strike only when characters are vulnerable, alone or out of options.

## YOUR MAIN TOOLS

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1. Strahd's Lair Actions are amongst the most useful abilities you have. You should almost always be using the ability to phase through walls, never staying in the room for more time than it takes to pass through it, fire a spell and leave via a side wall.
2. Your Charm ability can easily neutralize threats for as long as 24 hours, as long as you target it at characters with weak Wisdom saving throws.
3. You have a wide variety of spells available to you, which we will discuss later.

## CLASS WARFARE

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When preparing for the encounter, keep the party composition in mind, and prepare to react accordingly. By this point, Strahd should be familiar with their abilities and combat tactics, unless they have gone to great efforts to conceal them from him.

**BARBARIANS:** Exhaust with hit and run tactics. Use **shadows** to drain strength, and only engage when they are out of rages.

**BARDS:** Split from the party, target with undead immune to bardic magics. Laugh cruelly.

**CLERICS:** High priority for isolation. Do not approach unless you have Legendary Resistances to burn on Turn Undead. Tempt them into using their Channel Divinity early against **vampire spawn**. Get them alone and target

their relatively small hit point pool with multiattacks. Don't bother trying to Charm.

**DRUID:** Moon Druids have high stamina, and *goodberry* is dangerous. Use max hp drain to counter their efficient healing, and move rooms to counter zoning spells until they run out of magic.

**FIGHTER:** Use Charm liberally when alone. Do not allow to engage you in melee, and stay on the ceiling or phase through walls. Otherwise ignore and evade.

**MONK:** Rarely a threat due to their inability to wield sunsword, but watch out for stunning strike. Do not try and charm. Likely faster than you - leave until after you've dealt with bigger threats.

**PALADIN:** Do not engage in melee, or try to charm them. Paladins are your Achilles heel, and smite will wreck your day. High priority isolation from the rest of the party, to remove the protection of their auras. They are often slow moving - try and trap them on another floor and swarm them with smaller creatures.

**RANGER:** A ranged threat that may obstruct your attempts to stay out of range. Kidnap their pet (if they have one) with minions to keep them busy. Otherwise send minions in to grab their weapons or block their line of sight.

**ROGUE:** Don't be distracted - though difficult to pin down, they are weak to your abilities and are easy to pick off later. Good target for Charm.

**SORCERER:** High priority. Separate, engage in melee and destroy. They have an extremely low hit point pool, and can easily be duped into wasting their spell slots on minions if you force them into combat with wolves.

**WARLOCK:** It's a waiting game. Force them to use their slots, then destroy in close combat. Eldritch blast is an issue, but once their slots are used you can afford to leave the Warlock alone unless you can find a good place to drag them screaming out of a window to their deaths.

**WIZARD:** High priority due to their ability to counter your terrain shenanigans with their utility. Destroy as soon as possible. Target with vampire spawn and aggressively discriminate.



### DIRTY MAGIC TRICKS

Strahd has direct access to every level 1-5 wizard spell in the player's handbook and (in theory) others that aren't. He can change his spell list each day - abuse this. Assume he has the material components for every spell he can cast. Some options are suggested below depending on your preference.

### TERRAIN CONTROL

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1. Prepare *stone shape*, and use it to trap characters in the walls or floors
2. Prepare *wall of stone* and use it to block corridors/bury characters alive. If you trap a low strength character with no magic (eg. rogues) in a dead end with this spell, they may starve there.
3. Prepare *transmute rock to mud* and use it to hurl characters several floors down. Bonus points for collapsing a ceiling onto them, with monsters placed above to fall into the room.

### DEFENSIVE TACTICS

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1. Cast *fog cloud* early on to block vision and obscure your Misty Escape
2. Cast *greater invisibility* to prevent your spells from being countered
3. Cast *leomund's tiny hut* before the adventurers arrive, and return to it through the floor when you need to regenerate

### ILLUSIONS AND TRICKS

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1. When the party get used to your wall-phasing tricks, use *silent image* to make them waste readied spells/amulet charges on a fake Strahd
2. Use *minor illusion* to project your voice across the room or mimic a party member/ally in distress
3. Use *major image* on a vampire spawn, zombie or animated corpse to make it look like you. Then attack from the rear.

4. Charm creatures into accepting a *feign death* spell. To onlookers, it will look like the target died at your touch, and an hour will pass before they wake.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR

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1. Prepare *animate dead*, using it on characters/allies you kill to add the ranks of your servants. (This has a 1 minute casting time, so make sure their allies are busy elsewhere)
2. Unleash swarms of Charmed **commoners** into the room, Kill or body block with them as you see fit.
3. Prepare *seeming* and use it to make every character look like you.

### TOMFOOLERY

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1. Use *polymorph* on any of your summoned wolves/bats to gain a T-Rex ally. Phase through a wall and wait out the carnage.
2. Cast *tiny servant* on ordinary objects, and command them to attack the rear member of the party as they pass. Worse, find a way to make them drop holy relics and use the spell to have the item run away into danger.
3. Cast *Galder's Tower*. I have nothing further to add to this.

### GUERRILLA WARFARE

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1. Cast *scrying* once the party are in the castle. Use your lair action every 6 seconds to use the summon spectre ability. This only requires you be able to see the target(s), meaning you can attack every round from half the castle away until the characters are dead/weakened or the scrying spell ends.
2. Cast *flock of familiars* and use the bats (naturally) you summon to spy/cast touch spells through walls.





# DINNER WITH A VAMPIRE

## A HIGH-CHALLENGE STRAHD

### STRAHD VON ZAROVICH

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 346

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	21 (+6)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +12, Wis +8, Cha +10

**Skills** Arcana +17, Perception +14, Religion +11, Stealth +18

**Damage Resistances** cold

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 120ft., Passive Perception 24

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

**Challenge** 20

**Shapechanger.** If Strahd isn't in running water or sunlight, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat, a Medium wolf, or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form.

While in bat or wolf form, Strahd can't speak. In bat form, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. In wolf form, his walking speed is 40 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

While in mist form, Strahd can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and he can't pass through water.

He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight

**Legendary Resistance (5/Day).** If Strahd fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Misty Escape.** When Strahd drops to 0 hit points outside his coffin, he transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in running water or sunlight. If he can't transform, he is destroyed

While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his coffin within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his coffin, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After 1 hour in his coffin with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

**Regeneration.** Strahd regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in running water or sunlight. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

**Spellcasting.** Strahd is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +11 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost

1st level (at will): fog cloud, sleep, shield, absorb elements, silent image, snare

2nd level (at will): detect thoughts, gust of wind, mirror image, invisibility, misty step

3rd level (4 slots): fireball, counterspell, haste, hypnotic pattern, major image

4th level (4 slots): greater invisibility, polymorph

5th level (3 slots): scrying, dance macabre

**Spider Climb.** Strahd can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without having to make an ability check.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** Strahd has the following flaws:

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

*Harmed by Running Water.* He takes 20 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

*Stake to the Heart.* If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into his heart while he is incapacitated in his coffin, he is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

*Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* While in sunlight, Strahd takes 20 radiant damage at the start of his turn, and he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Vampire Form Only).** Strahd makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (6d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, Strahd can grapple it (escape DC 19) instead of dealing the bludgeoning damage.

**Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Strahd, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Strahd regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. A humanoid slain in this way rises as a vampire spawn under Strahd's control on initiative count 20 of the next round.

**Charm.** Strahd targets any number of humanoids he can see within 30 feet of him. If the targets can see Strahd, the targets must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed. The charmed targets regard Strahd as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. The targets aren't under Strahd's control, but take Strahd's requests and actions in the most favorable way and let Strahd bite them.

Each time Strahd or his companions do anything harmful to a creature under the influence of this ability, that creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Strahd is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

**Children of the Night (1/day).** Strahd magically calls 4d4 **swarms of bats** or **swarms of rats**, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Strahd can call 6d6 **wolves** instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Strahd and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Strahd dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Strahd can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Strahd regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Move.** Strahd moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Cast a spell (2 actions).** Strahd casts an at-will spell from his Spellcasting feature.

**Unarmed Strike.** Strahd makes one unarmed strike.

**Bite (Costs 2 Actions).** Strahd makes one bite attack.

**Transform.** Strahd changes into a bat, a wolf, or back to his Vampire form.

## LAIR ACTIONS

While Strahd is in Castle Ravenloft, he can take lair actions as long as he isn't incapacitated. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Strahd can take one of the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them in that round:

- Until initiative count 20 of the next round, Strahd can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there.
- Strahd targets any number of doors and windows that he can see, causing each one to either open or close as he wishes. Closed doors can be magically locked (needing a successful DC 20 Strength check to force open) until Strahd chooses to end the effect, or until Strahd uses this lair action again.
- Strahd summons the angry spirit of one who has died in the castle. The apparition appears next to a hostile creature that Strahd can see, makes an attack against that creature, and then disappears. The apparition has the statistics of a **ghost**.
- Strahd targets one Medium or smaller creature that casts a shadow. The target's shadow must be visible to Strahd and within 30 feet of him. If the target fails a DC 17 Charisma saving throw, its shadow detaches from it and becomes a **shadow demon** that obeys Strahd's commands, acting on initiative count 20. A greater restoration spell or a remove curse spell cast on the target restores its natural shadow, but only if its demonic shadow has been destroyed.

## APPENDIX: DARK CHANGES

### MINOR CHANGES

1d6	Minor Changes
1	The character gains Darkvision out to 60ft., and Sunlight Sensitivity
2	The character gains +4 Strength, but gains the flaw “what I can’t fix, I break”
3	The character’s hearing becomes acute, giving them advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks based on sound, but they become vulnerable to thunder damage
4	The character gains +4 Intelligence, but has frequent headaches and gains vulnerability to psychic damage
5	The character’s skin toughens, giving them a natural armor class of 13, but gains disadvantage on Dexterity based ability checks
6	The character gains +2 to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, but a -2 to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma

### MODERATE CHANGES

1d6	Moderate Changes
1	The character grows claws, increasing their unarmed strike damage to 1d4. The character gains disadvantage on ability checks requiring fine manual dexterity.
2	The character grows a forked tongue, and gains advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks, but loses the ability to speak 2 languages that they know.
3	The character gains blindsight out to 60ft, but their eyes become catlike and bright yellow, even in total darkness.
4	The character can scale walls as if under the effects of a spider climb spell, but grows octopus suckers all over their skin.
5	The character’s saliva is highly acidic, allowing them to cast the acid splash cantrip requiring no components by spitting at things. The character can no longer eat without specialist equipment to funnel food directly down their throat.
6	The character’s appearance turns grotesque and deformed, granting them advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks but disadvantage on all other social interaction.

## MAJOR CHANGES

1d6	Major Changes
1	The character grows thick scales all over their body, gaining a natural armor class of 18, but granting them disadvantage on Dexterity based ability checks, attack rolls and saving throws.
2	The character’s skin becomes deathly pale, and their unarmed strikes deal an additional 2d8 necrotic damage on a hit. Direct sunlight deals 10 radiant damage to them at the start of their turn.
3	The character regenerates 10 hit points at the start of every round. The character cannot enter a residence unless invited by the owner.
4	The character sprouts reptilian wings, granting them a fly speed of 40ft. The character gains the following flaw “I do not understand metaphor, or jokes”
5	The character grows a scorpion-esque tail. This tail can perform an unarmed strike as an action, dealing an additional 22 [4d10] poison damage on a hit.
6	The character’s devolves into a savage beast. Their Strength, Dexterity and Constitution scores increase by 6, and their Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores drop by 6 (to a minimum of 2).

# THANK YOU FOR READING

You can find more of my work on the [Dungeon Master's Guild](#), including the Ravenloft Gazetteer, and other bestselling works from the Domains of Dread. You can also find me on Twitter (@deathbybadger) with any questions or concerns. Don't forget to leave a review - if I know what people enjoy, I can make more, and if it's a pile of garbage then I probably need to know that as well.



## BE SAFE OUT THERE

## DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS

## THERE'S SOMETHING NASTY IN THE WOODSHED