



# THE DARK LORD

The enemy is revealed, but time short and if you are not successful in your mission to Mount Baratok, love will never die. Part fourteen and the finale of Misty Fortunes and Absent Hearts.

*A four-hour adventure for 5th-10th level characters*



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# Introduction

Welcome to *The Dark Lord*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Curse of Strahd*™ storyline season.

**This adventure is designed for 5th through 10th-level characters, and is optimized for five 8th-level characters.** Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure starts in Oraşnou, a small farming village just outside of the Svalich Woods, north of Barovia, within the Ravenloft campaign setting and eventually travels through parts of the Quivering Forest before ending on Mount Baratok.

## The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continues their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

## Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

## Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

## Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 3rd-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

## Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

**Average party strength** indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

## Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

**Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.**

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide™* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

## Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

## Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

### Help From Who!?

For the current storyline season, *Curse of Strahd*, the rules for spellcasting services are changed for characters adventuring in Barovia. In Strahd's bleak domain, there simply aren't any settlements where spellcasters can accommodate such needs, and those places of worship that might otherwise provide spellcasting services are overrun with monsters. As such, unless otherwise detailed in an adventure, the only individual able to provide spellcasting services is **Jeny Greenteeth**. This will no doubt lead to some uncomfortable situations and unforeseen consequences.

Refer to Page 7 of the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

### Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

### Acolyte Background

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

However, no religions have established places of worship here of sufficient size to provide spellcasting services. Because of this, characters with the Acolyte background gain no benefit from this trait.

## Character Disease, Death, and Recovery

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

### Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

### Death

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

**Create a New 1st-Level Character.** If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character. A 1st-level character may not continue in this adventure, which is for character levels 5-10.

**Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead.** If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

**Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead.** As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the

session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

**Faction Charity.** If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

### Resurrection Madness

In Barovia, the souls of the dead are as trapped as the souls of the living. They become caught in the mists and can't travel to the afterlife. When a humanoid who has been dead for at least 24 hours returns to life, either by way of a spell or some supernatural means, it gains a random form of indefinite madness brought on by the realization that its spirit is trapped in Barovia, likely forever. To determine how this madness is expressed, roll on the Indefinite Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### Vampirism and Lycanthropy

Vampires and lycanthropes are not included in the allowed rules for character creation or advancement (see the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide*). These conditions grant characters powers and abilities that are not suitable for organized play, and typically impose a restricted or prohibited alignment. As such, characters afflicted with vampirism or lycanthropy must have the affliction cured before the start of their next episode or adventure.

Afflicted characters have the following options:

- Lycanthropes can be cured with a *remove curse* spell. This spell is available as a spellcasting service for 90 gp (though Jeny Greenteeth might have additional requirements; see "Spellcasting Services" later in this guide).
- Vampires can be cured by a *wish* spell cast by a fellow player character (*wish* is not available as a spellcasting service). Alternatively, a vampire character can be slain and returned to life with *raise dead*, at the normal cost of 1,250 gp. If a character chooses to end a vampiric curse in this manner, the Dark Powers (see Page 8, *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) **do not** offer a free *raise dead*, though Jeny Greenteeth might be



willing to make a deal (see “Spellcasting Services” earlier in this guide).

An afflicted character who does not end his or her curse is retired from play until able to do so by one of the means above, or through the application of DM rewards to the character.

## The Demiplane of Dread

This adventure is set within the *Ravenloft* campaign setting, in the lands of Barovia which exists in the Demiplane of Dread. There are several atmospheric and thematic elements to keep in mind at all times while running your game:

### The Land is Bleak

By the will of the Dark Powers, the sun never fully shines in the lands of Barovia. Even during the day, the sky is dimmed by fog or storm clouds, or the light is strangely muted. Barovian daylight is bright light, yet it isn’t considered sunlight for the purpose of effects and vulnerabilities, such as a vampire’s, tied to sunlight. Nevertheless, Strahd and his vampire spawn tend to stay indoors most of the day and venture out at night, and they are subject to sunlight created by magic.

### Winter in Barovia

The winters are cold, wet, and stormy here. The natives of the Demiplane are prepared—well, as prepared as they can hope to be.

The characters, however, are unfamiliar with the realm. Thankfully, the region they came from was experiencing the worst winter in living memory, and are likely to possess winter clothing. If they are not, then, preparations are in order. The village has a single shop called The Hare & Hair where they are able to procure such supplies if they wish.

A dark sentience infuses the very soil, twisting and contorting everything within. In places where you would normally expect wildlife such as deer, rabbits, or squirrels, you instead find wolves, rats, and mangy dogs. Vegetation is rotted and dead, and forests are filled mostly with gnarled, thick trees with bare branches. Colorful, vivacious things simply do not exist.

### The Denizens of Oraşnou

Most Oraşnou residents are mundane laborers, farmers, fletchers and other folk who fall under common professions. They typically have gaunt features, as crops often fail to take root, and creatures of the night frequently kill and devour their livestock.

Most are sullen, and often filled with fear, be it from the lands themselves, what lies within them, Lord Strahd, or their own recently deceased tyrant of a Burgomaster; Ivan Randovich and his cronies. Be sure to play to the mindsets of these people who live threadbare existences, constantly on the precipice of horror during your roleplaying encounters.

As is the case with most of the denizens of Barovia, most of the people that reside in the village don’t possess a soul. These people are empty shells created by Strahd’s consciousness to populate his domain. However, about one in every ten people in Barovia are actually possessing of a soul—the souls of the original denizens of Barovia before its transition into the Demiplane. When a being with a soul dies in Barovia, its soul remains trapped until it is reincarnated later. Souls tend to wear clothing with a splash of color or have other features that demonstrate even a small bit of individuality.

### Alterations to Magic

The land of Barovia resides in its own demiplane, isolated from all other planes, including the Material Plane. No spell—not even *wish*—allows one to escape from Strahd’s domain. *Astral projection*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, and similar spells cast for the purpose of leaving Barovia simply fail, as do effects that banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts that have properties that transport or banish creatures to other planes. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal, such as the *etherealness* spell and the Etherealness feature of incorporeal undead, is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from Strahd’s domain is pulled back into Barovia upon leaving that plane.

For the purpose of spells whose effects change across or are blocked by planar boundaries (such as *sending*), Strahd’s domain is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Barovia, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such an extra-dimensional space (such as that created by *Mordenkainen’s magnificent mansion*) are subject to the same restrictions as magic cast in Barovia.

While in Barovia, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. In addition, spells that allow contact with beings from other planes function normally—with one provision: Strahd can sense when someone in his domain is casting such a spell and can choose to make himself the spell’s recipient, so that he becomes the one who is contacted.

## Cosmetic Spell Modifications

At your discretion, a spell can be modified cosmetically to enhance the horrific atmosphere of Ravenloft. A few examples are presented below:

**Alarm.** Instead of hearing a mental ping when the alarm is triggered, the caster hears a scream.

**Bigby's Hand.** The conjured hand is skeletal.

**Find Familiar.** The familiar is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

**Find Steed.** The summoned steed is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

**Find the Path.** A child's spirit appears and guides the caster to the desired location. The spirit can't be harmed and doesn't communicate.

**Fog Cloud.** Misty, harmless claws form in the fog.

**Gust of Wind.** A ghostly moan accompanies the summoned wind.

**Mage Hand.** The summoned hand is skeletal.

**Maze.** The surfaces of the demiplane's maze are made of mortared skulls and bones.

**Phantom Steed.** The steed resembles a skeletal horse.

**Rary's Telepathic Bond.** Characters linked together by the spell can't shake the feeling that something vile is telepathically eavesdropping on them.

**Revivify.** A creature restored to life by a *revivify* spell screams upon regaining consciousness, as though waking from some horrible nightmare.

**Spirit Guardians.** The spirits appear as ghostly, skeletal warriors.

**Wall of Stone.** A wall created by the spell has ghostly faces sculpted into it, as though tortured spirits were somehow trapped within the stone.

## Count Strahd Von Zarovich

Lord Strahd is the Darklord of Barovia. He rules his domain from Castle Ravenloft as Strahd IX; a descendent of Strahd I. In actuality, Strahd I and Strahd IX are the one and the same--a vampire. As a mortal, Strahd fell in love with Tatyana Federovna; the bride of his younger brother Sergei. In his jealousy, Strahd murdered his brother and became the Darklord of Barovia; which was swept away into the Demiplane along with its ruler. Since then, Strahd is cursed to seek incarnations of Tatyana for eternity. NOTE: Strahd is not present in this adventure.

## Not Without Humor

The bleak and oppressive landscape must give way now and then to some moments of respite, not only does this break up the taxing mindset that Ravenloft

can evoke, but it also provides good chances for horror to sneak back up on players just as they least expect it.

## Adventure Background

*I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul.*

*-Pablo Neruda, XVII (I Do Not Love You...)*

This is the story of a tortured soul, Esmae Amarantha; a girl from the village of Barovia and the daughter of a local chandler. In her youth, Esmae was a beauty to behold, and desired by many, but unfortunately not desired by the one she truly loved. Witnessing the bearing of Count Strahd Von Zarovich on one of the few trips where he left Castle Ravenloft, and the way in which he wielded his absolute power, the girl became smitten with the Darklord of Barovia. Strahd's love, however, belonged to Tatyana Federovna, who occupied Strahd's thoughts completely.

Esmae was rejected, spurned, and ignored all for some empty-headed girl that kept her true love's attention. But the Dark Powers will never afford Strahd the happiness that he seeks, and so when the latest incarnation of his desire was taken from him yet again, he grew wrathful and full of spite. Strahd grasped at the chance to cause another the lasting pain that he himself was cursed with. He accepted Esmae into his service, and she became one of the Barovian Witches, an order which serves Strahd as some of his most powerful agents. Always close to the object of desire but never with her love, her bitterness grew. Worried about her fading beauty and dwindling lifespan, Esmae was motivated to attract Strahd's attention and possess true love at all costs.

Esmae enlisted the aid of four followers which she calls her Obsessions, each with their own fixation that drives them. With their help, she found her way into The Breached Vault within The Amber Temple, and communed with the trapped vestige of the Evening Glory, a dead god representing love eternal through undeath. The vestige promised her that love need never die, and Esmae freed the vestige and merged with it, greatly increasing her power and bestowing upon her unique abilities. Esmae now has the power to expand Strahd's domain for undetermined periods of time and encompass other lands outside of Barovia. She need only collect four of Tatyana's possessions so that she can enact her plan to transform herself into an undying vision of

Tatyana that can love and be loved by Strahd...forever.

She sent her minions into the domain to find the four items. The first Obsession was Glovia Falinescu, heartbroken mother and educated healer that sought to return her daughter Isabella from the dead. She would recover Tatyana's Powder Box for her mistress. Graxxygak, the second Obsession was a lost soul confused and in pain since his death. His desire to recover his missing heart was exploited by Esmae to find Tatyana's Gloves. Greedy beyond compare, the Burgomaster of Oraşnou, Ivan Randovich betrayed his people for love wealth and found Tatyana's Comb for Esmae. Lastly, the fourth Obsession was the mongrelfolk Omou who suffered as an outcast from the village of Oraşnou. He would locate Tatyana's Mirror.

With all four items in her possession, she plans to climb the slope of Mount Baratok where it meets the edge of the Quivering Forest. Her goal is the snowy ruin of Boszórkan keep that she has made her lair and where her fellow witches await her return.

## Adventure Overview

*Instead of a man of peace and love, I have become a man of violence and revenge.*  
-Hiawatha

The adventure begins with the characters in the Seven Tables Inn with some of the residents of Oraşnou, taking stock of how to proceed. In previous adventures they have identified their enemy as the witch Esmae Amarantha, learned of her plan, and recovered a magical locket that can be used as a weapon against her. Unfortunately, they have failed to stop her from acquiring everything she needs to complete her ritual and they have no idea where she is. A Tarokka reading performed by Sybil points toward Jeny Greenteeth as the only person powerful enough to locate Esmae and the party sets off into the Quivering Forest to enlist her aid, but before they can leave, Jeny walks into the village.

Jeny believes she can scry upon Esmae, but she needs a coven to do it, and unfortunately she has no sisters in Barovia. She can use replacements (who must be female arcane casters), but it will exhaust them and anyone who participates will be in no shape to face Esmae. This excludes the characters, but Sybil immediately volunteers. They need a third, and there are several options which the characters might choose from. Jeny also needs a number of focus items from Barovia that are representative of

obsession. Each one will be bound to a character and offer them some benefit, and flaw...

When the characters arrive to enlist the aid of the third spellcaster, they find that NPC under attack by minions of Esmae. If they fail to save the NPC, they must find another option.

With coven in place, the women enact the ritual with terrible cost, but Esmae is now exposed. She has traveled to Ruins of Boszórkan Keep on Mount Baratok and plans to enact the ritual this very night. The characters are transported to the area, but are warned that their presence will be known. The characters have no choice but to brave the ruin and stop Esmae before it is too late.

## Adventure Hook

*Love is merely a madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.*

-William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

If the characters begin this adventure from within the *Forgotten Realms* or a setting other than *Ravenloft*, have them be transported to the Demiplane of Dread just outside Oraşnou via an unnaturally thick fog or mist while traveling overland, preferably at night. Proceed to "Welcome to Barovia", below.

If the adventurers are already trapped in Barovia, they have likely made Oraşnou their home and so they are waking for a new day at the Seven Tables when Sybil and the residents of the village come to them for aid. This works particularly well if the characters have just participated in *DDAL04-13 The Horseman*. If they have not, Sybil or the other residents may need to fill them in on some of the most recent events. Adjust accordingly during Part 1.

## Welcome to Barovia

Some characters may be arriving from Faerûn for the first time. For those characters describe a heavy fog bank rolling through their travel path while they are in the Quivering Forest, and when it eventually clears, they are on the outskirts of a small mountain village. It's heavy-handed, but such is the way of the Demiplane.

Any character that participates in this adventure earns **The Demiplane of Dread** story award if they do not have it already. They should be made aware that until this story award is removed, they may not



participate in any adventure that does not take place in Barovia.

### Curse of Strahd Adventures

The adventures for the Curse of Strahd Season of Dungeons and Dragons Adventurers League deliver the most impactful experience when played in numeric order (i.e.: 04-01, then 04-02, and so on) but this is not required. Please carefully read the following pages and be prepared to adjust encounters, especially where key NPCs are concerned! Although DM tips may be found in the adventure, they are unlikely to cover every table or situation.

For a *Ravenloft* game, the world itself should be treated with great respect—it is a character unto itself, and the Dark Powers rarely respond positively to hand-waving and outright dismissal...

# Part 1. In Need of Friends

*Love and Hate are not opposites; they are siblings birthed by obsession.*

—Steve Maraboli

## In the Cards

This encounter begins assuming that the characters are eating a late breakfast in the Seven Tables surrounded by the acquaintances they have met during the adventures set in Barovia. Adjust the NPCs accordingly, based on the personalities the characters may have never met or have died in the course the group's adventures.

The winter wind blows viciously; shaking the walls and rattling the windows as you huddle around the fireplace of the Seven Tables, oatmeal with honey in your bowl next to a fresh dark bread. You are not alone. As expectant faces look to you for salvation. Sybil Rasia shuffles her Tarokka while the tax collector Scartia Kurtz watches, her hand atop the head of her basset hound Frederick. Gregori Wurlbach, the Hare & Hair's owner, passes a pitcher of cider to Fillar Esven, owner of the Eyes of Midnight. Fillar seems momentarily distracted by the firelight's gleam in the pitcher's beaten copper before setting it on the table.

Sybil begins to lay the cards upon on the table in a cross pattern. When she flips the first card it is blank, nothing but solid black. Gregori gasps. Sybil flips another and it is the same, and the next and the next. When she scoops up the cards and shuffles them, you see their faces have all returned to normal.

"It is the same every time I have tried. Our foe, the witch Esmae, must be near but I cannot see her. If we are to find her, we will need a seer more powerful than I."

The characters have the chance to discuss how to proceed, or catch up on events that they have missed. Marku and Crina Grelon who run the Seven Tables are in the kitchen but can come out if the characters call for them. The NPCs can impart any of the following:

- The village's troubles have been the work of Esmae Amarantha, though her exact goals are unclear.
- While her past is not known, she did travel to the Amber Temple and extract the vestige of a dead god known as the Evening Glory. This deity once held sway over love eternal, through the power of

undeath, a love is so strong that not even death is allowed to quench it.

- Esmae was working through four Obsessions: the village healer Glovia Falinescu, the ghost of a half-dragon troll Graxxygak who came here from the Moonsea, the Burgomaster Ivan Randovich, and the mongrelfolk Omou.
- The four collected various items for her: a *powder box*, a *pair of gloves*, a *comb*, and a *mirror*.
- Sybil's visions suggest that Esmae intends to use these items in some sort of ritual, and if so, she will become even more powerful and the people and land from Faerûn may become permanently trapped in Barovia.
- Esmae's whereabouts are unknown. Attempts to divine her location have failed. She is believed to be very powerful while merged with the remaining shreds of the Evening Glory.
- The characters are in possession of a magical locket that was used by Esmae to draw the vestige of the Evening Glory from its prison in the Amber Temple. They should be able to use it to do the same to Esmae.
- The Order of the Feather has chosen to reveal themselves to the characters and a select few in the village. They have been watching and wish to help by giving the characters some provisions.

Give the characters a chance to ask questions or make suggestions. Any attempts by the characters to divine Esmae's location or knowledge concerning her or her plans fail.

If the characters do not come to it themselves, Sybil eventually suggests Jeny Greenteeth as someone who has shown unusual levels of power despite the limitations imposed by Barovia. It is clear, they need help, and they have little time to gather it. It seems as if there is no other choice by to approach the hag. Jeny has shown an interest in learning more about Barovia, and potentially escaping, so it may be possible that she will be agreeable to aiding the party (see Treasure below).

## Friends and Allies

The following NPCs are present and the DM should use any of them to help the players understand what is occurring. If there are other NPCs from Oraşnou that you or the players have formed an attachment to and that remain alive, feel free to add them.

**Fillar Esven.** Fillar is a wereraven and doesn't hide his affliction all that well. He's a tall, thin man with a long crooked nose, pointed features, and thick, backswept, black hair. He dresses primarily in

black and darkened shades of gray. He has dark, beady eyes and bony fingers. He is also quite skittish and seems to constantly be assessing his surroundings and moving in abrupt, jerky motions while doing so. He is a corvid at-heart and becomes defensive and even hostile if someone steals from him. Fillar is a member of the Order of the Feather that seeks to fight the evil of the devil Strahd and his minions. He has brought some provisions collected by the Order to aid in the fight.

**Gregori Wurlbach.** Gregori is a soft, balding man with gnarled hands who runs the Hare & Hair—a general store of sorts. He has worked hard for the comforts that he enjoys in the village. Fair minded, he often overlooks his own profits in favor of his community and friends. Unlike other denizens of the duchy, Gregori is friendly and welcoming of outsiders and is a proponent of the adventurers.

**Sybil Rasia.** Sybil is a young to middle aged Gur (the Faerûnian equivalent of the Vistani) woman and like the characters, she originally hails from Faerûn. Since being trapped in Barovia, her second sight has become substantially more keen, and she uses it to figure out how to return her family and the lands from the Moonsea back to their homeland. Despite her youth, she is the matriarch of her family and radiates wisdom and strength.

**Scartia Krutz.** The tax collector is a stout human woman of the Gundarakite ethnicity. She is gruff and a bit nervous. All other members of the village's ruling council (the healer Glovia Falinescu, the tax collector Eugen Adi and the Burgomaster of Oraşnou Ivan Randovich) have been killed by the characters in previous adventures. While Scartia is in control of the village by order of responsibility, she has barely been able to pay the village taxes to Count Strahd von Zarovich and worries what disaster will fall next. She happily agrees to anything that gets the newcomers out of Barovia.

## Treasure

Fillar has brought some provisions at the behest of the Order of the Feather. He gives the characters a *potion of greater healing*, a *scroll of lesser restoration*, 10 silver arrows, and explorer's pack that appears to be cobbled together from random pieces. Any character that has the favor **Eye of the Raven** from DDAL04-04 *The Marionette* also receives their choice of a *potion of healing* or a *potion of animal friendship*.

## The Hag's Arrival

*The sweetest smiles hold the darkest secrets...*

—Sara Shepard, *Flawless*

Once the characters have discussed how to proceed, there is a commotion in the village outside.

A commotion draws your attention to the window. The murmur of a crowd and the scream of a child are directed towards a decrepit, hooded human woman as she leans on a gnarled staff and limps towards the Seven Tables. Her stringy grey hair whips on the wind past a great hooked nose. Her twisted claw of a hand reaches for the door, "Did someone call me?"

Jeny Greenteeth, the hag of the Quivering Forest, and its most powerful fey creature, has found her powers growing substantially since coming to Barovia. At first she was delighted with her newfound power, but then the voices began to make her offers. A dark creature of the fey, she has no concern over the taint it may cause to what remains of her soul, but she is well aware that such offers are not without cost and so she has become wary. Now she seeks to exit Barovia, preferably with her new power intact.

### Roleplaying Jeny Greenteeth

Jeny Greenteeth is the living and breathing personification of hate and malice. She loathes humanity with every fiber of her being and lives to make it miserable. However, she is an exceptional actor and plays the sweet, doting grandmother without fail. Only when she is certain that her audience is not receptive to her act does she break character and reveal her true form and demeanor.

**Quote:** "Hush now dearie, or I'll carve out your eyes, too."

Jeny plays the helpful grandmother with an edge. She desires to exit Barovia and bring the Quivering Forest with her when she returns home. However, she wants to be asked, and possibly rewarded for doing what she intends to do anyway.

Jeny can share the following:

- Jeny claims to be just an old woman of the Quivering Forest, but admits that she has unusual powers. She doesn't admit to being a hag, but should someone accuse her of being one, she does not deny it (though she might suggest such a blunt character might want to watch their manners because if she was a hag, the consequences for angering her might be dire).
- Jeny has powerful scrying abilities, but she hasn't been able to connect them with whoever is the

cause behind the troubles for the Quivering Forest and Oraşnou, though she has little care for the Barovians. Her chief concern is the Quivering Forest.

- She does know that Count Strahd Von Zarovich is not responsible because she has been able to divine upon him. She believes that Strahd is also a powerful wizard and has allowed her attempts, possibly to direct her from wasting time on him.
- The empowering of the Obsessions as minions and the collection of specific—but otherwise seemingly meaningless items—suggests a powerful spellcaster who is seeking to perform a ritual.
- Jeny does have an idea however. A coven could enact powerful scrying rituals that should be able to locate their quarry. Unfortunately, none of her "sisters" are present in Barovia and so she needs two replacements.
- Replacements must be female arcane spellcasters. However, as any replacements found are not her "sisters" it is likely they will pay a price for participated in the ritual and will be in no shape for facing Esmae for many days, if at all. This rules out the characters. Who should she choose?
- If asked about the toll, Jeny is vague, but says it will be exhausting beyond the physical. Magic always has a price.
- Jeny also needs a focus for each of the characters that will serve to bind them to the target so she cannot hide herself again. This must be an object from Barovia, and should be emotionally tied to what drives the enemy: love, obsessions or revenge seem likely. This is in addition to the magical locket that can be used to draw the vestige out of Esmae.
- When the characters are ready, the group must travel inside the Quivering Forest to enact the ritual where Jeny is strongest.

### Coven "Sisters"

*She never knew when enough was enough. She only knew how to love from every corner of her soul, even the shadowy corners of her lonely heart.*

-S.M. Pastore

Once hearing what is needed to find Esmae, Sybil immediately volunteers. As a seer herself, it is logical and she is willing to do anything to get her family out of this dark place. Jeny nods as if expecting it and then looks to the characters to suggest a third. If a character demands to be the third, with a wicked smile Jeny tells them that they will likely be unable

to participate in the hunt for Esmae but if the little girl thinks the characters would be better served without her, who is Jeny to deny her? Assuming the character is still insistent, Jeny relents. Ensure the player is clear that this is likely the end of the adventure for their character if they make this choice.

Assuming the players agree to choose another female arcane spellcaster, there are three likely choices:

- **Aya Glenmiir.** The elven wizard from Phlan is an expert in abjuration magic, but is at least in the area. In fact, the characters recently learned that she has set up a camp in a cave nearby recovering from injuries gain while defending the eves of the Quivering Forest (DDAL04-13 *The Horseman*). She has the advantage that she has been working to escape Barovia since arriving and it's clear that she would likely be willing to help. Aya is the default choice if the players are unable to come up with any options or if they simply don't have an opinion.
- **Ixsaxa Terrorsong.** The leader of the Cult of the Dragon in the Moonsea region who masterminded the invasion and conquering of Phlan, as well as the murder of the town's Lord Regent. Recently a captive of orcs and also an elven wizard, Ixsaxa has the advantage of having been researching Esmae and trying to understand what ritual she has been up to. Also, given her crimes it is likely that many of the characters would not feel bad about Ixsaxa paying any price, no matter how heavy. She is also the one that discovered the way to use the magical locket to withdraw the vestige from Esmae. Of course, it is also possible in previous Season 4 adventures (DDAL04-12 *The Raven* or DDAL04-13 *The Horseman*) that the characters may have killed her. If more than half of the characters have slain her, assume she is not available for the characters to choose. Assuming she has survived, she also has a camp in a cave near the village that Sybil arranged.
- **Ghosts of Amber Temple.** It is possible that one or more characters may be possessed by one of the female ghosts of the Amber Temple (DDAL04-10 *The Artifact*). Instructor Rabenovich (bard), The Penticolfax (abjurer), or Magister Krausenatti (alchemist). All of them want to re-imprison the Evening Glory and they have experience working magic in Barovia and in cooperative ritual magic. To use one of the ghosts, a character must be willing to use the locket to draw her forth. This ends the possession.

## Focus Object

*When you have seen as much of life as I have, you will not underestimate the power of obsessive love.*

*-J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

For the ritual to work, each character needs a Barovian object that ties them to the magic. It also allows the characters to track Esmæ in a general sense, regardless of what she might do to screen herself from detection. However, particularly apt choices may offer additional benefits to the owner. Of course, it may also enhance certain drawbacks as well, though Jeny neglects to note that.

The following objects found in Season Four adventures have particular benefits/drawbacks (See the Appendix:

- Esselios the Raven (DDAL04-01 *Suites of the Mists*)
- The cursed Vistani tambourine (DDAL04-02 *The Beast*)
- The silver dagger Alina used to cut her baby free of her womb (DDAL04-02 *The Beast*)
- Lazlo or Alina's wedding ring (DDAL04-03 *The Executioner*)
- *Butler's Ring* (DDAL04-04 *The Marionette*)
- Marionette Control Box (DDAL04-04 *The Marionette*)
- Lela's jewelry from the mortu Hanzi (DDAL04-05 *The Seer*)
- Redcap rhyme (DDAL04-06 *The Ghost*)
- Any of the goods extorted by Eugen (DDAL04-08 *The Broken One*)
- The pearl-studded mask (DDAL04-09 *The Tempter*)
- Any portion of The Fidatov treasure (DDAL04-09 *The Tempter*) or any coins paid by Ivan Randovich the Burgomaster (*various*).
- Devotional Object for a ghost wizard of Amber Temple (DDAL04-10 *The Artifact*)
- A possessing ghost wizard of Amber Temple (DDAL04-10 *The Artifact*)
- Lodestone necklace (DDAL04-11 *The Donjon*)
- Tarnished silver crown (DDAL04-11 *The Donjon*)
- One of Omou's art objects (DDAL04-13 *The Horseman*)
- If a character does not have an item, Jeny provides a cup of her special "pork" stew made from some meat she caught in Barovia. It should work just fine.

## Development

The adventure proceeds assuming that the characters are going to retrieve Aya. If that is not the

case, adjust accordingly. If they go for Ixusaxa, simply replace mentions of Aya with Ixusaxa, but otherwise the Part 2 runs the same. If the characters use one of the ghosts of the Amber Temple, Part 2 instead occurs as they travel into the woods to enact the ritual.

### How Do I Use This Locket?

The characters have in their possession a magical locket recovered in DDAL04-10 *The Artifact* and attuned to Esmæ in DDAL04-13 *The Horseman* such that they can use it to draw the vestige of the Evening Glory out of Esmæ. Ixusaxa and Jeny both believe that it must be presented forcefully in some manner to do so; likely in a way similar to how it was used to pull for the possessing ghosts in the Amber Temple. They suggest being obvious and loud but are stumped on details as to how to do it and exactly what will happen.

**Note:** The characters do not know this but to use the locket, the character must use an action to present it forcefully to Esmæ and loudly demand the Evening Glory depart her body. Esmæ then must attempt a DC 15 Charisma saving throw to prevent the vestige from being pulled out. The DC increases by 5 for attempt made to entrap the vestige.



## Part 2. In Search of Aid

*Love is nothing but an overrated emotion that brings nothing but pain to those unfortunate enough to suffer from it.*

—Carole Mortimer, *Uncertain Destiny*

**Aya Glenmiir** is set up in a cave near Oraşnou, sensing a need to be nearby. Unfortunately, Esmae has also been watching for allies of those who have tried to thwart her Obsessions. Shortly after the characters arrive, she sends someone to eliminate Aya.

**Note:** This encounter assumes the characters have come to find Aya. If that is not the case, adjust as described in Part 1.

### Help Us

The smell of campfire smoke and pines surround the sheltered mouth of a shallow cave. Inside an elven woman with black hair turns a spit while reading a book in her lap.

Aya is browsing her spellbook when the characters arrive; pondering how best to continue her efforts to find a way home. Once the situation is explained to her, she is more than willing to join the coven, though she admits that she does not trust Jeny Greenteeth and urges the characters to be careful of any gifts Jeny might bestow.

### Roleplaying Aya Glenmiir

Aya is a female elf of about 300 years. She has long, black hair and radiant green eyes, along with a bit of an ego. She's well aware of the allure and mystery that her racial heritage evokes, and has no reservations against capitalizing on it. She is quick with a coy smile and a twist of the hair if it gets her what she wants. But despite this, she is quite brilliant, especially when the Weave is discussed. Aya has been trapped in Barovia and has been traveling the domain looking for a way to escape. She was recently a captive of the Bloodhand orcs.

### Do You Have Any Candy?

After a few minutes of discussion, the characters hear crying from nearby tree line.

A sniffing catches your attention. A small Barovian boy hides in the pines, clutching a stuffed animal and trying to hide from your gaze. Seeing you, the child nervously steps into the open while wiping his tearstained face on his coat sleeve.

"Can you help me? I'm can't find my mama and I'm lost."

The boy is actually the **oni** Vid, in the form of a human boy. Vid is a creature from the Vanishing Hills that recently came into Esmae's service when he realized that he was at a disadvantage alone in a new land. He has been ordered to find and kill Aya. To aid in this, Esmae has given him an enchanted stuffed animal that he can turn into a **giant ape**. If Vid fails to beat the characters Passive Insight (Deception +8), the character notices that his accent sounds more Faerûnian than Barovian.

Vid tries to get within twenty feet of the cave, possibly trying to hand his toy, which he calls Bertock, to one of the characters hoping to catch them by surprise when it changes form. Vid uses the large animal to back the characters into the cave to more effectively use his *cone of cold* and *sleep* spells. Once cast, he uses *invisibility* and hides while he dismisses his *Change Shape* to maximize his damage. His goal is to kill Aya, and he passes up obvious openings if it brings him closer to her. If it is clear that he can't succeed, he flees rather than give up his life.

The animal obeys Vid and fights until dead, at which point it transforms in to a giant child's toy; it's stuffing gaping from its wounds.

### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Replace the **giant ape** with a **brown bear**.
- **Weak Party:** Replace the **giant ape** with a **giant crocodile**.
- **Strong Party:** Increase the hit points by 20 and damage by 5 for both the **oni** and the **giant ape**. Increase the **oni's** spell save DC by 1.
- **Very Strong Party:** Add a **brown bear**. Increase the hit points by 20, to hit by 1, and damage by 5 for all three monsters. Increase the **oni's** spell save DC by 1.

### Development

Here are ways to address some likely complications:

**Capturing Vid:** Between his ability to fly and cast *invisibility* or *gaseous form*, capturing Vid is a challenge. If the characters do successfully restrain him, he admits to originally hailing from the Vanishing Hills and being trapped in Barovia just like the characters. In his dreams he met a woman calling herself Esmae Amarantha who offered him the chance to return to Faerûn if he killed an elf wizard near the village of Oraşnou. He never met her in person, but when he awoke from his dream, Bertock was there, as was the knowledge of where to find Aya.

Vid is not especially loyal to Esmae and is happy to sell her out in exchange for his life but unfortunately, he does not know where she is. He describes her as tall, beautiful human woman with long black hair that fluttered on an unseen breeze. Her skin was pale, but not to the extreme and in his mind's eye she wore a long black sleeveless gown whose bodice was decorated with black lace. Around her neck was a black ribbon from which dangled a silver wolf's head. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check recalls that this sounds similar to Strahd's heraldry that the character has seen throughout the domain. Her eyes were dark and intense, yet sad.

***What if Aya Dies:*** If the unlikely event that Aya dies, the characters need to return her to life or retrieve Ixusaxa or one of the possessing ghosts instead. If the characters are not capable of raising Aya, Jeny is willing to do so free of charge, though still tries to negotiate and asks what the characters have to offer her before volunteering to do it for free. If she is offered any payment, she accepts it quickly be the character can rethink their offer.

### **Treasure**

Vid carries four rubies worth a total of 400 gp.

## Part 3. Magic Always Has a Price

*Find what you love and let it kill you.*

—Charles Bukowski

Once the characters have recruited the last member of Jeny's temporary coven, they must travel nearby into the Quivering Forest. Jeny has a place prepared to undertake the ritual. Unfortunately, Esmae again plans to disrupt the hag's plans.

**DM Note:** This encounter assumes the characters have brought Aya as the third. If that is not the case, replace her with the appropriate NPC.

### General Features

The following details apply to the clearing in which the ritual takes place:

**Light.** It is late afternoon in a winter shrouded forest, so while there is bright light in the clearing the forest itself is dim light.

**Standing Stones.** The stones are 10 ft. tall with a rough surface that makes climbing them relatively easy (DC 10 Strength (Athletics)). The stones are planted too deep in the ground to be pushed over.

Leading you into the trees Jeny calls over her shoulder, "Watch your step, children. You never know what's under the leaves." With a chuckle she points towards a skull and skeletal arm poking from beneath the fallen leaves.

After a few minutes of walking the old woman walks into a clearing free of snow. Three standing stones ring a cauldron that is boiling over a fire. A nearby flat rock has a variety of pouches, vials and flasks close at hand. Three separate circles, one of chalk to the north, one of flower petals to the southeast, and one of fresh innards to the southwest.

"Take your places ladies," Jeny says as she steps into a circle made of viscera.

Jeny asks each character to place their focus object within the cauldron. The item is undamaged, regardless of its construction. Jeny warns that once the ritual begins, the coven cannot be disturbed and should anything happen or appear it will be up to the characters to deal with it. The characters must not allow the ritual to be stopped once it begins, no matter the cost.

The three women raise their arms and begin to chant in unison. Jeny cuts the palm of her hand and flicks a few drops of blood into the cauldron which roars to life with blue flame. Jeny smiles and works her magic effortlessly, but the strain on Aya's face is clear. Sybil however, looks as if she suddenly bears a great weight, and streaks of white rapidly flow through her black hair.

Over the women's incantation, you here a rustling in the undergrowth and slurring sibilant voices give voice to a threatening rhyme:

*"Old Mother hag,  
Stirring her pot,  
Gathering her minions,  
All for naught.  
Swallowing her lies,  
Each does their part,  
Rip open their chests,  
And eat out their heart."*

Twisted creatures begin crawling into the clearing. Vaguely human-like with greenish brown, warty skin, and shaggy mane of thick hair, each creature has a large fanged maw taking up more than half of its misshapen head. Each of the creatures has a heart-shaped, bruised indentation on their chest.

Esmae's power has grown dramatically since bonding with the Evening Glory. She now senses powerful individuals that can thwart her, and has taken steps to end that possibility. Twisting a group of farm folk into Goblins, she has ordered them to kill Jeny Greenteeth and her minions, and now that Jeny has started the ritual, the characters are the only thing that stands in their way. At the start of the combat, three **goblins** attack obvious foes while three more watch from cover out of sight looking for an opening.

### Goblins of Ravenloft

Goblins are humanoid creatures that have been transformed by powerful magic and are not actually the goblins that characters from the Realms may have seen before. Goblins are utterly loyal to their creator; in this case Esmae who created them as an exercise of her new found power. Goblins do not sleep or grow bored, but obsessively eat and seek to do their master's bidding.

After three rounds (or sooner if the first wave of goblins are defeated), continue with the following read aloud text:

The strain of the ritual is clearly taking its toll. A streak of grey flows down Aya's hair and her youthful elven appearance is marred by lines. Sybil is barely recognizable. Where once there stood a human woman in the fullness of life, there is a now a stooped old woman, barely more than a skeleton with skin stretched taut, wheezing out arcane words of power.

Before you have time to ponder the cost these women are paying, growls echo as more of the fanged creatures stream into the clearing.

This kills a normal human like Sybil. Elves like Aya or Ixusaxa are aged, but survive. If the third is one of the ghosts, it has no effect given their undead state.

The remaining three **goblyns** try to swarm around the same target, preferably one that has been avoiding melee combat. After a round of combat with the second wave, read or summarize the following:

Sybil utters a strangled cry as she collapses to the ground, scattering chalk dust on the breeze. Looking at the sky through milky white eyes she chokes, "I see her." Then wracked by a wet cough, she spits up blood over her timeworn face and then breathes no more.

Looking at the desiccated corpse, Jeny shakes her head. "I told you that there would be a cost little sister, but your price was well paid. I see our foe in the ruins of a keep astride a mountain."

The woods echo with growls and a dozen more fanged monsters break through the leaves. Aya's fingers work fast, and a circle of green light forms on the ground. "Go now, it will take you to the enemy."

Jeny offers a wide smile, "Yes, go. I will clean up here."

It should be clear that there is a massive number of goblyns swarming the area and it will take time to defeat them all, even if the characters survive. Aya urges the characters to step into the circle and she will teleport them to where they need to go. She has already paid the hag's price for this power, and so there is no reason to waste it.

## Development

If a character insisted of being one of the three "sisters" of the coven, they suffer significant effects as their life force is drained away to power the hag magic that they have no right performing. During the ritual, the character permanently ages 150 years and suffers four levels of exhaustion until they complete a long rest. If the years added to their age exceed their racial life span, the character dies at the end of the ritual. There is no saving throw to avoid these effects.

## Part 4. Ruins of Boszórkan Keep

*Here in the forest, dark and deep, I offer you eternal sleep.*

*-Death, The Poor Little Rich Girl*

Green warmth fades away as you find yourselves on the side of a mountain. To the south you see the domain of Barovia, Lake Zarovich a break in the trees below and the Old Svalich Road a thin muddy line in the snow beyond. To the north, there is only mist. A small crumbling keep hugs the side of the cliff face a spear's toss away and seems your only possible destination.

As the sun sets, you find that the items you had placed inside Jeny's cauldron are now at your feet in the swirling snow.

Once the characters pick up their focus item, they instantly know its benefits and hindrances, as well as the general direction and distance to Esmae (she is in the keep). Unfortunately for them, Esmae also knows they have arrived.

### Outside the Keep

While the small keep looks ill-kempt and likely wouldn't stand up to a protracted siege, the walls are mostly intact. Some pieces have crumbled here and there, but the walls are still 13 to 15-feet high. The front gate is open. The trail ends at the keep which overlooks a north-south pass more than two hundred feet below which terminates in the mist. Due to the proximity to the edge on one side and the tall wall on the other, there is no way to safely go around or get behind the keep. Given the snowy winds and ice-covered conditions, the walls can be climbed by a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) identifies tracks which a subsequent successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) identifies them as humanoid, horse, and wagon tracks. It is impossible to determine more due to the weather. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) of the gate notes limited wear and suggests that it has seen very little use, though there has been some recently.

**High Winds.** While fighting outside or in Area 1 or Area 2, the characters are exposed to high winds. Ranged weapon attacks suffer disadvantage. It is difficult to keep open flames lit.

**Light.** The setting as the characters arrive. After two minutes, the last of it dips below the horizon and it is night. There is no moon and the stars are blocked by clouds. It is dark.

### Inside the Keep

Inside the keep, it is cool and dark and things are decaying unless otherwise noted in the individual descriptions.

### Area 1: The Gatehouse

A rusted gate hangs open at an angle permitting entry to a ramshackle gatehouse but further passage to a courtyard is blocked by a portcullis in the far wall. Dead weeds and shrubbery poke through the broken flagstones and piles of snow.

The roof of the gatehouse has collapsed allowing the struggling light into the room. The rubble has been pushed into the corners and is difficult terrain.

From outside, the characters can see through the gate and the portcullis beyond to note a large courtyard further on. There are no obvious foes in sight, however a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notes an arrow slit in the northeastern corner (from Area 3) that is partially obscured by the snow. Those characters with a DC 22 passive Perception or higher (based on the **assassin's** Stealth check) also note a shadow move in the darkness beyond. The arrow slit grants three-quarters cover (+5 AC and Dex saving throws).

**Foliage.** The plants in the courtyard are terrorvine; a dangerous thorny vine native Barovia similar to wild roses. Any character moving along the sides of gatehouse, such as to explore the rubble or attack through the arrow slit, must succeed in a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being nicked by a thorn and taking 1 point of piercing damage. Those that take damage must succeed in DC 15 Constitution saving throw (poison based) or fall prone and incapacitated in the vines (taking an addition 1d4 piercing damage) as their mind is overcome with extreme terror. Afflicted characters can attempt another saving throw at the end of their successive turns. Those who successfully save are Frightened for 1 round, but then are immune to the vine's effects until they complete a long rest.

**Gate and Portcullis.** A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) made while searching the gate notes that the gate is not jammed open, but simply hangs halfway down as if it was stopped



while only partially lowered. The chains that raise or lower the gate are inside the wall and cannot be reached, though a character might try to brace or jam the gate at the DM's discretion. The gate and the portcullis to Area 2 can be lifted in one action a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check.

**Surprise.** If the characters enter through the Gatehouse, as opposed to trying to climb or fly over a wall, the **assassin** in Area 3 waits to spring his trap. He is watching for roughly half of the characters to enter, one of the characters succumb to the terrorvine, or when it is clear the party is sending just one scout forward. Once that happens, he triggers the level that drops the gate. A character that is under the gate can attempt a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid taking 7 (2d6) points of bludgeoning damage and being restrained beneath it. Those that succeed in the saving throw can decide whether to jump a space forward or back.

Once the gate is down, the assassin attacks from behind the arrow slit, taking full cover between shots. It is likely he gets to attack with surprise. If that becomes ineffective, he hides and prepares to strike once someone gets into the courtyard.

At the same time, the **phantom warrior** in Area 2 comes to investigate the ruckus and attacks anyone in Area 1.

### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove the **phantom warrior**
- **Weak Party:** Replace the **phantom warrior** with a **shadow**.
- **Strong Party:** Replace the **phantom warrior** with a **wraith**.
- **Very Strong Party:** Add a **shadow** to Area 2.

## Area 2: The Courtyard

Snow covers the uneven, open air courtyard. Paths are tracked through the snow to a single door to the north and a set of grand double doors to the east. A wagon is parked in the southwest corner.

At first glance the courtyard appears empty but anyone succeeding a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check hears the sounds of moaning carried on the wind, as if someone was suffering a great pain. A **phantom warrior** patrols this courtyard, bound by Esmae, and laments his torment. If the characters have already faced, the phantom warrior in Area 1, he is no longer here but his wailing (un)lives on.

**Doors.** The single plain door to the north leads to Area 3 and is locked (DC 20 Dexterity check made with thieves' tools). The double doors to the east are carved with one door showing a handsome man and the other an elegant woman; each gazing longingly toward the other while standing upon a piles of stones. A careful examination and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that the man has fangs and the woman's dress is stained by blood dripping from her neck. The stones that they stand upon are actually a mound of hearts. The double doors are not locked.

**Tracks.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check notes several sets of Medium size humanoid boot prints moving between both doors and the wagon. There are also hoof prints from a horse leading to the double doors.

**Wagon.** The wagon is an enclosed delivery-style wagon. The name Amarantha is painted on the side, above three candles, peeling badly from age. Inside the tools of a Chandler hang dusty in the back amidst blocks of wax, wicks and molds. Painted on the inside wall, across from a workbench, is a painting of dark haired, mustachioed man wearing a wax stained apron. His hand rests upon a thin girl of maybe ten winters with midnight hair and darkly intense eyes that follow as one moves about the wagon.

**Treasure.** A wax bust of a man's head sits lovingly in a velvet lined box. Those who have seen the marble bust in *DDAL04-04 The Marionette* or have seen the man himself, recognize Strahd von Zarovich. The bust is oddly heavy though, as Esmae used her father's skull to mold the wax around so that both the men she loved would always be with her. Breaking open the bust reveals the skull, but renders the work worthless. Otherwise, the bust is worth 25 gp to the right buyer.

## Area 3: The Guardroom

The southern wall is lined with empty weapon racks and beds are to the south. An arrow slit is in the western wall opposite a door.

This room is occupied by János Anatall, an **assassin** from Vallaki in the employ of Esmae. János is in awe of his mistress's power and beauty and worships her from afar. Ever since she merged with the Evening Glory his devotion has only grown. He hopes to die in her service that he might be reborn as undead so he can prove his love.

**Bunks.** He has stashed away a journal under the mattress of one of the bunks, which a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals. It is filled with childish attempts at romantic poetry, descriptions of murders committed in her Esmæ's name to prove his devotion and a general explanation of the Evening Glory's faith. The last entry mentions that he looked upon the painting of Tatyana Federovna that Esmæ keeps and he believes that Esmæ is more attractive as she is now. None the less, he will still love her once she is transformed into a creature of the night with Tatyana's likeness.

**Racks.** The weapon racks are empty, those János has hidden his key to the secret door in Area 4 behind one of them. It can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Treasure.** János Anatall carries 100 gp in Barovian currency, a *potion of healing*, and one of the two keys needed to open a door to Area 8.

## Area 4: Library

The three walls opposite the door are covered in shelves of tomes, scrolls, and small framed paintings. The room is overpowering with the smell of spices coming from a brazier hung above eye level in the center of the room. A fountain is built into the center of the northern wall, depicting a woman crying; her tears collecting in the basin. A stone cup rests on the lip of the fountain.

This library is a treasure trove of information, though much of it second hand or conjecture, concerning Strahd von Zarovich, his brother Sergei, Tatyana Federovna, and the Amber Temple. It is also one half of the puzzle to find the hidden stair (area 8).

**Illumination.** The lit brazier provides dim illumination, along with some minimal warmth.

**Smells.** The brazier is filled with a spicy incense that permeates the room. The scent is not unpleasant but is overpowering. All Wisdom (Perception) checks based on smell are made at disadvantage. Anyone succeeding on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a faint acrid smell in the room as well (the fountain).

**Fountain.** The statuette of the woman in the fountain bares a strong resemblance to the paintings of the woman around the room (Tatyana). The liquid is cold and clear. Unfortunately, it is also cursed. The mountain spring that feeds the fountain is transmuted into a strong acid. Anyone coming into

contact with the acid takes 22 (4d10) acid damage. The fountain radiates conjuration magic if checked.

**Secret Door.** A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices faint scuff marks on the floor suggesting that a shelf on the eastern wall can be moved. The shelf rests on hinges and can be easily slide open to reveal a door. In the center of the door there is one indentation in the shape of a key. There is no actual keyhole to insert a lock pick into or even visible mechanism to access, so the key must be found.

Unknown to the characters, the door is locked by two different magically controlled locks (one controlled here and one controlled by the secret door in area 7). If the key found in Area 3 is pressed into the indentation, there is an audible click of a lock disengaging. Unfortunately, this also activates a **magical trap** and does not unlock the second lock. The second lock is only disengaged by unlocking the secret door in Area 7.

If a character attempts to open the door without having disengaged the second lock, a *cloudkill* (spell save DC 15) fills the room and lasts for 10 minutes. The cloud does not expand out of the room. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can locate the trap. A successful DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) can disable the trap once it has appeared, but this does not open the door. A *dispel magic* or similar effect suppresses the trap and the magical locks for 10 minutes, but leaves the metal rods that extend from the door into the walls and floor in the locked position so the door cannot be opened. Doing 100 points of damage to the door can batter it down, though like most objects it is immune to psychic and poison damage.

**Shelves.** The shelves are filled with tomes and scrolls in various hands along with several paintings and drawings of Strahd, Sergei, Tatyana, the Amber Temple, and Castle Ravenloft. A character may search the library for useful information taking 10 minutes. For each increment of 5 by which a character's Intelligence (Investigation) check results in, they receive one unique piece of information until there is no more information to find. For example, a character that rolls a 17 on their check would learn three things.

- Strahd fell in love with his brother Sergei's betrothed, a woman named Tatyana. She died before Strahd could possess her.
- There are more pictures of Tatyana than any other person or place. In some of the pictures she can be seen sitting in front of a powder box while admiring herself with a hand mirror, combing her

hair with a silver comb, or dressed in a fine gown with matching gloves.

- Strahd is cursed to live forever and in each generation Tatyana is reborn and will die before he can possess her. There are several stories of Strahd rushing to a woman that appears as Tatyana, only to have her die in some freak accident.
- There are powerful, dark deific beings imprisoned in the Amber Temple. One of them is called the Evening Glory, the god of love through undeath who teaches that love is immortal and can never die.
- There are ample histories concerning rituals for transformation into the appearance of others. If to be permanent, most require personal items of the person that caster wishes to become.

Any lore taken from this room immediately bursts into flame and is consumed. The Dark Powers would not have the wrong people hold this knowledge.

### Area 5: The Watchtower (Ground Level)

The pass below can be seen through the cracked window of this watchtower. A cool draft whistles through the broken panes fluttering the blankets of half a dozen beds scattered around a central table with benches on either side. A staircase rises to a second floor.

This room is used as a barracks by the Witches of Barovia that follow Esmae. There are six unmade beds piled with furs, each with a trunk next to or under it.

**Sound.** Those with a passive Perception equal to or higher than DC 15 hear heated—but whispered—voices up the stairs. It sounds like an argument that at least three people are trying to keep quiet. The specific details cannot be made out without getting closer.

**Spear Trap.** The fourth stair on the stair case is trapped. Stepping on it causes several spears to thrust out from the eleventh stair (+8 melee weapon attack, 22 (4d10) piercing damage), catching a Medium size creature in the torso or a Small size creature in the head. The trap can be found with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check and disabled with a DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools), or simply by avoiding the fourth stair. If the trap is deployed it makes enough noise to alert the enemies in Area 6.

**Trunks.** The characters may search through the trunk to find several sets of clothes to fit male and female humans as well as some personal items.

**Treasure.** Inside the trunks, there are a number of personal knickknacks, jewelry and loose coins totally a value of 150 gp. Getting to them requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check.

### Area 6: The Watchtower (Upper Level)

An arcane circle and pentagram symbol dominates the center of this room, each point illuminated by tall iron candelabra. A table on the northern wall covered in paper, books, candles, and bottles. A painting of Lord Strahd is on the western wall.

The Barovian Witches use this room as a general ritual chamber. When the characters arrive, **Nikolaos Salahori** is here with a few other members of Esmae's retinue (two **Barovian witches** and two **thugs**) that have begun to have second thoughts about their mistress's plan. Nikolaos is the senior most member of the band after Esmae and he believes that pretending to be Tatyana is quite likely a betrayal of their ultimate lord and master, Strahd. He is trying to convince the others that they should flee Esmae's service and warn Strahd of her betrayal.

#### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove one **Barovian witch** and both **thugs**.
- **Weak Party:** Remove one **Barovian witch** and one **thug**.
- **Strong Party:** Replace both **thugs** with a **goblin**.
- **Very Strong Party:** Add a **goblin**.

**Illumination.** The candelabras, in addition to the magic noted below, fill the room with bright illumination.

**Candelabrum.** The center candle of each candelabrum is a different color and is unlit. Lighting the candle as an action triggers a stored spell and can be done even if the character is not capable of casting spells or does not have the spell on their spell list. The magic of these candles ends if Esmae is defeated. The candles and their associated spells are:

- **Black.** *Phantasmal killer*
- **Blue.** *Witch bolt*
- **Green.** *See invisibility*
- **Purple.** *Dominate person*
- **Yellow.** *Dispelling magic*

The spells are cast using Esmae's spellcasting ability (+9 spell attack, DC 17) using a 5th-level spell slot. If the spell requires concentration, the creature lighting the candle must maintain concentration. The

creature lighting the candle chooses the target of the spell.

**Painting.** The painting of Strahd is enchanted such that the Dark Lord can look through its eyes at his whim. Those in the room may attempt a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) to get a "bad feeling" when he watches.

**Pentagram.** Any creature standing in the 15-ft. diameter symbol on the floor has advantage on attack rolls and saving throw against any foe with **Touched by the Mists** story award. Any creature with the **Touched by the Mists** story award that enters the symbol must succeed in a DC 15 Charisma saving throw to leave the circle. The symbol can be destroyed using an action by any character without the **Touched by the Mists** story award.

**Worktable.** The table details a number of quasi-religious rituals for the worship of Strahd and the Evening Glory. It also has a wide selection of magical spell components worth 120 gp and the spellbook of one of the witches.

**Treasure.** On the workbench is spell components worth 120 gp and the *witch's spellbook*. If the characters negotiate to have the witches leave, they take the spellbook and components with them.

## The Witches

The witches are close to being swayed by Nikolaos' words, but when the characters enter, they are immediately on the defensive and prepared to fight. If a character immediately shows that the party means no harm, they are willing to talk. They know that if successful Esmee will take an undying version of Tatyana's form and plans to use that shape and the Evening Glory's power to seduce Strahd. Appeals to Strahd's unquestioned authority, or threats that Strahd will take vengeance against the witches may sway them to avoid combat and flee. If a character succeeds in a DC 25 Charisma (Intimidate or Persuasion) check the witches gather up their belongings and flee the keep. The DM should award advantage for particularly good roleplaying. Nikolaos will go so far as to give the characters the keep to the secret door in area 7 and tell them were to find the door; though he neglects to tell them of the trap. Fearing Esmee's wrath, they refuse to help fight her. They know the power of the Evening Glory is immense. They will say that Esmee has already begun the ritual in a chamber above the great hall and if the characters wish to stop her, they will have to hurry.

If the characters refuse to let them leave or take their belongings, or fail to convince them, they attack. If Nikolaos and at least two of the others are defeated, the remaining enemies can be forced to surrender.

## Area 7: The Great Hall

This great hall reeks of blood and burning meat. A hunch of meat chars in a roaring fireplace in the north east corner. A statue of a beautiful woman painted in blood is in a windowed alcove on the eastern wall, viscera and offal piled around it. The storm rages outside in the pass below. A tapestry on the western wall depicts a view from the pass below of Boszórkan Keep against the night sky. A pile of half eaten meat, topped with a skinless horse's head is on the table in the middle of the room.

The great hall appears empty when the characters arrive. The **fire elemental** (see below) watches in the form of the fire in the fireplace.

**Illumination.** The moonlight through the windows and the blazing fire provide bright illumination.

**Smell.** The room smells strongly of the burning horse haunch and the offal around the statue.

**Fireplace.** The fire in the fireplace is actually a **fire elemental** which attacks if the characters trigger the *firestorm* trap or open a door to leave this room.

**Secret Door.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices faint scuff marks on the floor suggesting that a section of the wall behind a tapestry on the western wall can be opened. The wall rests on hinges and can be easily slide open to reveal a door. In the center of the door there is one indentation in the shape of a key. There is no actual keyhole to insert a lock pick into or even visible mechanism to access, so the key must be found. Unknown to the characters, the door is locked by two different magically controlled locks (one controlled here and one controlled by the secret door in Area 4). If the key found Area 6 is pressed into the indentation, there is an audible click of a lock disengaging. Unfortunately, this also activates a magical trap and does not unlock the second lock. The second lock is only disengaged by unlocking the secret door in Area 4. If a character attempts to open the door without having disengaged the second lock, a *firestorm* (DC 15) fills the room but does not expand into the rooms beyond. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can locate the trap. A successful DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) can disable the trap once it has appeared, but this does not open the door. A *dispel magic* or similar effect suppresses the trap and the magical locks for 10 minutes, but leaves the metal rods that extend from the door into the walls and floor in the locked position so the door cannot be opened. Doing 100



points of damage to the door can batter it down, though like most objects it is immune to psychic and poison damage.

**Statue.** A statue of Tatyana is in the alcove surrounded by the bloody offal of a slaughtered horse. On its chest, painted in blood, is a holy symbol of the Evening Glory; a hand with a heart in the palm. Placing one's hand on the holy symbol causes the victim to collapse Prone to the floor and rapidly experience the myriad of deaths experienced Tatyana: falls, crushing, stabs, poison, etc... All of it swift succession, it is a confusing and painful blur until it ends with an image of her standing on the mountainside before Boszórkan Keep in a long black sleeveless gown whose bodice was decorated with black lace. Around her neck is a black ribbon from which dangled a silver wolf's head. She smiles and turns as it seeing the character raising a hand in greeting, a bloodless heart-shaped cut through her palm. This experience takes one round and requires the character to succeed in a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain one level of madness.

### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Lower the **fire elemental's** AC and to hit by 1 and decrease its hit points by 20.
- **Weak Party or Strong Party:** No change.
- **Very Strong Party:** Increase the **fire elemental's** AC and to hit by 1, increase its hit points by 20 and its Multiattack allows it to make three attacks instead of two.

## Area 8: The Secret Stair (Ground Level)

Beyond the secret door, there is a large landing with a spiral stair rising through the ceiling above. The von Zarovich heraldry is carved large on the northern wall.

This room can only be entered by unlocking both secret door, found in Areas 4 and 7. Both doors are obvious and can be safely opened from the inside of area 8.

## Area 9: The Secret Stair (Upper Level)

The spiral stair comes to another landing with a door in the eastern wall and another bas relief carving, this one of a pentagram in a circle with a snarling wolf's head in the center, on the northern wall.

Sofi Ellanani, the youngest of the **Barovian witches** stands guard here with a suit of **Strahd's animated armor**. If Sofi hears the characters coming, she directs to the armor to the top of the stairs to defend them against all comers while she goes into area 10 to warn her mistress and joins in her defense.

## Area 10: Ritual Chamber

*Sweet as sugar, hard as ice. Hurt me once, I'll kill you twice.*

*-Jeffree Star*

A man and a woman dance nearly naked, upon a floor slick with arcane symbols painted in blood. Wax puddles amid the symbols from squat candles placed every few feet. The windows to this floor are broken open and a bitter winds blows snow into the room, but it is quickly beaten back by the roaring bonfire in the center of the southern half of the room.

A woman with pale skin, black hair and dark intense eyes stands behind the flames wearing a black dress and gloves, a silver comb in her hair and hand mirror and powder box close at hand. She smiles and for a moment surrounded by a black mist and her form flickers to that of the woman you have seen depicted in the statues and paintings on the first floor. But then it is gone and Esmae Amarantha remains. Lighting a candle and dropping it to the floor she calls, "Soon, love will never die!"

**Esmae Amarantha**, joined with the vestige of the Evening Glory, along with a **Barovian witch** and a **thug** are close to completing the ritual. When the characters enter, they attack. The thug moves to engage immediately and if warned, the witch has cast *alter self* and does the same. If not, she relies on supporting the thug. Esmae tries to keep at range and use her spells to great effect. In order to ritual going she must use one action every round for ten rounds while possessed by the Evening Glory, either her own or a legendary action. If she cannot do so, the ritual is disrupted. In addition, she saves her *legendary resistance* ability for effects that prevent her from casting the ritual, banish her, or exorcise the Evening Glory. The DM should make it clear that magical power is building and the flickering between Esmae and Tatyana's bodies are accelerating and it is clear that she is staying Tatyana longer and longer. A clock is ticking.

**Illumination.** The moonlight through the windows and the blazing fire provide bright illumination.



**Bonfire.** A creature beginning their turn in the bonfire takes 14 (4d6) fire damage.

**Floor Glyphs.** The glyphs upon the floor fill the room with magic. Creatures with the **Touched by the Mists** story award receive half the effects of all healing magic while in this room unless they succeed in a DC 17 Constitution saving throw each time they are affected by a magical healing spell, item, or effect.

### Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak Party:** Remove the **Barovian witch** and the **thug**. Remove Esmae's 6th and 7th level spell slots. It takes Esmae 15 rounds to complete the ritual.
- **Weak Party:** Remove one **thug**. Remove Esmae's 7th level spell slot. It takes Esmae 12 rounds to complete the ritual.
- **Strong Party:** Add a **Barovian witch**. It takes Esmae 9 rounds to complete the ritual.
- **Very Strong Party:** Add a **Barovian witch** and a **thug**. Give Esmae another 30 hit points and increase her AC by 1. It takes Esmae 8 rounds to complete the ritual.

**Development.** If warned by the Sofi Ellanani from Area 9 of the characters approach, the Evening Glory blesses the **thugs** and **witches** in the room. They are affected as though they had been the targets of: *bless* (+1d4 on attacks and saving throws), *blur* (disadvantage to be hit by attacks that rely on sight), and *false life* (+15 hit points). If the Evening Glory is exorcised, these effects end.

If the Evening Glory is exorcised, read the following boxed text:

Presenting the locket and loudly demanding the Evening Glory leave Esmae, a black mist pours from the witch's eyes, nose, mouth and ears. The mists form into a transparent image of a pale, blonde woman with ice blue eyes and bloodless hearts cut through her hands. She looks sadly towards Esmae and then flows into the locket.

"Noooooooo! Love never dies! There's still time. I can make him love me. I will kill you as a wedding gift!" Esmae turns her full fury against you.

When the Evening Glory is banished, Esmae loses: all damage immunities, all condition immunities except charmed, blessing of the Mother Night, and two legendary actions per turn. In addition, her kiss no longer heals her.

**Treasure.** If Esmae can be defeated the characters find expensive candles inscribed with the symbol of the Evening Glory worth 250 gp, jewelry worth 1000

gp, an ivory icon of the Evening Glory worth 200 gp and a painting of Tatyana worth 200 gp. In addition, Tatyana's gloves, comb, powder box and hand mirror are each worth 25 gp. In addition, Esmae wears *bracers of defense* and has a spellbook.

## Conclusion

The adventure's conclusion depends primarily on whether or not the characters defeated Esmae in time.

### The Adventurers Fail

If the characters do NOT defeat Esmae and the Evening Glory in ten rounds read the following boxed text:

Esmae's body writhes and takes a new form. She is Tatyana Federovna reborn! Looking you with a crooked smile and blood red eyes she gives a full throated laugh in a whole new voice. Pointed fangs are clearly visible.

"You have failed! Love lives forever!" With that Esmae shifts form into a bat and flies into the night.

The characters did not defeat Esmae and so the lands of the Quivering Forest do not return to Faerûn. The characters must find their own way home. The characters gain access to the **Failure's Cost** downtime activity (see Downtime Activities, below).

### The Adventurers Succeed

Moments after Esmae and her followers are defeated, her schemes begin to unravel:

You feel a painful pulling upon you as though you suffer a great heart break; a mixture of longing, sadness and joy. Mists rise up from the floor swirling around you. Instead of smoke and candle wax, you smell the scents of spring.

By undoing Esmae's schemes, the characters, NPCs, and locations from Faerûn are no longer bound to the Domain of Dread. All of them return to where the mist took them from. Soon people around Phlan speak of the character's deeds in fighting the creatures of the mists.

Each character must now make a choice: return to Faerûn or stay in Barovia (possibly because the player wishes to play more adventures set in Barovia).

If the character wishes to leave, they gain the **Escape from the Demiplane of Dread** story award and wake up in the Quivering Forest not far from Plan. It is spring and they are in Faerûn. The locket containing the Evening Glory is nowhere to be found. Characters that are members of a faction are awarded with the **completion of a secret mission** upon checking in with their local faction representative.

If the character to stay in Barovia, they gain access to the **Return to the Keep** downtime activity (see Downtime Activities, below).

Whether the characters stay or not, they gain the **The True Meaning of Love** story award.

The End...?

## Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

## Experience

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

### Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Assassin	3,900
Barovian Witch	100
Brown Bear	200
Esmee Amarantha	7,200
Fire Elemental	1,800
Giant Ape	2,900
Giant Crocodile	1,800
Goblin	700
Nikolaos Salahori	1,800
Oni	2,900
Phantom Warrior	700
Shadow	100
Strahd's Animated Armor	2,300
Thug	100
Wraith	1,800

### Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Recruit a third "Sister" alive	500
Defeat the Secret door puzzle trap	500
Negotiate peacefully with Nikolaos Salahori and the other witches	500
Exorcise the Evening Glory	250
Stop the Esmee's transformation	500

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 4,500 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 6,000 **experience points**.

## Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

**Consumable magic items** should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

**Permanent magic items** are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

### Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP value
Silvered arrows	50
Rubies	400 gp
Wax bust of Strahd von Zarovich	25 gp
János Anatal's pouch	100 gp
Watchtower trunks	150 gp
Spell components	120 gp
Candles	250 gp
Jewelry	1000 gp
Icon of the Evening Glory	200 gp
Painting of Tatyana	200 gp
Tatyana's gloves	25 gp
Tatyana's comb	25 gp
Tatyana's powder box	25 gp
Tatyana's hand mirror	25 gp

### Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

## Bracers of Defense

*Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)*

These leather bracers are stitched with a symbol of an open hand, bloodlessly pierced through the palm with a heart shaped hole. The bracers fill the wearer with the belief that that is love eternal, regardless of creed, nationality, or vital signs. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Potion of Animal Friendship

*Potion, Uncommon*

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Potion of Healing

*Potion, Common*

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Potion of Greater Healing

*Potion, Uncommon*

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Spell Scroll of Lesser Restoration

*Scroll, Uncommon*

This scroll is inscribed with the spell *lesser restoration*. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Witch's Spellbook

This spellbook is covered in red leather and decorated with an impression of a wolf's and a raven's head. It contains the spells: *alter self*, *invisibility*, *ray of sickness*, *sleep*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*.

## Esmae's Spellbook

This spellbook is covered in black velvet over metal plates. The writing inside appears to be in blood. It contains the spells: *blight*, *charm person*, *cloudkill*, *counterspell*, *crown of madness*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *finger of death*, *fireball*, *hypnotic pattern*, *lightning bolt*, *magic missile*, *misty step*, *polymorph*, *shield*, *witch bolt*

## Downtime

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

## Renown

**All faction members** earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

Additionally, if successful in returning the portions of Faerûn that were swept away by the Mists, **each character that is a member of a faction** receives credit for accomplishing a **secret mission**.

## Downtime Activities

Characters who wish to escape Barovia must spend downtime to do so. You may use the following downtime activity granted by the result of your encounter with Esmae:

**Failure's Cost (Failure).** Without succeeding in returning the portions of Faerûn that were swept into Barovia, you must seek out alternative measures. At any point after this adventure, you may spend 40 downtime days and 250 gp traveling back to Faerûn with a family of Vistani. You gain the **Escape from the Demiplane of Dread** story award.

**Returning to the Keep (Success).** If you choose to wait to return to Faerûn, you can spend 5 downtime days to return to Boszórkan Keep at any time. The mists are still there, and when you finally choose to return to Faerûn, you earn the **Escape from the Demiplane of Dread** story award.

## Story Awards

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

**The Demiplane of Dread.** You have traversed the mists and now find yourself in the Demiplane of Dread and, until this story award is removed, you are unable to leave. So long as you are trapped, you cannot participate in any adventure or event that takes place outside of Barovia. Tread carefully during your time here, the Dark Powers are watching.

**Escape from the Demiplane of Dread.** You are free of the Demiplane of Dread and may remove the **The Demiplane of Dread** story award. If you later return to Barovia, you regain the story award again and must find a new way out.

If you have the **Touched by the Mists** story award, you fall into a magical coma upon returning and lose 10 downtime days for each dark gift you possess. You must pay life style for each of these days once you awake to eat, repair gear, etc., from while you were out. Upon waking (if you ever do...), you lose the **Touched by the Mists** story award.

***The True Meaning of Love.*** You have defeated Esmae Amarantha and once again caged the Evening Glory. You are true warrior of fate and love and are marked as such. You gain advantage on Charisma checks made with followers of the goddess Sûne. You may cross this favor out to succeed on a saving throw against a charm effect that you have failed.

## DM Rewards

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You receive **1,500 XP**, **750 gp**, and **ten downtime days** for running this session.



## Appendix. NPC/Monster Statistics

### Assassin

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Int +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +11

**Damage Resistances** poison

**Senses** Passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Giant, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Assassinate.** During its first turn, the assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit the assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

**Evasion.** If the assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the assassin instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if it fails.

**Sneak Attack (1/turn).** The assassin deals an extra 13 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the assassin that isn't incapacitated and the assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The assassin makes two shortsword attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison

damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Aya Glenmiir, Mage

*Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnomish

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *remove curse*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *scrying*

### Actions

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

### Barovian Witch

*Medium humanoid, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Arcana +4, Perception +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The witch is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The witch has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*  
 1st level (4 slots): *ray of sickness*, *sleep*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*  
 2nd level (2 slots): *alter self*, *invisibility*

### Actions

**Claws (Requires Alter Self).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage. This attack is magical.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

### Brown Bear

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 34 (4d10 + 12)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** Passive Perception 13

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 8) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

### Esmae Amarantha

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 120 (16d8 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

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

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Skills** Arcana +13, Religion +13

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13; Esmae sees through all forms of darkness

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Sylvan; telepathy 100 ft.

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Darkness Breeds Darkness.** Esmae has advantage on ability checks and attack rolls against characters with the **Touched by the Mists** story award. Similarly, such characters have disadvantage on any saving throw made against Esmae.

**Blessing of Mother Night.** Esmae is shielded against divination magic, as though she was protected by a nondetection spell.

**Legendary Resistance (3/day).** If Esmae fails a saving throw, she succeeds instead.

**Vestige of the Evening Glory.** If Esmae fails a saving throw against the magic locket and has no more uses of legendary resistance, the Evening Glory is pulled from within her she loses: all damage immunities, all condition immunities except charmed, *blessing of the Mother Night*, and two legendary actions per turn. In addition, her kiss no longer heals her.

**Spellcasting.** Esmae is a 13th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Esmae has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips: *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*  
 1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *witch bolt*  
 2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness*, *hypnotic pattern*, *misty step*  
 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*  
 4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *polymorph*  
 5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate*  
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Esmae makes three attacks with her Kiss.

**Kiss.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) psychic damage and the target must succeed in a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. The charmed target regards Esmae as his or her true love to be heeded and protected, through violence against others if need be. Although the target isn't under Esmae's control, it takes Esmae's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. Each time Esmae or Esmae's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Esmae is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect. Esmae heals half of the psychic damage done.

### Legendary Actions

Esmae can take 3 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. Esmae regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. Esmae can't use the same legendary action twice in the same round.

- **Anything for Love.** Each victim of Esmae's *kiss* attacks a creature within reach.
- **Blow a Kiss.** Esmae moves her speed without provoking opportunity attacks and then uses *kiss* against a target within 30 feet.
- **Loving Concentration.** Esmae transfers the ability to maintain concentration of a spell she has cast to an ally.
- **Love's Flickering Flame.** Esmae lights a candle which casts a cantrip at a target of her choice.
- **Ritual Casting.** Esmae maintains the transformation ritual.
- **Love Conquers All (costs 2 actions).** Esmae ends a condition that she began her action with.

### Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Esmae takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Esmae can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- **Candle Caster.** One of the candles in the room burns out, triggering a spell as if it had been cast by Esmae.

This spell uses one of her slots but emanates from any point in the room she wishes.

- **Candle Flare.** All candles in the room flare brightly. Esmae's enemies who can see must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their action.
- **Love Never Dies.** One of Esmae's allies returns to life with half hit points.
- **Vision of Beauty.** Moonlight fills the room. All creatures that were charmed by Esmae but no longer are, stare longingly at her until the end of their next turn; granting enemies advantage on attacks rolls. These victims may still act normally.

### Fire Elemental

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 102 (12d10 + 36)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	6 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities.** fire, poison

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

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

**Languages** Ignan

**Challenge.** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Fire Form.** The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the elemental or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage. In addition, the elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes an action to douse the fire, the creature takes 5 (1d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

**Illumination.** The elemental sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light in an additional 30 feet.

**Water Susceptibility.** For every 5 feet the elemental moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two touch attacks.

**Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until the creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 5 (1d10) fire at the start of each of its turns.

## Giant Ape

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 157 (15d12 + 60)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Athletics +9, Perception +4

**Senses** Passive Perception 14

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The ape makes two fist attacks.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (7d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

## Giant Crocodile

*Huge beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (9d12 + 27)

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** Passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The crocodile makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple

ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## Goblin

*Medium humanoid, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 56 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2, Stealth +5

**Condition Immunities** Charmed, sleep effects.

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Controlled.** The goblin is in constant telepathic communication with its creator who can see and hear through the goblin's senses as a bonus action.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The goblin makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its bite or feast.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 15).

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage.

**Feast.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one grappled target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) pierce damage and the goblin covers the target's mouth and nose with its own mouth as it begins to chew off the victim's face. The target can't breathe and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion and disadvantage on all Charisma ability checks until they complete a long rest. While feasting, the goblin may not bite.

## Nikolaos Salahori

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (studded leather armor)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Intimidation +8, Perception +2

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon does one extra die of damage when Nikolaos hits with it (included in the attack).

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Nikolaos makes two attacks with his battleaxe.

**Battleaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 15 (2d10 + 4) if used with two hands.

**Hurl Flame.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it catches fire.

## Oni

*Large giant, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (chain mail)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +3, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5

**Skills** Arcana +5, Deception +8, Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The oni's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The oni can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *darkness*, *invisibility*

1/day: *charm person*, *cone of cold*, *gaseous form*, *sleep*

**Magic Weapons.** The oni's weapon attacks are magical.

**Regeneration.** The oni regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The oni makes two attacks, either with its claws or its glaive.

**Claw (Oni Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Glaive.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage in Small or Medium form.

**Change Shape.** The oni magically polymorphs into a Small or Medium humanoid, into a Large giant, or back into its true form. Other than its size, its statistics are the same in each form. The only equipment that is transformed is its glaive, which shrinks so that it can be wielded in humanoid form. If the oni dies, it reverts to its true form, and its glaive reverts to its normal size.

## Phantom Warrior

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, any languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Ethereal Sight.** The phantom warrior can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The phantom warrior can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Spectral Armor and Shield.** The phantom warrior's AC accounts for its spectral armor and shield.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The phantom warrior makes two attacks with its spectral longsword.



**Spectral Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) force damage.

**Etherealness.** The phantom warrior enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

## Shadow

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8+3)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands Common, Dwarven

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Amorphous.** The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Shadow Stealth.** When in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Sunlight Weakness.** While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

## Actions

**Strength Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

## Strahd's Animated Armor

*Medium construct, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 21 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 112 (15d8 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire

**Damage Immunities** lightning, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 13

**Languages** Understands Common but can't speak

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

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

**False Appearance.** While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The armor makes two melee attacks or uses Shocking Bolt twice.

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

**Shocking Bolt.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit (with advantage on the attack roll if the target is wearing armor made of metal), range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) lightning damage.

## Thug

*Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment*

**Armor Class** 11 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### **Actions**

**Multiattack.** The thug makes two melee attacks.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

### **Wraith**

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8+27)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

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

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### **Actions**

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction

lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Create Specter.** The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

## Appendix: Important NPCs

The following NPCs are featured in this adventure:

**Aya Glenmiir (Eye-ya Glen-MEER).** Aya is a female elf of about 300 years. Quick, coy and brilliant, especially when the Weave is discussed. Originally from Phlan Aya has been trapped in Barovia. She was recently a captive of the Bloodhand orcs.

**Fillar Esven (FILL-er ESS-ven).** This less-than-scrupulous and usually has a fair stock of goods. His prices might be a bit high but generally of good quality. Fillar is also more than he appears; he is a wereraven.

**Ixusaxa Terrorsong (ICKS-oo-SAH-shuh).** Cult of the Dragon Wearer of Purple had been captured by the Bloodhand tribe and was rescued in DDAL04-12 *The Raven*. She knows the secret to escaping the Demiplane of Dread.

**Sybil Rasia (Si-buhl RAH-see-uh).** Female Vistani fortune teller. First introduced in DDAL 4-01 *Suits of the Mists* and from the Forgotten Realms

**Scartia Krutz (SCAR-shuh).** Tax collector left in charge when the Burgomaster takes off. Lord Strahd is not taking her head for the village not paying its taxes and she is not going to starve or watch others do so. She might actually have a soul. She does have a basset hound who believes he is a lap dog if she would just sit down!

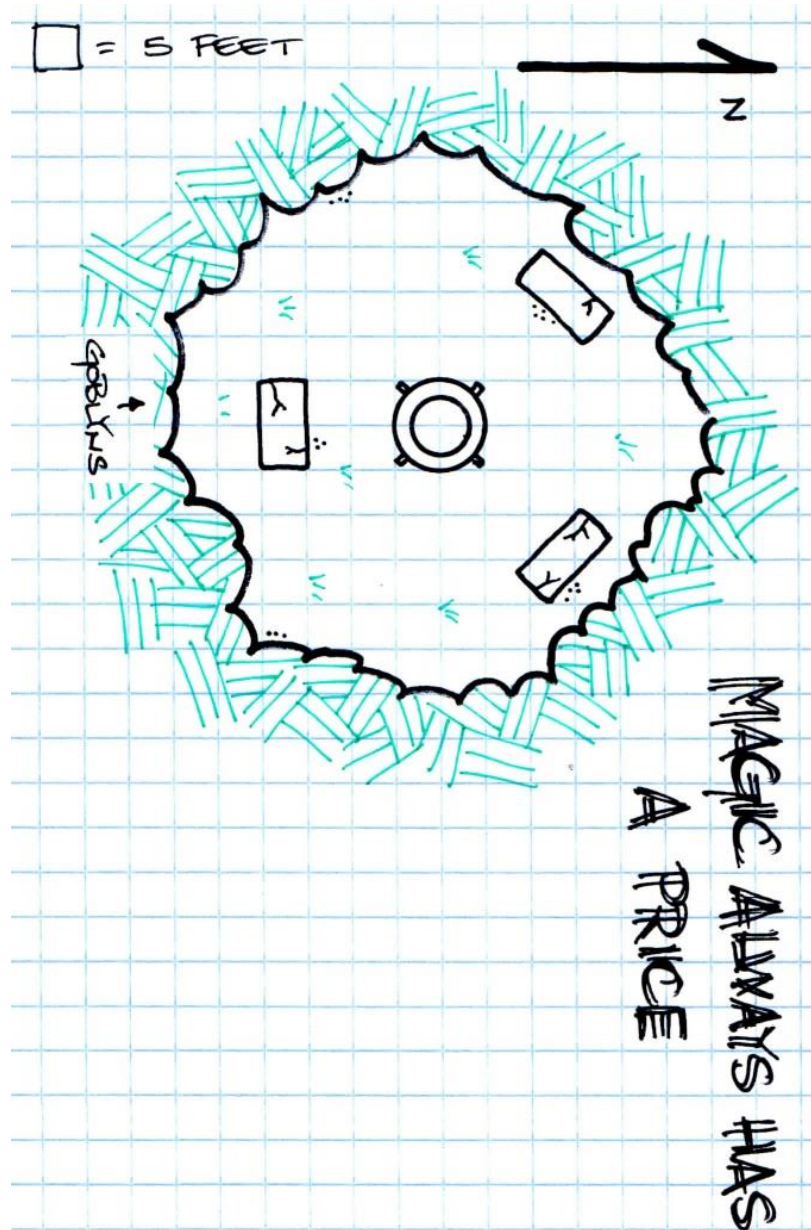
**Gregori Wurlbach (gre-GOR-ee VURL-bok).** Male human. Soul. Gregori is a soft, balding man with gnarled hands. He has worked hard for the comforts that he enjoys in the village—chief among these being that his food and drink is provided free of charge thanks to his ability to host the Vistani when they arrive every few months to peddle their wares. He is fair minded and often overlooks his own profits in favor of his community and friends. Unlike other denizens of the duchy, Gregori is friendly and welcoming of outsiders.

**Jeny Greenteeth (JEN-EE Green-teeth).** Female unseelie hag of the Quivering Forest. A green hag that resides within the Quivering Forest. Encountered in DDEX1-8 *Tales Trees Tell*. Very old and now even more powerful while in Barovia. Loathes humanity, but plays the sweet, doting grandmother.

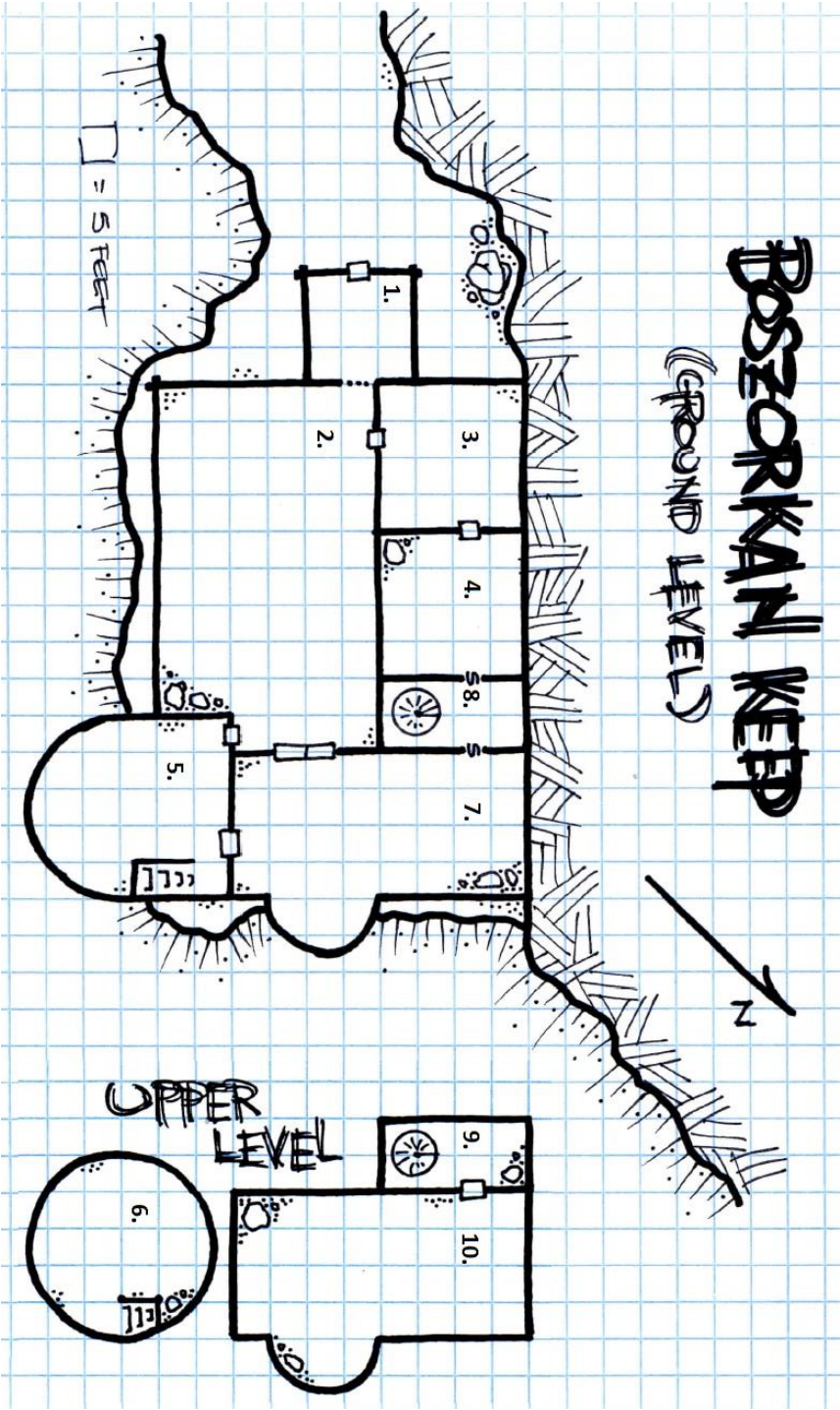
**Marku Grelon (MAR-koo GREE-lawn).** Male human, husband of Crina. Owner of the Seven Tables Tavern. Knows all the best gossip, but never keeps it to himself.

**Crina Grelon (KREE-nah GREE-lawn).** Female human wife of Marku. Owner and cook of the Seven Tables Inn and Tavern. Her ability in the kitchen is one of the chief assets of the Seven Tables.

## Appendix. Magic Always Has a Price Map



Appendix. Ruins of  
Boszórkan Keep Map





# Player Handout 1. Focus Objects

This table is a summary of the benefits and drawbacks of using a particular item for the focus in the ritual to locate Esmae. The DM should feel free to apply appropriate mechanical effects to the drawbacks if the players are not role-playing them. These objects are only usable once and only in this adventure. Unless otherwise specified, the effects last for one round. Each character should have one object.

## Focus Objects

Object	Source	Benefit	Drawback
Esselios the Raven	DDAL04-01 <i>Suits of the Mists</i>	You are not surprised when you otherwise would be.	You are filled with rage when your friends are attacked and never retreat.
Cursed Vistani tambourine	DDAL04-02 <i>The Beast</i>	When you and an ally make a saving throw, you may switch the result of the roll. You use your own modifiers.	You do not trust anyone else. They are almost certainly going to betray you if you do not betray them first.
The silver dagger Alina used to cut her baby free of her womb	DDAL04-02 <i>The Beast</i>	For one round, you gain damage immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered.	You hold grudges. If another character's actions (whether they intended to or not) cause you harm, you find it very hard to ever consider helping them with anything.
Lazlo or Alina's wedding ring	DDAL04-03 <i>The Executioner</i>	When you and an ally make a saving throw, you may switch the result of the roll. You use your own modifiers.	You find it hard to say no when someone asks for help.
Butler's Ring	DDAL04-04 <i>The Marionette</i>	You open a locked or barred door.	You find it hard to take the lead, but rather would rather follow.
Marionette Control Box	DDAL04-04 <i>The Marionette</i>	You can forgo your action to grant one of your companions an action, taken immediately.	You find yourself becoming clumsy unless someone else tells you exactly how to act.
Lela's jewelry that was a gift from the mortu Hanzí	DDAL04-05 <i>The Seer</i>	You gain advantage on a Charisma or Wisdom ability check.	You find it hard to tell the truth.
Redcap rhyme	DDAL04-06 <i>The Ghost</i>	You may use the Dodge action as a bonus action.	You are constantly talking in rhyme or a singsong voice.
Any of the goods extorted by Eugen	DDAL04-08 <i>The Broken One</i>	You grow fangs and make a bite attack as a Bonus Action using your Str or Dex modifier (1d6 piercing damage).	You are always hungry. You are desperate to eat every few minutes, even if it makes you sick.
The pearl studded mask	DDAL04-09 <i>The Tempter</i>	You turn invisible until the end of your next turn.	You are obsessed with staying clean.
The Fidatov treasure or any coins paid by Ivan Randovich the Burgomaster	DDAL04-09 <i>The Tempter</i> or various other adventures	You detect valuable objects and other nonmagical treasure within 60 feet, through walls. You identify the distance and direction to and value of each item.	You become greedy to the extreme. No one else deserves the treasure as much as you do!
Any Devotional Object for a ghost wizard of Amber Temple (blue gown, knife, candlestick, lucky claw, cookbook, quill pen, figurine, or rope)	DDAL04-10 <i>The Artifact</i>	As an action you cast <i>detect magic</i> .	You are single-minded about the thing you love the most.
A possessing ghost wizard of Amber Temple	DDAL04-10 <i>The Artifact</i>	You gain advantage on an Intelligence or Wisdom ability check.	You forget that you are you and instead fully embody the possessing spirit's personality.
Lodestone necklace	DDAL04-11 <i>The Donjon</i>	When you fail a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, you succeed instead.	You feel tired and exhausted. Couldn't this all just wait until tomorrow?
Tarnished silver crown	DDAL04-11 <i>The Donjon</i>	When you are reduced to zero hit points, you are reduced to 1 hit point instead.	Your ideas are better than anyone else.

One of Omou's art objects	DDAL04-13 <i>The Horseman</i>	You cast <i>misty step</i> . You can only teleport next to an ally.	You are filled with the ennui of an unappreciated artist.
A cup of Jeny's "Pork" stew	DDAL04-14 <i>The Dark Lord</i>	That was oddly tasty... but it didn't seem to do anything helpful.	You have trouble telling right from wrong and enjoy inflicting pain.

## Player Handout 2. Bracers of Defense

### Bracers of Defense

*Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing these bracers, you gain a +2 bonus to AC if you are wearing no armor and using no shield.

These leather bracers are stitched with a symbol of an open hand, bloodlessly pierced through the palm with a heart shaped hole. The bracers fill the wearer with the belief that that is love eternal, regardless of creed, nationality, or vital signs. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## Results Code: June-August 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of June – August 2016, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to [dndadventurersleague.org/results](http://dndadventurersleague.org/results) to enter their results.

