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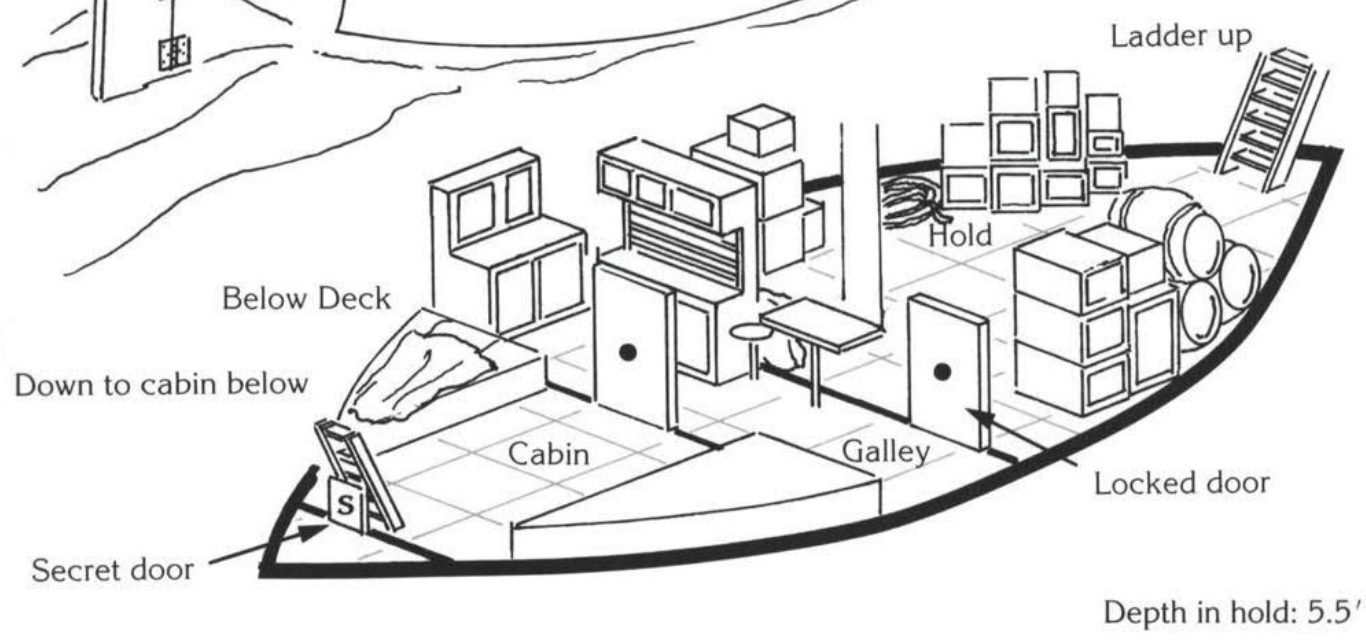
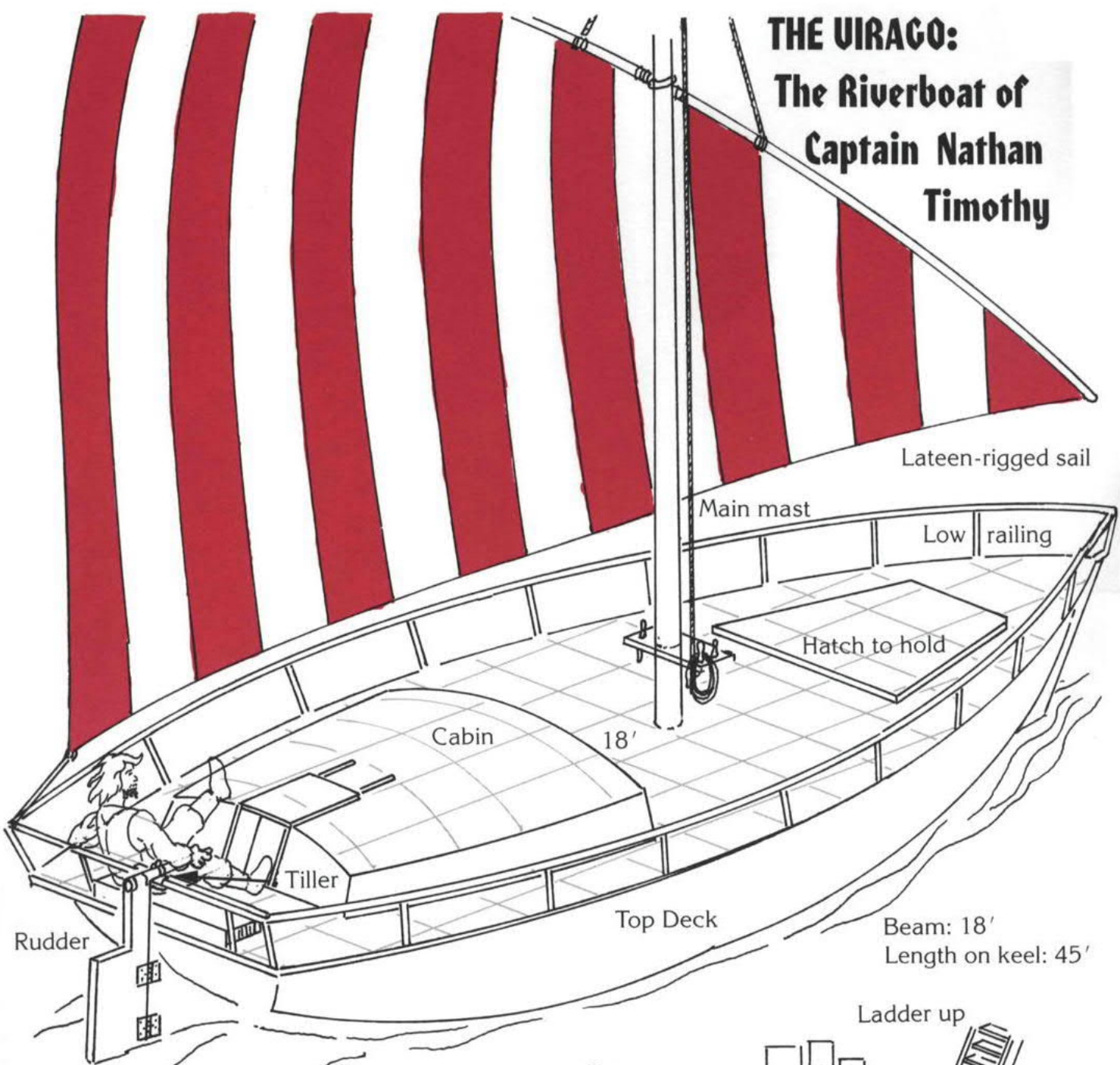
Official Game Adventure



THE
EVIL EYE



THE VIRAGO: The Riverboat of Captain Nathan Timothy



THE EVIL EYE

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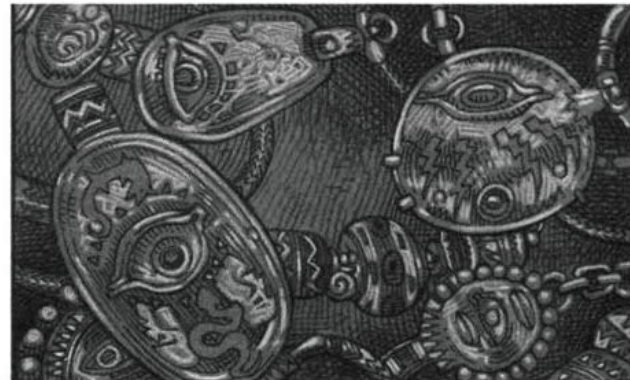
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Glossary of Vistani Terms

- Blood rite.** A mingling of blood, spiritualizing joining two people. When a *giorgio* is invited to engage in the blood rite, he becomes a *giogoto*.
- Captain:** The male leader of a caravan.
- Dukkar, The:** An abomination prophesied to bring doom to all Vistani Tasques.
- Doroq.** The ritualistic telling of stories and legends around the campfire.
- Fulltide:** The three days during which the moon is full.
- Giorgio.** Any nonVistana.
- Giogoto.** A nonmember Vistana who is considered a friend or ally.
- Lunaset:** A ritual that begins at midnight on the third and last day of the full moon.
- Patterna:** A Vistani dialect, made of words borrowed from many languages.
- Prastona:** The girl or woman who dances the *prastonata*.
- Prastonata:** The traditional evening dance around the campfire.
- Raunie:** The female leader of the caravan.
- Tasque:** A nation of Vistani, which is made up of several tribes, which are in turn divided into caravans.
- Vardo:** A Vistani, round-topped wagon.
- Vishnadd.** Justice. The *vishnadd* is actually an obsidian knife which is a central figure to the Vistani system of justice.
- Vistana:** The singular form of Vistana.



CUTTING THE DECK



In the shadowy seclusion of her boudoir, Gabrielle Aderre drew a veil across her face and inhaled the heavy perfume cast by stunted candles on the table before her. Reaching down, she pulled open a small, hidden drawer and withdrew a worn wooden box. Reflexively, her left hand formed a sign to ward off evil, while her right opened the box and took out a faded deck of cards, placing it on the table. Her hand briefly visited the jade amulets around her

neck, invoking their magic to shield her from the dark, invisible powers that moved around the domains unhindered and unseen.

With the smallest finger of her right hand, shaking ever so slightly, Gabrielle touched the tarokka deck and whispered her son's name. "Malocchio."

Fighting an urge to look at the first card, she placed it face down on the table. Slowly, with the calm dread that preceded every reading, Gabrielle shuffled the remaining tarokka, sensing the flow of time and place as the painted cards danced with their neighbors. She stared into the yellow flame of the candle.

Life is a web, her mother Isabella once told her. Pull the right thread and you can see the center. Pull on the wrong string and you will be trapped and devoured. For the web is not yours. It belongs to the spider.

A shuffled deck stood waiting on the table.

Gabrielle dealt four cards face down around the focus to form a minor cross: the simplest pattern for the most straightforward answers.

Clearing her mind, Gabrielle turned over the focus and stared at... the Beast. Alarmed but not surprised, she flipped over the card to the left, representing the past: the Ghost. Below, in the position of opposition, Gabrielle's fingers revealed the

Three of Swords, the Soldier, representing warfare and conflict. Above, in the pivot of alliances, Gabrielle overturned the Seven of Coins, the Thief, symbolic of acquisition. Finally, she barely paused over the card to the right, the point of the rising sun, the path to her son's future. The Mists.

Gabrielle braced herself for the pain that would come, but when the Sight blinded her eyes, she was still unprepared for its intensity. Stifling a scream, the witch fell to the stone floor, her chair clattering beside her. Only a full blooded Vistana may invoke the most powerful tarokka with impunity, and Gabrielle Aderre was only part Vistani. She thrashed uncontrollably on the floor while the vision of her son ran its course.

And in the soft shadows of her boudoir, a small child laughed.

For the Dungeon Master

Welcome to Invidia, where Vistani curses unfold to their terrible fruition. As the Dungeon Master, there are a few things you should prepare before running this adventure. The goal of any RAVENLOFT® scenario is to establish a mood of mounting fear and dread in the players. By familiarizing yourself with the adventure beforehand, you can devote more time during play to describing the details of sight, sound, and smell that will help bring a gothic horror setting to life for your players.

The module's major antagonists play changing roles as the plot evolves, but their basic background and game statistics remain generally constant. This information is summarized in Chapter XIII: "Dramatis Personae." You may find it convenient to photocopy these pages and keep them readily accessible during play.

This module assumes that you, as the Dungeon Master, have access to the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide (DMG)*, the *Player's Handbook (PHB)*, and either the two basic appendices of the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® (MC1-2)* or the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™ (MM)*. We also assume that you have access to the campaign setting. Either the old *Realm of Terror* or the new *Ravenloft* boxed sets will suffice: this adventure can be incorporated into any gothic horror campaign setting. Finally, "The Evil Eye" has been designed to accompany *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani*. While enough detail has been included so that *VR's Vistani* will not be necessary to play the adventure, a few encounters will have greater

CUTTING THE DECK

depth if you have access to that resource.

To a lesser extent, the adventure also includes a number of ghosts, apparitions, and other monsters that are fully detailed in *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* and the RAVENLOFT appendices to the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*. Though details about these creatures have been included in the adventure, feel free to substitute other monsters and creatures if these resources are not readily available.

Adventure Background

As a young girl, Gabrielle Aderre was warned by her mother Isabella to never have children: "A man, a babe, a home—these things can never be for you, Gabrielle, for tragedy will be the only result." For many years, while the bitter pair wandered the wilds of Ravenloft, Gabrielle pressed her mother for details about her future and her mysterious father, though Isabella forbade it. Gabrielle learned nothing more until she turned 19, on the eve of her mother's death.

While traveling in Arkandale (a domain that dissolved during the Grand Conjunction), Isabella allowed Gabrielle to set the warding circle around their camp. They had argued that day, and (as usual) Gabrielle had lost. Tired and seething with anger, Gabrielle wove the protective charms too hastily, and by the light of a rising moon, a werewolf stormed into camp through the imperfect wardings.

Before Isabella could ready an assault, the creature knocked her down and ripped open a huge gash in her leg with its jaws. Crawling frantically away, Isabella fixed the werewolf with her evil eye, blasting the creature with the full force of her hate and malice. The lycanthrope fell dazed to the ground while Isabella's enchantment seized him. As the blood pulsed out of her gashed leg, Isabella called to Gabrielle for help, but the cruel daughter saw only a window of opportunity.

"Tell me about my father," Gabrielle bargained, "and I will save your life."

Isabella was furious. "The charm will not hold the wolf for long! His strength will return, and he will kill us both!"

But Gabrielle would not be swayed, and as Isabella's vision began to blur, she told her daughter vaguely about her past. Isabella's voice was calm and strong in the cool night air.

"I was captured as a child and sold as a slave

in Falkovnia. My master was a sadistic monster. For amusement each night he would gather a group of slaves and impale them before his castle. Their dying screams would mingle with the chamber music and polite dinner conversation. But because of my beauty and Vistani gifts, he refused to kill me. Many nights I wished he had. Years later, when I finally escaped, I was two months pregnant with you.

"I have told you enough of your father. Bring my potions before the wolf kills us both."

Gabrielle was stunned. For years she had fantasized about her mysterious father, and her romantic dream was shattered. She stumbled away from Isabella into the vardo, packing her mother's prized tarokka and potions in a sack. The wolf still convulsed in its enfeebled state, helplessly charmed by the evil eye. Gabrielle returned to her mother's pool of blood. By then she had made up her mind.

"I don't believe your lies, Mother. I'm leaving to find my father."

As Gabrielle fled into the darkness, her mother's pleading voice slowly faded and the screams began. Suddenly, Isabella's voice rang out close by through the gathering mists. "The Mists take you, traitor. May you know your child's betrayal and realize too late the depths of its evil!" Then the Mists closed around Gabrielle, and she was gone.

The Mists brought Gabrielle to Invidia, which at the time was ruled by a werewolf lord named Bakholis. The werewolf's retainers captured Gabrielle and brought her to Castle Loupet for an audience. Proud and overconfident, Bakholis sought to enslave Gabrielle, but the witch managed to enfeeble the darklord with her evil eye, exactly as Isabella had struck down the werewolf in Arkandale. Thinking she was successfully averting her mother's curse, Gabrielle pulled out a silver-edged dagger and slit Bakholis' throat while he was still helpless. Instead of assuring her freedom, Gabrielle thereby became the new lord of Invidia, forever imprisoned within the domain and prevented from seeking out her unknown father.

Years passed and bitter Gabrielle slowly became accustomed to her imprisonment. She took many lovers from the small town of Korinna in her domain, but the passage of time could not erase her mother's curse from memory. Gabrielle was careful to use the medicinal arts thought by

CUTTING THE DECK

her mother to prevent her from becoming pregnant. She treated her lovers with disdain, enslaving them with her evil eye and discarding them when she eventually grew tired or bored, but none were able to comfort her terrible loneliness.

Then, one day, a dark traveler appeared at the gates of Castle Loupet. From the moment he locked eyes with Gabrielle in the great hall, her iron-hard heart melted under his hypnotic gaze. She soon invited the handsome stranger into her boudoir.

Before mounting the stairs to Gabrielle's private chambers, they were confronted by Matton, the lover Gabrielle had just replaced. Secretly a werewolf, Matton was the only one of Gabrielle's lovers who felt genuine affection for, having never been enslaved by her evil eye (although the witch had never realized this). Now, hurt and jealous, Matton transformed into a wolf and hurled himself at the stranger. The gentleman caught the werewolf and hurled him to the ground with stunning, superhuman strength. Gabrielle, meanwhile, overcame her shock and paralyzed her former lover with the evil eye. At the stranger's suggestion, they left Matton paralyzed and convulsing in the great hall as they climbed to Gabrielle's private chambers.

In the privacy of her boudoir, Gabrielle succumbed completely to the stranger's fiendish charms. And when the handsome gentleman disrobed, she thought it hardly unusual to see a pair of black, bat-like wings unfolding into a canopy of darkness. Gabrielle welcomed the incubus into her embrace.

"You will remember me only as the handsome gentleman," the stranger said afterward, once she had stopped screaming. The fiend's voice carried the weight of compulsion. And then he was gone.

The Dukkar

Among Vistani legends, there is the tale of a beast known only as the Dukkar, a name whose meaning has been lost in the aeonic swirl of time. According to this apocalyptic tale, the Dukkar brings about the destruction of the entire Vistani people. Not every Vistani knows of this legend, but for ages a tribe known as the Zarovan have been watching and waiting for the Dukkar's appearance.

The Dukkar is none other than the monstrous issue of a union between Gabrielle and an

incubus. Gabrielle named her son Malocchio, after the stranger's evil eye (for surely that was what robbed her of reason). Reassuring her vague recollections a "handsome gentleman," Malocchio was born appearing human, except for a slight defect: a sixth finger on hand. In all other respects, Malocchio appeared to be a regular baby.

Despite his cherubic appearance, which was a small comfort to Gabrielle while recovering from her three days of excruciating hard labor, it was quickly apparent the Malocchio was not a normal child. Most obviously, the child was growing much too quickly to be normal. By the time Gabrielle had recovered from childbirth, Malocchio was already walking and talking. And as the boy grew, his fiendish nature became increasingly apparent. When he thought no one was looking, he would cause flocks of birds around the castle to fly into walls. He would call wolves from the forest and command them to attack villagers for his amusement. However, not all of Malocchio's cruelties went unnoticed by his mother.

Once Gabrielle's suspicions were aroused, she used *Eva's Tarokka Deck* to perform a reading on her son, with the results described in the introduction to this chapter. When the adventure begins, Gabrielle knows the full range of her son's evil powers—through she does not want to believe his true identity—and she has begun a scheme to use Malocchio in her own selfish plans. Her hope is that through her son, she will finally be able to strike directly at the hated Vistani who have shunned her.

Attributes of the Vistani

Throughout this adventure the heroes interact with Vistani who can read the tarokka or cast the evil eye. Both attributes are fully detailed in the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* and *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani*, so only an overview will be given here.

The Tarokka

Unlike several other modules that have involved the Vistani, the tarokka does not advance the plot in the adventure (though you, as the DM, may wish to make it *seem* as though the tarokka has an effect). For this scenario, the cards are merely "window dressing." You can use the tarokka to

CUTTING THE DECK

guide confused heroes who are seeking advice, or you can “stack the deck” to duplicate Gabrielle’s earlier reading.

Many players find the tarokka highly entertaining, and a few cryptic readings can heighten the mood and atmosphere of a gaming session considerably when the techniques and advice offered in the *RAVENLOFT* box are followed. However, you should be careful not to overuse the tarokka during the adventure. If the heroes come to expect fortune telling from every Vistana they meet to help direct their travels, it replaces initiative with your heavy-handed directing.

Should the heroes come to rely too heavily on the tarokka or starts taking it for granted, you should feel free to have Vistani seers refuse to perform readings for them. The party begins the adventure with a potent curse. For this reason alone, most Vistani will avoid telling their future (few cursed individuals will have beneficial readings, and bad readings are bad for business). Even if heroes offer generous payments, the seer will not use tarokka, but will read palms or tea leaves. These situations are much faster to role-play.

The Evil Eye

This mysterious, deadly power is one of the Vistani’s most feared attributes. It includes a wide range of salient abilities that defy convenient characterization and vary widely from Vistana to Vistana, as detailed in Part Four of *Van Richten’s Guide to the Vistani*.

While the manifestation of the evil eye may vary from individual to individual, it is triggered by a similar act of will (or so the Vistani claim). A Vistana wishing to inflict the evil eye on a victim need only focus his anger, hatred, jealousy, envy and focus the negative emotion with his (or her) eyes. The evil eye can affect people, animals, monsters, and even possessions. There is no limit to the number of times a Vistana use the evil eye in a day.

The victim of a Vistana’s evil eye is entitled to an evil eye check (i.e., a saving throw vs. paralysis) to resist its effects. The evil eye check is subject to the bonuses on Table 1. Because of their belief and fear, all Vistani are more susceptible to its power than *giorgio*.

Evil Eye Amulets

These minor magical items provide a bonus to the evil eye check by virtue of the victim’s belief in their power. If the victim does not believe in the amulet or the evil eye, it provides no bonus. Beneficial amulets provide a +1 to +4 bonus on the saving throw, whereas cursed amulets provide a -1 to -4 penalty.

Table 1. Evil Eye Check Modifiers

Modifier	Condition
+1	Victim successfully saved against the evil eye from the Vistana
-1	Victim previously failed a save against the evil eye from the same Vistana, or witnesses an ally who failed a save against the evil eye
-2	Victim is a Vistana
-4	First use of the evil eye against a victim by a Vistana
None	The victim is a <i>giorgio</i> .
-4 to +4	Victim owns evil eye amulet

Fear & Horror Checks

Fear and horror checks are always optional. If one is called for, you may decide to allow the players a few moments to decide upon a reaction. If the character’s reaction shows good role-playing of fear and/or horror, then you may allow that adventurer to skip the check. If a character acts nonchalant or cavalier in the face of a horrific scene, then apply the check.

Any player who does a good job of role playing may be able to play the entire adventure without making fear or horror check. If the player does not do a good job of role-playing, then the dice must make his decisions for him. He must make fear, horror, and evil eye checks and suffer the consequences for them.

I. WIDOWER ONCE AGAIN



n the lengthening shadows of dusk outside his vardo, Raul Salazar poked at the dying embers with a charred stick. New wisps of flame stirred in the outdoor hearth, revitalized by his attention, like the thoughts at the fringes of his memory.

Why did you leave me, Leyla? What am I going to do?

A baby cried, snapping Raul out of his reverie.

He stormed over to the vardo, overhung with his metalwork, where Nikko fretted in a crib of wrought iron, a pale pink mouth of

wails and screams. Nikko only quieted by nightfall, tranquilized by the forest's predatory silence.

Later, as the crescent moon climbed through the night sky, filtered by the autumn leaves overhead, Raul returned to his outdoor forge-hearth, strangely comforted by the scattered tools and his lovely violin. Every night was the same. He pounded at the iron, working pain into art and sorrow into numbness, until he gazed through an exhausted haze at the violin, wanting to hurl it in the flames. He played it instead, consoling himself with her favorite melody, and some nights, Leyla came back, to look after her husband and child.

Getting to Invidia

Widower Once Again" provides the DM with a convenient way of transporting the heroes to the Ravenloft domain of Invidia, where the principal action of this module occurs. Alternatively, it can also be played as an independent mini-adventure. The scenario begins in any campaign setting. By meeting Raul and becoming involved in his dilemma, the party gains a powerful Vistani curse that attracts the attention of Ravenloft's powers.

The DM should feel free to adapt this introductory episode for the particulars of his or

her campaign. If the party starts outside Ravenloft, the DM should try to make the events and descriptions outlined in this chapter fit into the regular campaign as much as possible. For instance, if the party is engaged in a desert campaign, they might encounter Raul as a lone nomadic tribesman with camels and tents instead of a horse-drawn vardo. As the encounter unfolds, be careful to describe Raul and his belongings as characteristic of a gypsy, a wanderer, drifter, or rover; do not mention that he is a Vistani. Such a characterization may reveal to players that a RAVENLOFT adventure is soon to follow. As the Dungeon Master, you will maximize the drama of this scenario if the players have no idea that their characters will soon be in Ravenloft.

There are two reasons why Raul, a Vistani, may not be in Ravenloft at the start of the adventure. Raul may be a member of the fabled "Lost Tribe," who purportedly escaped Ravenloft, as mentioned in *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani*. Alternatively, Raul may simply have fled Ravenloft using the force of his grief-bolstered will, combined with his natural Vistani talents for traversing the Mists. Raul's background depends on whether or not the DM wants the Vistani to play a permanent role in his regular campaign.

Should the DM wish to keep the Vistani strictly in Ravenloft, or if the heroes are already within the misty confines when the adventure begins, then Raul is a member of the Kamii tribe, renowned throughout the demiplane for their smithing skills. Regardless of this tribal affiliation, however, he has left his extended family and friends to travel on his own, with only his infant child, Nikko, for company.

The Vistani's Background

Raul now grieves for his beloved wife, Leyla, who died while giving birth to Nikko. Raul, who loved his wife with incredible passion, was devastated. Following her death, he burned her possessions, as required by Vistani custom. Her clothes, jewelry, veils, amulets, and cards were all consigned to the flames of his forge-hearth, but Raul could not bring himself to burn his violin, which he claims to have made for her out of his passion and strung with her auburn hair. Raul felt that the violin was his possession—not hers—and should not be destroyed.

But Vistani customs have their reasons, and the burning ceremony is an important key to

WIDOWER ONCE AGAIN

releasing the past, not only for the living, but more importantly for the deceased. Three nights after the funeral, after Raul had left his tribe to wander on his own, Leyla came back to visit him. On the first night, Raul could only watch in shock and horror as Leyla nursed Nikko, cradling the infant in her ghostly arms. After Nikko's appetite was sated, Leyla approached her husband, growing more solid in his presence. Her auburn hair shone in the firelight, her perfume filled his senses like a seduction.

"Play for me, Raul," she said, "Play me a happy song."

So Raul played the violin, and the ghost of Leyla danced with her usual sinuous grace. In the morning, when Raul woke exhausted to the sound of Nikko crying, the gypsy smith found himself a widower once again.

A Violin of Passion

Raul's *violin of passion* is a potent magical item, created by the matriarch of the Kamii tribe. When Raul first began courting Leyla, the Vistana dancer initially treated him with aloof disdain, since he was

not a member of her Naiat tribe. Undaunted, Raul went to the matriarch of the Kamii, hoping to learn the secret to Leyla's heart. After gazing at her tarokka, the wise woman told Raul to find a violin and a hairbrush from Leyla's vardo. After Raul's procured these items, the matriarch took the violin and hair from the brush to restring the instrument. The wise woman then told Raul to play the violin every night for a year and a day, thinking only of his love for Leyla. After the appointed time, he found that Leyla had indeed fallen in love with him, exactly as the wise woman had predicted.

In game terms, the violin enables a Vistana to influence the emotions of his audience by duplicating the effects of the 4th-level wizard spell, *emotion*. The enchantment lasts so long as the Vistana plays, and it affects all within earshot—friend and foe alike—unless they make a successful saving throw vs. spells. When played by a virtuoso, like Raul, the violin can move even the undead to tears.

Like all powerful magic items, the *violin of passion* cannot be easily destroyed or discarded. As the symbolic embodiment of Raul's relationship with Leyla, the violin can only be broken when Raul decides—of his own free will—to give up his most



WIDOWER DANCE AGAIN

cherished possession. Until then, it cannot be destroyed. If left behind, it will mysteriously reappear among Raul's possessions. As detailed later, the violin still has influence over Leyla's ghost.

Setting Up the Encounter

The introductory scenario begins when the party arrives at any small town during their travels.

Gossip about the gypsy smith on the edge of town is rampant among the locals. At night, the vagabond plays his violin with such intensity that it can easily be heard in town, and those who have gone to spy on the gypsy have sometimes glimpsed strange lights; some report seeing a lovely woman, dancing seductively in the firelight of his forge until dawn despite the knowledge that he lives alone with a small child. The nosy villagers delight in gossiping about Raul, and they whisper conspiratorially about his mysterious mistress. They are both titillated and frightened by the gypsy, but his work is better and cheaper than the smith in town, so they let him to stay.

Drop only as many hints as are necessary to get the heroes interested in visiting Raul. Spread out the snippets of information among different townspeople, each one having a varying opinion (either good or bad) about Raul's presence. The town smith, Conrad, has naturally the worst opinion of Raul, and suggests the vagabond may be harboring a vampire in his wagon! Obviously, there is no real evidence to substantiate such allegations, but Conrad will offer the heroes a reward (no more than 50 gp) to drive the gypsy away.

Finally, the DM may arrange for the heroes to need Raul's services. Perhaps they antagonize the town smith by refusing to help bully Raul, so when one of their horses later drops a shoe, they will need to visit the gypsy. One way or another, the party should seek out Raul, if only to sate their own curiosity about the itinerant smith.

Dealing with Raul

Raul's camp is located a short distance from town. Since Raul is a smith, the outside of his vardo, or wagon-home, is covered with examples of his iron work: maces, railings, nails, spear-heads, spikes, knives, horseshoes. He has set up a temporary camp and forge around the vardo, with a hearth area where he can work.

Raul is a squat, heavily muscled man with

massive arms and broad shoulders. He is physically in the prime of his life, but his face is heavily lined with creases and his eyes are bloodshot. His hair and drooping mustache have turned almost entirely white. Raul usually dresses in dark black clothing with tall boots, covered with a sooty brown leather apron (the equivalent of leather armor—AC 8).

Raul is aware that he and Nikko have become something of a curiosity to the local townspeople, so he treats newcomers with a brusque facade. Striking up a conversation with the surly smith should not be easy, especially since the gypsy does not trust anyone that comes from town. At first, he prefers to speak about any metal work the heroes may need performed. If desired, he gives the party a brief tour of his forge and the goods displayed on the outside of his vardo.

When describing Raul's wares, include something of interest for every member of the party. A warrior may note an excellent helmet, shield, or sword; a priest notices the sturdy mace or elegant holy symbol on display; a rogue will admire Raul's fine collection of knives, caltrops, and padlocks; a wizard may be interested in an iron-shod staff or bookstand. If any heroes have a background in blacksmithing, they recognize Raul's work to be of superior caliber.

Raul stores his personal weapons and violin inside the vardo, within easy reach of the entrance should they be needed. The vardo's door remains securely closed during a tour (Raul prefers to keep some privacy), but the wagon-home's messy and cluttered contents are not noteworthy. The smith uses all excess gold or treasure to purchase unworked iron and steel, which he stores in a large compartment in the vardo's underside.

Beside the vardo stands an ornate white iron tripod, from which a small crib hangs suspended, rocked by the fitful breeze. Nikko sleeps here. Initially, Raul steers the party away from the crib, and he refuses to talk about Nikko with complete strangers.

Once the party makes it clear that they are not local residents, Raul becomes less short-spoken and more friendly, especially if a hero compliments his work. Eventually, Raul begins to glance worriedly over at the white iron crib, where Nikko lies. One does not need to be a healer to recognize that something is dreadfully wrong with Nikko. The baby is deathly pale and lies listlessly in his crib. The infant is too weak even to cry.

In the past, Raul has been too paralyzed by his

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grief to admit that Nikko is dying. Now, as the heroes look down on the sick infant, Raul sees Nikko and his predicament in a different light. He confides in the heroes about the nocturnal visitations from his deceased wife and asks their help in laying her to rest.

Crass inducements are probably not necessary to motivate a noble band of heroes, but Raul offers a reward should they appear unwilling to help. He promises them a pick from his wares should they succeed in dispelling Leyla's ghost. The DM should feel free to relate as much information as desired from the chapter introduction and the section entitled "Raul's Background" to pique their interest, omitting only the significance of the violin. This magical instrument is the key to Leyla's undead existence, and its mystery should be maintained as long as possible.

Meanwhile darkness falls, and a cold chill descends on the gypsy's camp. Slowly, a light fog forms and a drizzle blankets the gathering night. Raul hurries about, placing Nikko inside the vardo and packing up his tools. The party must decide whether or not to help him, even as the Mists begin to gather around them.

Raul Salazar (Kamii smith, 4th-level warrior): AC 8 (6 with *buckler +1*); MV 12; hp 26; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (*scimitar +1*, d8+5); Str 18/82 (+2 to hit, +4 damage), Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11; SA Evil Eye, Vistani Curse; AL N; THACO 17 (14 with *scimitar +1*).

Against the Uistana

There are several reasons why the party may not want to help Raul. If they listened to the rumors in town, they may believe that the gypsy is evil. The heroes may also already have a negative impression of Vistani or they may have accepted money from Conrad to drive him away. In addition, greedy party members may have viewed Raul's inventory of excellent metal crafts and considered stealing them. Indeed, what resistance might a single gypsy offer to an entire band of adventurers?

Of course, Raul has some of the mysterious powers of the Vistani. If the party seriously considers driving the gypsy out of town, or (worse) attempts to steal from him, Raul will be forewarned in a dream by his ghost-wife Leyla, and take the precaution of keeping his weapons, violin, and buckler by the forge during the day.

Also, when threatened, his first action will be to glare menacingly at the party with the evil eye.

Describe the weight of malice in Raul's gaze as hostilities begin, and have each party member roll a d20 (an evil eye check, but don't tell them that!). If a character fails the check, his or her metal possessions are effectively cursed, behaving as if they were -1 items (regardless of their original enchantment) until the effect has been lifted. This curse is not apparent immediately, so keep the effects of Raul's evil eye as mysterious as possible.

Sooner or later the scene will turn ugly, especially if the party refuses to allow Raul to leave with his possessions. Without his wares as a smith, Raul and Nikko will be reduced to begging. After blasting the party with his evil eye, Raul fights to the death (if he doesn't win, he reasons, he and Nikko will die of starvation).

Even a large, well-armed party should have some difficulty in slaying the desperate gypsy. During the fight, the effects of Raul's evil eye become quickly apparent: formerly trusty blades break when they miss their mark, and armor buckles now snap open in the heat of battle. Nevertheless, play up the conflict with as much drama as possible, describing the darkening shadows of night, the thickening fog and drizzle. When you think its time for the killing blow, read the following out loud:

The gypsy stumbles away from your last blow, his arms going limp, his weapon slipping from his hand, as he falls to his knees and blood gushes from a fatal wound. He gazes at you, his dark eyes now ill-focused, but manages to rasp through clenched teeth: "I curse you, thieves, I curse you! May you never delight in what you steal—may it betray you in your darkest hour!"

He falls forward, face down on the muddy ground, as thunder roars overhead. Torrential rain washes over you, and the infant begins to shriek in its crib. The mist has thickened to a heavy fog that encircles the camp and drifts over the gypsy's lifeless body.

Several bad things happen to the party when Raul dies. First, the hands and fingers (even the nails) of every party member turn coal black, marking them permanently as enemies of the Vistani. Unless these marks are somehow concealed, the heroes will have a +4 penalty to reaction rolls with the Vistani.

In addition, all of Raul's metal wares show signs

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of irreversible rusting and decay by morning. Raul's personal magic items gain more powerful curses: in battle, Raul's scimitar will always miss its mark (except on a natural roll of 20), and whomever carries the buckler will always be hit by an enemy (an opponent misses only on a natural roll of 1). Raul's violin will perform with effects identical to a *harp of discord* (described in the DMG).

Finally, at the Dungeon Master's discretion, the party may now become the new focus of Leyla's nocturnal hauntings. The ghost's motive will now be to obtain revenge for her husband's death, and can be expanded in to an interesting side-adventure as the following chapters unfold. Since the party will most likely never have had taken the time to learn of Raul's background, the sudden haunting by the beautiful ghost should be quite a mystery.

Of course, the final, and perhaps most severe circumstance is the fact that the party is now in the Ravenloft domain of Invidia. If the party fought Raul, the adventure continues in Chapter Two, "Virago Cruise."

Assisting Raul

If the heroes decide to help Raul, thorough questioning will reveal a number of important clues about the spirit's behavior.

Leyla's ghost only appears in the middle of night (so Raul gets at least a few hours of sleep). She always proceeds directly to Nikko's crib and nurses the infant for several minutes. While Nikko initially seemed to benefit from Leyla's nursing, over time the child has grown increasingly sick, even though Raul feeds the child regularly with goat's milk. However, when the ghost first appears, Raul says he can do nothing but sit and watch her, regardless of his resolve to prevent the nursing. Leyla then approaches Raul and dances until dawn while he plays the violin.

Unless the party takes steps to care for Nikko before the ghost's arrival, the infant will not survive the night. Any hero with the healing non-weapon proficiency, or a priest with access to healing spells, can stabilize the baby's condition, but even after their ministrations, Nikko still looks deathly ill. Nevertheless, award a story bonus of 250 XP to each hero who actively seeks to cure the child.

Despite the gathering dusk, the party still has up to six hours to make preparations for Leyla's arrival. The DM should allow the heroes to make any preparations that seems reasonable, including

arming themselves with any weapons from among his wares. While these items are not magical, they can harm Lyala as though they were weapons of +1 enchantment (Raul is unaware of this).

Should the heroes return to the town for any supplies (such as holy water), the fog begins to thicken around them, making it difficult to find their way in the misty darkness. Returning Raul's camp proves difficult, and a successful intelligence check is required, or the heroes wander for an extra 1d6 turns before finding their destination.

Eventually, the light rain turns into a cold, steady downpour, and occasionally the sound of distant thunder rolls across the fogbound landscape. Raul's cramped vardo is the only dry spot in the entire campsite. Only four people will fit comfortably in the vardo at once (not including baby Nikko) and there is no room to wield any weapon larger than a short sword. Outside, the rain is sufficient to extinguish all but magical light or fire sources. Even with illumination, the heavy fog and rain reduces the range of sight to less than 20 feet.

Finally, if the heroes attempt any magical investigations, *detect magic* reveals a subtle necromantic aura lingering around Nikko, and a powerful aura of enchantment/charm on the violin. Other magical divinations may provide cryptic advice, such as "The gypsy dances to the sound of her own hair," alluding to the manufacture of Raul's violin, or that ghost is not susceptible to turning attempts: Raul's violin is the only symbol that has any authority over her.

The Haunting

Once the heroes have completed their preparations, they must wait several hours in the rainy gloom for Leyla's arrival. Well after midnight, the phantasm slowly takes form in misty darkness outside the vardo. If the heroes have posted a watch outside, read the following out loud:

You see her approaching through the rain, a captivating beauty with a dancer's tall, supple curves at the height of youth and beauty. She wears multi-tiered skirts, anklets, and an embroidered halter, revealing a finely muscled midriff. Her delicately featured face is framed by a splendid cascade of auburn hair, and her almond-shaped eyes sparkle captivatingly. She appears unconcerned by the driving rain, but then you notice the rain is passing right through her...

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Since her entrance launches the climactic moments of this scenario, take your time describing the ghost's manifestation. However, once a hero decides to take action, either against the ghost or to warn those inside the vardo, have him make a saving throw vs. paralysis. Heroes who fail the roll can do nothing but stand in awe of Leyla's beauty.

As a former Naiat entertainer, Leyla's charming influence has become a much more powerful aura of fascination with her undeath. She now has the ability to *enthrall* mortals who look at her. A successful saving throw when she appears indicates that heroes resist the ghost's magic and can continue to act as normal. Those who fail their save, however, are unable to undertake any action, no matter how simple, for they are completely fascinated by her spectral beauty. After two rounds, and during every round that follows, victims are entitled to another save to break the fascination.

Heroes who make their saves have one round of actions before Leyla enters the vardo. While outside, Leyla remains an ethereal spirit (AC -1) that can only be harmed by holy water (1d8 points of damage per vial) or enchanted weapons.

As Leyla approaches the vardo, she completely ignores the heroes unless they pose direct threat by successfully attacking her. The spirit enters the vardo through a wall and coalesces in the presence of her husband and child. Upon seeing his wife, Raul becomes completely fascinated, and remains hypnotized while in her presence.

When she was alive, Leyla was a nurturing wife, but death robbed her of a chance to be a mother. The karmic resonance of her dying, augmented by Raul's *violin of passion*, brought some part of her back as a ghost. The ghost is more a twisted embodiment of Raul's grief, memory, and passion than an accurate representation of Leyla when she was alive. She is a pale echo of her former self.

Leyla's first goal, predictably, will be to nurse Nikko; she proceeds directly to her child's crib, ignoring any spectators unless they prevent her from discharging her maternal duties. Her objective can be thwarted in several ways by a creative party; the most effective deterrent would be to suspend the infant in a bath of holy water!

The DM should role-play Leyla as a confused,

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distracted, and somewhat demented maternal figure. If prevented from nursing Nikko, she will demand that the players allow her access to her son, her flesh and blood! She does not understand that she is undead, and will not accept that her presence is harming both her husband and child. If confronted repeatedly with this accusation, she attacks the liar who has tried to dishonor her in the presence of her family.

In corporeal form, Leyla is Armor Class 6, and her touch drains 1d6 points of damage from a victim, who must save vs. paralysis or be completely paralyzed with numbing cold for 2d4 rounds. She can now be harmed by holy water, magic or silver weapons, and any items forged by Raul. As noted previously, she can also be influenced by Raul's violin, although the hypnotized gypsy will clutch the instrument protectively and attack any who attempt to wrench it from his grasp. According to Van Richten's classification scheme, Leyla is a 2nd-Magnitude ghost.

Leyla (2nd-Magnitude Ghost): INT Avg (11); AL CN; AC -1 or 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 1-6; SA: Paralyzing touch (2d4 rounds), fascination aura; SD: harmed only by silver, magic, or Vistani-forged weapons; standard undead immunities; SZ M; ML Special; XP 3,000.

Once reduced to zero hit points, Leyla's ghost begins to dissolve into ethereal mist. She manages to pronounce a final curse:

As the woman's body begins to waver and fade, she gazes at you menacingly, her beautiful face contorted in fury and rage as she screams: "I curse you, murderers, from the depths of my heart! From this night forward, may you know how it feels to be separated from your love. May you never know the healing of compassion!"

Then, she disintegrates as if torn apart by an undetectable wind.

Leyla's curse is relatively straightforward: until its effects have been lifted, a hero cannot benefit substantially from clerical healing: every healing spell or potion always cures the minimum amount of damage. Thus, the first-level clerical spell, *cure light wounds*, only restores 1 hit point of

damage. The curse has no effect on normal means of healing: the heroes will continue to regain 1 hit point per day of complete rest.

Widower Once and For All

With the pronouncement of the Vistana's curse, the cold, rainy fog swirling around the camp transforms into the Mists of Ravenloft, transporting the entire party to the domain of Invidia. Assuming the heroes helped Raul, the Kamii smith is transported along with them, and can serve as an invaluable guide and ally for the remainder of the adventure.

Unless the heroes took steps to save Nikko, the frail baby perished when Leyla's spirit was destroyed in its presence. In such a case, the heroes' first task upon their arrival will be to bury the infant. Numb with grief, Raul plays a tragic dirge at the funeral and accompanies the party for the remainder of the adventure in silent sadness.

If the heroes managed to save Nikko, Raul will do his best to care for the infant, but it continues to be sick and must be treated with healing spells once a day or its condition worsens and it dies.

The Dungeon Master should award the party a total story award of 6,000 XP if they succeed in dispelling Leyla's ghost. You may wish to assign additional 100-1,000 XP bonuses to individual player characters, based on their heroism, creativity, and role-playing while facing the ghost. No story award should be given if the heroes slew or robbed the gypsy.

Continuing the Adventure

Whether the heroes assisted or wronged Raul, they have been thrust into a foreign land under the effects of a curse. Learning how to remove this curse will help motivate the heroes for the remainder of the adventure.

The Dungeon Master can easily interweave the repercussions from scenario into the remainder of the adventure, if desired. Leyla's ghost was not destroyed back in Raul's vardo, but will rejuvenate after 1-3 days and return to her maternal duties. Only after Raul's violin has been destroyed and—more importantly—the violin strings woven from her hair have been burned, will Leyla's ghost be laid to rest.

II. RIVER CRUISE



M

*ilady wears a leather dress,
She's always by my side,
I see myself reflected
In the mirror of her eyes.
For me alone milady's pure.
And I know that's not for long:
Oh, I know that's not for long.*

—Termagant's Ballad

*The Virago cast off at dawn
while a cool autumn mist still hung
over the river. Captain Nathan
Timothy stood by the stern, hand on
the tiller, smiling contentedly into
the ruddy morning light.*

*Only a day to Karina. He was
already looking forward to the dog
fights in the Falkovnian quarter, the
pretty girls of the Bustarde, the fresh
food from the Veinskeller. Not that he
lacked ample food or drink aboard
the Virago. He was already
beginning to feel the warm effects of
his brandy breakfast.*

*As dawn advanced into early morning,
Timothy tried to recall the opening stanza to
Termagant's Ballad, one of his favorite Karinan
songs. Reveling in his brandy wine haze, the
captain merely bellowed the first few verses and
the refrain repeatedly in his deep, rumbling
bass. The Virago was headed back to Karina,
after all. He would soon relearn the song, and
perhaps even practice some of its more
interesting verses.*

Arrival in Invidia

River Cruise" can be used by Dungeon Masters who wish to quickly take the heroes from their arrival in Invidia to the town of Karina, where they become embroiled in the plot involving Gabrielle and Malocchio. Captain Timothy, the principal character encountered in this scenario, can be an important source of information about the lands of Ravenloft and the Vistani.

Alternatively, the DM can use the "Further Adventures in Indivia" chapter to develop side adventures, allowing the heroes to travel the domain, eventually reaching Karina on their own.

Dead Man's Perch

As the rising sun burns away the cool morning fog, it becomes clear that you are no longer where you once were. You are on a small island, in the middle of a wide river. All around you, forested hills painted spectacularly in the bright yellow, red, and orange colors of autumn, stretch westward to meet a crisp blue sky and eastward to distant mountains. Wild birds fly overhead—small flocks of swallows and crows, mostly, interspersed with a few noisy bluejays.

The heroes find themselves on Dead Man's Perch, a small island in the middle of the Musarde River, about sixty miles from the town of Karina. If the party helped Raul in the previous chapter, the Vistani smith will have been transported to Ravenloft with them, along with his vardo and the vehicle's contents (but not with his horses). Otherwise the heroes will be completely alone.

Dead Man's Perch is a narrow strip of land perhaps a hundred yards long by at most twenty yards long. Its surface is covered by low brush, some evergreens, and a few tall sugar maples now in the height of their fall transformation. This mundane foliage is inhabited by a few small, uninteresting animals and birds. The nearest riverbank lies over a hundred yards from the island.

Despite its mundane appearance, Dead Man's Perch has a bad reputation among boat captains and travelers alike. The waters around the isle are murky and deceptively shallow. Large vessels can easily run aground as they come around a swift bend in the river. Unless a quick-thinking captain can warp himself off his perch before nightfall, it is said that at least one member of the crew will die before daybreak. Travelers who camp near the island are also rumored to suffer from the island's deadly curse.

The specifics of the island, and whether or not the beliefs of the locals have any truth to them, are left to the Dungeon Master's imagination. Regardless of the island's danger, there should be few—if any—clues noticeable by day. At first, allow the party to explore the small island at their leisure and question Raul about their new predicament.

A Grieving Widower

Even if Raul accompanies the party, he quickly becomes paralyzed by grief over the apparent final loss of his wife, and possibly his child, depending on the actions of the heroes in the last chapter. He will follow the party, provide some background information, fight in combat, or play the violin, but he plays mostly a passive role.

Should the heroes be new to Ravenloft, then the DM must decide how much information (if any) to reveal about the Demiplane. Raul always refers to Ravenloft as the “Homeland” and the Vistani as his “People.” As suggested by the *RAVENLOFT* box and *Van Richten’s Guide to the Vistani*, the Dungeon Master should not give away too much information about the Vistani. They are a very mysterious and secretive people. Raul will not discuss Vistani secrets with a group a *giorgio* (as he calls the heroes), even if they to all appearances have helped lay his wife’s ghost to rest. (While Leyla’s ghost may not yet be destroyed—especially if Raul’s violin remains intact—she does not haunt the party until they arrive in Karina during the following chapter.)

Unless the party has not yet figured it out by now, Raul explains that they have all been cursed by Leyla’s ghost. He suggests that the matriarch or wise woman from a Vistani caravan may be able to provide clues about how to lift the curse. If the party asks him for advice about how to find the Vistani, Raul suggests that they look to the nearest town. “Where there are *giorgio*,” Raul explains, “you will sometimes find the Vistani.”

For information on the towns of Invidia and its settlements, the Dungeon Master can refer to Chapter Seven, “Further Adventures in Invidia.”

The Musarde River

Before the heroes can reach any town or settlement, they must overcome the obstacle of the Musarde River, which surrounds the small island of Dead Man’s Perch. The nearest (southern) shore of the river lies over a hundred yards from the island. To even experienced heroes, the Musarde River presents a potential challenge.

The Musarde is the primary setting for this chapter. The Dungeon Master should slowly describe the river using mysterious, ambiguous language. On the surface, the river appears to be normal, but the hints of dark, slimy inhabitants, and a cold numbing death by drowning should all help reinforce an atmosphere of dread and danger, even for experienced adventurers.

Plumbing the Depths. The dark, cold waters of the Musarde carry broken twigs and clumps of wet leaves are swept inexorably downriver. Tiny sepia salamanders and long, black eels lurk in the dim shallows. These creatures are harmless, but heroes wading along the shore may feel the flicker of something slimy about their submerged legs, invisible in the muddy water.

Hypothermia. During late autumn, swimming in the Musarde is a chilling experience. Unless heroes have some magical protection against cold, they will temporarily lose 1 point of Strength and Constitution for every turn they spend in its clammy waters unless they make a successful saving throw vs. death magic. Those who are reduced to zero Strength or Constitution by prolonged exposure to the frigid waters will lose consciousness and drown within 1-3 rounds unless rescued by comrades.

Matton’s Hunting Party

While the party is attempting to leave Dead Man’s Perch, they hear the sound of barking dogs. The sounds are coming closer on the eastern shore of the river.

There is a sound of breaking branches and a young deer comes leaping from the shadows of the forest. It stares wide-eyed at the river, its nostrils flared, sweat shining on its hide. Then in wheel about, the sound of the barking dogs drawing closer. The deer flees northward along the river.

Moments later, a man astride a black d-strier emerges from the woods. Although clearly in pursuit of the deer, clad as he is in the greens and leathers of a huntsman, he reins in the horse and shields his eyes with a hand as he looks across the river at you. He cocks an eyebrow, a smile appearing on his face. “My,” he says, “what have we here?”

The horseman is Matton Blanchard, an estranged lover of Gabrielle Aderre. He is described in Chapter Eight, "Dramatis Personae." Only recently emerging from nearly a year-long stupor of lovesick depression, Matton has been hunting in the Breadth Forest for weeks, mulling over his shattered love life. Since fleeing Loupet, he has heard no recent news regarding Gabrielle, nor of the birth of her son.

Matton greets the heroes warmly, and is very curious to hear how they were stranded on Dead Man's Perch with a horseless vardo. He offers no assistance, and if one of the heroes asks for it (or when the Dungeon Master wishes to bring the encounter to a close), Matton's retainers emerge from the woods, and he loses interest in the heroes.

Matton is accompanied by six young men, whom he bullies and abuses with ruthless ferocity. Only Matton rides a horse: his exhausted retainers must carry the supplies and run with the hounds, keeping pace with the hunt. They wear dirt-smearred shirts, brown trousers and vests; they are armed only with daggers. The retainers have no idea that their master is a werewolf. Matton's dozen hounds look scarcely better than his retainers. Each emaciated hunting dog is covered with cuts and welts from constant lashings.

Matton launches into a tirade against the men, berating the "sluggards for their usual ineptitude and sends them along the riverbank after the deer. He cordially wishes the heroes a good day, as help offering only that the nearest town (Karina) is located about forty miles downriver.

While this encounter may seem brief, it introduces a recurring character in the adventure. From the onset, portray Matton with greasy cordiality and snobbish superiority. This "obvious" enemy will make the heroes more easily confide in much more dangerous characters in the future.

Storm (light war horse): INT Animal (1); AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg: 1-4/1-4; SZ L; ML 7; MM/194; XP 35.

Retainers (0-level humans, 6): AC 10; MV 12; hp 1d6; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (dagger: 1d4); AL N; THAC0 20; XP 35.

Hounds (12): INT Semi- (3); AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 1d8+1; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1-4; SZ S; ML 6; MM/57; XP 35.

A Riverboat Captain

Some time after Matton's hunting party merges back into the forest, whether the heroes are still on the island or traveling along the shore, they see a riverboat with a tall white sail as it rounds the bend about a mile upriver. As the *Virago* approaches, the lone pilot at the stern can be heard singing a bawdy sailor's song.

As the boat draws nearer, the man at the rudder stops belting out his tune. Even before the last note has stopped echoing off the hillsides, the bright sail of the boat is being lowered, and it slows as it reaches you.

As the boat drifts closer, its only apparent crewmember, a man of average size with a wild curly mane of black hair and a full beard, waves to you. He is dressed in a dark sweater and trousers. "Ahoy there! Cap'n Timothy's the name, and this is milady, the *Virago*. Would you folks be needing assistance?"

The sailor is Captain Nathan Timothy, a recurring character in this adventure who is described fully in Chapter Eight. If the party doesn't think to ask, he offers them passage on the *Virago*, providing that they don't mind sleeping on deck or ashore at nights. His hold is too full for passengers.

Despite a congenial façade, Captain Timothy is a powerful werewolf and a former dark lord. Although he fosters the image of a rough and bawdy captain, he is shrewd, devious, and heartless. He invites the party on board, observe them for a day, and (providing they seem sufficiently weak) he will attack and devour them at night.

Captain Timothy's first action is to separate the heroes from their most powerful ally: Raul. Timothy recognizes Raul as a Vistana and has no desire to harm or offend him (even former dark lords fear the evil eye). He will not tolerate Raul aboard his ship, since he fears that the Vistana may be able to pierce his disguise. Captain Timothy is adamant about not letting "that damn gypsy" aboard the *Virago*, claiming that the Vistani are extremely bad luck for ships.

RIVER COURSE

If the heroes insist, Timothy says that they are welcome aboard, but the *Vistana* must ride behind in a rowboat and be towed. Since the heroes probably have their own misgivings regarding Raul over their arrival to Invidia, they will probably agree to this request. Without a word, Raul gathers as many tools and sample wares as he can fit with him (and Nikko, should be baby still be alive) into the rowboat. Raul contents himself during the voyage by playing the violin as the *Virago* tows his rowboat downriver.

Secrets of the *Virago*

Since the heroes may be spending some time on board the *Virago*, deck plans and an illustration have been provided on the color mapsheet. The *Virago* is a 50' single-masted river schooner; if Cap'n Timothy were not an expert sailor, the ship would be too large to handle single-handedly. A hero with the seamanship proficiency will identify the *Virago* as a cargo vessel designed primarily for river travel. Timothy has tailored the rigging of the mainsail so that it can be handled from the stern, near the tiller.

Timothy is very secretive about the contents of the cabin and the hold (containing his "precious cargo"). Before he allows the party on board, he secures the forehatch to the hold from below, and locks the hatch to his cabin. He will not let the party into these areas. The cargo only contains numerous casks of brandy from Tufeldorf (hardly warranting such secrecy) and the usual ship's stores. Timothy's cabin, however, contains several sensitive mementos.

The main cabin is a cramped space and reeks of stale sweat and brandy. Barely tall enough for a man to stand upright, it measures roughly fifteen feet long by nine feet wide. The cabin contains a sleeping berth, table, bench, shaving mirror, and a stout locked chest, with an assortment of clothes (some are smeared with blood), a brown pipe, and a tobacco pouch. A cocked heavy crossbow rests beneath the sleeping berth next to a stoppered jug of brandy.

The captain keeps a book in his desk, locked in a waterproofed box. The tome—a character with seamanship proficiency will recognize it to be a *rutter*—is written in an encrypted shorthand, known only to Captain Timothy. Unless magic of some sort is employed (or a

rogue uses his Read Languages ability), the book will be completely indecipherable. Should it be partially decoded, the heroes will discover a complete description of the Musarde and Arden, including the location and travel times between villages.

The book also contains an abbreviated log, starting in the year 740. Characters familiar with the history of Ravenloft might note this to be the date of the Grand Conjunction, which freed Timothy from his domain and allowed him to sail where he pleases. The log ends with the following entries (either read or photocopy and distribute to players):

4 Oct—Moored in Zeidenburg. Off loaded the wine. Took on four crates of muslin and two passengers, M. and R. from the factory.

9 Oct—Reached Tufeldorf before nightfall. Off loaded the muslin; M. and R. paid handsomely for the speedy passage. Took on all the brandy she would carry.

16 Oct—Zeidenburg again. Took on three passengers, D. and her sons. They are desperate to reach Karina for the festival!

These last entries reveal two facts: the *Virago's* current cargo is brandy, and more importantly, the log mentions taking on passengers in Zeidenburg bound for Karina, but no one besides Captain Timothy was aboard the ship when he encountered the heroes.

Finally, there is a secret compartment hidden behind the gangway leading up to the deck. It contains a number of small objects, including an assortment of lady's jewelry (1-4 pieces, to be randomly determined by the Dungeon Master), a velvet pouch containing six tiny emeralds (500 gp each), a silver whistle (25 gp), a small box filled with 485 gold coins of Falkovnian mintage, and a woman's lace handkerchief, embroidered with small pearls, bearing the initials DLB (100 gp). Astute heroes may suspect (correctly) that handkerchief belonged to one of the Captain's passengers (referred to in the 16 Oct entry of the log as "D.").

Beyond Timothy's cabin is the galley, which contains a small cooking stove and several different kinds of breads, cheeses, and other dried foodstuffs and spices.

Down the Musarde

As the bleak waters swirl along the ship, Captain Timothy is more than happy to chat about his travels up and down the Musarde. He knows the river, its towns, and villages intimately. (Some details can be found in Chapter Seven, while the various Ravenloft adventures and accessories can provide others; this is an opportunity for the Dungeon Master to allude to interesting events elsewhere in the core domains and perhaps sew the seeds for future adventures.) He describes Karina as “a wild, lively town, especially around Festival season” and promises to give the party a tour of the highlights once they arrive.

Meanwhile, Captain Timothy is mentally planning an ambush for the party. While he chats about the river and its sights, he pumps the heroes for their background and skills. He is especially interested in the party wizards; in the past, they have caused him the greatest pain. Timothy works these queries into the flow of conversation.

Timothy disappears downstairs around lunch time, allowing the hero with the most nautical experience to steer, shutting and locking the hatch behind him. He will not allow any heroes to join him. While Timothy is below decks, the party can hear him bumping around the cabin and the hold as well (he is dipping into his brandy). When he returns above decks with coffee, bread, and cheese, the Captain’s breath stinks of drink.

The rest of the day passes quickly, marked by the spectacular array of fall foliage along the shores and Timothy’s apparent drinking binge in his cabin while he prepares lunch. Late in the afternoon, the *Virago* sails past Matton Blanchard’s hunting party, traveling in the direction of Karina along the south shore of the river. Timothy gives Matton scarcely a second glance, although the werewere gives the heroes a mocking salute as the boat sails past him. If the party asks Timothy about Blanchard, the captain’s voice takes on a tinge of disgust. According to the captain, Matton is “a foppish dandy and a real snob. I’d steer clear of him, if I were you.” Timothy and Blanchard are both fully aware of each other’s true natures; the werewere and werewere regard each other as a contemptible

nemesis, though they would never reveal the real reason for their enmity to mere humans.

Most importantly, Captain Timothy is also severely prejudiced against gypsies. Timothy’s poor treatment of Raul was spurred partially by his desire to split the party and partially by his fear and bigotry. He is especially fearful of the evil eye, and continually makes small hand gestures covertly behind his back when he thinks Raul is looking at him.

Among the superstitious, special hand gestures are thought to ward off the evil eye. Timothy will explain the concept of the evil eye to the heroes, if they haven’t heard of it already, although like most *giorgio*, his knowledge of the subject is imperfect and stilted at best. To gain the heroes’ confidence, he will teach them a few hand signs. Most hand gestures will likely make a Vistana laugh than provide any form of protection, but if the heroes truly believe they are effective, the Dungeon Master may permit the character a +1 bonus to the Evil Eye check.

Captain Timothy’s ill feelings toward gypsies are conveyed in the “Tale of the Captain and the Vistana.” He tells the story to the heroes in a low voice as they sail downriver, so Raul in the trailing rowboat cannot overhear.

The Tale of the Captain and the Vistana

“The Vistani turn up where you least expect them and always want what you can least afford. They’re never to be trusted, always spouting lies and stealing your gold. There’s a good reason why I won’t let any gypsy on my ship, and if you listen, I’ll tell you why.

I once heard of a sea captain named Bartley from Port-a-Lucine, a rather pitiable sort, who went into a Vistana’s tarokka booth for a reading. Down on his luck for the past year, he wanted to know what cargo he should take on his next trip to Leudendorf, so that he would make his fortune and retire.

Now the old woman looked at him and said, “Life has not treated you well, I can see, but your luck is about to change for the best. I will tell you what cargo to carry, but you must do what I ask when you arrive at your destination.” Captain Bartley was so desperate that he agreed

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to her strange request, so long as the *Vistana* would prophesy for him. And the old woman took out her cards, and laid them on the table. She told him to fill his ship with timber.

So Bartley did what he was told, and sailed up to Leudendorf with a hold full of seasoned pine. When he arrived, he learned that there has been a terrible fire in the city. Many houses had burned to the ground, and there was not enough wood to rebuild. Bartley's ship was the first to bring in a full supply of timber, so he made an incredible fortune. One foggy night, just after he sold the last of his timber, Bartley heard a knock at his cabin door while the ship lay in port. When he opened it, there he saw the same grim-faced *Vistana* from Port-a-Lucine.

She fixed him with her evil eye, and said, "You have made your fortune, now you must do as I say. Give up the sea forever, and never set another foot aboard this or any other ship. If you agree, you may keep what you have earned, but if not, you will lose everything."

Captain Bartley was not at all pleased by the *Vistana*'s curse, but before he could argue with her, she stepped back into the foggy night and was swallowed by the mists. Bartley searched the entire ship, but found no one besides his startled crew.

I'll be the first to admit that sailors can be very superstitious. Some of the crew heard the curse of the *Vistana*. Bartley was already known as an unlucky captain and many of his crew left him. A few figured that Bartley's luck had changed for good and decided to sail again. For you see, to ground a true sailor is to kill him, regardless of his wealth or luck.

So, despite the curse, unlucky Bartley decided to sail back to Port-a-Lucine, though most of his sailors had deserted him. As he approached Lucine Bay, a terrible storm descended on his ship. The rain fell in blinding sheets and the swells were higher than the tallest mast. Bartley lashed himself to the tiller

and screamed out his defiance against the *Vistana* into the dark howling winds.

It was then that the ship started coming apart. All over the decks, the tiny nails started squirming out of the wood, like squeaking little iron worms, and once a plank was free, it went hurling up into the night and the screeching gale. Frantic men ran about, tying themselves down to anything that would float, but Bartley stood fast by the helm, still screaming into the wind, oblivious to his approaching doom.

In the morning, pieces of the wreckage washed up on shore with the lucky crew, who all somehow survived the black maelstrom. But poor Bartley, he was never seen again. In the storms that wrack the Sea of Sorrows, sailors sometimes hear demented screams above the howling winds, and they say it's the Cursed Captain, still raging against the *Vistana*. Now that I can't attest, for I am only a river boat master, but I will still never let a gypsy board my beloved ship."

Nocturne

As the shadows lengthen, Captain Timothy pulls the *Virago* close to shore in a wide bowl-shaped spot known as the Purse, claiming that it is bad luck to sail on the *Musarde* after nightfall, when river trolls and other deep dwellers go hunting. In reality, however, Timothy wants to get the heroes off his ship, so he can set up a covert night attack without implicating himself directly, in case his plan goes awry.

The shore along the Purse is steep enough for the *Virago* to moor along side the shore, like a port, without becoming grounded. Timothy pulls out some supplies for dinner from the pantry and dismantles the tiller, locking it safely in his cabin, in case the heroes think of stealing his ship during the night. After securing the *Virago*, Timothy makes a campfire and cooks everyone spiced sausages from Zeidenburg, along with more tough bread and cheese. Timothy even brings out a cask of brandy, hoping to put the heroes even further at ease. Although Raul is obviously glad to be out of his rowboat, he does little besides drink Timothy's brandy. The gypsy keeps his weapons and violin by his side all

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evening, but he refuses to play the instrument after sunset. Nikko, if still alive, has gotten worse during the day, and will require treatment if he is to live through the night.

Night passes slowly in Invidia. During the fall, the sun sets around 5 p.m and does not rise again until 8 a.m. The majestic beauty of the chromatic forest has a more sinister atmosphere once darkness falls. In the night, the heroes can only hear the rustle of branches overhead, punctuated by the screeches of night owls and other nocturnal predators. The forest is redolent with the pungent aroma of fallen leaves and rotting vegetation. A waxing moon rises in the east, casting a pale ghostly light through the canopy of leaves overhead.

Once dinner has been cleaned up, Timothy gathers his bedroll and leaves the party to sleep on his own because of his terrible snoring. Soon the heroes hear the captain's distant snorts and snores. Of course, the werewolf is merely biding his time. He hopes a pack of wolves will stray close by, so that he can call them to provide a diversion.

Meanwhile, allow the party to set up watches

and sleep where they see fit (either in the woods near the ship or on deck). Hopefully, they have not been lulled into a false sense of security by Raul's inebriation and Timothy's nonchalance and retain their vigilance.

In the dead of night, a chorus of howls shatters the silence: a pack of wolves has wandered into the area. As soon as the captain hears their approach, he changes into his wolf form and approaches the pack. After a brief scuffle, during which he establishes his dominance, he leads the wolves back to the campsite. Meanwhile, the heroes will probably be rousing their sleeping comrades and readying for combat.

The wolves charge into camp with a piercing howl of such chilling intensity that all members of the party must make Fear Checks. The Dungeon Master should modify the number and strength wolves to properly challenge the party, based on their levels of experience. A low-level party should encounter at least one wolf per hero, whereas powerful characters may face 2-3 wolves each.

The wolves all appear diseased, with two exceptions: the pack leader and Timothy. The



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pack's usual leader is a huge and healthy dire wolf, measuring about 10' long. The beast has extensive scars on the left side of its muzzle, including a few fresh cuts from its recent scrape with Timothy.

In his wolf form, Timothy is even larger: 12' long—more like a bear than a wolf. His combat abilities are summarized in Chapter Eight.

Timothy has a simple but effective strategy to decimate the party: force the heroes to retreat to his ship, where he and the wolves can corner and destroy them. The wolves rush at the party from the front, forcing them back to the water. Timothy and the dire wolf charge the most powerful warriors.

Raul, meanwhile, distinguishes himself valiantly in battle. Swinging his blade with deadly accuracy, assume that he kills one wolf every two rounds, before being knocked unconscious six rounds after the battle begins.

Wolves: INT Low (6); AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 10 each; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d4+1; SZ M; ML 10; MM/362; XP 120.

Pack leader (dire wolf): INT Low (6); AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 30; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 2d4; SZ L; ML 10; MM/362; XP 270.

Continuing the Adventure

If the party does not manage to defeat the wolves, they will all be slaughtered and devoured by morning, like most of Timothy's previous passengers. However, given the poor health of most of the pack, the wolves will flee after half their number have been slain. The pack leader will also retreat after being wounded for more than 15 hit points of damage. Once his primary allies have fled, Timothy will make an assessment of the heroes' current ability to withstand his attacks. If the party spellcasters are still active, he will flee with the rest of the pack—not because he fears for his life (because of his regeneration)—but because he does not want to endanger his disguise. He will return to where he was supposedly sleeping, assume human form, and will, still naked, climb the nearest tree, and quickly heal any battle wounds using his regeneration.

After the sounds of battle have died down, he

will call out for aide. He thanks the heroes for "saving" him, and apologizes for the danger—in all his years, he claims he has never been attacked by a pack of wolves. Of course, he adds conspiratorially, this is the first time he has traveled with a Vistana. Timothy will insist on sleeping in his cabin for the rest of the night, which passes uneventfully. In the morning, the *Virago* will pull away from the Purse and sail to Karina before noon.

The Dungeon Master should keep careful note of any heroes who were bitten by Timothy during the battle. For each point of damage Timothy inflicts on a hero, there is a 2% chance the character will contract lycanthropy.

III. KARINA



al DeNonna had been more intoxicated in his life, but never had so much fun! The songfests of his village on the Barovia/Kartakass border couldn't hold a candle to the revelry of Karina during Carnival! The day had been a whirlwind of dancing in the streets, scantily-clad women, and more wine than he thought existed in the world.

It was past midnight now, and he staggered alone down Front Street, singing at the top of his lungs, enjoying the sound of his voice echoing off the walls of the buildings and that of the wine sloshing in the bottle he carried.

Then he saw a fellow reveler, a slender man in a dark cloak and wide-brimmed hat. He called to the man, offering him

wine and the opportunity to join him in song. The man raised an arm, in what Ral thought was a greeting... until he saw the blade flash in the moonlight. In his final moments, Ral was stone-sober.

As Ral's blood mingled with spilled wine and flowed into the gutter, the darkclad man merged with the shadows.

Invited to the Carnival

The harvest festival in Karina provides the principal backdrop for most events and encounters in this chapter. While the major non-player characters of this adventure are mobile free agents who can roam about the town and surrounding countryside as circumstances dictate, they are encountered in this chapter in specific locations in Karina. The Dungeon Master is encouraged to devise side encounters with these characters and otherwise bring them to life for the players.

The Dungeon Master must decide if he wants the heroes to spend any substantial amount of time in Karina at this point, or be contacted by the Zarovan Vistani, who hold the key to the lifting of their curse immediately, as described in Chapter Four. Regardless, the locations, rumors,

and suggested events involving major nonplayer characters of this adventure can be used in play, whether the heroes are just drifting through Karina or serving as the eyes and ears of the Zarovan.

The Town of Karina

Karina is Invidia's largest town, and during most of the year its population is around 2,000 people. In recent years, the small city has become famous for its extraordinarily alcoholic beverages, including Glum Wine, Ambered, and several other exotic drinks. As a result, the local wine harvest has grown into a highly popular event. During the Carnival season, the population swells to over 5,000, as visitors arrive from Barovia, Borca, Richemulot, and even distant Falkovnia and Kartakass for a week of drinking and carousing.

Karina is built on the shores of the Noisette River, a tributary of the Musarde, in a small bowl-shaped valley south of a thick, lush forest. The air is warm and clean during the summer months, but during the fall and winter, clouds of woodsmoke obscure the sky, casting the town in a gray dusky haze that lasts until spring when hearth fires are no longer necessary. On many nights, a thick fog rolls off the river into the city streets, enveloping Karina in a pale blanket.

The town is divided into two major sectors by Tower Road, a wide cobblestoned street that runs from the clockspire, Goldfinger, to the docks along Front Street. Landmarks of the city and locations used in this adventure are detailed below and clearly marked on the town map for easy reference.

East Karina

East Karina is a safe, affluent haven in comparison with the western part of town. During the week of Carnival, the sleepy town is transformed into a sprawling chaos of humanity. The normally quiet, cobblestone streets are crowded with people drinking from ale mug, wine glasses, or even directly from the bottle. Sidewalks are cluttered with broken glass and reek of spilled beer. Most Carnival activity takes place between High Road and East Front Street.

KARINA

1. Vineyards

Extensive vineyards line the steep shores of the river outside the city walls. The neat rows of vines, recently stripped of their grapes, have been decorated with paper lanterns for the festival. The vineyards stand like rows of soldiers around stately manors. Just outside the city walls, few estates have been built along the edge of a 50' cliff, undoubtedly the residences of the most affluent nobility.

The vineyards of Karina are famous for some of the best wines south of Richemulot. As the heroes approach the town, presumably aboard Timothy's *Virago*, they will sail past several farms and vineyards. One of the estates, known as Cliff House, has been claimed by Gabrielle as her residence for the Carnival. The dark lord's temporary residence is described in the final chapter of the module.

2. Dockyards

The dockyards run the length of East Front Street along the river, crammed with small passenger boats and river craft that are busily unloading visitors and cargo. The street is a confusion of uncertain travelers and heavily-laden porters, doubled over beneath luggage.

This neighborhood will most likely be the heroes' first impression of Karina. Compared with the wide expanse of the river, East Front Street is a claustrophobic bottleneck of hurried people, livestock, and carts. Those strolling along the packed dockyards pass a variety of crowded boarding houses, noisy taverns, and over-priced shops (tobacco, supplies, lumber, etc.) catering to boat owners or travelers.

Docking at Karina is not free. Although berthing fees are normally inexpensive, during Carnival the fee rises to 5 sp for every 10' of keel per day. For Captain Timothy's *Virago* (a 50' boat) the fee amounts to 50 sp per day. Cargo fees are 5% the



market value of imported goods, payable in coinage, barter, or actual cargo. In addition, the harbor master also charges each passenger an admittance toll to the town: 1 sp per unarmed person (unarmed) or 1 gp per armed person.

Nathan Timothy. Unless stated otherwise, Captain Nathan Timothy (featured in Chapter Two) will spend the majority of his time at the dockyards, within close proximity to the water's edge. Because of his curse, he cannot stray more than a hundred yards from the water's edge without experiencing mounting discomfort and weakness (losing 1 hp/hour). He spends his time in Front Street taverns.

Rumors. Timothy recommends the heroes join him at the Dog Fights in the Falkovnian Quarter (Area 9), in his opinion a high point of the festivities. (See Chapter 5 for details.) He says they can find him each night at the Black Swan, a disreputable pub on the corner of East Front and Tower Street, at midnight, where he will take them to the Fights.

A number of other stories are circulating the dockyards. The number of fatal "accidents" at the docks have risen dramatically during Carnival. People have been crushed while unloading or transporting cargo. If their memory is properly lubricated, one man whispers that he saw a "boy in black" that frightened him so much that he made a sign against the evil eye.

Event: The Boy in Black

Having long since *enthralled* his guardians and explored the dreary reaches of Cliff House, the adolescent Malocchio has decided to investigate the Carnival for himself. After *teleporting* into town, he is wreaking mischief with his evil eye. For now, the Dukkar limits his targets to animals and children.

"LOOK OUT!" a man shouts above the frenzied whinnying of panicked horses. An ale cart, laden with heavy wooden casks, teeters precariously as the bay draft horses rears back, ears folded in terror. As the driver works furiously to control the two horses, one of the casks rolls off back of the cart onto a pair of children playing by the street. With a scream, one boy disappears beneath the cask with a sickening crunch, while his playmate still stares at the cart, paralyzed with terror.

Unless the heroes act immediately, the rest of the casks will soon tumble off the cart, killing both children. With some decisive action, they should be able to drag both children to safety; the child beneath the fallen cask only has a broken leg. Play up the drama and suspense of the scene by threatening the heroes with falling casks from the wine cart; each inflicts 1d6 points of damage. While the children are being dragged to safety, the cordage holding down the casks breaks, showering down 2d10 casks on rescuing heroes with a THACO of 17.

Now that the cart is lighter, the horses suddenly bolt down the street, knocking the driver off his seat into the back of the cart. Unless the heroes can somehow stop the horses (either by slaying or magically controlling them) they will stampede down the along docks, eventually hurling themselves off the docks and drowning.

Award individual experience point awards (up to 400 XP per character) to heroes that participate in the encounter. Regardless of their actions, however, the heroes are not thanked for any courageous endeavors. The parents scoop up their children with a hostile glare and a spanking, while pedestrians rapidly resume their former activities as if nothing unusual has happened. The shattered casks remain on the street until the town watch arrives to clean up the mess (no questions are asked). The heroes might notice some of the townspeople glaring at them making strange signs with their left hand. Those who accompanied Captain Timothy may have learned these gestures are meant to ward off the evil eye.

Before the heroes resume their earlier activities, they spot Malocchio watching them. He is not at all pleased if they have disturbed his entertainment:

You notice a boy in the crowd, no more than 10 years old, dressed entirely in black velvet with a wide lace collar. He wears dark leather gloves and pointed slippers. The boy is simply standing there, regarding you with a stern, mirthless gaze that stands out starkly against the backdrop of Carnival. A group of revelers rush past him, obscuring the boy in black for a second, and then he is gone.

Malocchio will return to deal with the heroes later. You can foreshadow his return, or remind the heroes of this encounter simply by having them encounter horse-drawn carriages throughout town. Play up the clatter of approaching hoof beats through the crowd, or have them wake up at night to the neighs of horses below their window. If nothing else, these constant reminders of the horse incident should make them unsettled.

Finally, the Dungeon Master can refer to Chapter 8 for Malocchio's game statistics and description.

3. Walls and Towers

Karina proper is embraced by a 15-foot tall curtain wall made from hewn gray limestone, punctuated at hundred yard intervals by narrow bastions, that project out from the wall to offer flanking fire in the event of a siege. The walls are further protected by a 20' wide moat, fed by two meandering streams and by the Noisette River herself. Near the foundations of the walls and towers, the crumbling mortar has been overtaken by seeping, dark green lichen.

Karina's walls are kept in generally good repair considering the fact that the town has not been besieged during the past generation. The town's fortifications were originally erected Bakholis, Invidia's original lord, but after he was murdered by Gabrielle, Karina's walls and moat have served only to keep out prowling monsters.

The Watch. The watch intermittently patrols the long curtain wall, but their vigilance is lax, especially now since most of the guards would prefer to be enjoying the carnival. The wall watch consists of 30 guards (1st level warriors), overseen by three burly sergeants (2nd level warriors). They are equipped with studded leather armor, battle axes, and light crossbows.

The primary function of the watch is to make sure that visitors pay a toll in order to enter the town for the carnival. A pair of guards are stationed at each of main gates, where they charge 1 sp per person (unarmed); 1 gp per

person (armed); 1 pp per person (mounted). They also levy a 5% tax on the market value of imported goods, payable in coinage, barter, or actual items. Visitors must pay the toll each time they enter the city, but the import tax is a one-time event.

Rumors. The soldiers that guard the city are quite knowledgeable about the seedier elements of the city and warn the heroes to stay away from West Karina, especially after dark when the Slasher prowls those neighborhoods. In the Maze, the heroes are warned that Scar runs a "tough gang," while Commander Regess in the Falkovnian Quarter administers justice according to his own rules. The soldiers are not willing to discuss anything else with visitors, even for a sizable bribe, but they refer the heroes to the Engineer in Goldfinger (Area 5), who "knows everything."

4. Commons

Crowded cobblestoned streets open into a wide paved plaza, perhaps a hundred yards wide and two hundred long. The plaza has been converted into a grand bazaar and trading area of visiting merchants. Dozens of temporary stalls have been erected in the center of the square, where a variety of merchants, farmers, winemakers, and brewers sell their wares. Although many stalls feature the latest vintage wines from the surrounding countryside, they also contain fruits and vegetables from the autumn harvest: apples, squash, corn, potatoes, and huge turnips are all on display among the myriad of stalls.

The north end of the plaza is dominated by a long building with dozens of high arched windows along its facade.

In front of the hall, a wooden scaffold and gallows have been erected recently, as attested by the fresh unpainted timber and faint smell of sawdust. A long rope lies coiled at the base of stairs leading to the top of the platform, but otherwise the execution site is deserted, except for a few young children playing among the vertical supports beneath the platform.

Although not in the geographic center of town, the Commons is the commercial and administrative nucleus of Karina. The heroes can find just about any kind of foodstuffs or beverages at the open markets at the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook*. The market square remains active until nightfall, when the center of Carnival activity moves to the Wine Garden (Area 6). By day, the Commons is the heart of the Carnival, and any incidental encounters with the nonplayer characters of this adventure can be staged here.

The town hall at the end of the plaza contains the offices of the town officials and the meeting halls for the guilds. The residents of Karina currently acknowledge Mayor Zachary Beauchamps as their ruler, but like most important public officials, the poor man is hopelessly *enthralled* by Gabrielle and secretly her fawning slave. For the duration of the holiday, the town hall is closed. (Area 7).

The gallows in front of the town hall is reserved for the last day of the Carnival, in which the convicted criminals from the Citadel will be executed. Most citizens look forward to the hangings as the culmination of the week's entertainment. The Dungeon Master should take time to describe the ominous scaffolding in the midst of the celebration, if only to foreshadow the death and darker elements underlying the festival's merry facade.

Rumors. There is anticipation for the upcoming executions on the Commons; some townspeople mention arriving early for good seats. The prisoners come from the Citadel (Area 7), where they are said to be tortured hideously until their sanity shatters. Persistent questioning can uncover a few rumors on the Commons relating to strange accidents (similar to the wine cart upset described earlier), but the townspeople here are reluctant and frightened to discuss them. If asked about a "boy in black," the locals immediately shut up, make signs against the evil eye, and hurry away.

Event: Matton's Grand Entrance

While wandering through the crowd, the heroes encounter Matton Blanchard and his retainers, returning from their hunt (see Chapter Two):

The crowds around you part abruptly, disgorging a sleek black horse mounted by an extraordinarily handsome noble. In his mid-thirties, he has a long drooping mustache and a scar down his right cheek. He is wearing a hunter's leathers and tall black leather riding boots and a plumed wide-brimmed hat. It is the man you encountered while in the wilderness. He glares down at you from the saddle, hand on the sheathed rapier at his knee, not a glimmer of recognition in his face or voice, only haughty disdain: "Out of my way, you rabble!" Not a glimmer of recognition, only haughty disdain.

In the wake of the mounted nobleman, six exhausted retainers are jogging behind their master's horse, dragged along by a pack of hounds held tightly in reign. The emaciated dogs struggle at their leashes frantically in the direction of the food vendors by the street before one of the retainers lashes them brutally with a leather crop.

The heroes have two choices of action. The simplest (and safest) action is to back off, and allow Matton to pass. After their nocturnal ambush in Chapter Two, the heroes may suspect Matton is a shapechanger and hence may be unwilling to antagonize him openly on the streets, especially when he is supported by underlings. Assuming that they step aside, the noble heads toward the Wine Garden where he takes up residence at the Laughing Maiden.

The heroes will face dire consequences if they attack Matton openly on the streets during Carnival. Not only will they have to face down the pack of vicious hunting dogs, Matton's retainers, and Storm (the war steed), but Matton himself has the height advantage from atop the steed (+2 to hit). If the heroes seem too much for him to handle, Matton simply rides away, leaving his retainers to detain the heroes while he summons the watch (4 1st-level fighters), who arrive within 5d4 rounds and attempt to arrest the heroes. If captured, they may be incarcerated in the citadel (Area 7) until they manage to bribe the warden or escape. In any event, they will have made an enemy of Matton and robbed themselves of a potential source of information later in the adventure.

However much the heroes dislike Matton, unless there is open antagonism between him and the party, he will seek them out in the next chapter, asking for their assistance.

5. Goldfinger

On an unnatural bowl-shaped mound, surrounded by a copse of well-tended shrubbery, a lofty clockspire rises into the sky at the center of Karina. Easily visible from most parts of town, the 60' tower is hewn from polished yellow granite that reflects the golden light at dusk or dawn. Just under the tower's pointed roof, a white clock face stares out at the city, mounted at the center of each wall in the four cardinal directions. The hands and numbers of the clock are painted lustrous black, and every hour it chimes, punctuating the flow of time for the entire city.

Along with the Citadel (Area 7), this clock, called Goldfinger, is a prominent town landmark, essential for visitors navigating a new city. The tower is inhabited by the Engineer, an antisocial wizard with a fascination for machines. The Engineer is a wizened and self-absorbed wizard, thoroughly devoted to the creation of intricate magically-powered mechanical devices. He is utterly dependent upon an ear-horn (he is half deaf from living in the clocktower) and spectacles (he is near-blind from staring at tiny mechanisms). His only volume of speech is a shout. The wizard is alone in his tower, except for a small army of mechanical creations. The basement of the tower contains a huge workshop containing his latest invention, a mechanical golem (see the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM: RAVENLOFT Appendix*. The golem is nearly completed, and the Engineer is rushing to finish the device for the end of Carnival, when he plans to donate the contraption for the defense of the city. The Dungeon Master can expand the Engineer and his mechanical golem into an interesting side adventure, if desired. The Engineer should be at least 9th level, and may be developed into an interesting tutor for a visiting wizard to the city.

Rumors. The Engineer is as much of a landmark in Karina as Goldfinger. He has either

donated or sold all of the clocks available in Karina, either on a mercurial whim, or to finance one of his latest researches. Although he is well-known and admired throughout town, most citizens give Goldfinger wide berth, for those living nearby have reported hearing frightening rumbles emanating from the *base* of the tower. Contrary to most rumors, the Engineer does not know "everything;" in fact, he cares for very little aside from magic and machines. He lives in a mechanistic bubble, effectively insulated from the rest of the world.

6. Wine Garden

The streets leading east to the Wine Garden and Brewery Street are filled with revelers, open shops, outdoor cafes, corner entertainers, and ale stalls. The Garden itself is a crowded narrow plaza, a chaotic jumble of tables and chairs. At the west end of the plaza, on a raised stage, a brass band plays cheerful vignettes, while a great mass of drunken dancers stumble around in front of them. The Garden is lined with six large taverns, each packed with customers enjoying the Carnival.

The Wine Garden is the town's entertainment center, remaining active throughout most of the night. Most of the town's best taverns can be found along this plaza, or along nearby avenues, such as Brewery Street to the north. The six taverns on the Garden (the Silver Star, the Laughing Maiden, the Clock's Tick, the Golden Fields, the Raven's Roost, and the Shield & Boar) are each supported by an individual winery or brewery, so that the wines and ales at each of the houses are distinctly different.

Among the exotic, if expensive, beverages available in the Wine Garden are: Ambered (an aromatic golden wine), Glum Wine (a mellow red), Setarn (a delicate white wine), Shriek (a tart, brash red wine), Billy Goat (a musky beer), and Sharp (the local ale).

Entertainers. The Garden is a stage for some of the Carnival's finest entertainment. Minstrels, small bands, mimes, jugglers, jesters, puppeteers, and acrobats from all across the Core can be found in the streets near the Wine Garden. Those

seeking to gamble will find numerous opportunities to lighten their purse at the card and dice games in the taverns.

Matton. The wolfwere takes up residence in the Laughing Maiden. If the heroes spend any time in the Wine Garden, Matton will notice them; he has gathered some small information about Gabrielle, and has gotten the impression that she is being held isolated in one of the manor houses around town. He is wrong, of course, but he thinks it is the Gentleman Caller who is keeping her from attending the Carnival, which, he knows, is one of her favorite times in Karina. Assuming they did not attack him in the Commons, Matton offers to pay each hero 5 gp a day if they will attempt to locate Gabrielle for him, and then assist in expelling the evil man from her presence. He will tell the heroes the full tale of the succubus' appearance at Loupet, but leave out the fact that he himself is a wolfwere. (This tale may sound familiar if the heroes have already encountered the Zarovan, as described in the next chapter.)

Finally, Matton asks the heroes accompany him to the Dog Fights that evening so he can learn more information. He asks that they meet him at the Laughing Maiden before midnight on the day they speak with him.

Rumors. Crammed with drunken visitors from nearby cities, the taverns are an excellent place to learn about the lore of the Demiplane. Because of the festive occasion, however, none of the visitors will want to discuss the negative aspects about their home; a merchant from Barovia, for instance, might talk dreamily about the dawn rising over the mountains, about his estate's lovely forests, or about the beauty of his hometown, sooner than he would mention any of Strahd's depredations. Although it is easy to learn about distant domains from travelers, gleaning rumors about Karina is much more difficult, since many of the townspeople prefer to stay indoors until after the Carnival madness has ended.

Event: Invitation to Dance

As the heroes are in the Wine Garden, either here because of Matton or just wandering through, (but prior to him asking them for aid), they happen upon Gabrielle Aderre, who is attending the wedding reception of Dieter and Ingrid Zimmermann under the guise of "Frau Braun," one of Dieter's widowed cousins. The

celebration is taking place at tables outside the Silver Star, which is right next door to the Laughing Maiden. The reception proceeds normally until the toasting ceremony, when each family member must toast the newly married couple.

A man called Gustav, the brother to the bride, is called upon to give a toast. Instead, the angry man splashes wine in his brother-in-law's face, calling him a cheat and a scoundrel for bringing dishonor his sister's name. He challenges the groom to a duel on the spot. The bride faints. Seconds later, the groom's father is on his feet, shouting for his son Dieter to avenge the insult. While Dieter and Gustav prepare for combat, the tables are being swept aside to make room for fighting. Most of the wedding party is watching the unfolding events in stunned silence, as a crowd of curious onlookers starts to gather around the perimeter of the fighting area.

The heroes are watching the fruits of Gabrielle's cruel manipulations. For weeks prior to the wedding, she has had affairs with both Gustav and Dieter, and on the morning of the wedding, she arranged for Gustav to catch her and Dieter during a secret rendezvous. Later, she confronted Gustav and told an elaborate lie about how Dieter had forced himself upon her, while laughing about the ignorance of Ingrid. She gave Gustav a poison with which to treat his blade, and thus avenge both women with one swordthrust.

Unless the heroes intervene, the encounter proceeds like the final scene of *Hamlet*. Armed with the poison given to him by Gabrielle, Gustav envenoms his blade and stabs Dieter during the first few rounds of combat. Dieter then disarms Gustav, and uses the poisoned sword to stab Gustav, who stops fighting to reveal its poisoned nature. Meanwhile, Frau Braun has vanished without a trace.

As the fight is unfolding, Gabrielle has already moved on to her next prey: the male player character with the highest charisma, having been drawn to this handsome, foreign male in the crowd. She approaches him, the

illusion of Frau Braun dropped, revealing her true self. She is wearing a simple, yet elegant dress and a veil across her face, like many other women at the Carnival. She will feign horror at the brutality and will play the shrinking violet. Should the hero seem receptive to this routine, she will *charm* him with her evil eye, and will then begin to accompany the party during its wanderings in Karina. (The Dungeon Master may tell the player his character has been *charmed*, if he wishes, but should ideally just try to impress upon the player how sympathetic and vulnerable this small woman seems to him.)

Once Gabrielle discovers Raul is with the party, she will do her utmost to poison the hero against the smith, using twisted lies based on the truths of her background, claiming that Vistanis kidnapped her as a child and sold her to Bakholis, the former overlord of Invidia. At some point, she will react with horror to a burly fighter in the crowd, who is walking with a fetching beauty on his arm. She will faint into the arms of the *charmed* hero, and when she comes to will exclaim that the man was Bakholis' former slavemaster. She urges the heroes to free that poor woman from his fiendish hands. The *charmed* hero will be all for such a noble quest, and will do his utmost to convince the rest of the heroes to support him.

The fighter is, in fact, Radu Gerdanok, one of the few local nobles who has not fallen to Gabrielle's evil eye (he is a 9th-level fighter with traces of Vistani blood). He was recently reunited with his wife, and now Gabrielle wants the heroes to slay this "abominable monster."

The particulars of how this develops is entirely determined by the heroes' actions, but any rash attacks on Radu will either result in their deaths or on their being locked away in the Citadel (Area 7). If they attempt to learn more about Radu, they will find that he was one of the few who dared oppose Bakholis. Whatever the result, Gabrielle will have vanished when events have run their course, leaving behind only a handkerchief dappled with blood. (She hopes the heroes will think she has been kidnapped.)

7. The Citadel

A dilapidated castle broods on a small hill overlooking Karina. The town walls ride up the hill to kiss the perimeter of the citadel, but the castle stands apart from the town's fortifications, a self-contained stronghold guarding the northern-eastern approach to Karina. Although the castle's outer walls and towers appear solid, some of the inner buildings are in serious disrepair.

The Citadel was once an important administrative center for Baron Bakholis, Invidia's previous lord. Bakholis resided primarily in Loupet, and the castle and town were administered by his chief steward, Manfred Taige. When news of Bakholis's murder reached Karina, the garrison revolted against the steward. During the uprising, Taige and his supporters were cornered in the great hall. Rather than fighting the steward any longer, the revolutionaries sealed all the exits and set fire to the hall. The fire spread to engulf the entire north wing of the castle. Over the years, attempts have been made to renovate the north wing, but a number of strange and deadly accidents (caused by the ghost of Taige) quickly stops all progress.

The south wing of the castle currently houses the barracks and offices for the wall watch, administered by Captain Johannes Van Deusen, a cherry-cheeked, bulb-nosed drunkard and buffoon (and a 3rd-level fighter). The castle rarely houses more than 20 off-duty guards (1st-level warriors). Less than a dozen watch the gates and patrol the castle walls. The guards carefully avoid the North Wing.

Most of the castle towers serve as storerooms, containing provisions in the event of a siege, but the towers along the north wing have been converted into a prison. By day, the prisoners are guarded by a pair of soldiers, but none of the guards dare to watch over the prisoners at night. The prison towers contain over 30 inmates, most serving sentences for some sort of violent crime. The seven worst offenders (murderers, mostly) are scheduled to be hanged at the end of the Carnival, but the condemned are envied by the remaining prisoners, for they at least leave the prison.

Those who remain must still hear the tortured screams and pleadings that echo through the north wing, and endure glimpses of flame-ravaged specters. Not surprisingly, few of the inmates have a firm hold on their sanity.

The heroes are unlikely to visit the citadel, unless they commit a crime. Even if they are incarcerated, the heroes can be ransomed if they provide a suitable bribe to Van Deusen. The warden, however, makes certain that prisoners experience the terrors of the North Wing for at least one night before approaching them for a bribe; he has found that the prisoners are more amenable to negotiation after listening to the chilling screams.

Rumors. The citadel has a nasty reputation in town, and its warden is known to be a drunken fool who dotes on bribes. The prisoners are rumored to be tortured to the point of insanity, but this results more from the haunting than any actions taken by the guards. There are also stories that the citadel's old treasury was located in the haunted North Wing, but foolhardy adventurers who have managed to bribe the warden for a search permit (and a cut of the loot) have fled the castle dungeons screaming, their sanity quite shattered. Still, legends about the treasure persist, and this Carnival will find its share of fools willing to risk their lives for it.

The prisoners are well aware of the ghastly spirits haunting the North Wing. Many landed in jail as a result of the "Witch of Loupet" and are guilty of crimes of passion committed while under the influence of her evil eye.

West Karina

West of Tower Road lies Karina's most dangerous neighborhoods, including the Maze, the Falkovnian Quarter, and the Warehouse District. These areas are noted for their dirty, narrow streets, poorhouses, dilapidated buildings, and locked storage buildings. After dark, townspeople stay indoors in West Karina, for madmen, murderers, cruel Falkovnian soldiers, and more twisted beings slink through the clammy, dark streets.

8. The Maze

This seedy neighborhood is noted for its twisting, shadowed alleys which shelter the town's ruffians, ladies of the night, cut purses, and beggars. By day, the alleys are littered with garbage and the stink of human excrement. Starved animals and other vermin pick through the refuse and wander aimlessly amid the ruins of deserted buildings.

By night, packs of diseased wild dogs prowl the twisted streets, challenging or attacking anyone who enters their territory. Anyone bitten by one of these dogs must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or become infected with a debilitating disease, as described under the entry for the priest spell *cure disease* in the *Player's Handbook*.

Wild Dogs (4-16): INT Semi- (3); AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 2-9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d4+ Disease; SA: Disease; SZ S; ML 6; MM/57; XP 65.

Scar's Band. The attic of a deserted building in the Maze serves as an informal base for Karina's small thieves' guild, which is run by "Scar" Tabor, a greedy darkling. Scar and his band of eight accomplices meets every night to discuss their daily exploits of robbing or murdering Carnival celebrants. Scar arranges to punish visiting thieves who do not pay "tribute" to work in Karina during the festival.

A Vistana, Tabor was banished for murdering his elder brother. His mother accused him of the heinous crime and brought him before the *raunie*, a female tribal leader, for judgment. Placing an obsidian knife in his palm, the *raunie* asked Tabor to confess, but the arrogant Vistana denied the accusations. But the black blade burned his hand, proclaiming his guilt to all. From that day forward, Tabor was an exile and a darkling, a former Vistana with a black heart.

Tabor is a gaunt man in his mid-thirties, with olive skin, soulless eyes, and long black hair woven in a flowing braid. He wears brown, threadbare clothing over leather armor, but the

folds of his shirt conceal four throwing daggers, each envenomed with a foul poison (type E, injected, death/20). Tabor also carries the *vishnadd* blade, the dagger of judgment that proclaimed his guilt. This blade is also poisoned. In a shirt pocket, he conceals a *potion of healing* in clear crystal vials. He wears a magical belt that elongates into a *rope of climbing* upon command. Tabor also wears dark woolen gloves to cover his hands, which were colored dark red on the day of *vishnadd*, forever labeling him as Kinslayer to all Vistani. His right palm is crossed by a long black scar, where the *vishnadd* blade marked him forever.

The darkling is described in the RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix*, but a brief overview of his powers is given below. Tabor has the power of *foreseeing*. He is never surprised and makes all his saving throws automatically. He also retains the powers of the evil eye, which in Tabor manifests as a strike of paralyzing fear into the hearts of his enemies (the victim must make an evil eye check or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4+1 rounds). Highly intelligent and driven by his hatred of the Vistani, Tabor can serve a minor nemesis for the adventure.

Rumors. Those seeking information in the Maze will be referred to Scar, who meets the inquisitive heroes at the Pale Rose, a squalid bar beneath a house of ill-repute. The Pale Rose has five bouncers (2nd-level fighters) to keep order, and Scar is accompanied by a few of his gang members, who mingle unobtrusively with the bar crowd for added protection.

Scar is willing to sell any of the rumors detailed for Areas 1-7 for more than the heroes can afford. However, if they help him perform a heist the evening they approach him, he will tell them whatever they want to know about the city in exchange for their take of the treasure. If they are interested, he asks them to meet him at the Pale Rose just after Goldfinger has tolled midnight.

9. The Falkovnian Quarter

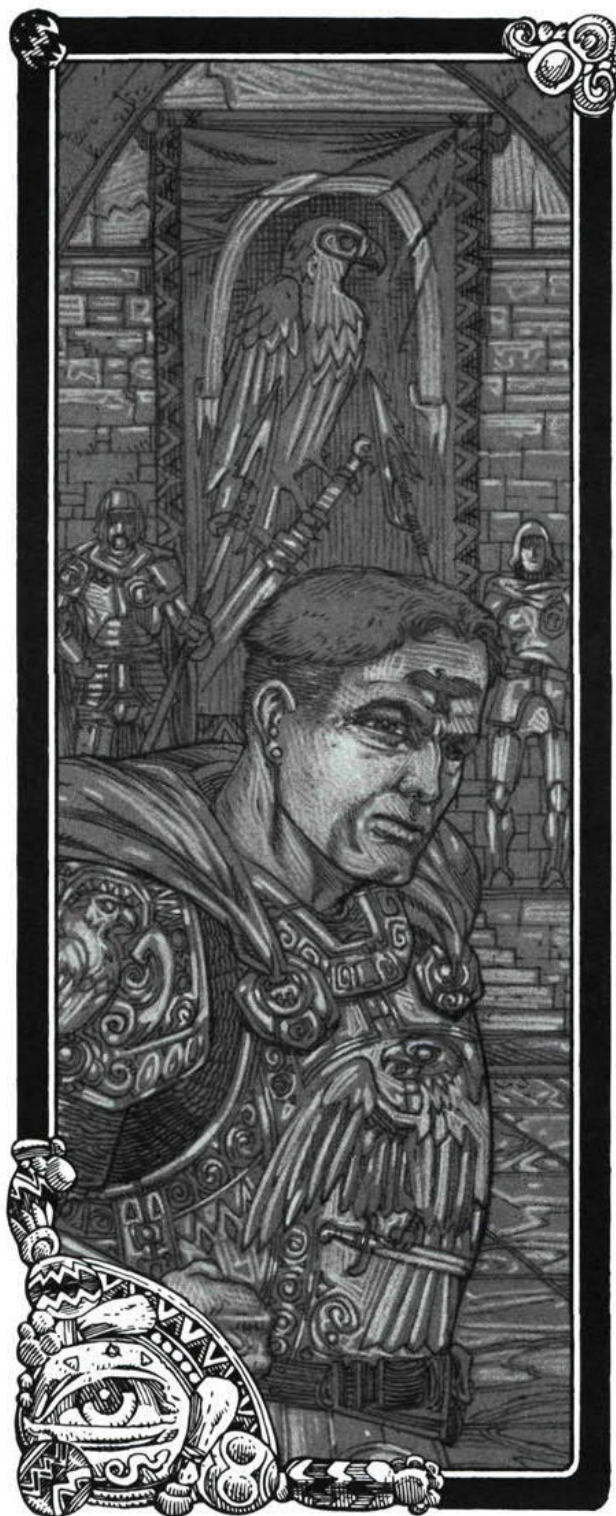
This tense, orderly neighborhood is bordered by Bog Street to the south and by the Maze to the north. Infrequent pedestrians rush quickly down the clean cobblestoned streets, their eyes fixed determinedly on the road before them. Iron bars and sturdy shutters cover all the windows of buildings in this neighborhood. Curiously, the neighborhood is untouched by the Carnival, and there are no sign of revelry.

The quarter is a small “colony” established by a trio of wealthy Falkovnian wine merchants under the direction of Commander Regess, who dispenses justice to those within “his” quarter according to their own brutal laws (the Dungeon Master is referred to the RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting for details on Falkovnian society).

Less than a hundred Falkovnians have permission to live in Karina and they keep mostly to themselves, rarely leaving their own neighborhood except to shop in the town market. Most of the immigrants are the family and slaves of the merchants, but a platoon of Falkovnian soldiers is also stationed here.

As the appointed leader of the Falkovnian community, Regess arranges regular patrols of the houses and warehouses maintained in the quarter. The patrols dispense swift military “justice” on the spot to apprehended offenders within the neighborhood.

The Commander’s Residence. Commander Anton Regess lives in a small walled townhouse with four domestic slaves and a bodyguard of six soldiers. Regess is noted for his taste of brutality, and his greed, and entertains all manner of visitors who would like to benefit from his protection (the Falkovnians make a much more effective police than the local watch). His townhouse is scattered with a number of expensive presents from local merchants wishing Regess to extend his patrols to watch over their warehouses. Regess is also allied with a band of werewolves, who rent space in his neighborhood for the “Dog Fights” during Carnival Season (see Chapter 5). The townhouse basement contains an interrogation and torture chamber.



Like all Falkovnians, Regess' most striking feature is the branded hawk on his forehead, symbol of ownership by the State. His hair has been cropped short, military style, and his steel gray eyes show no evidence of emotion. He wears polished plate mail, engraved with hawk symbols that echo the brand on his forehead. Since the Midnight Slasher has already made one attempt on his life, Regess carries several weapons. His *bastard sword* +2, named Windower, has a golden eagle pommel with a brilliant emerald in its beak (1,000 gp).

Rumors. Congregating on the streets of the Falkovnian Quarter is a crime, and no one will stop to talk with the heroes for fear of public whipping or worse punishments if apprehended. There are no taverns in the quarter for heroes to visit, either.

If the heroes seek an audience with Regess, they find him cordial but strict, and a good source of information about Falkovnia. He is not knowledgeable about Karina or Invidia. However, he does know about the Midnight Slasher whom he both fears and hates with a passion. Regess asks the heroes if they would be willing to help him eliminate the Slasher, who has been murdering his soldiers and has threatened his life on more than one occasion. He invites the heroes to meet him at a later time to discuss terms of employment. (If the Slasher survives this adventure, the Dungeon Master might wish to develop an adventure in which the heroes hunt the brutal killer.)

10. The Warehouse District

Unlike the rest of town, this neighborhood has no homes or shopping areas: it is devoted entirely to tall imposing storage buildings. The district is a quiet, lonely place, even during Carnival. Its empty streets are littered with empty crates and broken casks, home to stray animals and a few deranged beggars.

One of the oldest parts of town, this district stretches between Bog Street and West Front Street. The town watch makes regular patrols of the streets, but most merchants hire private guards, wizards, or adventurers to watch over their wares. Some of the warehouses, especially

those along West Front Street, are quite old. They were built on extensive stone foundations, riddled with countless subterranean vaults and secret storage chambers. Many of the underground rooms are now forgotten by the warehouse's current tenants.

The Slasher. A hidden underground chambers beneath East Front Street are the secret home of a dangerous murderer known as the Midnight Slasher. This serial killer is detailed fully in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix II* (2139), but enough information is given in Chapter 8, "Dramatis Personae" to allow effective use of the character for this adventure.

On cold foggy, nights, the Slasher roams the streets of Invidia, enveloped in darkness, silent as a shadow. The murderer strikes anywhere in the city, but usually stalks in the slums of West Karina. The Slasher is a sworn enemy of Commander Regess, but attempts to eliminate the sadistic Falkovnian have ended in failure. The Midnight Slasher is driven by an insane rage at any who would disrupt family life or hurt children.

A Dungeon Master who plans to introduce the Midnight Slasher into the adventure must be very careful. If the Slasher is presented simply as an insane killing machine leaving a trail of gore in his wake, then the atmosphere of horror will have been destroyed. Instead, the Slasher should be portrayed as a frightening, mysterious stalker.

Rumors. There are few people in the warehouse district to question, except the few scattered beggars who shelter in abandoned buildings. Most are deranged escaped convicts from the Citadel, who mutter about the "Angel of Darkness." There is nothing that the heroes can learn from the warehouse district's inhabitants.

Continuing the Adventure

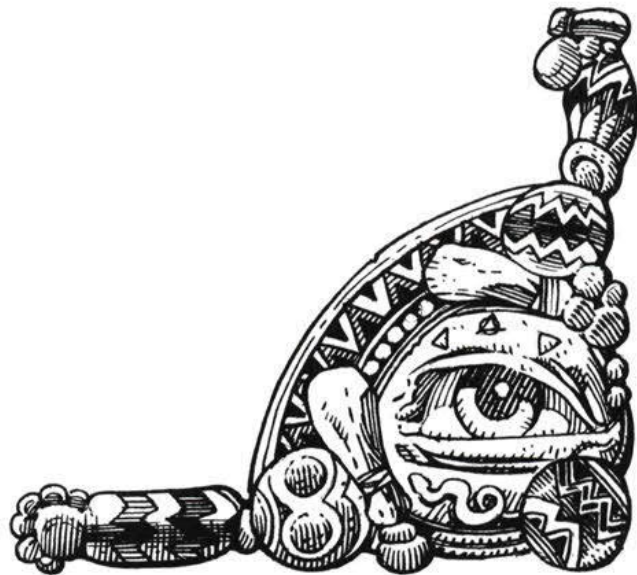
At some point after they arrive in Karina, the heroes attract the notice of the Zarovan Vistani. This mysterious tribe initiates contact with them, as described in the next chapter, and this will both put them on a path to have their curses lifted, as well as a collision course with the Dukkar.

Meanwhile, Gabrielle learns of Malocchio's exploits in town (possibly even after playing

wicked games with the heroes), and returns home to punish her disobedient child. She arrives at Cliff House to find herself a prisoner, captured by the bodyguards who have been *enthralled* by her son. After a brief battle (some of Gabrielle's allies were willing to defend her), the witch was locked in the manor's basement until Malocchio can decide her fate. He returns to town, and if the heroes have not yet been to visit the Zarovan, they will become the soul targets of his growing power.

In the course of their time in Karina, the heroes must have received at least one invitation to attend the mysterious Dog Fights which take place in the Falkovnian Quarter after midnight on each day of the Carnival. This event will provide them with more information about the Dukkar.

Once the heroes have finished all their business in Karina, the Dungeon Master should award them each up to 500 XP, based on their curiosity and handling of the various role-playing encounters.





Marcella squinted at the tarokka cards that lay in an extended cross on the table, the incense swirling thickly in the air around her. “They are near,” she said. She turned to the mustachioed man at her side. “You must go to Karina and test their strength and show them the proper path.”

“Yes,” the man said, leaving the vardo.

Marcella fingered the cards, absorbing their full meaning. “And you, Gabrielle Aderre, wherever you are, may your foul offspring make you regret your life of evil. But may the price of your punishment not be the world.”

This chapter focuses on the heroes interaction with the Vistani, as triggered by an encounter with

a different kind of Carnival amusement, and the return of a foe they thought slain. The events in the chapter take place after the heroes have spent some time in Karina. However, they may have to return to the city to gather more information in order to find the clues needed to defeat the Dukkar.

The Zarovan

The mysterious Zarovan have come to Karina in response to the presence (or more precisely, the anti-presence) of the Dukkar, a creature immune to the divinations and extended influence of the Vistani. The Zarovan cannot allow such an abomination to roam free, for they fear the Dukkar when fully grown may bring about the destruction of the entire Demiplane.

The Zarovan are perhaps the most powerful Vistani in Ravenloft, as suggested in *Van Richten’s Guide to the Vistani*. They are linked with Strahd von Zarovich, and some (such as Van Richten) speculate that the Zarovan are Strahd’s allies or perhaps even his jailers.

The Zarovani are led by Vincenzo (the captain); Eva (the *raunie*); and Marcella (the seer). Game statistics are irrelevant for these powerful characters. They can have access to any spell, magic item, or secret knowledge that the

Dungeon Master feels appropriate. None of these characters will ever reveal name of their tribe or discuss their true agenda. When dealing with the Zarovan, the heroes must never experience the comfort of knowing exactly with whom they deal.

Despite her awesome divinatory gifts, Marcella is powerless to locate the Dukkar. She knows the creature now resides near Karina because it is the region of the Demiplane has become obscured in her divinations. The Zarovan captain, Vincenzo is now seeking the *giorgio* at the Carnival whom she has foreseen will defeat the Dukkar.

The House of Mists

The presence of the Dukkar have made the Zarovan paranoid and distrustful of even their own abilities. Before recruiting the heroes, Vincenzo plans to test them with the *House of Mists*. The Dungeon Master can stage this episode anywhere in Karina, although it would work best in the Commons (Area 4) or the Wine Garden (Area 6), the Carnival’s focus.

Pushing through the Carnival crowds, you have seen countless entertainers, from the Fabulous Fire-Eaters of Mortigny to the bizarre Fred with his Singing Salmon.

“Come one, come all, to the terrifying House of Mists!” A barker’s cry suddenly rises above the festival clamor. “Test your courage and skill of arms!”

At the side of the street, a man stands on a short wine cask in front of a 7’ tall black wooden box. A nervous green parrot paces atop the tall box, muttering to itself, echoing the barker (“Monsters of the Mists, wraagh!”). The barker’s weathered face is creased by a inviting smile, and a gold earring glitters at an ear. His dark pants and shirt are accented by a fancy red and black satin vest.

The barker is now looking directly at you. The roar of the crowd drops away, so that you hear his voice alone.

“Welcome to the House of Mists! Come brave the ghosts of your past!”

“Ghost from the past, wraagh!” The green parrot fixes you with a knowing gaze.

The barker introduces himself as Vincenzo, his parrot as Lolita, and the tall wooden box as the

THE VISTANI

fabulous, incomparable *House of Mists*. He invites the heroes to step into the box and battle the fearsome creatures of the Mists. Vincenzo assures them that it is utterly safe. For the “thrill of their lives” he charges a “pittance” of 5 gp. Each. (Of course, the price is subject to negotiation; he names a price that the heroes can just barely afford and lowers the price until they seem interested).

If the heroes ignore the barker, that’s fine as well. The Dungeon Master can arrange a future encounter with the *House of Mists* after the heroes have spent an additional night or two in town and been subject to Leyla’s renewed haunting (see “Ghost from the Past,” below). If, after several attempts, the heroes still refuse to try the *House of Mists*, Raul himself volunteers to enter the House of Mists so that he can face the “ghost from his past.”

Although he is a powerful Zarovan, Vincenzo plays the part of a mundane barker and a carnival illusionist. Lolita chimes in occasionally from her lofty perch to accent Vincenzo’s important assertions about the attraction’s safety (“Perfectly safe, wraagh!”) and to poke fun at the heroes. Vincenzo will not admit he is Vistani, although he shares a few words of welcome with Raul in *patterna* (the Vistani language). Neither Vistani will elaborate further on the nature of the *House of Mists*. The heroes may enter the *House* only one at a time.

The House of Mists is a seven foot tall black box with a square base less than three feet wide. It is fitted with an accordion door of dark, supple leather. Inside, there is seemingly infinite space to maneuver, all of it shrouded in thick mist. The Dungeon Master may choose to place rocks and other natural terrain in the area as well.

Moments after entering, the hero hears the howl of a wolf, and then a huge, bear-sized wolf charges out of the mist. The creature looks identical to Nathan Timothy in werewolf form (see Chapter Two). If the hero failed a fear check during the previous encounter with Timothy, then another such check may be called for in the House of Mists.

For the purposes of the carnival game, the phantom wolf creature has the same THACO and AC as the hero. Furthermore, successful attacks do not score damage, only “hits.” The wolf creature attacks once per round. Five hits inflicted upon either adversary ends the simulation, and no experience points are earned. However, if the wolf creature is defeated, its prone

corpse transforms into the body of one of the heroes (assuming that one of them was infected with lycanthropy by Timothy during Chapter Two; if none of the characters was infected, then the wolf corpse transforms into Nathan Timothy).

Should more than one hero want to try the *House of Mists*, the Dungeon Master may vary the phantom creature according to the heroes’ wishes (he’s the paying customer), which allows him to face off with a creature he could not normally beat. The creature should be utterly ruthless with its tactics, for the character can always play again.

Once the heroes have tired of the simulation (or perhaps exhausted their supply of gold), they should have learned that Nathan Timothy and at least one member of the party may have lycanthropy.

Vincenzo thanks you all for stopping at the *House of Mists*. Then, leaning forward and lowering his voice to a conspiratorial whisper, he adds: “The help you need can be found in Vulpwood, but only if you possess courage.”

Lolita alights on Vincenzo’s shoulder. “Courage, wraagh!” she echoes.

The barker steps back into the black box and draws the door closed with a brisk snap! In the blink of an eye—as if a spell has just ended—the clamor of the crowd around you swells to its previous volume, and you are now staring at an empty stall in the market.

Tenants of nearby market stalls—who claim to have been spent the day in the vicinity—will swear they have not seen a man in a red vest, accompanied by a green parrot. The *House of Mists* is gone and will not reappear for the duration of the adventure.

A Ghost from the Past

Shortly after encountering Vincenzo, the heroes are once again plagued by Leyla’s ghost. Until Raul willingly destroys his violin by fire, as noted in Chapter One, she will haunt them from now on, although her hate and desire for revenge will be focused mostly on the hero most responsible for her defeat in Chapter One. Leyla attempts to lure the Chosen away from his compatriots using a variety of auditory illusions that only the victim can hear. This is a new power,

THE VISTANI

gained upon her evolution into a third-magnitude ghost (according to Van Richten's classification). At first, she is content with tormenting her victim from afar.

The Distant Echo. Faintly at first, the Chosen hears a distant Gypsy violin, softly at first from a secluded location, such as a dark alley, or a back room in a tavern (if the Dungeon Master has access to Gypsy music, he should play an appropriate violin passage). Regardless of the hero's actions, the music softly dies away, only to pick up later when the character relaxes his guard. The Dungeon Master can perhaps obscure its importance by mixing it with one of the events from Chapter Three.

Chilling Crescendo. After nightfall, perhaps while the hero tries to sleep, he hears the music again growing steadily louder until it fills his ears in a deafening crescendo. The music comes from no specific direction. Suddenly the music stops, only to be replaced by the sound of an infant crying. The wailing gets louder and louder, until it sounds like a frenzied shrieking. Then the keening stops as soon as suddenly as it began. (If Nikko is still alive, the baby is sleeping soundly.)

If the Dungeon Master wishes to torment the hero further, these brief hallucinations can be skillfully interwoven with real events (perhaps a mother walking down the street with an infant, or an ordinary street-side entertainer playing the violin). At any event, these strange noises foreshadow Leyla's attack when the heroes go to find the Vistani.

Vulpwood Horror

Once the heroes decide it is in their best interest to investigate Vincenzo's cryptic remark, even a few cursory questions to the townspeople or tourists will reveal that Vulpwood is directly to the north of the city. Townsfolk will also advise the heroes against traveling Vulpwood after dark, and only with great caution during the day. The wilds beyond the city walls are infested with wandering wolves, wild dogs, and werewolves from neighboring Verbrek, and the deep ravines are home to will o' wisps and jermlaine.

The Dungeon Master should stage at least one hostile encounter in the wilds before the heroes reach the Vistani. Compared to the forest, the *House of Mists* was a minor test of courage. The DM may run the following encounter with Leyla's ghost, or, if the DM decided to conclude the plot

involving Leyla with Chapter One, any random encounter may be substituted.

The Ghost's Attack

The heroes come upon a lone vardo, and the heroes (including Raul) hears the sound of a baby crying behind it; if Nikko still lives, the infant begins to cry as well. The vardo appears identical to Raul's, which the party presumably abandoned on Dead Man's Perch in Chapter Two. If the heroes does not investigate, Raul approaches the vardo himself. Beyond it, is a campsite stands the ornate iron bassinet that was Nikko's cradle. Leyla is stands beside it, fully manifested in physical form. Unlike Chapter One, she appears as a solid human Vistana, although she now radiates supernatural fear like any ghost. Aside from Leyla, the remainder of the campsite, including the vardo, cradle, and crying are illusions.

Leyla walks menacingly at the Chosen character, ignoring Raul and the rest of the party, her eyes blazing with evil fury. Unless the heroes makes a saving throw vs. spells, they flee in panic for 2-12 rounds. If Leyla touches the character once with her paralytic grasp, the victim must make an insanity check (another saving throw is needed in order to resist the paralysis). The ghost can be harmed by magical or Vistani-forged weapons. Raul helps the party drive off the ghost, slashing at the undead with his scimitar. Leyla pursues the Chosen until reduced to zero hit points or the victim fails an insanity check. The ghost then slowly dissolves with a gleeful laughter, along with her illusions.

If the party is helpless in the face of the ghost (i.e., they have no magical weapons or Raul), the DM can arrange a last-minute rescue by Vincenzo from the nearby Zarovan camp, since the ghost flees at the sound of the barker's approach. Alternatively, fleeing heroes may run straight into the Zarovan camp, where they are safe from Leyla's tricks and illusions.

Leyla (3rd-Magnitude Ghost): INT Ave (11); AL CE; AC -2 or 4; MV 9; HD 8; hp 45; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 1-6; SA: Paralyzing touch (2d4 rounds), insanity, fear aura (2-12 rounds), accelerated aging (5d4 years); SD: harmed only by magical or Vistani-forged weapons; standard undead immunities; auditory and visual illusions; SZ M; ML Special; XP 5,000.

THE VISTANI

Night with the Zarovan

As the heroes end the encounter with Leyla (through flight or otherwise), night falls over the forest with frightening speed, as if the day has been sucked into oblivion. However, in a small clearing, blanketed in moonlight, they come upon a circle of vardos that stand like a fortress against the night creatures of the forest. The heroes arrive are welcomed by Vincenzo, still wearing his flashy red vest. An elderly woman named Eva stands beside him, attired in dark flowing dress with a parrot-green shawl wrapped around her sturdy shoulders. The Vistana introduces herself as the *raunie*, or female leader, and invite them to join their campfire circle with the rest of their tribe and assuring them of their safety from the ghost. In the shelter of the fire, the heroes are given mugs of fragrant tea by other Vistani to warm their hearts and wash away the last traces of ghost-fear.

At some point, the Dungeon Master should call for intelligence checks from the heroes. Success means they notice Raul's vardo among the others at the camp, somehow transported from Dead Man's Perch. Raul is startled and grows cautious at this sight, but a few words with Vincenzo in *patterna* changes his concern to gratitude.

The Prastonata

Once the heroes begin to ask questions, proceed to following scene:

By the time the wooden cups have been wiped (not washed) and put away, the moon has risen high over the campsite and the stars shine brightly in the evening sky.

"Moonrise," whispers Vincenzo, "is the finest hour of the day." A rather odd comment, considering the horrible things that come out by moonlight, here in Invidia.

With an ease that would amaze a ranger, Vincenzo sparks a fire to life in minutes, using nothing but a flight block and some kindling. Two beautiful young girls begin to feed the flames, laughing merrily and jabbering to each other in their colorful tongue.

One by one, the Vistani finish their various tasks about camp and join the growing circle around the fire. At Eva's request, Raul produces his violin and, after a few plucks to tune the strings, the Vistana smith begins to stroke them with his bow, striking up a spirited melody. A look of tense surprise momentarily appears on the elderly woman's face, but it quickly gives way to a smile of enjoyment as she begins clapping in time to the music.

If the Dungeon Master has access to "gypsy" violin music, he should put it on, then continue with the description of the scene.

Soon, the Vistani are clapping and singing. A beautiful young girl rises and begins to dance around the fire, shaking a tambourine to the rhythm of the music. She spins and twirls her skirt round and round, until you are dizzy just watching her. Suddenly, she comes to a stop before your party. Gently she sways before you, the slightest smile upon her lips.

"Who will dance with Gitana?" asks a nearby man. "Hers is a rare invitation indeed!"

If any adventurer accepts the invitation, have the player make a Dexterity check with a -2 penalty unless the character has the dancing proficiency (no penalty). Success indicates that the giorgio acquitted himself well, perhaps amusing the Vistani in the process. Such an accomplishment results in a favorable disposition toward the character. The Vistani will tend to address him, as if he spoke for the rest of the party.

The Doroq

Once the *prastonata* has concluded, the time for telling legends arrives.

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Eva and Vincenzo walk over to one of the *vardos*, each knocking on the door three times. After a pause, the narrow portal opens and a young woman steps out, dressed in layered skirts of many vibrant colors and intricate patterns. Her narrow face is framed with night-black hair and her eyes burn like smoldering coals. “It is time for the *doroq*,” she says approaching the firelight. “I am Marcella.”

If the Dungeon Master has access to *Van Richten’s Guide to the Vistani*, Marcella starts the *doroq* with the “Legend of the War for All Times.”

Following the narration of the creation myth in *patterna*, the Vistani seer recounts the history of Gabrielle Aderre, as summarized in “Dramatis Personae.” Finally, she speaks of heroes about the Dukkar:

From that monstrous union, an abomination was born, a creature in the guise of a child, known to us as the Dukkar. It is this creature we have come to defeat. Its presence gnaws at us like a cancer, as it is a gaping hole in our Sight. We ask you to assist our endeavor. As *giorgio* you can walk about Karina unnoticed, and learn of its lair. For this information we would be grateful.

The Vistani are extremely powerful allies, and their reliance on *giorgio* to assist in their affairs irks them greatly. Marcella reveals only as much information as is necessary to motivate the heroes to join them—she does not say why the Dukkar has such significance to her people. The party is free to refuse her request for aid, but Raul (if he accompanies them) suggests that they accept, especially since the Vistani may know of a way for the heroes to return home.

Heroes who react respectfully during the *doroq* and accept Marcella’s proposal are

THE VISTANI

welcomed to stay with the Vistani for the entire night. Heroes who can provide the information the Vistani need (any information about “The Boy in Black” will reassure them of the Dukkar’s presence), will receive immediate rewards. Marcella will perform tarokka readings and otherwise provide information free of charge. On the other hand, if the heroes make light of the event or refuse Marcella’s request for aid, then they must pay dearly for any services rendered.

Assuming that no breaches of protocol occur, Marcella, Vincenzo, and Eva ask the heroes about their sojourn in Karina and invite them to tell a story. They are particularly interested in their encounter with the Boy in Black. Reward those who entertain the group with experience points. (Flout any bard who refuses to rise to the occasion).

Finally, when the heroes inevitably ask about how to return home, Marcella says only that “you will not see the home forge before the last night of the full moon.” Leaving Ravenloft is one of the most powerful gifts of the Zarovan. However, under no circumstances will any other Vistana reveal that he or she has the power to return the heroes home.

Vistani Gifts

Assuming that the heroes agree to help, the Zarovan provide them with a number of gifts. First, as added protection against the Dukkar’s evil powers, Marcella gives each of the heroes a small *evil eye amulet* +4 in the shape of a blue glass pendant, painted with an eye symbol (see the introductory chapter, “Cutting the Deck”). She does not explain the evil eye in detail, except as a general magical force shared by all Vistani.

Further, Marcella provides the heroes with a form of *healing potions*. This herbal curative functions regardless of their curse. The imbiber must immediately make a saving throw vs. poison after drinking one dose of the noxious mixture. If the save is successful, the elixir acts as a *potion of extra-healing*; if it fails, no healing is achieved and the imbiber suffers a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls for 1d6 hours, due to nausea. The heroes may consume as many doses as are needed to heal them fully.

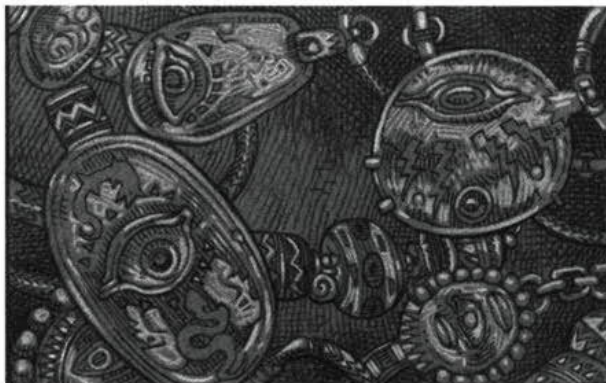
In addition, if any of the characters have contracted lycanthropy from Timothy, she warns

them of its impending evolution under the full moon tomorrow night. She gives the afflicted character another, even more vile tasting potion. This mixture will stave off the onset of the disease for three days.

Continuing the Adventure

If the heroes do not yet have any information to report about events in Karina, the Dukkar, or Gabrielle, Vincenzo requests that they go to the city and return to the campsite before nightfall tomorrow to report. During the next three nights of the full moon, known as *Fulltide*, the Vistani are at the height of their powers. If the heroes cannot uncover the location of the Dukkar before the close of *Fulltide*, then not only will the creature remain beyond the influence of the Vistani for another full month, but the heroes’ curses will be even more difficult to remove. Chapter Three details Karina and the information that can be learned.

If the heroes have already gathered the needed information (or upon returning to the camp after doing so), the Zarovani leaders state that, with the help of Raul, they will create a magical item capable of binding the Dukkar. Further, they request that the heroes return to town, as this night is one of the great significance to the Vistani, the *Lunaset*, and they must perform rituals that no giorgio may see. In the meantime—if the heroes do not think of it themselves—one of the Vistani urges the heroes to investigate the Dog Fights (the subject of the next chapter) in the event that they can learn more specific information about the Dukkar.



It's gonna be a good one this year," Nathan Timothy said, kneeling in front of the cages. The dogs inside threw themselves at the wire gates, frothing at the mouth and snarling angrily, wanting to rip his face with their fangs. He stood and looked to the woman in the shadows. "How did you get them so vicious?"

"Trade secret," she replied, giggling sweetly. "Do you want to see the other combatants?"

"With pleasure," Timothy said, standing and taking the woman's arm. "Anton had promised me a tour of his dungeon. Let's make an even out of it."

Bloodsport

The Dog Fights are a recent Carnival tradition, established by Nathan Timothy and two werewolf associates from Verbrek. Unlike most dog fights, however, these contests are conducted between a trained attack dog and a defenseless human, and the werewolves wager how many dogs it will take to bring down the prey. The Dog Fights have many visitors—some of them even human—who delight in such horrid sport.

The sadistic Commander Regess, who provides some of the victims from his townhouse dungeons, finds the Dog Fights exhilarating. Every year, the Midnight Stalker watches secretly from the shadows, waiting for an opportunity to strike at the evil crowd.

The Dog Fights are an event where the evil creatures of Ravenloft come to see and be seen. It is a place where dirty money changes hands and dark secrets are whispered. It is also the ideal setting for a brief adventure.

Sponsors and Guests

The location of the Dog Fights is a carefully maintained secret; the event moves on a yearly basis but always remains in the Falkovnian quarter, where Regess has supreme legal authority. On the first year, the Dog Fights were held in the Warehouse district (so that

Nathan could feel comfortable with the proximity of the river), but the event was plagued by the Midnight Slasher, and the town watch arrived to interrupt the affair. Since the event has been moved to the Falkovnian Quarter, the number of unpredictable "accidents" has decreased substantially. The invited arrive at the Dog Fights with a well-armed escort to the attentions of the Slasher.

Only two people involved with the Dog Fights know of Gabrielle's and Malocchio's current lair in Cliff House. Both Scar Tabor and the Midnight Slasher have (independently) done enough snooping around the manor house to verify the repeated presence of Gabrielle and "the Boy in Black." The plot of this mini-adventure revolves around learning this key piece of information. Armed with this intelligence, the heroes will be able to search out and confront Gabrielle and Malocchio in the following chapter.

Because of the Dog Fights' secret location, the heroes need a sponsor to guide them to the event: either Nathan Timothy from the Dockyards (Area 2); Matton from the Wine Garden (Area 6); or Scar Tabor from the Maze (Area 8). Each of these sponsors have their own reasons for wanting the heroes to accompany them to the occasion; none of the sponsors' motives are altruistic, and none discuss the true nature of the event. Depending upon the mood of the Dungeon Master, the strength of the party, and their choice of a patron, there are three ways to run the adventure, each outlined below:

Recruiting Entertainment

The nastiest and most dangerous introduction to the Dog Fights would be for the heroes to choose Nathan Timothy as their patrons. As an organizer of the event, Timothy is interested in recruiting additional entertainment for the evening. If the heroes accompany the villain to the Dog Fights, he plans to make them participate. The soldiers and twenty werewolves attending the dog fights should be plenty to subdue even a powerful party.

Planning a Heist

Scar Tabor's plot to steal the bankroll for the Dog Fights should be appealing for the heroes, since it

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provides them with a specific mission aside from serving as simple bodyguards. In addition, an invitation for a caper may be too tempting for roguish heroes to resist. Scar Tabor plans to doublecross the party, but only after they have handed him the stolen treasure (see Area 8 in the previous chapter). Because of the treachery involved, this plot also requires a battle-ready party of adventurers.

Should the heroes keep accept Tabor's rendezvous at the Pale Rose, he lays out a map of 123 Bog Street showing the secret exit and the location of the treasure chest in Area 4c. The plan of the heist is simple: the heroes must arrive at the Dog Fights alone; they will be admitted after whispering the password into the guard's ear ("Arkendale Lives."). Tabor will be there. Once inside, they will wait for his signal to slip behind the curtain, subdue the guards silently, unlock the storeroom (4b); disarm and unlock the trapped chest; steal the gold; leave by the secret exit, finally overpowering the guards before they leave.

To help in the heist, Tabor hands the party leader a ring of skeleton keys (which open the

various locks in the warehouse) and pouch of black flight powder (see below). Tabor cautions the heroes to sprinkle the powder on their boots before they leave, since it has a limited duration. The darkling explains that the powder is necessary since the Falkovnians use guard dogs to track escaped prisoners. Although this is true, he is much more concerned about an unwelcome visit from a pack of angry werewolves. Finally, once the heroes reach the Pale Rose (using an indirect route if possible) and hand over the gold, Tabor promises to answer all their questions.

Skeleton keys. As detailed in *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani*, the manufacture of skeleton keys is an attribute associated with the Corvara, Scar Tabor's former Tasque. The skeleton key provides a rogue with a +25% bonus to his or her Open Locks ability. Furthermore, any traps—magical or otherwise—which would normally be activated by failure to use the proper key does not go off when the skeleton key is used. Each key works only upon the lock for which it was constructed.

Flight powder. This dark peppery mixture is



another of the darkling's secrets learned as a Vistani. When sprinkled on boots, this powder enables one to leave no footprints or scent by which he can be tracked, (similar to *pass without trace*, the first level clerical spell). The effects last for 2d6 turns.

Bodyguards

Perhaps the easiest way to the heroes to the Dog Fights is as bodyguards for Matton Blanchard, who desperately wants to locate his beloved Gabrielle Aderre. He is well aware that the Dog Fights is a werewolf hangout, where others are only tolerated. Given the bitter enmity between werewolves and wolfweres, Matton realizes his chances of survival will be improved by hiring bodyguards. If the heroes are reluctant to approach Matton at the Laughing Maiden, the noble hires a crier to advertise that he is looking for bodyguards.

The heroes probably do not wish to associate with Matton, given their unpleasant previous encounters. As noted in Chapter One, Matton is a rude, arrogant, and condescending snob who treats his hirelings like furniture. However, astute players will have noticed that he does not doublecross his henchmen: the six retainers that accompanied Matton on his hunting expedition (as noted from Dead Man's Perch in Chapter Two) were seen riding with the nobleman into town in Chapter Three.

When they arrive seeking employment, Matton tells the heroes nothing of his true motives, although they may be able to guess given the stories told by the Zarovan. By now, the heroes should also realize that the Dukkar can probably be found in the vicinity of his mother; Gabrielle would obviously be a good source of information about her son. The heroes may also hope to question Matton's source of information at the Dog Fights.

Getting There

As the heroes move through the streets of West Karina, they feel as though they are being watched. The street lamps are placed further apart, casting flickering shadows that seem to move.

Crossing Tower Street, you notice a tall, slender figure standing on a street corner a block away, leaning up against a building near a street lamp. He wears a wide-brimmed hat and a billowing cloak of some dark fabric that seems to drink up the night, making him hard to see. A dark scarf covers the lower half of his face. The man abruptly steps out of the lamplight and is swallowed silently by darkness. Where he was standing, a crumpled piece of parchment lies on the cobblestone sidewalk by the street lamp.

The cloaked figure is the Midnight Slasher, an element of random violence in the adventure, whose sole aim is to break up the Dog Fights. His first goal is to discomfit the guests, either by threats (in the case of a well-armed party) or by murder (in the case of a single person wandering alone). The Dungeon Master should review the Slasher's history and background in "Dramatis Personae."

If one of the characters picks up the crumpled paper, they find it contains a severed human finger, still wearing an iron signet finger carved with the Falkovnian hawk (recently harvested from one of Regess' soldiers). The paper is scrawled in blood (undoubtedly using the finger as a writing implement):

*The darkness is mine.
The anger is mine.
The vengeance is mine.*

The last verse is still moist. The heroes' patron blanches visibly at the sight, although he does nothing except urge the party to hurry. If asked about the Slasher, the patron tells them to shut up and walk faster. They reach 123 Bog Street, the location of the Dog Fights, without further incident.

123 Bog Street

The Dog Fights begin after midnight at 123 Bog Street. A map of the warehouse and environs is included on the inside of the cover for the adventure. The entire area is guarded by ten Falkovnian soldiers (designated by **S** on the map) and three vicious war dogs (**D**). Equipped

DOG FIGHTS

with silvered blades as a precaution against lycanthropes, the soldiers remain at their posts unless called away by Commander Regess. The large mastiffs are chained in a specific locations, mainly to sniff out concealed or *invisible* intruders. Important areas and defenses in the warehouse are detailed below.

Falkovnian soldiers (10); AC 5; MV 9; F3; hp 21 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (short sword: 1-6); AL LE; THAC0 18. Scale mail, shields, silvered short swords.

War Dogs (3): INT Semi- (3); AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 2-8; SZ M (6' long); ML 10; MM/57; XP 120.

1. Ground Floor

From Bog Street, the warehouse's most obvious entrance is a pair of sturdy wooden double doors over ten feet wide, large enough to accommodate a horse-drawn cart. To the right of the cargo doors, a single door is recessed into the stone walls of the warehouse; a narrow street to the left wraps around the building, leading to its back door.

The ground floor of the warehouse has been secured like a fortress to guard against unwanted intrusion, primarily from the Midnight Slasher. All of the single doors are locked and barred from inside; a peephole enables guards to survey visitors. For added security, windows have been shuttered and bolted from the inside. If heroes listen at the doors or windows, they can hear faint cheers and sounds of dogs barking.

Inside the front foyer (1a), where workers commonly hang their cloaks on a row of pegs along the wall, two soldiers watch the front entrance, accompanied by a war dog by the light of a guttering lantern. They will admit any visitors who know the password ("Arkendale Lives."). A similar security team guards the back door.

The soldiers guarding the entrance are under orders to disarm visitors, meaning that they do not permit any large weapons into the Dog

Fights. The guards do not perform a rigorous body search of the guests, so it is easily possible to smuggle in small weapons, provided that they are modestly concealed. Confiscated weapons are kept in the chest in (1a) and will be returned upon the heroes' exit. Soldiers direct disarmed guests to the stairs leading down to the dog fights (Area 3).

The stone floor of the warehouse (1b) is stacked with crates, containing assorted mundane goods, including huge casks of wine for export to Silbervas. The stacks and crates loom up into the darkness beyond the scant illumination provided by the guard's lanterns. A pitch-dark (locked) office (1c) contains the business records for one of the Falkovnian merchants. In addition to papers and ledgers (detailing business transactions between Silbervas and Karina), the desk contains a curved dagger and a branding iron with a hawk insignia for marking new slaves.

2. Escape Route

The warehouse next door to 123 Bog Street has been fitted with a secret trap door, leading to the bar area (Area 4c). The windows, front and back doors have been secured as in Area 1. The escape route is guarded by two soldiers and war dog. Expecting a quiet night, the guards are passing time by playing cards under the light from a single lantern. The rest of the warehouse is pitch black and filled with towering casks of Shriek, a red wine produced only in Karina.

3. Dog Fights

The stairs leading down to the basement are wrapped in clammy darkness, except near the bottom where a crack of light seeps around heavy wooden double doors. Two soldiers open the doors, double checking visitors for visible weapons.

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The warehouse basement is a long barrel vaulted chamber, perhaps thirty feet wide and seventy feet long with a sooty 15 foot high stone ceiling. The southern part of the hall—dimly lit by flickering candlelight from iron candelabras and swinging chandeliers—is dominated by a deep pit built up against the western wall. The pit is surrounded on the remaining three sides by a low iron railing. Chairs and tables have been pushed up to the three sides of the pit, and a number of spectators stare with fascination into the depths, where harsh guttural growls, barks, and yips burst out in staccato bursts of ferocity. Along the eastern wall, an wide arch leads to a crowded bar. The dark, northern part of the hall is discretely blocked off by a heavy black curtain, hanging from an thick iron bar that spans the width of the chamber.

Two more soldiers, armed with spears, stand at the back of the chamber, hidden behind the curtain. In addition to the soldiers, the heroes may recognize Commander Regess and Scar Tabor (with two of his accomplices). The Dungeon Master should refer to the previous chapter for a description of these two characters.

Nathan Timothy arrives 1-4 turns after the heroes (unless he serves as a guide). Note that since the dog fights are greater than 100 yards from the river, the former dark lord cannot regenerate, and he loses 1 hp/hour until he returns to the *Virago* (see Chapter One).

The dogfights are administered by a square-shouldered brute with a callous disposition named Pitmaster Frand. One of Timothy's old associates from his halcyon days as dark lord of Arkendale, Frand is a werewolf who currently resides in Verbrek. Currently in human form, he wears a black studded leather and matching bracers. Frand also carries the keys to the dog kennels (3a) and the prison (3c) on a chain around his neck.

The Dungeon Master may showcase any number of dark celebrities from any of the domains; otherwise, the dog fights are attended by 2-16 werewolves, all currently in human

form, with statistics similar to those of Pitmaster Frand. Finally, Matton Blanchard is not present unless accompanied (i.e., protected by) the heroes. Wolfweres are *not* welcome at the dog fights.

A locked door on the west wall leads to the dog kennels (3a), where over twenty vicious war dogs (game statistics in Area 1) are stored in box-like pens that can be easily lowered into the pit by rope. The dogs are only the first part of the program. Behind the dark curtain in the back of the hall, near a tall stack of empty crates and a pile of torn dog corpses (3b), another locked wooden door is recessed in the west wall (faint sounds of weeping and crying can be heard if one cares to listen). The door leads to a temporary prison (3c), where Regess has chained 3-18 human prisoners. A few are old slaves, too feeble to work productively any longer, some are snatched beggars and children from the Maze, but most are visitors or tourists visiting Karina for the Carnival. All are zero-level humans with 2-5 hit points.

As the night progresses, the prisoners will be lowered into the pit (perhaps with a dagger) along with a ferocious war dog. Sometimes, one or more of the werewolf patrons will jump into the pit to satiate his moon-driven passion, but most of the lycanthropes have already fed for the evening. The dog fights are for entertainment, not nourishment.

Commander Regess: INT Exceptional (16); AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; F5; hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (3/2 with sword); Dmg by weapon +1 (strength bonus) SA Specialized with long sword; SD Nil; SZ M; ML 18; Plate mail, *bastard sword* +2, mace, light crossbow.

Pitmaster Frand (werewolf): INT Ave (10); AL CE; AC 5; MV 12 (15); HD 4+3; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: by weapon (2d4 in wolf form); SA: Surprise; SD: silver or +1 weapon to hit in wolf form; SZ M; ML 16; MM/240; XP 650; *studded leather* +2, prison keys.

4. Belly Up to the Bar

A 15' wide arch in the west wall of the long hall leads to a smoky bar, busily tended by two lovely women in simple dresses, their white blouses seductive and revealing. The patrons at the bar seem to be spending as much time drinking as placing wagers on the outcome of the dog fights.

Everyone at the bar, including the female bartenders, are werewolves. The bar patrons try to intimidate any humans who approach for a drink. One man flashes his canine jaws in a feral smile, another taps the bar top with monstrous claws. The bartenders (named Amanda and Caroline) swat the brash offenders, ordering them to "lay off the paying customers! You're cutting into my tips." Unless a generous tip is forthcoming, Amanda and Caroline will not restrain the patrons in the future when humans return to the bar. The Dungeon Master should refer to Area 6 in Karina for a description of the various exotic drinks available at the Carnival.

A large sum of money passes over the bar. While Amanda (dimples, long honey-colored hair woven in two braids, hazel eyes) is chiefly concerned with mixing and serving drinks, Caroline (loose chestnut hair, blue eyes, never smiles) takes care of the bets. Despite their gorgeous appearance, both Caroline and Amanda are vicious killers (hp 30 each, same stats as Frand). Caroline keeps a *heavy crossbow of speed* behind the bar, along with a supply of 14 bolts +2. The key to the bank is in her bodice. Amanda has a brace of six silvered daggers, envenomed with sleep poison. Even Pitmaster Frand wisely heeds their bark. The bartenders are close associates of Nathan Timothy and like Frand live in Verbrek during most of the year.

The heroes are free to place a wager on the outcome of the fights. The odds range from 1:1 (50% chance of winning, pays back original bet) to 2:1 (33% chance of winning, pays back double the original bet). Caroline keeps a tabulates wins (or losses) and pays from the bank upon departure. Those who welch on their bets are stripped, tossed into the pit, and pitted against

one of the werewolf patrons.

The store room south of the bar (4a) contains casks of alcoholic beverages; while the store room north of the bar (4b) contains the bank: a large locked iron box, trapped by a pair of envenomed scything blades (#AT 2, THACO 15, Dmg 2-8 + Poison (E, 20/death)). The trunk contains (in 100 coin sacks) 4,200 cp, 2,400 sp, 5,000 gp, and 5 bloodstones (each worth 500 gp). In the north corner of area 4b, an empty crate conceals a secret door, leading to escape route via area 2.

Unwelcome Revelations

Given the violent nature of the Dog Fights, the Dungeon Master must be careful to avoid turning the scenario into a gorefest. At first, the Dog Fights must seem to be simply another brutal sport, where a group of cruel humans gather to watch dogs tear each other to pieces in a deep bloody pit, surrounded by cheering onlookers. The Dungeon Master should keep in mind the techniques of terror, detailed in the RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting, to build the drama and horror of the scenario.

First focus on details leading up to the fight. Frand enters the storeroom, hauling out two crates, each filled with a barking dog. The crates are slowly lowered into the pit, and then a release mechanism opens the door allowing the dogs to spring out and attack. Since the fights take place in a pit surrounded by an imposing curtain of people, they are kept discretely out of sight, although the sounds are easily discernible. Frand hauls the bloody remains and empty crates, disappearing behind the curtain at the back of the hall.

Slowly, the truly monstrous nature of the event should become frighteningly clear. A trip to the bar may reveal the identity of the patrons, while the sudden arrival of Nathan Timothy—someone they suspect a werewolf—should make them realize that they are completely surrounded by monsters. The true magnitude of the horror should be obvious when Frand hauls out the first human prisoner—a terrified young woman—from the cell behind the curtains and lowers her screaming into the pit.

Continuing the Adventure

There are many possible resolutions to this adventure, depending upon the party's choice of patron and their actions once they arrive and are confronted by the horror around them. The Dungeon Master can award the party up to 8,000 XP for braving the perils of the Dog Fights and discovering the location of Gabrielle's lair. Reduce this award by half if the adventurers did not even attempt to save any of the human prisoners or acted in a cowardly or unheroic manner. The DM should reward heroes for their initiative and role-playing with individual awards of up to 800 XP.

Captured!

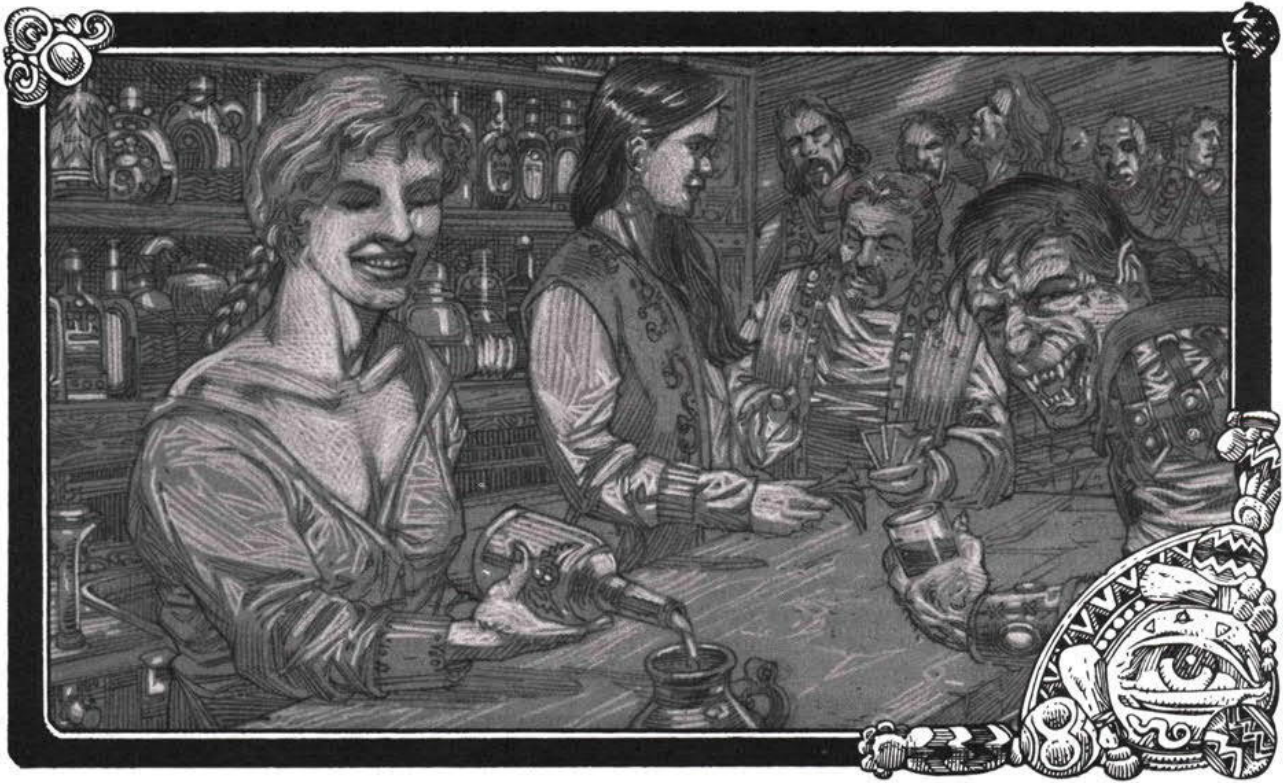
Heroic attempts to save the human victims (or the choice of Timothy) will find the party subdued by the werewolves and locked into the holding cell until they, too, are tossed to the dogs. Assuming the party has the resources to escape, they may be able to sneak out the secret exit.

During their escape, the heroes encounter the Midnight Slasher lurking in the shadows either behind the curtains (Area 3b) or in one of the storerooms. Instead of attacking the party, the Slasher helps the heroes escape with the surviving prisoners, guiding them out the secret exit, and past the mutilated corpses of the guards in Area 2. Before melting into the darkness, the Slasher tells them to seek out the witch and her boy at Cliff House.

The Heist

If the party decided to perform Tabor's heist, the theft may be complicated once they see the first human prisoner being lowered into the dog pits. If the heroes do nothing and merely continue with the caper, the Dungeon Master should have each character make powers check once the *unfortunate is torn to shreds by the dogs*, and then create a number of minor complications to raise tension. For instance, while the party is subduing the guards behind the curtain, one might make a sound; fortunately the patrons are too distracted by the dog fights. The greatest moment of danger in the caper occurs when they have to open the treasure chest. If one of the

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bartenders from Area 4 were to enter, she would smell the heroes unless they have applied the magic powder early. The final complication is Tabor himself, who plans to kill the heroes with the help of eight accomplices once the gold is delivered. True to his word, the darkling reveals Gabrielle and the Dukkar's location, but then springs the ambush.

Bodyguards

Finally, if the heroes serve as bodyguards for Matton, they find him to be a surprisingly unpopular figure at the Dog Fights. As soon as he enters Area 3, the Pitmaster approaches him, growling "You are not welcome here!" Matton responds that he will not stay long, and only wants to speak with Tabor, who is sitting at a table in the corner. Frand lets Matton and the party enter, but the wolfwere continues to attract angry stares from almost all of the patrons.

Matton drops a pouch of gems on the table and asks Tabor where Gabrielle is located; the

heroes may ask questions too, but must pay for their own answers. By the end of the questioning, a group of three patrons from the bar (hp 25 hit points each), unable to contain their animosity, assume half-wolf form and charge Matton while the rest of the patrons watch the combat with interest. Unless the heroes defend him, Matton changes into half-wolf form but is promptly slain. The heroes may either use the confusion of combat to escape (deserting Matton to his fate, which may call for powers checks), but if they fight off the werewolves, the rest of the bar patrons do not attack providing that Matton and the heroes leave immediately. Otherwise, the exit will be barred, Matton will be torn to pieces on the spot, and the heroes will be captured.

If the heroes leave the Dog Fights with Matton, they escort him back to the Laughing Maiden at the Wine Garden without incident (unless the DM wishes to challenge them further with encounters of his own devising). Matton rewards each of the party members with a pouch of 100 gp and attempts to hire them for

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his investigation of Cliff House tomorrow (he promises a similar reward). As a bonus, he pays for their lodgings at one of the inns at the Wine Garden so the heroes can rest for the remainder of the night.

Reporting to the Zarovan

Regardless of how they learn the crucial information, the heroes must wait until after moonset (just before dawn) before attempting to reach the Vistani encampment. If the heroes foolishly try to contact the Zarovan during the full moon, the DM should device a few vicious encounters with night creatures or even the vengeful Leyla to dissuade them. Exhausted after their own nocturnal activities, the Zarovan sleep until noon. When they wake, the heroes can relate their news of from the Dog Fights.

The Vistani prepare a lavish noonday meal, during which Marcella narrates a story from *Van*

Richten's Guide to the Vistani and heals their wounds with more of her bitter potions. At the end of the meal, she presents them with a fist-sized black iron ball, a *sphere of binding*, to use against the Dukkar at Cliff House. The sphere binds the Dukkar to Invidia, neutralizing his ability to teleport beyond the Mists and hence eliminating him as a threat to the Demiplane. When they encounter Malocchio at Cliff House, Marcella advises them to hurl the *sphere* at his feet. She tells the heroes nothing of its powers; divinations cast by the player characters reveal nothing.

Raul apologizes for not accompanying them to the Dog Fights; he was busy all night forging the *sphere of binding* before its enchantment by the Zarovan. Raul will join the party for the adventure in Cliff House. Before the party leaves with Raul, Marcella calls after them: "Return to our camp before midnight; tonight all curses shall be broken."





In the near darkness of the clammy cellar, Gabrielle Aderre sat on the floor in a corner, mindless of the broken glass and pool of blood-red wine. The words of her mother echoed relentlessly in her memory.

"The Mists take you, traitor. May you know your child's betrayal and realize too late the depths of its evil!"

Gazing into her son's eyes before he locked her away, Gabrielle had at last realized the meaning of Isabella's curse. The illusions that had cloaked her mind

slipped away, and she had remembered, Malocchio's father.

She screamed then, as the winged beast clawed in her unshackled memory, gloating over his conquest. Gabrielle hurled all the wine bottles she could find against the cellar walls, fighting the remembered fiend. In her shattered mind, he spoke with her mother's voice.

"A man, a babe, a home—these things can never be for you, Gabrielle, for tragedy will be the only result."

As her sanity slipped away, Gabrielle Aderre sobbed in a corner, oblivious to the pool of blood-red wine that seeped slowly across the cold stone floor towards her.

A Dark Lord's Residence

One of the more spectacular estates along the river, known as old Haptmeyer residence or simply "Cliff House" by the townspeople, has been largely deserted for the past seven years, ever since the deaths of Lord and Lady Haptmeyer.

According to local tales, Lady Haptmeyer found her husband in the arms of a pretty house servant, and during the violent argument that ensued, the noble pair battled on a high balcony, plummeting over the edge to their watery deaths. The destruction of the

Haptmeyers was one of Gabrielle's early triumphs as lord of Invidia.

When returning to Karina for the Carnival, Gabrielle chose to use the estate as her home base for old time's sake. Posing as a long-lost relative of the Haptmeyers, Gabrielle brought a few of her furnishings from Castle Loupet to turn the desolate manor into a home away from home.

Malocchio is now master of Cliff House. Having grown remarkably during the first night of *Fulltide*, the unnatural young man took her unawares when she returned from her last encounter with the player characters. With the help of the servants he had stolen away from her, he robbed her even of the illusion of being in control and locked her in the wine cellar. Then he went the day amidst the citizens of Karina, taunting and breaking them as he pleases. Should the heroes be in town, the Dungeon Master may wish to stage an encounter with the new, more powerful Malocchio. Unless summoned by his raven guardians, he returns to the estate at dusk.

Getting There

Locating Cliff House is not difficult. After accepting the *sphere of binding* from Marcella, the heroes and Raul can easily locate the Haptmeyer estate by asking directions at one of the outlying farmhouses, although they will be warned that it is haunted. As the heroes pass farm houses on their way to the estate, they hear the sounds of children playing and babies crying, echoing the haunting by Leyla.

The heroes are not alone in their interest of Cliff House. Both Matton Blanchard and the Midnight Slasher also have business at the Haptmeyer estate: one for love, the other for revenge. Even if the heroes refuse to join Matton's service, they encounter the werewolf near the entrance of the estate. Scared away by the ravens, he was planning to wait until dark before approaching the house. Now that he sees the heroes, he will attempt to join them, begging for their aid if he must. It is clear that it pains him to do so.

Finally, the Midnight Slasher has been spying on the estate, hoping for an opportunity to catch her hated enemy, Gabrielle Aderre, unawares. She will use any disruption created by the heroes as an opportunity to sneak into the mansion.

The Haptmeyer Estate

The Haptmeyer estate stretches from the Curriculo road to the cliffs towering above the Noisette river. A two-story mansion with a steeply-peaked roof and large, leadlined windows that stare darkly from its facade, Cliff House stands at edge of the precipice, sternly overlooking the ashen waters below.

The manor house is surrounded by a few low outbuildings and a ring of brightly colored sugar maples, now at the height of their fall colors. Spreading out from the manor house along the river, long rows of vineyards are tangled and overgrown after years of neglect.

Formerly one of the most spectacular residences along the Noisette, the estate is now a lamentable state of disrepair. Despite its deserted appearance, the outer boundaries of the estate hold several dangers for intruders. A variety of wild animals, including poisonous snakes, giant ravens, and dire wolves—all *summoned* by Malocchio—slink about the outer estate, serving as guardians. These creatures tend to congregate in specific areas of the estate, as detailed below, but it is still possible to encounter groups of wild animals wandering among the outbuildings and vineyards.

For each turn that the heroes spend outside Cliff House, there is a 1 in 10 chance of encountering 2-7 poisonous snakes, 2-8 giant ravens, or 2-5 dire wolves. These animals will attack the heroes immediately and pursue them either to the boundary of the estate, or the threshold of Cliff House. The animals will neither leave the estate nor enter Cliff House unless given permission by the Dukkar.

A large scale map of the estate has been included on the colored Map Sheet. Important areas of interest are detailed below.

Poisonous Snakes (2-7): INT Animal (1); AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg: 1; SA: Poison; SZ S; ML 8; MM/320; XP 175.

Giant ravens (2-8): INT Animal (1); AL N; AC 6; MV 3, Fl 18 (D); HD 3+2; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg: 3-16; SZ S; ML 12; MM/27; XP 175.

Dire wolves (2-5): INT Low (6); AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 28 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 2d4; SZ L; ML 10; MM/362; XP 270.

A. Vineyards

The vines of the Haptmeyer estate were once known to yield the best red wines of Karina. Now the snarled vines have produced nothing but food and shelter for birds and a variety of small animals. The vineyards could provide excellent cover for the party, should they decide to approach Cliff House stealthily. To thwart such an advance, Malocchio has summoned a dozen poisonous snakes, which have curled themselves among the snarled grapevines. While not fatal, the serpents' poison causes 2-8 hit points of damage, and a numbing paralysis that lasts for 2-8 turns (saving throw negates, onset time 1-6 rounds).

B. Outbuildings

The outbuildings, once used as wine production facilities, have stood vacant for the past seven years; all of the serviceable wine making equipment was carted away long ago for use at the other local wineries. The great barn now serves more sinister purpose, and curious explorers are in store for a grisly sight. Over fifteen servants and bodyguards perished during the fight between Gabrielle and Malocchio. Their bodies were deposited in the open building, where they were discovered by some of the dire wolves. Now half-eaten corpses scatter the area, along with 3-12 dire wolves. The animals are sleeping, and will rest in the barn unless awakened by clumsy explorers or summoned by Malocchio.

C. Stables and Carriage House

Of all the outbuildings on the estate, only the stables and carriage house have seen recent use for their original purpose. The outer doors to these buildings have been shut to keep out the wild animals patrolling the estate.

Inside, explorers will find a team of six black

draft horses in the stables, well fed and recently tended, along with tack, harness, saddles, and feed. A new carriage and wagon sit in the carriage house, used to transport Gabrielle and her entourage from Loupet to Karina for the festival. The servants that tended these areas either died in the recent struggle between Malocchio or Gabrielle or are now stationed inside the manor.

D. Silver Maples

Several silver maples skirt the perimeter of the estate. Amidst their neon yellow and bright orange leaves roost a large flock of **giant ravens**, Malocchio's primary allies. The ravens perch in separate trees, making it impossible to dispatch them all with a single spell; they can congregate in a single spot within a single round to repel unwanted intruders. The sturdy birds are two to three feet tall, with wingspans of 9-10 feet. Their calls alert the guards inside Cliff House of visitors, and one or two birds will be dispatched to fly circles around Karina. This sign is a clear summons for Malocchio, who *teleports* home immediately.

E. Cliff House

After the strange deaths of Lord and Lady Haptmeyer, greedy relatives and thieves stripped the estate of furnishings and valuables. The majority of Cliff House is empty and contains little of interest for the party. A floor plan for the old mansion has been provided on the color map included with this adventure.

Malocchio has stationed Gabrielle's former bodyguards inside Cliff House to guard Gabrielle during his absence (designated by an **B** on the floor plan). When the heroes approach within fifty yards of the house, the guards stationed near the windows open fire with their bows. After the heroes have infiltrated the house, the guards set up an ambush in the great hall. The *charmed* guards will fight to the death to prevent the heroes from reaching the wine cellar, where Gabrielle is imprisoned.

Bodyguards (8); AC 7; MV 9; F3; hp 18 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (short sword: 1-6); AL NE; THACO 18. Studded leather, light crossbows, and longswords.

Furnishings and Decor

Except for the two simply-furnished bedrooms, the well-stocked kitchen, and the dining hall, Cliff House is mostly empty, filled with nothing but old broken furniture, fallen plaster from the ceilings, and musty cobwebs in the dark corners. All of the new furniture was recently imported by Gabrielle for the Carnival; since she did not plan to spend much time in Cliff House, except as a place to rest in between her amusements, she did not bother to bring enough furniture to fill the entire mansion. In Gabrielle's well-appointed chamber upstairs, the heroes find a pouch filed with 2-8 pieces of gold jewelry (worth 100-600 gp each), Gabrielle's spellbook (containing the spells listed in the introduction), and her tarokka deck, all in a locked chest by her four-poster bed.

Malocchio's chamber contains no treasure.

The majority of Cliff House has been left for the Dungeon Master to fill with whatever additional furnishings, treasures, and adventure hooks as are appropriate for the campaign. There are many published deserted or haunted house adventures that the Dungeon Master may draw upon for ideas, including the House of Lament and the Shadowborn Manor from the *Darklords* accessory. Cliff House serves as primarily as an eerie, desolate location for the heroes' final confrontation with the Midnight Slasher, Gabrielle Aderre, and the Dukkar.

In the Shadows

The Slasher avoids the party by hiding in the shadows, waiting patiently until all of the bodyguards have been dispatched. When the heroes leave any of the slain or incapacitated guards alone, the Slasher murders the helpless prisoners (or at least mutilates their bodies).

On the door leading down to the basement where Gabrielle is imprisoned, they find the following writing in the guards' fresh blood:

*You cannot hide from the shadows.
You cannot run from your fate.
You cannot escape my justice.*

Unbeknownst to the heroes, these warnings are meant for Gabrielle, not them. The Slasher

continues to evade the heroes until they descend to the basement and release Gabrielle.

How the Mighty Has Fallen

The basement of Cliff House is a series of abandoned stone-lined vaults, culminating in a locked wooden door watched by at least two bodyguards. Once the guards have been overcome (one of them has the key), the heroes can listen at the door, hearing the sounds of a woman crying.

The low vaulted chamber appears to be a wine cellar, but its bottles lie shattered on the hard stone floor. Spatters of blood red wine cover the walls and pooled on the floor. In the far corner, a woman in a wine smeared dress cowers, sobbing quietly. She looks at you and screams, her eyes wide with startled fear. The hysterical madness fades quickly from her intense dark eyes.

“You are not Mother,” she says accusingly. “Who are you?”

Gabrielle Aderre is now quite insane, a victim of intense paranoia. Until assured otherwise, she assumes that everyone is plotting against her in a grand conspiracy linking all of her enemies: the Vistani, her Mother, and her vicious son Malocchio, who she will lament was to be her tool of revenge against “you all, but he’s just like you!” She voices all of her suspicions out loud. Noticing Raul, she might say, “So the Vistani have sent you kill me. I always knew they would.” If Matton is with the party, he rushes to hug Gabrielle, but she slaps him angrily across the face, saying “I killed you once Bakholis, I can kill you again!” Matton grovels at her feet, begging forgiveness and pleading for her love.

Even a brief discussion with the party will reveal she has lost her mind. She implores the party to kill Malocchio, the ungrateful child, when he returns. The Dungeon Master may reveal as many details of the Dukkar’s powers as desired, but they are couched in the language of a paranoid madwoman.

Gabrielle’s insanity makes her extremely dangerous. During the conversation, secretly roll an evil eye check for each member in the party;

each is entitled to a +4 bonus because of the Vistani amulets. Those failing the check are *charmed* by Gabrielle and sympathetic to her desires and almost tortured by her pain. Take these players quietly aside and inform them that their characters have been *charmed*, and now regard Gabrielle as a dear friend, whom they must to defend *to the best of their ability*. The players may retain control of their *charmed* characters provided they role play them appropriately. If not, then the DM should take control of their characters when events turn against Gabrielle.

Malocchio’s Return

The Dukkar returns to Cliff House just after the heroes have released Gabrielle. Time his entrance for a lull in their conversation with the dark lord, or when some of the heroes suspect Gabrielle of foul play. Summoning dire wolves from the estate to attend him, Malocchio confronts the party, smiling with overconfidence. There should be at least one dire wolf per party member.

“Mother, I see you have made a mess of things again!” A cold voice echoes from the door.

Turning, you see a copper-skinned young man with dark hair, his eyes like two midnight seas. Dressed entirely in black, with a broad white collar, he looks like an aged version of boy in black you saw at Carnival. He is surrounded by a pack of huge black wolves that are growling menacingly.

Ask everyone in the party to make an evil eye check with the customary bonuses. Those who fail have been *charmed* by Malocchio and will defend him to the death. Players may retain control of their *charmed* characters during the final battle provided they role play them appropriately. Malocchio orders his *charmed* allies and the summoned wolves to slay Gabrielle and her supporters. Both Matton and Raul fight against the dire wolves.

During the melee, it should be relatively simple for one of the heroes to hurl the Vistani *sphere of binding* at Malocchio—providing of course that the hero carrying the sphere was not *charmed* by him!

When the Vistani sphere lands at the Dukkar's feet, it explodes in a flash of blinding light, flinging cordlike tendrils of magical energy around his body. For a moment the cords look like glowing iron chains, but then they dissolve, leaving nothing behind but sulfurous smoke.

"What have you done!" Malocchio appears more surprised than hurt.

Although Malocchio can no longer leave Invidia, he can still *teleport* at will within the domain. Malocchio battles the heroes until wounded for 10 hp of damage. He then *teleports* away, leaving the heroes to fight the wolves and his charmed allies.

The Slasher Strikes

Watching from the Shadows, the Midnight Slasher positions herself to strike at her hated enemy. At a climactic point in the battle, the Slasher suddenly steps out of the shadows. Give each

hero an intelligence check; those who succeed, notice the Slasher.

The movement is almost unseen, but in the corner of your eye, you see a shadow separate from the rest. Then, you see the cloaked figure of the Midnight Slasher leap at Gabrielle, tears streaming from wild eyes. "For Mother and Father!" he shrieks.

This action may have several outcomes, depending on actions, or lack thereof, on the part of the heroes.

On the round of the Slasher's initial attack, a hero (chosen by the Dungeon Master) who noticed her, slays his opponent and is free to help Gabrielle, who merely raises her arms in a futile effort to protect herself. If this hero stands by and lets the defenseless woman be slaughtered, the Dungeon Master should call for a powers check. (Although a she is a dark lord, Gabrielle is still a victim in this case.)

The Slasher stabs Gabrielle repeatedly, even after



the evil witch is dead, and continues to do so until either a hero or Matton takes action to stop it. Her mask and hat fall from her head, revealing her to be a young woman.

Raul will step up to protect any hero who turns away from the Dukkar's servitors in order to save Gabrielle.

Concluding the Adventure

If Gabrielle is killed, Matton is hysterical at the loss of his beloved. Changing into wolf form, he hurls himself at the Slasher. Unless the heroes intervene, the two's struggle carries them through the Solarium and onto the balcony, where they plunge off the cliffs to an apparent watery doom, locked in mortal struggle even as they hit the water far below.

Malocchio becomes the new lord of Invidia. Stunned by his unexpected defeat, he retreats to Castle Loupet to sulk. He will not bother the heroes for some time, but Invidia will soon become an even more unpleasant domain for the Vistani and their allies to travel; while the peoples of the land didn't like them before, at least they didn't have to worry about direct attacks from the lord of the land. This is no longer the case; Malocchio hates the Vistani more than his mother ever did, and he is not prevented from harming them.

If the heroes save Gabrielle, she has retreated deep into the confines of her shattered mind. When the battle is over, she simply stares blankly into space, her lips moving soundlessly. Matton, his heart broken at the state of his beloved, promises to care for her and nurse her back to health. "You will be safe with me, my love," the heroes hear him say, as he tenderly escorts her into the darkness. The pair retreats to the Laughing Maiden, where Gabrielle Aderre will be cared for by the only creature who loves her... a creature she finds repulsive and horrifying. A *charmed* hero may wish to care for Gabrielle, and may try to prevent Matton from taking her away. In this case, Matton fights to the death. Should the heroes be left with the responsibility of dealing with the insane Gabrielle, see the next chapter, "Further Adventures" for scenario ideas.

Assuming that they defeat the Dukkar, the Dungeon Master should award the party 10,000 XP for completing the final chapter of the adventure. Reward heroes for their initiative and role-playing with individual awards of up to 1,000 XP.

Breaking the Curse

When the heroes return to the Vistani, the Zarovan are grim, but nonetheless pleased at the outcome. As the heroes and the Zarovan are gathered around the fire, Raul adds his *violin of passion* to the regular camp fire, saying that in the mad eyes of Gabrielle Aderre he saw the dangers of letting the past rule the present. As the violin begins to burn, Marcella announces, "It is finished. The curse is broken. Leyla's spirit will now rest in peace."

As evening approaches, the Zarovan make preparations for the *prastonata*, during which the beautiful seer invites each of the heroes in turn to dance with her around the fire. During the *doroq*, Marcella states that the present Dukkar is no longer a threat to the Vistani.

Blood Rite

If one hero in particular stood by Raul in his times of need, Raul now feels indebted. He offers to enter into the blood rite with the hero, who would become *giogoto*, a *giorgio* who is "enlightened, yet not of the blood." The hero is free to refuse the offer without penalty, for counting the Vistani as allies can have its dangers. Assuming that the hero accepts Raul's solemn request, read or paraphrase the following text:

Raul stands face to face with you beside the roaring fire. Drawing forth one of his keen edged knives, he takes your left hand and slices it open with a single deft slash of the blade. He then opens his own palm in the same manner and both of you clasp bleeding hands.

Raul wraps a scarf around the members and says, "Hands bound, blood mingles. I cannot repay you for your act, but I will call you brother (sister)."

While the rest of the Vistani gathers round and chants, you enter a dream state, in which you feel joined to Raul, linked by a powerful and invisible bond. Indescribable images flash before your eyes before you regain consciousness. Perhaps only minutes had passed. Perhaps it was hours. Still facing Raul, your hand and arm are covered with blood.

When at last the two hands separate, they are covered with blood, but the wounds are miraculously healed over. All that remains is a wide purple scar which creases the palm, forever identifying you as *giogoto*.

Any Vistana can readily identify the *giogoto*'s affiliation with the Camii, simply by touching the scar and sensing its origins. The hero (and his compatriots) can take shelter from any other tribe in the Kaldresh Tasque. In the future, the *giogoto* will never be lied to or swindled by any Vistani; and should he consult them for assistance, he will be given a little more information than he asked for.

The blood rite opens the door to many interesting adventures involving the Vistani, should the Dungeon Master care to run an extended campaign in Ravenloft. The Dungeon Master should consult *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani* for more information about the blood rite.

Summoning the Mists

After the *doroq*, Marcella will perform readings for the heroes and answer their questions (as evasively and cryptically as possible, of course). If the Dungeon Master wishes to extend their sojourn in Ravenloft, then Marcella may point them in the direction of a new adventure. If the Dungeon Master wants to conclude the adventure in Ravenloft, read or paraphrase the following.

Looking up from her cards, Marcella squints at you with her intense dark eyes.

"Your homeland and ours are separated by a veil of Mists, impenetrable to all save at certain times of the year. During the second night of Lunaset, the veil is thinnest, and with the aid of a potion one can walk from one world to the other. At midnight tonight, when the moon at its fullest, you must drink the potion I give you and walk into the Mists. I cannot promise where they will take you, but if you are lucky, they will perhaps transport you home. "

As the moon rises over the mountains, and after all the heroes' questions have been answered (although perhaps not to their satisfaction), Marcella gives each of them another one of her foul-tasting potions. As the draught takes effect, the heroes nod off to sleep. In their dreams, the heroes glimpse the Vistani dancing around the camp as a cool fog rolls up from the river, blanketing everything in its clammy embrace.

Summoned by the Zarovan, the Mists of Ravenloft return the heroes to the town where they began the adventure, or any other location in the original campaign world where the heroes need to be for their next adventure. If the Dungeon Master wants to role-play the transition through the Mists, the party might encounter any number of creatures wandering between worlds during Lunaset, the least of which would be a mist horror.

Although the heroes' original curse from the beginning of the adventure is now lifted, they may still be plagued by lycanthropy, and some of the heroes may have died during the final battle with Malocchio. The party is now free to locate a powerful priest to cure lycanthropy; outside of Ravenloft, a *remove curse* cast on the third and final night of the full moon should do the trick. A priest may also be needed to raise fallen comrades. Of course, the Zarovan may have cured these afflictions before returning the heroes home.



VI. FURTHER ADVENTURES IN INVIDIA



laude's heart beat so hard he thought it might burst; in fact, the taste of blood in his mouth made him think it just might have—but that was just the blood flowing from his nose and over his lips.

He crashed through the forest, branches striking and scratching his face, he prayed to his gods that if they would just see him through this day, he would join a holy order as thanks. He shouted the name of his god, but then received solid evidence that his plea had not been heard.

Claude had reached the edge of the trees, but now found himself standing on the edge of a cliff that dropped sharply down. Hundreds of feet below him, and as far as he could see, a landscape of dazzling beauty

was spread out. A grand forest, clad in the brilliant colors of autumn at its most splendid, reached toward distant snowcapped mountains. A river of brilliant blue cut a swath through the scene. A crisp blue sky, stained by a bank of threatening, black clouds spread like a canopy over it all. But in this beauty, all Claude could see was death.

And then death took a physical form behind him. He heard mocking voice of the young man who had descended upon Claude's party and the Vistani who had offered to guide them from Zeidenburg to Curriculo, and slain everyone: "If you're done with your afternoon constitutional, shall we finish with your lesson? The world must learn that the Vistani and their friends are not welcome in Invidia."

The Domain of Invidia

This chapter provides information on Invidia, for Dungeon Masters who, instead of sending the heroes back to their original world, would like to continue the campaign with additional adventures in Ravenloft. And, as the map of Invidia indicates, the domain is much more than just the Musarde and Karina. The following is an expansion, and, in some cases, an update to the material presented in the

Denizens and Domains book from the RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting.

Invidia is a land of lush forests and fertile farmlands, cradled in the river valleys of the Musarde and Gundar Rivers. Three deep, old-growth forests grace the land with immense red woods and oak trees, the Vulpwood in the north; Dreadwood, between the Prestige Mountains and the Crmartan Ridge; and the Breadth Forest and Mantle Woods in the south. Human inhabitants are not generally found in these forests, although the Breadth Forest is home to at least one elven vampire.

While Invidia is a place of great natural beauty, it is also a land where crimes of violence and passion are common. Jealousy is perhaps the one emotion that most frequently touches the heart of Invidians, followed closely by envy. It may be that Gabrielle Aderre's connection with the land, as dark lord, has mystically influenced the emotions of the people, or it may just be a part of the national character, but the people of Invidia are often found to long for things they cannot have, and when they take or otherwise obtain what was thought unattainable, they become objects of resentment by both those they have wronged and their neighbors. Grudges fester, arguments grow hot, and sorrow inevitably follows. The folk view even their own kin with a suspicious and fearful eye.

Also, whether Gabrielle or the Dukkar is the lord of the land, Invidia is one of the few domains where traveling with a Vistani escort is deadly. Both mother and son have their reasons for hating the Vistani.

Karina is the only city in the domain, but there are several other towns of interest.

Beltis was once a thriving logging community that supplied wood to Karina by floating logs down river twice a year. However, one night, the 35 people who lived here (loggers and their families) vanished without a trace. Attempts to reestablish the community and resume the business have all ended in tragedy, with the loggers seemingly killing each other.

The initial community was destroyed by rival loggers from Valetta. The bodies of all community members were sunk to the bottom of the river. The deserted village is now infested with a variety of vengeful spirits, including corpse candles, geists, and odems. (All detailed in the RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III.) Meanwhile, Valetta is a thriving,

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN INVIDIA

rough-and-tumble frontier community with a guilty secret. A character possessed by a corpse candle or vengeful odem might well serve to turn the community on itself, the way it turned on Beltis.

Further upriver, **Tancos** was a community established by Barvoian loggers, but this effort was long-since abandoned. There is still a thriving community here, on the surface just another, if a bit pricey, waystation where riverboats can receive repairs and buy supplies. However, the citizens here are even less friendly than most Karinans, and river-lore states that those who attempt to overnight in Tancos, vanish without a trace. The residents of Tancos are, in fact, of pakas, who bear an intense hatred for all other humanoid. (These feline shapeshifters are detailed in the RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix III*.)

The final Invidian community of note is **Curriculo**, located in the northern part of the domain but on the Musarde and two separate paths that lead to major towns and cities. At the time of Bakholis' death, this village was little more than a roadside inn and a single dock, but once the werewolf's iron grip on the domain and its residents was loosed, merchants from Zeidenburg and Richemulot began to use this as their base for Invidian trade rather than the crowded, expensive, and decaying Karina. New warehouses are being built in Curriculo every day, as are residencies and docks. Merchants here are always looking for adventurers to fend off gangs and arsonists hired by unscrupulous warehouse owners in Karina. A rumor has been circulating that a Karinan noble has hired a necromancer from Darkon to "shut down Curriculo once and for all."

Also of note, while not a town or village, is **Castle Loupet**. It has been at the heart of tragedy and terror for decades, first as the seat of power of the tyrant Bakholis, then as the home of the dreaded Witch, Gabrielle Aderre, and after the events chronicled in "The Evil Eye," a new terror will dwell in those wicked halls, the **Dukkar**. Vulpwood and the roads near it will soon become unsafe for any travelers at all, as the Dukkar vents his rage at being trapped within Invidia, whether he is the domain's lord or not.

Politics and the Lord of the Domain

Since the death of Bakholis, Invidia has had not central leader. Each community maintains its own small militia to defend itself against monsters and raiders. Some Karinan nobles have been watching Lord Soth's renewed campaigns against the elves of Mal-Erek and the Iron Hills, fearing that once the elves are defeated, the Sithican armies of undead and mercenaries will head for Invidian territory. There is a growing feeling that another overlord is needed to keep the nation safe. Of course, each Karinan noble is of the opinion that *he* is the only one suited for the job. Duels among the nobles have been on the rise, and in many houses, thirdborn sons and daughters, and even distant cousins stand to inherit the family vineyards. Naturally, the rising voices of those growing rich on trade in Curriculo wish to remain independent, claiming that the Karinan alarmists are just trying to take away their personal liberty for their own gain; the citizens of Curriculo think Lord Soth is only concerned with "the pointy-eared freaks" and has no designs for Invidia.

Of course, if Gabrielle Aderre is dead, Invidia will eventually have its overlord again. The Dukkar will get tired of harassing travelers in the vicinity of Castle Loupet, and will start looking for more effective ways to keep the hated Vistani from his land. Armies will be raised, villages and cities will be brought under the control of Castle Loupet, and laws to slay Vistani on sight will be passed. Eventually, the Dukkar will hear of the Vistani Wanderers trapped in Sithicus and the Barovian tribe of the Zarovan. Even larger armies will be raised . . .

Sooner or later, someone will want to attempt to deal with this "Dukkar person," particularly once his agents begin stealing Karinan maidens to serve as his "consorts."

If this adventure concludes without Aderre being replaced as the lord of the domain, the Dukkar will behave much as outlined above, but a powerful party of heroes will be able to deal with him much easier.

Of course, the Dukkar may be a villain the DM might wish to keep around for a while, if he is running an extended Ravenloft campaign. First, his machinations serve as a way to connect the heroes with the Vistani, who are excellent DM

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN INVIDIA

mouthpieces and adventure motivations. Second, although quite powerful even if he isn't a domain lord, the Dukkar can still serve as a master villain to whom the heroes can deal the final blow at the climax of a campaign, without necessitating a major change to the Ravenloft world. (This should be an attractive option for DMs who run successive, linked campaigns.)

Further, future TSR RAVENLOFT releases will continue to develop some of the seeds sewn in "The Evil Eye." The Dukkar and the mysterious Gentleman Caller are but the heralds of a time of terror that will make the Grand Conjunction look like a summer rainstorm.

Neighboring Domains

With the possible exception of Lord Soth, no lords have any interest in sending armies to conquer the lands of Invidia; after all, why spend effort on something they will never be able to enjoy?

However, the reactions of some neighboring peoples lords should the Dukkar be in control do bear mentioning.

With all the tensions that will be raised in the lands of Core, those who know what the Dukkar might have been had he been free to roam, breathe sighs of relief.

Barovia: Should the Dukkar begin to send mercenaries after the Zarovan, Count Strahd von Zarovich will most certainly send his own agents after the Dukkar. While it is unknown exactly what Strahd's relationship with the Zarovani is, he not take murderers preying on those within his land, nor to armies massing on his borders.

Borca: Neither of Borca's twin dark lords care one way or another about the Dukkar or his vendetta against the Vistani. However, should roving parties of hired killers get overzealous and raid a farm or two, or destroy a merchant caravan, adventurers will be sought out (either by agents of the dark lords, or by beleaguered peasants) and asked to hunt the mercenaries down.

While such an adventure would most likely pit the heroes against another party consisting of evil adventurers, although the bad guys could conceivably be led by a werewolf or some type of vampire, it could a horrific change of pace if the heroes find themselves facing humans so brutal that they make even the worst monster seem tame; after all, the brutal acts committed by both the werewolf and vampire, while terrible, pale

when compared to the slaughter of innocent Vistani perpetrated solely for financial gain. Killers hired by the Dukkar should be a worthy target for any Ravenloft adventurers.

Sithicus: Much like Strahd, Lord Soth desires to keep the Vistani in his domain from suffering harm at the bidding of another lord; Soth wants to keep the lone Vistani band that travels Sithicus firmly in his grasp, and whole, as he blames their leader, Magda, for his being imprisoned in Ravenloft. He wishes them to share his suffering. An invasion of Sithicus on the part the Dukkar, be it with assassins or a fullblown army, will prove disastrous for Invidia: Soth has spent over 400 years as a warrior, and the prospect of war will only rejuvenate his undead existence.

Verbrek: Ever since Bakholis ruled Invidia, the werewolves of Alyssum, in what is now Verbrek, have used Vulpwood has a location for their rites of passage ceremonies (a young werewolf, upon making a sentient kill in Vulpwood, is considered an adult). Although Gabrielle, in her intense hatred for shapeshifters, tried to drive the werewolves from the forest, she was never able to succeed. However, once the Dukkar creates enough animosity against him among the people of Karina and Curriculo, there will be an increase in armed parties venturing into Vulpwood. The humans will be attempting to invade Castle Loupet, of course, but will instead come upon young werewolves.

After a few of such encounters, the lycanthropes of Alyssum will assume that the Invidians have launched an organized effort against them, and will launch a counter offensive. Heroes may find themselves set upon by a pack of werewolves in search of vengeance, or one or more heroes might be captured by a grieving mother who wishes to avenge her son or daughter's death. But before she kills the hero as revenge, she wants to understand what kind of "monsters humans really are." If orchestrated properly, the DM can add some depth to monsters with a scenario along these lines.

Recurring Characters

Much talk has been devoted to the Dukkar in this section. As a major source of disruption, that's only natural. However, there are several characters from "The Evil Eye" who will lend themselves to spin-off adventures.

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN INVIDIA

Matton and Gabrielle

Despite her catatonic state, Gabrielle remains the lord of Invidia. In his *Guide to Fiends*, Dr. Van Richten mistakenly hinted that Gabrielle was draining life from the soil of Invidia to extend her own life, as he labeled her as being of an unnatural age. (This seemingly far-fetched assumption arose when the doctor came across a forgery among the papers of Aimon Davidovich, but didn't recognize it as such due to grief over the loss of a beloved comrade while working on that volume). As Matton tries nurse her back to health, he could get wind of would-be heroes bent on slaying her. If the heroes are still in Invidia, they will receive a desperate plea for aid.

Of course, Gabrielle may also recover from her madness, and set about gaining revenge over the Dukkar, as well as just resuming her evil, manipulative ways . . . with love-struck Matton being her first victim, and the heroes being high on the list of targets as well.

The Midnight Slasher

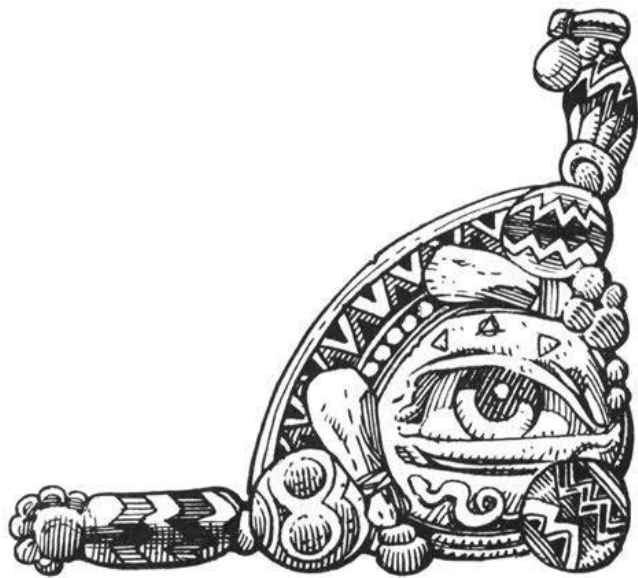
Whether or not the Midnight Slasher survived this adventure, Karina will continue to be haunted by a brutal serial killer. Whether this is the same killer or a different one, is up the Dungeon Master to decide, but Commander Regess will be very keen on securing the services of the heroes in stopping the disruption of order in his Quarter, not to mention the threats being leveled against him.

The identity of the Midnight Slasher in the wake of "The Evil Eye" can be many-fold; the original Midnight Slasher may not been dead (particularly if she plunged from Cliffhouse with Matton Blanchard), or the role of Slasher could have been adopted by Gabrielle herself, from whom a violent, rage-filled personality emerges in the dark of night, filling the empty shell of the once-vicious manipulator with blood-thirst. In this case, the Slasher is no longer killing victims who abuse women and children, but rather dancers, musicians and darkhaired men and women (an expression of Gabrielle's hatred for Vistani).

The Gentleman Caller

The incubus known as the Gentleman Caller may have been a purely random event, prophesied by Isabella, and the incubus may have no further role in the lives of the people of Invidia, except as a phobia in the mind of Matton Blanchard, who is (irrationally) afraid that the Gentleman Caller still exerts an influence over his beloved Gabrielle. The Dungeon Master may still wish to drop hints and build up anxiety about the Gentleman Caller. Alternatively, the Dukkar may not be gathering consorts for himself (as mentioned above), but actually for the incubus, who has returned to Invidia to preside over some masterplan that is now ready to unfold.

As hinted above, the mysterious Gentleman Caller may also appear in future RAVENLOFT products. In the meantime, he can be considered an addition to the roster of Ravenloft fiends identified by Rudolph van Richten. He is a roving element, and the DM can have his path cross that of the heroes—he may even take a lethal liking to a female hero...



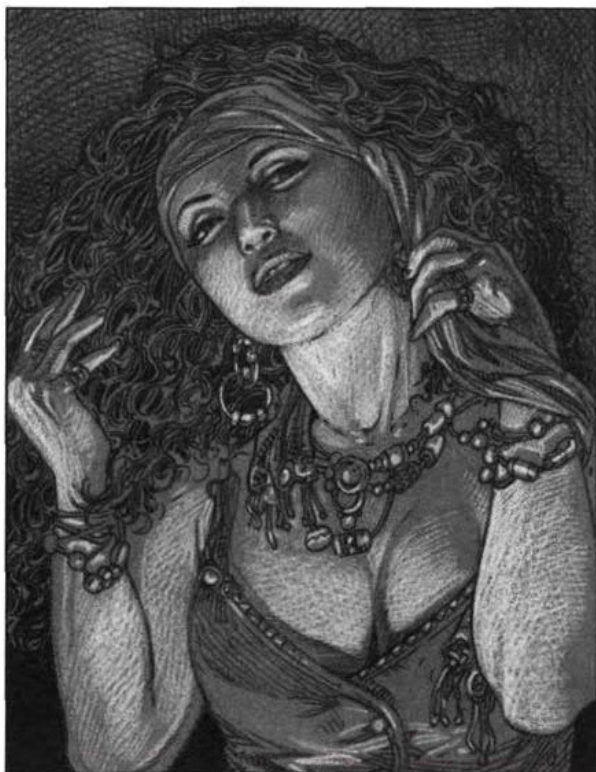
VII. DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The main antagonists of this adventure are not restricted to a given locale, nor even to this adventure. For as long as the heroes are in Invidia, or perhaps even in the Ravenloft Core domains, these characters may touch their lives again. Descriptions of these characters are presented below.

Gabrielle Aderre

Lord of Invidia
8th level Enchanter, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	10	Str	8
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	8	Con	10
Hit Points	21	Int	13
THACO	18	Wis	16
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	16
Damage/Attack	By Weapon (1d4+1)		
Special Attacks	Evil Eye, Spells		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Special (see magic ring)		



Gabrielle is a small woman with hypnotic black eyes. Her dark hair and eyes come from her mother, Isabella, her pale skin is drawn from her mysterious *giorgio* (non-Vistani) father. Despite being of middle age, she has the appearance of a younger woman.

Gabrielle cloaks herself in disguises and deception. She sometimes covers her head with a kerchief, or when she wants to appear mysterious, she draws a dark veil across her face. Although this is her favorite disguise, Gabrielle is capable of assuming many others.

Role-Playing. Despite her great hatred for the Vistani, Gabrielle still takes fierce pride in her heritage, and is very much a would-be Vistani. She frequently dresses like a Vistana, in vibrant, tiered skirts that swirl about her ankles, blouses embroidered with silver and golden threads, and opulent jewelry. Her ability to confer the evil eye (detailed below) is a dark gift bestowed directly by the Powers of the Demiplane. She may also cast the tarokka, but only when using the powerfully enchanted *Madame Eva's Deck*. Like all darklords, she is a prisoner in her domain.

Gabrielle's two greatest weaknesses are her hatred for full-blooded Vistani and her loathing of wolves. Even when her mother was alive, the Vistani shunned her, but since her mother's death—due indirectly to Gabrielle's own betrayal—the Vistani have openly scorned and denounced her. Gabrielle wants to take revenge, but the dark powers will not let her harm a Vistani. Gabrielle also fears wolves and lycanthropes, since she has had at least three unpleasant encounters with such creatures in the past: the first encounter was when her mother died; the second occurred when she killed baron Bakholis to assume the lordship of Invidia; and the third incident transpired when she learned her former lover Matton was a wolfwere.

Nonetheless, Gabrielle remains a cunning, ruthless, and domineering person. She is a master manipulator who relishes spreading anger, fear, and jealousy throughout her domain by ruining friendships and marriages. She is widely feared as the Witch of Loupet—not as the lord of Invidia.

Combat. In addition to the magical abilities of an 8th level enchanter, Gabrielle Aderre has the power of the evil eye: she can "cast" any memorized enchantment/charm spell from her eyes once per round, at will, without spell components. Spells invoked with her evil eye do

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

not count against those she has memorized, and the victims of such an attack must make an evil eye check (not a saving throw vs. spells).

Characters with Vistani blood receive an additional +2 bonus to their checks against Gabrielle's evil eye. Full-blooded Vistani are completely immune to both her evil eye and her cast spells. She can never wreak the vengeance she seeks on the Vistani—that is part of her mother's dying curse. Of course, Gabrielle's charmed servitors are in no way hindered from harming the Vistani.

Gabrielle has a number of talents which make her a dangerous opponent in combat. Her greatest defense includes her *charmed* servitors that always join her when outside Castle Loupet. She also has access to a number of magical items and potions. Her most powerful item is Madame *Eva's Deck*, a set of tarokka cards of legendary power. She uses the cards infrequently, for they bring her excruciating pain. Gabrielle's other magical items include a *ring of spell turning*, a *hat of disguise* (usually masquerading as a kerchief or veil), an assortment of *evil eye amulets* (giving her a +4 bonus against such attacks), a curved *dagger +1, +3 against lycanthropes*, and four potions: *extra-healing*, *flying*, *glibness*, and *speed*. Despite these accouterments, Gabrielle is very weak in hand-to-hand melee, and will always seek to flee an encounter that involves such danger.

Spell List

1st level (4/day, plus 1 enchantment): *affect normal fires*, *charm person**, *detect magic*, *friends**, *hypnotism**, *mending*, *read magic*, *sleep**, *wizard mark*.

2nd level (3/day, plus 1 enchantment): *alter self*, *bind*, *ESP*, *fog cloud*, *forget**, *ray of enfeeblement**, *scare**, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter**, *whispering wind*.

3rd level (3/day, plus 1 enchantment): *dispel magic*, *hold person**, *spectral force*, *suggestion*, *wraithform*.

4th level (2/day, plus 1 enchantment): *charm monster**, *confusion**, *curse*, *emotion**, *magic mirror*.

* Enchantment/Charm spells, which can be cast through the evil eye.

Malocchio Aderre

The Dukkar, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	5	(3)	Str	9	(14)
Movement	9	(12)	Dex	14	(16)
Level/Hit Dice	4	(5)	Con	8	(10)
Hit Points	21	(33)	Int	14	(16)
THACO	17	(15)	Wis	9	(11)
No. of Attacks	1	(2)	Cha	16	(17)
Damage/Attack	1-2 (1-3/1-3)				
Special Attacks	Evil eye, animal summoning				
Special Defenses	+1 weapons to hit, resistant to fire, lightning, poison.				
Magic Resistance	10% (20%)				

Malocchio's appearance and supernatural abilities change during the course of the adventure. Initially, Malocchio appears to be an adolescent boy of about ten years of age. He stands four feet tall, has a wild mop of midnight black hair, and has dark penetrating eyes. There is something disturbing about the lad. His hypnotic eyes glimmer with malign intellect, while his voice is surprisingly mature for a child of his age.

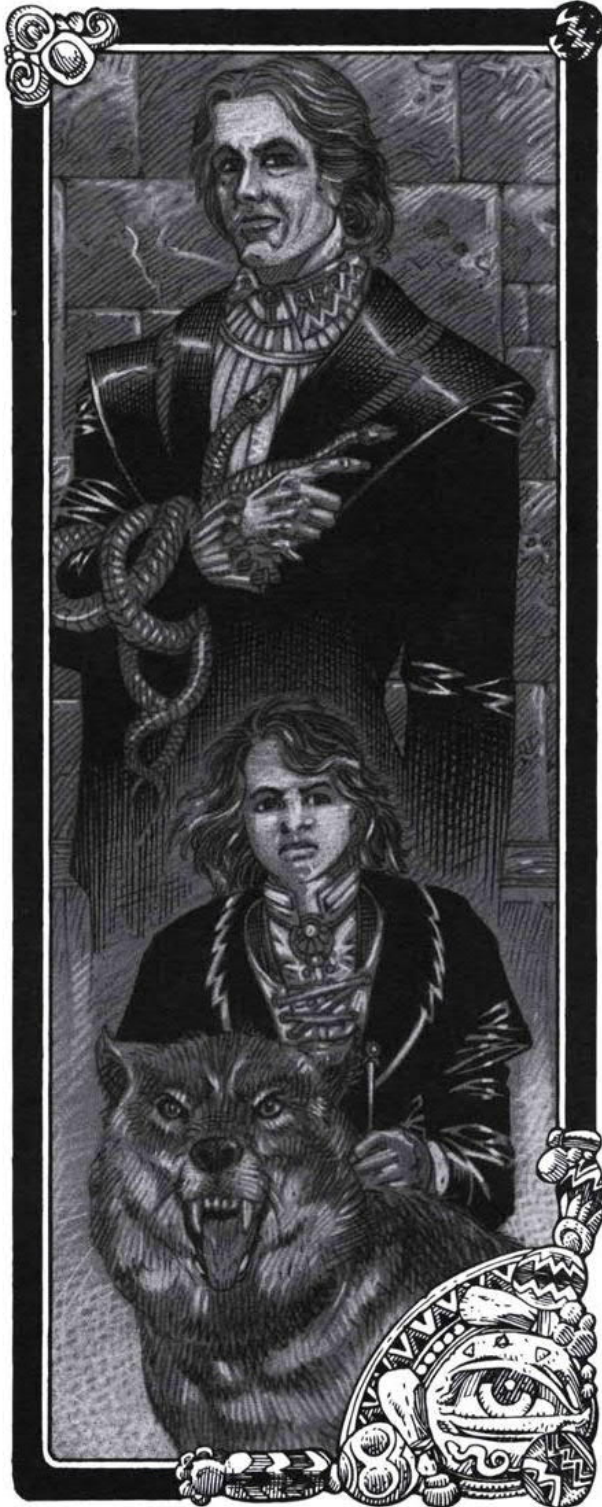
By the end of the adventure, Malocchio will have matured into a young adult, appearing to be about six feet tall and 18 years of age. As Malocchio matures, his evil powers grow with him. Game statistics in parenthesis refer to his mature stage.

Regardless of his age, the most obvious clue to Malocchio's monstrous nature can be found in his hands: each bears a sixth tiny, clawlike-digit beside the pinky. Malocchio's "witch finger" is quite small and usually concealed beneath a pair of gloves.

Background: As the Dukkar, Malocchio has the potential to bring about the destruction of Ravenloft. He has the power to transcend the boundaries of the Demiplane due to his mixed Vistani and fiendish bloodlines, and release the darklords from their prisons.

As an adolescent, Malocchio can call upon the Mists to transport him to an adjacent domain—regardless of a darklord's will. By the time he reaches maturity, however, Malocchio will be able to not only travel anywhere within Ravenloft, but he will also be able to escape. Most importantly, Malocchio can bring along passengers, including imprisoned darklords, and thus cause the

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dissolution of their land. For this reason, the Dukkar is regarded as a figure of awesome evil among the Vistani. (In game terms, Malocchio as an adolescent can *teleport* 1/round at will, and in maturity can *teleport without error*.)

If the heroes trap Malocchio in Invidia, Ravenloft is safe... for now. Should Malocchio emerge as lord of Invidia the mists will seal Invidia's borders at his command.

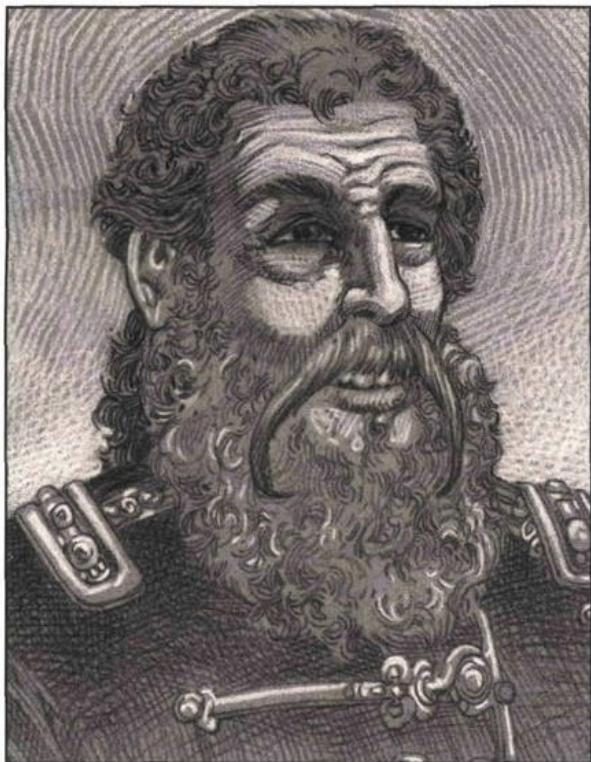
Role-Playing: Regardless of his initial childlike appearance, Malocchio is a cruel and sadistic monster. As an adolescent, he is constantly testing the limits of his evil powers, regardless of the pain, suffering, and death he brings. Other living beings are his toys, to manipulate or destroy at his leisure. In the course of this adventure, he even reduces his mother to this state, causing her downfall and becoming the new darklord. Like all bullies, Malocchio is devoid of courage. When cowed by a superior opponent (such as Gabrielle) he either meekly submits or flees via teleportation.

Combat: Malocchio's combined fiendish and Vistani heritage make him a dangerous opponent. Physically, he is very weak in combat, but as the prophesied Dukkar, his magical abilities are terrible indeed. Malocchio's most dangerous power is the evil eye, which enables him to effectively cast a small number of enchantment/charm spells, 1/round, at will. At first, he can only invoke *charm person*, *hypnotism*, or *suggestion* using the evil eye; once he reaches maturity, he will also be able to cast *charm monster* and *fear* as well.

From his tanar'ri heritage, Malocchio gains the ability to call upon wild creatures native to Invidia. He has a 25% chance of summoning 2-12 dire wolves, 1-6 poisonous snakes, or 2-8 giant ravens once per day. After reaching maturity, his chance of success increases to 40%. Summoned creatures arrive in 1-4 rounds and will follow Malocchio's commands to the death.

Finally, Malocchio enjoys some of the innate defenses of the tanar'ri. He can only be harmed by +1 or better weapons, and is resistant to fire, lightning, and all poisons (+4 on saving throws for quarter instead of half damage).

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Nathan Timothy

Ex-Lord of Arkandale
Werewolf, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	10	(5)	Str	15	(18/25)
Movement	12	(15)	Dex	13	(19)
Level/Hit Dice	5+4		Con	13	(10)
Hit Points	40		Int	16	
THACO	15		Wis	12	
No. of Attacks	1		Cha	12	
Damage/Attack	2d4 or by weapon				
Special Attacks	Surprise				
Special Defenses	+1 weapons to hit				
Magic Resistance	Nil				

Captain Nathan Timothy has curly, black hair, a full beard, and usually wears a wide salacious grin. He is middle aged and has an average height and build. He typically dresses in a dark wool sweater, trousers, and boat shoes. His hands are callused and his face brown from working hours under the sun.

Background: Despite a congenial façade, Captain Nathan Timothy is a powerful werewolf and

formerly darklord of Arkandale. A natural lycanthrope who has always been possessed with intense wanderlust, Nathan traveled the domains of Ravenloft aboard a riverboat, always moving and leaving a swath of destruction in his wake. Eventually, the Dark Powers took notice of him, and he was gifted with and confined to the domain of Arkandale. But Nathan had no ambitions toward rulership and continued to sail his riverboat up and down the Arden and its tributaries within the domain's borders. During the Grand Conjunction, he escaped the watchful eyes of whatever force holds sway of the demiplane, his domain ceased to be, and was is currently again free to roam. He now sails the waterways of the Musarde and Arden, bringing unsuspected prey onto his riverboat.

Role-playing: While he fosters the image of a rough and bawdy captain, Nathan is shrewd, devious, and heartless.

Combat: Timothy has all the combat abilities of a standard werewolf (the numbers in parentheses are for either of his two wolf-forms). Further, he still has the power he enjoyed and curses he suffered as a darklord: he can only be harmed by magical weapons and regenerates 3 hit points per round when injured. However, he cannot travel more than a dozen yards from the river without feeling pain and disorientation.

He always carries a *dagger* +2, used as a tool more often than as a weapon. Timothy's only other magical item is a *ring of water walking*.

Matton Blanchard

Wolfwere, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	9	(3)	Str	15
Movement	12	(15)	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	5+1		Con	13
Hit Points	40		Int	14
THACO	15		Wis	11
No. of Attacks	1 or 2		Cha	17
Damage/Attack	2d6 or by weapon			
Special Attacks	Singing causes lethargy			
Special Defenses	Iron or +1 weapons to hit			
Magic Resistance	10%			

Matton Blanchard is a tall, extraordinarily handsome man, apparently in his mid-thirties, with a long drooping mustache and the trace of a scar down his right cheek. He dresses in elegant,

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

dark green velvet overcoat and breeches, with tall black leather riding boots and a plumed wide-brimmed hat.

Background: Matton is an estranged lover of Gabrielle. He still loves the witch and would do anything to regain her affection. Originally from Kartakass, Matton traveled to Karina, where he used his considerable acting skills to masquerade as an aristocrat. He eventually met Gabrielle, and she tried to use evil eye to *charm* him into devotion. Although the attempt failed (since, contrary to appearances, Matton is not human, the *charm person* Gabrielle used was without effect), Matton fell madly in love with her. Now estranged from her, Matton will do anything to regain her affection. He is one of the few creatures who has genuinely loved Gabrielle during her lonely existence, a tragic state of affairs, considering her hatred for wolves and related shapeshifters.

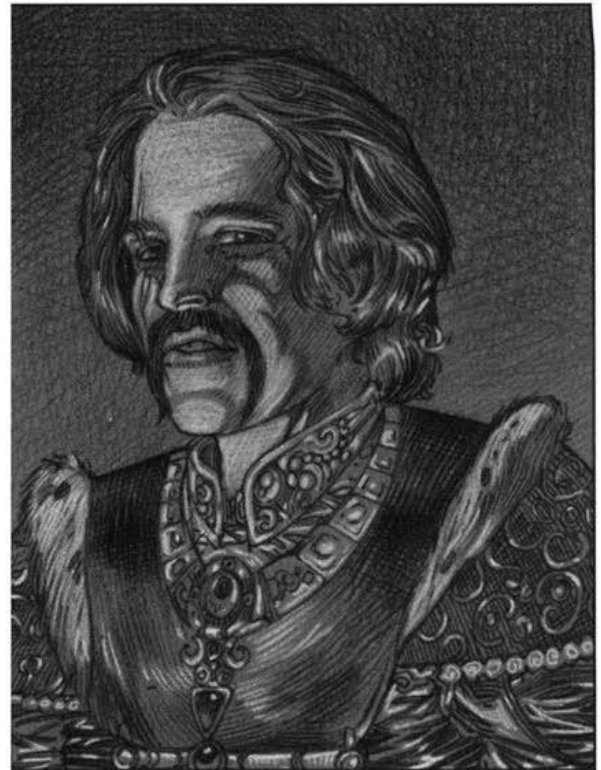
Role-playing: Matton addresses all around him with greasy cordiality and snobbish superiority. The exception to this are characters who he believes may be able to help him regain favor with his love; to them, Matton shows a face of desperate sincerity and tortured, unrequited love.

Combat: Matton to has all the abilities of a standard wolfwere, although he only assumes his animal forms in the most dire of emergencies now that he knows how they disgust his beloved. He rides a battle-trained black destrier named Storm. His bow and *rapier* +1 usually hang from the mount's saddle.

The Midnight Slasher

5th level Rogue, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	9	(3)	Str	15
Movement	12	(15)	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	5		Con	13
Hit Points	40		Int	14
THACO	15		Wis	9
No. of Attacks	1		Cha	10
Damage/Attack	1d4+1			
Special Attacks	Backstab x3			
Special Defenses	95% MS/HS.			
Magic Resistance	Nil			



Tall and slender, the Midnight Slasher wears a wide-brimmed hat, a scarf across the face, and a billowing cloak of a dark fabric that seems to drink up the night. Most assume the Slasher is a man, but the killer is in fact a woman.

Background: As a child, the Slasher's parents were destroyed by Gabrielle Aderre, and she has devoted her life to avenging herself upon the evil witch. Until her day of retribution, the insane Slasher occupies herself with brutal murder.

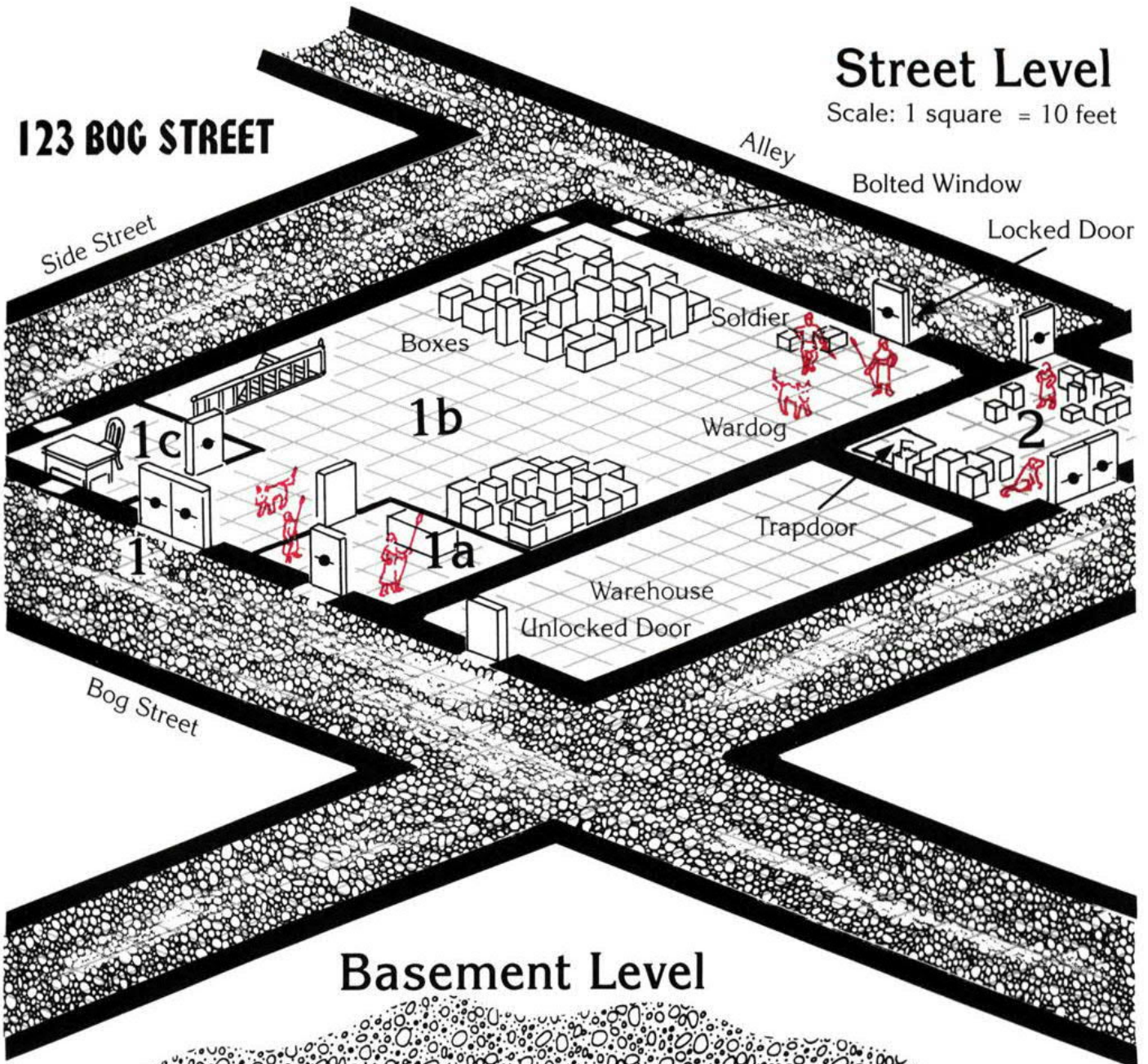
Role-Playing: The Slasher is driven to kill by insane rage.

Combat: The Midnight Slasher only attacks when able surprise a single character. Her magical cloak and boots give her a 95% chance to hide in shadows and move silently. If she fails to attain surprise, she will flee, using a magical cloak and boots to vanish into the night.

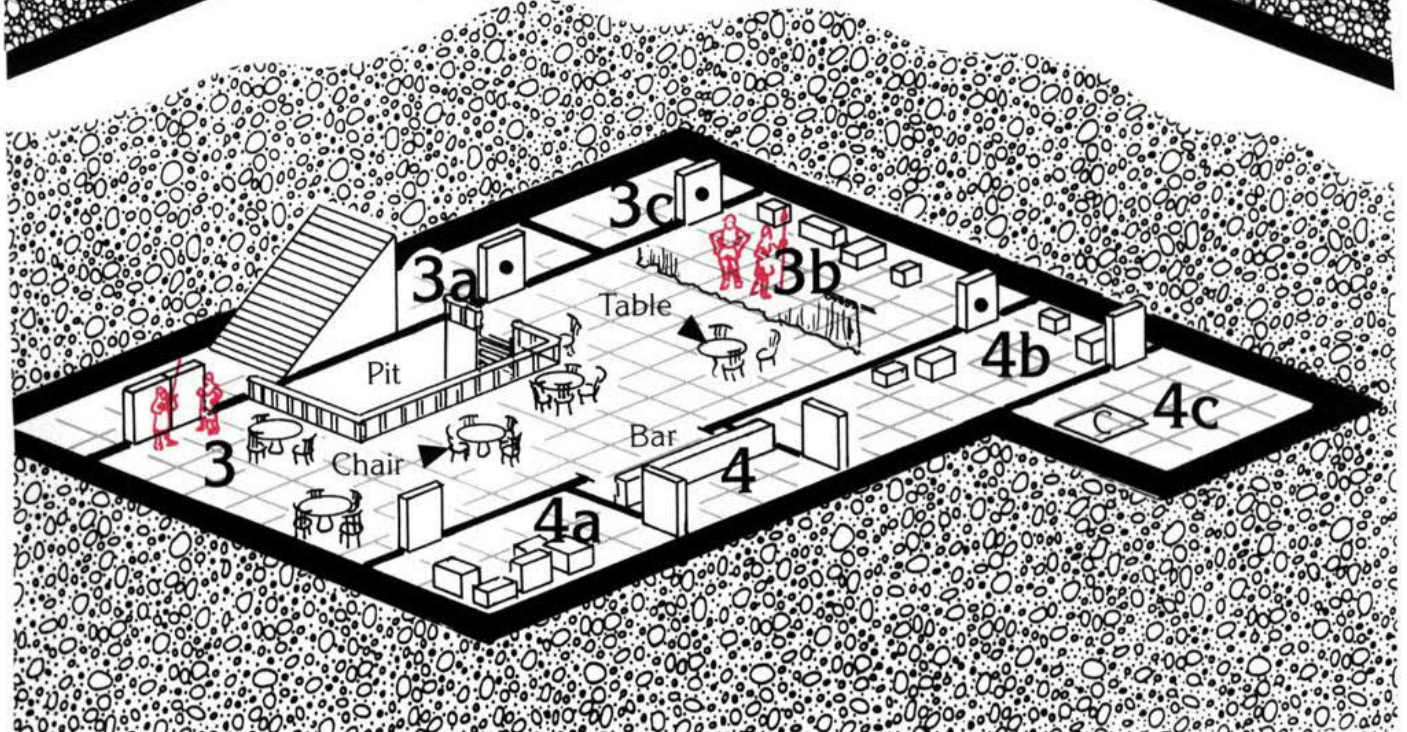
123 BOG STREET

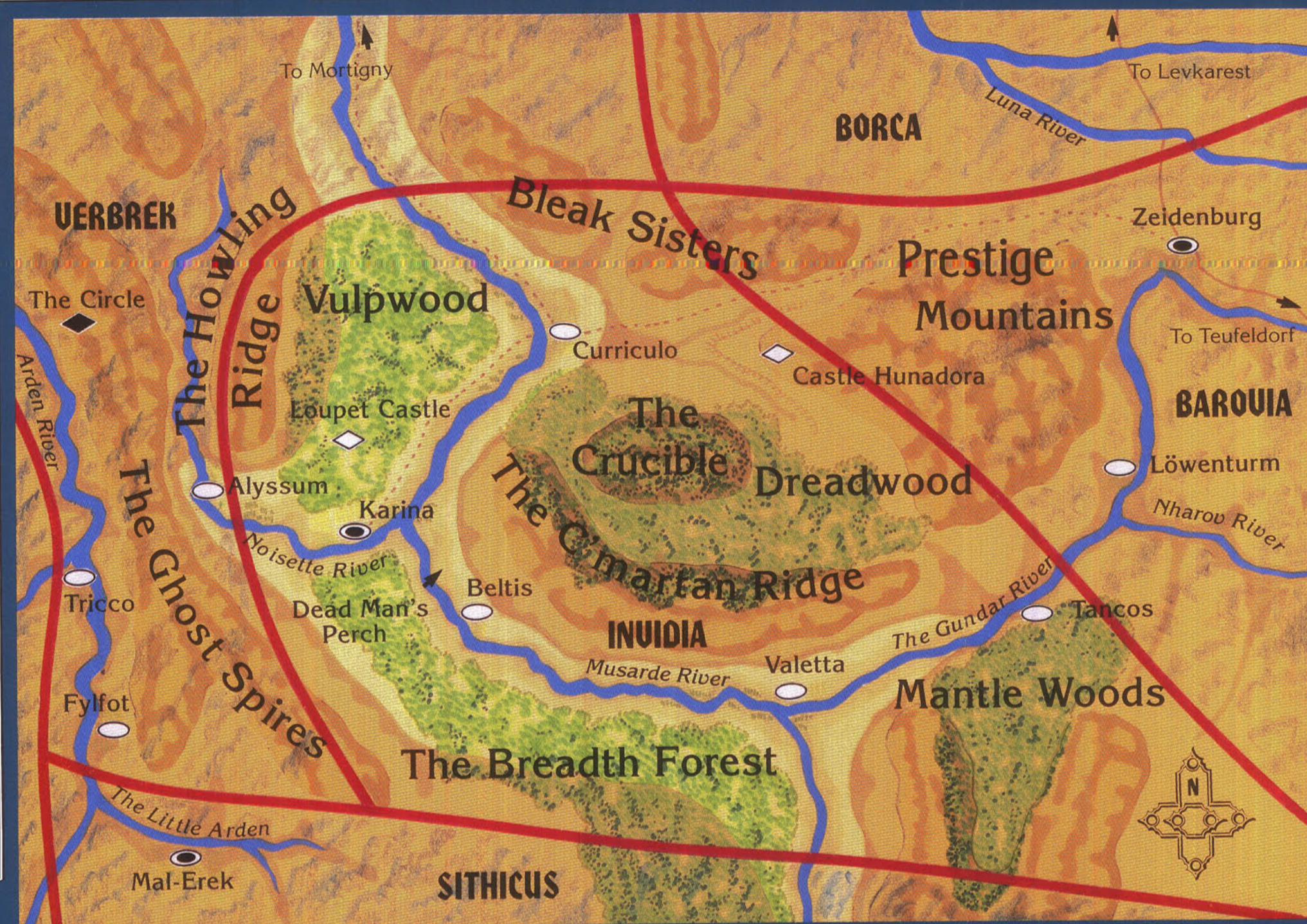
Street Level

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



Basement Level





THE DOMAIN OF INVUIDIA

One inch = 80 miles

THE DOMAIN OF INVUIDIA

- Ruins
- Major Town or City
- Village
- Castle
- Road
- Path
- Border

- River
- Forest
- Fields
- Marsh
- 0-200 Feet
- 201-500 Feet
- 501-1000 Feet

KARINA AND SURROUNDING AREA

- Farms
- Light Roads
- Estates

THE HAPTMEYER ESTATE

- A. Vineyards
- B. Outbuildings
- C. Stables
- D. Silver Maples
- E. Cliff House

KARINA AND SURROUNDING AREA

Scale: 1 inch = 200 yards



Ravenloft

Official Campaign Adventure

CLIFF HOUSE

Ground Floor

1. Entry Foyer
2. Solarium
3. Cliff Terrace
4. Dining Room
5. Kitchen
6. Parlor
7. Library
8. Study

First Floor

9. Gabrielle's Bedroom
10. Malocchio's Bedroom
11. Empty Bedroom

Cellars

12. Pantry
13. Storage Vault
14. Wine Cellar

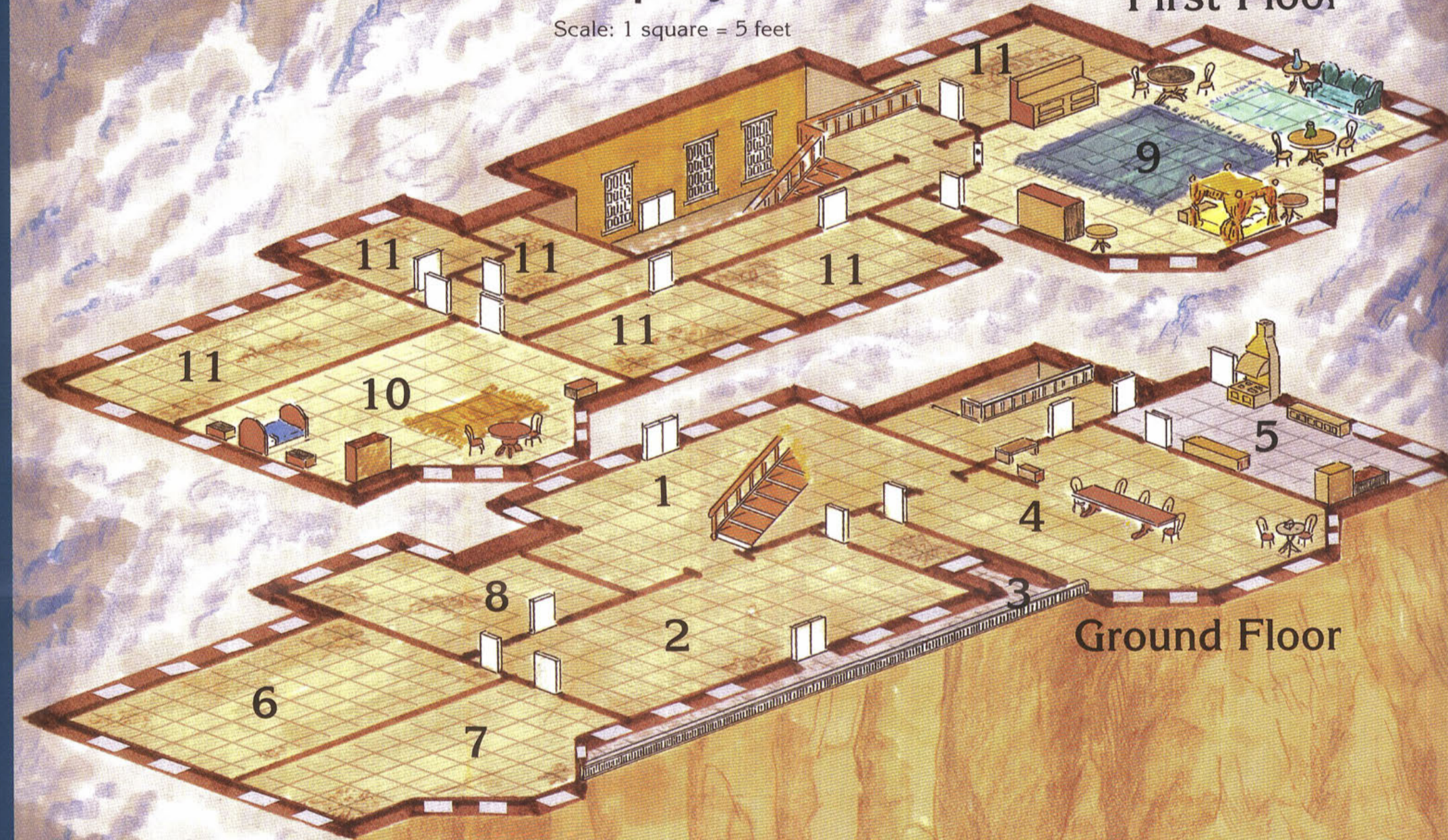
THE HAPTMEYER ESTATE ("Cliff House")



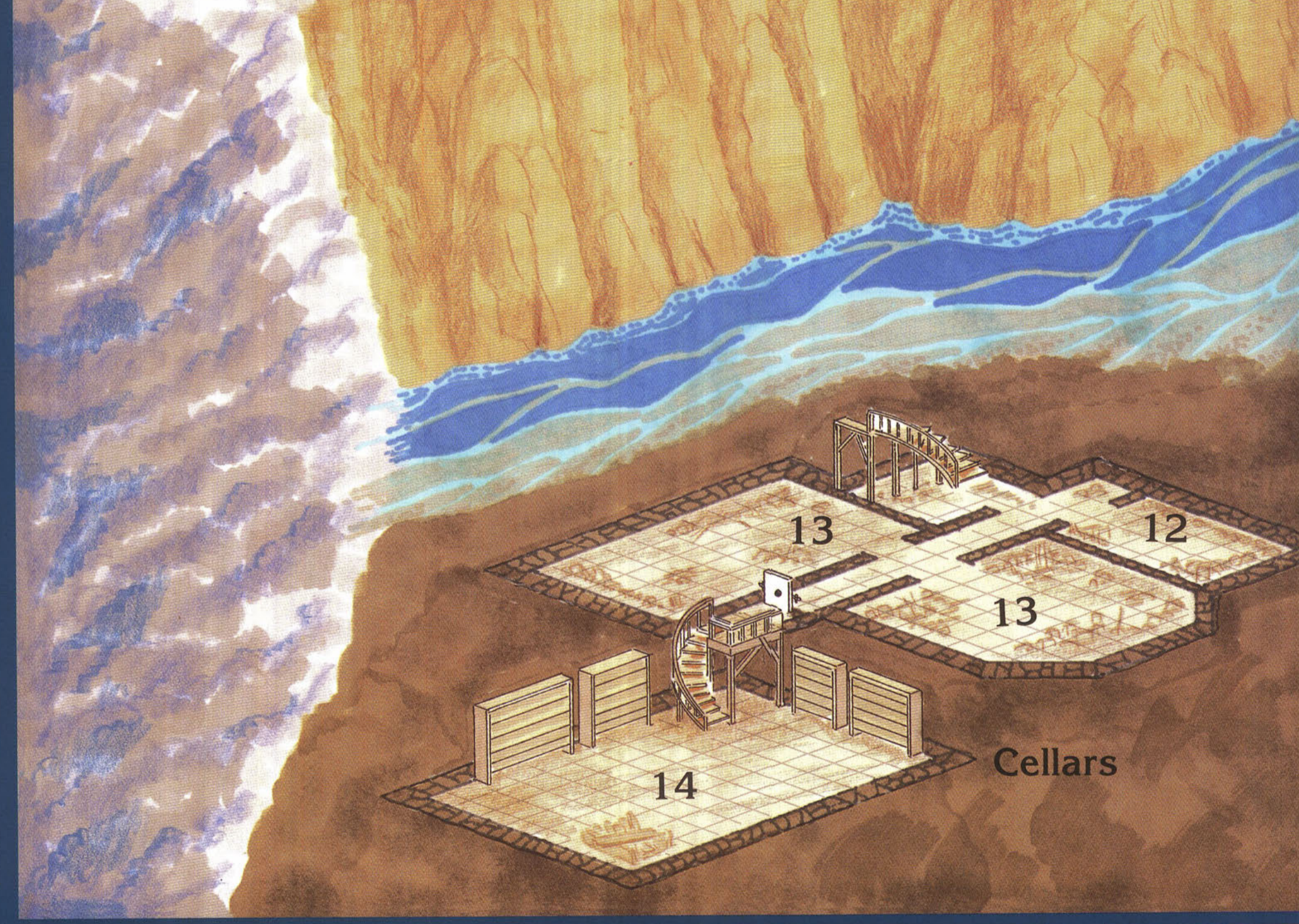
CLIFF HOUSE (Haptmeyer Estate Area E)

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

First Floor



Ground Floor



Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®

Ravenloft®

Official Game Adventure

THE EVIL EYE

by Steve Kurtz

Welcome to Invidia, where Vistani curses come to their terrible fruition. As a young girl, Gabrielle Aderre was warned by her mother never to have children: "A man, a babe, a home — these things can never be for you, for tragedy will be the only result." Now the witch Gabrielle has disobeyed her mother and borne a child, an abomination that could spell doom for Vistani everywhere. Gabrielle has learned too late the truth of her mother's prophesy.

The Evil Eye is a series of six scenarios involving the Vistani and their most hated nemesis, the legendary Dukkar. The adventures uncover the hidden secrets of Karina, the largest town in Invidia and home to the most terrifying festival in Ravenloft. The heroes will arrive to see a town in the throes of Carnival — a time when ghosts and madmen, werewolves and gypsies all mingle under the waxing moon.

Inside this package is a 64-page book containing all the information needed to run *The Evil Eye*, plus a full-color mapsheet showing the land of Invidia. *Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani* and *Van Richten's Guide to Fiends* are helpful sources of information to expand and enrich these adventures, but are not necessary for play.

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