

Ravenloft

Van Richten's Encyclopedia

of Darklords & Domains

Volume I:

A Complete 5e Ravenloft Encyclopedia.
Meet all the Darklords and visit every
Dread Domain ever published!

By *Mistfactor Press*



Credits



WARNING!

Some of the content in this book can and will be disturbing to part of our audience. We have tried our best to treat these subjects with the respect and severity that they deserve, but parts of Ravenloft, and the real world history and fiction that inspired it, have always been horrific in the extreme. If you or your group feel uncomfortable with that kind of material, we strongly suggest that you leave it out of your campaign. We have chosen to leave it in as we believe that these subject still need to be addressed, and that roleplaying games — like literature — are one of the best mediums for doing so.

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A few words...

Who are we?

We are a group of people who share their enthusiasm for the Ravenloft setting and desire to spread the mists so that more victi... people know about our favorite setting of dread. We are all creating Ravenloft material that is true to the origins of Ravenloft under the umbrella of Mistfactor Press, for the DMsGuild.

What is this?

This is the **first** volume of Van Richten's Encyclopedia of Darklords & Domains. A huge project almost two years in production. In this encyclopedia we present all the Darklords and domains that have ever been published in novels or other Ravenloft books released prior to the fifth edition. In this book, you will find the lore of the domains of the Core and the wandering domains. Within each domain entry you will also find the lore and statblock of its current or even former darklord and their stats. New spells and magic items, as well as new NPCs and monsters unique to their domains are also included. For the people that wish to dig deeper, our references and links for the original books and areas of research are given as well.

Regarding Ravenloft

Maybe there isn't only one Ravenloft. Maybe there are many.

The Mists may hold not only many different domains, but also many versions of each domain. Several Barovias, Darkons, Falkovnias and each of the dark domains, all slightly or greatly different from the others. Ravenloft is a dark mirror of other realities, but rather than an intact mirror, it may be more of a shattered one — each shard reflecting the original somewhat differently. Think of this like the reincarnation of Tatyana, or maybe the reflections of Amber in the works of Roger Zelazny. Books and records inside Ravenloft may contain different, contradictory descriptions of apparently the same realms. Travelers in the Mists might return to a familiar domain, only to find out that it is not quite the same as the one they are familiar with. This could be quite an eerie and unsettling experience. The Darklord and the folk could be different, the geography or the history, the technological level or even small and irritating details. Their own families might not recognize them, or may have never existed. Perhaps they'll encounter another version of themselves. Most importantly, this cosmology can put an end to the debates about different editions and fanfics. There's no need to choose one over the others.

They could all form part of the many Ravenlofts, in the one setting.

What's next?

If you wish to be informed of our future products and also receive a discount, you can register at our newsletter list [here](#). You can also take part in Ravenloft conversations by looking for us on Facebook at the [Mists of Ravenloft Group!](#) There, you can give us your feedback or even request stuff that you would like to see included in future projects!

Till then,

GET MISTIFIED!

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Map of the Core



Marboria

**Heinroth's Asylum
Dominia**

Blaustein

Dementien

Lamoria

Deerpolis

Darfon

Palkoonia

Keening

Yapest

The Shadow Rift

Doon Vaasa

**Isle of
the Ravens**

L'ile de la Tempest

Liffe

Veehor

Valachan

Verbrech

Imiddia

Kartakass

Barovia

Forlorin

Razlan

Mordent

Richemulot

Borra

Baron

Barovia

Forlorin

Razlan

Sithicus

Arbora

Codstein



Shadow Rift



Shadow Rift / Arak



The Shadow Rift was once known as Arak, and lay to the south of Darkon, though most of its inhabitants lived underground, and were presumed to be drow. Since then the domain has disappeared and the Shadow Rift has formed in its place. Scholars have since then, also discovered that the Arak are not drow elves like the inhabitants of both Barovia, Darkon, and beyond, believed, but are instead fey creatures, some of whom resemble elves with dusky skin. Not much is known of Arak before the Grand Conjunction — the inhabitants lived underground and kept to themselves. Anyone who ventured there risked being captured and dragged into the underworld, never to be seen again.

In many ways, the same state of affairs applies still, but since the appearance of the Shadow Rift, fey creatures have become far more common in the lands surrounding the domain, and scholars have been able to deduce much from the information gleaned from the creatures, somewhat able to piece together what lies within the Rift.

The Shadow Rift is a fey land that, despite having no sun, is lush with vegetation half the time, and a winter wasteland the other half. And above it all rolls the Mists, keeping any natural sunlight out. And that is probably for the best, at least from the viewpoint of the Arak, as sunlight is deadly to all of them.

The Arak themselves are somewhat of a misnomer, as unlike in other lands, the Arak consist of at least nine different races of fey, all of whom have influence in either the Seelie or the Unseelie Court. And all of them owe allegiance to the Law of Arak.

To look at the history of the Shadow Rift briefly is almost impossible, but in ages past, Gwydion the Sorcerer-Fiend held huge numbers of fey in thrall on the Plane of Shadow. They were treated as no better than slaves, and eventually one among their number, Arak the Erlking rose up and led the fey in rebellion. But Gwydion was too powerful, and finally the slaves tried to escape. They opened a portal to what later became Arak (named in the Erlking's honor), but Gwydion was right behind them. Arak stood his ground, sent his children to lead the escapees, and fought Gwydion in a stalling effort to hold him off before the gate closed. As the gate closed, Gwydion was caught and imprisoned. And so he has remained for five millennia, stuck in the Obsidian Gate, and should he break free, he'd find himself in a slightly larger prison, but one that would be equally difficult to escape.

The fey meanwhile have been ruled by Arak's children, Queen Maeve and Prince Loth, ever while his name has been immortalized in both the naming of the inhabitants of Arak (all the fey living here refer to themselves as Arak, though they may be very different creatures) as well as the name of the domain before the Grand Conjunction.

Finally, there is the Law of Arak, again named after the Erlking. It is universally obeyed by everyone within the domain, but simply put, it states that "No Arak may kill another Arak", in defiance of Gwydion's callousness. It is such a respected law that even those who harm another Arak or who are so much as suspected of murder can be found guilty of breaking it. Ironically the most grievous breach of the law was the killing of Tristessa by Loht, for following the Spider Queen, one of the religions outlawed in the Shadow Rift, due to its use of living sacrifices. Breaking the law is punishable by exile (for Arak/fey creatures) or execution (for non-fey creatures).

Then there is the issue of time within the Shadow Rift. Time here passes much faster than in the surrounding domains. A year here is only a fortnight in the outside world. It is therefore dangerous to mortals, even if they're simply visiting the place and never run into a single inhabitant. This has also led the otherwise immortal fey to be fascinated with mortals and the passing of time. To them, the mortals disappear in but a short time, and their desperate fight to make an impact in the world before they die is endlessly interesting to the immortals.



Shadow Rift / Arak

Adventures in the Shadow Rift should focus on dualities, whether that is the fight between good and evil (or at least evil vs. everything else), the passage of time within and outside of the Shadow Rift, or the clash between mortal and immortal. All of these should serve as a foundation for, or at least play a part in any adventure in the Shadow Rift. Perhaps the heroes are looking for a specific fey that has placed a curse on a friend, or they're looking for a way to fight an ancient evil that the fey might have encountered in the past, and therefore have knowledge of. Most worryingly, perhaps the heroes are looking for a way to leave, and have heard of the Obsidian Gate. Opening the Gate would unleash Gwydion, even if the heroes should manage to escape.

"Lord, what fools these mortals be!"
~William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Culture Level:	Late Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, mountains, and swamp
Year Formed:	575 BC (as Arak), 740 BC (as Shadow Rift)
Population:	24,000
Races (%):	Fey 65%, Others 35%
Languages:	Arak, Balok, Common, Darkonese, Mordentish, Sylvan, Tepestani, Vaasi
Religions:	None
Government:	Hereditary aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Queen Maeve/Prince Loht (depending on season)
Darklord(s):	Gwydion the Sorcerer-Fiend
Nationality:	Arak
Analog:	Dante's Inferno, fey folklore



Local Fauna:

The Shadow Rift is home to all kinds of nocturnal creatures such as bats, wolves, red and silver foxes, badgers, wild cats, rodents, and even some of the gremishka from Forlorn have found their way here. (See Forlorn for further details on the gremishka).

Like the plants (as described below) the animals of the Shadow Rift are different from those of other lands. While the flowers and plants are more "alive", the animals are, in some cases, quite literally MORE. Giant versions of the animals abound here, some are known to walk on their hind legs and use tools (though they seem no more intelligent than their normal counterparts — either that or mortals simply haven't found a way to communicate with them yet), while others are twisted with horned protrusions or powerful claws, even extra limbs. These are often termed "dire" animals in other domains, but here, they are completely normal, to the point where those animals that aren't twisted in some way are the exception. Vermin and bugs are common as well, especially spiders and spider-like monsters — this poses a problem for the local Arak population who hate the creatures, and have been driven to the very edges of the Stonedowns. Perhaps this proliferation of spiders is a contributing factor to why the people of the domains surrounding Arak thought that the Arak were drow and not a form of fey. In spite of having been driven to the edges of the Stonedowns however, they breed with such speed that they frequently invade Arak lands and have to be driven back.

Local Flora:

To describe the flora of the Shadow Rift is near impossible. Basically, anything and everything grows here, but it does so in a peculiar manner. Firstly, it only grows in the Greenlands. The Stonedowns are only home to the Stonedowns moss. Secondly, there is no sunlight in the rift, as it is all blocked by the Mists swirling above, but even in this twilight zone life flourishes. Every plant is somehow more than those found elsewhere. Roses are far more vivid in their colors, but their thorns are sharper and larger. Trees grow larger, though they're interspersed with abandon, and it isn't unusual to see oak trees growing next to bamboo, which in turn grows next to a palm tree and a fir. While all plants grow here (from ones that are perfectly safe to ones that are incredibly ravenous), there is a proliferation of those plants that are known for their colors or their smells, such as roses, hyacinth, lilies, and orchids. It's almost as if the very nature of the Shadow Rift is conducive to these more vivid plants (in all aspects), and that it draws them here to break the monotony of the immortal life of the Rift's inhabitants.

Shadow Rift / Arak

Native Horrors

Of greater worry, to those around the Shadow Rift, than the more-or-less natural animals are the saugh or undead of Arak. Wraiths and strange vampiric mists haunt the Black Marsh. Nearer to the Southern Rift, where the land is dry, a visitor will find zombies, skeletons, ghouls, and strange axe-wielding wights known as dearg-due. Unlike normal wights, their skin and flesh has not started decaying, but their eyes have been plucked from their heads, leaving only empty sockets that somehow still see everything.

The undead have become more prolific in the years that followed Prince Loht's failed attempt to dethrone and remove Gwydion, and some fear that the Sorcerer-Fiend is somehow spreading his influence throughout the lands now, in spite of his imprisonment.



Most worryingly, from the viewpoint of those living around the Shadow Rift, is the sheer number of fey creatures and changelings. Fey creatures of all kinds can be found here: pixies, nymphs, sidhe, satyrs, dryads, the arak, and so on. The ruling classes are those of the arak and the sidhe (or sith) however, as they lord over the rest of the creatures that make the Shadow Rift their home. While these are relatively easy for the people around the domain to catch and recognize, the changelings are a different matter. They can appear as completely human, and the other fey of the Shadow Rift take a devilish delight in stealing children from the other domains and replacing them with changelings. Of course, some of the evil fey simply dispose of these children, but in many cases the neutral or good ones let them live out their lives in the Shadow Rift — un-

fortunately, due to the way time passes in the Shadow Rift, their families never see them again, as they'll pass full lifetimes in mere weeks, while the rest of the world crawls on around them. Meanwhile, the changelings take their place, and for this reason are often outcasts — at least when they are discovered, which often happens around puberty when changelings lose control of their powers for a year or so, going through random transformations into forms they've taken or admired. This only adds to the already sinister reputation of the Shadow Rift of course, especially in Tepest which suffers the worst of the depredations — probably simply due to how much easier it is for the fey to enter that domain.

Terrain type

Any discussion of the terrain of the Shadow Rift should start with the fact that the Rift itself is strange and appears so from the surrounding domains.

Anyone on the borders of the domains can look down into it (in fact, Ivan Dilisnya of Borca has built a balcony specifically for this purpose, and enterprising people in another domain have built a stairway down into it) but entering is difficult. To the outside world, the Shadow Rift appears as a truly massive canyon or valley — almost literally a hole in the ground. This hole is filled with mist and fog so thick as to be almost solid, and it is impossible to see through. The hole goes down some 500 feet when seen from the outside world, before ending in a roiling mass of mist and shadow. Anyone foolish enough to try and enter the mist is lost, regardless of any constraints or emergency measures.

To the people inside the Rift, the sky appears much the same as what others see from above. A roiling mass of mist, fog, and shadow. No one knows how deep the drop actually is, but as there are areas of the Stone-downs that reach up 2,500 feet or more, it is safe to say that if the surrounding domains and the Rift are located as would seem logical, then anyone who takes a fall from the above world, would die on impact. No such event has been registered however.

The Shadow Rift is divided into the Northern and the Southern Rift, and each has a unique make-up. The Northern Rift is the home of the Greenlands, an area that is lush with life and plants. It is relatively flat, broken up by only five plateaus on which a visitor can find ruins of lost civilizations. These are seemingly interspersed from all ages of history and from all over the multiverse. All in one gigantic jumble of mixes, so it's not unusual to find austere marble temples filled with columns standing right next to an enormous pyramid

Shadow Rift / Arak

even though these would never normally coincide. The Southern Rift is dominated by the Stonedowns. Unlike the Greenlands, the Stonedowns is anything but flat, dominated by hills, crags, and deep chasms. It's mostly devoid of life, but that is not the case with the Black Marsh. It has life, but it is something far worse. In between the rifts is a 500 foot set of cliffs known as the Precipice. The Falling River takes the steep drop constantly, ending in the Biting Tarn at the very edge of the Stonedowns.

Important Landmarks

Arak's Tomb

Arak's Tomb sits at the edge of the Precipice, overlooking the Biting Tarn, and is considered to mark the border between the Northern and Southern Rifts, centered like Arak himself was between his daughter and son. The structure is a gigantic stepped pyramid made from black marble that's been polished to a mirror finish, that is capped with a vaulted arch that rises a further 30 feet into the air, supported by caryatid columns. The pyramid is empty and hollow, with only a single room in the middle.

The room is dominated by an enormous statue of Arak the Erlking, wearing the full regalia. Surrounding him are carvings in the marble floor with representations of the various kinds of fey that live in the Shadow Rift, those known as the nine bloodlines. An inscription sits at the foot of the statue that says "I was the way to the cities of freedom, I was the death of night, Through me, the lost make their passage; The Enemy slain at last".

The Arak believe that this is a reference to the capturing of Gwydion, but scholars from across the Core (or at least the few who know of it) suspect that there may be a hidden gate here somewhere, or perhaps even a potent weapon that can destroy the Sorcerer-Fiend. If so, neither monarch has made any obvious moves to secure it.

Biting Tarn

The Biting Tarn is a lake that forms at the foot of the Precipice, where the Falling River ends. The tarn is extremely polluted with the minerals that have washed out of the earth above, as well as from the cliff face itself. Even the otherwise immortal fey avoid bathing in it, for fear of catching something that they cannot get rid of.



Black Marsh

The Black Marsh takes up much of the north, east and south sides of the Stonedowns, and it is the only place within the Stonedowns that has any semblance of life. In fact, despite the salty waters and the runoff from the Biting Tarn that borders it, swamp plants choke out almost everything else here, covering every surface with browns and greens. The area is also haunted by incorporeal undead like ghosts and, even more worryingly, it is the home of numerous will-o'-wisps.

The creatures are drawn here for the effects that the Marsh has on the living. Anyone who goes here slowly desponds, giving into depression, and if enough time passes, they simply lose the will to live. At that point, the swamp swallows them, but before then the will-o'-wisps feast on the fears and worries released by the unfortunate trespassers.

Cascades

The Cascades are a series of waterfalls that drop into the Shadow Rift. Calling them waterfalls may be overstating the point as some are reduced to mere droplets and mist, while others remain roaring rivers. Supposedly these are from the rivers that end and flow into the Shadow Rift from the surrounding domains, but it is well known that some of these rivers in the domains flow away from the Shadow Rift, in defiance of all logic. Similarly, none of the rivers in the Shadow Rift flow into the surrounding domains, but the Rift has never even come close to drowning in the supposed mass of water coming from above. The biggest of these waterfalls is the one called Deadfalls. The Deadfalls drop from the Volgis River where Nova Vaasa meets the Shadow Rift.

Shadow Rift / Arak

Loch Lenore

Loch Lenore is situated in the Greenlands, and is a lake of great beauty even if the waters are constantly moving and dangerous to swim. It is fed by the Hidden Cascades — a series of waterfalls that drop from Tepest above. Loch Lenore is not a big lake, in fact, it's only about two miles wide at its largest, but it is incredibly deep. It may in fact be bottomless — but not because it doesn't have a bottom. Instead, the other end of the lake is another surface, one that depends on which season it is. When it is summer it ends in Nidal in Lake Amenta, and when it is winter it ends in Saragoss. While the Saragoss connection is seemingly unstable, and no one is sure if it works, the Nidal one is very stable, and that domain sees a regular influx in fey creatures for half the time.

Malachite Palace

The Malachite Palace is the seat of power for the Shadow Rift. Half of the time it is ruled by Queen Maeve and the other half of the time it is ruled by Prince Loht. Their attendants follow them wherever they go, so the entire court changes when control moves from one sibling to the other. During the time of Maeve and the Seelie Court, most of the creatures here are good or neutral fey, while Loht and the Unseelie Court are evil fey.

The Palace itself isn't a castle, but a mansion with no curtain wall — where other seats of government are guarded, this isn't needed for the Malachite Palace. The Law of Arak prevents that sort of dissension. The Palace is built around a well of crystal that is filled with a blood-red inferno of fire. Rumor has it that this pillar of flame is actually an elemental spirit or a representation of the natives of Arak's will to live. Not even Maeve or Loht seem to know the truth, as it died with their father when he sacrificed himself to stop Gwydion.

The Malachite Palace is a true marvel of craftsmanship, with finely carved pinnacles, graceful towers, and delicate carvings adorning it. Strangely though, it appears to be tens of thousands of years old, and everything is shaped as if it has suffered erosion from rain and weather, giving it a strange feeling as if both the immortal and mortal sides of life were strangely entwined here.

The most important part of the Malachite Palace is the throne room. In there sits two thrones, the Gilded Throne and the Midnight Throne. One of brightest white marble, the other of deepest, darkest obsidian. The seats of Maeve and Loht respectively. None but the siblings can sit on the thrones — those that try find themselves suffering excruciating pain and are unable

to move until released. Those caught there are found guilty of treason, and exiled from the Shadow Rift (if Arak or fey) or drowned in the Biting Tarn (if mortal).

Midnight Garden

The Midnight Garden is a topiary hedge maze interrupted with beds of flowers. The main distinction here from a normal one of these though is that all the things that'd normally be green are black, though in various hues. The only exception are the tiny flowers that grow on a single type of vine that snakes its way throughout the maze. The flowers are white and so bright that they resemble twinkling stars amongst the sea of darkness around them.

The Garden is safe IF you stay on the path, but moving away from it or trying to take a shortcut through the maze is certain death. The most preferable fate is death at the jaws of carnivorous plants, but most fates here are far worse. The secret of the Midnight Garden is that all the plants and all the hedges were once living creatures of all kinds. They are still intelligent and still feel pain, so when the fey trim and prune the hedges, the air is filled with cries of pain and shouts pleading for mercy, while blood bubbles forth from the new cuts. Thankfully, only new cuts react in this manner, saving the sanity of those traversing the maze. This is also one of the most common methods of punishment within the Rift, as it affects the fey (if they die they're reborn after all), but just as importantly, this does not break the Law of Arak.

Obsidian Gate

The Obsidian Gate has a special significance in Arak history. It is how they originally escaped the Plane of Shadow, and unbeknownst to the Arak (at least until 751 BC) it had served as the prison of the Sorcerer-Fiend for the last 5,000 years. It sits atop the Darkenheights, in the Stonedowns, at the peak of 2,500 feet. It is nearly impossible to get to, as the slopes are dangerous and spiders and undead creatures of all kinds patrol the mountain. Furthermore, the veil between the Shadow Rift and the Plane of Shadow is very thin here, and creatures on either side of the veil can interact with each other, though they cannot pass through. The gate itself is a globe of shadow (not entirely unlike a *sphere of annihilation*) that floats in the air above a winding spiral staircase. And only with the Regalia is it possible to open it. It is against the Law of Arak for anyone to approach the Gate, though Loht himself has done so in the past without the knowledge of anyone else.

Shadow Rift / Arak

Shifting Sands

The Shifting Sands is the home of everything lost. An area of dunes of sand that shift and move like those of a sea in a storm. Constantly bubbling to the surface are the treasures that have been lost to time, provided they were lost to the manipulations of the fey. Usually, these treasure pieces remain with the fey, but due to the immortal nature of these creatures, they eventually lose interest in even the most fascinating pieces, and the Sands is where they end up afterward. Anyone who searches through here could find great treasure — but it comes with a risk. Anyone who enters or spends more than 30 minutes searching the Sands risks losing their mind. First temporarily, but at least they return to normal when they leave. If they enter again the same day, they lose their memories. Permanently (in game terms the first time a visitor enters and each half-hour thereafter, they must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail they are *confused* until they leave, or fail again. If they fail a second saving throw within the period of a day, they are instead *feebleminded* permanently, with no secondary saving throw allowed after 30 days).

Towns and villages:

Anvolee

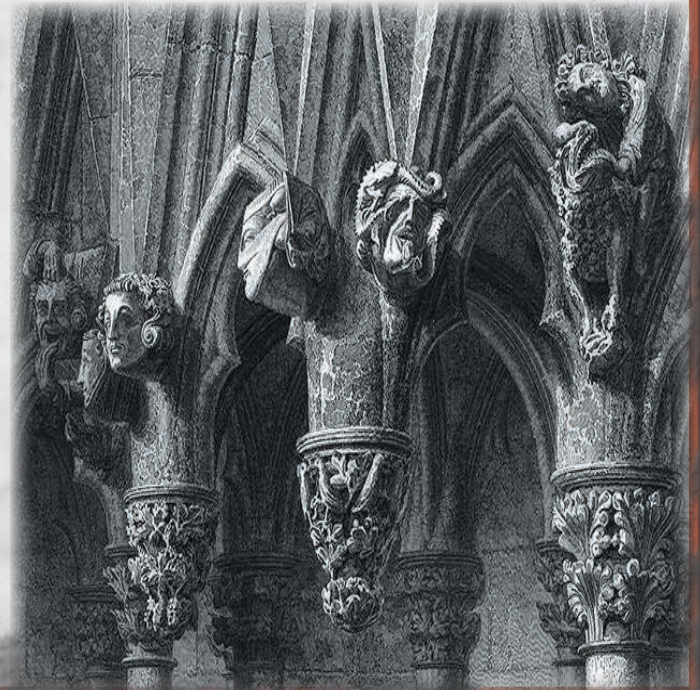
Anvolee is a city of 5,000, the vast majority of who are changelings who work for all eternity in their workshops. The buildings themselves, and everything around them, are nearly flawless, as the craftsmen who built them have had ages to make them not only unique but works of wonder. Nothing stands out more than the Clocktower. Though it is not a clock. It is a tower, filled from top to bottom with clockwork constructions of all kinds. Seemingly to fulfill some function, but no one knows what it is. The creature that runs it, a genius named Waelin, is both Anvolee's Mayor and Chief Artisan (whenever he can be bothered). Why he is building his mechanical creation is unknown, but he has been at it since the founding of Anvolee. Another that has been at it since the founding of Anvolee is Arlien, or "She Who Maintains The Sun". Anvolee is built inside a gigantic cavern underneath one of the plateaus of the Greenlands. And it has a dull green ball of light that serves as the sun for Anvolee — though in reality it merely makes it slightly brighter than the rest of the Shadow Rift and tints everything green. Arlien lives in a stalactite directly underneath it. The rest of the people of Arak believe that the constant exposure to light has driven her crazy, as she is experimenting with creating true sunlight, something that is deadly to the inhabitants of the Shadow Rift.

Beliviue

The sith are another of the nine fey bloodlines and the ones who mostly control the Unseelie Court under the leadership of Prince Loht. The sith themselves resemble tall and elegant but gaunt and pale elves with pale skin and hair. Sith tend to dress in dark and grim clothing, and have a fascination with death. And Beliviue is their capital, a grim and cheerless reminder of who they are. Like Anvolee before it and Esmerth after it, it is located inside a great cavern underneath one of the plateaus of the Greenlands. The buildings here resemble barrow mounds and are laid out in an extremely orderly fashion with arrow-straight lanes bisecting the city. Smaller caves surround the larger central cave and in each of these can be found magical circles, though none but a select few sith know what these are for.

About 1,000 fey make their home here, with the majority being the sith, but despite of being the largest gathering of the sith in the Mists, the settlement is silent as the grave.

It is home to several gathering halls, though the most important of these is the Hall of Records, which sits next to Loht's private palace (though he is only here when not in power at the Malachite Palace). The Hall of Records is a strange library that contains information on all of the ways that a human life can come to an end, including magical recordings of how a human died and how they felt at that time. Several of the evil aligned sith and fey find this very useful when studying certain interrogation techniques, but for most of them, it is merely a hobby. Humans, and other mortals, would likely find this obscene and incredibly disturbing.



Shadow Rift / Arak

Esmerth

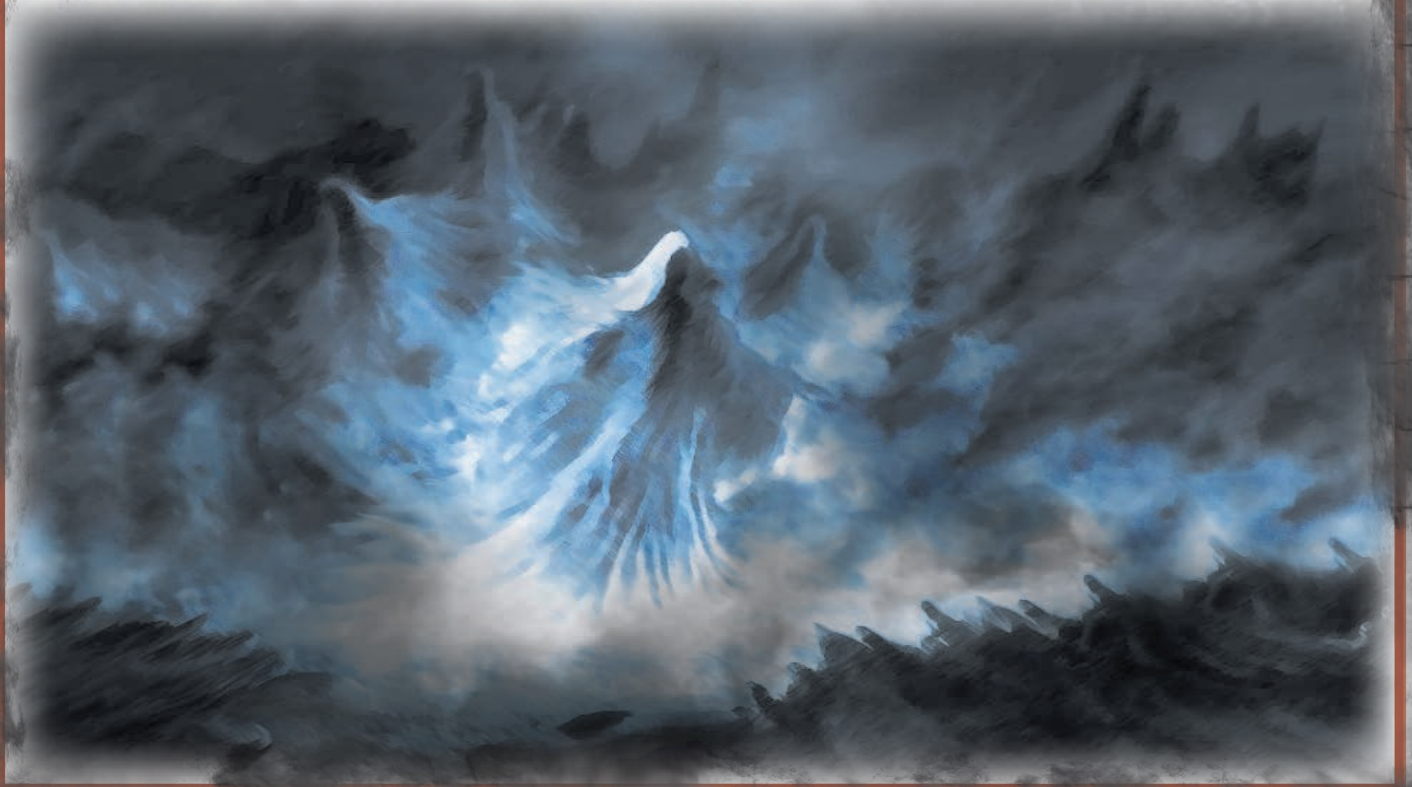
Everything that is dark in Belivue is reflected in the light that is Esmerth. It is home to the shee, who, like the sith, appear as tall, elegant elf-like humanoids. Unlike the sith, the shee are colorful and bright, a bastion of light against the terror of darkness. They're led by Queen Maeve who has her great hall here, where she spends time when not in the Malachite Palace. The city is filled with music, both that which is played by the shee bards who perform here (and use the echo of the natural cavern that Esmerth lies in to their advantage), but the many pools in Esmerth add their own bubbling and rushing counterpoint to the music. The pools all flow into a vast lake at the center of town, at the foot of Maeve's Summer Palace. The palace itself is a tribute to the queen, a way to show her wit, beauty, and majesty to all visitors, though for the time where it is empty, it feels cold, silent, and strangely alien. Perhaps this impression of the queen is more accurate than most would like to consider, but the fey have named the palace with some humor, as it is during the spring and summer of the Shadow Rift, that Maeve is in attendance at the Malachite Palace. Esmerth is home to music of all kinds and boasts several bardic colleges (often filled with mortals who'd been lured here by the shee, and who never want to leave), all of whom teach music. Some also teach history, but while the shee are meticulous lore keepers, their race's history is entirely orally preserved, which has led to some... creative... changes at times.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Borca
Darkon
Falkovnia
Keening
Nova Vaasa
Tepest

Fun Fact:

The Law of Arak is absolute, and all the fey inhabitants of the Shadow Rift stick to it. Except one, Prince Loht. When Tristessa (now of Keening) was discovered to be worshipping the Spider Queen, he had his men stake her at the top of Mount Lament and be exposed to sunlight. This killed her and her child, and the land was doomed to become her domain. The prince desperately wants to atone, as Arak is his father, and doesn't want to fail him, but each of his schemes to do this, merely strengthens Gwydion's hold on him. If Loht keeps this up, he may well find himself becoming a Darklord as well.



Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

"You have trapped my people in the blighted hell for centuries! I have long waited for this day, Gwydion. You are not a god. Now wither in the darkness you have created. ~Arak the Erlking

Gwydion the Sorcerer-Fiend appears as a roiling mass of darkness. Disjointed limbs, hands with too many fingers, and three pupiled eyes occasionally surface only to be dragged back into the mass in the center. A sibilant hissing fills the air. No one has seen Gwydion and lived to tell the tale. Whether Gwydion killed them in anger or the shock of seeing his true form killed them is unknown.

Background: Gwydion the Sorcerer-Fiend's long journey towards Ravenloft began in a demiplane of his own creation. The Demiplane of Shadow was a place of absolute darkness, and Gwydion was its god. He toiled for centuries to gain power, until he realized what he needed was a race to worship him. He searched through dozens of worlds before he found the ellefolk, distant relatives of elves and skilled artisans. In one horrible night, Gwydion attacked and dragged them all into the Demiplane of Shadow. The ellefolk were forced to worship Gwydion, to attack his enemies and build temples in his name.

After centuries Gwydion started to feel something akin to affection for his slaves, and invested them with the essence of the Demiplane of Shadow. Rather than be grateful for his gift, the ellefolk rebelled. The ellefolk's leader, Arak fought against Gwydion using nine artifacts that combined to give Arak almost god-like powers. Gwydion and Arak's battle tore apart the Demiplane of Shadow and the ellefolk ran for the Obsidian Arch, the only way out. At the gate Arak managed to drive Gwydion back long enough to try and dive through. When Arak turned his back and was distracted by thoughts of escape, Gwydion hit him with a blast of arcane energy that burned him to ash. Arak's young children, Loht and Maeve, had the presence of mind to pull the Regalia of Arak through the gate and seal it. With the Demiplane of Shadow destroyed, Gwydion was trapped inside the Obsidian Arch.

Gwydion was trapped inside the Obsidian Arch for years, the hidden Darklord of Arak. Arak was a subterranean realm where the ellefolk made their home after they escaped the Demiplane of Shadow. The ellefolk, infused with shadow, could no longer go about in sunlight and changed their name to show they had

become a new people. They named themselves after their fallen hero, Arak. Gwydion ruled Arak in secret for centuries, using puppets to carry out his will. When the Grand Conjunction occurred, Gwydion took his chance. He tore open the fabric of Ravenloft, and very nearly escaped, but failed. Where once he ruled Arak, now he ruled the Shadow Rift.

Current Sketch: Gwydion still seeks to escape the Obsidian Arch. He talks to Loht in his dreams, pretending to be Arak, saying Gwydion was slain and Arak has been trapped in the Arch this whole time. Gwydion has convinced Loht to reassemble the Regalia of Arak and open the gate. Loht is only missing two pieces, the crown and the sword. The sword was lost during the Grand Conjunction, and the crown is worn by his sister, Maeve.

Darklord's Tactics: Gwydion is intelligent, devious, and possesses immense magical power. Gwydion prefers to work in the shadows, using agents to enact his plans. If directly threatened, Gwydion becomes a storm of tearing limbs and arcane power. No one knows the limits of his power, and he may not have any.

Borders: The Shadow Mist that covers the Shadow Rift is always active. Creatures that try to penetrate the shadow mist start to fade away after a few feet. If the creature keeps trying to move through the mist they will fade away entirely.



*Gwydion
the Sorcerer-fiend*

Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer (Trapped)

Gargantuan aberration (extraplanar), chaotic evil

Armor Class N/A

Hit Points N/A

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
35 (+12)	20 (+5)	32 (+11)	31 (+10)	29 (+9)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +18, Con +17, Int +16, Wis +15

Skills Arcana +22, Athletics +18, Intimidation +22, Perception +15

Damage Immunities All (only Gwydion's parts can be targeted).

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, prone, poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), darkvision 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Planar Immunity. Gwydion is immune to all spells and spell-like effects except to those that can reach other planes.

Demand Submission. Anyone within 100ft of the Obsidian Gate that Gwydion is trapped within is subjected to the *dominate monster* spell effect unless they succeed on a DC27 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that succeed are immune to this effect for 24 hours. This ability can't affect shadow fey.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Gwydion's choice that is within 120 feet of Gwydion and aware of him must succeed on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Gwydion's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Globe of Darkness. A physical shadow covers a 100ft area around the Obsidian Gate that Gwydion is trapped in. The area is considered to be under the *darkness* spell effect. An undead creature within the area has advantage on Wisdom saving throws and skill checks. Additionally, if they begin their turn in the circle, they gain 2d6 temporary hit points. Creatures of Gwydion's choosing suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and skill checks while inside the area.

Modify Memory. Gwydion can alter the memories and dreams of all the shadow fey within Arak. Gwydion has complete control over the content of memories, dreams and nightmares and can modify them with a *modify memory* spell unless the targeted shadow fey succeeds on DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. This ability can be used once per month, its effects also lasting 1 month.

Mastery of Skills. Gwydion enjoys a +10 bonus on any ability check.

Shadowmaker. Gwydion can create either 10d8 shadows or 4d6 shadow demons by using an action. The created monsters act as allies to Gwydion and use their own initiative. They fight till they are destroyed or dismissed. Gwydion can use this ability once per day.

Targeted Implosion. Gwydion can force a creature within 100ft to implode, taking 10d10 force damage on a failed DC 27 Constitution saving throw or half if it succeeds. If this ability kills the target, it implodes in a shower of flesh and guts which covers a 10ft radius. Gwydion can use this ability once per day.

Undead Mastery. Gwydion has total control over any undead creature of CR 13 or lower within the Shadow Rift. Gwydion can choose to see through the eyes of any undead creature he controls.

Malevolent Possession. As an action, Gwydion can attempt to inhabit the physical body of a living creature within his domain. The target may resist with a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. A creature that saves against this ability becomes immune to the charmed condition for 24 hours. If the save is failed, Gwydion's essence enters into the target's physical body. The target gets another Wisdom saving throw every 10 minutes to throw Gwydion out of its body, causing Gwydion's essence to return back to his main body. This is a mind-affecting ability. Gwydion may use this ability 10 times per day. Gwydion controls the creature as per the ghost's possession ability. Gwydion may remain within a host for four hours, after which he is expelled automatically. If Gwydion or its allies harm the host, it can try to expel him by taking another saving throw at the end of its turn. Gwydion can possess 10 living creatures at a single time and can divide his actions among his hosts in any way it sees fit. Distance is not a factor. For example, if Gwydion is possessing a dwarf, an elf, and a human, he could have the dwarf reload his crossbow (a move-equivalent action), have the elf cast a *sleep* spell (a standard action), and have the human take a move action. Hosts left with no actions for the round or if Gwydion takes no action with a host, leave the host free to act until Gwydion takes an action using the host's body again. Gwydion can use this ability 10 times per day.

Otherworldly Constitution. Gwydion maximum hit points cannot be reduced. In addition, Gwydion is immune to disease, aging, death spells (such as *disintegrate*), mind affecting effects and effects that would alter his form.

Trapped Within the Gate. As long as Gwydion is trapped within the Obsidian Gate, he is invulnerable to all attacks.

Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Nothing can target him and he can only use his abilities to target creatures on the other side of the gate. A special ritual must be carried for Gwydion to manage to slowly pass into Arak. Each time a part of Gwydion passes through the thin membrane of the Obsidian Gate that separates realities, that part can be targeted normally as it uses a unique statblock listed below. The part or limb uses Gwydion's initiative roll in combat. Gwydion has numerous tentacles, talons, hoofs, two thirteen fingered hands, two smashing fists, one spiked tail and ten withering eyes. Different parts of Gwydion come through the gate at a rate determined by the Dungeon Master. If the heroes seem to be on the right track and look like they could handle a greater challenge, Gwydion should come through faster—perhaps at a rate of three parts every two rounds. However, if the heroes seem to be having quite a bit of trouble and could not handle too much resistance, Gwydion could come through the gate far more slowly—perhaps at a rate of one part every two or three rounds. Gwydion passes through the gate completely after 10 minutes of combat and is free to roam the domain. He then uses Freed Gwydion's statblock. Gwydion can be stopped only if a character throws the Crown of Arak (or any other portion of the regalia), the Sword of Arak, or the Dagger of Arak into the Obsidian Gate. This task should not be accomplished too easily, as Gwydion will do everything within his power to stop them. If a creature simply throws it, Gwydion will surely catch it. By the time any of these artifacts is successfully thrown into the gate, then all of the parts that have passed immediately wither and die. Gwydion is trapped on the other side of the gate and cannot be summoned again for 1d10 years at which time, Gwydion will have regenerated his lost parts and limbs.

Gwydion's Tentacle

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spell Immunities. The tentacle is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Actions

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (1d8 + 12) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A restrained creature takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage per turn until the tentacle is severed or the creature is freed with a successful DC27 Strength saving throw rolled at the end of its turn.

Gwydion's Thirteen-Fingered Hand

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spell Immunities. The hand is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on Gwydion, this part will have disadvantage on attack rolls. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on this part, it suffers a -2 Armor Class per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 11 AC.

Spellcasting. Each round, the hand can cast one spell (as a 15th-level sorcerer). Each spell originates from a different finger, so if the finger is destroyed, the hand can no longer cast the corresponding spell. Any finger that directly suffers 4 or more points of damage is destroyed. Each spell can be cast once. Gwydion's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 27, +16 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Spells:

1st finger — *charm person*

2nd finger — *sleep*

3rd finger — *hold person*

4th finger — *vampiric touch*

5th finger — *fear*

6th finger — *shatter*

7th finger — *power word pain*

8th finger — *ray of enfeeblement*

9th finger — *chaos bolt*

10th finger — *finger of death*

11th finger — *enervation*

12th finger — *harm*

13th finger — *sickening radiance*

*or any spell found in Free Gwydion's statblock assigned to a finger before the start of combat.



Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Gwydion's Talons

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, petrified

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spell Immunities. The talons are immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on this part, it will have disadvantage on attack rolls. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on this part, it suffers a -2 Armor Class penalty per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 11 AC.

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (1d8 + 12) piercing plus 4d8 poison damage and the victim's Strength and Constitution drop by one point. If either score reaches 1, the character falls unconscious and is paralyzed. If the creature is not treated within 12 hours, it dies. The points can be restored with a Greater Restoration cast upon the target.

Gwydion's Cloven Hoof

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spell Immunities. The hoof is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on this part, it will have disadvantage on attack rolls. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on this part, it suffers a -2 Armor Class per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 11 AC.

Earthquake. Once per combat round, a single hoof can strike the ground, causing it to shake violently. All creatures within 90ft must make a successful DC 27 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone, dropping any items held in their hands.

Actions

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (1d8 + 12) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of its next turn.

Gwydion's Crushing Fist

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spell Immunities. The fist is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on this part, it will have disadvantage on attack rolls. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on this part, it suffers a -2 Armor Class per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 11 AC.

Smash—On. On a natural roll of 19 or 20, the fist picks up its target and smashes it to the ground, inflicting 4d6 points of damage. Each round thereafter, the fist smashes the character again until the victim makes a successful DC27 Strength saving throw with a -4 penalty to break free.

Actions

Crushing Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d6 + 12) bludgeoning damage. This weapon attack lands a critical on a roll of 19–20.



Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Gwydion's Spiked Tail

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d10)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spell Immunities. The tail is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on this part, it will have disadvantage on attack rolls. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on this part, it suffers a -2 Armor Class per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 11 AC.

Actions

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d6 + 12) piercing plus 4d8 poison damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Dexterity saving throw or be pushed by 20ft and fall prone.

Gwydion's Withering Eye

Large aberration (extraplanar)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d10)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (cannot move further than 200ft from the Obsidian Gate)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), darkvision 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 28

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spell Immunities. The withering eye is immune to *sleep* and other mind-affecting spells.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down on this part, it will be blinded and can no longer cast spells (until it is somehow rid of the light).

Metamagic Abilities. The eye can take a metamagic option from the ones listed below 3 times per day each. No matter how many withering eyes have passed the gate, only one can take a metamagic option per turn.

Quickened Spell. When Gwydion's eye casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, it can change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

Distant Spell. When Gwydion's eye casts a spell that has a range of 5 feet or greater, it can double the range of the spell. Spells that have a range of touch are elevated to 30 feet distance.

Empowered Spell. When Gwydion's eye rolls damage for a spell, it can reroll up to 10 of the damage dice Gwydion must use the new rolls. Gwydion can use Empowered Spell even if it has already used a different Metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Innate Spellcasting. The eye's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). The eyes share the available spells amongst them. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bestow curse*, *chaos bolt*, *charm person*, *cloud of daggers*, *crown of madness*, *divination*, *erupting earth*, *fear*, *hold person*, *identify*, *phantasmal force*, *ray of sickness*, *shatter*, *sleep*, *stinking cloud*, *vampiric touch*

3/Day each: *blight*, *circle of death*, *cloudkill*, *confusion*, *counterspell*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *disintegrate*, *enervation*, *harm*, *mental prison*, *sickenening radiance*

1/Day each: *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*, *blade of disaster*, *control winds*, *earthquake*, *finger of death*, *power word pain*, *power word kill*, *psychic scream*, *reverse gravity*



Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer (Freed)

Gargantuan aberration (extraplanar), chaotic evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 666 (31d20 + 341)

Speed 60 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR 35 (+12) **DEX** 20 (+5) **CON** 32 (+11) **INT** 31 (+10) **WIS** 29 (+9) **CHA** 30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +21, Con +20, Int +19, Wis +18

Skills Arcana +28, Athletics +21, Intimidation +28, Perception +18

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), darkvision 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 28

Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

Demand Submission. Anyone within 100ft of Gwydion is subjected to the *dominate monster* spell effect unless they succeed on a DC27 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that succeed are immune to this effect for 24 hours. This ability can't affect shadow fey.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Gwydion's choice that is within 120 feet of Gwydion and aware of him must succeed on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Gwydion's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Globe of Darkness. A physical shadow covers a 100ft area around Gwydion. The area is considered to be under the *darkness* spell effect. An undead creature within the area has advantage on Wisdom saving throws and skill checks. Additionally, if they begin their turn in the circle, they gain 2d6 temporary hit points. Creatures of Gwydion's choosing suffer disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and skill checks while inside the area.

Modify Memory. Gwydion can alter the memories and dreams of all the shadow fey within Arak. Gwydion has complete control over the content of memories, dreams and nightmares and can modify them with a *modify memory* spell unless the targeted shadow fey succeeds on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. This ability can be used once per month, and its effects also last for 1 month.

Mastery of Skills. Gwydion enjoys a +10 bonus on any ability check.

Shadowmaker. Gwydion can create either 10d8 shadows or 4d6 shadow demons by using an action. The created monsters act as allies to Gwydion and use their own initiative. They fight till they are destroyed or dismissed. Gwydion can use this ability once per day.

Undead Mastery. Gwydion has total control over any undead creature of CR 13 or lower within the Shadow Rift. Gwydion can choose to see through the eyes of any of the undead creatures he controls.

Multiple Actions. Gwydion can take 7 extra actions per turn. These actions can be used to Attack (once with each action) or cast a spell or make an ability check.

Malevolent Possessions. As an action, Gwydion can attempt to inhabit the physical body of a living creature within its domain. The target may resist with a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. A creature that saves against this ability becomes immune to the charmed condition for 24 hours. If the save is failed, Gwydion's essence enters into the target's physical body. The target gets another Wisdom saving throw every 10 minutes to throw Gwydion out of its body, causing Gwydion's essence to return back to its main body. This is a mind-affecting ability. Gwydion may use this ability 10 times per day. Gwydion controls the creature as per the ghost's possession ability. Gwydion may remain within a host for four hours, after which he is expelled automatically. If Gwydion or his allies harm the host, then it can try to expel Gwydion by taking another saving throw at the end of its turn. Gwydion can possess 10 living creatures per day, at a single time and can divide his actions among his hosts in any way he sees fit. Distance is not a factor. For example, if Gwydion is possessing a dwarf, an elf, and a human, he could have the dwarf reload his crossbow (a move-equivalent action), have the elf cast a *sleep* spell (a standard action), and have the human take a move action. Hosts left with no actions for the round or if Gwydion takes no action with a host, then the host is free to act until Gwydion takes an action using the host's body again.

Damage Reduction. All attacks, spells and spell-like abilities that target Gwydion and damage it, are reduced by 20.

Regeneration. Gwydion regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Otherworldly Constitution. Gwydion's maximum hit points cannot be reduced. In addition, Gwydion is immune to disease, aging, death spells (such as *disintegrate*), mind affecting effects and effects that would alter his form.

Metamagic Abilities. Gwydion can take a metamagic option from the ones listed below 3 times per day each. Gwydion can take a metamagic option once per turn.

Quickened Spell. When Gwydion casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, he can change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

Gwydion the Fiend-Sorcerer

Distant Spell. When Gwydion casts a spell that has a range of 5 feet or greater, he can double the range of the spell. Spells that have a range of touch are elevated to 30 feet distance.

Empowered Spell. When Gwydion rolls damage for a spell, he can reroll up to 10 of the damage dice Gwydion must use the new rolls. Gwydion can use Empowered Spell even if he has already used a different Metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Warping Implosion. Gwydion can unleash his aberrant power as a space-warping anomaly. As an action, he can teleport to an unoccupied space he can see within 120 feet of him. Immediately after he disappears, each creature within 30 feet of the space he left must make a DC27 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10d10 force damage and is pulled straight toward the space Gwydion left, ending in an unoccupied space as close to Gwydion's former space as possible. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pulled. If this ability kills the target, it implodes in a shower of flesh and guts which covers a 10ft radius. Once Gwydion uses this feature, he can't do so again until he finishes a long rest.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. If Gwydion's Globe of Darkness is somehow dispelled and sunlight shines down upon him, Gwydion will have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. If a *light* spell of any kind is cast on any limb of Gwydion, he suffers a -2 Armor Class penalty per *light* spell cast with a minimum of 15 AC.

Smash-On. On a natural roll of 19 or 20 when attacking with a crushing fist, Gwydion picks up his target and smashes it to the ground, inflicting 4d6 points of damage. Each round thereafter, Gwydion smashes the character again until the victim makes a successful DC27 Strength saving throw with a -4 penalty to break free.

Innate Spellcasting. Gwydion's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bestow curse, chaos bolt, charm person, cloud of daggers, crown of madness, divination, erupting earth, fear, hold person, identify, phantasmal force, ray of sickness, shatter, sleep, stinking cloud, vampiric touch*
3/Day each: *blight, circle of death, cloudkill, confusion, counterspell, confusion, dispel magic, disintegrate, enervation, harm, mental prison, sickening radiance*
1/Day each: *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting, blade of disaster, control winds, earthquake, finger of death, power word pain, power word kill, psychic scream, reverse gravity*

Actions

Multiattack. Gwydion makes five attacks with his talons, crushing fist, tentacles or hoofs in any combination and one with its Tail Slap or Gore.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (1d8 + 12) piercing plus 4d8 poison damage and the victim's Strength and Constitution drop by one point. If either score reaches 1, the character falls unconscious and is paralysed. If the creature is not treated within 12 hours, it dies. The points can be restored with a *greater restoration* cast upon the target.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (1d8 + 12) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Constitution saving throw or become stunned until the end of its next turn.

Crushing Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d6 + 12) bludgeoning damage. This weapon attack lands a critical on a roll of 19-20.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (1d8 + 12) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A restrained creature takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage per turn until the tentacle is severed or the creature is freed with a successful DC27 Strength saving throw rolled at the end of its turn.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d6 + 12) piercing damage and the target must make a DC27 Constitution saving throw or bleed 1d4 damage per turn until it is healed. The bleeding damage stacks with each Gore attack and resets when the creature is healed.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d6 + 12) piercing plus 4d8 poison damage and the target must succeed on a DC27 Dexterity saving throw or be pushed by 20ft and fall prone.

Legendary Actions

Gwydion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The monster regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cast a Spell. Gwydion casts a spell.

Teleport. Gwydion magically teleports up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Gwydion beats his wings. Each creature within 100 ft. of Gwydion must succeed on a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw or take 39 (5d10 + 12) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Gwydion can then fly up to half its flying speed.

Earthquake (Costs 2 Actions). Gwydion strikes the ground, causing it to shake violently. All creatures within 90ft must make a successful DC 27 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone, dropping any items held in their hands.

The Southern Core

Monsters are real, and ghosts are real too. They live inside us, and sometimes, they win.

– Stephen King, *The Shining*

Overview

We teach children to fear the unknown through stories of vampires, werewolves, and all manner of things that go bump in the dark loneliness of night. Each is a representation of the worst humanity has to offer. Only as we age, approaching our own inevitable return to darkness, do we realize who the true monsters are. These real monsters often find themselves within the Mists. Passing into the Domains, we fear a deserted house, an abandoned mausoleum, or the dungeons of a castle. While any number of vile creatures may lurk within, and present very real dangers, the blackest reaches of these Dread Realms actually lie within the hearts of their Dark Lords. Those who would forsake their family, friends, and countrymen to obtain that which they most desire, are unerringly bound within these shadowy lands. These (mostly) human monsters seal pacts with The Dark Powers, only to have their desires twisted into torturous curses. The very lands contort into macabre reflections of their owner's sins.

Each Domain, past and present, within the Southern Core (**Barovia**, **Forlorn**, **Mordent**, **Gundarak**, **Invidia**, **Kartakass**, **Valachan**, **Nova Vaasa**, **Borca**, **Richemulot**, **Arkandale**, **Dorvinia**, **Hazlan**, **Sithicus**, **Verbrek**, and **Daglan**) exists to reflect its Lord's sins and transgressions. The large, geographically connected, area is home to threats as diverse as they are deadly. These lands are populated by the things we feared as children, the monsters we recognize only as adults, and all the things that even these monsters have learned to fear.

Mistways

The Outlander's Gate allows travel from The Prime Material Plane into Barovia. This is a one way trip.

The Path of Innocence unreliably connects Valachan with Odiare (an Island of Terror).

The Serpent's Coils connects eastern Nova Vaasa to Paridon.

The Shattered Passage connects southern Kartakass to Bluetspur.

The Oak of Screams connects Invidia to unknown destinations. It is said one can choose where they wish to go, but must provide the heart of an innocent under a full-moon.

Chronology

351BC – **Strahd** seals his pact with his brother's blood. **Barovia** is taken by the Mists.

547BC – **Tristen ApBlanc** executes those who had surrendered to him. **Forlorn** forms.

579BC – **Lord Wilfred Godefroy** kills his wife, daughter, and then himself. **Mordent** forms.

593BC – Duke **Boldizar Gundar** slaughters all nobility unrelated to him. **Gundarak** forms.

603BC – **Bakholis** kills a husband and wife. The wife curses him. **Invidia** forms.

613BC – **Harkon Lukas** flees the wrath of **Strahd**. **Kartakass** forms.

625BC – **Urik von Kharkov** flees the Kargat of Darkon. **Valachan** forms.

682BC – **Tristen Hiregaard** inherits a curse from his father, and likes it. **Nova Vaasa** forms.

684BC – **Camille Dilisnya** poisons her husband and his mistress. **Borca** forms.

694BC – **Claude Renier** and his followers flee Darkon. **Richemulot** forms.

708BC – **Nathan Timothy** enters The Mists. **Arkandale** forms.

709BC – **Ivan Dilisnya** is exiled into The Mists. **Dorvinia** forms.

711BC – **Ivana Boritsi** poisons her mother, **Camille Dilisnya**. New Darklord of **Borca**.

714BC – **Hazlik** creates a vat of living clay through necromancy. **Hazlan** forms.

720BC – **Lord Soth** attempts to trap the soul of a consort. **Sithicus** forms.

726BC – **Jacqueline Renier** arranges the poisoning of her father. New Darklord of **Richemulot**.

729BC – **Gabrielle Aderre** betrays her mother, kills **Bakholis**. New Darklord of **Invidia**.

730BC – **Alfred Timothy** murders the Vistani who saved him. **Verbrek** forms.

736BC – **Daglan Daegon** returns to life. The Domain of **Daglan** rises – and soon falls.

736BC – **Dr. Dominiani** arranges the assassination of **Boldizar**. New Darklord of **Gundarak**.

740BC – THE GRAND CONJUNCTION

Dorvinia is absorbed by **Borca**.

Lord Soth disappears from **Sithicus** and is immersed in the memory mirrors.

Gundarak is split between **Barovia** and **Invidia**.

Arkandale is absorbed by **Verbrek**.

Valachan's geography rotates 90 degrees.

743BC – **Azrael Dak** becomes the new Dark Lord of **Sithicus**.

748BC – **Malken** exerts control as the "new" Dark Lord of **Nova Vaasa**.

751BC – **The House of Lament** enters **Borca**.

752BC – **Inza Kulchevich** betrays **Azrael** and becomes the new Dark Lord of **Sithicus**.



Arkandale

Arkandale




Arkandale, like its eventual conqueror, was the realm of the man-beast. It sat in the northern part of the domain that is now Verbrek, and used to be roughly twice its present size, but was absorbed by Verbrek in the Grand Conjunction. Arkandale was not civilized, with hamlets and villages clustered around the Musarde River. The villages traded in furs and the plentiful meat of game, but none had any interest really in growing the size of their settlements. There were no roads, and trade and movement happened almost exclusively on the Musarde River and its tributaries, as they were the safest option. The forests were rife with wolves and werewolves (as well as other, smaller predators), making life and travel in the domain dangerous for the unprepared.

Adventures in Arkandale should focus on the loss of freedom that Nathan feels. They should, despite of the connection with the Musarde, feel trapped. As if they cannot escape. Most heroes would have little reason to visit Arkandale, but there are plenty of opportunities for passing through the domain, mainly due to the riverways offered by the Musarde. Perhaps they're moving across the Core, and find themselves in need of a ship's captain after their first one is killed by werewolves. And who better than the famed Captain Nathan Timothy?

"But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed."

~ 2 Peter 2:12



Arkandale

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forests and hills
Year Formed:	708 BC
Population:	300
Races (%):	Humans 98%, half-Vistani 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Mordentish, Vaasi, Sithican
Religions:	The Wolf God, Ezra, Hala
Government:	Independent settlements and farms (usually led by family elders)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Nathan Timothy
Nationality:	Arkandalemen
Analog:	Warm Norway infested by wolves

Local Fauna:

Wolves were the dominant predator with many packs being led by werewolves that spent all of their time in their animal form. The wolves were so plentiful that almost no other predator made an impact here, as even the biggest and strongest bear would meet its death at the teeth of the wolfpacks.

Game was plentiful, with hares and squirrels dominating the place. Larger animals such as deer, stags, and wild boar were common too, with many of them staying close to the rivers of Arkandale, as it was safer than being deep in the woods with the wolfpacks.

Local Flora:

Arkandale consisted of the same deciduous trees that are now found in Verbrek. Oak and beech dominated the landscape, but because the hamlets and villages stayed close to the sides of the waterways, the woods were pristine and virgin in nature, never having faced lumber operations despite the strength, size, and age of the trees.

Flowers and smaller growth were somewhat rare as the thick crowns of the trees blocked out most of the sunlight. Mosses and lichen thrived in the darker parts of the forest. One strange exception to this was wolfsbane, which grew plentifully in the deepest parts of the forest, being well away from the eye of mankind, this potent weapon against werewolves was within easy reach of the villages, but due to their beliefs and superstitions, they never knew.

Arkandale

Native Horrors

Werewolves are the main threat of Arkandale, just as with Verbrek. They're under the nominal leadership of Nathan Timothy, but he doesn't care what the werewolves do and as long as they don't bother him, and do what he says when he says it. Instead, they roam freely around the domain, hiding among the populace.

Terrain type

Arkandale was dominated by forest — in essence being one huge forest, broken apart only by the waterways. The waterways were the lifeblood of Arkandale, as they carried trade and provided transportation as well as abundant fresh-water fishing. Apart from Nathan Timothy, a large number of small to medium-sized craft plied their trade on the waters, ensuring that the small villages remained prosperous in spite of their lack of ambition. Many of them grew rich, by local standards at least, from trade in fur and fish, though they equally had to import metal and most vegetables.

Important Landmarks

The Circle

The Circle (see Verbrek for details) used to be located in Arkandale, and was until the emergence of Verbrek, the center of the worship of the Wolf God. Nathan Timothy never cared much for the beliefs, openly ridiculing it at times, but other werewolves (including his son) took it very seriously and if the domain had remained, could eventually have posed a great threat to his stewardship.

Musarde River

The Musarde River was (and is) one of the largest trade routes within the Core. It contained Nathan Timothy within its waters for most of the time (though he could travel across land to other pools and waterways, doing so inflicted physical pain on him and he eventually refused to do so, after an extremely unfortunate incident left him stranded on land, and in extreme pain, for over a month), though he could not leave the domain either. It allowed trade to flow from Lamordia to Hazlan through its many byways and tributaries. Control of the river is highly regulated in most domains, but in Arkandale there was no such rule. Everyone was free to use it, and because of this, few suspected that Nathan Timothy, the gregarious skipper of the *Virago*, was in fact both werewolf and the darklord of the domain.

Towns and Villages:

Arkandale had little in the way of hamlets, villages, and townships as none were either of size or note to be remembered. Since being absorbed by Verbrek, they've

almost entirely vanished from importance, as they still refuse to start large-scale lumber operations within the old domain.

Neighboring domain(s):

Borca
Gundarak
Invidia
Mordent
Richemulot
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

Arkandale used to be famous for its cheese, made from goat's milk and a mix of acorns from oak trees and beech. Since Arkandale was absorbed by Verbrek the secret of making this cheese has been lost.



Nathan Timothy

Yes, it's expensive, but you'll pay it. I guarantee you, you won't find another boat on this river that will be willing to take you and your goods across the river.

However... I notice you have a few children amongst your followers. If you'd be willing to part with them, I might be willing to reduce the price.

My family is always hungry. ~ Nathan Timothy

Nathan Timothy is a man of average build with dark curly hair and brown eyes. His skin is darkened by the sun and rough from hard work. He dresses in simple but well made clothing, and carries a worn dagger, that he uses more as a tool than a weapon. Nathan is a werewolf, and his dire wolf and hybrid forms are massive beasts with sharp claws and fangs like daggers. Nathan would be unremarkable in human form, if it wasn't for his smile. His teeth are long and sharp, and his grin brings to mind images of predators and the feeling of being hunted.

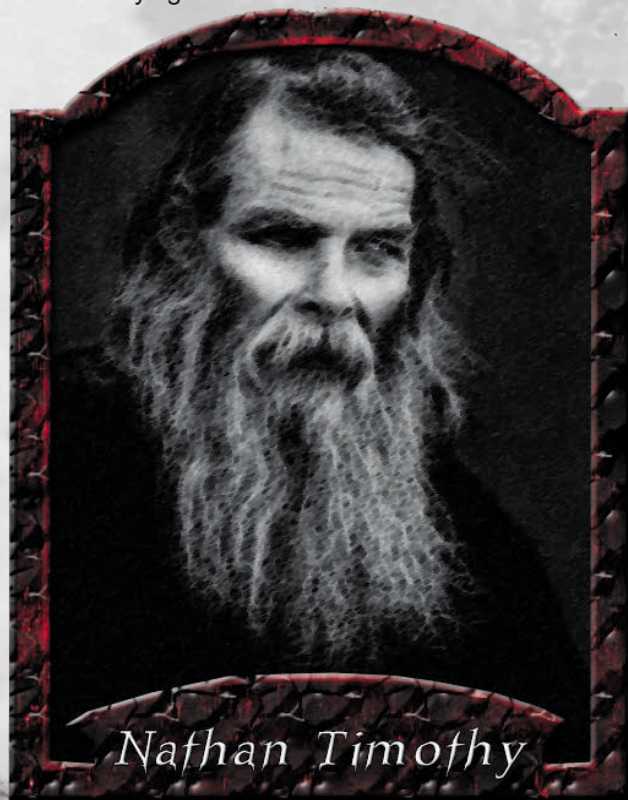
Background: Nathan was born to Eowyn Timothy and Emily Gerhardt, along with five brothers and sisters. Eowyn was the head of a large clan of werewolves that ranged across the Core. Nathan possessed a severe wanderlust from an early age and left the clan to wander the lands of the Core when he was barely in his teens. Nathan moved from domain to domain hunting humans and slaughtering small villages as his whims drove him. He found a boat and began to travel the River Musarde, occasionally offering charters or dabbling in some river piracy. In 708 BC, Nathan sailed his boat into a fog bank. When he emerged, the Dark Powers gave him the domain of Arkandale. In 709 BC he married Priscilla Shilling and had a litter of six children, all werewolves. Nathan rarely had time for his children, especially little Alfred. The boy grew up lonely and neglected. Alfred would later become the dark lord of Verbrek. With the creation of Arkandale came Nathan's greatest curse. He could never leave his ship again. If he touched the shore he would be wracked with pain and slowly become weaker until he couldn't move. If he stayed on shore long enough he wouldn't have the strength to move at all, but would never die. Still, Nathan made the best of his life. He commanded his werewolf minions to attack any other boat on the river and slaughter the crew, and soon Nathan had the only ferry on the River Musarde. His rates were astronomical but everyone was forced to pay them. Priscilla died soon after his children were born, some say try-

ing to escape her husband, and Nathan kidnapped a woman named Arabella. Nathan has turned her into a werewolf and controls her completely. When the Grand Conjunction came, Arkandale was swallowed by Verbek and Nathan was free to take his ferry along any river in Ravenloft. He is still forbidden to touch the shore, but this rarely bothers him.

Current Sketch: Nathan continues to ply his ferry along the rivers of the Demiplane of Dread. All in all, he is happy with his life. He is one of the few dark lords to accept his fate and get close to genuine happiness with his lot. He hates and fears the Vistani. He will only kill one if he is positive he can get away with it. He is far more likely to refuse any Vistani passage on his ferry, just to avoid having to deal with the wanderers at all.

Darklord's Tactics: Nathan revels in close combat. He loves feeling skin tear beneath his claws and bones crack between his teeth. He is far stronger and more durable than a normal werewolf. Unlike most of his kin, Nathan is immune to silver weapons and regenerates at a phenomenal rate. Nathan enjoys hunting and toying with his prey, preferring to take on melee combatants first and then stalking spellcasters at his leisure.

Borders: When Nathan closes the borders of Arkandale, a dense wall of vegetation grows around the domain. The vines can't be cut or burned, and reach up to snatch flying creatures out of the air.



Nathan Timothy

Nathan Timothy

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 in humanoid form, 15 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 85 (10d8 + 40)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form), swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7

Skills Animal Handling +4, Athletics +7, Intimidation +4, Nature +4, Perception +7, Stealth +6, Survival +4

Damage Resistances poison

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Balok, Common, Mordentish (can't speak in Wolf Form)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. Nathan can use his action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid, into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Nathan has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

Regeneration. Nathan regains 3 hit points at the start of his turn. If Nathan takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Nathan's next turn. Nathan dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Shape Up, Ye Dog (2/Day). Whenever a friendly creature within 30 feet of Nathan that can hear him misses with an attack, Nathan can yell perilous threats to allow that creature to reroll the attack roll.

Limited Magic Immunity. Nathan can't be affected or detected by spells of 1st level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Alert. Nathan is always on the lookout for danger, he gains a +5 bonus to initiative and he can't be surprised while he is conscious. Other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against Nathan as a result of being unseen by him.

Savage Attacker. Once per turn when Nathan rolls damage for a melee weapon attack, he can reroll the weapon's damage dice and use either total.

Watery Prison. Nathan cannot travel more than a dozen yards from a river or other body of water without feeling pain and disorientation. For every hour that Nathan spends on solid ground, he loses 10 hit points. Once his hit points reach 0, he does not die but becomes immobilized and must lie in agony until someone carries him to the River Musarde or another body of running water. He once lay helpless for a month before a servant discovered his plight.

Poison Resistance. Nathan gains a +1 bonus and rolls saving throws with advantage when it comes to poison effects.

Ring of Water Walking. While wearing this ring, Nathan can stand on and move across any liquid surface as if it were solid ground.

Floating Dagger. While Nathan is attuned to the Floating Dagger, he has a swimming speed of 30ft and can breath while under water for 10 minutes per day.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Nathan makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws or dagger.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

Claws (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Floating Dagger +2 (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry (Humanoid Form Only). Nathan adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Nathan must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Significant Possessions:

Ring of Water Walking, Floating Dagger +2

Barovia



Barovia

"I am glad that it is old and big. I myself am of an old family, and to live in a new house would kill me. A house cannot be made habitable in a day; and, after all, how few days go to make up a century. I also rejoice that there is a chapel of old times. We Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may be amongst the common dead. I seek not gaiety nor mirth, not the bright voluptuousness of much sunshine and sparkling waters which please the young and gay. I am no longer young; and my heart, through wearing years of mourning over the dead, is not attuned to mirth. Moreover, the walls of my castle are broken; the shadows are many, and the wind breathes cold through the broken battlements and casements. I love the shade and the shadow, and would be alone with my thoughts when I may."

~ Bram Stoker



Barovia, which straddles the highest peaks of the Balinok Mountains, is a harsh, rural territory enslaved by despotism and superstition. The Vistani call Barovia "Anda Thema" meaning both 'heart' and 'edge' of the world. The Balinoks, particularly the twin snow-capped summits of Mounts Baratok and Ghakis, dominate the scene. The mountains run through the middle of the realm like a jagged spine, expanding east and west to embrace the steep highlands on each side. The Balinoks, which are marked by rocky outcroppings and steep cliffs, are particularly dangerous. The ice and snow that clog mountain passes nine months of the year make travel much more dangerous. To the east and west, the narrow valleys that cut the Balinoks' slopes expand. Mountain streams rapidly become huge, powerful rivers that weave their way through the densely wooded dales. The Gundar, Luna, and Nharov Rivers to the west, and the Ivlis and Saniset Rivers to the east, all start their trek through the Core high in the Barovian Balinoks.

The domain is dominated by old woods, with the exception of the highest slopes of Mounts Baratok and Ghakis, which are periodically interrupted by mossy meadows. Huge, screaming bats fill the skies at night, and monstrous wolves prowl the forests. Along the Old Svalich Road, Lake Zarovich, one of the biggest freshwater lakes in the Core, is situated between Mounts Baratok and Ghakis. The only link between the eastern and western Cores south of the Shadow Rift is this roadway. Despite Barovia's forbidding environment, a remarkable number of merchants and pilgrims pass through the realm each summer, hurrying to cross

the Balinoks before the Old Svalich closes in late fall. The majority of Barovia's buildings are made of brick and thick wood that has been plastered and painted a deep russet or light dun color. Rows of mineral-flecked stones embedded into the plaster decorate many homes and businesses. The steep thatched roofs have small leaden rose windows placed in the gables. Window boxes bloom with vibrant flowers in the spring, while pumpkin lanterns appear at harvest time to ward off evil's henchmen. The ring of continuous fog that surrounds the town of Barovia is one of the realm's most notable features. Although the winters in Barovia are long and harsh, the rest of the year is pleasant, with gentle precipitation and sun-dappled days. The ethnic Barovians, who have resided in the area for seven and a half centuries, have dominated Barovian culture. The Barovian populace constantly changes as the majority of the residents are soulless husks, created by the thoughts and mood of Strahd.

Only a few actually possess a soul and they are doomed to reincarnate eternally. Balok, their language, is one of the most widely spoken languages in the southern Core. The Gundarakites are Barovia's second biggest ethnic group, having become second-class citizens (at best) after Strahd conquered nearby Gundarak during the Great Upheaval in 740 BC. The Gundarakites are an oppressed people who live mostly in the ruins of their old country in Barovia's west. There are also smaller tribes of Forfarrians, descendants of Forlorn refugees when it was disclosed to Barovia in 550 BC, and Thaani, who fled over Barovia's southern border in 585 BC from the dreadful realm of Bluetspur. By refusing to marry ethnic Barovians, these two tiny groups have retained their identity. Finally, thanks to their alliance with the von Zarovich family, the Vistani have a sizable presence in Barovia. Although the Vistani are a nomadic race, specific tribes may always be found within Barovia's boundaries, as it is the safest area in the Core for them. Barovian society is mainly medieval, with the bulk of the population consisting of impoverished peasants and serfs who labor the von Zarovich family's farms under the careful eye of the local boyars. Small farmers, herders, and fishers are among the few who are free.

The villages and cities, on the other hand, are a different story, with a plethora of artisans and merchants to be found. Barovians married at an early age, with males marrying at 16 and females marrying at 13, however they do not practice planned marriages. Widows and widowers are not allowed to divorce or remarry under their traditions. Due to the fact that many Barovians labor on farms, their families are often large, and wom-

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en are expected to have as many children as they can. As a result, many mothers die during childbirth, and infant mortality during the first two years of life is significant. Barovians do not have access to formal education, and few, if any, are literate. Wealthy children are tutored privately or sent to study overseas. Because the hilly terrain is unsuitable for horseback riding, the majority of the journey is done on foot.

As a result, the people of Barovia remain sedentary, with many of them never leaving their birth hamlet. The majority of the rivers are too dangerous for boating, but Lake Zarovich's deep waters have been a fishing paradise for generations. Regardless of their ethnic roots, the Barovian people all have one thing in common: a hatred of outsiders that borders on xenophobia. Their cold stares and lack of friendliness are the result of years of living under Count Strahd's strict rule. Barovians are unconcerned about the ways of others and prefer to mind their own business—which is generally just day-to-day survival.

Every Barovian has a paralyzing dread of the supernatural. At nightfall, they lock all of the doors and windows in the house. They hold magic in the same respect that they hold superstition. Arcane magic, in particular, is thought to be a fiendish gift, and any reckless spellcaster in Barovia will almost certainly face an angry crowd. Count Strahd von Zarovich is the current ruler of Barovia, the latest in a long series of feudal dictators dating back generations. Locals refer to him as "the Devil Strahd," a harsh and remote ruler who seldom gets involved in the day-to-day (or possibly night-to-night) affairs of his kingdom. Strahd delegated local government to the boyars (noble landowners) and burgomasters (mayors), who can rule as they see appropriate.

These small but desired positions of power are typically hereditary, although turnover is high owing to Count replacement (for incompetence, frailty, or insurrection) or mysterious deaths. The boyars and burgomasters' principal responsibility is to maintain a militia, for which they collect heavy taxes, despite the fact that Strahd himself does not demand regular payment from his people. Boyars and burgomasters help preserve the peace, select magistrates to settle civil disputes, and keep a watch on craft and commercial guilds that are ambitious. Humans are the most common race in Barovia, while half-Vistani constitute a distant second. Other races are exceedingly uncommon, but not unknown. Calibans appear in Barovia with alarming regularity, yet their births are just as often attributed to the influence of vampires, demons, or wizards as they are

to hags. Halflings are only found in western Barovia's major settlements, where they reside in small ghettos. Wild elves are said to prowl the Tepurich Forest, while dwarves are said to live deep in the Balinoks or near the mining settlements. When rural Barovians come upon such nonhumans, they are prone to think of them as grotesque freaks or evil fey.

The most prevalent classes in Barovia are clerics, warriors, rangers, rogues, and sorcerers. Even if they are not always trusted, clerics are renowned for their healing and prowess over the undead. Barovians revere the warrior's path, thus fighters and rangers are always paid their due. Rogues, dubbed scoundrels, are common, though they tend to limit their efforts to rural banditry rather than urban guild pursuits. For fear of retaliation from inquisitive peasants, sorcerers must keep their true nature hidden. Druids and wizards are both uncommon, but equally feared. Barovian bards are scarce, yet their melancholy songs and lullabies are popular. All save worshippers of the Morning Lord, who appreciate their goodness, if not their legal viewpoint, see Paladins as hopeless lunatics. Typically, the strange barbarian is a wild man who grew up amid creatures in the high highlands or a member of the remnants of the Neureni tribe who decided to wander off on their own.

"I would rather live and love where death is king than have eternal life where love is not."

~ Robert Green Ingersoll



Barovia

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forests, plains, hills, mountains, swamps, lakes, rivers, caves, sandy desert.
Year Formed:	351 BC
Population:	28.000 to 58.000
Races (%):	Humans 92%, half-Vistani 1%, other 7%
Languages:	Balok, Luktar, Vaasi, Sithican, Forfarian, Thaani
Religions:	Cult of the Morning Lord, The Mother Night, Ezra, Hala, Erlin, Raven Queen, The Severance
Government:	Feudal Monarchy
Ruler(s):	Count Strahd von Zarovich
Darklord(s):	Count Strahd von Zarovich
Nationality:	Barovian
Analog:	Transylvania

Local Fauna:

The wildlife of Barovia is varied. As a regular visitor to the Mists might suspect, the moon is regularly obscured by the countless varieties of bats that call this domain home. The forests and plains have red foxes, grey wolves, deers, elk, wild boar, otters, wild cats and brown bears prowling about. On the eastern side of Barovia, in the desert of the Hills of Bleak Vistas, as the Barovians know it, or the Howling Hills as the people of Nova Vaasa call it, stray Nova Vaasan lynxes and golden jackals are a common sight. Many of these animals are hunted for their fur.

Barovia's rivers, lakes and ponds are home to many freshwater fish, most importantly, carp, trout, perch and bream. Some six species of sturgeon have been identified as living in Lake Zarovich. These swim up the Volgis river to spawn. Five of these sturgeon species are critically endangered, due to the efforts of the Mad Mage who fishes using the most unusual method of lightning strikes.

A unique species of leech can be found at Lake Zarovich and Lake Luna. This particular leech has golden hair on its body and is quite aggressive. Spellcasters and Vistani collect these leeches and usually will pay up to 1gp for each specimen, their blood and golden hair being of use as spellcasting components.

Barovians, most especially in Krezk, commonly keep goats, pigs, cows, horses and chickens. The Barovian chicken differs from the common hen. These chickens are larger than normal chickens, and alarmingly are

mostly black, including their plumage, their beaks and their innards. Their eggs are pitch black, whilst the yolk is blood red.

Vermin, such as rats, are not unknown in the larger settlements of the domain. The Barovians argue whether they need to keep the common cat (which is usually black) to get rid of the problem, or if they should shoo these cats away, as they believe that they either bring bad luck or are transformed Barovian witches.

Every now and then, a traveler will notice that ravens or crows fly above their head and follow behind them. The superstitious Barovians believe that these birds act as spies for Strahd and most of the time it is true. Ravens on the other hand, are believed by the Vistani and the wereravens to help as guides through the mists for the wandering souls. Killing a raven in front of a Vistani would immediately curse the perpetrator, as their actions would doom hundreds of souls to be claimed by the mists forever. Another bird that is sacred to the Vistani, is the Vista-Chiri. Vista-Chiri follow Vistani caravans for reasons that not even the travellers can fathom. The Vistani are adept at reading their flight patterns and altering their travel routes according to the warnings or signs they get, making it all but impossible to surprise a troupe with the birds around. Raunie can even magically speak with them, making the Vista-Chiri highly effective information gatherers. Only the Raunie knows the real nature of these birds and they will never share the secret. Not even with other Vistani. The Vista-Chiri are the souls of departed Vistani that willingly reincarnated into the birds to act as helper to their former tribe.

Local Flora:

Hardwoods (beech, and oak with cherry and hazelnut) grow in Barovia's lower slope country. Timberlands of combined evergreens (antiquated tidy, fir, and pine) tower in the domain's greater heights.

Some of Barovia's pine trees have become what are known as 'Spine Trees'; pines that grow where piles of skeletal remains lie. The pines absorb the bones, giving them an odd bend and white sheen, so much that it looks as though the tree is covered in bones. Green glades flourish in the dales, where grasses and wildflowers thrive, fed by crystal streams during the warm months of the year. Barovians are deeply fond of the wild lilacs and daffodils that burst into life with every new spring.

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Some Barovian plants are highly prized by the Vistani. Bitterblot — a large green variety of Barovia's famed plum — has a slightly noticeable, relatively tannic pleasantness that prevents it from being grown widely. The Vistani utilize this fruit for divination. The Vistani seer will cut the fruit down the centre, dealing the most savage slash she can; if the pit breaks neatly in a single strike, it is considered a great omen. The fruit is a component of a malevolent Vistani curse, the poor subject of the curse gradually becoming a whining cripple. The Vistan's Tears, a sensitive bloom, bluebell shaped but with a dull white hue, is broadly accepted as the primary component in the Vistani's mythical healing elixir. Finally, Speckled Hydrangeas, often known as "Vampire's Kiss" are white Hydrangea flowers with a single red petal on each flower. Herbalists claim that making a properly balanced tea from the red petals of this plant can cause the imbiber to slip into a more easily persuaded state. The nobles and burgomasters of Vallaki are known as the main users of this tea and the Vistani love to overcharge a possible buyer. Other common flowers are the wolfsbane, mandragore, and the night roses which have a dark violet hue to their petals. Beware the Black Nightshade, poisonous to the touch, it is rumored to bring misfortune or even death to the hapless plucker.

Barovia is the home of the legendary "Bloodied Edelweiss". Only one of these flowers blooms each year, and it can only be found near the peak of Mount Ghakis. Due to its rarity, the common folk do not believe in its existence. Legend has it that if it brewed into a peculiar concoction, it can cure lesser vampirism. Many Barovians hire adventurers to find a cure for their loved ones that become vampire spawn, yet, alas, the flower is so difficult to find that most adventurers freeze to death on the frozen slopes of the mountain. Around the settlements, creeper vines, ivy, black dahlia, black lotus and wild berries sprout. Occasionally, Barovian gardeners will find a flower in their garden that makes them doubt whether that flower is a living creature. The Snapdragon, as this flower is known, has bright colors and sweet fragrance—not to mention that when squeezed at its sides it resembles a dragon's mouth opening and closing. When it rots, the "dragon's skull" is left behind. Interestingly enough, the Vistani believe Snapdragons hold mystical powers, and that growing them in other people's gardens will protect them from curses and evil. Finally, sweet grapes are being grown to create the delicious wine that is Barovia's main export. Most notably, Purple Grapemash which is the cheapest variant, Red Dragon Crush and finally, the most expensive and delicious, Champagne du le Stomp.

Native Horrors

Barovia is widely known for its many horrors that plague the domain.. The most common monster of all can be none other than the common folk, who become zealots and join cults to worship vile deities or entities that they deem worthy of veneration. These fanatical cultists stop at nothing to see the completion of their dark patron's schemes. Druids who worship the decay of nature and bloodlust Neureni barbarians dwell in the hills and forests. Other common creatures are the Strahd Zombies and Strahd Skeletons. These undead creatures are similar to the generic skeleton and zombie but have some unique traits.

Vampires, Vampire Spawn and Nosferatu plague the settlements, and the common folk will quicker speak about Barovian Witches and Hags than the vampires that make them tremble.

Severed heads are sometimes found near the rivers and lakes. The usual suspect is an Orchard Nymph, or "Poludnitsa" as the locals call them. They behead travelers that try to cross their bodies of water without first paying their respects or offering meat and red wine. Carrion Crawlers infest the cellars and sewers of the larger settlements such as Vallaki

Near the rivers and lakes sometimes, severed heads can be seen. . . Dire Wolves form packs with common wolves and hunt hunters and other humans that have strayed from the safe paths. Werewolves and lycanthropy roam these lands, but most devious are the Red Widows; shapechangers who take the form of an attractive woman wearing red, their main goal is to find a victim, lay their eggs within the poor man's stomach and claim their fortune as a weeping widow. Another creature with a charming presence is the Veela who beguile fishermen and make them drown themselves, or the "Nocnitsa", a blood sucking crone known to take human form.

One of the many defenses found around Castle Ravenloft is the death's head tree which appears to be a tall weeping willow with thick branches. The fruit of the death's head tree is truly terrible to behold, decapitated heads. The fruit grows from the tree's branches and is used in its defence. Once fully matured, the heads fall from the tree, and float away, in search of the flesh of warm-blooded creatures. The heads moan as if true living beings, but these lamentations are but imitations of speech; the head can't truly communicate. The tree is believed to be of magical origin, and its wood is sometimes used by wizards and alchemists due to its anti-magical properties. The sap of the tree

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can be used as a material component for the antimagic field spell or be used as an ingredient to make a potion which, when someone drinks it, becomes unable to cast spells for 1 hour. Shackles made out of this tree's wood stop spellcasting and spell-like abilities but can easily be broken.

Other creatures are spoken of in hushed whispers, for fear of attracting their dark attentions, particularly flesh eating ghouls, shuffling revenants, moving shadows, carnivorous blood oozing plants and other countless undead.

Spellcasters, cultists and hags mutter about a great power lurking in Lake Zarovich. The fishermen of Val-laki believe a giant squid lurks in the dark waters, but the truth is far worse. An undead aboleth was trapped within the Lake Zarovich when the domain formed. It attracts spellcasters, usually Warlocks, promising them power and riches if they either find a way for it to escape or kill the Mad Mage of Mount Baratok, who plagues it with lightning bolts. The aboleth is far too fearful of Strahd to act and show its presence, preferring to stay idle at the bottom of the lake until it is time to take its freedom.

Terrain type

The terrain is mountainous and forested, with sharp winters.. At the far east of the domain, next to Nova Vaasa, at Graenseskov (aka Borderwood), is a desert, with a cold climate not usually expected in such areas. Swamps and marshes are abundant due to the many rivers, waterfalls and lakes that come from the melting ice pouring down from the nearby mountains. Towns and villages sit upon most of the grassy plains. There are many species of tree in the dark forests, but these are usually tainted by the foul magic lingering in the land. Dense rainy clouds cast over the land, creating the perfect environment for any vampire. Rocky fissures and razor sharp rocks licked by icy winds stop any brave traveler who decides to stray from the usual paths. Barovia is truly a beautiful yet hostile domain.

Important Landmarks

Amber Temple

The Amber Temple was created a long time before Strahd's arrival in Prime Material Barovia. It was firstly built as a temple to store all dark secrets, abhorrent knowledge of spells and rituals as well as evil magic relics and vile heirlooms. Amber walls deny access to anyone who tries to teleport into the temple or walk into it through other planes. Scrying and other divination magic is also canceled by the amber. The temple's original purpose was to be a safe place meant

to hide the dark knowledge and power from to-be evil-doers. Or so, the lesser ranking wizards, librarians, priests and members of the "Keepers of Forbidden Lore" thought. In reality, the temple was dedicated to none other than Vecna himself, who aimed to collect all secrets and dark knowledge of the cosmos. Sat on Ghakis Mountain, the temple is always surrounded by mounds of deathly cold ice. Any creature that tries to find and enter the temple without protection or a guide will be found in a state below freezing and facing the effects of extreme cold. Not many know the way to the temple, there are rumors that the Neureni barbarians and the druids of Yester Hill know the right path but convincing them to share that information would be a difficult task. Nothing lasts forever though, and the dark knowledge started corrupting the minds of the keepers, promising them an awakening that would ascend their powers even to the level of demi-gods. Eventually driven mad, they turned on each other. Many of them hid in secret chambers with as many papyri and scrolls as they could amass to study, eventually dying of starvation or self-inflicted wounds. Others were convinced to experiment and cast vile rituals, or even duel the other wizards, as a means to classify the potency of the spells, freeing demons and aberrations, transforming themselves to unspeakable horrors or outright killing each other. The few that resisted the taint managed to trap some of the freed dark entities into sarcophagi of amber and barricaded themselves in the areas where magic protection was at its peak. No protection can stop the human condition though, and the poor souls, driven mad by fear or anger, turned on each other.

They cannibalised their fallen, betrayed their friends or even dispelled the protection to let the fiends in and end it all. Now, it stands as an old prison, used to store the relics of evil of the past. Nobody remains to protect the knowledge and it is filled with the monstrosities that remain. The temple is now "managed", if one can claim that, by the amnesiac lich Exenthanter, who is happy to share the temple's forbidden secrets to all who come. The ruins here provide the temptation of immense potential for those who seek power, although every favor comes with a price. It was here that Strahd made an evil contract with the Dark Powers, became a vampire, and thus determined his own destiny. The temple now reeks of evil. The dark vestiges imprisoned within the temple will try to corrupt anyone who comes into contact with them, offering secrets and gifts in exchange for a taste of the evil that lurks within their true hearts. The temple itself is multileveled, there is a secret basement that not many knew about and there is also an observatory to track the stars and observe the skies, some floors above the main halls. Long forgotten and unmaintained, who

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knows what can be observed through the mists and clouds that cover the skies of Barovia. The observatory can be used to reach the highest peak of the Ghakis mountains, where a giant Roc protects its nest.

Argynvostholt

Once the fortress mansion of the silver dragon Argynvost. Argynvostholt was the headquarters of the once kind and brave Knights of the Silver Dragon, whose mission was to protect the valley, the passage, and land leading to the Amber Temple. However, during the war to conquer the Barovian Valley, Strahd's army besieged it, and the organization was destroyed, along with their commander Vladimir Horngard and their dragon master. It is now the residence of the undead army of the Order led by Horngard and his paladins, knights, and squires, all of whom have been reanimated by their hatred for Strahd as undead revenants and phantom apparitions. Despite death, Argynvost's spirit lingered on. If his skull can be taken to the mausoleum located in the ruins of Argynvostholt and sealed in the tower, his soul will shine like a lighthouse, allowing all the restless souls to finally rest in peace. A beacon of hope that can be seen from all places in Barovia. Argynvost's skull is currently found in the Hall of Bones of Castle Ravenloft. Taking it from the Castle's basement and transporting it to the mausoleum is a huge task though, as Strahd would never allow anyone to take the large silver dragon skull. Being a potent necromancer, he would merge the skull with the skeletal remains of Svarobog, his long deceased red dragon, beheaded by Lord Soth, who is buried in the castle's yard, and reanimate it as a Skeletal Adult Dragon.

Asylum of the Shadowed Heart

A grim rocky and dark fortress lays atop a small hill on the northern parts of Barovia. Minuscule cracks that act as barred iron windows are the only source of light for the inside of the building. The Asylum of the Shadowed Heart is home to many sad souls lost to despair or warped by evil magic. Faint whispering moans and muted screams echo beneath the feet of anyone who is crazy enough to visit this place. A massive oaken door appears to be the only entrance to the asylum and any who knock on it will surely be greeted by Lady Arieth, the asylum's attendant. A delicate young woman dressed only in a white shift, with scars of manacles on her slender wrists and ankles. Lady Arieth once believed herself to come from a different world but now works with other such deluded souls in an attempt to save their minds. With treatments only thought of by her devious mind, she tries to restore the sanity of not only the poor trapped in the asylum souls but also her own. The asylum has two important areas, the first one is known as the "Cage of Tormented Souls" where chil-

dren lost in their misery scream and rock while hugging themselves, the elderly claw with nails wild and sharp at their own flesh or run near-naked as the white-clad attendants move about like specters, attempting to keep them from harming themselves. The worst sight of all are the quietest, those with eyes glazed, mouths open screaming terrible but silent cries, with scenes playing over and over again in their minds. The second area is called the "Hallway of Delusions". A generally much less violent area of the asylum where the air is filled with notes of sadness, mixed with frustration and anger. This is the place where an old friend and former companion of Lady Arieth is trapped. The large man known as "Sol" is dressed in little more than loose leggings. His chest and arms, heavily muscled and scarred. Against the back wall, the symbol of the sun is drawn in his own blood. He claims that he is a paladin of a sun god and begs to be freed and have his armor and weapons returned to him. Who really can say who is delusional and who is sane in this asylum?

Berez Swamp

Berez was once a fishing village in Barovia, it used to have a population of less than a hundred. The Berez swamp is located on the Luna River, a few miles south of Vallaki. After Brother Gregor and Mayor Laszlo Ulrich destroyed one of Tatyana's reincarnations, Marina, in order to prevent her from becoming a vampire, Strahd killed them both and used the powers from the Swamp Fane to flood the town by redirecting the Luna River's flow to pass through the village. Most of its residents drowned, yet to this day, their souls still inhabit their bloated undead bodies and forcefully grab and drown those stupid enough to enter the swamp. Berez, now a swamp, was never inhabited by Barovians again. A thick shroud of yellow fog covers everything. Scattered throughout the marsh are the old peasant cottages, half covered by mud. Black clouds of flies dart around, hungry for blood. Pockets of hallucination-inducing spores float about, with people claiming to see huge ships battling on the shallow waters, or trees moving to drier land, digging and placing their roots there, having fallen victim to them. When Strahd was done with the flooding, he used his magic to eternally bound Laszlo's spirit to the ruins of his own mansion. Other notable ruins are the Saint Andral's church that barely stands and its watery cemetery filled with undead. After Strahd flooded the village, he erected a monument to remind him of Marina. A few hundred meters from the monument, the standing stones of Berez... stand. More ancient than the Amber Temple, nobody remembers who built them. The stones form a 100ft' wide circle and act as a ward against divination magic, protecting everyone and everything within.

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The druids of Yester Hill, Barovian Hags and even sometimes the Wereravens of the Keepers of the Feather, use it as a ritual site to deliver their prayers. Berez has become the residence of Baba Lysaga, the mother of all Barovian hags. She lives there with her hut and animated scarecrows, secretly helping Strahd and oppressing the wereravens.

Bleak Vistas / Howling Hills

Graenseskov overflows from the shadows of the desolate and distant hills of Barovia, known as “Howling Hills” by Nova Vaasans or Bleak Vistas by Barovians. The name is apt because of all the forests of Nova Vaasa, it is Graenseskov that has the most wolves. Wolves are larger and more aggressive here, perhaps the result of cross-breeding species between Nova Vaasan and Barovian wolves. Barovians and Nova Vaasans have little to do with these woods; vampires and werewolves are said to roam at night in Graenseskov, in addition, the wood from the trees here rots quickly, making it a forest that cannot provide timber. The only people who “brave” these parts are the hardened citizens of the Volchykov Manor, yet even they avoid most of the parts of Graenseskov. The northern boundary of the Graenseskov forest lies a little south of the Old Svalich Road where the beech-firs of the Old Svalich Woods resolutely hold their ground. The southern limit is the Hazlani border.

Bloodfang hills

The Bloodfang hills extend to the desolate haunted forests of Forlorn in the south. The savage goblins (also known as the “snaggle-toothed hags” by the Barovians, stalk these parts and come out of the woods seeking their favorite delicacy: human brains. Such attacks were said to be more common in the middle of the 6th century, and the von Zaroviches ordered the erection of a line of watchtowers along the border with Forlorn. Despite the symbolic garrison from Immol that still patrols and uses the towers, they have decayed, their wood rotten with time; an assignment to these “bogie-towers” is one of the loneliest of all military tasks that can be assigned within Barovia. The Gundar River, which flows through the beautiful Gorge of Passing Sorrow on the western border of Bloodfang, penetrates deep into the Balinok Mountains. As people journey upstream to Forlorn, the steep cliffs of the gloomy gorge show a scarlet red color, and a barren land composed only of withered grass.

Castle Ravenloft

Castle Ravenloft is the von Zarovich family’s ancestral castle and the present residence of the vampire lord Strahd von Zarovich. It towers sinisterly above the land of Barovia, stark against the sky as an ever-present reminder of Strahd’s dominance over the region. A long time ago, when King Barov was younger than Sergei, this land was owned by his family. The Tergs, a barbarian tribe that used horses and bows to fight, drove the von Zarovich family away from their rightfully owned lands. The castle was a small keep at that time and it was sieged, torched and raised by the Tergs who then used the ruins as their headquarters. Years later, Strahd came back with an army and massacred the Tergs and others that opposed him such as the Order of the Silver Dragon. Strahd rebuilt the small keep into a great magnificent castle, naming it Ravenloft to honour his mother, in an attempt to gain the appreciation of his cold-hearted father. This was the place where Strahd murdered his brother Sergei, where Tatyana Federovna leapt to her “death” and where Strahd’s pact with Death was enacted. Later Strahd, as a vampire and darklord of Barovia, used the castle’s premises to conduct experiments with Azalin’s help. In the catacombs of the castle, he buried his parents and other important figures or actors of renown. The castle is now inhabited by many allies of Strahd such as his vampire brides, Rahadin, Gravestorm the Lich-Dragon and Khyristrix, a devil who has made a fiendish garden which feeds the Heart of Sorrow, a crystalline red shard found at the highest tower of the castle, with energies that protect Strahd. The garden is currently composed of 60 devil trees, which are created from humanoids that have killed while serving as hosts for garden larva. Garden larvae are immature devil trees, requiring humanoid hosts to fully mature. The trees, in turn, bear garden larvae as “fruit”. Behind the castle, a thousand foot drop fall meets the Barovian plains. Harpies protect their nests on the cliffs.

Dominiani’s Keep

Dominiani’s Keep, also known as the Dark Keep, used to be located in Gundarak. When Teufeldorf fell to the rulership of Strahd, the former asylum and residence of Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth was moved inside the borders of Barovia. It now lies one hour’s walk east of Teufeldorf. The old keep is a dark and ominous place. Evil looking vines crisscross its surface and cling to the walls like the webs of some great and dreadful spider. It has two spires that were used to attract lightning for Daclaud’s hideous experiments. Behind the keep, a waterfall roars. Rebeka Ditrau, Captain of Teufeldorf’s military has restored the keep to its original purpose. It now serves again as a military prison. Now it is filled with

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the enemies of the state. Poor souls to be tortured and driven mad for any little thing that can be considered as rebellious or traitorous against Strahd or the state.

Dreadpass

Teufeldorf and the Old Svalich Road, as well as former Gundarak and old Barovia, are connected by the Dreadpass. From this pass, one can access the Keep of Forgetting.

Gundar River

The Gundar River used to flow through Gundarak Territory, before it was absorbed by the neighboring lands. The Gundar River's main tributary is that of the Musard River. It flows from the lower Forlorn through the Gorge of Passing Sorrow, it passes through the western edge of Bloodfang Mountains into Barovia, and then through the Balinok Mountains in the south into Invidia. In Invidia, it merges with the Nharov River and eventually ends at the Moussard River. Heavier ships cannot sail on the Gundar River, but can be driven by smaller ships and boats. Geography scrolls and scholars have different descriptions of the source of the Gundar River. Barovians stipulate that Barovia is the ultimate source of the river, while scholars exploring Forlorn believe that it starts upstream of Forlorn and passes through the Gorge of Passing Sorrow. Most maps indicate that this river eventually derives from the Lake of Red Tears in Forlorn.



Ivlis River

The river Ivlis extends broad and dominates the land in the lowest point of the Barovian valley. The Ivlis River runs through central Nova Vaasa, defining the Dommark's southern boundary, skirting Bergovitsa to the north, turning west into Barovia, cutting through the Old Svalich Woods, climbing the Balinoks in a valley eventually shared with the Old Svalich Road, skirting the Village of Barovia to the north, mounting spectacularly the Tser Falls, climbing the Svalich Path. The Ulvand River, which flows from the Howling Hills and

Mount Sawtooth, and the Volgis River, which flows from the Vaesen Foothills, are both tributaries of the Ivlis. The Volgis joins the Ivlis from the north, immediately north of the Old Svalich Road, very near to the Barovian border. Ulvand, a bit south-east of Bergovitsa, eventually joins it from the south via the Vaere Bange Road. The Storrokke Canyon, midway between Arbora and Egertus, flows into the Nocturnal Sea. Given its swiftness, rapids, stones, and gravel bars, the upper portions of the Ivlis in Barovia are hard to travail even on a tiny raft. Its mouth, a maw of jagged stone teeth, opens into the sea. In between, the Ivlis' twists and narrowness make sailing too unpredictable and dangerous to be cost-effective, though that isn't to say it can't be done. Given that the Ivlis is both economically and physically impassable, a bridge has most likely been erected across it at a very narrow point. Up to the beginning of the Storrokke Canyon, one or more more bridges might be built. In most areas, the Ivlis is probably too deep to cross. However, there will be spots before the Storrokke Canyon where a horse could swim over. Crops, humans, domestic animals, and creatures all rely on the Ivlis for water. Without it, many of the animals who live in southern Dommark would perish. However, what begins as a strong band of farmland reaching back from the river's banks near the Barovian boundary becomes a fractured band.

Finally, at the cliffs overlooking the Nocturnal Sea, there's virtually no band at all. Because, as the river dips farther into the Storrokke Canyon, access to its waters in sufficient amounts becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. Ruins of abandoned farmsteads become widespread, especially on the north bank, where having the Dommark at one's back adds to the weight of life. The Rivtoffs levy harsh taxes on the farms. The Rivtoff family owns the Ivlis Duchy, which includes the Ivlis River.

Ivlis Marsh

Patches of dead gray reeds and tiny stands of moss-draped trees may be seen throughout the marsh, while murky ponds attract swarms of insects. The shadows of crumbling stone walls border the terrain a quarter mile into this marsh. Because there is no route leading into the Ivlis marsh, one must take it gently, skirting around the deeper ponds and keeping an eye out for dangers. The remnants of the Swamp Fane that binds Strahd to the land may be discovered in the swamp's heart. The marsh is home to bloodsuckers, drowner zombies, and other monstrosities and creatures. Valicia, the Drowned Lady, protects the fane.

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Keep of Forgetting

The Keep of Forgetting sits atop the Dreadpass, guarding it against trespassers. The story of the Keep of Forgetting precedes Strahd's ascension to the throne by several years, as the actions of his father Barov von Zarovich laid the foundations of the Keep. During the wars to reconquer Barovia from the Neureni Horde, one of the nobles who, supposedly following the von Zaroviches, turned on them in one of the pivotal battles with the Neureni, having sold their fellows out. They believed that the Neureni Horde would emerge victorious, but they had not counted on the tactical abilities of the von Zarovich family, who carried the day. The nobles retreated to their Keep, and Barov's soldiers followed. Standing at the keep, Barov proclaimed that the noble's family name would be stricken from all records and that the lives of any that did not surrender immediately would be forfeit. The nobles did not surrender, and Barov set in place a large force to besiege them. They were given strict orders to not engage, and rather to starve the family. Any that tried to escape or surrender were to be killed. After a year, everyone inside was dead, and the keep was abandoned. When Strahd made his pact with the fiend Inajira for his Dark Powers, the land changed. For the Keep, it came back to life. Skeletal soldiers walk the parapets now, patrolling incessantly, defending their keep against a foe that no longer exists. No one remembers their name, hence the nickname the Keep of Forgetting, but the undead here seem to be beyond Strahd's control, and will attack even him — though they stand no chance in such a combat, they do not submit to his will. Some brave or foolhardy locals who dared to explore have noticed that any skeletons destroyed will reform the very next day, and the keep never seems to run out. Some of these visitors have apparently been able to stay the night, resting under an old banner that once carried the family crest. Strahd ignores the Keep. It is a blind spot in his ability to control the land, as it was stricken from the records before he was born, and it doesn't appear in any of the books penned within Barovia. Strahd has seen it, but much to his frustration, as soon as it is no longer visible, he forgets about it. He knows he saw something, but he is unable to recall what it was...

Lake Zarovich

Between Mount Baratok and Mount Ghakis, stands Lake Zarovich, which is fed by streams of ice-cold water that pour down the face of Mount Baratok. On the south side of the lake rests the town of Vallaki and on the northern side of the lake, Aracos and Antonbucher are found. The lake's water is perfectly still and dark, reflecting the black clouds overhead like a great mirror. The center of the lake is covered with a dense cloud of mist. Fishermen avoid the misty part like it's the devil. Rumour has it that anyone who enters the mist will reappear at a later time period, perhaps long years, aged as little as a few hours and totally forgotten by time. Others are moved to the past or even worse devoured by whatever horror hides in that area. Mirages of huge battleships, islands that never were, the lights of lighthouses that do not exist and other illusions or peeks into alternate realities occasionally appear through the mists. Unnatural phenomena such as whirlpools, maelstroms of different water coloration, or thunderstorms forming within the body of water occur. The Barovians usually fish right outside of their town's port avoiding any "uncivilised" parts of the lake. The lake, even though it is not as big as one would think, shelters a number of fish, unnaturally numerous for a lake of this size.

The lake's shores are home to the Green Hag named Jenny Greenteeth. Barovians are terrified of her, but will occasionally, if in dire need, decide to meet her and ask for a service. Jenny will happily agree to deliver, as long as her price is met. She is only paid in the currency of life-span and years.

The recent sightings of the Mad Wizard, who shoots bolts of electricity into the lake to take in huge catches of fish, have deterred the villagers from seeking Jenny. The villager's fear of meeting the wizard is greater than that of meeting Jenny, and eventually may convince them that the problem they want solved is smaller than a bolt of lightning or the risk of being devoured by the green hag. Although the Mad Wizard is thought of as a delirious fisherman, in his madness he does not use his spells to fish. Rather, the Mad Wizard is trying to target and suppress something way greater than a few tons of sturgeon. At the deepest part of the lake, a slumbering behemoth remains trapped since the formation of the domains of dread. The monstrosity is an undead aboleth cursed to be unable to travel the planes forever, its nature changed by years of absorbing necrotic energies. Fearful of Strahd, it remains dormant, only influencing the to-be warlocks or other poor creatures that it sees as worthy to use and further its schemes. There are an increasing number of cultists that worship

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the creature in the deep, mostly found at Antonbucher and Aracos. Strahd has yet to realise the existence of the Aboleth and quickly dismisses any information that reaches him about the cult that worships it, thinking the cultists to be madmen grasping at an explanation for the peculiar nature of the lake.



Lysaga Hill

The Lysaga Hill is a hill in Barovia which can be found some 10 minutes walk away from the Tser Pool. The hill parts the forest which surrounds it, revealing a spur of bare rock jutting up from the earth. At the top of the hill, a blackened ruined tower of crumbling stone stands. The ancient ruins hide within them the Mountain Fane, the oldest of the three that Strahd utilised to be connected to the land. Long before the advent of Strahd, the location had profane importance, as a wicked cult conducted horrible sacrifices on moonless nights. When Saint Ecaterina established her monastery on the hill, she felt she had hallowed it, and the inhabitants of Barovia regarded Lysaga Hill as a sacred spot for a time after the tower was destroyed and the saint perished. The respect of the people dwindled as more pilgrims met their terrible ends on the peak. The hill now accommodates meetings of Barovian witches, hags and spirits. The witches of Lysaga Hill are men and women from the village and nearby farmsteads. They have limited magical skills as a result of their indoctrination into the religion of the demon Chernovog, which is led by Baba Zelenna, the green hag who is a vassal of Baba Lysaga. With each new moon, they meet at the hill, but Baba Zelenna herself is never far from the Mountain Fane. Unbeknown to Baba Lysaga, Baba Zelenna has great ambitions of her own for the future. She intends to summon Chernovog himself and urge him to murder Strahd (along with the other two hags accompanying her and Lysaga too) so that she can govern the valley without opposition. The Lysaga Hill is haunted by a creature which was formed by the

remnants of souls of those that were sacrificed to the witches and hags. These souls formed the "Caller in Darkness", a creature that remains silent and hidden as long as the witches remain on the hill. When the witches are driven away, the caller manifests and tries to kill any living or undead creature on the hill. A tiny remnant of Saint's Ecaterina's power remains in the grounds of the tower, as a 30ft holy circle, though it no longer discerns between holy and unholy. Spirits and undead cannot enter the circle and all attacks coming from within the circle are considered as magical and gain a magical bonus of +2. The same circle will be used by Baba Zelena to summon, trap and control Chernovog. Amongst the rubble, a hidden trap door leads to the tower's basement. There, a tiny reliquary box, the size of a spellbook, lies buried beneath the runestone, beneath the rubble. Images of devas, planets, and solars are etched into the sides and lid, but every angel's eyes are crimson with a sticky substance that looks disturbingly like blood. A folded piece of paper within the box contains the powdered bones of Saint Ecaterina, an item now devoid of all sacred power but protected by two Babau Demons.

Luna Lake

The Luna Lake can be found southwest of Barovia by the Tsolenka Pass. It is fed by the Luna River which ends in Lake Zarovich. The river is safe to traverse with light watercraft but other dangers might befall those who journey along it as the waterway passes right through the middle of the Swamp of Berez. Legend has it that a small mithril ore mine is located somewhere around the lake; many treasure hunters have searched for it but it is said that only a gnome who knows no greed may find it.

Monastery of Silver Threads

This small monastery is found on the lower hills of Mt. Baratok. In 398 BC, Strahd confronted Lord Leo Dilisnya here, but fell into his cunning trap. Had it not been for the intervention of the monks, Leo would have almost defeated Strahd. Today it stands abandoned, despite rumors that before its dissolution it was packed with unimaginable treasures. It is still guarded by foul undead horrors that inhabit the bodies of the slain monks. Inside the monastery, there is a central but hidden chamber. This chamber is filled with silver threads that hide a terrifying secret and wooden broadloom machinery that the monks used to divine the future. The monks worshipped Mother Night who, some say, is responsible for the thread of fate. Some of the monks are said to still be alive, unharmed by the horrors of the monastery. One might seek them to gain secrets regarding their life. It is said that the monks can

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see the thread of life (or even cut) and always know the amount of time left to someone with but a single glance. The monks might also see the red thread of marriage. This is commonly thought of as an unperceived red cord around the finger of those that are destined to meet one another in “true love”. The two people connected by the red thread are destined and star crossed lovers, regardless of the place, time, or circumstance. This magical cord may stretch and tangle, but never break. Finally, the monks may help one travel to the astral plane through astral projection. There is a catch though, anyone who astral travels with the monk’s help, risks being stranded in the astral plane forever, their body possessed by the soul of a deceased monk of the monastery who stole their silver thread. All of the silver threads in the central room are threads stolen from victims who looked for an easy way to “ascend”. The silver thread is described as a strong, silver-colored, elastic cord which joins a person’s physical body to its astral body and once stolen, the departed soul cannot return to its body without guidance.

Mount Baratok

Mount Baratok is the most noteworthy top in the Balinoks, with a height of 7,440 ft. It is situated in the northern wilderness of Barovia, already sitting above Markovia, presently gazing into the Shadow Rift. The Old Svalich Road skirts its south-western flank. The late spring melt waters from its flanks feed Lake Zarovich, which is a wellspring of the Musarde River. On its lower level, the town of Aracos and village of Antonbucher sit. Mt. Baratok also hides the ruins of the Boszórkan Keep. The uninhabited little keep appears chaotic and disorganized, yet the walls are mostly in functioning order. Aside from a few cracks and holes here and there, the walls are mainly 13-15 feet tall. Terrorvine, a deadly plant endemic to Barovia, has taken over the courtyard. Any book stolen from the keep’s library is magically set aflame and reappears in the library one week later at a random place, as the Dark Powers do not approve of their removal. On the east side of the mountain, a small camp of darklings, expelled from Vistani tribes for vile deeds beyond measure, can be found, magically bound to guard a cave. The dank and damp cave has a strongly acidic pool and varied oozes live inside it. These pools of acid dissolve any organic material that falls inside them in mere minutes. At the end of the cave, an acidic apple tree waits for those brave enough to wander and find it. These apples are the main ingredient for an acidic apple cider that is rumored to have positive enervating effects on those who drink it. The wood of the tree can be used to enchant any weapon by replacing its wooden handle, making it permanently drip acid and deal 1d6 acid damage with

each blow. The darkling Vistani are magically forced by a spell similar to *geas*, to stop any oozes or their master, a semi-sentient hybrid of green ooze and cloud giant from escaping this cave. Unfortunately for them, they cannot harm it, but can only subdue it by making offerings of animal and metallic items for the giant to devour. If the giant is slain, the darklings will be free to leave and exact revenge on their tribes and other innocent people.

Mount Ghakis

Mount Ghakis, with an elevation of 4620ft, has the third highest peak in Barovia. It stands at the heart of the land. The Svalich Pass and the Old Svalich Road cross its northern shoulder, connecting the city of Vallaki and the Village of Barovia. The heat of summer melts ice to water, pouring down its sides, and feeds Lake Zarovich, which is a source of the Musarde and Ivlis Rivers. Hidden inside the glaciers of the mountain, one might find the path to the Amber Temple or death at the hands of the Neureni barbarians who hunt these parts. On Ghaki’s side, which overlooks Vallaki, the lair of Lukas the Red, whose bandit incursions were halted by Strahd, can be found. The lair is a small underground cavern system which still hides some of the loot and equipment used by Lukas’ bandit crew.

Old Bonegrinder

Once property of the Barovian family Durst, this old windmill has fallen into the hands of Morgantha and her coven. The Dursts used it to make grain for Vallaki, as the Old Svalich Road connects the two. Morgantha has transformed the windmill into a place of horror. Here, she and her sisters bring the unfortunate children that their parents exchange for dream pastries. A drug made from the bones of the innocent, infused with parts of their young souls. Anyone that frees this place from the grasp of the hags will bring much joy to the Vallakians (but dismay to the Barovian addicts) as the Bonegrinder will be able to mill grain again. The deeds of the Old Bonegrinder lay in an old folder in the Durst family’s ancestral home, also known as the Death House. Situated outside of the windmill, a stone circle, once enchanted with holy magic, has been corrupted and is now desecrated ground that empowers the undead. If the hags are driven away and a cleric blesses the area, it will permanently be under the effects of the *hallow* spell. This stone circle was the place where the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind was enchanted by the most high Priest of Barovia.

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Old Svalich Road

One of the most important roads in the whole of Barovia is the Old Svalich Road. It is mainly used by merchants and other foreign travelers as it provides the only thoroughfare connecting the southeastern and southwestern sections of the Core thanks to the presence of the Shadow Rift. In Borca, it goes from Levkarest east through Barovia and the Svalich Pass, eventually winding into the Vaasi Plateau. One that travels on the road will certainly meet the Gates of Barovia guarding, symbolically at least, the Svalich Pass. Another thing found on the Old Svalich Road, are two small orchards sat right outside of Barovia village. The orchards are owned by Autoaneta and Romulich respectively who compete with each other over who has grown the tastiest fruit.

Tser Falls

The Tser Falls are part of the Ivlis River, and feed the Tser Pool in Barovia. Behind the falls, an enchanted cave can be found. Once it was used by Jander Sunstar when seeking shelter from the sun what Jander did not know is that anyone behind the waters is protected from divination magic and that the cave is deeper than it seems. A secret entrance leads to Varikov's secret lair. Varikov (Ranger 4/ Rogue 3) the Trapper as he is known, is a dwarven serial killer whose modus operandi is to trap, skin and staff his victims. Varikov has an animal companion named Farkash and inside his secret cave, one can find taxidermy corpse-work and the tools of his trade. Further down following the waters of the Tser Falls, Madam Eva and her vistani have set a camp. The reason why Madam Eva has decided to set a camp there is because the pond of water named Tser Pools is the gate leading to the Forest Fane that grants nondetection abilities to Strahd. In the Forest Fane, a corrupted simulacra of Madam Eva awaits anyone who dares to enter, defending the fane with mad resilience.

Werewolf Dens

Barovia has plenty of werewolves. These creatures have taken residence into various caves found throughout Barovia. The most notable ones can be found at the northern side of Krezk and in various places in Graenseskov, around Volchikov Manor.

Towns and Villages:

Aracos

Aracos is not easy to miss, nestled on the shores of Lake Zarovich opposite to Vallaki. It has a population of 3500 to 7500 residents and it consists of homes of varied construction and size, a fishing pier known as "the Docks", where scoundrels and bandits force the

fishermen to pay for protection and stop those with no business at the docks from entering. The thugs have an inn close to the pier, the "Scoundrel's Patch" as their base. In its basement, bets are made on the pitfights of men, roosters and dogs. The leader of this lawless gang is named Jacob Shrudel, a veteran sailor not of Barovia. Lost at sea in the mists, he only managed to make shore at Lake Zarovich thanks to the now cursed and abandoned lighthouse of Aracos. Aracos has another inn, The Mangy Mongrel, where the sheer talent of the music of the bard Tarin Nightingale can embow a husk with a soul. Aracos is the only known settlement in Barovia that sports a bank. The bank is owned by a greedy dwarf named Gerasimo Cianfanovich. When a locker holder in his bank is rumored to have perished or disappeared, Gerasimo will happily dispose of the contents to the highest bidder. Aracos has a central square market where a variety of shops hawk their merchandise. The market square is owned by Gerasimo's brother, Jeremiah Cianfanovich but, in contrast to his brother's greedy nature, Jeremiah is lenient when it comes to delaying rent to the point where he "forgets" due debts. Aracos has no burgomaster but a General-Marshal who rules over it. He is a cruel, but in a dark way just, leader. He is named Yuri and not much is known of him other than rumors that he is cursed to never age and that he used to be a general of Strahd.

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The Demiplane of Dread and the Core began with the realm of Barovia, which sprang from the horrific crimes of Strahd von Zarovich in 351 BC. Strahd has continued to govern the country and the bleak Barovian people via a phony succession of kings who all wear his name. The Village of Barovia "takes pride" in being imprisoned under Strahd's Choking Fog and the gaze of Castle Ravenloft. Barovia has had plenty of burgomasters but the latest one was Kolyan Indrirovich who resided in the Indrinovich Manor. Barovia's population always changes according to Strahd's mood but it usually numbers a few thousand residents between 1000 and 4500 people. The Blood o' the Vine Inn is the village's primary inn, where one may obtain a drink or a glass of wine. Underneath it, there is an old basement that used to be the "nest" of the Keepers of the Feather guild, but since the members moved to Vallaki to avoid Strahd's gaze, it remains unused. Another inn which is not as well regarded by the locals as the first one, is the Wolf's Den, owned and run by Daria Fidatov. It is a gathering spot for Vistani women who dance to attract tired travelers, hunters of the nearby woods and Barovian thugs and bandits. Bildrath, a greedy merchant, runs a general store called Bildrath's Mercantile. Barovia also has a temple which was once dedicated

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to Andral but was renamed to Sanctuary of Blessed Succor by Martyn “the Mad” Pelkar and Sasha Petrovich, founders of the Morninglord cult. Now it is just a ghost of its former self as it is almost ruined. Father Donavich resides here with his son, Doru, trapped in its basement. Barovia also has a haunted building which attracts innocent travelers. The Death House is a haunted mansion that was previously home to a cult that worshiped Strahd as a dark messianic figure. Strahd slaughtered them all when they kidnapped, murdered, and sacrificed innocent victims. The ghosts of the cultists and some of their families are still present. The House has little sentience or knowledge of its surroundings and occupants; it may generate illusions of children to entice unsuspecting victims. The house may reconstruct and repair itself if it is destroyed or damaged. Finally, northwest of the village, two areas of old remain. One is called the Dark Grove which is a desecrated druid’s grove at the border crossings with Nova Vaasa and Hazlan in Barovia. It is a training place for priests seeking to join the Order of the Ebon Gargoyle but is also an accursed place where brave or perhaps paranoid Barovians visit to ask the spirits for the “resurrection” of their departed ones. Even though the resurrection seems to occur, the one that is raised is not the one that departed. Their nature is changed to that of undeath and the love they might once have had is replaced with bloodlust which they will chase with devious plans until all the people they once cared for take their place in the grove and are perhaps raised as well to accompany them. The other location is a training facility for recruits who wish to join the Order of the Ebon Gargoyle as soldiers and fighters. The trainee must live inside the Great Oubliette, a labyrinth where the mental and physical capabilities of the ones who enter are tested.

Immol

Immol is located in the south-eastern part of Barovia, in a valley near to a lake at the foot of Mount Sawtooth. The lake is the headwater of the Saniset River, which is currently impassable. The Warlock’s Road connects Immol to Hazlan. Toyalis is said to be a hard days ride away. It is governed by the burgomaster, Petre Teodorus. Although his passion for history has hampered his capacity to keep watch over the village, it has resulted in his library, the Teodorus Archives. He dwells in the Scarlet Cross Keep, previously the residence of a knightly order. The Teodorus Archives is a one-of-a-kind library in Barovia, specializing in Barovia’s own history and tales. The contents of the library are only accessible to renowned scholars and other experts, not to the general public. Aside from information about the realm of Barovia, there is some information on the

true and false history of Borca. Immol has a population of 2080-5400 and is home to a tiny refugee Thaani and Forfarian community. According to their tales, they are fugitives from human settlements that once existed on Bluetspur’s surface. Immol also acts as the Ildi’Thaan’s hidden headquarters. The Ildi’Thaan seek to recover the Thirteen Texts of Thaan, a collection of tomes that, when united, are said to grant the Thaani knowledge and power. They are said to have been founded by the sole person to venture out of Bluetspur with their mind intact a century after the thirteen original survivors of the Thaan escaped into Immol. (This includes the ability to defeat Bluetspur’s mind flayers.) The members aim to tap into the power of the mind via strict discipline and unwavering effort. They are opposed to magic (hence no wizards) and mystical tricks (thus no true psionicists). The Bolting Stag stands out as Immol’s lone inn, a living museum of Forfarian traditions and social behaviors, a strong whiskey, and superb lamb sausage. Otherwise, the cuisine fails to stand out, and the accommodations are nothing spectacular or memory inducing.

Krezk

Krezk is a large town in northeastern Barovia on the Borca border. It has a population ranging from 2000 to 4500 people. Unlike the more remote areas of Barovia, Krezk is a bustling commercial center along the Old Svalich Road. Krezk’s centre is protected by strong physical fortifications, from which four quarters extend: one for general commerce, one for upmarket trade where the Red Vardo Traders are based; a trade enterprise. They are well-known for recovering misplaced items and are directed by Jacqueline Montarri, one for housing, and one for institutions of religion. The ancient Terg siege left behind some old structures. Because of the existence of the Cult of the Morninglord and the Sanctuary of First Light (now known as the Abbey of Saint Markovia), the Cult’s most important shrine, many Gundarakite residents have relocated to Krezk from the south. The locals of Krezk mostly operate as a commune and even though they trade with merchants, they are almost hostile to anyone else that is not a part of their commune or someone who can offer a service or trade with them. Krezkites grow trees and vegetables, cut wood to heat their homes, raise chickens and pigs, and share their food. A few of them have cows and mules, but there are no horses in Krezk. The town has no need for an inn as no outsider is allowed to stay in Krezk unless they have a permit from burgomaster Dmitri Krezkov. If they do have a permit, they can dwell in any of the town’s cottages in exchange for services requested by the owner. Residents never leave the village for fear of being attacked by wolves, dire wolves,

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and werewolves which infest the nearby areas. Krezk has its own militia which is mainly used to patrol the stone walls and to make sure that any visitors don't remain for a longer period than needed. A blessed pool at the north end of the village provides fresh water throughout the year. Next to the pool, the locals built a shrine to the Morninglord, covering it with a gazebo. It's known as the Shrine of the White Sun. The Abbey of Saint Markovia is no longer a holy place. Screams can be heard from it and it is no longer being visited by Gundarakites, who now prefer to visit the pool. There is a prophecy that somewhere in the catacombs of the abbey, the headquarters of the Dawnslayers still remains and when the time is right, the Dawnslayers will rise again to fight evil. The Needle of Ghaddar is a towering minaret that towers over Krezk's center plaza. It is unknown why the von Zarovich Family has allowed its existence since the Terg takeover. Finally, for anyone that is not allowed to enter Krezk, the Smoldering Ember Inn, which lies outside the town's walls, accepts any traveler or merchant.

Teufeldorf

Teufeldorf is found southern of Barovia, along the Crimson Road, where the Balinoks abruptly drop away to the edge of the Tepurich Forest. The site has allegedly been inhabited periodically since the age of stone, when brutish barbarians constructed dolmens to a profane cave bear deity. Perennial invasions by nearby tribes forced the early dukes to substantially fortify Teufeldorf and honeycomb it with tunnels and pathways. Teufeldorf is a large town once off Gundarak and now in southern Barovia. It has a population of 6000 to 9000 people and it has become the headquarters for the Ba'al Verzi assassins. Captain Rebeka Ditrau, the leader of the local militia is the effective leader of Teufeldorf. The Refuge of Quiet Diligence represents the Church of Ezra, while the faithful of the Church of Hala (mainly witches) care for the sick and infirm from the Hospice of the Three Hundred Wounds. However, the presence of the devout has not prevented an overpopulation of beggars and thieves. Someone that has no place to stay in Teufeldorf can do so at the Weeping Widow inn which also serves as stables for the military's cavalry. The Twisting Tower of Teufeldorf, once supposed to be the stronghold of malevolent spellcasters loyal to the Gundar, serves as a military strategy and espionage training center for Barovian warriors. It is the tallest building of the place and dark-looking gargoyles protect it. One hour to the east lies an asylum created by the traitorous Dr. Heinfroth. Ditrau has repurposed the keep and made it into a military prison.

Vallaki

Vallaki is a town where everything is perfect and well. It is the only town in the whole of Barovia that has many festivals. The burgomaster Baron Vargas Vallakovich believes that through enforced joy, the devil will stay away. The town of Vallaki lies in the heart of the valley right next to Lake Zarovich. Despite being mainly reliant on lake fishing, Vallaki's location makes it a key conduit for travelers and traders traversing the southern Core. Vallaki's economy is thriving, including orchards, distilleries, blacksmiths, and fish markets. The bustling commotion, however, is claimed to conceal the presence of terrifying secrets of an arcane and magical kind. Vallaki has a population of 3000 to 7000 people and among them, the Keepers of the Feather walk. The wereravens have their headquarters hidden in the attic of the Blue Water Inn. A visitor to this inn can enjoy Tsuika, a traditional Barovian plum brandy. It is distilled principally at the Romulich Distillery whose owner is a friend of the wereravens who own the inn. Vallaki has a temple dedicated to Ezra and its own graveyard. Rumor has it that the burial site for Quinn Roche holds several dozen of his suits of magic armor. Vallaki also has a smithy owned by Tibor who will craft anything if he is given the materials and money in exchange for his services. The trading mainly happens at the Arasek Stockyard, a market owned by Gunther and Yelena Arasek. Fiona Wachter aided by her demonic cult tries her best to overthrow Vargas and take his place as a burgomaster of Vallaki. She uses her council and cultists as well as her own sons to create happenings and disturbances to make Vargas appear as weak and incompetent to rule over the town. Fiona's family keeps the bones of Leo Dilisnya as an heirloom and a way to show their allegiance to Strahd. Vallaki has its own sewer system which connects to the lake and goes so deep that all entrances have been locked. Still, there are many entrances that are being used by local gangs that pose as Vallaki's militia and demand travelers to pay an entrance toll. Izek Strazni is secretly their leader. Vallaki is the home to Barovia's only toy maker shop owned by Blinsky. His toys, although creepy, are mysteriously found all over the Core. Located south of Vallaki, a training ground for arcane spellcasters who would join the Order of the Ebon Gargoyle remains.

Zeidenburg

Zeidenburg is a large city on the Gundar River ruled by Burgomaster Jacenty Girghiu. Its population is between 7500 and 13000 people. It was once a part of Gundarak, but is currently claimed by Barovia. Though it is a prosperous town, it is a center of warfare between repressed Gundarakite rebels and Barovian boyar soldiers. Despite the authorities' onslaught, Zeidenburg re-

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mains a hotbed of illicit activities and the black market. Most black market activities take place at the Bloated Leech inn which is known for its lice infested beds and the place where any desire of vice can be catered to. One that would prefer lice-less beds would better visit the more expensive and cared for inn, named Grizzled Boar Inn. The reborn Erlin religion is strong in Zeidenburg, and the faithful's homes, stores, and possessions are decked with small, jingling bells intended to distract the fallen deity and his demon servants, keeping their fatal touch at bay. Despite recent instability, the hamlet has prospered due to abundant cereal harvests from adjacent estates. More significant is the robust illicit trade, which involves both respectable Barovian merchants and Gundarakite smugglers and rebels. Despite the enormous militia presence, a wide range of illicit products, including raw Hazlani opium poppies, Mayvin's clockwork lock picking contraptions, and salted pheasant taken from Vlad Drakov's personal game reserve, can be found in just a few hours of searching. At the heart of the city, the Ashen Stronghold stands. Zeidenburg was initially built around the dismal fortification of charcoal-gray stone. Following the First Unwise Rebellion, the Gundars built the fastness to keep a watch on the region's nobility and secure the profitable commerce along the Crimson Road. Count von Zarovich's most difficult and brutal hamlet to conquer in the aftermath of the Great Upheaval, Zeidenburg, required a four-month siege that ended only when the Gundarakites were overpowered not by Barovian warriors, but by rats multiplying in the village's mass graves. The most famous Gundarakite rebel group is known as the "Courses of Chaos". Their leader, Ardonk Szerieza (Fighter 4/ Rogue 4), uses imported smoke powder to mount terrorist attacks against the government of the city. Zeidenburg is the place where Lyssa von Zarovich, Strahd's niece, resides. She is a powerful vampire with strength that belies her age. As part of a massively insane plot, she helped, presumably as a necrologist, in the genesis of the illithid vampire and, as a result, most likely has at least a passing knowledge with the concepts of biomancy. Lyssa conspires with Bluetspurean illithids to create a vampiric version of their race. She hopes to use these vampire mind flayers to take over Barovia.



Antonbucher is a small port village across the lake from Vallaki with a small populace of 90 to 300 people. Most of the village is centered around the fishing fleet, which provides the major food source for Vallaki. Antonbucher is also a supply and trade center for the mining and logging camps around Mt. Bartok. Somehow the fishermen of Antonbucher are resistant to the peculiar nature of the lake and can travel its waters but not always. One hundred years ago, Antonbucher was dying. Not a proper village yet, just a few rickety shacks around the docks. Plague and drought ravaged the land, the catch was scanty, the boats rotted in port, the town's people boiled nettles and fish heads for soup and still went to bed hungry. Robb Drake, a wealthy noble from Vallaki offered Antonbucher salvation. It has a population of 90 to 300 people and its most notable areas are the Docks, Byronite's general store, Black Sails tavern, the old church of St. Johan and the old watchtower that used to look out for danger and warn the fishermen

Cuzau

Cuzau is a neighboring village to Hoessla. The main occupation of the people of this village is mining and thankfully for them, the ores they mine are different to those of Hoessla, meaning that the two villages do not compete with each other but have established a healthy trade partnership. If the partnership is somehow broken, a civil war between the villages could break out. Cuzau has a population of 230 to 650 people. Even though they have a lesser population than Hoessla, they are better equipped as the ore they mine is stronger than that of their neighbours but still useless without the Hoesslan blacksmiths and ingredients they have to make proper alloys.

Hoessla

Hoessla is a small village in southern Barovia. It is one of the mining communities in the foothills of Mount Sawtooth and it is found between Immol and Cuzau, about a mile from the southern Misty Border. It has a population of 600 to 1860 people depending on Strahd's mood. Most of the people living here are short and hot-tempered. Their life-span is shorter than that of others found in Barovia due to the working conditions of the mines. There is a single inn called The Pick and Ladder, large enough to house a couple of hundred tenants who happily will drink wine or beer after a hard day's work. Hoessla has a large clock tower which signals, via a bell, the time for the men to go to and return from the mines. Its clock is damaged and does not work as many of its gears are missing. Hoessla is surrounded by many caves which remain sealed as they have been deemed too dangerous to be mined, either

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due to the fear of collapse, or because unimaginable horrors have either been freed from the depths or have nested in the caves.

Jarvinak

Jarvinak is, or was as of 348 BC, a village three or four miles from Renika. The nature of this enchanted village with a population of 190 to 330 residents remains highly problematic. There are scribes that would take an oath that they have visited the place while other historians and map makers insist that this place does not and has not existed at any time in Barovian history. In reality, the village is hidden by the mists and only the ones that truly believe in its existence are allowed to perceive and visit it (but perhaps not leave it). Jarvinak is not an important place and other than the small cottages, pig farms and a small temple of a long forgotten god, nothing else of interest can be found. Except one thing, the residents themselves. These people are all immortal and forgotten by time; they have lived since Strahd was still the human conqueror who freed them from the Tergs. The people of Jarvinak do not recognise their longevity as time does not register in their minds. The reason for their immortality is their enchanted blood. Strahd used the people in an experiment to create a herd that would be able to feed him eternally with blood that not only would sustain him but also empower him. He hid the village with the powers granted to him by the land to impede any other vampire from feeding from his personal "blood cellar". Strahd has failed to give empowering traits to the blood of the people but he surely made them immune to ageing. Angered by his failure, he moved on to other more promising experiments and permanently hid the village behind a veil of mist.

Krofburg

Krofburg is a rather prosperous Barovian hamlet atop Mount Ghakis in Barovia with a population of 450 to 790 people. Locals have had success herding goats and fermenting wine, as well as brewing Stout Heart, a local beer. The folks are of typical Barovian origin and have a similarly reserved, distant demeanor. They are, however, extremely accepting of the Vistani, who they rely on for some trade (this is rare for Barovians). An annual harvest day in the fall is one of the local festivities. The Burgomaster of Krofburg is named Milos Yehven (Human, Noble). There are two wineries in Krofburg of which Milos owns the greater of the two. Krofburg has a single temple which is affiliated with the Morninglord. Pavla Oleynyk (Human, Priest) is the local priestess and with Milo's aid, they both run the everyday life of the people and solve any disputes that may occur. The

other winery is owned by the Badunas family, which, being irritated and dissatisfied with their social status, try to outcompete Milos. Nikolai Badunas (Rogue 3), a merchant by progression, is the youngest member of the family. He is a known cheat and troublemaker. He secretly sabotages the Winery of the burgomaster to make him appear as an untrustworthy winemaker. He is locally known for his cruel pranks, some deriving from his hidden attraction to Pavla Oleynyk and some from his jealousy of Milos. Nobody really likes him but since he is a merchant, most of the people will quickly forget the harsh prank they fall victim to. A greater threat than the Badunas troubles Krofburg though, a gnomergo werewolf named Teodor Dymtrus (Fighter 6/Rogue 4) is constantly looking for a victim to devour while he acts as a wandering merchant. Other places of Krofburg is the local tavern and inn known as The Wandering Billy, the Daily Wares general store where one can buy useful items and finally the Luftan's Wool Works, a Weaver and dyer's shop.

Neureni Settlement

The Neureni Settlement is a small camp of barbarians who are the remnants of the Neureni horde which invaded Barovia before it became a Ravenloft domain. The horde invaded circa 230BC from the east through the Svalich Road. The horde managed to reach Vallaki where it was eventually stopped after a three month siege by General-Princess Nicoleta Von Zarovich. After seven months of occupying Barovian land, they were defeated and the survivors fled to the mountains. There, remain to this day. Having allied with the druids of decay of the Yester Hill, they still number around 110-250 barbarians. Legend has it that the word 'neuri' signifies either a werewolf or a shape changing wizard. The barbarians know Mount Ghakis like they know no other place. They hunt there, occasionally resting at the Amber Temple when foul weather forces them to. The Neureni tribe still has a deep hatred for the von Zarovich family and awaits a leader sent by Irlek-Khan, the demon-lord they worship, who will wield the Blood Spear of Cavan and lead them to their vengeance.

Nolinsky

Nolinsky is a small town situated atop a black rock outcropping, that sets it about twenty feet above the flat ground of Barovia around it. The rock seems to have come from nowhere, and there are no other formations around it. A row of old buildings, a large church, an inn, simple houses and shops. St. Bergoyavich church is the tallest building in town, a long dead and long forgotten saint in the age-old fight against the Devil Strahd. The first floor of the building is made of the same black

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stone the town is situated upon. The years have worn it flat, and it is hard to see the mortar lines of the bricks. The Black Rose is the liveliest place in Nolinsky. The two story building is two houses down from the Church and close to the small excuse for a square that the village has. Most of the other buildings are boarded up and the doors are locked. The people of Nolinsky are your average Barovians: they live sad lives that are usually devoid of happiness and filled with fear. Their numbers are always decreasing, they once used to number 200 but now only 50~ of them remain. Like Jarnivak, this place is enchanted. Nolinsky is trapped in time and only exists in Barovia if the mists wills it. Anyone that enters the village might not exit at the same time period they once entered.

Oraşnou

Sitting at the foothills of the Balinok Mountain, one can visit a place called Oraşnou. Oraşnou is a village of 300 to 900 people and on its south one can see the Svalich Woods. Despite the hostility and infertility of the land, the local farmers managed to lay the foundations for a successful farming business and produce great amounts of crops which mainly feeds the people of the village. It occasionally struggles with the winter cold and as their land freezes, so do the crops, resulting in hunger. The Burgomaster is named Ivan Randovich, a tyrant whose rule inspires dread and despair to everyone in Oraşnou. He resides in the Randovich Manor, protected by his bandits and thugs. Glovia Falinescu, the village's healer, tries her best to help any poor soul, ravaged by the tyrant's cruel tax collectors or perhaps by other ailments and misfortunes. But even she has an agenda of her own. In the Falinescu Manor, she creates undead creatures by transforming her own servants into ghouls to achieve her ends. The village has an inn called the "Seven Tables Inn" where one can hear or share any rumor as rumormongers are welcome there. A visitor can trade their wares mainly at the Hare and Hair, a general store operated by Gregori Wurlbach. His establishment is both a shop that sells adventuring gear (but not weapons or armor) and an inn where three rooms can be rented by travelers. The other area is known as the "Eyes of Midnight" and it is owned and operated by Fillar Esven. He mainly trades oddities, jewelry, and other weird or unusual items. Outside of Oraşnou, the Vaduva Trading Post lies abandoned. Once a successful business, now it remains in ill-repair and without an owner. Finally, if one takes a path from Oraşnou into the Svalich Woods, they would quickly reach the Fidatov Manor. Once home to Lady Marilena Fidatov, the Manor and all its inhabitants became cursed after she was poisoned by Burgomaster Ivan Randovich. Lady Fidatov pleaded with the Dark

Powers to make certain that no one else profited from the Manor or its wealth. In retribution, the Dark Powers issued a horrible curse that forced an eternal cycle of normalcy during the day and horror throughout the night. The residents of the manor would repeat the day before the curse occurred throughout the day, but at night they would turn into horrifying undead or wererats. The mansion itself became immaculate during the day but degraded at night.

Renika

Renika is a village with a small population of 250 to 650 people. Renikans are always trying to find a way to gather money, not out of greed but due to fear. A long time ago, Strahd publicly decapitated the burgo-master of Renika for withholding taxes and using them for personal luxuries. Since then, Renikans are overly protective of their gold and will trade anything to amass small fortunes as a way to be sure that the next time the tax collector arrives, the amount will be ready to be delivered. Renikans mainly breed hens and donkeys which they sell to other areas of Barovia. The second most common trade is that of herbs as the Renikans have a tradition of herbology.

Löwenturm

A small community of 40-50 people who have created a small camp by the sides of Gundar River. They are quite fearful of outsiders but they will offer a good night's rest to anyone who visits them with the promise to leave the next morning without harming anyone. They are barely able to defend themselves as they only wield makeshift weapons made out of branches. Their camp is "protected" by a small wooden fence of brittle wood. Their main defence is the numerous dogs they keep, which bark at any approaching danger. If the danger is deemed great, the people will immediately abandon everything they have and jump into the river and move to the other side where a similar camp resides, hoping that whatever is coming, will be stopped by the river. They live off the fish they catch. The reason that they have not decided to live in a proper town or village is unknown even to them.

Volchikrov Manor

The people of Volchikrov Manor are a hardy lot and accustomed to living alongside the wolves. Every man, woman, and child of the Graenseskov carries at least a dagger or club, and is prepared to defend themselves from the wolves. In times of need they rely on the boyar's mounted knights known as the "Hounds of the Borderwood" to keep aggressive wolf packs at bay. The manor's residents number a few hundreds and are mostly farmers, hunters and lumberjacks and their

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routine is mostly the same each day. By morning they go about their work, immediately returning at sunset, when the horn at Volchykrov Manor is blown. The manor dates back to the first boyar of the Graenseskov, Sordje the Justifier, who raised a wounded wolf pup as his own. According to the folktale, when Sordje returned the beast to its pack, the pack leader — an ancient werewolf — was grateful for the return of the cub and ever since that day, the wolves have given Volchykrov Manor and the surrounding farms and homesteads a wide berth. Regardless of how much stock one puts in the folktale, whatever supernatural providence kept the wolves in check can no longer be relied upon. The Manor is ruled by boyars who, when they die and end their service to the people, are rewarded by Strahd himself. Strahd turns them into undead specters or revenants and traps them within the “Barrow of the Boyars” so that they may continue to serve.

Neighboring domain(s):

The Shadow Rift / Arak
Nova Vaasa
Hazlan
Forlorn
Kartakass
Sithicus
Invidia
Borca

Fun Fact:

Barovian females wear black for five years after the death of even their most distant relatives, lending a universal drabness to their dress. Most of the time they forget who they mourn or for how long. Meanwhile, another relative perishes or disappears to renew the cycle of mourning making them wear black for most of their lives.

“I am the Ancient, I am the Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past. I am not dead. Nor am I alive. I am undead, forever.”

~ Tome of Strahd

Strahd has a commanding figure, lean and muscular with a regal demeanor. His features are chiseled and muscular, his eyes commanding, and his voice rich and full. He moves with fluid ease and talks with the authority of one who expects to be heeded. His pale complexion detracts from his image of strength, but eating restores color to it and gives him a healthier aspect. His ears, which are pointed like those of an elf, his most peculiar aspect. He occasionally conceals this by combing his black hair over the tips, but he can easily explain them away by falsely claiming to

be descended from elves, so he normally does not bother hiding them unless he is attempting not to be identified. His long, pointed nails are also unique, and he frequently conceals them with gloves. Strahd’s fangs, unlike those of other vampires, are easily concealable, retracting when he no longer requires them. Strahd wears the finery of a Barovian nobleman, favoring black with red and white accents. He favors long cloaks and a gold necklace with a huge red stone around his neck.

Strahd was doomed to be the devil long before his human birth. Count Strahd von Zarovich was a decent man with a talent for alchemy. Harrowed by his darker impulses, he employed the Apparatus, an experimental magical-alchemic contraption, to separate his evil and toxic half from himself and hurl it away. Unbeknownst to the Alchemist, this wicked side was reborn elsewhere in the multiverse as Strahd von Zarovich, who went on a crusade to take back the lands of his ancestors and eventually doomed himself to vampiredom. Before Strahd’s birth, Baba Lysaga had made a pact with Mother Night to dedicate a baby, born of noble lineage to her. In exchange Lysaga would have power and enjoy immortality. When Strahd was born, she recognized the baby Strahd’s potential for evil and realised that it was the baby destined for her goddess. Lysaga approached the Zarovich family and wormed her way into their home in the guise of a midwife for Queen Ravenovia van Roeyen, Strahd’s mother. Lysaga ensured that Strahd would be able to cast spells and follow an evil path by using the baby as a conduit for bloody rituals cast over empty graves under the full moon. When Ravenovia realised what Lysaga’s actions were doing, she cast her away to protect Strahd. His destiny was already determined as he had a dark soul of and a chain of villainy tied to his life’s web. Although Lysaga was dismissed, she kept close to Strahd to ensure that her “son” grew up as intended. Strahd’s father was cruel and mostly absent, only caring for his crusades and political schemes. Barov only cared that Strahd would be trained as his successor in warfare and politics. He never considered him as his son but as a tool to further his schemes. Strahd had a difficult childhood, always trying to prove himself worthy of his father’s attention. Eventually Strahd determined himself on the path to reclaim his ancestral lands from the Tergs. While still mortal, he made a pact with the arcanaloth Inajira, bargaining for military success in return for eternal servitude, and receiving a valuable artifact from Inajira as collateral, further sealing his fate. Strahd was renowned as a heroic general with ideals similar to that of a paladin, but that would later change. When

Strahd von Zarovich

he rebuilt Castle Ravenloft atop the old keep's ruins, he invited his family to join him. Barov would show no appreciation for his son's achievements, and Ly-saga lethally poisoned Ravenovia as she made her way to the castle. Strahd had managed to achieve his dream but none recognised it, making him feel hollow. Sergei, his younger brother, was the only one family member to come to the castle. Strahd saw in Sergei everything that he could be but wasn't. He had spent most of his life chasing empty wishes. Sergei eventually fell in love with a village maiden named Tatyana, Strahd became obsessed with her. In her young life and passion, he saw what his brother had, what he wanted to steal from Sergei, what he had never had: youth and purity... Strahd tried to approach Tatyana to express his desires, but she saw him only as an elder brother to her true love, Sergei.

In his depression, a whispered evil approached. A creature that Strahd knew was "Death". Death gave him knowledge of an ancient temple made of amber, hidden at the tallest peak of the Balinok Mountains. There, Strahd found an entity, Vampyr. The trapped vestige offered him immortality in exchange for a sacrifice. Strahd was fated to kill the person he loved the most and in turn be killed by those that hated him with passion. On Tatyana and Sergei's wedding day, Strahd murdered his brother with a Baal Verzi dagger, a relic from a society of dark assassins. In her despair, Tatyana threw herself from the castle walls. Strahd's enemies made their move, bolts and an arrow piercing his body. Yet, he would not die but rather would be "reborn" in undeath. He became the first vampire and welcomed the mists, thus creating Ravenloft. Strahd's curse is that though he is absolute lord and master of Barovia, to the point where he can enter any home as the land's rightful owner, once in every generation he will meet a woman whom he believes is Tatyana reincarnated. As he tries to claim her, she always dies, spurned his advances in horror. Tatyana's latest reincarnations always evade his grasp. Strahd has had to deal with at least two darklords in the past: Azalin Rex the lich and Lord Soth the death knight. The visage of Ravenloft has altered dramatically over the years, but one constant always remains: Strahd.

Background:

Strahd set in motion events that cursed not only himself and Barovia, but also many other lands, by making a pact with an unseen entity that he assumed to be Death itself, and murdering his brother to cement that. It is unknown if Ravenloft would exist in its current form without Strahd's evil, although his evil appears to have had a considerable role in it. Strahd

has grown in evil and might during the period of the tale recorded in The Tome of Strahd, becoming a necromancer of immense power and learning much about the prison that binds him. He has interacted with most of the Core's great characters, establishing alliances and enmities that have shaped the face of Ravenloft to this day. His partnership with Madame Eva, where he offered the Vistani free passage in exchange for them becoming his informants, is particularly noteworthy. Strahd despises the lich Azalin, who was once his reluctant servant, but is now his greatest nemesis. Their antagonism reached a climax at the Grand Conjunction, when Azalin came dangerously near to annihilating Strahd, but Strahd survived that encounter as he has every other. When Lord Soth arrived in Castle Ravenloft, Strahd understood that Soth's strength was actually a match for him. Armies of Strahd's slaves were defeated by Lord Soth, and the devastation and destruction inflicted by Soth compelled even Strahd to reconsider. Strahd had to give Lord Soth what he had sought, the disloyal retainer Caradoc, in order to remove Lord Soth from Barovia, for fear of the death knight wrecking further damage to his kingdom.

Current Sketch:

Strahd has little involvement in the politics of Barovia, only sometimes venturing from his fortress to see that his rules are enforced. Despite his disdain for the wellbeing of his people and his scorn for most other beings, he fiercely guards his property. Barovia and its people are his to rule over, and any who attempt to defy him will suffer the full force of his wrath. Strahd has been a vampire for nearly four centuries and has learnt to plot in ways that few humans can. His machinations are never as straightforward as they appear, and he will never reveal the underlying reasoning behind his acts. He is inhumanly patient and is ready to outlast his adversaries if that is what it takes to overcome them. He is merciless at heart, and if he perceives an opportunity to quash a possible danger, he will seize it. Strahd's greatest flaw is his attachment to Tatyana. Though she hurled herself to what must have been certain death, her body was never found, and countless women have been born in Barovia who resemble her in every way save name over the decades. Strahd believes that these women are reincarnations of his lost love and that with each he gets a new chance to win Tatyana's heart. Unfortunately, every attempt has failed. Something constantly snatches his intended away from him before he can claim her, and each failure stings him more and more. Strahd will go to any lengths in his pursuit of Tatyana.

Strahd von Zarovich

Darklord's Tactics:

Strahd is possibly the most deadly of Ravenloft's darklords. He is very civil, and even nice when he wants or needs to be, and holds himself to the highest standards of aristocratic behavior. He is a powerful necromancer and a skilled swordfighter, both traits augmented by his vampiric nature. He has created unique variants of classic undead types, such as zombies, skeletons, and skeleton horses, that are far more powerful than standard variations as well as a "super-zombie," that is capable of seeing the invisible, regenerates as a troll, and whose appendages continue to battle even when severed. He combines force and cunning to an extent that few can equal. He has created many custom spells to fit his needs. He is well-versed in the application of his vampiric talents and battles his opponents with speed, ferocity and ruthlessness. He is immune to many of the flaws that plague the common vampire and exploits these advantages to surprise the would-be vampire slayers he encounters. He is an accomplished necromancer who uses his spells to lethal effect. Despite his personal power, Strahd is not rash and will not risk himself when another can do the job. He has a plethora of henchmen at his disposal, ranging from animal servants to vampire slaves to magically summoned beasts. Strahd can summon worgs, rather than wolves, unlike most vampires. He has the ability to summon 1d10 Strahd zombies or 2d10 Strahd skeletons. Strahd has free action to open or close the two major gates on the Old Svalich Road from anywhere in his territory. He wields comparable authority over the gates and doorways of his Castle, where he can detect the entrance of any creature with an Intelligence score of at least 3. Strahd can control his carriage without focusing, as if he were at the reins, from anywhere in his territory. He can detect the presence of any creature with an Intelligence of at least 3 that approaches the carriage within 30 feet and can also detect when such a creature enters the carriage. Strahd has a contingency set on him that teleports him to a hidden mountain sanctuary whenever he is exposed to light that may harm him or curb his power. Strahd is unaffected by garlic, mirrors, or holy symbols. He is free to enter any building in Barovia, whether he is invited or not. Strahd can withstand up to ten rounds of sunlight before succumbing to its effects by concentrating on a summoned cloud of bats that engulfs him, creating a perfect shadow cover. Strahd's greatest weakness is Tatyana.

Strahd will take chances he would not otherwise take when chasing one of Tatyana's reincarnations, and he is prone to oversights and miscalculations in his desire for her that would otherwise be at odds with his brilliant mind and detached, pragmatic personality.

Even if Strahd is defeated, the Dark Powers will not let him die so easily. After some time he will reappear as the ruler of Barovia. The only possible way to stop Strahd from existing is to kill the vampire and, before he is brought back to life, slay the alchemist of Mordent. An evil act that would most likely result in the birth of a new darklord. There is also another way; if somehow the Alchemist is convinced to visit his dark counterpart and merge with his evil self via the Apparatus, the vampire Strahd would cease to exist. Such a thing would be almost impossible to happen though, since neither the Alchemist nor Strahd would ever agree to this.

Borders:

When Strahd tries to seal his territory, a dense fog rises from the ground to envelop his domain. This fog is similar to the mists that cover the settlement of Barovia. The fog ring that surrounds the settlement of Barovia is a terrible toxin that lies dormant until one unlucky person tries to flee the village. While entering the village of Barovia it is quite safe, leaving is a different story. Any creature without poison immunity who goes beyond the fog's outer border dies instantly in a foaming fit of apoplexy (no saving throw). A Vistani may create an elixir that makes a creature resistant to the effects of the fog for 10 minutes. The Vistani sell this elixir and guide travelers through the dense fog for 5 gold pieces per person. This is referred to as the "captive charge" by giorgio merchants, yet without this service, the trail of goods through the southern Balinoks would cease to flow. The Vistani, on the other hand, never allow giorgio (vistani for city dwellers) to learn the elixir's recipe, and they will refuse any traveller without hesitation if Strahd commands them to.



Strahd von Zarovich

The Real Devil Strahd

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class (29 +2 animated full plate(20)+ ring of protection (+3)+ Mountain Fane (+6))

Hit Points 237 (19d8 + 152)

Speed 30ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 (fly 150 ft. while in monstrous form)

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**
26 (+8) 24 (+7) 26 (+8) 26 (+8) 14 (+2) 26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +15, Wis +10, Cha +16

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +15

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons; swamp fane: fire, cold, lightning, thunder, acid

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Condition Immunities while in armor blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

Senses darkvision 120 ft., Bloodscent 240ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Balok, Falkovnian, Abyssal, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Strahd isn't in running water or sunlight, he can use his bonus action to polymorph into a Tiny bat, a Medium or Large wolf, a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in bat or wolf form, Strahd can't speak. In bat form, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 40 feet. In wolf form, his walking speed is 40 feet. His statistics, other than size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in mist form, Strand can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 60 feet, can hover, can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and he can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all non magical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Strahd fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When Strahd drops to 0 hit points outside his coffin, he transforms into a cloud of mist (as per the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in running water or sunlight. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his coffin within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his coffin, he reverts to his vampire form and is paralyzed for 1 hour until he regains 1 hit point.

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

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

Vampire Weaknesses. Strahd has the following flaws:

Harmed by Running Water. He takes 10 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.

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

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

Magic Weapons. Strahd's attacks are considered magical for overcoming resistances.

Rejuvenation. If Strahd is killed, he regains all his hit points at the next sunset unless his body was destroyed, his head was removed, or his heart was pierced with a wooden stake and the stake is not removed, in which case he will take 1d10 years to rejuvenate at the location of his death.

Unholy Persistence. Strahd is immune to effects that turn undead unless the Icon of Ravenkind was used to turn him.

Monstrous Form. If Strahd isn't in sunlight and if he has fewer than half of his hit points remaining, he immediately polymorphs into a Large monstrous form for 10 minutes. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Any objects he is wearing transform with him, but nothing else does. He reverts to his true form if he dies, or if there are no longer any active threats to hunt down. Strahd must rest for a full night after this transformation. While in monstrous form, Strahd has the following traits:

-Strahd gains an additional action on each of his turns. That action can be used only to take the Attack (one weapon attack only) or Dash action.

-Strahd grows bat-like wings and gains a flying speed of 150 feet.

-Strahd has resistance to all damage except radiant damage.

-Strahd is under a blood frenzy. He has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points and cannot use his spellcasting or shapechanger features.

Strahd can assume his monstrous form once every 24 hours.

Strahd Von Zarovich

Blood Scent. Strahd can sense living creatures that have blood, or vital fluids similar to blood, within a radius of 240 feet.

Wilderness Fanes. The Three Wilderness Fanes were once three sacred sites in Barovia, each guarded by one of the priestesses that are known today as the Three Hags of Barovia. When Strahd corrupted the land with dark rituals, the Fanes were likewise corrupted. Each one gives a concrete and continual mechanical benefit to Strahd. Each priestess turned hag dwells in the fane protecting it. If Strahd's link to the fanes is cut; he loses the benefits provided by that fane.

Mountain Fane: The most ancient of the Three Wilderness Fanes, located on Lysaga Hill. As a result of his connection to the mountains of Barovia, Strahd is surrounded by a field of force armor that grants him a +6 armor bonus to AC. As it is made of force, this armor protects him against incorporeal attacks — this also applies when Strahd is in gaseous form. If Strahd's connection to the Mountain Fane is severed, his Armor Class is reduced by 6 and his CR is reduced by 1.

Swamp Fane: The Swamp Fane is one of the Three Wilderness Fanes, located in Ivlis Marsh. It grants Strahd several elemental resistances. If Strahd's connection to the Swamp Fane is severed, he loses resistance to Fire, Cold, Lightning, Thunder, Acid and his CR is reduced by 1.

Forest Fane: The Forest Fane is one of the Three Wilderness Fanes, located in a random place within any forest in Barovia. It grants Strahd continual nondetection and the ability to eavesdrop and know the location of anyone who mentions his name. If Strahd's connection to the Forest Fane is severed, he loses this benefit and his CR is reduced by 1.

Heart of Sorrow. Any damage that Strahd takes is transferred to the Heart of Sorrow. If the Heart absorbs damage that reduces it to 0 hit points, it is destroyed, and Strahd takes any excess damage. The Heart of Sorrow has 100 hit points and is restored to that number of hit points each dawn, provided it has at least 1 hit point remaining. Strahd can, as a bonus action on his turn, break his link to the Heart of Sorrow so that it no longer absorbs damage dealt to him. Strahd can reestablish his link to the Heart of Sorrow as a bonus action on his turn, but only while in Castle Ravenloft.

Spellcasting. Strahd is a 16th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 24, +16 to hit with spell attacks). Strahd has the following Wizard spells prepared:

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

1st level (4 slots): *cause fear, fog cloud, puppet, ray of sickness, sleep, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, flaming sphere, ground fog*, gust of wind, heat metal**, hold person, mind spike, mirror image(active), misty step, ray of enfeeblement*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning**, counterspell, dispel*

*magic, enemies abound, fly, haste, hypnotic pattern, lightning bolt, rain of terror**

4th level (3 slots): *blight, dimension door, greater invisibility, phantasmal killer, shadowbind, storm sphere, Strahd's baneful attractor**

5th level (3 slots): *animate objects, control winds**, cloud-kill, far step*

6th level (2 slots): *circle of death, disintegrate, guards and wards(active)*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death, power word: pain, reverse gravity***

8th level (1 slot): *control weather**, maddening darkness*

*New spells found in this book

**Swamp Fane spell, can cast once without expending a spell slot

Actions

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Strahd makes three attacks, any combination of black steel longsword and unarmed strike or four unarmed strikes in Monstrous form.

Blacksteel Longsword +3 (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (3d10 + 11) slashing damage, or 33 (4d10 + 11) slashing damage if used with two hands, plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 24).

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). Strahd can use a bonus action to make a bite attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Strahd, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 18 (3d6 + 8) piercing damage plus 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Strahd regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Strahd's control.

Charm. Strahd targets one creature he can see within 60 feet of him. If the target can see Strahd, the target must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed. The charmed target regards Strahd as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected, by force if necessary. The target isn't under Strahd's control, but it will take his requests and actions in the most favorable way and allow him to bite it. Each time Strahd or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise the effect lasts 24 hours or until Strahd is destroyed, in a different plane of

Strahd Von Zarovich

existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Strahd magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or swarms of rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Strahd can call 3d6 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Strahd and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Strahd dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Blood Drain (Mist Form Only). One creature in Strahd's space must make a DC 24 Constitution saving throw (undead and constructs automatically succeed). On a failed save, the target takes 22 (4d6+8) necrotic damage, its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Strahd regains hit points equal to that amount. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the target finishes a long rest. It dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Feral Swarm (Recharge 5-6). A giant swarm of bats gather around Strahd and descend upon a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and take 4d6 bludgeoning damage plus 4d4 piercing damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage and isn't knocked prone.

Beguiling Gaze. As a bonus action, Strahd fixes his gaze on a creature he can see within 30 feet of him. If the target can see Strahd, the target must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or Strahd has advantage on all attack rolls against that target. The effect lasts until the target takes damage or until the start of Strahd's next turn. For that time, the affected creature is also a willing target for Strahd's bite attack. A creature that can't be charmed is immune to this effect. A creature that successfully saves against Strahd's gaze is immune to it for 1 hour.

Summon Equipment. Strahd magically summons his armor and sword. The armor and sword magically replaces the armor, clothes and weapons that Strahd was wearing.

Reactions

Counterspell (3/Long Rest). Strahd can use a reaction to cast counterspell



Legendary Actions

Strahd can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. If Strahd has unspent legendary actions at the end of the round, he may spend and immediately use his remaining legendary actions. Strahd regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

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

Unarmed Strike. Strahd makes one unarmed strike.

Attack. (Cost 1 Action). Strahd makes a longsword or unarmed strike attack.

Move (Cost 1 Action). Strahd can move up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Shocking Bolt (Vampire form only, costs 1 Action). Strahd's Armor attacks an enemy. Ranged Spell Attack: +4 to hit (with advantage on the attack roll if the target is wearing armor made of metal), range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) lightning damage.

Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). Strahd fixes his gaze on one creature he can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 24 WIS saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours.

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

Shadow Mirror (Costs 2 Actions). Strahd teleports up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see along with any equipment he is wearing or carrying. Alternatively, he can choose a space within range that is occupied by a Small or Medium creature. If that creature is unwilling, it must make a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, both Strahd and the creature teleport, swapping places.

Charm (Cost 2 Actions). Strahd makes a charm attack.

Ancient Might (Costs 3 Actions). Strahd makes one attack with his claws. If it hits, the attack is a critical hit. A creature taking damage from the attack suffers from a Lingering Injury (See p. 272 of the Dungeon Master's Guide).

Lair Actions

While Strahd is in Castle Ravenloft, he can take lair actions as long as he isn't incapacitated. On initiative count 20

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(losing initiative ties), Strahd can take one of the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them in that round: Until initiative count 20 of the next round, Strahd can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there.

- Strahd targets any number of doors and windows that he can see, causing each one to either open or close as he wishes. Closed doors can be magically locked (needing a successful DC 20 Strength check to force open) until Strahd chooses to end the effect, or until Strahd uses this lair action again.
- Strahd summons the angry spirit of one who has died in the castle. The apparition appears next to a hostile creature that Strahd can see, makes an attack against that creature, and then disappears. The apparition has the statistics of a specter.
- Strahd targets one Medium or smaller creature that casts a shadow. The target's shadow must be visible to Strahd and within 30 feet of him. If the target fails a DC 24 Charisma saving throw, its shadow detaches from it and becomes a shadow that obeys Strahd's commands, acting on initiative count 20. A greater restoration spell or a remove curse spell cast on the target restores its natural shadow, but only if its undead shadow has been destroyed.

able to necrotic damage. Undead within the mist have resistance to radiant damage. Light within the mist can be no brighter than dim unless created by a spell of 5th level or higher, or equivalent magic. The mist lasts for 1 minute, but a strong wind can disperse it, and sunlight burns the mist away instantly and clears the area such light touches.

- The psychic impressions of the ancient one's innumerable victims rises in the area for 1 minute. For this time, each creature hostile to and within 120 feet of the ancient one is overwhelmed by the voices of the dead and distracted by disturbing sensory input. Such a creature is deafened, and it has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can make a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If this saving throw fails by 5 or more, the affected creature can't maintain concentration until the start of its next turn

Strahd can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Significant Possessions

Ring of counterspell (3 charges/dawn), Blacksteel longsword +3, Animated Armor of Strahd +2, 1 Bead of Force



scured. Living creatures within the mist are vulner-

The Severance

New Barovian Religion

"There exists in hidden manuscripts a legend of an entity that stood between Good and Evil, Light and Dark, Order and Chaos. These manuscripts were said to have been systematically hunted down and destroyed, as the tales or concepts within were too dangerous to the establishment. Why was Severance so dangerous?"

Severance is an entity, for lack of a better word, that has existed since the beginning of creation. However, despite his status and position within the natural order of life and death, the Severance is, perhaps surprisingly, a lesser known being. Unlike the concepts of good and evil, the Severance is known to be the neutral side between order and chaos. The Severance's form is unknown. That is due to the fact that he possesses no true form at all, and is only perceived as to what the viewer sees him as. He is mostly depicted as a cloaked figure, slightly hunched over, and with no discernible features, save one glowing eye in the depths of the hood, and a suggestion of a missing arm under the cloak. Rumor has it that those who have had the immense luck of encountering him describe a feeling of absence and complete serenity, as though there was no order, no chaos, just an absolute. In reality, those who met that entity felt the void engulf them as all of their memories and secrets were drawn from them into the void of his hood. Things grow even more complicated as ancient texts discuss the powers of this entity. According to legend, the power of the Severance was "absolute". With such a description, it is not surprising that many authorized the banning of all books mentioning the Severance. After all, the Severance is foremost a god of secrets and knowledge. Therefore, he came to be known as "the Anonymous One", "The Nameless One", "The One Who Should Not Be Named", "The Whispered One", "The Great Keeper". Since the Severance is the "gap" between the light and the dark, he is neither living nor dead, nor is he quite physical, simply absolute. Such a power can make both celestial beings and devils tremble. The holy symbol of this entity is a book with an eye drawn on and chained shut so that it can never be opened. The favorite weapon of those that follow him is the dagger. The Severance's domain is mainly found in neutral, knowledge, secrets, madness and magic. The worshippers of the Severance are known as "The Keepers of Forbidden Lore" and usually consist of wizards, clerics, warlocks, rogues and even bards. The Keepers believe that there is knowledge too evil for the world to know. They hunt down secrets and information they deem to be too dangerous for

the world at large and keep it secret in the name of the Severance. The only known temple in Ravenloft that was made to worship this entity was the Amber Temple found in Barovia. Not every worshipper uses the same method to worship the Severance and usually, each method is kept a secret. One of the most commonly used methods of worship is a unique prayer. The worshipper whispers their secrets into an effigy of a closed palm of a severed arm, usually made out of branches, cloth and animal bones and thus, the prayer is complete. The uninitiated usually confuse this effigy for a voodoo doll or a spell component of evil magic. It is generally considered a great sin for a Keeper to have their effigy found by others. The main motto of the Keepers is "*Learn, Lie, keep secrets, promote confusion, sow distrust.*"

Tenets:

- Never reveal all that you know.
- Gather all secrets and knowledge of the world so that the Severance can create the puzzle of reality and thrive above all.
- Hide in plain sight, be one with the crowd.
- Never compromise the Church.
- Use all means necessary to deceive others and lead them astray from the truth that only you know.
- Secretly sow discord to further progress your plans.
- Your hood is your face, your face is your soul, never betray your soul.



Borca/Dorvinia



Borca / Dorvinia



Borca is a land of corruption, revenge, and intrigue, a land where a vial of poison is just as likely (if not more so) than a polite conversation to resolve an issue. But while Borca was always like this, not long ago, it was actually more peaceful (though still just as deadly), but that was before the Grand Conjunction.

During the Grand Conjunction, the borders between Borca and Dorvinia blurred and Ivana and Ivan sought comfort in each other's arms, as they had long been penpals. However, when the cataclysmic event ended, the two domains merged, and the pair found that everything that tied them together as penpals pulled them apart when they were together. Now, they cannot stand each other, and the Dark Powers have divided the domain between them. Ivana ultimately holds the power of the throne, but Ivan holds the reins of the tax collectors and the money of the domain. And with that, an internal and eternal war has been created as each tries in vain to poison the other.

As they are related, both ultimately hail from Dilisniya stock, and the family even has remote ties with the Von Zaroviches of Barovia. One of their ancestors was present at Strahd I's wedding, though they somehow survived that event. Evil tongues say that Leo Dilisniya was partly to blame for what happened and that Strahd exacted a terrible revenge upon him. Regardless, the family line survived and spread throughout the Core, eventually culminating in Ivan and Ivana (though many more Dilisnias live in many of the domains of the Core, no others have risen to such a level of prominence). Just as the favored weapon of both darklords is poison, so does poison run through the veins of the Borcan populace, in a very literal sense. Any liquid in Borca can, at the command of Ivan or Ivana, be turned into poison when it passes the domain's borders. Often, their foes think that they have escaped, only to fall foul of poison hours or days after they thought themselves safe. But that may not be the most dangerous part of Borca — that may well be the Borcans themselves. They are as likely to scheme and plot as the worst nobles of Richemulot or Dementlieu, but while there they may consider the smearing of another's name enough to win a clandestine war, the Borcans will never let it lie.

Poison and other means of dealing death without evidence are popular here, but none more so than the duels. The law in Borca is so corrupt (not helped by being under the control of Ivan), that sentences are carried out based on cost — the life of a commoner will cost the culprit 73 gold pieces, whereas the life

of a noble might cost thousands. As such, most turn to duels as a way to get personal satisfaction and revenge. This is the only way that a commoner might find some measure of satisfaction against a noble, but everyone is entitled to the use of "seconds", assistants or mercenaries that take the place of the duelist. Professional duelers are paid a great deal of money for these tasks, as they often prove deadly. Adventures in Borca should focus on the struggles between Ivan and Ivana as each makes their way through Borcan society in a futile attempt to poison the other.

The intrigue lies heavy here, and adventurers are likely to get drawn into plots that are beyond their control. This ranges from the simple matter of escorting one of Ivana's favored noblewomen (possibly one of the ermordenung) or one of Ivan's tax collectors, to protect them from attack to encountering one of the darklords directly and being instructed to deal with the other darklord. This could even be simpler and involve the heroes being dragged into one of the many vendettas among the Borcan nobility, perhaps with one of the heroes hired to be a second for one of the nobles. Upon killing the other duelist, the heroes find themselves the target of assassins looking for "justice" for the murdered noble.

"Justice" for the murdered noble. *Never presume that I will not act on my worst instincts.*

~Cesare Borgia



Borca / Dorvinia

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	684 BC
Population:	34,000
Races (%):	Humans 95%, Halflings 4%, Other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Falkovnian, Halfling, Luktar, Mordentish
Religions:	Ezra, Hala
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Ivana Boritsi, Ivan Dilisnya
Darklord(s):	Ivana Boritsi, Ivan Dilisnya
Nationality:	Borcan
Analog:	A mix of Romania and Italy, House of Borgia

Local Fauna:

Generally speaking, Borcans have little to fear from the wildlife of their domain. Certainly, a few bears wander the woodlands, and occasionally wolves travel through the domain from Verbrek, but overall, the wildlife of Borca isn't dangerous. Deer are common here, as are hares, and other smaller animals. The exception here comes in two forms: the bats of Mt. Gries (covered below), and monstrous insects. There are swarms of insects in the hills and forests of Borca, and many of them venomous. A wise traveler avoids any brightly colored or lurid insects while within Borca, as these are likely to be dangerous to both approach and eat.

Local Flora:

Borca is a vibrant land, dominated by hardwood trees, which lumberjack fell in the west. But what strikes a visitor are the many plants of all kinds that can be found here, ranging from beautiful flowers to healthy fruits and berries. However, appearances can be deceiving. Many of these plants, no matter how innocent or normal they appear at first, are often poisonous — Borcans know that plants, where the flesh of the plant is purple, should be avoided at all costs. The same goes for any water that has a purplish tint, as it is likely to be a carrier of poison from some plant or other. While the purple tint is not a guarantee of something being poisonous (and the absence of the color is not a guarantee of it being non-poisonous), it is a very good indicator. Borca is also home to many toadstools, and they are universally poisonous unless prepared in the correct manner. This process is incredibly rigorous and difficult, and only a master chef would ever attempt it. A popular method of poisoning someone in Borca is simply to bribe one of these chefs to serve the meal wrong

— in other domains, nobles might avoid such dishes, but in Borca it is considered proof of one's courage to eat one of these meals, and cowardice to decline. Of course, should someone be challenged by another, and then die of poisoning, it is considered bad form on behalf of the host, and they will inevitably be challenged to a duel. No one considers the chefs to be guilty of such a trick, as they are merely the tool used by a poisoner. There are two plants that stick out among the multitude of plants in Borca. The first is passionflesh. This plant resembles an eggplant but has deep purple and red striations in the skin and flesh. It is mildly toxic (though not lethal unless partaken of to extreme degrees), but it is somewhat addictive. It is an aphrodisiac that supposedly enhances the imbiber's pleasure tenfold. As such, many Borcans use the plant frequently and many are addicted, though they take care not to poison themselves (at least usually). The other plant is the caldura rose. It is a white, exquisitely delicate, rose with long thorns and pale pink blooms in the petals. To the Borcans, the flower is symbolic — a fresh caldura rose is the sign of marriage, while a cut one is a sign of adultery. The rose is not without its dangers either, as once cut, it supposedly drains the vitality of those nearby. However, when imbibed in certain teas and ointments, it reputedly helps drive out disease. While this is not definitely proven, Borcans believe this to be the case and use the flower freely as a result.

Native Horrors

Monsters (at least, those that aren't human) are few and far between in Borca, but due to the nature of the domain, a number of undead spirits linger. As so many Borcans die in agony or anger (from either poison or intrigue) their raw emotions hang thick over the land, giving birth to many incorporeal undead, such as ghosts and wraiths. Most Borcans dismiss these as tall tales until confronted with proof that they exist. At that point, the room turns quiet, many pray to their gods, and the next day they seem to have forgotten about it again, moving on to whatever other challenges they face.

Terrain type

Borca is somewhat hilly, with mountains on the eastern end that borders against the Shadow Rift. For the most part, it is forested (so much so that living in the western part of Borca is practically considered exile by Borcan nobles), with areas broken up for crops of various kinds. Almost everything grows well here, but not as abundantly as in neighboring Falkovnia. Care must also be taken by the farmers to ensure that their crops aren't poisonous when harvested. Summers tend to be pleasant, if slightly cool, and winters can become

Borca / Dorvinia

quite harsh, though the terrain prevents the worst of it. Borca has a number of geysers (often referred to as hellspouts by the Borcans) that can be found everywhere. Some are well-known and can be timed, while others are unpredictable. These geysers carry many minerals with them when they sprout, and some Borcans have built health spas near them. In other cities, they are used as a way of punishment. Those that cannot pay the fines that the law requires are put to death, and in places where they have geysers, this means being boiled alive by the scalding water.

Important Landmark

Degravo (Dilisniya's Mansion)

Degravo, the mansion of Ivan Dilisniya, sits right on the edge of Borca and has a balcony that overlooks the Shadow Rift. According to Ivan, it helps him focus his thoughts and relax — everyone else considers the man insane for taking such a risk with the fey. The estate sits north of Lechberg, and is surrounded by a thick wall. It is a place of untended gardens that are poisonous or black with rot. The sole exception to this is the kitchen and medicinal gardens. Beyond the black wrought-iron gates of Degravo, it is not possible to find beauty. In short, Degravo is a squat, ugly mansion, with squat ugly buildings surrounding it, far too square for any architect worth their salt and it resembles a mix of a prison more than a house. Inside, Degravo is a marvel of self-indulgent splendor. Ivan has his own private theatre, ballrooms, dining halls, chambers for displaying weapons, toys, and armor, and even opulent lounges thick with the smell of hallucinogens. Central to all of this is Ivan's "Laughing House", the central hall where he usually meets his guests. Those asked to dine should be wary, as Ivan has no taste buds at all, and since he cannot be poisoned, he often serves meals that others would never partake in. He has hired several excellent cooks, which means that on a lucky night you'll get delectables the like of which you'll find nowhere else. But if you're unlucky, you end there on a day where rotten rat is being served alongside offal. Ivan takes great offense if his meals are declined, and takes a savage joy in delighting and disgusting his guests.

Great Cathedral of the Church of Ezra

Located in Levkarest, the Great Cathedral of the Church of Ezra is one of the oldest monuments to the faith within the Mists. It is also one of the largest, able to host 500 seated members of the congregation, or 1000 when standing. The congregation is led by Praesidius Levin Postdye, the Sentire of Levkarest. Levin is one of the highest-ranking priests of Ezra anywhere,

and the leader of one of the sects. He is also utterly corrupt, taking bribes from both Ivan and Ivana, in return for stirring the populace up with his speeches to support whatever schemes they are cooking up, though he is careful to avoid engaging directly in anything that the other darklord could subsequently accuse him of. He is playing a dangerous game indeed, jumping between the two, but for the last few years, he has been doing so successfully and greatly enriched the church (and himself, his family, and his supporters) as a result. A new election for Praesidius is coming up, but everyone in the Levkarest clergy knows that this is just a ploy for Levin to root out his enemies within the priesthood — he has already bought the votes he needs from the high-ranking clergy.

House of Lament

The House of Lament lies in Blightwood. It has a dark reputation in Borca, for being a house where people disappear, though none are sure where exactly it lies or who built it. The House of Lament is covered elsewhere in this book, as it is a domain in its own right.

Misericordia

Rising from the noble's district in Levkarest, Misericordia (or "loving kindness" in Borcan) is the home of Ivana Boritsi, and is at least as opulent as the estate of her rival Ivan. It is far more refined than his estate, and while his mansion is surrounded by untended gardens, Ivana ensures that hers are perfectly kept. It is a single building but with soaring minarets and walkways high above the city streets. These have been nicknamed the "widow's walks" and Ivana supposedly haunted them whenever one of her husbands died. Most of the people of Levkarest believe it's just a matter of time before some hapless sod falls into her clutches and dies again, which has given rise to the estate's nickname "Misericordia" — the body of misery. Vaulted ceilings and polished marble floors dominate Misericordia, with heavy tapestries and soft carpets dominating the galleries where guests can sit in comfort in ornately carved furniture, most of it imported from outside of Borca — a subtle display of Ivana's wealth. Misericordia is thick with secret passages, most of which are for the servants to move about unobtrusively, but rumor has it that Ivana has even more tunnels of her own, for moving around the estate and stalking her guests. Supposedly her private suite can only be accessed through a series of these tunnels. Those who enter Misericordia had best watch their step and behave appropriately. Ivana tolerates fools — she does not tolerate boors. Those who misbehave in Misericordia might not survive the night.

Borca / Dorvinia

Mount Gries

Mount Gries sits on the border between Borca and Barovia. Even among the Balinok mountains, it stands out for its height of 4,800 feet, easily the tallest mountain in Borca — and one with a view of Barovia, Borca, and the Shadow Rift. The mountain is uninhabited for a reason: It is home to the Night Swarm, a vast bat swarm that can drain all the blood from a human in seconds. The swarm is only active at night, and those who have to travel the mountain seek shelter well before the sun goes down. Otherwise, the deafening drone of thousands of bat-wings may be the last thing that the unlucky traveler hears.

Royal Grove

The Royal Grove sits only a few miles from Degra-vo. It is the private hunting grounds of Ivan Dilisniya, and is filled with animals of all kinds. Many of these have been purpose-bred and released here, and Ivan takes particular delight in chasing down venomous animals, trusting in his immunity to poison to see him through. Obviously, Ivan uses poisons in these hunts, but he seeks only to scratch the target, and let them succumb to his latest concoction. That is because his other favorite prey is sentients. Few things give him more pleasure than hearing an intelligent creature screaming in death-throes, unable to understand how a small scratch could kill them.

Towns and villages:

Ilvi

Ilvin will never win any prizes for being pretty, as it is rather hideous. Especially Ghiare Keep in the center of town which is an eyesore with red brick and verdigris-stained copper roofing. It is a solid building designed for holding the Borcan militia should it be needed anywhere along the border with Falkovnia. The large town of 4,000 sometimes struggles to keep the soldiers in check due to their rambunctious nature and the general emotions of the Borcans. It is a trading post, and the center of Borca's leatherworking industry — this means that the stench of abattoirs and tanneries hangs thick over the town. The stench of blood and death during summer doesn't help either. Even the temple of Ezra in town, which otherwise is a pretty building, seems to be drowned out among the warehouse look to the town. That said, the priests here are a prideful lot, especially as the Praesidius once served here. The city is ruled by Baron Baldassarr Olszanik, who has made himself (and Ivan) rich from the meat and blood of animals. He is severely disliked, and he dislikes people in return. The man only loves his attack dogs, which he breeds and trains.

Lechberg

Lechberg is a small city of 5,500. It is built on a tor, requiring anyone who visits the city to navigate a series of winding stairs, reaching from the bottom of the valley and 800 feet up. Centuries ago, it was also home to a monastery dedicated to Andral, the sun god of Barovia, but the monastery is long gone and is now a weather-worn fortress dubbed the Golden Palace. It's used both by Lechberg's militia as well as Ivan on his infrequent visits. Lechberg is the home of the mining industry of Borca, but more importantly, it's the home of the currency mints and banking houses. It basically sustains itself by making money, but in the literal sense, and the not-so-literal sense. It's the home of corruption, if such a thing can be said, of Borca. Strangely, it is also the home of the performing arts. Thanks to Ivan's patronage (as he fancies himself a playwright and composer), it has a thriving theater community and is home to the famous Cezar Vercezzo and the Sommet Theater.

Levkarest

Levkarest is a major trading center, home to some 8,500 people. The small city is the capital of Borca, and it is a hustle and bustle where everything can be found at the right price. Trade is the keyword here, but so is culture, at least in the minds of the locals. The locals considered Levkarest the rival to Port-a-Lucine in Dementlieu — travelers would disagree strongly with this. But it is home to a surprising degree of sophistication, having an Academy of Style (a finishing school for young men and women who aspire to become "proper" aristocrats and members of society), as well as numerous art galleries and music halls. Ivana even frequents many of these, possibly even sponsoring them. She does this both formally and in disguise when she is looking for companionship. Levkarest is home to the Borcan government, which is housed in Marsav Hall. It is a true palace, sitting behind high walls on the northern edge of town. It also has room for Levkarest's militia. Conte Suolo Boritsi, a brother of Ivana (who at 63 looks more like her grandfather), rules both the city and the palace and serves as Ivana's closest advisor.

Sturben

Sturben sits near the Falkovninan border. It is a small town of 2,000 who have an almost fortress-like mentality, as it bears the scars of many invasions from Falkovnia, especially the one called the Widow's Massacre from 706. This is both mental, but also physical as the (well-manned and maintained) walls surrounding Sturben still bear witness to the power of Falkovnian siege weapons. Strangely, it has become something

Borca / Dorvinia

of a business hub since, as Falkovnian crops stream through its warehouses, making the merchants and guilds here rich. And of course, the government officials (read: thugs) ensure that taxes are paid. Sturben is also well known for its hot springs and bathroom, but more disturbing is the favored method of execution here. In the center of town is a marble fountain called the Wyrmsbreath. It depicts a two-headed dragon, whose mouths are open. In between the heads and mouths hangs an iron cage. The Wyrmsbreath sits atop a hell-spout of ferocious strength, and every three hours, the cage is bathed in scalding steam. Prisoners who have been sentenced to death are put into the cage and then told to wait for their end. The guards barely even have to clean up the mess afterward, as the steam comes out with such force that it washes itself clean.

Vor Ziyden

The small town of Vor Ziyden is home to 1,200 souls and is nestled near the forests of the west, along the river. It is mostly abandoned with a few old logging mills and lumber operations left to rot. By now, only one of the mills is still active. The city itself is undermined by a number of abandoned mineshafts, and occasionally someone digging a new cellar (or just cleaning their old one), will fall through the floor, through the rotting supports of the mines, and land in one of the tunnels. The city is now ruled by a consortium of three Borcan families who work on growing wine in the vineyards in the hills above town. Though Vor Ziyden is usually calm and quiet (especially so for a Borcan town), whenever trouble breaks out, the deputies (called Stapanes) of the three families are quick to blame each other, in an attempt to gain more control over the wine business.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Falkovnia
Invidia
Richemulot
The Shadow Rift
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

Makeup is incredibly popular among both men and women of Borca, and everyone looks to Ivana Boritsi for their clues as to what to wear next. Ironically, this enables her to hide her deadly nature and the signs there-of far more easily than would otherwise be possible. Furthermore, Borcans often use the "language of flowers". This is a process in which flowers are used to communicate between those who have agreed on a code, based on the traditional meanings of flowers —

the Borcan underworld has perfected this as a means of sending messages throughout their clandestine networks, and as a result, florists are very highly paid by criminals in Borca. As their activities are legal, the authorities turn the other cheek (or get bribed).

"She nourishes poison in her veins and is consumed by a secret fire."

~Virgil

Despite being in her sixties, Ivana looks like she is in her late teens. Her hair is long and as dark as ever and her eyes shine bright green. She has an infectious laugh and an irresistible smile. She dresses well and her clothing is always very carefully chosen to accentuate her natural beauty. Ivana's lips and fingernails are naturally dark blue, but she is adept at hiding them with makeup. When Ivana sleeps, her appearance becomes a nightmare. Her lips and hands turn dark blue, no matter how much makeup she uses. Her neck swells and the veins throb in her throat. She looks like one of the victims of her poison kiss.

Ivana is a gifted manipulator and has no morals. One of her greatest pleasures is inciting people to fight to the death for her affections or to defend her honor. The victor never lives longer than the vanquished.

Background: Ivana is a true child of Ravenloft. She was born five years after Borca joined the Core. Ivana never knew her father. Ivana's mother, Camille, had an affinity with poisons and a quick temper. Ivana tried to convince her daughter that all men were disposable pawns to be used and thrown away. Camille had a succession of powerful lovers and husbands that all met tragic ends while Camille grew in power and influence. Despite Camille's best efforts, Ivana believed that most men were decent. She had a strong desire to find love and live a quiet life. Eventually Ivana met a bard, Pieter. Pieter was a wonderful poet, and Ivana loved his wordplay almost as much as she loved him. Ivana believed she had found her happiness. Camille had other plans. She waited until Pieter was asleep and came to him. In the dark Pieter thought Camille was his beloved Ivana. After they made love Pieter and Camille lay together as Ivana found them. Camille convinced Ivana that Pieter had seduced her and that Camille would never betray her only daughter this way. Ivana turned and silently left the room.

Ivana Boritsi

Camille found an alchemist and had them brew a remarkable poison. The poison was harmless to her but lethal to anyone else. She waited until Pieter came to her, begging her for forgiveness and trying to explain what had happened. Ivana let him speak, then opened her arms. Pieter was the first victim of Ivana's poison kiss.

Camille was tremendously proud of her daughter. She would talk about Pieter's unfaithfulness for years after that night. All the while, Ivana's hatred of her mother grew. Finally Ivana could stand no more and poisoned her mother. Camille became the second victim of Ivana's poison kiss. The Dark Powers took notice and made Ivana's poison kiss permanent and made her the darklord of Borca.

Current Sketch: Ivana is bitter and regretful. Deep in her heart she knows she threw away her one chance at happiness years ago. She despises any man who tries to court her after she gains access to their land and titles. Ivana lives a luxurious lifestyle backed up by a small army of enforcers.

These enforcers run a variety of protection rackets, theft, and assassinations, but none would dare cross Ivana. Ivana has a special relationship with Ivan Dilisnya. They first met when they were children and they maintained a correspondence after each earned a domain. Ivana and Ivan would trade techniques on the best way to poison someone and brag about their vicious new concoctions.

two darklords sought each other out. They were together when the Dark Powers regained control and their domains joined together. Ivana had the dominant personality and their joined domains were called Borca. Once the two domain lords were almost friends. Now they each keep a manor as far from the other one as possible. They hate each other with a burning passion and regularly try to poison their rival. Neither darklord has created a poison strong enough to harm the other yet, but they are dedicated to figuring it out.

Darklord's Tactics: Ivana doesn't engage in combat, that's why she has minions. Ivana is very good at playing the lost innocent and is a shrewd judge of character, and uses this to her advantage when threatened. Despite not having any interest in physical combat, Ivana is an excellent tactician, the equal of any general. If she thinks her minions will lose she will start to cry out for help and beg the victorious party to save her. Once her thugs have been dispatched Ivana will move quickly to secure a leadership position among her saviours and start making new minions.

Borders: When Ivana wants to close the borders, every liquid in Borca becomes poisonous, even liquids brought in from other domains, created by magic, and the blood of living creatures. Crossing the border activates the poison. The poisoned creature feels feverish and is wracked with pain. They will die in less than a minute if they don't return to Borca. The poison is so virulent it will even affect creatures immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.



Ivana Boritsi



Ivana Boritsi

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather, bracers of armor, ring of protection)

Hit Points 126 (12d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +0, Dex +5, Con +7, Int +8, Wis +1, Cha +6

Skills Deception +13, Insight +4, Investigation +11, Perception +8, Persuasion +13, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Mordentish, Balok, Falkovnian, Luktar, Vaasi, Draconic

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Ivana can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Ivana can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ivana deals an extra 3d6 damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of her that isn't incapacitated and Ivana doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Steady Aim. As a bonus action, Ivana gives herself advantage on her next attack roll on the current turn. She can use this bonus action only if she hasn't moved during this turn, and after she uses the bonus action, her speed is 0 until the end of the current turn.

Schemer. Ivana can read the lips of a creature within 60 feet of her with a Wisdom (Perception) check. The DC for this check is 10, or contested by the creature's Dexterity (Stealth) check if it is on its guard. In addition, Ivana has advantage on ability checks to pass herself off as someone else.

Court Functionary. Ivana's knowledge of how bureaucracies function lets her gain access to the records and inner workings of any noble court or government she encounters. She knows who the movers and shakers are, whom to go to for the favors she seeks, and what the current intrigues of interest in a group are.

Style and Grace. Ivana receives a +4 competence bonus to Charisma-related skill checks made for social interactions (included).

The Eyes See the Heart. If anyone attempts to lie while in direct conversation with Ivana, she can immediately make an insight check as a free action to discern the lie. If the roll is higher than the liar's deception roll, Ivana knows of the lie.

Taunt and Rally. Ivana may take an action to Taunt and Rally. Allies within 30 feet of her are affected by a bless spell, and one opponent is affected by the bane spell. This is a mind-affecting ability and creatures who cannot hear Ivana are not affected. This effect lasts until the end of Ivana's next turn.

Detecting Poisons. Ivana can instantly detect any poison within 50ft of her. She knows if something (such as a drink or a weapon) is poisoned, what poison is used and the effects of the poison.

Deadly Perfume. Once per day Ivana can apply a perfume on her skin made out of vile neurotoxins. Any creature that comes within 5ft of her must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for one minute, ending the effect on a successful save rolled at the end of each of its turns. Any creature that succeeds is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The perfume dissipates after 1 minute.

Kiss of Death. The kiss of Ivana is far deadlier than any poison known to man. Ivana can kiss an incapacitated creature as an action or kiss a resisting creature with a successful grapple check. Any living creature that is kissed must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw or immediately suffer 3d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. The victim must continue to make a constitution save each minute following the kiss, suffering 3d6 points of temporary Constitution damage with each failure, until the victim dies or has the poison neutralized via a lesser restoration, lay on hands or similar spell/ability. Creatures that are immune to poison are immune to the kiss.

Actions

Poisoned Dagger +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Poisoned Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Significant Possessions.

Cloak of Charisma, Dagger +1, Ring of Protection, Bracers of Armor

Ivan Dilisnya

"I wither away to nothing while she basks in eternal splendor!

She has discovered the secret of eternal youth and beauty! I know it!

But does she share? No!

We are family. Friends!

I will have the secret. One day I will discover her weakness and then I will drain the blood from her veins and the marrow from her bones!

One day..."

~ Ivan Dilisnya

Despite his thin frame and five feet seven-inch stature, Ivan is a hard man to ignore. His hair is gray with but a few stubborn streaks of the blonde of his youthful years remaining. His eyes are bright blue, and his thin lips are usually drawn up in a quirky grin. Ivan is 68, but has the vitality of a man half his age. A true fop, Ivan fancies himself a great actor and master of the arts. When he is not clad in the finest of Borcan and Dorvinian fashions, he dons theatrical costumes ranging from that of a court jester to a paladin. Ivan has a soft, tenor voice with a high, rapid laugh, but at a moment's notice, both can change. His voice can become a low, velvety whisper or a dramatic boom. He enjoys changing his voice often since he believes it illustrates his theatrical talents. Ivan will gesture dramatically and rapidly pace back and forth to punctuate his words, giving the impression that he's less a man and more an animated marionette.

Background: Darkness has followed the Dilisnya family from 351 BC when they attended the wedding of Sergei von Zarovich, and his beloved Tatyana. A sudden illness forced the Dilisnya family to leave the celebration, sparing them from the following slaughter, yet didn't protect them from being drawn in by the mists and trapped in Ravenloft. When a distant cousin, Camille Dilisnya, was made the darklord of Borca, Ivan's parents and sister, Kristina, ignored her disdain for them and moved into the new domain. Five years later, both Camille and Ivan's mother bore children on the same night and dark moon. It was pure coincidence that Ivan and Camille's daughter, Ivana, had similar names, but the children shared a dark bond from an early age.

Ivan was enraged with the world and vented his frustration upon those unfortunate souls nearest to him.

From torturing animals at the tender age of six, poisoning his first victim at ten (a servant child who stole a pastry) to poisoning his own mother at the age of twelve. The only people who were immune to this treatment were his childhood playmate, Ivana Boritsi, and his sister whom he loved dearly. In return she doted on her "dearest little brother", blind to the evil that welled inside of him. Tragically that all came crashing down. His love turned to bitter jealousy when she was married and then became inchoate rage when she bore a child. Hurt, Ivan poisoned his sister and her husband (the lucky child was stolen away by a midwife). Now at the age of 21, his family discovered his foul deeds and chased him from town. With nowhere to go, Ivan fled into the mists where the domain of Dorvinia was created for him.

Despite the curses that were inflicted upon him by the Dark Powers, Ivan's corrupt rule of Dorvinia proved far from dull. From the poisoning of Vlad Drakov's troops when they tried to attack his domain, to his intriguing letters to Ivana over the finer techniques of poisoning, and finally, his marriage to Lucretia who later became a victim of uxoricide after faking the deaths of their three children. What really changed things for Ivan was the Grand Conjunction when earthquakes and general chaos allowed him to leave his realm and head straight to Ivana. Given Ivana's more dominant personality, she renamed the newly combined lands to Borca and took over the duties of state, while Ivan was given control over the new domain's police, military, and tax collection forces. But, like anything in the mists, it all went to hell...

Current Sketch: While Ivan's main curse is the loss of his beloved sense of taste (something he indulged in greatly), his other is his bitter fear of his own mortality. He sees Ivana's eternal youth and believes that she has found the secret to staying young forever. Ivana claims she doesn't know why she stopped aging, but Ivan knows she's lying. The two have become bitter enemies, with a hand on each other's throat and a desire to poison each other. The cousins try to poison each other constantly, but neither has found an effective toxin. Every night he wakes up in a cold sweat, screaming his sister's name.

When he's not running the police and tax collectors, Ivan holds dinner parties (to live vicariously through other's tastebuds) or supporting the arts in his own way by hiring theatre and opera tropes to come to his estate and making his own changes to the act mid-way through the production.

Ivan Dilisnya

He has recently written his first book called, "Jacoba and the Problems of Virtue" which shows the folly of a virtuous life in a world of darkness and intrigue. To put it lightly, it shocked and appalled both Ivana and the church of Ezra.

Even that has hit a snag with the mounting pressure between Borca and Invidia in the form of the new ruler, Malocchio Aderre, and his desire to eliminate the Vistani by sending troops and mercenaries over the border. Enraged over this, Ivan has used his traditional cloak and dagger tactics to handle this situation when his threats of cease and desist fell upon deaf ears. So far, he has assembled a squad of killers to take care of any Invidian forces that enter the domain.

Darklord's Tactics: Ivan's combat abilities are limited at best, but to him that's what minions are for. To make up for this, the Dark Powers granted him a deadly power. Three times a day, Ivan can turn a small non-magical object into poison dust via his touch. The poison must be ingested and he can create one of three types. The creature that ingests the poison must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If the creature fails, the effect varies based on the type of poison Ivan created. The deadly variety that kills the victim, the dangerous one that inflicts poison damage, or the malingering one which leaves the victim weak and bedridden for 1d4 days. Ivan Dilisnya commands fanatical loyalty among his inner circle of servants, guards and spies, chiefly through his use of an insidious poison known as Borrowed Time. This venom courses permanently through the veins of Ivan's key minions. Ivan poisoned these souls with Borrowed Time years ago, laying a sentence of death that only he can stay.

A creature poisoned with Borrowed Time will take 3d6 points of Constitution damage every day at sunset unless the victim ingests the antidote, Mercy, less than 10 minutes prior to sunset. There is no saving throw allowed to resist the poison, and it can only be temporarily stopped with Mercy. Ivan doles out Mercy to his favored servants each day just before sunset. Ivan is fickle however, and even the appearance of disloyalty can provoke Ivan to withhold Mercy at the last moment. A dose of Borrowed Time must be ingested each day for seven consecutive days for it to begin taking effect; thus, it is somewhat impractical for Ivan to inflict the poison on anyone but his own servants.

Borders: Ivan cannot close the borders to Borca. When he closes the borders to Dorvinia, any creature foolish enough to cross the border has all the liquid in their body turned into virulent poison. If the creature

moves away from Dorvinia for thirty seconds, they are wracked with pain and their movement is reduced by half. If they continue to move away for more than a minute, they will die. This poison ignores immunity and resistance.



Ivan Dilisnya

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather, bracers of armor, ring of protection)

Hit Points 105 (10d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +0, Dex +5, Con, +7, Int +9, Wis +3, Cha +2

Skills Deception +9, Insight +6, Medicine +10, Nature +8, Perception +6, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities paralyzed, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Mordentish, Balok, Falkovnian, Luktar, Vaasi, Darkonese, Halfling, Draconic, Tepestani

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Ivan can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Ivan Dilisnya

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Ivan can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ivan deals an extra 3d6 damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and Ivan doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Piercer. Once per turn, when Ivan hits a creature with an attack that deals piercing damage, he can re-roll one of the attack's damage dice, and he must use the new roll. When he scores a critical hit that deals piercing damage to a creature, he can roll one additional damage die when determining the extra piercing damage the target takes.

Immune to Disease. Ivan is immune to all types of disease

Envenom. As an action, Ivan can touch an object weighing up to 50 pounds to render it permanently poisonous. This is a contact poison that can never be removed from the object; the poison infuses the object's very essence. Creatures that touch the object must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d6 initial temporary ability damage and 2d6 secondary temporary ability damage. Ivan can decide at the time that he poisons the object whether the poison will inflict Strength, Dexterity or Constitution damage. The damaged ability can be restored by 1 with a greater restoration spell, or by 1 point each passing week. The secondary damage happens the next time the creature ends a long or short rest and can be avoided if lesser restoration or lay on hands or similar spell/ability is casted on the poisoned target

Deadly Alchemy. Ivan can use an Alchemist Kit to make nearly any poison listed in the Dungeon Master's Guide. The DC is 10 + the poison's market price in gold pieces divided by 100 (round up). Ivan must still pay one third of the poison's market price and spend the appropriate amount of time on the process.

Turn to Poison. Three times a day, Ivan can turn a small non-magical object into poison dust via touch. The poison must be ingested and he can choose how powerful the poison is: a "deadly" one that kills the victim if they fail a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, a "dangerous" one that inflicts 4d6 poison damage on a failed roll or half on a successful one or a "malingering" one which, on a failed saving throw leaves the victim weak and bedridden for 1d4 days within 1 hour after it was ingested.

Undetectable Poison. Ivan's poisons are undetectable to the non-initiated. Creatures that are not versed in the poison making techniques cannot detect his poisons with non-magical ways.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Ivan can utter a special command or warning whenever a non hostile creature that he can see within 30 ft. of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Ivan. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Ivan is incapacitated.

Actions

Poisoned Rapier +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Poisoned Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Indirect Intoxication. As an action, Ivan can toss one of his vials of poison to a surface he can see within 20ft. The vial is destroyed, and it spreads a cloud of poisonous gas. Any creature within 10ft of the point of impact is subjected to the poison.



Lady Camille Dilisnya

"Did you really think you could have a dalliance with MY husband and I wouldn't know?"

Don't cry, it won't do you any good and it ruins your makeup. You can't move anyway so you might as well accept what's about to happen.

Now to business.

Do you see this fire poker? I'll assume you can.

Now, first we're going to trim a little off the nose, then get rid of your lying tongue.

Finally, I'll take your eyes.

And I don't want you to worry, I have it on good authority that you will feel everything that is about to happen to you until the Grim Reaper takes you.

I know you were concerned..."

~Lady Camille Dilisnya

Lady Camille Dilisnya is a human female in her late forties, but appears to be about a decade younger. She is beautiful, with long dark hair, a slender waist, full lips and pale skin. Unlike other darklords, Lady Dilisnya ages normally in Ravenloft, but is adept with makeup and can appear to be in her late twenties if she is careful.

Camille is outgoing and friendly in public, but cold and vindictive in private. She remembers every slight, real or imagined, against her and burns for revenge. Often the targets of her rage have no idea she is angry with them until their throat starts to close.

Background: Camille Dilisnya was born in Mordent in 662 BC. She was the heir to the vast and powerful Dilisnya family that de facto ruled large portions of Mordent.

Camille was beautiful, with long, dark hair, full lips and a small waist. Between her beauty and her fortune, by the time she had reached fifteen, dozens of suitors wanted her hand. Her father chose Siegfried Grymig and in 681 BC the couple were married. Siegfried was not handsome, but was a Barovian boyar with an ancient family that dominated the wool trade in southern Barovia. He was wealthy beyond measure and the children of Siegfried and Camille would inherit vast polit-

ical influence and wealth. Camille was happy enough for three years until she discovered her husband was indulging in one of the oldest of boyar customs, he was having an affair. His lover was Maria Diazzi, a servant girl that worked in the manor. Incensed beyond measure, Camille seduced the local alchemist and convinced him to give her the most painful poison he could make. What he gave her was a draught called the Wasting. The victim would be locked inside their own body, unable to move but their nerves would be on fire as the poison slowly dissolved their nervous system. Through the magic of the poison, the creature would remain conscious until death took them.

Camille gleefully took the poison and tested it on the foolish but helpful alchemist. Satisfied with the results, Camille returned to her manor and prepared a special dinner. She insisted Maria join her and her husband at dinner. The young girl and Siegfried were definitely nervous, but Camille insisted. She had lived in the manor for three years and knew nothing of the servants that lived there. She was going to have dinner with one servant every week until she knew them all. As the first course was served, Siegfried and Maria ate in silence while Camille talked of her day.



After a few bites the poison had taken effect. With Maria and Siegfried defenseless, Camille unceremoniously dumped them on the ground. She took a poker from the fireplace and held it over Maria. She taunted the young woman while searing her flesh with the poker. By the time the poor servant girl died, her eyes, nose, and tongue had been burned to ashes. Camille blamed the murders on the alchemist. She concocted an elaborate story about the alchemist falling in love with her and trying to poison Siegfried and Camille while taking the poison himself. The poor servant girl had taken the poison by accident and fallen into the fire. The local authorities did not wish to dispute the word of Lady Dilisnya, and the murders became an open secret in Mordent. Siegfried's family was a completely different

Lady Camille Dilisnya

issue. They swore revenge for his death. After a few close calls the Dilisnya's sent Camille to live with distant relations in Invidia. As she crossed into the misty borders between domains, she was given Borca. Since becoming the darklord of Borca, Lady Dilisnya has been granted the ability to craft any poison she can imagine. The ingredients and preparation process forms in her mind as she thinks about the effect she wants the poison to have. She can even create supernatural poisons, although she has no arcane knowledge herself.

The Lady Dilisnya was also cursed that any man she ever loved would betray her. She married three more times, and all of her husbands betrayed her for another woman or man. Despite being married four times Camille has only had one child, a daughter Ivana.

When Ivana was seventeen she was engaged to Pieter, a poet and songwriter of no small talent. After a few months of courting, Pieter and Ivana managed to find one of the rarest commodities in Ravenloft, love. Camille was enraged at the thought and swore Ivana would never have something she could not. The darklord dressed as her daughter and went to her lover in the dead of night. She seduced Pieter and made sure they were discovered by Ivana.

Ivana turned her back on Pieter and demanded he leave the manor they shared with her mother. Camille smiled as the young man left. With a little prodding, Ivana poisoned him a week later. Ivana was furious with her mother, but Camille knew she had actually performed a favor for her daughter. She had shown Ivana the true nature of men.

Current Sketch: Lady Dilisnya believes she is in an excellent place. Her daughter has seemingly turned away from men. Ivana has ruled by Camille's side for nearly two years since the death of Pieter. Ivana was angry with Camille for a time, but has recently come around and has started to treat her mother with the respect she deserves. Poison is still the darklord's preferred weapon, but she must be careful. Lady Dilisnya can create any vile concoction she wishes but is not immune to poison.

Darklord's Tactics: Lady Dilisnya has no interest in open combat. Her weapons are the whispered secret, the vial of poison, and a dagger in a mercenary's hand. Camille rarely even carries a dagger. She maintains a vast network of spies and informants, and learns of threats long before they reach her. Her bodyguards carry weapons coated in the nastiest poison Camille can imagine, and she has a very active imagination.

Borders: When Camille closes the borders of Borca, the domain is encircled by a vaporous cloud of poison. Any creature that crosses the border takes one level of exhaustion. For every minute the creature continues to move away from Borca they gain one level of exhaustion. The creature cannot remove these levels of exhaustion until they return to Borca.



Lady Camille Dilisnya



Lady Camille Dilisnya

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Deception +9, Insight +3, Medicine +3, Persuasion +9

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Mordentish, Balok, Falkovnian, Luktar, Vaasi, Darkonese, Halfling, Draconic, Tepestani

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Deadly Poisons. Camille was blessed with the ability to craft any poison imaginable. Camille can use an Alchemist Kit to make any poison listed in the Dungeon Master's Guide or other official materials. The DC is 10 + the poison's market price in gold pieces divided by 100 (round up). Camille must still pay one third of the poison's market price and spend the appropriate amount of time on the process.

Trust Kills. Camille was cursed by the Dark Powers. Anyone who she trusted completely will betray her. There is a 25% chance that any of the minions or allies that she trusts, betray her in any given situation, social or combat.

Undetectable Poisons. All the poisons that Camille crafts are undetectable via non-magical means.

Actor. Skilled at mimicry and dramatics, Camille has advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks when trying to pass herself off as a different person. In addition, she can mimic the speech of another person or the sounds made by other creatures. She must have heard the person speaking, or heard the creature make the sound, for at least 1 minute. A successful Wisdom (Insight) check contested by her Charisma (Deception) check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.

Poisoner. Camille can prepare and deliver deadly poisons, granting her the following benefits:

- When she makes a damage roll that deals poison damage, it ignores resistance to poison damage.
- She can apply poison to a weapon or piece of ammunition as a bonus action, instead of an action.
- Camille can, with one hour of work using a poisoner's kit and expending 50 gp worth of materials, create 2 doses of potent poison. Once applied to a weapon or piece of ammunition, the poison retains its potency for 1 minute or until the weapon or ammunition strikes a target. When a creature takes damage from the coated weapon or ammunition, that creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 2d8 poison damage and become poisoned until the end of Camille's next turn.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Poisoned Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. Camille adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Camille must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Daglan



Daglan



Daglan was named after its second darklord, Daglan Daegon, though it can be argued that he was in fact the first, and that Radaga was merely a caretaker — a vessel — for his ultimate return and rise to the status of darklord. Daglan as such was formed from their shared lust for power, a domain where ancient undead lurked, controlled by the two masters, one a priestess of the undead, the other a powerful necromancer, but both with powers well beyond those given to others of their kind. Though small (less than 50 miles across in any direction), Daglan had several thriving farming communities, though none of them ever exceeded 500 (with Homlock being both the largest and oldest), and the populace was fairly rustic, with some odd and unfortunate habits. The people themselves were reclusive and reserved. Their style of clothing reflected this, with everyone wearing loose-fitting robes that obscured the person's features. This was the perfect cover for Radaga's and Daglan's minions, as the undead that they both controlled, and sometimes even the goblins that Radaga created, were able to move about without being noticed. These undead creatures rarely caused trouble as they were tasked to keep the peace and ensure that any troublemakers disappeared. Of course, with Daglan originally confined to the artifact known as the Crown of Souls — a prison that could contain even this power-crazed necromancer. It required something spectacular to free him, which happened when a group of brave heroes defeated Radaga. He took her body for his own and came back to life. Shortly thereafter, they put him to death permanently. Adventures in Daglan should focus on the cost that comes with wanting power. Perhaps the heroes meet one of the goblins that Radaga has transformed when the (formerly human) unfortunate soul rejected her advances. Perhaps they run into a group of the undead who are in the act of silencing troublemakers. Perhaps the heroes even are the troublemakers themselves. Or maybe they know the Crown of Souls from ancient myths from their own homeland, about a powerful wizard, who was betrayed by his king, and whose soul transcended into a mighty artifact that tried to control all who wore it.

*"The measure of a man is what he does with power."
~ Plato*



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hills, and grasslands
Year Formed:	736 BC
Population:	4,000
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Other 2% (not including goblins)
Languages:	Balok, Common, Daglander, Old Kartakan
Religions:	Ezra, Hala
Government:	Individually governed settlements
Ruler(s):	Radaga/Daglan Daegon
Darklord(s):	Radaga/Daglan Daegon
Nationality:	Daglander
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

Daglan was a domesticated domain, where herd animals, such as sheep and cows were kept by the locals, even though the numbers of animals were always low in Daglan. A few wolves had made it across the border from Kartakass, but overall there were the only animals that the inhabitants kept. There was one exception, as out in the grasslands, several prides of lions roamed. The locals avoided them entirely, often abandoning fields to the predators, as they were far too dangerous to deal with. Occasionally, the lions would run into an undead pack, a bloodbath usually ensued. Normally the undead came out on top in those confrontations, but there was one pride where the alpha male seemed particularly strong and aggressive (and large, by all accounts, at least nine feet to the shoulder) and he destroyed all the undead packs. Anyone who entered his territory did so at their own risk.

Daglan

Local Flora:

Daglan was mostly grassland interrupted only by a few fields of crops. These crops were normally wheat and vegetables, but the main agricultural product in Daglan came from the grasslands themselves in the form of Ghee Grass. Ghee Grass looks like wheat and grew between one and six feet in height (though the average was only around two), and it was edible. Not only that, but it also fed the few domesticated animals that the Daglanders held. Apart from being plentiful and edible, it was also a hard type of grass that, when dried correctly, was strong enough to be used for building small houses, as well as baskets, rugs, and furniture. Some visitors even commented that this made most of Daglan's settlements look like farmer's markets in other places, with hay bales for children to play on.

Native Horrors

By its very nature, Daglan is overrun with undead. These undead are generally corporeal (like zombies and ghouls) and hide their natures underneath the same loose-fitting clothing that the populace uses. As a result, they're hard to track and destroy. They are also kept on a tight leash by their darklord, and rarely prey on the populace except to sustain themselves. Their role is mostly as protector and peacekeeper — and since troublemakers tend to disappear by their hands in Daglan, there is no constabulary.

Terrain type

Daglan was temperate in climate, and the low rolling hills and grasslands provided little cover against the strong winds that sometimes blew across it. Daglan only ever had small wooded areas, and even these were only lightly forested, with none of them being more than a mile across. This was presumably what led the locals to use Ghee Grass as their main staple of building material, though they still needed timber for support and larger buildings.

Important Landmarks

Daglan's Tower

Daglan's Tower, the Tower of Magic, was a 200-foot tall tower (once the building process was complete) that was in the process of moving into the Mists, from the distant past and planes where it had been sent. While the tower hadn't fully materialized yet, as it was building itself brick by brick, it was surrounded by a ring of gigantic rib bones, that rose thirteen feet into the air (and possibly dropped even further down into the ground), and which were four feet wide and a foot and a half thick. These enormous ribs were from some unknown creature but looked mostly humanoid in nature, so were perhaps the bones from an unknown and an-

cient race of giants. Within the ring of bones the tower was to materialize, but as the domain was only short-lived it never fully arrived. Had it arrived, Daglan would have had access to his full suite of spells and powers, and become a powerful darklord within the southern part of the Core.

Homlock Church

The church of Homlock was slightly run-down, but generally well-maintained and the local priest held regular services here. The people of Homlock were not a religious or superstitious lot as such (apart from their peculiar robe custom), but they usually attended church. The church itself was considered sacred to both Ezra and Hala, though this was before the arrival of Radaga. After Radaga arrived, the church felt subtly different, exuding a sense of dread and evil, and it was surrounded by a ring of zombies, pretending to be locals that were trying to get in. In reality, they were there to attend to troublemakers, as Radaga or her more intelligent minions (the goblins) saw fit. Had the domain survived for longer, it is likely that Radaga would have converted the church to her own despicable beliefs.

Towns and villages:

Homlock

Homlock (or Homloch as it was sometimes referred to) was a village of 500, and the seat of power for both Radaga and Daglan Daegon, though it was never officially referred to as the capital of the domain. Homlock is an unassuming place with not much to speak of in the way of establishments. It has an unnamed inn and tavern, as well as a relatively busy marketplace where locals from across Daglan came to trade. Usually, these were crafted goods, rather than raw crops — after all, what is the point, when everyone has Ghee Grass, and since it grows wild in the domain too?

Neighboring domain(s):

Bluetspurt (before the Grand Conjunction)
Kartakass
Sithicus

Fun Fact:

Daglan only existed in its position between Bluetspur, Kartakass, and Sithicus for a few days before the darklord was defeated and returned the land to the mists. A few travelers in the mists, as well as more than a few Vistani, claim that the domain still exists, but is now afloat in the mists, like an island. Who rules the domain now is unknown, but it seems likely that either Radaga or Daglan has come back to life once more, following the initial defeats.

Daglan Daegon

"I have watched an empire grow from nothing.

I have wove the spells that turned the honored dead into nightmares. I have escaped the impossible trap.

*I will break free of my prison, and I will make the powers that control this prison plane pay.
~ Daglan"*

Daglan is currently a spirit trapped in the crown of souls, a powerful artifact that saved his life and served as his prison for centuries. Daglan can only escape by possessing the dead body of one of his descendants. Radaga, the current dark lord of the domain Daglan, is the last of his line and his final hope for escape.

Background: In life, Daglan was a small man with a twisted spine but a brilliant mind. He served a powerful warlord that had risen from nothing to make an empire with his keen tactical mind and shocking brutality. Daglan had joined the warlord early and was instrumental in the warlord's rise to power.

Once the warlord's banner was decorated with the skulls of a dozen kings, he ordered Daglan to create a crown for him. Daglan agreed and retired to his Tower of Magic to work. While he worked Daglan used his magic to spy on the warlord and his inner counsel. What he heard made him rage. The warlord had decided Daglan had become too powerful and must be slain.

Daglan laid his plans very carefully. He cast a variant of *magic jar* on one of the gems in the crown and presented the *crown of souls* to the warlord. Much to Daglan's surprise, the warlord rewarded him with gold and praise and Daglan was allowed to leave.

Daglan soon understood why. His undead minions were needed for an upcoming campaign against the elves of the forest that bordered the warlord's new empire. As the campaign ended, Daglan saw the trap. He was isolated from his disciples during the final battle, surrounded by the warlord and his retinue of fanatical bodyguards. As the final elf fell, Daglan felt the spear point slam into his back. As he fell from his horse, his soul was transferred to one of the gems in the warlord's crown.

As the warlord wound his way out of the devastated forest, he was ambushed by some of the last surviving elves. The skirmish was brief but the Crown of Souls was lost, knocked from the warlord's head by a stray arrow and rolling into mists that had started to surround

the battlefield. In the confusion the crown was found by one of the surviving elves as they fled the battlefield. The elf placed the crown upon his head and his soul was drawn into the crown. The elf's soul and Daglan have fought for supremacy inside the crown ever since. Daglan is stronger but the elf weakens Daglan to the point that he cannot possess anybody that wears the crown. Daglan can only possess dead bodies killed within 30 feet of the crown. As the years crept on, Daglan discovered that every time one of his descendants died, Daglan was able to feed on their soul and grow stronger. Eventually the crown was pulled into Ravenloft along with one of his last descendants, the father of Radaga.

Current Sketch: Daglan waits inside the crown. He believes it is only a matter of time before Radaga dies and he can possess her body. Fighting against the elven soul in the crown weakens him, but Daglan is the stronger soul, and once he feasts upon the soul of Radaga he will have more than enough power to escape. Unfortunately for Daglan, the Dark Powers will reanimate Radaga as a wight if she is slain.

Once out of the crown, Daglan will attempt to escape Ravenloft or assault the Dark Powers directly. Little does he know how foolish his ideas are, and Dark Powers look forward to educating him.

Darklord's Tactics: While inside the Crown of Souls Daglan cannot engage in combat. Once free of the crown, Daglan is a powerful spellcaster. He creates undead in swarms and hurls them at his enemies, then casts his most powerful spells. If he annihilates his minions, he doesn't care as long as his enemies die as well. Daglan has created a number of powerful magical items and always has a few on him for emergencies. He prefers spells and effects that drain life forces and tear apart the souls of his enemies.

Borders: As long as Radaga exists, Daglan cannot close the borders to his domain. If Radaga is destroyed then Daglan can seal the domain with a wall of wailing, grasping souls. Any creature foolish enough to touch the wall must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that succeed are teleported 1 mile into the domain. Creatures that fail are incapacitated for 1 minute. If the creature rolls a natural 1 on the saving throw they are slain.

Daglan Daegon



Daglan Daegon

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 10 (13 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +12, Deception +4, History +12, Investigation +8

Damage Resistances damage from spells; non magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stonewood)

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Balok, Common, Daglander, Old Kartakan, Elvish

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Magic Resistance. The archmage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Daglan is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch**, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*, *toll the dead**

1st level (4 slots): *cause fear**, *false life**, *mage armor**, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead**, *bestow curse**, *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *blight**, *fire shield*, *stonewood**

5th level (3 slots): *dance macabre**, *enervation**, *scrying*, *wall of force*

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death**, *create undead**, *eyebite**, *magic jar**

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

* Daglan casts these spells on himself before combat.

* Necromancy spells.

War Caster. Daglan has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from Daglan, he can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Daglan finishes a short rest, he can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 7, and none of the slots can be 6th-level or higher.

Grim Harvest. Daglan reaps life energy from creatures he kills with his spells. Once per turn when he kills one or more creatures with a spell of 1st-level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times its level if the spell belongs to the School of Necromancy. Daglan does not gain this benefit for killing constructs or undead.

Undead Thralls. When Daglan casts *animate dead*, he can target one additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another zombie or skeleton, as appropriate. Whenever he creates an undead creature using a necromancy spell, it has additional benefits:

The creature's hit point maximum is increased by 20.

The creature adds 5 to its weapon damage rolls.

Command Undead. Daglan can use magic to bring undead under his control, even those created by other wizards. As an action, he chooses one undead that he can see within 60 ft of him and that is intelligent or controlled by another spellcaster. The target must make a DC16 Charisma saving throw. If it succeeds, Daglan can't use this feature on it again for the next 24 hours. If it fails, it becomes friendly to Daglan and obeys his commands until he uses this action again. All other non-intelligent undead that are found on his domain, are friendly to him and obey his commands. Intelligent undead are harder to control in this way. If the target has an Intelligence of 8 or higher, it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails the saving throw and has an Intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of every hour until it succeeds and breaks free.

Rejuvenation. Daglan has placed his soul within the Crown of Souls. If he is slain and the crown is not destroyed, Daglan gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all his hit points and becomes active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the crown.

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Radaga

"I did not endure countless years in this mystic prison to be thwarted by a girl who doesn't even know what she carries. My line has fallen far.

I will fix things, though. I will return and when I do the planes will tremble at my tread."

~ Daglan

In human form, Radaga is breathtakingly beautiful, flawless skin and bright green eyes and flame-crimson hair. Her mouth is set in a permanent lop-sided grin that gives the impression she is always one step ahead of those she talks to. Radaga dresses well, but not ostentatiously. Her outward appearance is very carefully calculated to enhance her beauty. Radaga enjoys being the center of attention, but there is far more to her than her looks. Some people become infatuated with her, willingly becoming her willing pawns. Others assume Radaga is nothing but a pretty face. It often proves to be the last mistake they make.

Background: Radaga was born in Kartakass, sometime after the domain was pulled into Ravenloft. As she grew up, she knew nothing about her parents; her mother died during childbirth and her father disappeared just a day after her birth. As an abandoned child, she was sent to a monastery, to be raised in the faith of the sisters there. The monastery was one of a handful that were dedicated to the Raven Queen on the Core. It sat over an extensive set of catacombs, and was one of the few areas in Ravenloft free from the scourge of the undead. Radaga grew into a beautiful, yet isolated woman. Male visitors to the monastery always fawned over her and she soon considered them little more than expendable tools that could be used and discarded. As time passed, Radaga became increasingly concerned that one day her looks would fade. Whenever she looked in a mirror, she could see a million small flaws reflected back at her. She never understood how others couldn't see them. Her sisters at the monastery always commented on her beauty, but Radaga knew they were lying. As time passed, she knew they were mocking her. She could see the flaws in her beauty, and her sisters clearly had to see them. There was no way they could miss them. One day, as she spoke the endless prayers of her order, Radaga had a vision. A woman lying on a stone slab, a dagger above her heart. The dagger was brought down. The woman on the stone slab screamed as she aged a century or more in seconds. The vision expanded. Radaga saw the back of the woman with the dagger. When she turned around Radaga saw herself. She was perfect. Absolutely flawless. Radaga became obsessed with the stone table and the dagger. She tried

to remember every detail of the table, the dagger, the room, anything. It haunted her dreams and her waking hours. Radaga took to wandering aimlessly through the halls of her monastery, often finding herself deep in the catacombs. Deep, deep in the catacombs, she finally found the table, and it was there that her descent into madness truly began. Radaga began to lure her sisters into the catacombs, often under the pretense of praying in a small chapel she had discovered. Once in the catacombs, Radaga would disable her victims with her spells and sacrifice them to her vanity on the altar. Her perceived flaws vanished, although new ones always appeared. It was only a matter of time before she was discovered. Radaga fled the monastery mere minutes before her vengeful sisters gave chase. Radaga fled to the mists, and, with that, the domain of Daglan was born. As the domain formed around her, Radaga found a crown, inlaid with precious jewels and made of the purest gold. The crown called to her, but Radaga did not know why.

Current Sketch: The Dark Powers only intend Radaga to rule Daglan for a short time. She is a placeholder for her ancestor, Daglan, who is still trapped in the Crown of Souls. If she is slain before Daglan can be freed from the crown, and if her death doesn't give Daglan the power to shatter his prison and return to life, then the Dark Powers will resurrect her as a wight. Her wight form will be as hideous as her human form is beautiful. She will still maintain all of her clerical abilities but will be formidable in hand to hand combat as well. Wight Radaga will hit harder than an average wight and her touch will drain some of the life force of her victim. She will be immune to nonmagical weapons, and immune to turning attempts from enemy clerics. Radaga can transform humans in her domain into goblins, giving her an army of the corrupted monstrosities at her beck and call. She can also create and control a variety of undead. Radaga is rarely alone, and one of her favorite tactics in battle is to summon more minions or corrupt nearby innocents and throw them into the fray. She still obsesses over her beauty, although she is easily the most beautiful woman in the domain. She sees flaws all over her body and face. Anyone that compliments her looks is sure to draw her hatred.

Darklord's Tactics: In her human form, Radaga sends her minions into melee combat and uses her spells to support them. She chooses her spells carefully and will avoid hurting her minions if possible. She will gladly sacrifice her minions if she is threatened however. Radaga never carries a weapon, considering her minions her greatest weapon.

Radaga

Borders: When the borders of Daglan are closed, a ring of goblins, hordes of the vicious beasts, ring the domain. Any creature foolish enough to approach the border is swarmed and devoured by the horde.



Radaga

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Medicine +11, Persuasion -1, Religion +8

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elvish, Infernal

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Radaga's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *cause fear*, *charm person*, *command*, *inflict wounds*, *sanctuary*

3/Day each: *animate dead*, *blindness/deafness*, *cure wounds*, *hold person*

1/Day each: *insect plague*, *protection from evil or good*

Withdrawal (2/Day). Radaga can bend time around herself so that time is slowed down for everyone except herself. For 1d3 rounds Radaga cannot move from the spot where this ability is activated, nor interact with others, nor perform any actions other than to ponder her next move, solve a problem, cast a divination spell, or cast a heal or cure, or a protective spell on herself. Attempting to do otherwise cancels this ability.

Withering Strike (3/Day). Radaga can expend 1 charge to deal an extra 2d10 necrotic damage to a target she strikes with her walking stick. In addition, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage for 1 hour on any ability check or saving throw that uses Strength or Constitution.

Integrated Glyphs. Radaga has a *glyph of warding* cast upon her person that will cause 7d4 lightning damage to the first creature that targets her with a melee weapon attack. Another glyph is set upon the top of her walking stick. This glyph will release a *feign death* spell at anyone who grabs for or is struck by it. The target does not need to be willing. Radaga will use this glyph on herself if a situation seems hopeless. After the glyphs are used once, they reset after a long rest.

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

Actions

Multiaction. Radaga makes two attacks with her walking stick.

Walking Stick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under Radaga's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. Radaga can have no more than twelve zombies under her control at one time using this ability.

Significant Possessions

Staff of Withering, *Wand of Web*

Forlorn



Forlorn



Forlorn truly is what its name says. Forlorn, and devoid of all hope. The crimes of Tristen were so numerous, and the ways in which he killed those who mattered to him were so vile that the land itself seemed to abandon all hope. And on the eve of his success, with the total conquest of the realm of Forfarmax and the execution of his archenemy, the paladin Andrew ApFittle, Forfarmax was dragged into the Mists and became Forlorn. The druids felt the land twisting and turning around them, and the human populace twisting into the goblins that now inhabit the land. And they knew the land was lost. The people left, with only a few druids staying behind to protect their sacred groves.

Now, Tristen directs his goblins to destroy and decimate the land, believing that only the complete severance of the Forfarian's druids connection to nature will free him from the Mists. Despite war having been waged in this manner for centuries, nature fights back. Strange accidents, freak weather, and carnivorous plants harass the goblins as they follow Tristen's commands.

Adventures in Forlorn should focus on this sense of desolation. The heroes should see landscapes destroyed by goblin industry, with foundries churning out the simple weapons and tools used to wage war on nature. And they should see the druids' desperate fight to keep the goblins and monsters at bay. And this is what adventures should focus on, the continuous fight between the druids on the one side and Tristen's quest to destroy what's anchoring him on the other. Fighting him directly is unlikely unless the heroes come within 300 feet of the central oak at Castle Tristennoira. Perhaps they're hired by the mayor of the hamlet of Forfarmax to clear out the ghosts at Castle Forfarmax or they've been tasked by the druids to help them in the fight against the goblins. Perhaps they're sent here to attempt to stop Azenwrath at the Black Grove. The slash and burn tactics of the goblins might even bring them into conflict with Azenwrath and the heroes will have to choose which side to help — which is the lesser evil?

"The fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone."

~ Mary Shelley, Frankenstein



Culture Level:	Iron Age (among the druids and goblins, the ruins in Forlorn are Medieval)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, and plains
Year Formed:	547 BC
Population:	2,000 (known)
Races (%):	Goblins 94%, Humans 6%
Languages:	Forfarian
Religions:	Druidism
Government:	Anarchy
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Tristen ApBlanc
Nationality:	Forfarian
Analog:	Celtic myths and legend

Local Fauna:

Because of the desecration of the local forests, animal life is slowly dying out in Forlorn. That said, there are still animals left though they are increasingly rare. Bears, weasels, deer, and boar were once prolific in Forlorn, but are mostly gone. Wolves are a different matter, as they are omnipresent here, and every bit as large and ravenous as any found in Barovia. Some have demonic blood in their veins and can be found helping the goblins in their quest to destroy Forlorn. Insects, spiders, centipedes and the like can be found on the outskirts of the remaining forests where they crawl in the hundreds, if not thousands across the rotting boughs of trees cut down and left to fester by the goblins.

And then there are the gremishka. Where most humans were transformed into the monstrous goblins, most animals were turned into gremishka. Gremishka resemble cats or dogs crossed with monkeys and rats,

Forlorn

and they have a hint of reptilian features about them, mainly in their eyes. A horrid abomination of life, they hide in the shadows EVERYWHERE within Forlorn. They're not a threat on their own and are easily cowed by fire, even in great numbers. But there are hordes of them, and they can overwhelm adventurers who aren't careful to protect their camp perimeters with fire. They aren't really monsters though, as they act as natural creatures would.

Local Flora:

Forlorn was once covered in dense forests consisting of mixed evergreens and bunches of hardwoods such as oak, fir, pine, and beech. Now though, much has been cleared away by the goblins, and thistle, heather, and bracken have taken their place in the open areas. In many of the goblins' underground caves, many varieties of mushrooms and fungus are found.

Plant life is much lessened in Forlorn, but Forlorn really truly shines when it comes to poisonous herbs, with many herbs unique to the domain. Only the druids know how to safely harvest most of these (or at least ensure that they retain their powers when harvested), and there are more than 20 different types of herbs such as Goblin lime, a deeply poisonous fruit that looks and tastes like a normal lime, Lung-eater puff-ball, which fills your lungs with fungus over a few days, slowly making it impossible for you to breath, before finally choking you. While most of them are deadly or painful in the extreme, some few grant the ability to see into the ethereal such as Ghost threads that appear like a spider's web, spread across the ground.

This wealth makes Forlorn incredibly important to many of the druids of the Core, and many of them have Forfarian blood running through their veins.

Native Horrors

The main "monster" of Forlorn is the goblins. They were created by the Solleyder (or bogeyman) when the Year of Woe happened. The Year of Woe was the year where Forlorn appeared outside the borders of Barovia, as the first new domain after the formation of Barovia. These monsters resemble normal goblins, but they have no need to eat or sleep and have seemingly no interest in procreation. They live and serve only at the whim of Tristen ApBlanc (the Solleyder of Forfarian myth).

Forlorn is also host to a number of ghosts and spirits, and there is a persistent rumor of a stone henge haunted by one of these spirits, the Maiden of the Menhir. The Forfarian druids have so far been unable to find the grove that holds the henge.

More important is a single notorious inhabitant of the

Lake of Red Tears, Aggie. Agatha (or "Aggie") is a sea serpent that lairs at the bottom of the blood-red lake. It is no normal sea serpent, but an undead monstrosity that seems to obey no master, striking when and where she wants. She is also regrettably intelligent, often lying in ambush near the shores of the lake, waiting for the living to come too close before striking. Legends claim that hoards of treasure lie at the bottom of her lake, but no one has been lucky enough to survive trying to plumb the depths of her home.

Terrain type

Forlorn is a land of desolation. It was once covered in trees, but now, many of them have been destroyed by Tristen's forces in an attempt to root out the Forfarian druids. This leaves the land now covered in empty hills and grassy plains, where, for the most part, not even the most enthusiastic and knowledgeable farmer would be able to make anything grow.



Important Landmarks

Black Grove

The Black Grove is all that remains of the ancient druid grove that was once the home of the treant Azenwrath. When Forlorn entered the Mists, Azenwrath could feel the land changing around him, the evil seeping in around him slowly turning him to madness. When goblins burned his grove and felled him where he stood,

Forlorn

he turned completely to evil and madness and swore his vengeance. His felled wood was used to manufacture furniture and paper, but all the individual pieces were still possessed by his malignant intelligence. Over the years the pieces gathered themselves up, sometimes by controlling their owners, and often killing them after they were put together. Eventually, all the pieces were restored to one location and Azenwrath rose once more, as a unique golem of paper and wood. He retained his old powers, and he has been gathering the ancient nature spirits of Forlorn to his side, instilling them with the same madness that has possessed him. Now, he seeks to expand his Black Grove and take over Forlorn and the lands beyond and has started actively fighting back against the goblins. While this would normally make him an ally of the Forfarian druids, he kills all of them on sight, blaming them for his current state — more importantly, he feels that ALL of humanity is to blame for the corruption of his homeland, and any prisoners that he takes face a very short and very painful life.

Castle Forfarmax

Castle Forfarmax is several hundred years old but has been uninhabited for at least four centuries due to the long-ago tragedy that happened here. Two twins were feuding for the right to the throne (the Seat of Farn) and one, Duncan, invited his brother Donal to a feast. During the feast, Donal and his retinue were slain by the traitor — and not only that, but the men he murdered were never given a proper burial, instead simply buried underneath the stones of the great hall. A year later, on the anniversary of his death, Donal took his revenge. Duncan was celebrating with his new wife in the hall, calling for a toast to his own kingly glory, when the very stones rose up from the ground, and smashed everyone inside, as the doors barred themselves. Only when the stones had completed their bloody work were the doors able to open once more.

Foul stories were told of that night. Those who came to check on the castle found only a gruesome bloody mess, and the body of Duncan and his bride laying on the stones as if they were ready to be interred. The stones themselves had returned to their normal place. Now the castle is haunted — the murderous stones come to life each night and “kill” the ghost of Duncan. Duncan has been imprisoned in the murder room of his own design, with no one to keep him company, for over four centuries. The horror has driven him quite mad.

Castle Tristenoira

Castle Tristenoira is difficult to describe as it exists

simultaneously in three versions and timelines: The Lord's Keep, Castle ApBlanc, and Castle Tristenoira. The three castles differ greatly, but the oak at the central courtyard remains the same whatever happens. It always stands strong and tall.

The Lord's Keep is inhabited by Tristen in his guise as the Minstrel ApBlanc. With him are his wife and three children, along with their servants. It's a square, strong set of buildings, flanked by two towers that overlook the surrounding landscape. Two ghosts haunt the Lord's Keep: Flora, the mother of Tristen, and Rual, the druidess who tried to cure him, but who he killed. Flora runs the route between the Ruins of Birnam and the castle each night, cradling a crying baby in her arms. She ignores anyone who steps in her way and runs to hand her bundle to invisible hands in the courtyard at the foot of the old oak. When she hands over the child, a ghostly noose appears and hangs her. Rual, like Flora, is present through all versions of Tristenoira — but unlike all the other ghosts, she does not look human. Instead, she manifests as a cloud of swirling smoke, gurgling like someone with a slit throat — a spiritual memory of how she died at Tristen's hands. Now she, of all the ghosts here, wishes only to torture Tristen and prolong his agony — the rest simply wish to escape their own fate.

Castle ApBlanc is when the castle is at its peak power: it's been expanded with a great hall, a guest tower, and a curtain wall around it for protection. It is clearly a structure at war. Here Tristen takes the guise of Marc ApBlanc, a ruthless nobleman who is in charge of a rebellion. It's inhabited by ApBlanc himself, a large group of mercenaries, and a necromancer named Lucy AlMorten who is secretly in love with Marc, even though she knows his true nature. The ghosts of the family that he slew are present as well, with his youngest playing with the ghosts of the castle's dogs (one of whom snapped at Tristen, causing him to set the wolves upon them — accidentally killing his youngest son Gilan). His eldest son, Morholt, is in the temple praying, though his bed still carries the imprint of the sword that Tristen slew him with (mistaking him for a visiting cleric. Said cleric was later hung, convicted of the murder of the eldest son). The ghost of his wife Isolt can be seen searching the halls at night, looking for her daughter. Everyone believes this is a result of her suicide, but in reality, it was Tristen that did it, striking her so she fell from the walls. The only one missing is Tristen's daughter, Brangain, who vanished after having been imprisoned in the castle's dungeon for over a year. While Tristen doesn't know this, she was rescued by adventurers and has since become a pala-

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din that hunts the lands surrounding Forlorn. Here she is known as “The Weeping Knight”. Finally is *Castle Tristenoira*. Inhabited only by the elderly Lord ApBlanc, his goblin servants, and the ghosts of his past. It has fallen into ruin, opening into vast caverns that opened underground with the earthquakes that heralded Forlorn’s arrival in Ravenloft. Within them live only goblins and wolves. One of the two original towers has toppled into the caverns and several doors are now crudely bricked over, along with a wooden barbican and wooden rooms for the goblins to live in. The constructions are their work, and of a quality that is far below the rest of the castle.

Lake of Red Tears

Most explorers claim that the Lake of Red Tears is red because of the mud and iron run-off from the destruction that the goblins perpetuate throughout Forlorn, ascribing it all to the waste. However, the Forfarian druids claim that the color of the lake was a fact well before the goblins had created such widespread devastation. Instead, they say that the lake turned red on the first day of the Year of Woe, a lake of blood to show what was to come. It was also on this day that Aggie made her first appearance and she has been the undisputed mistress of the lake ever since.

Mount Arawn

Mount Arawn is the highest peak in Forlorn, standing roughly 4,500 feet tall. It is also one of the deadliest as it is home to the Maw of Arawn, a volcanic caldera from which lethal yellow fumes constantly spew. Named after the ancient Forfarian god of death, even the goblins avoid it as being too much trouble to mine, in spite of the wealth of salt that it holds.

Ruins of Birnam

Birnam lies roughly at the midpoint between Castle Tristenoira and the Lake of Red Tears. It once housed some 500 people, but it was destroyed during the Year of Woe, burned to the ground by goblins. Now the ruined buildings are only home to the ghosts of the villagers and the goblins that lurk there. Anyone who survived Birnam’s sacking either moved to Forfarmax in Hazlan or elsewhere in the Core.

Towns and villages:

Forfarmax

Forfarmax is technically located just over the border to Hazlan, but it has such a strong influence from the Forfarrians that it may as well be considered their capital. Tall praise for this hamlet of only 350. It remains the only settlement within the Core that is dominated by the Forfarrians. Only druids remain within the borders

of Forlorn itself. The head of the local noble family is Lionna ApMorten, a strong and wilful woman who has delved deep into the mystic arts and is an accomplished wizard. This relationship with arcane magic has led to the family having a terrible reputation within Forfarmax, in spite of their frequent feasts, defense against goblin raiders (for which the family is invaluable, both for its sorcerous power, but also their strength of arms), and the happy marriages that have been arranged with the family over the years. The local mayor, Lord Forfarmax, is the descendent of the original founder, the leader of the man who led the Forfarrians out of Forlorn, and he dreams of one day returning to Forlorn and restoring Castle Forfarmax to its former glory.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Hazlan
Kartakass

Fun Fact:

The original name of Forlorn was Forfarmax, like the castle and the hamlet. However, the place is so desolate and the people who left it so despondent that the locals they encountered quickly named the area Forlorn for its lack of hope.



Tristen ApBlanc

"Damn these insufferable forest dwellers! They lie and cheat and rob me of my destiny!"

They have trapped me here. They have made me what I am.

I will escape. I will drain them dry, and as I drink the last of their blood I shall be set free."

~ Tristen ApBlanc

Tristen appears as a handsome man of about eighteen years of age. During the day, Tristen is outgoing and friendly, with long dark hair and bright blue eyes. His open and honest face belies his true nature, that of the vampyre, a living creature that feeds on blood in the same manner as its undead cousin. At night, Tristen becomes a completely different creature. His face becoming haggard and his hair blowing in an ethereal wind, Tristen floats a few inches off the ground and his clothes are torn asunder. He becomes a ghost, the result of a most unusual curse.

Tristen rules Forlorn from Castle Tristenoir. As part of his curse the castle continuously shifts in time, forcing Tristen to relive the same events over and over again. Because of his curse, Tristen cannot leave his castle.

Background: Rivalin, Tristen's father, was wounded in a battle in a forgotten war, hundreds of years ago. After the battle, a vampire waited until dark and started draining any survivors that were too wounded to resist. Rivalin was completely drained, rising the next night as a vampire.

Rivalin flew home and, overwhelmed with hunger, attacked his beloved wife. Rivalin came to his senses before he killed her and their unborn child. After she recovered, Flora allowed Rivalin to feed on her regularly. Despite her regular loss of blood, Tristen was a healthy baby boy when he was born a few months later.

Tristen and his parents lived quietly for a few years. Rivalin fed from animals in the forest and the ApBlancs avoided the nearby village as much as possible. It couldn't last.

When Tristen was ten, his father was spied feeding on a deer. As the locals massed with makeshift weapons and torches, Flora and Rivalin brought their son to the local druid, Rual. Before the ApBlancs could flee the druid's sacred grove, the mob caught up with them. The mob wouldn't touch the druid or Tristen, who was

under the druid's protection. Flora and Rivalin were another matter. Tristen watched as his father was beheaded and his mother was lynched on the druid's sacred tree. That night left deep scars on Tristen's soul. Rual tried to raise Tristen as her own and for a few years things were quiet. It changed when the boy was fifteen, and the vampirism that had lain hidden in his blood for so long took control. Rual found Tristen feeding on an animal in the forest. Beyond reason, Tristen attacked Rual in her sacred grove, at the foot of the tree where his mother was slain. The battle was fierce and Rual could have killed Tristen, but couldn't.

At last she drank holy water and allowed Tristen to feed on her. Rual hoped the holy water would cure Tristen, or at least stun him long enough for her to talk some sense into him. Instead the holy water acted like poison to the young vampyre. As she lay dying, Rual gave into her despair and cursed Tristen. Tristen would never be able to move more than 100 feet from that spot.

Tristen's new life began. Due either from the curse of the druid, the curse in his blood, or the holy water in his veins, Tristen changed. By day he was a vampyre, a living vampire, and with each nightfall he became a ghost. Tristen used his new powers to amass a small army of thugs and set them to raid the nearby villages. His first target was the village whose mob had murdered his parents. The village was burnt to the ground and the villagers sold into bondage. Tristen soon amassed enough wealth to build a castle and purchase a title. He married into an impoverished noble family with a long lineage. Tristen and his wife, Isolt, had three children.

None in Tristen's family lived long, and all ended as spirits trapped in the castle. Any druids captured by Tristen's men were brought back to the castle and brought to a special chamber. None ever emerged. Tristen's cruel temper and raids brought him into conflict with the ApFittle family. The ApFittles were an ancient line of nobles and paladins that objected to Tristen in every way. Tristen was able to employ mercenaries and assassins with the money from his raids and soon was able to grind down the smaller and poorer ApFittle clan. The last ApFittle, Andrew, was captured and brought before Tristen. Tristen had him tortured and executed. Andrew's body had not even touched the ground before the mists closed around the castle.

Tristen ApBlanc

Current Sketch: Tristen has been trapped inside Castle Tristenoira for 500 years. The goblins of Forlorn follow Tristen's mental commands and serve as his enforcers and henchmen. Tristen has unleashed Forlorn's goblins on the druids in the woods that surround his castle. The overwhelming numbers of goblins have flooded the forest. The druids fight back and inflict horrific casualties, but it's not enough. The smaller streams that feed the Lake of Red Tears are choked with bodies, their waters turning black with rotting bodies. Tristen is unaware, but his feud with the ApFittle family isn't over. The last ApFittle, Nellie, works with the druids in the forest to resist Tristen and his goblins. More than one Tristen is in Castle Tristenoira. Some are caught in time loops, repeating the same actions over and over again.

One version of Tristen meeting a party might not remember who they are. The real Tristen knows everything that his doubles know, but will use the confusion to his advantage. Tristen hates druids with a passion. Even worse, the ghost of Rual haunts the forest outside his castle. Tristen has not seen her but every day goblin bodies are brought to him that whisper "Rual" as Tristen gets close.

Darklord's Tactics: Tristen's tactics and capabilities vary greatly depending on his form. At night Tristen attacks through castle walls and floors. He will use his wail first to try and incapacitate as many opponents as possible then use his spectral touch against any survivors.

During the day he dramatically changes his tactics. As a vampyre, Tristen has a powerful charm ability. Tristen will try to charm his opponents and separate one or two from their fellows.

Then Tristen will use his life draining bite to dominate his opponents. If his charm has failed, Tristen turns into a massive warg. Tristen will summon packs of wargs and goblins to attack his foes. He will command his minions from the rear and move in to finish wounded or incapacitated foes.

Borders: When Tristen closes the borders, any creature trying to cross the border is instantly paralyzed. Any attempt, magical or mundane, to remove the paralysis fails. The creature can move again when Tristen opens the borders. Several packs of goblins roam the forest near the border looking for victims. They know exactly where the border is and delight in leading unsuspecting creatures into its embrace.



Tristen ApBlanc

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +4

Skills Acrobatics +8, Arcana +8, Deception +9, Perception +4, Performance +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances as a ghost: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, thunder; as a vampyre: necrotic and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities as a ghost: exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Forfarian, Draconic, Druidic, Sylvan

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Double Nature. Tristen is cursed to walk the day as a vampyre and the night as an incorporeal ghost. He utilizes different abilities depending on the time of day or night. Each dawn, he is transformed into a corporeal vampyre, and with each dusk, his flesh vaporizes, the spectral body of a ghost in its place. The transformation takes 1 turn to complete. Any missing Hit Points are restored during the transformation. All creatures of level 13 level or higher gain a +2 bonus to their saving throws against Tristen's ghost and vampyre abilities.

Tristen ApBlanc

Allergen. Tristen cannot enter an area where deer antlers are present. If he perceives a creature that holds deer antlers, he needs to succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for as long as the antlers are within his view. Weapons made of deer antlers (including improvised ones) are considered +1 magical weapons and inflict an additional 5 (1d8) damage on a successful hit.

Reverse Time (Recharges after a Short or Long). When Tristen is reduced to 0 hit points, he doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, he moves backwards along his personal timeline, regaining 80 hit points and teleporting to a space he can see within 60 feet.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Tristen fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Undying Soul. If slain in vampire form, Tristen immediately rises in his ghost form. If he then successfully uses his wail ability and kills a male humanoid, he instantly destroys the victim's soul and replaces it with his own. The character's mental ability scores change to those of Tristen, who retains all of his skills, feats, and abilities. Over the course of the next week, Tristen's new body transforms to match his original physical ability scores and appearance. If slain in ghost form, Tristen returns to life in his body at dawn as normal. At sunrise on the two solstices and two equinoxes each year, Tristen transforms into a normal human for 24 hours and falls into a deep, comatose slumber. If killed while in this coma, he is truly destroyed. Of course, Tristen takes great care to guard this secret.

Ethereal Sight (Ghost Form). Tristen can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement (Ghost Form). Tristen can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Keen (1/Day / Ghost Form). Tristen releases a scream, provided that he isn't in sunlight. This scream has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of him that can hear him must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.

Regeneration (Vampire Form). Tristen regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight. If Tristen takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Shapechanger (Vampire Form). If Tristen, when in his vampire form, isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Worg (MM, pg.341), a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in Worg form, he can't speak. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing that

he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in mist form, Tristen can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and he can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Spellcasting. Tristen is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Tristen has the following Bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, friends, message, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *dissonant whispers, Tasha's hideous laughter*
2nd level (3 slots): *heat metal, hold person, shatter, silence*
3rd level (3 slots): *hypnotic pattern, slow*

Second Wind. On his turn, Tristen can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 4. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. On his turn, Tristen can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Arcane Shot. Tristen can unleash special magical effects through some of his shots. Once per turn when he fires an arrow from his longbow as part of the Attack action, he can apply one of his Arcane Shot options to that arrow. He decides to use the option when the arrow hits, unless the option doesn't involve an attack roll. He has two uses of this ability, and he regains all expended uses of it when he finishes a short or long rest.

Piercing Arrow. Tristen gives his arrow an ethereal quality. When he uses this option, he doesn't make an attack roll for the attack. Instead, the arrow fires forward in a line, which is 1 foot wide and 30 feet long, before disappearing. The arrow passes harmlessly through objects, ignoring cover. Each creature in that line must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes damage as if it were hit by the arrow, plus an extra 1d6 piercing damage. On a successful save, a target takes half as much damage.

Shadow Arrow. Tristen weaves illusion magic into his arrow, causing it to occlude his foe's vision with shadows. The creature hit by the arrow takes an extra 2d6 psychic damage, and it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be unable to see anything farther than 5 feet away until the start of Tristen's next turn.

Command the Clans. Tristen has an empathic link with every goblin in Forlorn. Communicating with a goblin requires no concentration or action on Tristen's part. He can communicate with an unlimited number of goblins simultaneously and give each one orders without any outwardly visible cue.

Tristen ApBlanc

Feral Allies (1/Day). Feral Allies: Once per day, Tristen can call forth 3d6 wolves or 2d6 worgs from the wilds of Forlorn as a standard action. The creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve Tristen for up to 1 day. All wolf-like animals, beasts, and magical beasts in Forlorn are under Tristen's influence.

Undead Feral Allies (1/Day). Once per day, as a standard action, Tristen can animate 2d6 corpses of dead wolves or worgs within the borders of Forlorn as zombies. These lupine minions are considered Medium-size zombies, save that they have a speed of 50 ft., Str 16, and a single bite attack (+4 melee, 1d6+3 damage) rather than a slam attack. Tristen has an empathic link with every zombie wolf in Forlorn.

Anchored. Tristen cannot move more than 300ft away from the oak tree that grows at the center of the castle Tristenaira.

Turn Resistance. Tristen has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to Tristen that starts its turn within 60 feet of him must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, unless Tristen is incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Tristen's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Actions

Attacks. Tristen can attack three times as a vampire or once as a ghost.

Withering Touch (Ghost Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Longbow +1. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Bite (Worg or Vampire Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Tristen, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Tristen regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Tristen's control

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Tristen can grapple the target (escape DC 17).

Charm (Vampire Only). Tristen targets one humanoid he can see within 30 ft. of him. If the target can see Tristen, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards the vampire as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Tristen's control, it takes his requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Tristen's bite attack. Each time Tristen or his

companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts until dusk or until Tristen is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Horrifying Visage (Ghost Only). Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Tristen that can see him must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be Frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A Frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, Ending the Frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the Effect ends for it, the target is immune to Tristen's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging Effect can be reversed with a Greater Restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (1 / Short or Long rest / Ghost Form). One unconscious humanoid that Tristen can see within 5 feet of him must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be possessed; Tristen disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Tristen now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Tristen can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and he retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. Tristen otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Tristen ends it as a bonus action, or he is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. Tristen can maintain possession until dawn but the creature can repeat the saving throw each hour, ending the effect on a success. When the possession ends, Tristen reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Reactions

Open Wounds. As a reaction, Tristen rewinds time for a creature he can see within 90ft that received magical healing, partially undoing any benefits. A creature Tristen targeted must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, reducing their current hit points by 18 (4d8) on a failure, or half as much on a successful save.

Legendary Actions

Tristen can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Tristen regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Command Ally. One goblin or swarm within 60 feet of ApBlanc that he can see can make a melee attack as a reaction.

Move. Tristen moves up to his speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Attack. Tristen makes a weapon attack.

Gundarak



Gundarak



Gundarak and the lord of the land, Duke Gundar are mostly defined by their relationship with one of its neighbors: Barovia. Like that other land, the populace here live in fear of the vampire that rules them, but there are some very significant differences. Strahd rules with a distant touch, one that is firm, but often unseen. Strahd is often seen by the Barovians as harsh but fair, and while some suspect it, very few know that he is a vampire. Gundar is everything that Strahd isn't. Gundar rules overtly with a tyrannical fist that taxes his peasants mercilessly on everything from firewood (the forests are owned by the state, despite being so plentiful) to the birth of a girl instead of a boy. (Gundar believes that women contribute less to the total labor output of Gundarak than men, so families who have girls are punished with a heavy tax. "Generously" he gives them 15 years to pay it off, but if it is not paid off by then, he takes the girl away on her 15th birthday. The woman is never seen again.)

Life under the beastly Gundar isn't easy, and only Falkovnians are worse off, as Gundar is a sadistic ruler who balks at nothing to get his way. But his tyrannical ways keep backfiring and his focus on his semi-constant war with Strahd (more on his side as he continually sends Gundarakite soldiers to harass the Barovians, while Strahd quickly disposes of them) has left him exposed and failing to notice the dangers that have taken root at the very heart of his domain. His closest advisor, a vampire named Dr. Dominiani, was working on a way to introduce the Dr. as the darklord of Kartakass. What he didn't know, or even suspect, was that Dominiani was a double agent. In fact, the Kartakass agent that Dominiani was working with was Ariel Lukas, daughter of Harkon Lukas, and they'd intended to double-cross them both. In the end, Dominiani was successful, though Ariel wasn't. Gundar disappeared, and for 4 years Dominiani ruled Gundarak, though he had little interest in the country itself. When the Grand Conjunction happened, the domain disappeared and the lands were absorbed by Barovia and Invidia who invaded the vacant territory.

It cannot be overstated how much Duke Gundar hates Strahd. Like dark mirrors of each other, Strahd is smart and calculating, where Gundar is a beast. Strahd uses subtlety to accomplish his goals, where Gundar uses force. Strahd takes the long view, and Gundar the short view. They do have one thing in common: They despise each other. Strahd views Gundar as an idiot, while Gundar views Strahd as a weakling. Gundar is, unknowingly, far over his head and while he could

probably take Strahd in a one-on-one fight, he is so outmatched strategically that he might as well give up. Strahd already has contingencies in place to deal with upstarts and hasn't had to update his plans for how to deal with the Duke in over a century.

This constant war has also led Duke Gundar to outlaw the Vistani within the borders of Gundarak, as he suspects them of being spies for Count Strahd, even if he cannot prove it. Any Vistani found within the border of Gundarak is put to death without question.

Adventures in Gundarak should focus on this dichotomy. The lords hate each other, but the people look at it differently. Barovians are an insular lot, but they feel a kinship with the Gundarakites, viewing them like their poor cousins, the ones who got a worse deal. Gundarakites, meanwhile, are jealous of the lighter hand of the lord of Barovia, and dream of the day where at least their sons and daughters can be relatively safe. Adventurers therefore could enter Gundarak in an attempt to overthrow Duke Gundar or as part of the plot that Dr. Dominiani and Ariel Lukas are brewing. Perhaps they're trying to rescue one of the young maidens that are sent regularly to the Duke's residence at Castle Hunadora. Or perhaps (even likely) they've been manipulated by Strahd into making a move that'll distract Duke Gundar.

"The blood is the life!"

~Bram Stoker, Dracula



Gundarak

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, and mountains
Year Formed:	593 BC
Population:	30,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Balok, Luktar
Religions:	Cult of the Morninglord, Erlin
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	Duke Nharov Gundar (succeeded in 736 BC by Daclaud Heinfroth (also known as Dr. Dominiani)
Darklord(s):	Duke Nharov Gundar (succeeded in 736 BC)
Nationality:	Gundarakite
Analog:	Transylvania

Local Fauna:

Wolves are the dominant predator in Gundarak, even more so than the danger that they pose elsewhere within the Core, with bats and rats close behind. The forests are somewhat empty of non-predatory life as if herd animals and herbivores avoid the place. Only rarely can deer and other large animals be found in the forest, though farms have plenty of pigs. A few of the very wealthy might own cows, but usually, the populace sticks to pigs and sheep as the taxes on them are far less arduous. Horses are unheard of, outside of those ridden by Duke Gundar's soldiers.

In the mountains to the west, the main problem is spiders, especially the ones of gigantic size, along with the bats that roost in the area.

Local Flora:

The forests of Gundar, mainly located in the east, are dominated by conifers, though beech and oak manage to hang on among the various pine trees. All of the trees within Gundarak are twisted into almost unrecognizable shapes compared to their brethren elsewhere. The trees here have visages that seem to leer at travelers, while many openings resemble mouths with dagger-like teeth.

Native Horrors

Perhaps unsurprisingly given that Duke Gundar is a vampire, Gundarak has an undead problem. The ones that roam the countryside are normally dealt with by the local constabulary as they tend to be ghouls and zombies. Almost all the undead within Gundarak are unintelligent, no matter how powerful they might be. The exception to this is Duke Gundar's vampiric minions. He's sired a number of vampires and vampire

spawn, but they normally stick close to the two cities of Gundarak. Underneath Gundarak lurks another danger, as away from the prying eyes of man, thousands of kobolds have set up their own kingdoms. Whether these are under the control of the Duke or led by someone else is unknown, but whispers speak of the Lizard King as a half-dragon kobold that leads the pests.

Terrain type

Gundarak is cold most of the year, more so than it should be, and is almost constantly under a heavy cloud cover. Mountains dominate the western portions of the domain, while ancient forests cover the east. In between the two are the hills that seem to make up the majority of the domain and where the populace lives, having set up their cities so that they follow the rivers and streams, and are sheltered from the worst effects of wind and weather.

Important Landmarks

Castle Hunadora

Lying 10 miles east of Zeidenburg, Castle Hunadora is an old, but strong fortification, clearly created for defense. It is surrounded by an apple orchard, where all the apples are black when in bloom. In the past, whenever rebellions have struck and the Gundarakites have risen up against the Duke, they've found their leaders in the following days hanging from the tree branches of the orchard. As a result, no one ever eats the apples from here. (The orchard was burned down by the locals following Dr. Dominiani's take-over).

The building itself gives off an almost palpable aura of evil, and people can be heard screaming in pain during the night, even over the tall, almost impregnable, walls. Those who have been inside the building speak of "drinking halls" where Gundar's minions have their victims suspended upside down like swine to the slaughter — rendering them conscious for as long as possible, while they're slowly bled to death.

The Twisting Tower

Lying on the outskirts of Teufeldorf, the Twisting Tower is said to hold a cabal of black magic users who are held in thrall by Duke Gundar. No one knows the truth of the strange tower, as only one door leads into it and that door is never open. Several windows are seen up in the tower, the lowest of which are at least 50 feet up. And from those windows, on dark nights, can be seen green and red flashes, and minor explosions — perhaps the result of evil experiments.

Gundarak

Towns and villages:

Teufeldorf

Teufeldorf is home to 4,000 souls and is the center of one thing in Gundarak: Crime. The city, despite the work of the local mayor, has had grave problems trying to keep various factions and crime lords at bay. Of course, the mayor is on the take, getting numerous bribes and becoming rich in the process. As for the Duke, he doesn't care, as it merely makes it easier for him to contain such rebellions, and as long as he gets his taxes from those bribes.

Zeidenburg

Home to some 3,000 people, Zeidenburg is busily growing and is a center of trade due to its location. Zeidenburg is heavily defended as it has been built up around the Ashen Stronghold. The Stronghold was built following the very first rebellion against Duke Gundar's reign by local nobles, and as a result, he had the fortress built.

Zeidenburg is known for being a hotbed of sedition, and whenever a new rebellion starts, it always seems to start there, though the Ashen Stronghold has never fallen to rebel forces, and has managed to hold out for months. The main reason for not simply sacking the city, which the Duke has considered a few times, is because it is located on the best farmland in Gundarak. Nowhere else do crops grow as well as they do here.

The Cult of Erlin (a local death god — one that the locals see as more of a trickster, as opposed to a bad omen) also has its headquarters here, in a cemetery just outside town. They hold their services in the open air and have no temples apart from the cemeteries. Any ground where people are buried is holy to them, and the local populace often seeks them out for advice.

Finally, Zeidenburg is home to an infamous inhabitant that the locals do not know about. In an unassuming mansion on the edge of town lives Lyssa von Zarovich. She is a distant cousin to Count Strahd von Zarovich, and for decades she's been plotting and planning ways to incite rebellion against her cousin and take Barovia from him. So far she has proven unsuccessful, but she is hoping to sway things her way and has started looking into ways to fund a new rebellion against Duke Gundar. Perhaps when she's taken Gundarak, she can take Barovia.

Neighboring domain(s):

Arkandale
Barovia
Borca
Forlorn
Invidia
Kartakass
Sithicus

Fun Fact:

After the destruction of Gundarak following the Grand Conjunction, Duke Gundar was somehow restored to life, but in a lesser form. No longer a Darklord, he now wanders the Core in an effort to restore his former power. Whether he intends to restore Gundarak as it was, or create a new one, is unknown.



Duke Nharov Gundar

"It's a shame really.

He could have been so much more than he was, but he never let himself move beyond the tragedy of his youth."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Duke Gundar makes no attempt to hide his undead nature, nor the hallmarks that mark him as a vampire. His nails are hooked claws, his teeth horrific fangs, and his eyes are bloodshot and wide. Although he could pass for a human male at a distance, up close he seems to have more in common with the wolf than any other creature.

Gundar is large and powerfully built. He is possibly the oldest vampire in the Demiplane of Dread, but while Strahd has spent the centuries mastering the necromantic and martial arts, Gundar has made no attempts to increase his power. A bully that enjoys picking on the helpless, Gundar is too lazy to try anything new

The duke dresses well in tailored clothes and carries a jeweled walking stick. Though the stick is made of the hardest wood that Gundar can find, he still regularly breaks it on the skulls of those who displease him.

Background: In the kingdom of Chesrush, the Gundar family was never quite enough. For generations they were pig farmers. Though they were well off, living on a large farm, they still lived in the mud and sold food to their betters. Then came Lord Callar's rebellion. Milak Gundar joined the forces of King Brun to save the kingdom, leaving his young son Nharov and wife behind. When Milak returned two years later, he was missing a hand, and came riding a fine horse, bearing the title of lord. Milak had saved King Brun from an ambitious spearman, at the cost of his hand. The grateful king had given Milak the title of lord and Callar's estates as a thank you. Milak had serfs that would work his farm for him now, as well as hundreds of acres of wineries and farms.

Milak and his family were welcomed by the king when they moved into the Callar estates in the capital of Navar. Milak was hailed as a war hero and Nharov thought his life would be perfection. He was very wrong. Callar and his family came from an old house and were well connected and liked by their peers. In giving Callar's land and estates to Milak, the king sent a simple message "If I can do it to them, I can do it to you." Callar and his sons were slain during the rebellion, but his

wife and daughter were taken in by relatives when the Gundars evicted them from their home.

Once the king's attention turned elsewhere the nobles that had fawned over Milak and his family began to openly mock the Gundars for their simple ways and ignorance. In less than a year Milak had lost the fortune he gained during the war through drinking, gambling and whoring. Nharov's mother left and never returned.

Milak barely noticed his wife's absence. He was too busy begging other nobles for money that slipped through his fingers as soon as he got it. Nharov was left alone, surrounded by nobles that despised him for being born, and enemies that would rather see him dead.

A few years later, Milak succumbed to a death from alcohol and debauchery. Nharov was left alone. The servants took what they could carry from the estate and left. Duke Nharov Gundar was forced to beg in the streets to find food. Loudly mocked by his peers, whenever he fought back, he always lost to his enemy's great numbers.

By the time Nharov reached adulthood, he had secured several sources of income, using his vast estates to smuggle in and hide all manner of vice. His vast palace in Navar held nearly a dozen brothels, opiate pits, and other more specialized dens of debauchery. Nharov was even able to bribe another pauper lord for his daughter's hand in marriage. Despite his wealth, Nharov was more of a social and political outcast than ever. Nharov sneered as he was mocked. Some of the nobles mocking him were his best customers. Nharov was their better, and he knew it, but he had no way to prove it. All that changed one night when a stranger arrived at Nharov's doorstep. The stranger offered Nharov a means of revenge. He could slay all the nobles that mocked him, and their numbers would count for nothing. All he wanted in return was Nharov's wife. Nharov agreed immediately. Even as the stranger revealed his long fangs, Nharov had no regrets. When Nharov awoke, he could feel his great strength. He waited until nightfall and then began to move through Navar. Finding nobles, whether by themselves or in small groups, regardless, he slaughtered them all. As he killed the mists arose.

Nharov found himself in a strange land. Surrounded by people that called him Duke Gundar. He accepted their fealty without comment and set to building his hall.

Duke Nharov Gundar

Gundar ruled like a petty tyrant. He worked his peasants and taxed everything. He even levied a tax on peasants that had a female baby, as Gundar didn't think they would work as hard. Gundar turned anyone that he thought might be useful into a vampire and didn't give a damn who knew.

It was this hubris that was his downfall. Dr Daclaud Heinfroth had become a unique type of vampire after transfusing cerebral fluid from one of Gundar's many vampire wives into his own skull. Because the wife had been Gundar's thrall, Heinfroth became so as well. Gundar lauded his mastery over the doctor, berating and beating him mercilessly.

Eventually Heinfroth had enough. He played on Gundar's ego and convinced the duke that Heinfroth could rule over neighboring Kartakass, should Harkon Lukas be slain. Gundar was desperate to have a thrall in charge of a second domain and agreed. At a crucial moment, Heinfroth abandoned the duke, and Gundar was slain, with a stake piercing his chest. In an instant the flesh shrivelled from Gundar's skeleton and he fell to the ground lifeless.

Current Sketch: The remains of Duke Gundar are part of Professor Arcanus' traveling curiosities show. The Professor doesn't realize that one of the thousands of lies he tells is actually the truth. The stake is still lodged in Gundar's ribcage, and if it were removed the duke would be instantly regenerated. Gundarak is long gone, so Gundar would likely be free to move around Ravenloft, less than a darklord, but not trapped in his domain.

Darklord's Tactics: Duke Gundar is a straightforward and unimaginative combatant. He is strong enough to tear a fully armored man in half. Gundar eschews weapons and armor. He claims he doesn't need them but in reality it's just too much of a hassle for him to worry about.

Borders: When the borders of Gundarak are sealed the mists rise up, forming an eerie white wall. Any creature that enters the mists is hopelessly lost for 1d6 hours. When the mists clear, the creature is back at the border of Gundarak.



Duke Nharov Gundar

Medium undead (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

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

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +16

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

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Elvish, Luktar

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Gundar isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat, a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in bat form, Gundar can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing trans-

Duke Nharov Gundar

forms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in mist form, Gundar can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and he can't pass through water. He has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Gundar fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Indomitable. Gundar can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Misty Escape. When he drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, Gundar transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

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

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

Vampire Weaknesses. Gundar has the following flaws:

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

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

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Gundar's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, he is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Gundar takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Blind Fighting. Gundar has blindsight with a range of 10 feet. Within that range, he can effectively see anything that isn't behind total cover, even if he is blinded or in darkness. Moreover, he can see an invisible creature within that range,

unless the creature successfully hides from him. Gundar can't use his blindsight while deafened.

Second Wind. Gundar has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 13. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Gundar can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Predator Leap. Gundar can use a bonus action to take a jump as a part of his movement and reach great distances, up to 40ft.

Precise Strike. Gundar can use a bonus action to focus his attacks giving him advantage on his attack rolls but also granting a critical hit when he rolls a 19-20. Gundar can use this ability 3 times per long rest.

Primal Predator. Gundar can as an action make a threatening battle cry that can be heard throughout his domain. All creatures that hear this cry must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 10 minutes ending the effect on a successful roll, rolled at the end of each passing minute. This battle cry activates Gundar's feral instincts and grants him advantage on his Strength and Dexterity rolls for 10 minutes. He also gains a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Once he uses this feature he can't use it again until he finishes a long rest.

Whirlwind Attack. Gundar can use his action to make a melee Attack against any number of creatures within 5 feet of him, with a separate Attack roll for each target.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, Gundar can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Limited Magic Immunity. Gundar can't be affected or detected by spells of 3rd level or lower unless he wishes to be. He has advantage on saving throws against all other spells and magical effects.

Grappler. Gundar has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling. He can use his action to try to pin a creature grappled by him. To do so, he makes another grapple check. If he succeeds, Gundar and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.

Mobile. Gundar is exceptionally speedy and agile. When he uses the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost him extra movement on that turn. When he makes a melee attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether he hits or not.

Duke Nharov Gundar

Entertainer's Curse. Gundar can curse a target he sees within 30ft with a unique form of undeath. The target must succeed on a DC 18 wisdom saving throw or have its type change to undead the next time it finishes a long rest. If a Remove Curse is casted upon the target before it finishes a long rest, it is freed from this curse. While cursed, the target must each day entertain at least one humanoid creature by succeeding on a DC 15 Performance check. The target can try to entertain a humanoid enough times equal to its Charisma modifier. If it fails to entertain, it dies the next time it takes a long rest.

Actions

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Gundar makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Longsword +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) slashing damage, or 12 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Gundar can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Gundar regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Gundar's control.

Charm. Gundar targets one humanoid he can see within 30 ft. of him. If the target can see Gundar, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards Gundar as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Gundar's control, it takes his requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and is a willing target for Gundar's bite attack. Each time Gundar or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Gundar is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Gundar magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Gundar can call 3d6 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Gundar and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Gundar dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Legendary Actions

Gundar can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Gundar regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. Gundar moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Melee Weapon Attack. Gundar makes one melee weapon attack.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Gundar makes one bite attack.



Hazlan



Hazlan



Hazlan is divided in nature, between the races of the Mulan and the Rashemani. The Mulan only comprise 10% of the population but they're ultimately in control of everything. The Rashemani are a subjugated caste, barely allowed any freedom at all, especially compared to the decadence of the Mulan. The Mulan are nobles, and shave off all their body hair and cover themselves with tattoos, both of which are strictly prohibited to the Rashemani. Both Mulan and Rashemani are incredibly hostile to visitors, believing themselves both superior to any outsider, and have gained a reputation as difficult to deal with because of this.

The land used to be hostile to magic on the orders of Hazlik, the Red Wizard. He is a powerful wizard in his own right, and his word is law. However, following the Grand Conjunction, he reversed that particular edict and now encourages the people, whether Mulan or Rashemani, to seek power through magic. He has gone so far as to take a Rashemani as his apprentice (much to the discomfort of the ruling Mulan, though none dare question him), and has built an academy that teaches magic to those with the talent for it.

For all that, Hazlan is an old and dangerous land. Riches and deadly artifacts hide below the surface, and Hazlik constantly experiments with ways of increasing his power.

Adventures in Hazlan should focus on intrigue, politics, and the dangers of magic. The Mulan constantly scheme amongst themselves, and the Rashemani could be a powerful force of rebellion — but they're too cowed to make a move on their own. Power is all that matters in Hazlan, the power to do as you wish. The power to live. And the power of death over each other. And the easiest way to gain that now, is through magic. And magic is of course where Hazlik shines, so using magic potentially exposes the user to the often fatal attention of the Red Wizard.

*"Oh my, but art is long and our life is fleeting."
~Faust, by Goethe*



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, hill, mountains, and plains
Year Formed:	714 BC
Population:	26,000
Races (%):	Humans 92%, Halflings 4%, Gnomes 3%, Other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Gnome, Halfling, Rashemi, Thayan, Vaasi,
Religions:	Cult of the Lawgiver, Hala
Government:	Feudal ethnocratic despotism
Ruler(s):	Hazlik
Darklord(s):	Hazlik
Nationality:	Mulan & Rashemani
Analog:	Thay (Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting)

Local Fauna:

Hazlan is home to the typical animals you'd expect to find in the region, such as wolves and predatory cats, but it is also home to those that are much worse, often twisted, as if warped by proximity to Hazlan's inherent magic, and the creatures that escape from Hazlik's laboratories and the Red Academy. The most common of these are the krenshar, dire panthers or tigers, that stalk the plains and kill a lot of farmers each year. The second are the chuul, that hide in the rivers near Sly-Var and grab unwary sailors who stare into the waters from the supposed safety of their boats. As can be expected from a domain in the Core, undead are a constant problem, though, in Hazlan, the main problem comes from ghouls that, looking for food, seek out the graves of the unfortunate Rashemani.



Hazlan

Local Flora:

Hazlan is a land of little variety. While it has mountains, plains, hills, and such, they all seem much the same. This is due to the relative lack of natural resources in the domain, and while Hazlan has many enormous grain fields, they're often infected by molds and insects, leading the farmers to burn the fields in the height of summer, rather than risk sickness spreading. Similarly, there isn't much in the way of trees, except for a few tangled patches of scrub trees, although the broken forest in the west could be used for timber. Unfortunately, the wood taken from there rots extremely quickly, making it useless for constructing buildings, and it is instead used for firewood. There are two plants that stand out in Hazlik, and both for unfortunate reasons. The first is quøvsp, a mildly narcotic plant. The Mulani use it as snuff and gain little effect from this affectation, but the Rashemani treat it as part of a religious ceremony, where a single person will venture into the wild, build a bonfire, and spend the night smoking quøvsp. This supposedly gives the smoker the ability to see the answer to any question that they're facing, but those non-Rashemani who have tried this simply claim that it makes for a strange experience, but not one that gives any sort of insight. The other plant is the poppy flower, and the juicy milk harvested from it, the milk of the poppy, is refined into opium, and many opium dens are found in Mulan circles, though the Rashemani are too poor for this, and merely use flophouses. There seems to be little consequence to those who partake in this while in Hazlik, as long as it does not affect their work.

Terrain type

Hazlan is a mix of plains, hills, and mountains with only the Broken Forest in the west to break up the monotony, save a few tangles of trees. It is always warm, becoming unbearably so in the summer, and insects buzz everywhere during the middle months of the year. Dotted around the landscapes is a strange oddity of Hazlan. The Hazlani Windmills are several long-abandoned windmills that no one knows who built. The style is neither Mulan nor Rashemani in nature and they are shaped like gigantic bee hives, standing four stories tall. They're made from an earthy red mud and have dirty gray sails on the wings of the windmills. Some of them have been decorated by the Rashemani, as one of the few places that they're allowed to. The Mulan however, completely ignore them as being beneath their attention.

Important Landmarks

Black Spire

The Black Spire rises from the mountains on the southern end of Hazlik. It is made of an alien purplish-black glassy stone that feels uncomfortable to the touch, though the sensation varies from person to person. Even just moving near it means that you can hear a low, vibrating tone. Local Hazlani claim that when it is struck by lightning, which happens far more frequently than normal, the tone grows in level, becoming an unearthly, alien, and loud note. Anyone standing near it is then transported to.. Somewhere else, though the Hazlani cannot agree on where it ends. Unfortunately, that somewhere else is the alien domain of Bluetspur. And what's worse, is that this portal is one way only. Once through, there is no way to return.

The Tables

The Tables sit outside Sly-Var and Toyalis. They are squat, domed, stone fortresses with minarets at each of the cardinal points and corners of the buildings. They sit at the heart of each settlement and serve as Hazlik's bases of operations whenever he is away from Veneficus. Underneath each of them is a deep dungeon that holds the fodder of Hazlik's cruelest experiments. In effect, the Tables are fortress, laboratory, and dungeon all collected into one. Whenever the Red Wizard meets with his governors here, he often operates on subjects strapped to tables, causing them to scream out in pain. Whether this is because Hazlik is more focused on his magical studies, or used as an intimidation tactic by him, is unknown.

Veneficus

Veneficus is Hazlik's own private estate and sits about a day's travel to the northeast of Toyalis. The grounds of the estate are covered in a vast garden that is filled with unusual, beautiful, and in many cases, deadly examples of horticulture. Rashemani laborers have their huts on the south-eastern edge of the estate, and they tend to the gardens and buildings of Veneficus.

Veneficus is a blur of activity both day and night as if the Red Wizard hardly sleeps. Messengers (normal and supernatural in nature) come and go constantly, and rare are the days where some form of experimentation isn't happening. Veneficus is opulent and very well-appointed, and very well guarded, by magical constructs and traps, as if Hazlik is showing off his own power. Visitors are not permitted into the inner sanctums of Veneficus with only Hazlik and Eleni (and some of the magical servants) being allowed to delve into the inner mysteries. Visitors, and even Rashemani servants, are confined to the outer areas.

Hazlan

Red Academy

The Red Academy is the center of magical learning in Hazlan. As an institution, it is very young and was only established the year after the Grand Conjunction, when Hazlik reversed his position on the study of magic. Until that point, no one was allowed to study arcane magic apart from Hazlik, and arcane magic users were hunted like animals by his agents. Now that has changed and ALL Hazlani, whether Mulan or Rashemani, are encouraged to learn the magic ways, the Mulan most especially keen to follow in their cultural footsteps. Now it is a path to power, regardless of race, and one that Hazlik's apprentice, the Rashemani woman Eleni, has taken to with a vengeance.

Iron Sanctum

The Iron Sanctum sits in the northern mountains of Hazlan, though its precise location is unknown. It is heavily warded against scrying magic, and local legend has it that it houses the Order of the Guardians, an order of scholarly monks that devote themselves to the study and collection of evil magical items and artifacts. They do not plan to use them but to keep them safe so that they cannot be used by those with ill intent. Rumor states that Hazlik is aware of its existence, but that he has allowed it to remain functional, though none knows why. Perhaps this is due to its most infamous piece, the *Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless*, a magical artifact from far away — one that stores 99 demons within.

The Lodestone

Inside a large crater outside of Toyalis sits the Lodestone. It is an enormous black basalt obelisk that pulses with arcane energy, as faint traces emanate all the way to the surface. It is surrounded by several layers of semi-collapsed ruins, and is a dangerous dungeon to explore. It is currently being excavated and exposed by local sages. The dig has yet to begin, but plans are moving quickly, and both Mulan overseers and Rashemani laborers will be involved. Excavating it, though they do not know it, is a grave risk, for the Lodestone is a gateway to power for many, enabling people to grow in power by leaps and bounds. But it was buried beneath the surface by the alien El-Koth, its constructors, for a reason. The power comes at a cost and it drives those who partake in it utterly and irrevocably insane.



Towns and villages:

Toyalis

Toyalis is the capital of Hazlan and is home to just over 8,000 people. It is the center of Mulan society and hosts a number of powerful families within it, all of which vie for the position of governor. It is home to several notable people and locations. First is Eleni of Toyalis, the apprentice of Hazlik himself, who hosts her family (to the annoyance of the nobles of the city, they are all Rashemani) at a large estate near the center of the city. It is the home of the Iron Citadel-Fane, the Church of the Lawgiver's center in Hazlik. The Fane is the center of some intra-religious intrigue currently as Pave Stavroz Vatsisk (the spiritual leader) fights off a challenge from his second in command, Aerkebiskop Venin Lols.

Sly-Var

Sly-Var is a mercantile center in the eastern part of Hazlik. Surrounded on three sides by water, the rivers present a great opportunity for its 3,000 inhabitants to make a prosperous living. They're also slightly more friendly than the rest of the Hazlani people. That simply means that they do not assume you're a spy on sight or an agent of nefarious powers, but they still act as if they're superior to anyone else. Sly-Var is ruled by Helenah Kerpatis, a competent governor and a genuine friend to Eleni of Toyalis, a rarity in Hazlik. She is also a true believer in the inherent superiority of the Mulan to everyone else, especially the Rashemani, making her friendship with Eleni even more of an oddity. Helenah has been having trouble in recent months with Kemen Kebasi, a local "brigand lord". He has been targeting caravans to rob, and extorts protection money from the Rashemani merchants in the area.

Ramulai

Ramulai sits in a vale at the foot of the largest mountain in Hazlan, Mt. Soren, and it is the newest and smallest settlement in Hazlik. A hamlet of only 300 people, it didn't even exist 20 years ago. It was raised, seemingly overnight, shortly after the Great Upheaval by Hazlik himself, and many of the buildings are made from seamless stone, while most of the roads are channels cut into the very bedrock. The streets are laid out in strange and complex patterns that when studied by visiting spellcasters give them migraines. It is surrounded by a large stone wall that is only broken by a gargantuan gate, and it is much larger than its population calls for, leaving many buildings empty. Staying here is dangerous for visitors, as the students at the Red Academy can sometimes be found prowling the streets of Ramulai for new test subjects.

Hazlik

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Forlorn
Kartakass
Nova Vaasa

Fun Fact: Only the Mulan are allowed to have tattoos in Hazlan, along with shaved heads. As a result, Rashemani normally wear their hair long to distinguish themselves from the upper class. Hazlik himself is embarrassed about his tattoos, as they are overtly feminine. None of the Mulan nobles dare comment on this openly, but they do whisper and laugh when they are certain that the Red Wizard cannot hear them.

"He is not a creature of the night, but he is a son of darkness. Vampires and werewolves act according to their nature, and they are monsters. Hazlik is a man, which makes his actions all the worse."

~Gonegal

When the people of Hazlan refer to their lord, they never dare call him Hazlik, but rather the "Red Wizard." The nickname is apt, as Hazlik wears bright red robes that mark him as a Red Wizard of Thay. His head, neck and torso are covered with bright red tattoos. He doesn't hide his tattoos, but anyone who mentions them is met with icy silence. Hazlik wears a goatee, but never a moustache. His left eye is brown, and his right eye is blue. His people say this is from a magical experiment gone wrong, but no one knows for sure.

Hazlik always wears a silver chain with an amulet, with intricately carved runes surrounding a yellow gemstone.

Background: Hazlik is a powerful wizard with an aptitude for study and the magical arts. He rose quickly in the ranks of the Red Wizards and enjoyed his growing personal power and social standing. His rise to power did not go unnoticed and he made many enemies. The most hated of his rivals was Thantosya, a necromancer. Hazlik craved Thantosya's power, her position, and wealth. Most of all, he craved Orliab, Thantosya's lover. Hazlik pursued Orliab, and for a time she did not return his affections. After years of dogged pursuit, she finally relented. Orliab agreed to meet Hazlik in her tower, but it was a trap. Thantosya gathered all Hazlik's enemies together and watched as Orliab served him drugged wine. Once Hazlik could no longer defend himself, Thantosya and her allies sprung the trap. Hazlik was

easily overwhelmed. Thantosya didn't want to kill Hazlik, that would be too easy and too quick. Thantosya wanted to make an example. They marked Hazlik with women's tattoos, deeply humiliating for a Thayan man. Hazlik's rise to power came to an abrupt halt. His peers ignored him in the streets, and jeered at him behind his back. Hazlik, enraged, threw himself into his craft. He would have his revenge by becoming the most powerful wizard in the history of Thay. For years Hazlik studied and advanced his magic. While Orliab and Thantosya advanced socially, Hazlik pushed the boundaries of magic. While searching the woods one night for a rare ingredient for one of his experiments, Hazlik came across Orliab and Thantosya unaware. Full of rage, Hazlik easily overcame his enemies. Once Thantosya and Orliab were defeated and helpless, Hazlik gave into years of planned revenge. Hazlik tore the skin from Orliab, and made Thantosya drink the blood of her lover, as well as a hundred acts even more terrible. Then, when Hazlik's lust was sated, he slew them both. As Hazlik turned to leave, the mists closed in, as he found himself in the Nightmare Lands. Hazlik was repulsed by the alien nature and soon retreated back into the mist. Hazlik lived in the mist for months. He thought he had fallen into another trap from one of his enemies in Thay, so he plotted his revenge. When the mist lifted, Hazlik had been granted the domain of Hazlan. Once Hazlik realized he had been spirited to a realm he couldn't leave, no matter how much magical power he acquired or knowledge he learned, he went mad. For thirty years, Hazlik was the only person allowed to study arcane magic in Hazlan. Any other arcane spellcaster was hunted down and killed. Hazlik passed the time trying to escape Ravenloft. His experiments usually required the unwilling assistance of some of his subjects. His subjects never survived. This changed during the Grand Conjunction. When the walls of the domain of Dread weakened, Hazlik found himself in Thay. He saw his enemies had gained power and prestige and were raising a new generation. When Hazlik returned to Hazlan he had a new plan. He created the Red Academy and started taking apprentices.

Current Sketch: Hazlik doesn't care about governing his domain. He leaves the collecting of taxes and enforcement of laws to the local satraps he has selected. His satraps know the price of failure or rebellion and Hazlik never hesitates to remind them. Hazlik spends all of his time in the Red Academy. He hopes that one day an apprentice will escape and return to Thay. Hazlik is getting older, but isn't ready to die yet. Hazlik plans to switch bodies with one of the students in his Red Academy, and carefully watches his apprentices to judge which one has the qualities he would want in a

Hazlik

new body. He thinks he has found the perfect vessel in Eleni of Toyalis, a talented wizard and Hazlik's closest confidant. Swapping bodies with Eleni isn't a perfect solution because women are looked down upon by the Iron Faith, so Hazlik is keeping his options open for now. Hazlik has outwardly accepted his imprisonment in Ravenloft, but all is not as it seems. The Red Academy and the town it lies in, Ramulai, are designed in unusual ways. Arcane casters can sense the power drawn to the area by the design. Ramulai and the Red Academy were designed by Hazlik himself, and some say built by magic overnight. Hazlik tolerates the Iron Faith. As a wizard, he is anathema to many of the faithful, but Hazlik could have the entire church wiped out overnight. The Iron Faith keeps its rhetoric to a minimum in Hazlan, and Hazlik uses the church as a form of social control and outlet for his subjects. Hazlik's sleep is wracked by nightmares. In them, his enemies are powerful and unstoppable and he cowers before them. Hazlik uses potions and spells to stay awake but constantly seeks for more effective solutions.

Darklord's Tactics: Hazlik is a powerful wizard and never leaves the Red Academy without at least two apprentices and several guards. In combat Hazlik rains fire, lightning and cold upon his enemies. Hazlik may try to avoid hitting a valued apprentice, but will happily slaughter his guards. You don't have to pay dead men.

Borders:

Hazlik is able to perform a mysterious ritual that requires concentration to maintain, hoping that the borders of Hazlan and all adjacent areas in the demiplane of dread will be closed. This ceremony requires him to meditate and burn incense on a brazier. The ritual creates a huge wall of flames at the edge of his domain, and as long as he stays focused, even creatures that are usually resistant or immune to fire can be harmed. Hazlik cannot seal the border to Hazlan for long periods though. His guards patrol the borders and his apprentices constantly scry for threats as long as he is not concentrating on the ritual.

Regional effects:

The region around Veneficus is altered by both Hazlik's magic and the results of his arcane experiments, creating the following effects: Vines and roots wrap themselves around the limbs of creatures that pass too close to the domain. The area within five miles of Veneficus takes twice as long to traverse and is considered difficult terrain. Creatures that take a short or long rest within this area must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become entangled in vines, being restrained. A creature can escape with a suc-

cessful DC13 Athletics roll. Thorny bushes and hidden brambles grow wild within one mile of Veneficus. For every 10 minutes spent travelling off a path or road, creatures must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) piercing damage



Hazlik

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (19 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 77 (15d6 + 15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +10

Skills Arcana +10, Deception +5, Insight +5, Intimidation +5, Religion +10

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Draconic, Vaasi, Abyssal, Balok, Darkonese, Thayian
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

War Caster. Hazlik has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from Hazlik, he can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Spell Sense. Hazlik can automatically sense every arcane spell that is cast within Hazlan. When a spell is cast, Hazlik instantly becomes aware of the spell's school and the caster's location with a precision of 10 miles as well as the spell's level.

Hazlik

Undying Soul. Hazlik's amulet radiates a strong necromancy aura when studied with detect magic, though the amulet is not truly magical and functions only for him. If Hazlik is slain, his soul is transferred to the amulet's gem. If a humanoid or monstrous humanoid touches the gem while it contains Hazlik's soul, the creature must succeed on a Charisma save (DC 21) or be compelled to wear the amulet and defend it to the death. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. Unlike the *magic jar* spell, however, *protection from evil* or a similar ward will not block the amulet's power. The amulet is not a cursed item and can be forcibly removed from a creature that wears it. Each time a creature sleeps while wearing the amulet, they must succeed on a Charisma save (DC 21) or his own soul will be destroyed and replaced by Hazlik's soul. Once reborn, Hazlik keeps his original mental ability scores, skills, feats and abilities. Over the course of the next month, Hazlik's new body is slowly transformed to match his original physical ability scores and appearance. The amulet can be destroyed with a *Disintegration* or *Wish* spell.

Metamagic. Hazlik can twist his spells to suit his needs. He has the following Metamagic options

Empowered Spell

When he rolls damage for a spell, he can spend 1 sorcery point to reroll up to 5 of the damage dice. He must use the new rolls. He can use Empowered Spell even if he has already used a different Metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Quickened Spell

When he casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, he can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

Heart of Fire. Whenever Hazlik casts a spell of 1st level or higher that deals fire damage, fiery magic erupts from him. This eruption causes creatures of his choice that he can see within 10 feet of him to take 7 fire damage.

Fire in the Veins. Hazlik gains resistance to fire damage. In addition, spells he casts ignore resistance to fire damage. When he rolls damage for a spell he casts that deals damage of that type, he can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2.

Pyromancer's Fury. When Hazlik is hit by a melee attack, he can use his reaction to deal 7 fire damage to the attacker. This damage ignores fire resistance.

Mage Slayer. Hazlik has practiced techniques useful in melee combat against spellcasters, gaining the following benefits:

- When a creature within 5 feet of him casts a spell, he can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature.
- When he damages a creature that is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration.

Spellcasting. Hazlik is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting abil-

ity is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He can never learn or cast an illusion or enchantment spell. Hazlik has the following Wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *All wizard cantrips*

1st level (4 slots): *alarm, burning hands, enlarge/reduce, expeditious retreat, identify, mage armor, magic missile, message, protection from good, shield, spider climb, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, arcane lock, blindness/deafness, darkness, flaming sphere, knock, Melf's acid arrow, see invisibility, sending, web*

3rd level (2 slots): *clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, fly, gaseous form, lightning bolt, protection from elements, daylight*

4th level (2 slots): *arcane eye, dimension door, ice storm, stoneskin, wall of fire*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill, cone of cold, passwall, planar binding, scrying*

6th level (2 slots): *guards and wards, true seeing, contingency, magic jar, chain lightning*

7th level (2 slots): *delayed blast fireball, forcecage, teleport, crown of stars (XGtE, pg.152)*

8th level (2 slots): *dark star, incendiary cloud, maddening darkness, sunburst*

Overchannel. Hazlik can increase the power of his simpler spells. When he casts a Wizard spell of 1st through 5th level that deals damage, he can deal maximum damage with that spell. The first time he does so, he suffers no adverse effects. If he uses this feature again before he finishes a Long Rest, he takes 2d12 necrotic damage for each level of the spell, immediately after he casts it. Each time he uses this feature again before finishing a Long Rest, the necrotic damage per spell level increases by 1d12. This damage ignores Resistance and immunity.

Actions

Dagger +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage.

Legendary Actions

Hazlik can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The monster regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cast a Spell. Hazlik casts a spell.

Stab. Hazlik makes a dagger attack.

Fiery Burst (2 actions). A wave of fiery explosions sweeps out from Hazlik. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from him must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 4d8 fire damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed. In addition, unsecured and flammable objects that are completely within the area of effect catch fire automatically by the spell's effect.

Significant Possessions: *Bracers of Defence, Headband of Intellect, Wand of Fireballs (10 charges), Gauntlets of Dexterity*

Invidia



Invidia



Invidia is a land at war with itself, with the forces of the dukkar Malocchio Aderre fighting against the forces of his mother Gabrielle, splitting the country between them. Add to that a rebellious faction of Gundarakites (from the fallen domain of Gundarak that Invidia usurped a part of when Duke Nharov Gunder died — the other half of Gundarak now belongs to Barovia) and Invidia is a hotbed of internecine warfare, with tensions lurking just below the surface in the small realm. Invidia is the story of vendetta, of passions that run high, and of hatred. Originally it was the hatred of the werewolf Bakholis against humanity in general, and his cruel mistreatment of the people he ruled, especially the women. However, Bakholis was murdered by one of the women that he tried his tricks on; Gabrielle Aderre. She was able to overwhelm him with her powers and kill him. She then took his place as darklord of Invidia.

Her hatred of the Vistani is beyond belief and she has both killed her mother (specifically by leaving her to die at the hands of a werewolf) and deliberately sired Malocchio, the dukkar supposedly destined to destroy the Vistani, and raising him with a hatred of the Vistani at least as great as her own. When he came of age (after having been born only a year before), he turned her subjects against her and tried to drive her insane. He succeeded, but she was rescued by her lover Matton Blanchard, a wolfwere from Kartakass that genuinely cares for her, and her newborn child, Lucita Aderre.

Malocchio, meanwhile, is the son of Gabrielle and the fiend known as the Gentleman Caller. He is a dukkar, a man of Vistani blood, one of whom is prophesied to destroy the Vistani themselves. These are usually killed at birth, but his birth outside of a Vistani tribe saved him that fate. Due to his upbringing, he hates the Vistani with a passion and is convinced that he is the one that has been prophesied. And so do the Vistani. Adventures in Invidia should focus on the internal conflict between not only the forces of the two members of the Aderre family but on the conflicts between otherwise reasonable individuals. Passions run high and violent in Invidia, and they're prone to brooding, bitterness, and holding grudges that can claim hundreds of lives and last decades (if not centuries). In many cases, the people involved have forgotten the reasons, but still fight duels of honor (and brawl) over these long-forgotten slights. They love as fiercely as they hate, embroiled in their passions, but this also leads to disaster such as infidelity at the end, leading to more bloodshed. The ex-Gundarakites in the north

are more somber and subdued than the southern Invidians, but Malocchio's soldiers are trying to transform them into law-abiding Invidians. Which of course just riles them up more, and among the Gundarakites there is a strong current of revolutionary sentiment, with at least one rebellious leader counting himself amongst Gabrielle's lovers.

"Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly."

~Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*



Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate forest and hills
Year Formed:	603 BC
Population:	7,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Falkovnian, Luktar, Mordentish, Vaasi
Religions:	Ezra, Hala
Government:	Independent settlements, but moving towards despotism
Ruler(s):	Malocchio Aderre
Darklord(s):	Gabrielle Aderre
Nationality:	Invidian

Invidia

Local Fauna:

Even the animals in Invidia seem driven by their emotions, though these are simpler than those of the humans who live here. So the beasts here, primarily deer, elk, and small game have a more frequent breeding cycle than in any other domain except perhaps Falkovnia. The wolves that are so prevalent elsewhere are here too, but they don't have the same malicious intelligence that they exhibit elsewhere in the Core. Here they are driven by instinct and hunger, and they represent the main natural threat in Invidia. They're still a small threat, with Invidian myth running rampant with stories of shapeshifters, lycanthropes, and evil spirits.

Local Flora:

Thickets and evergreen trees dominate the northern part of Invidia, with blackberry bushes being particularly rife here. As one moves further south though, the land slowly changes to deciduous trees instead, and oak, birch, and ash trees take over instead of the pines to the north. To the south, these grow particularly dense, and persistent local rumors tell of mobile carnivorous trees that hunt down villagers in their homes. Most of the flora that is indigenous to Invidia is present elsewhere too, with the exception of a strange type of fungus called hermitshawl. Hermitshawl makes for a potent sleeping potion, and even the raw spores of the fungus can lull the unwary to sleep. People normally wake up again, but locals say that those who fall asleep in a hermitshawl ring are doomed to be eaten by fey creatures.



Native Horrors

The Invidian legends and stories of shapeshifters and lycanthropes are true to a large extent with werewolves from Verbrek often crossing into Invidia. Even wolfweres are a relatively normal sight too with a number of them having immigrated here from Kartakass. Ghosts and other incorporeal undead are common here as if the very temperament that forms such a large part of the Invidian mindset forces them to remain after the end of their natural lives.

Terrain type

Invidia is a sparsely settled and wild domain. Stretches of woodlands, straight from the most ancient of childrens' tales dominate the land, broken only by slow-moving, lazy rivers and low rolling hills. Small hamlets, numbering less than 50 people, are the mainstay of civilization, relying on the readily available lumber, and whatever produce they can eke from the ground to survive.

Important Landmarks

Castle Hunadora

Castle Hunadora used to belong to Duke Gundar, and is now under the control of Gabrielle, the Gundarakite Rebels and their leader Ardonk Szerieza (and the wolf-were bard Matton Blanchard when Ardonk isn't present). It is still being carefully explored by Gabrielle and her men as the castle was extensively trapped, and they're still securing it for themselves, all while building new traps to replace the older ones. As a former home to an oppressive vampire lord, the castle features extensive external defenses and some truly disturbing rooms, such as a "drinking hall", where victims were suspended upside down to prolong their suffering as they were slowly bled to death.

Castle Loupet

Castle Loupet was the stronghold of Bakholis, the darklord and ruler of Invidia before the coming of Gabrielle and Malocchio. From here Gabrielle ruled the land until her son took the throne and she had to flee to Castle Hunadora. Castle Loupet is an ugly building, built solely for defense and with a deep dungeon underneath it from where Malocchio can perform wicked deeds on his prisoners. These lower chambers are where Bakholis used to keep his female prisoners, but under Gabrielle, they fell into disuse as she preferred other, subtler, methods of enforcing compliance.

Towns and villages:

Beltis

Beltis was destroyed several years ago by loggers from rivaling Valetta, with the bodies of all 35 inhabitants thrown into the bottom of the river. It is now haunted by vengeful spirits looking to get revenge on those that killed them, but unable to leave their village behind.

Curriculo

Curriculo is a town of about 1,100 inhabitants, which lies northeast of Karina. In recent decades, trade has caused the city to grow from nothing but a handful of houses and a single dock, to be very prosperous, and

Invidia

a bitter rival of Karina, whose inhabitants believe that upstarts from Curriculo are stealing their business. The city is in much better condition than Karina, with better walls, and is the only town in Invidia to have its own separate militia — this is because the mayor believes that dark days are ahead, especially with the jealous Karinans to the south, and that the city will need to be able to defend itself. Here a central marketplace provides both for daily interaction and gossip for the city's inhabitants, and for others a place to purchase produce, grain, beer, wine, livestock, and leather goods without having to suffer the attention of Malocchio's Falkovnian guards in Karina.

Karina

While Karina is a small town of 2,300, it is the capital of Invidia. It is a town in perpetual decay, sustained by trade with Barovia, Borca, and Falkovnia (which has to pass through Borca by necessity). It is surrounded by a low, patrolled, wall that is in need of serious repair — just like the rest of Karina. The town feels empty as many of the houses and buildings are abandoned, but once per year, for the Harvest Carnival, the city overflows with people to almost 7,000 individuals, as people come here from all over the Core for the famous event.

At the center of Karina stands the Goldfinger, a tall yellow granite clock that was home to an ancient clock-maker known simply as The Engineer. The Engineer abandoned the clock a few years ago, and it is now patrolled by some of Malocchio's guards.

These guards are not only Invidians, but from Falkovnia as well, on loan from Vlad Drakov, who is a great admirer of the young Malocchio. These soldiers are housed in the bridge quarter, where they can keep an eye on visitors from other Domains, while the native Invidian guards are housed at the citadel, the center of tax collection in Invidia. It towers over the city, casting the nearby districts in shadow. The citadel is also where prisoners are kept in Invidia, a terrible prospect at best. It is said that those nearby can hear the screams of the tortured captives, even through the thick walls of stone. The most famous inhabitant of Karina is the Midnight Slasher, an insane killer who murders everyone whom she thinks has mistreated children or families and supposedly lusts after the blood of Gabrielle Aderre.

Tancos

Tancos is a small and very inhospitable place, even less so than Karina. River-merchants whisper that to stay the night is to invite death, and while it lies at a handy spot in the river, most skip by unless repairs and

supply-shopping are quick. Most times it is that they arrive early in the day and leave before nightfall. The secret to Tancos is that the inhabitants here are paka, a type of kitsune that looks closer to a cat than a fox, and which have serious issues with humans, to the point where they actively hunt them down whenever they can do so without attracting attention. Their time is spent shapeshifted into humanoid form to avoid attention.

Valetta

Valetta has become a small thriving community, a rough-and-tumble logging town, with some 100 inhabitants, and another 100 transient ones depending on the logging season. They harbor a dark secret with the murder of Beltis, something that is never ever mentioned here. Anyone who makes the connection is quietly disposed of by the mayor and his cronies, and their bodies added to the tally at Beltis.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Borca
Sithicus
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

Saying that someone has “an Invidian's heart” is a deadly insult in some of the domains of the Core where reason is highly prized. In particular, natives to Lamordia and Mordent resent this implication so much that it has (ironically) led to many impromptu duels.



Gabrielle Aderre

"Secrets and lies are her currency. She has no friends, only puppets who don't even realize they have strings."

"Her minions are everywhere, and by the time you've slain one she has two more."

~ Malocchio

Gabrielle is a direct descendant of Madame Eva, the first Vistana in Ravenloft. She is only half Vistani and she is rejected by some Vistani who think her blood is impure.

Gabrielle Aderre is a small woman, so beautiful she's hypnotic. Her eyes are as black as a raven's feathers, the same color as her hair. Her hair is wild, but frames her face perfectly and cascades down her back in waves. She dresses as a Vistani with layered skirts in vibrant colors and blouses stitched with gold and silver thread. Gabrielle loves gold and wears rings on each finger and large gold hoop earrings. She is barefoot, but never seems to cut her feet on sharp stones.

No one knows her exact age but Gabrielle has the body and face of a woman in her mid-twenties. Only a small streak of gray at her temple hints that she might be older. Gabrielle hates mirrors and will not abide having them nearby. In mirrors, Gabrielle looks like an attractive middle aged woman to everyone except herself. Gabrielle sees a hag. Her skin is gray, her eyes white with cataracts, and her hair falls out in clumps.

Background: Gabrielle was born in Richemulot to Isabella Aderre. Isabella was a Vistani that was cast from her clan and captured by slavers. Isabella was beautiful and was sold to Vlad Drakov, the ruler of Falkovnia, a heartless psychopath who revelled in causing pain. By the time Isabella escaped, she was two months pregnant with Gabrielle. Mother and daughter wandered the domains of the Core for years, stealing, begging and swindling to survive.

During their travels, Isabella never told Gabrielle about her father. When Gabrielle asked, Isabella would tell the young girl that her father was evil and his evil infected everything that it touched. Isabella told Gabrielle that she must never marry, and never have children. Gabrielle, angry and isolated, began to blame her mother for all the hardship they encountered. Every time they were kicked and beaten, spit on and chased out of town, Gabrielle's hatred for her mother grew.

Gabrielle would daydream that her father was rich and powerful. She longed for the day he would save her from her wretched life.

It was while they wandered that Isabella noticed Gabrielle's gift. Gabrielle was a natural sorcerer. At first it was small things, Gabrielle could influence others. Soon, when angered, Gabrielle could summon fire.

When Gabrielle was nineteen, she and her mother were ambushed by a pack of werewolves. Gabrielle was able to drive the wolves back for a time, but her mother was injured. Realizing her opportunity, Gabrielle refused to give her mother a healing potion until Isabella told her the truth about her father. Isabella, grievously injured, told Gabrielle about her time as a slave and being sold to a monster. No matter what, Isabella would not tell Gabrielle her father's name.

Gabrielle listened quietly. When Isabella finished, Gabrielle turned and left her mother to the howling pack. Gabrielle's only possession she left with was an ancient Tarokka deck that once belonged to Madame Eva herself. Gabrielle fled into the mists and found herself in Invidia. At that time Invidia was ruled by a powerful werewolf named Bakholis. Bakholis was strong, but dim witted. Gabrielle soon infiltrated his court and one night slit his throat with a silver dagger. That night Invidia got a new darklord. Gabrielle adapted to her new home quickly. She took a succession of lovers, but none of them meant anything to her. That changed with the Gentleman Caller. The Caller appeared in her court one night, silent but impossible to miss. She kept him as a dalliance for a while, and when he left, she was two months pregnant with her son Malocchio. Once he was born, Malocchio grew quickly. Soon he rivaled his mother in personal and political power. Gabrielle underestimated him for a time and Malocchio nearly broke her. Malocchio is as manipulative as his mother, and used her own anger and grief at the death of her mother to turn Gabrielle into a shell of a woman.

Current Sketch: Gabrielle recovered with the help of Matton, a wolfwere who may be the only person she has ever truly loved. Gabrielle was quick to reassert her power over Invidia and a shadow war has developed between mother and son. Malocchio is a constant thorn in her side but Gabrielle refuses to kill him. Instead her minions and his minions fight in the alleys and sewers of Invidia. Matton has recruited wolfweres from nearby Kartakass and Gabrielle has recruited an army of assassins. Gabrielle is winning, it is only a matter of time.

Gabrielle Aderre

Darklord's Tactics: Gabrielle is intelligent and ruthless. She favors enchantment spells and loves to turn her opponents against each other. To make matters worse, Gabrielle has the most powerful tarokka deck ever created, and is a master at reading it. She knows what her opponents are going to do before even they do. One of Gabrielle's favorite tactics is to divine some of her sons' minions, then enchant them to do her bidding. Then she will wait until her puppets are fighting her minions, then turn her puppets against their friends. Gabrielle cannot directly harm any person with Vistani blood, including her son. This is annoying for the darklord, but not crippling. She has plenty of minions after all.

Borders: When Gabrielle closes the borders Invidia is surrounded by an invisible wall of terror. The wall is invisible, but any creature that touches it immediately flees 100 yards back into Invidia.



Gabrielle Aderre

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather)

Hit Points 48 (8d6)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +3, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +4, Deception +6, History +4, Insight +6, Performance +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Balok, Mordentish, Luktar, Patterna, Common, Elvish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Evil Eye. Gabrielle's foes crumble and fail under the force of her derision and baleful glare. As her reaction, Gabrielle can cause any creature within 60 feet of her to take disadvantage on any attack roll, ability check or saving throw it is currently making. Gabrielle can use this ability three times before she needs to finish a short or long rest.

Illusory Youth. Gabrielle is middle-aged, though apart from a streak of grey hair at her left temple, she looks years younger, having the carriage and bearing of a young woman. She does not look a day over twenty five. However, her reflection always reveals her true age. For this reason, Gabrielle allows no mirrors near her.

Cursed. Gabrielle is unable to cause any direct harm against any of the Vistani. Any spell or attack directed towards a Vistani has its powers nullified. Gabrielle can normally harm half-Vistani though.

Tarokka Deck of Madam Eva. Gabrielle is in the possession of an original Tarokka deck made by Madam Eva. Once per day she can cast any one divination spell from the Wizard spell list. After she does so, she must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned for 1d4 turns. Regardless of whether she succeeds or not, she will suffer from a headache for 1d6 hours.

Casts of the Eye. Gabrielle can use her evil eye to cast enchantment spells. For example, if she has memorized charm person, she can cast it, without expending a spell slot and without the need for spell components. When Gabrielle uses this ability, her eyes flash and narrow like those of a cat.

Gabrielle Aderre

Spellcasting. Gabrielle is an 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Gabrielle has the following Sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, friends, mending, message, mind sliver*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, sleep*, Tasha's caustic brew*

2nd level (3 slots): *crown of madness*, darkness, hold person*, Tasha's mind whip**

3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell, hypnotic pattern*

4th level (2 slots): *sickening radiance*

* can be cast through the Evil Eye

Free of Lunatio. Gabrielle is immune to the mental ailment known as Lunatio or Moon Madness that half-Vistani suffer from.

Ring of Spell Turning. While wearing this ring, Gabrielle has advantage on Saving Throws against any spell that Targets her only (not in an area of effect). In addition, if she rolls a 20 for the save and the spell is 7th level or lower, the spell has no Effect on her and instead targets the caster, using the slot level, spell save DC, Attack bonus, and Spellcasting Ability of the caster.

Font of Magic. Gabrielle has 6 sorcery points which she can use to create spell slots, alter her spells or use sorcerer abilities as explained in the Sorcerer class section of the Player's Handbook.

Metamagic. Gabrielle knows the following metamagic options which she can use by expending sorcery points:

Extended Spell. When she casts a spell that has a duration of 1 minute or longer, she can spend 1 sorcery point to double its duration, to a maximum duration of 24 hours.

Twinned Spell. When she casts a spell that targets only one creature and doesn't have a range of self, she can spend a number of sorcery points equal to the spell's level to target a second creature in range with the same spell (1 sorcery point if the spell is a cantrip). To be eligible for Twinned Spell, a spell must be incapable of targeting more than one creature at the spell's current level.

Eyes of the Dark. Gabrielle can cast the *darkness* spell either by spending 2 sorcery points or by expending a spell slot. If she casts it with sorcery points, she can see through the darkness created by the spell.

Hound of Ill Omen. Gabrielle can call forth a howling creature of darkness to harass her foes. As a bonus action, she can spend 3 sorcery points to summon a hound of ill omen to target one creature she can see within 120 feet of her.

The hound uses the dire wolf's statistics, with the following changes: The hound is size Medium, not Large, and it counts as a monstrosity, not a beast. It appears with 4 temporary hit points. It can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. The hound takes 5 force damage if it ends its turn inside an object. At the start of its turn, the hound automatically knows its target's location. If the target was hidden, it is no longer hidden from the hound. The hound appears in an unoccupied space of Gabrielle's choice within 30 feet of the target. The hound uses its own initiative and on its turn, it can move only toward its target by the most direct route, and it can use its action only to attack its target. The hound can make opportunity attacks, but only against its target. Additionally, while the hound is within 5 feet of the target, the target has disadvantage on saving throws against any spell Gabrielle casts. The hound disappears if it is reduced to 0 hit points, if its target is reduced to 0 hit points, or after 5 minutes.

Actions

Blade of the Crescent Moon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage or +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage against shapechangers.

Significant Possessions

Taroka Deck of Madam Eva, Ring of Spell Turning, Hat of Disguise, Blade of the Crescent Moon, Potion of Flight, Greater Healing Potion, Potion of Haste

Moon Madness Affliction:

Lunatio is the moon madness that afflicts half-Vistani monthly on the three nights of the full moon. During the first hours of the full moon, all half-Vistani that fail on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw lose control of their actions. Half-Vistani characters become NPCs under the DM's control for the whole three nights period. Their minds are clouded by restlessness and anxiety. They cannot sleep, prepare spells, or heal naturally during this period. On each of the three nights of the full moon they need to resist the madness or have their mind deteriorate further. The first night they must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or run wild under the night sky, the second night they roll again to resist becoming aggressive and violent, switching their alignment to Chaotic Evil and finally, if they fail the roll of the third night, the character turns completely insane. Until the moon phase changes again, they act as complete lunatics. During the three night period, they suffer a -2 penalty on all ability checks and saving throws. A *greater restoration* spell cast upon an afflicted with moon madness target, stops the current effects of the madness but the target will still have to resist the next night's effects.

Baron Bakholis

"I have known many monsters in my time.

Some are tragic, others wear their cruelty on the outside, still, others have been forged by the dark fires of their past.

Bakholis is none of those..

He is a tyrant. A pathetic bully. He is not worth the time it would take to crush him.

He will not see his end coming, and no one will mourn him."

~Count Strahd von Zarovich

Background: Three hundred years ago, Treholan was one of dozens of petty nobles that tore Invidia apart with their squabbling. Treholan differed from the other nobles in his willingness to use intimidation and violence to crush his enemies. Treholan invited several dukes to attend a wedding. One of his daughters was to be wed to one of his greatest rivals' sons. Once all of the guests had arrived, Treholan bade his men attack. Every duke, duchess, and escort was slaughtered in the courtyard of the duke's castle. Treholan quickly dispatched his armies to occupy their lands, lest any distant relation stake a claim. Within a few years, Treholan sat as baron over all of Invidia. To honor his ascension to the throne, he had his great castle, Castle Loupet, built. Nearly one hundred years later, Treholan's descendants still ruled Invidia. The most recent, Baron Bakholis, was the cruelest thus far. Bakholis would ride through the countryside, choosing peasants at random to force into his harem or give to his soldiers. He taxed the peasants mercilessly, with any infraction was met with extreme punishment. Soon villages had more people with missing hands and eyes than those that did not. The only person that Bakholis showed any compassion for was his son and heir

One night Bakholis took a young woman named Marta. As he tried to flee with his prize, over a dozen men, Marta's fiance Karlus, Marta's brothers, father, and several villagers gave chase. A fight broke out between the men and Bakholis' guards. The men were angry but they were not trained warriors. They were fighting with pitchforks and wood chopping axes. Bakholis' men were trained killers, armed with real weapons and armored in maille. The fight was short. In the end, Marta's father had to sacrifice himself so Karlus could escape. All the village men were dead, and only one of Bakholis' men had been slain. As Karlus fled into the woods around his village, Bakholis ordered every member of the village to be crucified to pay for the life

of his soldier. He made Marta watch as every person she had ever known was crucified that night. Then he sent her off to his harem. Karlus soon gathered a small army of oppressed villagers from other hamlets, bandits and refugees. Soon Karlus was able to overrun a few small outposts of Bakholis' troops, and turned his attention to Castle Loupet.

Karlus and his army were dedicated and hated Bakholis, but they were not warriors. Castle Loupet was a formidable fortress, and Karlus couldn't breach the walls. The siege dragged on, and soon disease and famine ran rampant in Karlus' camp. As Karlus' army fell apart, Bakholis and his men attacked. Karlus' army was broken, scattered to the winds and Karlus captured. Bakholis brought Karlus and Marta to his dungeon and suspended over a pack of starving wolves. The lovers were slowly lowered into the pit while Bakholis laughed. While the wolves feasted on the lovers' legs, Marta cursed Bakholis. He would be beast outside as well as inside. She yelled the curse as the wolves devoured her legs. She screamed the curse as the wolves tore into her stomach. Choking on her own blood, she whispered the curse as the wolves ripped into her arms. Bakholis laughed the whole time. Once the wolves had had their fill, Bakholis retired to his chambers. He had a sudden headache and needed to sleep. Bakholis woke the next day covered in blood. Every servant, soldier, and advisor in the castle were but piles of bloody meat. Bakholis seized with a sudden panic, raced through the castle, calling his son's name. He barely registered that the landscape outside the window, while similar to the Invidia he ruled, had changed. He found most of his son in the throne room. His wife had tried to save the child by covering him with her own body. She had failed.

Current Sketch: Bakholis rules Invidia as he always has. In many ways his rule has become even more cruel since he was cursed with lycanthropy. He recruited new guards and advisors after his rampage and continues to roam the countryside, kidnapping peasants at will. Some he tortures, others he kills, the rest he forces into slavery. He maintains cordial relationships with Arkandale and Gundarak, and isn't actively hated by the von Zaroviches. In the century since that dark night, Bakholis has learned to revel in his curse. Bakholis leaves before sunset on the nights of the full moon. His soldiers and advisors close the gates and seal themselves inside Castle Loupet, drinking the night away as their lord and master tears across the countryside, slaying with abandon. Bakholis has recently taken a young woman, Gabrielle Aderre, as a pleasure slave. He nearly passed her by, but something about her

Baron Bakholis

eyes caught his attention. In less than a day she will slay the werewolf, stabbing him in the neck with a silver dagger. After Bakholis' death, the peasants of Invidia report seeing his ghost moving amongst the trees of the forest, always pursued by a mob of angry ghosts. Most believe it's the spirits of everyone Bakholis ever killed chasing after him, hungry for revenge.

Darklord's Tactics: Bakholis is a talented warrior, but is a bully and a coward at heart. If he knows his victim can't fight back, Bakholis takes his time. He slices at the flesh of his victim and eats the pieces. Bakholis makes sure the victim sees him devour their flesh. He revels in their fear. Eventually Bakholis gets tired of the game and indulges his savagery. There's very little left of his victim by the time he's done. Against creatures that can fight back, Bakholis sends in troops first. He will let the enemy tire slaughtering his followers and then move in for the kill. Bakholis then takes all the credit for the kill and anyone who disagrees soon disappears.

Borders: When Bakholis closes the borders of Invidia, the domain is surrounded by massive packs of dire wolves and werewolves. Any creature that draws too close to the border is brought down by a sea of snapping jaws and slashing claws. If the creature runs, the pack may pursue for over a mile.



Bakholis

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 in humanoid form, 13 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +3, Perception +6

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. Bakholis can use his action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to its true form if he dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Bakholis has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Bakholis can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

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

Grappler. Bakholis has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by him.

Pack Tactics. Bakholis has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Bakholis makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

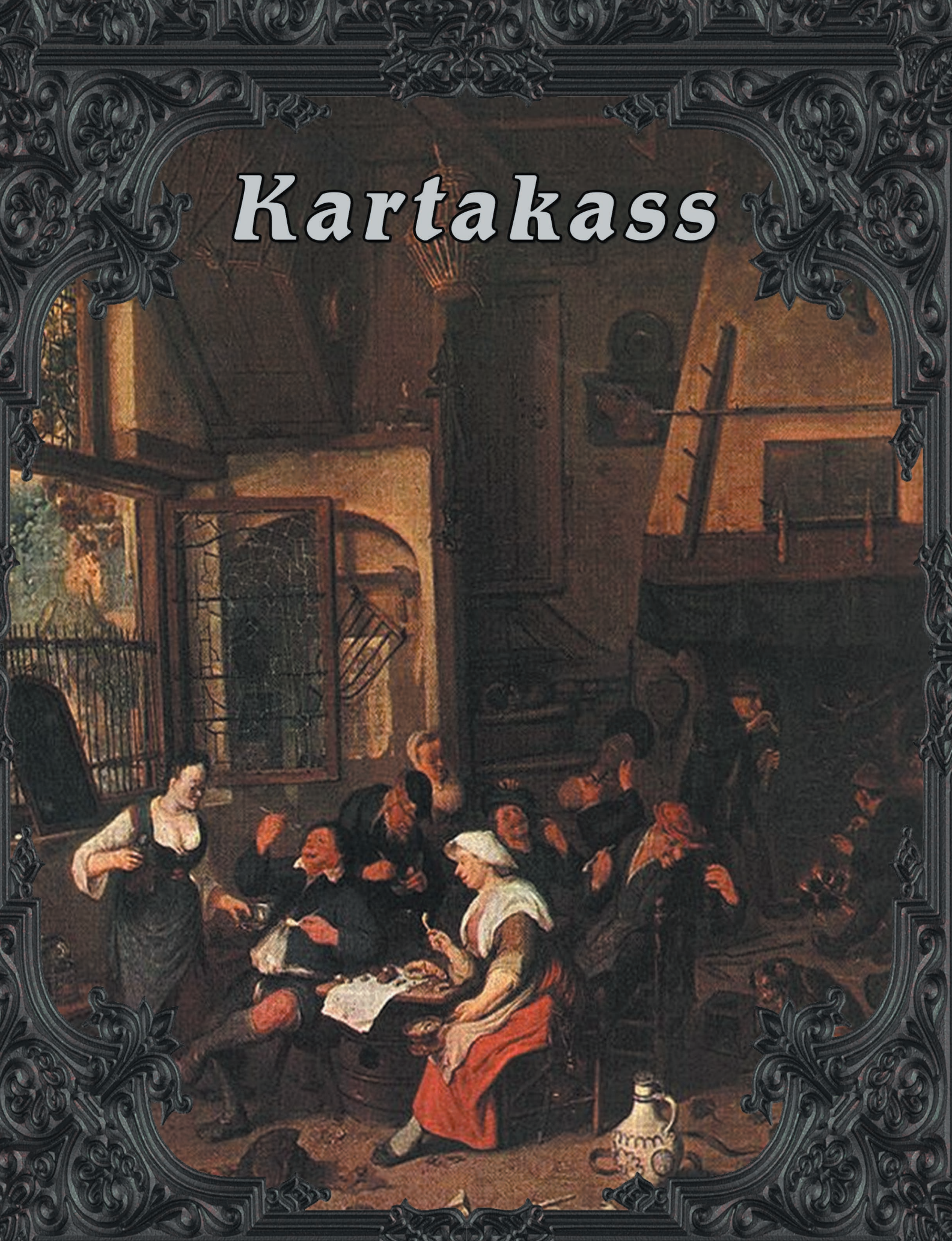
Claws (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d4 + 4) slashing damage.

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

Reactions

Parry (Humanoid Form Only). Bakholis adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Bakholis must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon

Kartakass



Kartakass



artakass is sometimes known as the domain of song. And it is the song of the wild, of the animals coming for humanity in the dead of night. It is a primeval kind of place, one that is closer to its natural roots than the realms around it. Echoes of sound and music can be heard from miles around each of the settlements of Kartakass, but most of the domain is unsettled wilderness populated only by wild beasts.

Much as Harkon Lukas wishes it otherwise, and yearns for a domain filled with people, it is as if the land itself resists the attempts, and the people who live here are fiercely independent though they hold the man they know as the Bard Harkon Lukas in the highest regards. It is also the home of a unique religion known as the Ancestral Choir. It is best worshipped in song, but the main thing that stands out for it is the belief that there is no hell, only two versions of heaven: One for animals and one for humans or sentient beings. Adventures in Kartakass should focus on the strange dichotomy — the people here are open and welcoming, especially to those who are capable musicians, singers, and performers, but the wilderness is dark and dangerous. The deep woods hold many deadly secrets, and while you might think that you're safe in the comfort of civilization, shapeshifting beasts could be all around.

"Some people aren't who they say they are, be cautious of the company you keep, wolf in sheep's clothing." ~ Unknown author

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate. forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	613 BC
Population:	5,000
Races (%):	Humans 94%, wolfweres 4%, half-elves 1%, other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Old Kartakan, Sithican, Vaasi (Kartakan dialect)
Religions:	Ancestral Choir, Ezra, Hala
Government:	Meritocracy (independent settlements)
Ruler(s):	Meistersingers (for each settlement)
Darklord(s):	Harkon Lukas
Nationality:	Kartakan
Analog:	Mixture of Scandinavia and the Black Forest

Local Fauna:

Wild animals are common in Kartakass and form the majority of the food staples within the domain. Wild boars in particular are very common and a favorite at the local inns. Kartakass is also home to a number of predators, with wolves being the most common. Some of the beasts are fearless enough to chase down carriages that move down the roads of the domain, regardless of any armed escorts.

Local Flora:

Kartakass is mostly forested with only some open lands around for farming. The woods consist mainly of hardwoods such as beech, oak, and ash, while the grassy dales are filled with crops and wildflowers that bloom over the spring and summer. The soil is rich and dark, making tubers and beets grow very well here. However, two plants stand out in Kartakass, with one being well known to the Kartakans and the other a closely guarded secret. The first is meekulbern, a type of vine that grows only in a few places. It has a sickly-sweet odor, and the berries are a deep crimson. The berries can be distilled into a strong form of ale known as meekulbrau that relaxes the throat and calms the nerves of singers, though the bitter taste is not for everyone. (Drinking meekulbrau gives a character advantage on either Performance or Persuasion checks for 1 hour (at the end of which they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned until they complete a long rest)).



Kartakass

Kartakass

Drinking meekulbrau stains the lips and teeth blood-red for about an hour, after which it turns brown and flakes away. Some outsiders mistake this for vampirism and often need to have the confusion cleared up by the locals.

The other plant is a version of wolfsbane known as nightblight. The locals say that it carries an overwhelming stench to those who have changed shape (regardless of whether these are lycanthropes, doppelgangers, spellcasters, or any of a number of others), and that it prevents them from moving closer. (Any creature that has changed shape must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be unable to move within 30 feet of the bloom). The plant only remains potent for a few days after being plucked and loses efficacy after 3–5 days. It also only grows in the Arkalias Hills along the southern border of the domain.



Native Horrors

Of greater concern to the inhabitants of Kartakass are the kobolds and goblins that populate the Wolfwood near the border with Barovia. They occupy the natural caverns and ravines that can be found beneath the ancient forest, with limestone caverns being their favorite lairs.

But the biggest threat in Kartakass is what the locals call narrulve (trickster wolves in the local tongue, known to others as wolfweres). They are fearsome creatures that assume the shape of man and wolf, but unlike the werewolves common elsewhere, the natural form of these creatures is the wolf form, and they voluntarily assume the shape of a human, rather than being subject to the whim of the lunar cycle. They're unable to pass on their abilities to anything but their physical children, meaning their numbers are stable. They are far more voracious and cunning than the werewolves seen elsewhere and are very hard to detect and catch as a result.

Terrain type

Kartakass is a land of three: forests, dales, and ravines hidden within either. The forests as mentioned are dark, deep and ancient hardwoods, while the hills are gently rolling, and perfect for farmland and flowers. The ravines appear in both, sometimes without warning, and many wolf packs herd their prey into these ravines, from which there is no escape. A few of the ravines also have openings into extensive limestone caverns that stretch underneath the domain and serve as home to all manner of beasts.

Important Landmarks

Ambrose Compound

The Ambrose Compound, a two-story wooden lodge with a few outbuildings and a stable, is the home of the Brotherhood of Broken Blades. It is a small society of mage-finders who hunt down and eliminate evil mages. They believe that ALL non-divine magic is evil, and while they are willing to acknowledge that there are those who use their magic for the betterment of all, they are heavily outnumbered, and best dealt with before they become an issue.

This has led to the founder and leader, an elderly but capable swordsman, Jonathan Ambrose to suffer a bit of an internal conflict that sometimes sees visitors on the receiving end of his temperament. His step-daughter, Elaine Clairn, a beautiful and kind young woman, is a sorcerer, and his love of her continually duels with his bitter hatred of spellcasters.

Catacombs of Kartakass

Beneath the Arkaliss Hills lie the Catacombs of Kartakass, the remains of an attempt by Radaga — a failed darklord — to establish herself as the ruler of a new domain named Daglan. She failed, but her ruins remain here. From the surface, it is only possible to see the tip of a grim ziggurat that is topped with a statue of a great raven. The raven marks the entrance to the catacombs. It was thought to be uninhabited for a long time, but it seems that the Beast of the Hills is a creature that lives there. It is a hideous female, with black scaly skin, wings, and thin matted hair. Though it looks fearsome, the locals have yet to be able to verify a single instance of it attacking anyone, leading some to speculate if this creature might actually be the opposite of the dangerous wolfweres, in that it looks malevolent, but is benign. (With the wolfweres being the other way around).

Kartakass

Towns and villages:

Harmonia

Harmonia is the smaller of the two largest settlements in Kartakass, clocking in at 1,500 inhabitants. It is widely considered the cultural center of Harmonia, and ruled by a Meistersinger (Eliska Vokrona) who has won the nomination for the past 15 years running, and who is a competent and uncontroversial ruler. The biggest source of pride to Harmonia is the amphitheater that it is home to, and the source of much of its fame. The amphitheater is carved directly from the rock of the surrounding cliff face and its acoustics are unmatched in the Core. Anyone who takes to the stage and sings can be heard clearly more than halfway through the town. Next to the amphitheater is the Harmonic Hall, the palace widely considered the finest musical academy in the Core, having educated many famous performers over the years. Finally, Harmonia is home to the Temple of Divine Song, the only known temple dedicated to the Ancestral Choir. It is in poor shape and in need of repair, but the pipe organ has been lovingly restored through the efforts of Tibor Bellock, the baritone lead singer and high priest of Harmornia.

Skald

Skald is the home of some 2,800 individuals, and is the largest settlement in Harmonia, though it is considered less culturally important than Harmonia, despite its bigger size, power, and wealth. It is one of the few fortified towns in Harmonia, with a thick 25-foot tall curtain wall around it, one that once radiated out from the now-vanished Dargacht Keep.

All that is left from the keep, apart from the walls, is the Dargacht Plaza, where supposedly Harkon Lukas held the speech that caused all of Kartakass to rise up in rebellion against their overlords. The wall is in terrible condition now, though the town has never suffered a wolf attack during any of the Meistersinger competitions. It is the domain of the Meistersinger Harkon Lukas, a man who is seemingly incapable of losing the competitions, as he has won them for as long as anyone can remember. He lives in the Meistersinger's Keep, an old building from earlier times, that sits dark and brooding atop a hill, overlooking the town. Rumor has it that he spends his time elsewhere, often in the beds of his many lovers.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Forlorn
Hazlan
Sithicus

Fun Fact:

Rulership of each settlement is determined in meistersinger competitions. These are extended contests where the participants are pitted against each other, first in a mass singing competition, then in a "war of words" where they are to humiliate each other, and finally, in a head-to-head competition where the final two contenders sing against each other.



Harkon Lukas

"Greetings friends! Though we have never met, I call you friend all the same. This world can be such a dreary place. Come and drink with me and let us spread some cheer and push back the darkness for a while."

~Harkon Lukas

Harkon Lukas is a handsome human male, looking to be in his late thirties or early forties. He is friendly, instantly likable, and seems to have friends in every tavern. Harkon's long black hair, goatee, and mustache are neatly trimmed and washed. Unusually for a Dark Lord, Harkon is genuinely likable, and has a real affection for humans and elves. It is not unheard of for an especially attractive human or elf traveling through the woods of Kartakass to have an escort of dire wolves to keep predators away. This only lasts until Harkon gets hungry, as no company is worth missing a good meal.

Background: Harkon Lukas was born a wolfwere in Cormyr in the Forgotten Realms. Harkon was unusual for a wolfwere, fond of the company of humans, with a genuine interest in their lives. Wolfweres are solitary creatures that are happy to spend their lives alone, but unfond of just his own company, Harkon tried to forge his clan into a tight knit group, but was shunned for this. After trying for years, the embers of rage finally burst in him. Harkon rampaged through the farmlands outside of Cormyr, killing and burning indiscriminately. He was giving chase to an unfortunate child through the forests as the mists closed in. When the mists cleared, Harkon found himself in Barovia. Harkon wandered through the villages of Barovia for a few years, mostly performing, with the occasional killing spree when he finally met the vampire Strahd von Zarovich. The lord of Barovia took exception to Harkon hunting his peasants. The battle was short and entirely one sided. Harkon fled from Strahd into the mists and found himself in Kartakass. Since that encounter, Harkon hunts any vampires he finds in his domain down without mercy. The hunt only ends when the vampires flee or are torn to pieces.

Current Sketch: Harkon wants to rule, and have a life of consequence. The powers that gave him his domain have robbed him of that chance. Harkon rules the domain, but full of forests and wild animals, this gives him no opportunity for consequence. Harkon is intelligent and fond of making long term plans, but in Kartakass, none of that matters.

Darklord's Tactics: Harkon always has a pack of dire wolves or wolfweres nearby. Harkon will cast a few spells at the beginning of combat if possible, but always inevitably succumbs to the berserker rage of his cursed sword. Harkon revels in combat and does not fear pain or death. Death never seems to hold him in its grip anyway.

Borders: When Harkon closes the borders, a soporific song starts. Any creature, even undead or constructs, that tries to cross the border falls into a deep sleep. They will awaken an hour later. If they move toward the border again the creature will fall asleep. The wall won't harm them, but Kartakass is full of large packs of wolves.

Harkon Lukas' Lair: The Kartakan Inn

In the center of Skald, the largest city in Kartakass, sits the Kartakan Inn. At midday, the inn is comfortable and usually filled with patrons. Harkon Lukas is fond of the inn, and often performs for the crowd. Harkon uses the performances to keep the crowd happy, make a little coin, and choose his next meal. As night approaches and the shadows grow longer, the farmers and craftsmen that fill the inn during the day scatter and the customers become more bestial and brutal. No matter which group is in the inn, Harkon is the center of their attention. Harkon Lukas encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 15 (XP)



Harkon Lukas

Harkon Lukas

Medium beast (shapeshifter), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (in human form), 18 in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 225 (30d8 + 90)

Speed 30 ft. in human form, 40 ft. in wolf or hybrid form

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**
18 (+4) 20 (+5) 17 (+3) 16 (+3) 12 (+1) 22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +6, Cha +11

Skills Deception +11, Perception +6, Performance +11, Persuasion +11

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks not made with cold iron weapons, thunder

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elven, Undercommon

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Wolfwere. Harkon appears to be human, but is actually a rare creature called a wolfwere. Wolfweres appear to be similar to werewolves, but have several important differences. Wolfweres start life as a dire wolf, and cannot curse others with their affliction. Wolfweres are unaffected by silver, but often pretend to be afraid to lull victims into a false sense of security. Iron burns wolfweres, leaving bald patches and blistered skin. Wolfweres can change from their dire wolf or hybrid form into a humanoid form at will.

Shapechanger. Harkon is an accomplished shapechanger that can become any humanoid, but is most fond of his human form. Harkon is fond of changing his gender, and can be either gender in any of his forms. No matter which gender he chooses, Harkon is stunningly attractive. Harkon can use his action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a humanoid, or back into its true form, which is a dire wolf. Harkon is fond of changing his gender, and can be either sex in any form. No matter which sex he chooses, Harkon is stunningly attractive. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Harkon reverts to his dire wolf form if he is killed. Harkon cannot be forced to change his shape.

Innate Spellcasting. Harkon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (+11 to hit, spell save DC 19). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring not material components:

At will: mage hand, minor illusion, vicious mockery
5/Day each: charm person, dissonant whispers, silent image

3/Day each: blindness/deafness, crown of madness, hold person

1/Day each: fear, hypnotic pattern, major image

Cursed Berserker. When Harkon became the lord of Kartakass, the Dark Powers gifted him with a cursed sword. If Harkon is in his hybrid or humanoid form and starts his turn within, or moves to within 5 feet of an enemy while in combat, the sword immediately appears in his hand. While Harkon is holding the sword he gains 25 temporary hit points, but cannot cast spells, and will continue to attack the nearest enemy until it or Harkon is slain. Harkon will keep attacking the nearest enemy until there are no more visible enemies. If Harkon drops the sword, it appears in his hand at the beginning of his next turn.

Elixir of Madness. Harkon carries a magical bottle that is always full of a dark red liquid. Harkon tells others the liquid is wine, and offers to share it with anyone he meets as a sign of friendship. Anyone who drinks the liquid must make a DC 16 constitution saving throw or be affected by the 4th level spell confusion for 1 minute. Creatures affected by the spell can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect. Harkon automatically makes this saving throw.

Rejuvenation. The woods of Kartakass are filled with massive wolves. If Harkon is killed, his soul immediately jumps into the body of the nearest dire wolf. He regains consciousness and control over his powers within 2d12 hours, before that, he acts and is like any other Dire Wolf. If Harkon is killed while in this bestial state, he is permanently slain. The method of Harkon's death doesn't matter. Old age, disease, combat etc. always leads to him having his soul transferred to a dire wolf. Harkon doesn't know how long this will last, but has survived centuries this way. It seems the Dark Powers that granted him this realm are determined to make sure he stays in Kartakass as long as possible.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Harkon makes two attacks with his Berserker Blade..

Berserker Blade (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The sword is magical and has +1 to hit and damage.

Bite (Dire Wolf Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 25 (6d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Silver Harp (recharge 5-6) (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Harkon plays one of two songs on his harp. The first song, called Lament of the Worldwalker, drains his opponents' will to live. Enemies within 50 feet of Harkon must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be slowed as the 3rd level spell of the same name. Slowed characters may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to escape the spell. The second, called The Children of the Night, summons 2d10 dire wolves. These wolves appear at the end of the turn. The dire wolves are friendly to Harkon and follow his commands.

Harkon Lukas

Legendary Actions

Harkon Lukas can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Harkon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Vicious Mockery. Harkon casts *vicious mockery*.

Berserker Blade. Harkon makes one Berserker Blade attack.

Howl of the Pack. The eerie howling of dozens of wolves fills the air around Harkon Lukas. Every creature within 60 feet of Harkon must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are frightened of Harkon for one minute. Frightened creatures can reroll the Wisdom saving throw at the end of their turn. Creatures that save are immune to this ability for 1 hour.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Harkon Lucas can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

The massive fireplace in the inn roars to life, flinging embers everywhere. Every creature within 50 feet of Harkon must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. They take 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save.

Harkon chooses one creature within 30 feet of him. All the food and drink that creature has in its stomach turns rancid. That creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they take 14 (4d6) poison damage and are poisoned for 1 minute. They may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn to end the condition.

Harkon drinks or eats any of the food he finds in the Kartakan Inn. Harkon is healed for 18 (4d8) hit points.

Harkon Lucas can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Mordent



Mordent



Mordent is a land mired in anger, vengeance, and perseverance. Unlike many other domains, it wasn't created from whole cloth by the entrance of an evil entity into the Mists but was instead ripped from another world by the actions of those who attempted to escape the clutches of the Domains of Dread.

The story starts when an alchemist named Count Strahd von Zarovich, a man of good heart and alchemical knowledge embarked on his greatest undertaking, the creation of a device known as the Apparatus. Of course, within the Mists, the name Strahd has very different tones, and no one knows if this second Strahd (referred to hereafter as the Alchemist) was a byproduct of Strahd's agreement with the Dark Powers. Perhaps this was where the good parts of his soul were sent, while the remainder turned into the Devil Strahd of Barovia. Regardless, on the night where he activated his device for the first time, he broke down the barriers between the realities of the multiverse.

At the same time, Strahd and Azalin were attempting to escape the confines of Barovia, and for a time, all three were caught near Mordentshire and Gryphon Manor in particular. Once the dust of that settled, the two of them had been returned to their domains, and the Alchemist had vanished. And that left the ghost of Wilfred Godefroy as the most powerful force of evil within the land. At the time, he had been hiding from the ghosts of his wife and daughter, who were haunting him, after he killed them and later committed suicide to avoid the haunting. His residence at the time, Heather House, was no longer sufficient and he returned to Gryphon Manor and has since been absorbing spirits and souls, strengthening himself.

Adventures within Mordent are likely to involve Gryphon Manor or Heather House and should feature elements of Godefroy's volatile temper. Crossing him is easy, and annoying him even more so, but he prefers his revenge and striking back to be slow, and instead of merely killing an enemy, will set out to utterly destroy him: mind, body, and soul. Perhaps the group of adventurers is sent here to assist the famed Weathermay family in their pursuit of monsters, and a spirit that they are fighting against is absorbed by Gryphon Manor as the fight draws close to the building. Perhaps they're looking for information on someone who is lost, or perhaps they're here to help cure Lord Weathermay, or strengthen his heir. They

may even have been sent as ghost hunters, looking to the famous House on Gryphon Hill, wanting to make sure that earlier adventurers completed the task and drove out the ghosts that the Manor reputedly holds. Of course, those previous adventurers failed, and Godefroy is not likely to make the same mistake twice.

"One should not lose one's temper unless one is certain of getting more and more angry to the end." ~William Butler Yeats



Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, marsh, and plains
Year Formed:	579 BC
Population:	6,000~
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Mordentish, Falkovnian, Vaasi
Religions:	Ezra, Hala
Government:	Hereditary aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Lord Jules Weathermay
Darklord(s):	Lord Wilfred Godefroy
Nationality:	Mordentish
Analog:	England (especially Dartmoor and the like)

Local Fauna:

Mordent is rather short on wildlife, as the heaths and moors do not allow much cover for the animals to hide. There are a few deer, boars, foxes, and a number of wolves as well, but there isn't as much animal life as

Mordent

most would expect for such an open area. What is in abundance here are bats. They hide in the attics of old houses, barns, and in the ruins that can be found around the Mordent countryside. In Mordent, the populace doesn't fear the bats refusing to believe in such things as vampires, though they're all too aware that ghosts are real. While the wolves do pose a threat, local custom says that those who kill a wolf will be haunted by their spirits until the entire pack is dead. As a result, most Mordentish folk simply avoid them.

Local Flora:

Mordent is dominated by the heaths, and the grass that covers it appears to the casual observer to be practically everything that lives in the domain. And to some degree that is correct though only at first sight. The true variety of plant life in Mordent can be found within the ancient deciduous forests. Here all kinds of trees can be found, though willow trees dominate near the waterways. Of special note here though are the bush known as Devil's Tears and a small white flower called Wraithroot. Devil's Tears, or specifically the berries from the bush, are exceedingly hot when eaten, followed by a sweet rush afterward. They're often added to certain desserts and delicacies as a result, where they can be counteracted in the proper way and ensure that the taste comes to the forefront at the right time. Unfortunately, they are the crux of a favorite practical joke among the young of the Mordentish nobility, where the crushed berries are added to an unsuspecting victim's drink or food. Apparently, it is the height of comedy to watch someone trying to cool themselves after a mouthful of the berries. Wraithroot flowers are small, ivory-colored flowers that reflect even the slightest light back on their source. They're often used to make cemeteries where the flowers will lead a visitor past the graves in the moonlight. Locals insist that it looks romantic with the silver glow, but their stories insist that it is bad luck to use the flowers to lead the way home, so they're not used for marking public roads. More specifically, they believe that spirits are bound to follow the lights of the flowers, and if those lead to a home, they'll haunt the house forever.

Native Horrors

What Mordent lacks in animal life, it more than makes up for in the activity of malign spirits. Ghosts, banshees, poltergeists, and more are extremely common in the land as if they were drawn here. The same is true for the various creatures tied to the Mists, such as the Mist Ferryman. Encounters with the Headless Horseman are more frequent here than anywhere else in the Mists. There is an exception to this. In a 6-mile radius around Gryphon Manor and Mordentshire, there

are hardly any such creatures. Those that do venture here, are inevitably drawn towards the Manor and Godefroy's control. As a result, being here is quite safe, though a few spirits do the work of Godefroy, and they are able to move freely within the area. Special mention must also go to Arden Bay on the west coast of Mordent, where there supposedly is a large sea serpent that rises to the surface during the most violent storms, and who has been blamed for the disappearance of many ships over the years.

Terrain type

Mordent is flat, with only very slight hills breaking the monotony. As a result, the wind tends to blow fiercely across it, and it's a rare day where the wind isn't blustery. Only in the groves of trees is it possible to find some refuge from it. The other thing that tends to dominate Mordent weather is the rain. It rains for at least an hour, practically every day. When combined with the wind, it gets incredibly cold to be caught in a downpour, even though the domain and temperature might otherwise be quite comfortable. The land is also rather poor when it comes to minerals and stone. As a result, everyone builds their houses from timber and thatch, often using mud and the like to insulate their houses, along with sod roofing. Only the rich can afford to have stone and ironwork as part of their buildings, but even for them, it is sparse. Instead, they use wooden shingles to cover their roofs and show their higher status. Around the domain though are the ruined remains of many older mansions and houses, and these all show a much greater degree of stone and ironwork than even the buildings of the rich. It is as if the land was once much richer, but lost a great degree of mineral wealth when it entered the Mists. Elsewhere, the stones and metals might have been recovered from the ruined buildings, but in Mordent the fear of ghosts is enough to keep people away from them.

Important Landmarks

Boistribue Mansion

The remains of the Boistribue Mansion lies within the Forest of the Ancients at the northern edge of Mordent. It once housed the Boistribue family, but they disappeared almost 100 years before Mordent entered the Mists. The family was suspected of inbreeding due to their extreme isolation. Something must have happened on the night that they disappeared. The mansion was found empty except for the bloody remains of servants, claw marks everywhere, and but a single survivor of the family who had been driven so mad that their accounts of the night made no sense. All they could talk about was teeth, claws, and blood. They died in a mental asylum a few years later. Locals sus-

Mordent

pect that lycanthropes were behind the massacre, but no proof was ever found of it. Moreover, no one knows if the family was victim or perpetrator of the crime, but these days the Mordentish stay away from the Forest of the Ancients once night has fallen. Not for fear of Lycanthropes, but for fear of the Boistribue Manor. The terrible events are said to have given sentience to the house, as well as a means of moving, and it now haunts the forest.

Halloway House

Halloway House sits on a hill overlooking the Arden River and the ruins of Steadwall. It was the home of the Halloway family, who all died in mysterious ways over the years, to the point where the last patriarch of the family became an absolute recluse, lost in his paranoia — never leaving the house. Supposedly that last scion of the Halloways may still live there now unless they too have died. The Halloway family was quite wealthy, but their wealth has never been found, and must still be at the House itself. The only way to access the hill and Halloway House is through the use of Smythe's Shadow. Smythe was the ferryman of Steadwall and is the only living resident left in Steadwall. The old man is too stubborn to move and spends his days ferrying people across the Arden River, though he is particularly eager to ferry adventurers to Halloway House, hoping that finding the wealth may help him too. In fact, Smythe is the reason that the Halloway family has died. After killing a young Halloway bride and groom, and dumping them overboard, he was discovered by one of the dreaded Mist Ferrymen. Pleading for his life, he made a deal with the ferryman. He would receive all the riches of Halloway House in return for killing the entire family and guiding victims into the ferryman's waiting hands. He's done so for years, but the wealth eludes him, as he can no longer leave the crossing, making him unable to retrieve the riches and break the curse that the ferryman has placed on him. He hopes that, eventually, adventurers will successfully recover the riches, after which he will kill them, take the treasure for himself, and finally escape the grasp of the ferryman.

Heather House

Heather House is the home of the Weathermay family and is the unofficial capital building of Mordent and Mordentshire. Here is where Jules Weathermay lives out the remainder of his days, helped by his family, especially that of his son-in-law Daniel Foxgrove. His two granddaughters meanwhile (Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove) have become famed monster hunters after spending time under the tutelage of the famed Rudolph van Richten. Regrettably, and unbeknownst to Jules, Daniel is being haunted by Wilfred Godefroy,

who has captured the spirit of Alice (Jules' daughter and Daniel's wife) and is threatening to never allow her to pass into the afterlife unless Daniel spies for him. Wilfred Godefroy visits Heather House on occasion, ensuring that everything is going to plan, but he avoids Jules wherever he can, as Jules seems able to see him or at least pick up on his presence, something that worries Godefroy. After all, he doesn't want monster hunters to come running after him, which is also why he hasn't simply eliminated Jules outright and is simply waiting for him to pass on. Once he does, he will capture his spirit, and gain access to the knowledge that was previously denied him.

House on Gryphon Hill

Also known as Gryphon Manor, the mansion is a source of legend within Mordent, shunned by the living and absorbing any spirit near Mordentshire itself. The house was built some 600 years ago, by famed explorer Jacques Renier (a long-ago ancestor of Jacqueline Renier of Richemulot), but no family ever lived there for more than a year afterward, until the arrival of Lord Wilfred Godefroy, a man well known for his temper and harsh treatment of servants and wife. He, against all odds, liked it here, and stayed here for a number of years, with his wife giving birth to his daughter. Wilfred was not happy with "just" a daughter, wanting a son, and blamed his wife for all manner of transgressions against him, for failing to secure him a male heir. And eventually, his temper led him to murder his wife and child, pinning the blame on his favorite stallion for it, as an "accident". While this absolved him of mortal judgment, it didn't free him of the hauntings of his wife and daughter who came back as ghosts and haunted him for almost a year before he finally killed himself on New Year's Eve. This still did not free him of their hauntings, and he fled to Heather House until he became a darklord, at which point he returned. Unfortunately for Godefroy, while his ascent to Darklord gave him great powers, including control over other spirits and undead, it doesn't extend to his wife and daughter, and they still haunt him now, taunting him for his failures and stoking his rage, making it grow ever hotter. The building itself is built in a gothic style, with crenellations and gargoyles on every corner. The roof is made of clay shingles, and in spite of the age and lack of living inhabitants for the last century, it is still in good repair and all the windows are intact (though the garden could use some work). It sits like an angry animal waiting to pounce atop Gryphon Hill, just waiting for the right moment.

Mordent

Towns and villages:

Blackburn's Crossing

Blackburn's Crossing is named after the Blackburn-Bruce family and is home to 500 souls. The Blackburn-Bruces died out many years ago, but their family manor still sits, literally, astride the river with polished red stones covering a flying, two-story walkway that crosses the river. Apart from this magnificent building the rest of the buildings of Blackburn are utterly unremarkable, which is just the way the inhabitants prefer it. But that is the only "normal" thing about the inhabitants of Blackburn's Crossing. Where the people of Mordent are normally reserved and quite off-putting, the people of Blackburn's Crossing are open and welcoming, which has no doubt helped them to establish themselves as a trade hub within Mordent. The downside of this is that it has given the criminal elements of the population a good place to conduct business. To prevent this, the local authorities, led by the mayor, a half-elf woman named Lily Vidicus, a wizard of some note, have strengthened the local police force of Mordent, known throughout the domain as the Lamplighters.

Mordentshire

Mordentshire is the capital of Mordent, and home to both the Heather House and the Gryphon Manor and sits above the natural harbor of Arden Bay, atop a series of high cliffs. The city is split into two, the higher and lower end. The lower end is the harbor area, from where numerous stairways ascend to the top of the cliffs and into the higher end of Mordentshire. The city is dark, with the wood of the buildings quickly absorbing the salty smell of the ocean nearby, giving it a perpetual smell of the sea, even on days where there is no wind. It is quite chilly because of the presence of the ocean, and most people wear heavy coats and scarves, even during summer. All told, some 2,500 people live in the dark city, with the children playing in the alleyways and quiet streets. The city feels safe, at least to the people living here, though outsiders and foreigners get met with cold stares and silences that drag out forever. Countering all of the dark buildings and wood of Mordentshire is the singularly beautiful Chapel of Pure Heart. It is made of white stone akin to marble, and sits like a beacon of light just on the edge of town, on an overlook — a place where it can be seen from everywhere in town. Here, the faithful gather to pray to Ezra for safety. On the opposite side of town, like a dark twin to the Chapel of Pure Heart, sits the House on Gryphon Hill itself.

Steadwall

Steadwall is an abandoned town that lies in ruins thanks to the year-long efforts of Smythe the ferryman. The buildings have started to collapse from neglect, except for Smythe's own, though it too is suffering, and those who venture into Steadwall experience an eerie sensation of being watched from the empty doorways. Once home to 500 souls, it now holds only the empty residences of the families who left or died, though according to Mordent superstition, it may well also be home to several types of undead.

Tumbledown

Tumbledown sits deep within the Lightless Wood, a place that polite society within Mordent has either forgotten or ignored. Built upon and within the ruins of a far older city, the 300 people of Tumbledown prove even more insular than the rest of the people of Mordent. Tumbledown has a sinister reputation within Mordent. The family that used to own the Lightless Wood, the Gauldamons, were revealed, after centuries, to be worshippers of the demon, Lou'gal the Smiling One. Though the family was driven off or killed (depending on who tells the story), the land remains tainted. Why the residents cling to Tumbledown is unknown, as it is an unpleasant place that sits within a swampy area, but this might be traced to the rulers of the city. Here, the mayor, Alfred Montrose, is a man without power. has succumbed to depression, due to the city's true rulers: the business owners. There aren't many of these here, in fact, only a blacksmith, three tanneries, an "exotic" item store (read: junk, but don't say that to the owner) and a money-changing service are the only businesses that are readily apparent. Why they're clinging on, or what they might be looking for is unknown, but surely there must be some form of riches to keep business folks coming here.

Neighboring domain(s):

Dementlieu
Richemulot
The Sea of Shadows
Valachan

Fun Fact:

The people of Mordent are a stoic lot, but many of them have a liking for practical jokes, such as with the Devil's Tears that are added to food. They would never show this to non-Mordent folk, but the glee with which they engage in this behavior is almost childlike.

Lord Wilfred Godefroy

"Hell is empty, all the devils are here."

~William Shakespeare "The Tempest"

Lord Wilfred Godefroy is the ghost of a tall human in his mid seventies. He wears a ruffled shirt with a high, stiff collar. He has a tailored jacket with tails. His hair is pulled back into a ponytail held together with a knot. Lord Godefroy always has a severe expression, like someone just asked him to perform a particularly obnoxious task, or he smelled a foul smell. He squints at anyone that approaches him, sometimes through a pince-nez. Lord Godefroy talks to everyone like they are a particularly dim child, and hates to be interrupted. He is intelligent with a sadistic streak. Underneath all his arrogance and bluster, Godefroy is a coward at heart.

Background: In the heart of Gryphon Manor lay something evil. The locals shunned the place. The surrounding towns and villages all knew the legends. Gryphon Manor was evil. No one has lasted there for more than a year before fleeing in terror, taking only the clothes on their back and what they could grab in a panicked flight. Then the house would sit empty for a few decades before some other fool moved in.

Lord Wilfred Godefroy inherited Gryphon Manor nearly 200 years ago. Unlike previous tenants, Lord Godefroy found the home quite comfortable. After living there for a year, he arranged to marry Estelle Weathermay, the daughter of a wealthy local, some 50 years his junior. Godefroy was a cruel and quick tempered man, given to fits of rage at his new wife for imagined slights. When his wife gave birth to a girl, Godefroy began to build an insane fantasy. His wife had cheated on him. His wife had cheated to make sure she wouldn't have a male child. The young girl, Lila, was Estelle's heart and soul. Lila was a sweet child that loved unconditionally. Godefroy stewed in his insanity for years before it finally became too much. One night his temper exploded and he beat his wife to death with his walking stick. When his daughter tried to save her mother, Godefroy killed her as well.

Godefroy moved quickly to frame one of his servants. Against someone as wealthy and well connected as Godefroy, the man never stood a chance. He was hanged for murders he never committed within a week. For all the centuries Gryphon Manor had been a nexus of evil, no one had ever taken a life there. When Godefroy killed his wife and daughter something deep in the heart of the house awoke. The night after his wife and daughter were buried, their vengeful spirits appeared

and tormented Godefroy. Every night for a year Godefroy was tormented by their spirits. Finally it proved to be too much, and Godefroy committed suicide.

Godefroy haunted his manor for a few years. He was denied the rest of the afterlife, but at least he was free of his wife and daughter. All that changed when the Dark Powers found Mordentshire.

An alchemist moved into Gryphon Manor, seeking to use the terrible power trapped there to activate an arcane Apparatus he had created. The alchemist activated the Apparatus at the same time that Strahd and Azalin opened a portal to Mordentshire. Strahd and Azalin were trying to escape Ravenloft, but instead pulled all of Mordentshire into the Core. The alchemist was slain, and the Dark Powers chose Lord Godefroy as a darklord.

At first Lord Godefroy revelled in his new power. Gryphon Manor was full of spirits and Godefroy wasted no time in making them his unwilling servants. For one day, Godefroy enjoyed Ravenloft. Then night came and his wife and daughter found him. They came one night as the sun set. They tore at his ethereal form, ignoring his powers and pathetic cries for mercy. Despite this, Godefroy rarely left Gryphon Manor, only going as far as his family vault to check on his body.

A decade ago, a party of adventurers assaulted Gryphon Manor. Godefroy was able to best them, but was nearly slain in the process. The conflict shook Godefroy from his self imposed exile. He used his ability to turn invisible to spy on the moving in Mordentshire. To his horror, he found that the adventures had been around for weeks and openly discussed their plans.

Godefroy continued to spy on the living when fortune smiled on him. The mayor of Mordentshire, Daniel Foxgrove, had recently lost his wife, Alice Weathermay. Alice was one of the spirits trapped in Gryphon Manor. Now Foxgrove serves as Godefroy's spy. If Godefroy is disappointed with Foxgrove's information, Alice is punished. If Godefroy is pleased, Alice is allowed to leave the manor and visit her husband for one night.

Current Sketch: Godefroy sees stupidity all around him. He lords himself over the spirits trapped in Gryphon Manor during the day. He forces a spirit to spend its time in one room, cleaning and making minor repairs. Godefroy inspects each room daily. He rages at the spirit if the room is not perfect. If the room is perfect, Godefroy tears the room apart and then punishes the spirit for not stopping him. Godefroy plays the invincible lord during the day, but as the sun sets his

Lord Wilfred Godefroy

demeanor changes. He starts at every small sound. As the terrible screams of his wife Estelle and Lila echo through the house Godefroy flees. No matter where Godefroy hides, his wife and daughter find him. When the morning dawns and Estelle and Lila leave, Godefroy vents his anger on the first creature he sees.

Darklord's Tactics: During the day, Godefroy toys with his victims. He stalks them while he's invisible and then attacks with his walking stick before disappearing again. Godefroy will try to isolate his opponents when he can. He can torture them longer if they're alone. If his opponents escape Gryphon Manor Godefroy will pretend to be anchored to the house. After his opponents have moved out of sight he will turn invisible and follow them. He wreaks bloody revenge on anyone who helps them.

Borders: When Godefroy closes the borders, the mists roll in. Anyone foolish enough to venture out discovers that all the roads head end at Mordentshire. Traveling across the country doesn't fare any better. To make matters worse, spirits fill the mists and it's only a matter of time before they discover a living creature either brave or foolish enough to travel in the mist.

Regional Effects: The region containing Godefroy's lair is warped by his presence, which creates the following effect: Gryphon Manor is considered a vortex of evil in many Mordentish legends. Creatures that die within 5 miles of Gryphon Manor must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or have their soul trapped within the manor. Funeral traditions include practices to ensure that spirits do not linger after their death and become trapped, making them immune to the Manor's influence. Ethereal creatures in Mordent must make a Wisdom save or be involuntarily drawn into the manor. The DC to escape the manor's pull is 30 within its walls and drops by 1 for each increment of 1,000 feet between the subject and the manor. Thus, an ethereal creature 10,000 feet away would have to make a Wisdom save of DC 20 or be sucked in. (At distances beyond 30,000 feet, the manor's pull is easily ignored.) Ghosts and other incorporeal creatures add their CR as a morale bonus to this saving throw. Ethereal creatures must make this Wisdom save once a day. Godefroy is exempt from this effect, and he can exempt other ethereal creatures by giving them verbal permission to leave. Dead creatures that have their soul trapped can't be returned to life unless their corpse is also in the manor and their spirit can be located.

If Godefroy dies and the Manor is destroyed, the effects fade immediately.



Lord Wilfred Godefroy

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor (13), Ring of protection +2 (3))

Hit Points 89 (12d12)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +9, Con +8, Int +3, Wis +9, Cha +3

Skills Animal Handling +6, Deception +12, History +7, Insight +11, Intimidation +17, Investigation +7, Perception +6, Persuasion +12

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic, Darkonese, Mordentish

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Ethereal Sight. Godefroy can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Godefroy can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Turn Immunity. Godefroy is immune against any effect that turns undead.

Bolster the Undead. Any undead creature within 300 ft of Godefroy gains a +2 bonus against turning attempts.

Lord Wilfred Godefroy

Sense Magic. Godefroy senses magic within 120 feet of him at will. This trait otherwise works like the *detect magic* spell but isn't itself magical.

Shielded Body and Mind. Godefroy is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense his emotions, read his thoughts, or detect his location. Godefroy is also immune to any mind-affecting spells and spells that affect his biological functions.

Rejuvenation. Godefroy cannot be permanently destroyed unless Gryphon Manor is torn down and its stones scattered. If Godefroy is slain, he reforms inside the Manor 24 hours later.

Etherealness. Godefroy enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Ethereal Musket. This magic musket allows the wielder to fire on a target that is on the Material Plane while the wielder is on the Ethereal plane. This ability can be used 3 times per long rest.

Alert. Godefroy is always on the lookout for danger, he gains the following benefits: He can't be surprised while he is conscious. He gains a +5 bonus to initiative. Other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against Godefroy as a result of being hidden from him.

Flyby. Godefroy doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Godefroy fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Curse. Each night, the spirits of his wife, Lady Godefroy, and their child hunt down Godefroy. He is helpless against them and when they find him they tear at his ethereal flesh as they curse him for their murders. No matter how Godefroy hides, they always track him down and find him. The wife and child use the Ghost statblock and he is always frightened of them.

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (4d6 + 1) necrotic damage.

Walking Stick +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage and 1d4 permanent damage to Charisma. The target's Charisma cannot drop below 1.

Ethereal Musket +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage.

Etherealness. Godefroy enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Invisibility. Godefroy magically turns invisible until he attacks or casts a spell, or until his concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Godefroy wears or carries is invisible with him.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of Godefroy that can see him must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Godefroy's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that Godefroy can see within 5 ft. of him must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by him; Godefroy then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. Godefroy now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. Godefroy can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and he retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. He otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, Godefroy ends it as a bonus action, or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil* and *good* spell. When the possession ends, Godefroy reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to Godefroy's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Legendary Actions

Godefroy can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Godefroy regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Walking Stick Attack. Godefroy makes a Walking Stick attack.

Forced Obedience. A target that Godefroy can see must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or bow until the end of its next turn. Until this bow ends, the target can't take actions or reactions, and its speed is 0 and can't be increased.

Indentured Spirits (Costs 3 Actions). Godefroy conjures 1d6 Specters within 60 feet of him.

Lair Actions

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

-Drapes, tapestries, and rugs animate and wrap around a creature of Godefroy's choosing. The target is grappled (escape DC 15) until initiative count 20 on the next round.

-A heavy piece of furniture moves, slamming into a creature of Godefroy's choice within 10 feet. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

-A Poltergeist (MM, page 279) spirit trapped in the manor uses its Telekinetic Thrust ability.

Significant Possessions:

Ethereal Musket +1, Walking Stick +1, Cloak of Charisma +2, Ring Of Protection +2

Nova Vaasa



Nova Vaasa



Nova Vaasa is a domain built on duality, where everything seems to come in opposites. The wide plains and steppes are twinned with claustrophobic cities that are almost too narrow for their inhabitants. Nobles and their families are twinned with bandits and raiders. And the noble of heart are twinned with the monstrous, with Sir Tristen Hiregaard facing his opposite in Malken.

Born from the many murders committed by Tristen Hiregaard, from an old curse placed on his father, his personality was split in two upon his arrival in the Mists. The original, Tristen, and his dark opposite, Malken. While not as noble as he would wish, Tristen, at the end of the day, is a good man, cursed by the actions of his father — indeed, should he die and take Malken with him, the curse will pass on to another member of his extensive family.

Nova Vaasa is under the control of both the church and Prince Othmar. Normally the Princedom would circulate between the five great families of the kingdom, with a new prince put into power every five years, but Prince Othmar has managed to retain the power for the past 29 years, using a technicality while Tristen Hiregaard was his regent (back when the prince was young), and with the support of the well bribed Church of the Lawgiver, with Divine First Pieter Jergaar lending enthusiastic support to Othmar, as long as the church is given its due. Even Malken sees this state of affairs as beneficial to him, as it allows him to further expand his criminal empire, while others draw attention away from his endeavors.

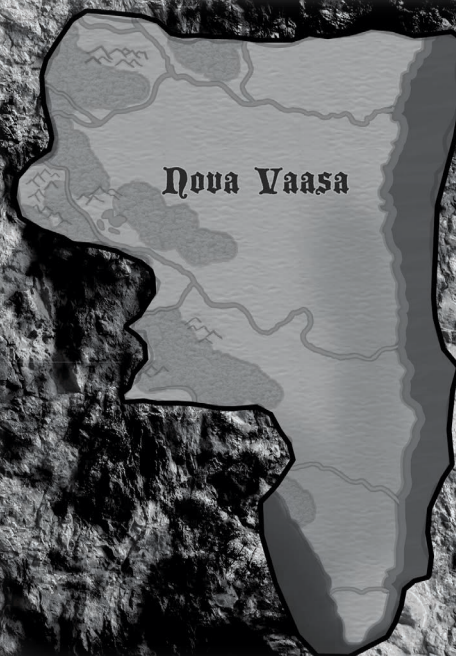
All of Nova Vaasa knows of Malken. He has committed hundreds of murders since the creation of the domain, and of his war with Tristen Hiregaard, as it has been well-documented, especially during Tristen's service with the realm's guards. Even after his retirement, Tristen continues to dedicate himself to the pursuit of Malken. It is but ten years ago that Tristen discovered that he and Malken share the same body, and that during his blackouts in periods of rage, Malken takes control and enacts his schemes. Malken understands the state of affairs, however, he does not know that he will be reborn in a different body should Tristen die, and he is not interested in his own death. Tristen would like nothing more than to separate the two so that he can finally kill his nemesis, and for that purpose, he has been exploring ways to split body and soul. Efforts such as Azalin's Doomsday Device and the Apparatus of the Alchemist (in Mordent) have proven of great in-

terest to him. His agents work across the Core to find a cure for his ailment, though they don't know why they are looking. It is unclear if Malken is aware of all the agents that are sent out in this manner, as Tristen has taken steps to avoid the darklord finding out.

Adventures in Nova Vaasa should focus on this duality, or at the very least include elements of it. There should be an element of conflict between two polar opposites, so a certain amount of friction is introduced. Good should be opposed by evil, nobles by bandits, and so on. While the heroes should not have direct polar opposites, perhaps their employer has, or there is some element introduced of opposing interest to spice things up. For example, the heroes could be hired to retrieve a stolen religious artifact for the Church of the Lawgiver in Kantora, but another group has been hired by either an extreme atheist (perhaps from Lamordia) or the Church of the Lawgiver in Hazlan, as the artifact is used in declaring the position of the Divine Fist.

"If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also."

~Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde



Nova Vaasa

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, and plains
Year Formed:	682 BC
Population:	68,000
Races (%):	Humans 91%, Halflings 5%, Gnomes 3%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Balok, Darkonese, Falkovnia, Gnome, Halfling, Tepestani, Vaasi (While other countries may speak Vaasi, only the Nova Vaasa dialect is considered the true one by the Vaasi themselves. They consider all other versions brutish and inferior)
Religions:	The Lawgiver
Government:	Hereditary aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Prince Othmar Bolshnik
Darklord(s):	Malken
Nationality:	Vaasi
Analog:	Vaasa (Forgotten Realms), Russia (especially the steppes), The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Local Fauna:

While all kinds of animals can be found on the plains of Nova Vaasa, there are two that stand out. The plains cat and the horse. The “plains cats” are a type of leopard that live on the plains. They are extremely aggressive and seem to have outcompeted the wolves that are present in so much of the rest of the Core. They hunt not only other animals but sometimes deliberately target humans, though they avoid larger groups. The horse is the greatest export of Nova Vaasa, and there are multiple breeds present within the domain, as nearly every noble family breeds their own particular kind of horse. The horses of the Hiregaard family are known to be sturdy and strong warhorses, while those of the Bolshnik family are swift horses, built for racing. Most commoners within Nova Vaasa have access to a horse in one form or another, though this usually amounts to a draft horse that their family owns. And it’s not always the nearby family that owns it.

Local Flora:

Nova Vaasa is home to a few crops (wheat, oats, and rye) as well as a few pine trees here and there in various small forests on the western borders of the domain. However, what Nova Vaasa is really known for is grass. Lots and lots of it, and in vari-

ous types. Dead man’s grass grows near Ehrendton, and a fungus infection gives it an unhealthy white pallor, rather than the normal yellow-green hue. Locals believe that it’s a sign of an unmarked grave. Sea grass is the tallest known type of grass, and grows in the Pommel, an area in the southern part of Nova Vaasa. Due to the height of the grass, the area is infected by stalking felines such as pumas and plains’ cats, who find it easy to hide in. Horse grass grows only to knee height and is common on the Tordenmark (or Thundering Plain). The grass has brown or white seeds that stick to horses like burrs, and the seeds are the source of the name. Knife grass grows only in the Dommark (Plains of Judgment). The grass is only about ankle height but the edges of the blades of grass are razor sharp and will cut through unprotected feet. Horses and other animals avoid areas of this grass, which has led to some farmers cultivating it around their fields (though only while wearing heavy work clothing themselves) Wine grass is short and golden with purple seeds and grows on the Kejsersmark (the King’s Plain). Due to its color when it is blooming, the thick patches of grass look like a royal carpet, hence why it’s also sometimes known as the Palace Carpet.

Native Horrors

Nova Vaasa is big enough to have more than its fair share of monsters, with lycanthropes and undead posing the biggest issues. The lycanthropes, while problematic, are rare, but the Vaasi tell stories of the Death Riders — undead horsemen that rampage across the plains, the remains of horsemen and horses that have died of thirst or exposure. They crave the company of the living, but their mere presence is anathema to natural life. Of more immediate concern to those visiting Nova Vaasa are the bandits. There are many of them, and while bandit lords come and go, there are three that have managed to stand the test of time, and who have built a legacy of their own: Dagfinn the Burner, the Tatters Man, and Chezna the Bloodcat. Dagfinn raids fields and farms, putting both lands and the people to the torch when he’s finished with them. The Tatters Man ties strips of his victims’ clothing to his band’s barding and lances, though some whisper that the strips are not clothing, but truly human skin. And finally, the most infamous is Chezna, the one who obtained the poison that Prince Othmar used to kill his sire.. Her band has been active for over thirty years, and she is the only one to regularly raid Bolshnik lands, in retaliation for the prince’s attempt on her life following his father’s assassination. She’s rumored to be a darkling — a cursed Vistani with blood-red hair, one bound to the land but still able to use the terrifying magic of the Vistani.

Nova Vaasa

Terrain type

Nova Vaasa is mostly flat, with only a few hills and the western forests breaking the monotony of the plains. The land is temperate, but on the cold side, with the winters getting extremely cold. Only on the eastern edge, near the Nocturnal Sea do winter temperatures stay on the side that most humanoids consider survivable. The Vaasi themselves have learned to bundle up and prepare for the cold winters, with both food and firewood being stockpiled throughout the rest of the year. The land is hard enough on its people that they have little time for anything else other than survival.



Important Landmarks

Castle Faerhaaven

Castle Faerhaaven is the ancestral home of Sir Tristen Hiregaard, though he spent many years away, working in the city guard of Kantora. It lies a short distance outside Liara, and it is not a pretty construction. It is clearly constructed for defense, with stout walls and imposing towers, though unlike many fortifications in the lands surrounding Nova Vaasa, it is not built to intimidate the populace, merely to defend them. Some attempts have been made to “brighten up the place” through the use of colorful pennants and banners, with little success in drawing attention away from the sturdy drawbridge or the barbican.

This is where Sir Hiregaard retired to, after his years of service to the Crown and city guard, and though now in his 90s, he is very spry and takes an active part in the day-to-day running of the lands surrounding the castle. One of the castle towers stands out from the rest, with the window shutters being even sturdier than the others. The tower rises some 30 feet over the other three

towers of the defenses. The whispers of the guards have led the locals to deduce that this is where Sir Tristen retires to, when he is in one of his “moods” and needs to get himself back under control. A certain amount of sadness lingers over the buildings here as if the emotion has seeped into the very stones, the result of the murder of Tristen’s first wife, and the lovers that Malken has killed along the way. This is not helped by Tristen’s current marriage, which is a loveless affair, but one that has borne him four children, who he loves (unlike the half-disdain he has for his wife. Ironically a disdain that seems to be shared by Malken).

Clinic for the Mentally Distressed

This large building stands outside Egertus and has been empty since the disappearance of its patients and staff in the year 749 BC. Since then the building has been avoided by locals at all costs, except when the city watch was investigating the disappearance. Unbeknownst to the locals, the Clinic now has a twin in the Nightmare Lands — more worryingly, the disappearance of adventurers who have investigated the Clinic over the years seems to indicate the presence of a Mistway between Nova Vaasa and the Nightmare Lands. Since there has never been a return, the Mistway is likely to be one-way only. More information on the current status of the Clinic of the Mentally Distressed can be found under that Domain.

Darkhaaven

Darkhaaven is as much myth as it is real. It’s a series of underground chambers, usually connected to the sewers, that manifest in any city of Malken’s choice. Darkhaaven can only manifest when Malken is “in control” of the body, and as such, it has proven impossible to invade the lair of the darklord, despite Sir Tristen’s many attempts. This has led many of Malken’s henchmen to believe that the darklord is capable of magic, for how else could he make it impossible for them to retrace their steps to his lair?

The chambers are filled with all manner of contraband, such as alcohol, drugs, and poisons. There are also torture chambers here, that Malken uses to “persuade” his guests to part with information. The whole complex reeks of pain and suffering. Upon Malken’s transformation back to Sir Tristen, those who are not prisoners of the darklord are simply expelled into the sewers. The poor prisoners, though, remain within the chambers, unknowing of the transformation or that they are no longer within the “real” world. To them, nothing has changed.

Nova Vaasa

This can prove dangerous in unintended ways, as Malken's victims may die from dehydration or starvation if Sir Tristen is in control for long enough — while it is sometimes annoying, Malken takes fiendish delight in knowing that his counterpart has caused numerous unintended deaths in this manner.

Prince's Palace

The Prince's Palace lies at the center of Kantora, but is usually only occupied by a handful of guards and stewards. Only on the rare occasion that Prince Othmar is present will a larger contingent of guards be assigned to it. The Palace is built for show: Its walls are tall and beautiful, but more-or-less impossible to defend. The gate is far too wide for anything save parades and the towers are too thin to withstand an attack by siege engines, quite aside from being in the wrong locations, creating areas of non-coverage for archers and defenders. It is quite simply, a toy. And Prince Othmar despises it, seeing it as a necessary evil for maintaining power, rather than a place that he wants to live in.

Stonegard

Stonegard is a mighty fortress built by the Bolshnik family and home to Prince Othmar. It lies where the Dnar river meets the Vaughn Dnar, necessitating an odd triangular shape to the fortifications. The fortifications are unusual as well, as the north-western wall is far stronger and more fortified than the south-west and north-east walls. The rivers function as natural impediments to any attackers, so the ancient Bolshniks decided to focus their defenses in one direction, something which has served them well. Stonegard is the main home of Prince Othmar, who prefers it to his other abode, the Prince's Palace (see above), as it keeps him away from the stench of the city and allows him access to his favorite sport: Horseback hunting.

The Three Sisters

The Three Sisters are three lakes in Nova Vaasa, named after a legend of the Church of the Lawgiver. The Three Sisters are named Jensine, Nielsine, and Vibeke after the three daughters born to the first man and woman. The first and largest lake is named Nielsine, after the eldest daughter who was the first woman to tame and ride a horse. The second and middle-sized lake is Jensine, named after the middle sister, the first woman to grow crops in the soil of the world. The last and smallest lake is Lake Vibeke, named after the youngest daughter. Legend claims that she was the first woman to be eaten by a plains cat. Whether the legends are true is unknown, but the lakes do seem to have many fish in them, except for Lake Vibeke. It is home to a much larger than normal pride of the plains

cats. Some suspect that they might be under the control of a variant of the lycanthropic weretiger — perhaps an unknown strain unique to Nova Vaasa.

Towns and villages:

Arbora

Arbora is home to about 4,500 people, and those from here refer to it as “the far corner of the world”. It is the southernmost settlement of any decent size in the Core, and is rather isolated from the rest of the world, except for the Nocturnal Sea. Arborans are far more independent than the rest of Nova Vaasa's people, as the geographical distance lends them a degree of security that is not shared by the rest of the domain. The city is ruled by the Chekiv noble family, as the current Duke isn't one for rocking the boat and risking the city (and his lands) or its independence, so he dutifully pays his taxes to the Prince, and ensures that the region sees little trouble.

Arbora has one minor fame to claim. It is the home of the famed monster hunter George Weathermay. While he is not as famous as them, he is the uncle of the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins. In fact, he blames himself for the injuries suffered by Gennifer at the hands of the werewolf, Natalia Vhorishkova. His trail of revenge first took him to Verbrek, where he slew the entirety of Vhorishkova's clan, not just the men, but the women and the children too. She managed to elude him, and now he hunts her from his base in Arbora, being more than willing to risk his own life, if it enables him to take hers. Where Natalia can be found at this point is unknown, but she knows she's being hunted and wakes up every day bathed in sweat at the dreams that George might be closing in on her.

Bergovitsa

Bergovitsa is a city practically at war with itself. The city falls within the reach of two of the noble families, the Vistins and the Rivtoffs, and practically everyone here has sworn allegiance to one family or the other, with the exception of the city watch. Bergovitsa is under the control of Mayor Araam Tavolys, who is a cousin of the Bolshniks. He's been instructed by Prince Othmar to allow the two families to feud — in some cases, he even seems to encourage this and ensures that even otherwise peaceful overtures between the families are sabotaged. In this manner, the 6,600 folk who call the city home are almost under constant siege. In spite of this, the city is thriving as it is a vital trade stop between the capital of Kantora and the domains of the west. As a result, it has grown rich, making it a prime prize should either of the two noble families ever gain control of it. It is also home to the most famous horse-race of Nova

Nova Vaasa

Vaasa, the Vaasi National. Both the race itself, and the horse-trading that surrounds it (and a number of smaller races) are centered around the Avener's District. The district itself, in spite of being famous for its races, is best avoided by outsiders. Not only are they unwelcome, but Avener's District is rife with thugs and thieves. If you walk away with your money and your life, you're either a local, or lucky indeed. Bergovitsa also has the unlucky distinction of being the first place that the Signature Killer struck, an inn known as the Clever Grey Malken (Malken, in the local dialect, means cat), where a barmaid was killed.

The inn has changed its name to the Clever Grey Mouser to avoid any association with the now infamous crime lord. Recently, some have come to doubt whether Malken is the Signature Killer. The Killer went dormant for a number of years, where Malken was active, and Malken was nearly destroyed a number of years ago when Sir Tristen Hiregaard uncovered the scheme of the cult known as the Claws of Sekhmaa. These two lapses between each criminal's reigns of terror seem to indicate that the two are different individuals, though no one knows for sure. As it is a recent development most still believe Malken to be the Signature Killer — regardless, the Signature Killer is a terrifying prospect for most of Nova Vaasa as he has killed more than 100 women, leaving each dismembered and practically torn apart for the city watch to find. Bergovitsans breathe slightly more easily than others might, as the Killer has only rarely struck here, seeming to favor Kantora (and Liara in recent years).

A final mention should also be made of the Mudman of Bergovitsa. No one knows for sure what the creature is, but it is said to be a "man with skin of mud, who rises from the streets to drown anyone unlucky enough to be nearby". No confirmed sightings of the creature have been reported, but victims have been found with lungs filled with mud.

Egertus

Egertus stands at the eastern end of Nova Vaasa, and was, for the longest while, considered to be a lost cause by most of the Vaasi. When it arrived, only half the city seemed to have been transported, with empty docks, shipyards, and quays resting on the grounds outside the city, and the ends of some of the quays even extending into the Mists beyond the edges of the domain. This terrified most of the locals so much that they moved to Kantora instead, and for many years, only a few traders dared to brave the miles between Kantora and Egertus. This all changed with the appearance of the Nocturnal Sea in 750 BC, when sud-

denly Egertus found itself with a shoreline again, and the old quays came back in use (though many required much repair). The people of Egertus were quick to take advantage of this new state of affairs and suddenly found that resources were flowing back from Kantora, through Egertus, and into trade with the realms that had appeared within the Nocturnal Sea. As a result, the small town is now almost back to full strength with some 4,000 souls now calling it home. Egertus had the dubious fortune of being the home of the Clinic of the Mentally Distressed before the disappearance of its entire staff and all the patients in 749 BC. A thorough search and investigation was conducted by the city watch, as one of the recently admitted patients to the clinic was a relative of Prince Othmar, a man who had killed a dozen people and who had gained the nickname of the "Kantora Strangler".

Kantora

Kantora is the capital of Nova Vaasa. A city of some 17,000 people, the city is practically split into two, though the split isn't even. The rich quarter of Kantora is well-maintained and brightly lit, even gaudy at times. Patrols of the city watch are frequent, and the districts are safe, though people who "don't belong here" are quickly ejected by the watch. The poorer quarters of Kantora are a seething morass of humanity and riddled with crime. The watch comes here only rarely, and most crimes are ignored (including murder), as long as it doesn't involve the nobles or the richer merchants. It, more than any other city in Nova Vaasa, is cramped, and this isn't helped by the smell of horses permeating every inch of the city, most notably around the Great Corral. The Great Corral is a gigantic fenced-in area for horse-trading, and, every fortnight, traders from across the Core congregate here for the auctions, hoping to get good deals for strong horses or set up new breeding programs to improve their stock.

Here, and only here in Nova Vaasa, the Vistani are welcomed with open arms and treated well, as they are considered to be expert horse-trainers and breeders, something which is appreciated here. Kantora is also the location of the Prince's Palace (described above), though it's rare for Prince Othmar to be here. Kantora is home to the Mausoleum of the Elect, a series of mausoleums created for the use of the elected Princes. In theory, anyone who dies while wearing the crown of Nova Vaasa, is interred here, but the Church of the Lawgiver often uses this as a propaganda tool. Princes who are unpopular with the Church, or considered too liberal by the clergy, are proclaimed to have been struck down by the Lawgiver and denied entry into

Nova Vaasa

the Mausoleum. Those who commit suicide (such as Sir Tristen Hiregaard's father who killed himself while wearing the crown) or who die dishonorably are also denied entry.

Liara

Liara, even more so than Kantora, lives up to the duality aspect of Nova Vaasa. 8,000 people call the place home, and during the day they live in the safest city in Nova Vaasa, under the control of its kindest ruler, Sir Tristen Hiregaard. The watch is attentive and diligent in their duties, though during the day they often have little to do. During the night, this all changes, due to the Signature Killer. The murderer has conducted his business in Liara more often than in any other city in the domain, and the people here live in fear of the maniac striking again.

In spite of this, they have taken an almost aggressive counter-approach, refusing to stay their hands, and during the night Liara descends into depravity, partying as if there is no tomorrow, and alcohol and drugs flowing freely. During the night, visitors would do well to stay indoors unless they intend to find (or be sought out by) trouble.

This strange state of affairs is epitomized by two central buildings in Liara. First, the Passelot is a squat, strong stone fortress, and the home of the City Watch. It is constantly busy with its stables and armory at work at all hours. It radiates an area of calm and watchmen patrol the walls at all hours during the day. Secretly, they hope that all who were sent on patrol at sunset will return unscathed. Realistically they know that at least some of their number will be hurt, but they hope that at least they'll return alive. The other building, the dark twin to Passelot's light, is the Staggering Stallion inn. It is the center of all the criminal activities in Liara and offers everything from alcohol, drugs, and gambling, to beast fighting, and companionship. While none of these are illegal in Nova Vaasa, the degree to which the patrons of the Staggering Stallion engage in the activities is so high that it contributes significantly to the troubles facing Liara at night.

The owner of the Stallion, a man named Canute Dorisz, a fat and (falsely) jolly man who has the hygiene of a swine, claims that he has nothing to do with it. After all, it is all legal. The watch knows that the money generated by the Staggering Stallion ends up in the pockets of Malken, but they've been unable to prove it decisively. Each attempt they've made, where they haven't been 100% certain, has ended in disaster and made the next attempt much more difficult. For now

they hold back until they've gathered all that they need. The city watch looks forward to the day that Sir Tristen unleashes them upon the filth they see gathering at the Inn, and they believe that vengeance will soon be theirs. After all, so many of their friends have had their lives taken by the patrons, that it seems only fair to return the compliment.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Darkon
Hazlan
Nightmare Lands (via Mistway)
Tepest
The Nocturnal Sea

Fun Fact:

The people of Nova Vaasa do not hold too much in the way of artistry, with one exception: They've taken the art of the "epic poem" to such heights that even the Meistersingers of Kartakass come here to learn at the feet of the bardic masters. All other forms of art are either discouraged, illegal or thoroughly under the control of the church.



Sir Tristen Hiregaard

"A madman is loose in my castle. He slaughters the women and children, those who cannot defend themselves. He thwarts my every effort to find him, but I will persist. I shall bring this brigand to justice or perish in the attempt."

~ Sir Tristen Hiregaard

Sir Tristen Hiregaard is a human in his late seventies. Despite his advancing years, his rugged good looks make him quite the ladies man. His hair and moustache are still black, though peppered with enough gray to make him appear wise yet not distract from his vigour. A man in his seventies could be forgiven for not taking exercise every day, yet Tristen does so, and still comfortably wears chain mail and swings his family's ancestral sword when there is need. In times when he doesn't expect trouble, he dons comfortable loose black trousers and a bright red shirt. Malken is hunched and twisted, with heavily muscled arms that are far too long, his massive hands ending in jagged claws. Malken runs on all fours and is frighteningly fast, giggling uncontrollably as he lopes. The giggling is the last sound that his victims hear. Their last sight is his bloodshot mad eyes.

Background: Tristen's curse began with his father, Romir Hiregaard. Romir was a good ruler who was fair and, sometimes, even kind. Romir's only weakness was jealousy. If his young wife showed even polite interest in another man, he would descend into a rage. The rages became worse as time progressed. One day he found his wife in the arms of another man and killed them both. After the rage subsided, Romir realized the man was his wife's dance instructor. With her dying breath, Romir's wife cursed him. Romir would kill any woman he loved or any man that angered him. Overwhelmed with shame over what he had done, Romir killed himself. The curse passed on to the 15 year old Tristen. Tristen first learned of the curse less than a year later when he murdered the daughter of a servant family. Over the next six years, Tristen killed nine more women. To make matters worse, the more Tristen killed, the more he enjoyed it. Eventually the Dark Powers took notice and pulled Tristen into Ravenloft. When Tristen was pulled into Ravenloft, Malken manifested fully, a raging mad man that was everything Tristen despised. There is no way out for Tristen. If he is killed and Malken chooses to let him die, then the curse is transferred on to his eldest son, Yorgi. The curse that created Malken can only be defeated when the Hiregaard line ends.

Current Sketch: Sir Tristen is a stern but just ruler. He pays every cent of the taxes he owes to Prince Othmar, the nominal ruler of Nova Vaasa. Tristen treats his peasants fairly and at the yearly conclave of nobles argues that the poor folk should have their taxes reduced. His entreaties fall upon deaf ears, but still he keeps trying. Tristen has four sons from a loveless marriage that lasted for forty years. Tristen's oldest son is in his early fifties and his youngest is three years old. Tristen's youngest son is being raised by his brothers who constantly dote on the child. Sir Tristen knows of the curse and tries to stop Malken from killing his lovers and enemies. When Tristen starts to feel the hate rising, he seals himself in his quarters in Castle Faerhaaven and prays it is enough. Malken is a madman. His only goals are to cause as much misery as possible. Malken knows Sir Tristen is a good person, and wants to make him suffer the most. Malken knows that Tristen tries to lock him in the tower that serves as his personal quarters, but Malken is clever and escapes nearly every time.

Darklord's Tactics: Sir Tristen is a fair and honorable combatant. He allows his enemies to prepare and gives quarter to opponents that ask for it. Malken is a deranged psychopath. He doesn't fight. He hunts. Malken uses his speed to dart into his foes and carve bloody chunks from them before disappearing into the shadows. Malken loves to make his foes beg for their lives. Of course, once they've debased themselves, Malken kills them anyway.

Borders: Because of his dual nature and his constant internal battles with Tristen, Malken cannot close the border.

Lair: Castle Faerhaaven

Castle Faerhaaven is a stately castle where Tristen lives with his four sons, their wives and families. The walls are tall and strong and the castle is surrounded by a moat. The castle is well maintained. Tristen considers its appearance to be a reflection of him and his rule. Castle Faerhaaven is riddled with holes and secret passages that seem to move at random. Sir Tristen and his family are unaware of them. Malken knows where all of the secret passages are and where they lead. Malken can disappear into the walls and reappear at any point in the castle at will. Malken encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 17 (18,000 XP).

Sir Tristen Hiregaard

Sir Tristen Hiregaard

Medium human, lawful neutral

Armor Class 19 (chain mail +2)

Hit Points 138 (25d8 + 25)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +5

Skills History +4, Perception +5, Persuasion +9

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, dwarvish, elvish

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. Tristen/Malken makes saving throws with advantage against spells and spell-like effects.

Call Forth the Beast. If Tristen is angry or jealous he must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. If Tristen is in combat, he must repeat this saving throw at the start of his turn. If he fails he turns into Malken. If Tristen fails a saving throw against a spell from the enchantment school or is subjected to the charmed, blinded, deafened, incapacitated, restrained, stunned, or unconscious conditions, he becomes Malken. If Tristen is reduced to 0 hit points he becomes Malken.

The Beast. Malken is Tristen's other personality, a brutal beast with no regard for right and wrong. He is a monster of rage and madness. Malken's Strength and Constitution are 22 (+6) and he has 350 hit points. Malken is proficient with Strength, Constitution, and Wisdom saving throws. Malken is immune to all spells from the enchantment school and any condition that can cause Tristen to change into Malken. Malken's arms are unnaturally long and his nails lengthen and harden into jagged claws. Even more disturbing, these claws drip thick poisonous globs. Malken has a speed of 40 feet. Malken's CR is 16.

Enrage (Malken only). If Malken takes more than 30 hit points of damage in one turn he becomes enraged. He gains +4 damage to his slash attack and makes melee attack rolls with advantage during his next turn.

Regenerate (Malken only). Malken regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. This trait does not function if Malken took radiant damage at the end of his last turn. If Malken is reduced to 0 hit points and this trait does not function, he falls lifeless to the ground and his body turns to dust. Tristen will be reborn in his castle 24 hours later.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day, Malken only). If Malken fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Into the Shadows (Malken only). At night or in an area of shadows Malken can make Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks as a bonus action

Actions

Multiattack. Tristen makes 2 attacks with his defender longsword. Malken uses his aura of pain and makes three slash attacks.

Defender Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage or 12 (1d10 + 6) slashing damage if used two handed. **Slash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 5 (1d8) poison damage. Creatures that take damage from the poison must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail are poisoned until the end of Malken's next turn.

Aura of Pain. Every creature within 30 feet of Malken must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures take 27 (6d8) psychic damage and may not take reactions on a failed saving throw. Creatures take half damage and may use reactions as normal on a successful saving throw.

Legendary Actions

Malken can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Malken regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Slash. Malken makes one slash attack.

Leap. Malken may leap to any empty space within 30 feet. This leap does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Spit. Malken spits a glob of thick fluid into the face of an enemy within 10 feet. That enemy must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. If they fail they are blinded until they use an action to wipe the fluid out of their eyes.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Malken can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

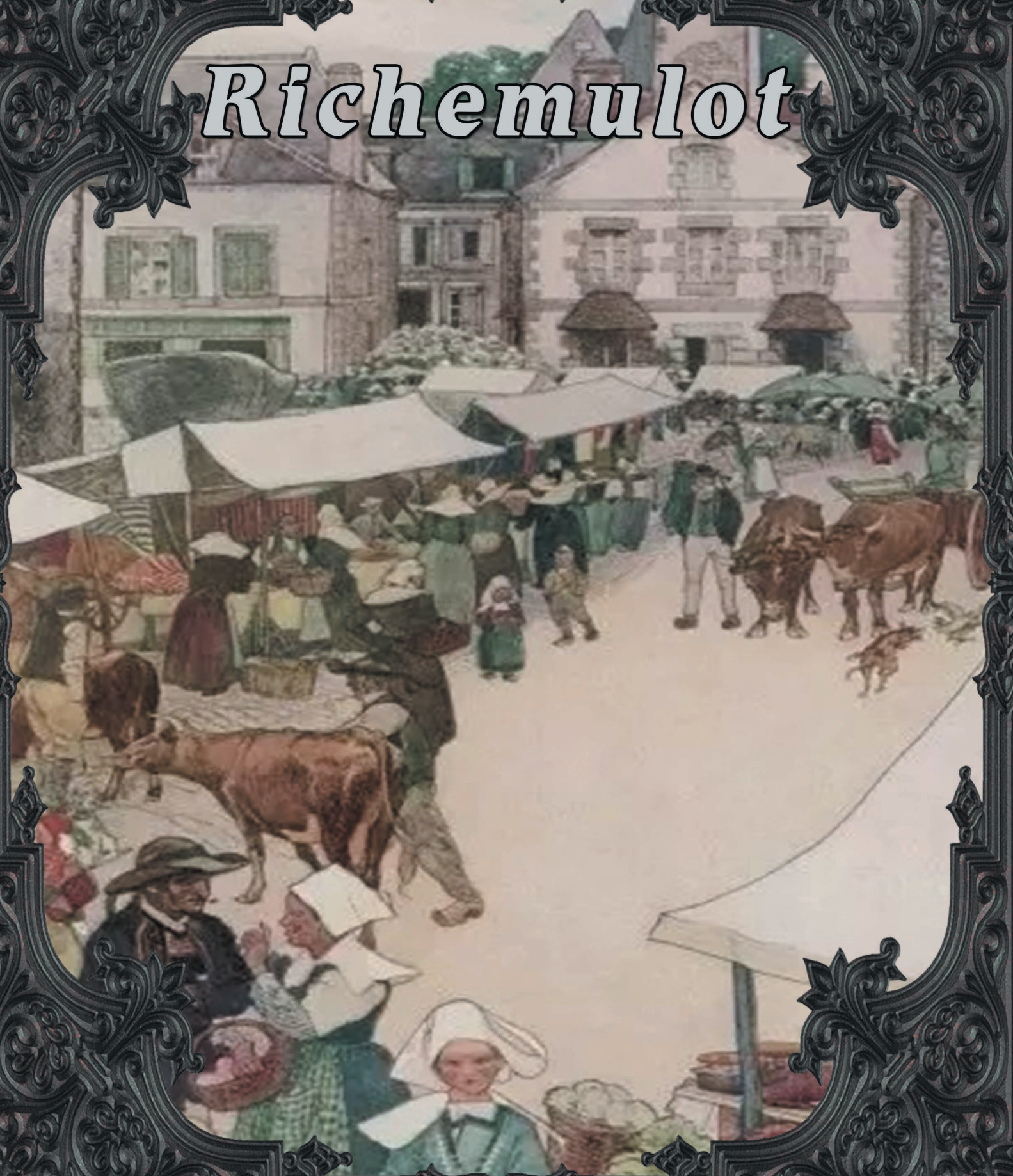
-Raucous laughter fills the air. A creature that Malken chooses within 50 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail find the laughter irresistible and join in. They may only take an action, move action or bonus action on their next turn.

-The people and creatures inside the painting and tapestries that line the walls of Castle Faerhaaven come alive, subtly moving when Malken's foes can see them out of the corners of their eyes. A creature that Malken can see within 30 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on their next attack roll.

-Malken locks eyes with one creature he can see within 30 feet. That creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

Malken can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Richemulot



Richemulot



Richemulot is a land under siege from an invisible threat, an illness that is nearly impossible to cure, and which spreads like wildfire when unleashed. Lurking underneath the city streets, and in the houses of the populace, most know of the threat but can do little to fight against it. In essence, the domain hides the bestial underneath a thin veneer of civility and sophistication.

This disease is that of lycanthropy, specifically that which turns people into wererats. It is also the reason that so much of Richemulot is empty of people, even though it has room for far more. People crowd together for safety, as many as can comfortably be kept in a single building or estate as possible. Ironically the term, rats in a cage, fits only too well, not only for the wererats but also for those that they prey upon.

The darklord, Jacqueline Renier, is cut from the same cloth as Richemulot's original darklord — her grandfather, Claude Renier. But she rules with far more sophistication and charm than her predecessor ever did. And this is where Richemulot truly shines, not in the pestilence of the wererat, the (innumerable) intrigues of the noble houses or the stabbings in back alleys, but in the realm of lost love. Jacqueline CAN and DOES love others on occasion, though she is cursed to assume her rat form in their presence. And inevitable doom soon comes to the bond, twisting it into animosity — often through no action of Jacqueline's. Adventures in Richemulot should feature any and all of these. Perhaps one of the heroes has fallen in love with a noblewoman from Richemulot, but she has been promised to someone else. That person is a wererat in disguise and tolerates no interference from others and sets their pack upon them. Perhaps they're trying to find a cure for lycanthropy for another strain than wererat, but have heard of experts in Richemulot, only to find that the sage has been kidnapped by wererats, and no one knows where they are. Or perhaps, one of the heroes is infected and will soon turn into a wererat, and they're taking the others home as a peace offering to their future family.

"Love Jo all your days, if you choose, but don't let it spoil you, for it's wicked to throw away so many good gifts because you can't have the one you want."

~Louisa May Alcott, Little Women

Richemulot

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hills, and plains
Year Formed:	694 BC
Population:	50,000 (at any given time, an estimated 10% are wererats)
Races (%):	Humans 93%, halflings 5%, half-Vistani 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Darkonese, Dementlieuse, Falkovnian, Halfling, Mordentish, Vaasi Ezra, Hala
Religions:	Hereditary aristocracy
Government:	Jacqueline Renier
Ruler(s):	Jacqueline Renier
Darklord(s):	Richemuloise
Nationality:	France
Analog:	

Local Fauna:

The forest of Richemulot teems with wildlife like deer, boar, ermines, and other animals. It is a prime hunting ground for nobles who are looking for easy sport as bears, badgers, and other predators are in short supply. Even wolves tend to stay away from here, despite the proximity of Verbrek. Scholars believe that this is due to the overshadowing presence of the rats. They are present in such numbers, that they have taken over the typical role reserved for predators in most environments. And they truly are everywhere, at least when you're in the city. Locals often refer to them as the "threat in the walls" for their ability to get in anywhere. Ratcatchers get rich here, but those that are too successful seem to attract unwanted attention from wererats and find themselves as prey to the ultimate predators in the land.

Richemulot

Local Flora:

Richemulot is heavily forested, and during the summer turns into a scene of stunning beauty as the green leaves of oak, ash, and chestnut trees try to outshine the others. The areas that aren't covered by trees are instead beautiful meadows with colorful flowers. Most especially, the orchids around the forest known as the House of the Sages are famous for their lustrous and vibrant colors. Some of the locals, what few there are, turn the flowers into powders that are used throughout the Core for coloring cloth. These fetch top prices all over and are coveted by nobles and the rich everywhere.

Native Horrors

Generally speaking, apart from wererats, there are few monsters within Richemulot, but those that there are stick to the three cities, and normally have an ability to hide among humans. Shapeshifters, doppelgangers, and lycanthropes of all kinds are here (though any lycanthrope that isn't a wererat would be wise to keep their presence hidden), as can a few disembodied undead such as ghosts. Most travelers to Richemulot find it to be peaceful and civilized when compared to other parts of the Core. This pretense is of course intensified as the wererats have successfully infiltrated society at all levels, and work hard to keep up the mask of civility that drapes across the land.

Terrain type

Richemulot is mostly forest, with a few meadows, and gently rolling hills. The Musarde River flows through the domain, carrying trade to and from the cities, along with the highway known as the Road of Whispers, the only major road in Richemulot. All three cities of Richemulot lie near the Musarde and the Road of Whispers, allowing them all to take advantage of the trade that passes nearby. This also increases the importance that each city plays on the cultural life of the Core.

Important Landmarks

Castle with No Gate

The Castle with No Gate is a semi-legendary castle that lies somewhere within the House of the Sages. It is an immense fortress, but it doesn't have a gate, and this doesn't look to be a matter of the gate being walled up after the rest of the castle was built, but something that was done at the same time. Its battlements stand empty with no guards, but local legends claim that it houses a beautiful maiden whose name is unknown. Supposedly she waits to be rescued, but no one who has ever scaled the walls has come back, at least none that can be verified. There are some discussions in Richemulot as to whether the castle is even real, as it doesn't seem to stay in the same location.

House of the Sages

The House of the Sages is a raised limestone plateau that sits east of the Musarde River. Upon the plateau is the forest that shares its name. The landscape here is somewhat rugged, with isolated farms and cottages, along with the crumbling ruins of castles, monasteries, and more. At least one hermit is known to live in one of the caves of the plateau. The region has a reputation for hiding those whose crimes are best forgotten or who are too monstrous to be contemplated and constant rumors fly about Richemulot speaking of mystic cults, evil spellcasters, and necromancers on the loose. Its two most famous locations though are the Castle with No Gate and the Sanctuary of the Forgotten Lady.

Sanctuary of the Forgotten Lady

The Sanctuary of the Forgotten Lady sits on the borders of Borca and consists of a ruined chapel at the center of a stone-filled meadow. Its ivy-clad walls hide a temple of Hala, a rarity of a faith that normally prefers shrines and hidden groves. It is one of the oldest buildings in Richemulot, though the roof has collapsed, exposing the interior to the sky. The chapel only has one priest, Balihnda, a blind old matron with wild hair. To many, she comes across as addle-brained, though pleasant, but the reality is far worse. Balihnda is an annis hag of terrible power and rage, who has taken up residence here after a prolonged fight with the famed monster hunter van Richten. While originally she only took up residence here as a temporary measure, she developed a genuine interest in the teachings of Hala, and this interest has tempered her bloodlust to the point where most travelers are hosted amicably and generously while here, often remembering their time with fondness. Those who profess to follow the teachings of Hala however are tortured for information about their faith, before being eaten.



Richemulot

Tinctnoire Manor

Tinctnoire Manor is in near-ruin, lying deep within the House of Sages. It is a cursed place that has fallen under the terrible power of the hungry dead, specifically a group of shadows once cursed to stay here. Legend holds that the tower of Tinctnoire Manor holds a bell that once held incredible power. It had to be rung every hour, to keep evil spirits in check, but a single night of failure to do so, for the sake of an illicit tryst, caused the entire manor and all its inhabitants to succumb to the darkness. Now, it is an evil place, and wise folk stay away from here, especially at night.

Towns and villages:

Mortigny

Mortigny is a small city that holds about 8,200 people and it is home to most of the glassware that makes its way into the domains of the Core, with especially the blue “melancholy” glassware being prized among the nobility and rich. Mortigny is bright and vibrant, teeming with eager life, and its distance from Jacqueline Renier and her ilk doesn’t hurt it. It is home to one of the few arcane colleges in the Core, though even here it hides and disguises itself as an observatory. It’s an open secret among the locals, but one they hold to as there are several strongholds of various faiths (most notably the Church of Ezra) in town, and they do not take kindly to anything they perceive as heresy.

Mortigny is also home to a secret society known as the Lock and Key, whose members hide behind hideous masks, and work to protect the city. These members are often calibans (half-orcs) or others who are easily recognizable as non-humans when without their mask, but they work day and night to keep Mortigny safe, and their strong morals have made them popular among the locals, even if they don’t know who the people are behind the masks. If they did, their gratitude would likely wane quickly.

Ste. Ronges

Saint Ronges is the smallest of the three cities of Richemulot, but what it lacks in size it makes up for in viciousness. It is also the only one of the three who has a fortified wall around it, though these are leftover from a time before Richemulot joined the other domains within the Mists, and no one knows who built them, or why. Most of the 6,500 people who live in Ste. Ronges are involved in a criminal trade of some sort, though most keep it very quiet. Only a few career criminals exist here, but they are powerful enough to make the nobles think twice before acting.

Apart from its criminal underworld, Ste. Ronges is also famous for the quality of its steel and the swords that the smiths of Ste. Ronges put out. They are the highest quality blades available in the core, and as many of the smiths are devotees of Ezra, weaving prayers over the blades as they are made, legend holds that anyone who uses one of these swords to kill a man without mercy, will feel the wrath of Ezra herself.

Pont-a-Museau

Pont-a-Museau, home of more than 16,000 souls, is both built next to and on top of, the Musard river. Stone bridges cross it in many places, and the shorelines have been reinforced and built upon as well. Mansions and the houses of the common folk are all in excellent quality, courtesy of the amount of coin that flows through Pont-a-Musea.

By many, the city is also considered the birthplace of culture in the Mists. If it didn’t originate here then, to many, it isn’t worth as much as it could be. This, unfortunately, includes the locals, but the truth is that they are — at least to some degree — correct. The Grand Theatre of the Musarde stands here, as does the Academy of Richemulot, where the elite can go to get a classical education, including literature, philosophy, languages, and insight into the natural sciences. And of course, it is home to Chateau Delanuit (the Castle of the Night) where the Grande Dame, Jacqueline Renier, and her extended family live. With such residence comes danger and intrigue, and though no human of Richemulot suspects it, she is at the heart of the wererat infestation that plagues Richemulot.

Neighboring domain(s):

Borca
Dementlieu
Falkovnia
Mordent
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

The Richemuloise prefer to live close together for safety, which means that houses are often overcrowded. This has also left the cities feeling strangely crowded in some places, while utterly empty in others. At any given time, each city within Richemulot could easily handle increasing its population by one-third. This also means that many of the buildings are in good condition (locks and shutters especially so), while others are falling into ruin. Everything to keep safe from the wererats and the menace in the walls.

Jacqueline Renier

"You think because I'm not some clod in armor or waving my hands in the air while muttering that I am not a threat. Good. Keep thinking that. I know where you are and what you are doing before you do. I have thousands of eyes. I have thousands of hands and each of them holds a dagger."

~ Jacqueline Renier

Jacqueline appears to be an attractive human female. Her age is almost impossible to guess, as she could easily pass for someone in her twenties or forties. Jacqueline dresses well but avoids overt symbols of wealth. Her outfits are always alluring but simple. Intelligent and well educated, Jacqueline is comfortable discussing dozens of esoteric topics and not afraid to make anyone who underestimates her look like a fool.

Background: Jacqueline was a child when she came to Ravenloft. Her small family of wererats were cornered by a group of adventurers, as a portal filled with mist appeared. When faced with the choice of certain death by the sword or the chance of safety through an unknown portal, the Reniers chose the portal.

The Reniers found themselves in the sewers under Silbervas, a city in Falkovnia. For a time the Renier clan grew and prospered, but they eventually came to the attention of Vlad Drakov, the dark lord of Falkovnia. Vlad sent a legion into the sewers to clean them out. The Reniers were chased out of the sewers and through the countryside. They were chased by dogs and men with murder in their eyes. Finally the Reniers were able to flee to the mists.

When the mists cleared, the Reniers were in Richemulot. They were instantly at home in the sewers under Pont-a-Museau, and found the Chateau Delanuit. Jacqueline's grandfather ruled as the dark lord of Richemulot for a time until Jacqueline killed the old man and took his place twenty five years ago.

Current Sketch: Jacqueline has networks of informants all over Richemulot and the surrounding domains. She is extremely intelligent, manipulative, and one step ahead of anyone who dares to attack her. Jacqueline's curse forces her to fall deeply in love, but she is forced into her rat form whenever she sees the object of her desire. Jacqueline's twin sister, Louise, is not cursed and regularly takes lovers when she wishes. This drives Jacqueline mad with jealousy and the lovers inevitably disappear within a few days. This has

led to a rift between the women, as Louise has started to become annoyed with having to replace her paramores so often. The citizens of Richemulot consider the Renier's to be fair rulers. Their taxes are light, and people are required to be armed at all times by law. Jacqueline wants her citizens armed and prepared for one of Falkovnia's frequent invasions. Most of the citizens don't know that the Reniers are wererats, and threats to the family will be met by an angry mob.

Darklord's Tactics: Jacqueline doesn't hesitate to use any dirty trick or underhanded tactic. She will gladly sacrifice a minion or member of her clan if it will allow her to leave or gain an advantage. She prefers to pretend she is helpless and afraid until her enemy lowers their guard before she turns into her hybrid form and launches a flurry of attacks with her dagger.

Borders: When the borders of Richemulot are closed, Jacqueline summons a monstrous swarm of rats. The swarm is at least 50 feet thick. The rats cover the walls, trees, and boil up out of the ground. If a creature tries to fly over the swarm, an invisible force pulls them down into the snapping jaws.

Jacqueline Renier's Lair: Château Delanuit

Chateau Delanuit is a stately manor house on the Musarde River in the heart of Pont-a-Museau. The house and grounds are kept in immaculate shape by Jacqueline's army of servants. The rooms that the public have access to, as well as Jacqueline and Louise bed chambers, are well appointed but not gaudy. Moving past these rooms, the house quickly becomes run down and infested with vermin, especially rats. Rats pour from holes in the walls and ceiling. The Renier wererat clan resides here and are quick to sound the alarm when intruders are spotted. Jacqueline Renier encountered in her lair has a challenge rating of 18 (20,000 XP)

How to defeat the Darklord

Jacqueline must be attacked and devoured by every wererat she has created within her own home. If even a single wererat is missing, Jacqueline will assume her mist form and try to escape. Lye is her biggest fear as it stops her regeneration and mist form traits.



Jacqueline Renier



Jacqueline Renier

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)

Speed 40 ft. burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +10, cha +11

Skills Acrobatics +12, Persuasion +11, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +12 Stealth +12

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks not made of silver, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, poisoned*

Senses blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant, Mordentish, Balok, Falkovnian (can't speak in rat form)

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Shapechanger. Jacqueline can use her action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into her true form, which is humanoid. Her statistics, other than her size, are the same in each form. Any equipment she's wearing or carrying is transformed.

Loss of Control. Jacqueline can control her transformations perfectly. She is cursed however to transform into her rat form when she is in the presence of anyone she truly loves.

Regeneration. Jacqueline regenerates 10 hit points at the start of her turn. If Jacqueline takes damage from a silver melee weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. If Jacqueline is reduced to 0 hit points and this trait does not function, she is forced into her mist form.

Mist Form. Jacqueline can turn into a foul smelling mist at will. While in this form, Jacqueline is immune to damage and regenerates one hit point per round. While in her mist form Jacqueline has a fly speed of 30. If Jacqueline is reduced to 0 hit points she is forced into her mist form until she regains at least half her hit points.

Slippery Mind. Jacqueline is incredibly devious, even for a wererat. Her plots are works of art and have dozens of moving parts that always seem to work out how Jacqueline thought they would. Jacqueline is immune to psychic damage and enchantment schools.

Monophobia. Jacqueline is terrified of being alone. If Jacqueline is fighting alone, she has disadvantage on all her attack rolls.

Surprising Friends. Jacqueline always has 2d8 wererat minions nearby. She will not hesitate to sacrifice them so she can escape. A wererat infected by Jacqueline is automatically charmed by Jacqueline as long as she is within 30 feet of that wererat.

Sneak Attack. If Jacqueline has advantage on a melee or ranged attack roll against an enemy, or has an ally within 5 feet of an enemy she is attacking, she inflicts an extra 5d6 points of damage. This damage is the same type as the weapon Jacqueline is wielding.

Spider Climb. Jacqueline can climb any surface as if under the effect of a *spider climb* spell that cannot be dispelled.

Magic Resistance. Jacqueline has advantage on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects.

Keen Smell. Jacqueline has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Allergic Reaction. If Jacqueline consumes a drink or food that is spiked with Lye or is damaged by a weapon that has lye applied on it, a severe allergic reaction due to her wererat lycanthropic nature occurs. Jacqueline's regeneration and mist form traits don't function and she is considered poisoned until she takes a long rest or lesser restoration is cast upon her. Lye is the only known substance that can poison her.

Gnaw. Whenever Jacqueline hits an object, with a bite attack, the hit is a critical hit.

Improved Initiative. Jacqueline rolls initiative with advantage.

Actions

Multiattack. Jacqueline makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

Bite (Rat or Hybrid form only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage. If the target is a humanoid it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy. All creatures that become a wererat through this effect are under the absolute control of Jacqueline.

Jacqueline Renier

Dagger of Potent Venom (humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) poison damage. A creature damaged by this dagger must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they are poisoned for 1 minute.

Pistol +1 (humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 7) piercing damage.

Legendary Actions

Jacqueline Renier can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Jacqueline Renier regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Bite (Hybrid or Rat form only). Jacqueline makes one bite attack.

Dagger of Potent Venom (Hybrid or Human form only). Jacqueline makes one Dagger of Potent Venom attack.

Scuttle. Jacqueline digs into the ground and burrows to an empty space within 20 feet.

Handful of Dirt. Jacqueline throws a handful of dirt into the eyes of one of her opponents. Jacqueline chooses an opponent within 10 feet and they must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. Creatures that fail are blinded until they use an action to clean their eyes.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Jacqueline can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

-Jacqueline chooses a point within 30 feet. A massive swarm of rats boils out from the walls, ceiling and floor and attacks every creature within 10 feet of that point. Creatures attacked by the swarm must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. They take 18 (4d8) piercing damage on a failed saving throw and half as much on a successful one.

-A crossbow bolt launches out of the shadows. One creature within 50 feet of Jacqueline must make a DC 17

-Jacqueline chooses a point within 50 feet of her, and the area swarms with vitality draining energy. Creatures within 10 feet of that point that are immune to poison damage become resistant, and creatures resistant to poison damage lose their resistance until initiative count 20 of the next turn.

Jacqueline can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



Claude Renier

*"Oh please.
I'm hardly some master villain manipulating
everything from the shadows.
I'm a businessman, plain and simple.
I bring people what they want and they pay me
for it.
And they keep paying me. Over and over again.
And they continue to do so. Forever."
~Claude Renier*

In his human form Claude Renier is thin with pale skin and wispy hair and beard. Claude, also called the Clawed by his minions and family, has beady eyes that are constantly searching the shadows for hidden assailants. Claude dresses in simple clothes that don't stand out. Claude can disappear into a crowd instantly, and reappear behind someone with a poisoned dagger in his hand.

In hybrid and dire rat form, Claude has blonde fur and glowing red eyes. His teeth are long and sharp, even for a wererat. Claude is lightning fast and can climb faster than most creatures can run.

Background: The Renier family had been at war with itself for generations. Half the family were human hunters of lycanthropes and other creatures of darkness. The other half were wererats. The two halves of the family waged bitter war against each other in the shadows of a massive city that Claude can't seem to remember the name of ever since he came to Ravenloft.

Through deft political maneuvering and a swift dagger, Claude quickly rose to lead the wererat clan of the Reniers. Claude ruled his followers through a dance of fear and empty promises. Under Claude's rule the wererat half of the family quickly lost ground against the human lycanthrope hunters. Claude's clan lost ground and wealth until they were finally driven into the sewers. The hunters followed the lycanthropes into the sewers and the cornered wererats took a horrible toll, but it wasn't enough. As silver crossbow bolts thudded into wererats all around him, Claude, his wife and children and anyone fast enough dove through a misty portal that suddenly appeared.

Claude and the survivors found themselves under a city full of humans on a strange world. These new humans were a quick furtive lot, but Claude discovered they were eager to trade for illegal goods. Amazingly, this city had a ton of goods that were considered illegal.

Claude and his clan soon met other wererats that lived under Silverbas, the city they had appeared beneath, and learned a little of this strange new world. Claude soon took control of the isolated families of wererats he discovered and forged them into a criminal empire. Illegal goods flowed into Silverbas from other domains and Claude became rich. He created his own thieves guild that took control of the docks. He brought in drugs and preyed on the poor and downtrodden. He took everything they had and then made them his slaves. Eventually Claude and his wererats became too bold. Several lycanthropes were caught and impaled by human authorities. In their pain the wererats shifted from one form to another and their secret was out.

Human soldiers flooded the sewers. Wererats were ripped to pieces by dozens of hacking blades. Claude was driven out of the sewers and fled across the length of Falkovnia. He and his family ran into the wall of mist at the edge of the domain. When the mists cleared, Claude had been given the domain of Richemulot.

Current Sketch: Claude has ruled the Renier family for almost three decades. He lives a pampered life. He is extraordinarily wealthy and well connected. He has servants and no one is in a position to challenge his power. To pass the time and secure his rule Claude pits his family against itself. None of them have the intellect or ruthlessness to threaten him. His granddaughter Jacqueline is interesting in a vague sort of way, but nothing will ever come of the child.

Darklord's Tactics: Claude is the ultimate catch as catch can fighter. There is no trick too dirty, no level to which he won't stoop. Poison, narcotic clouds, sneak attacks. Any tactic that Claude thinks will win is fair game. If the battle is going poorly, Claude will flee, then return when his foes are sleeping. If Claude has to sacrifice dozens of his family members to win, he will do so without hesitation.

Borders: When Claude closes the borders of his domain, they are sealed by a horde of chittering rodents. Any creature that comes near is torn to pieces by thousands of razor sharp teeth. Creatures that attempt to fly over are pulled down into the horde by unseen hands.



Claude Renier



Claude Renier

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3, Int +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +3, Persuasion +9, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Thieves' Cant, Mordentish, Halfling, Balok, Falkovnian (can't speak in rat form)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. Claude can use his action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid, into a giant rat, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Keen Smell. Claude has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Allergic Reaction. If Claude consumes a drink or food that is spiked with Lye or is damaged by a weapon that has Lye applied on it, a severe allergic reaction due to his wererat lycanthropic nature occurs. Claude's regeneration trait doesn't function and he is considered poisoned until he takes a long rest or lesser restoration is cast upon him.

Sneak Attack. If Claude has advantage on a melee or ranged attack roll against an enemy, or has an ally within 5 feet of an enemy he is attacking, he inflicts an extra 4d6 points of damage. This damage is the same type as the weapon Claude is wielding.

Cunning Action. Claude's quick thinking and agility allow him to

move and act quickly. He can take a Bonus Action on each of his turns in Combat. This action can be used only to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Claude can see hits him with an Attack, he can use his Reaction to halve the attack's damage against.

Evasion. When Claude is subjected to an Effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Master of Intrigue. Claude can unerringly mimic the speech patterns and accent of a creature that he hears speak for at least 1 minute, enabling him to sound like a native speaker of a particular land, provided that he knows the language.

Master of Tactics. Claude can use the Help action as a bonus action. Additionally, when he uses the Help action to aid an ally in attacking a creature, the target of that attack can be within 30 feet of him, rather than 5 feet, if the target can see or hear Claude.

Slasher. Once per turn when Claude hits a creature with an attack that deals slashing damage, he can reduce the speed of the target by 10 feet until the start of his next turn. In addition when he scores a critical hit that deals slashing damage to a creature, he grievously wounds it. Until the start of Claude's next turn, the target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Savage Attacker. Once per turn when Claude rolls damage for a melee weapon attack, he can reroll the weapon's damage dice and use either total.

Skulker. Claude is an expert at slinking through shadows. He can try to hide when he is lightly obscured from the creature from which he is hiding. When he is hidden from a creature and misses it with a ranged weapon attack, making the attack doesn't reveal his position. Dim light doesn't impose disadvantage on his Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight.

Regeneration. Claude regenerates 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes damage from a silver melee weapon this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. If Claude is reduced to 0 hit points and this trait does not function he is slain.

Actions

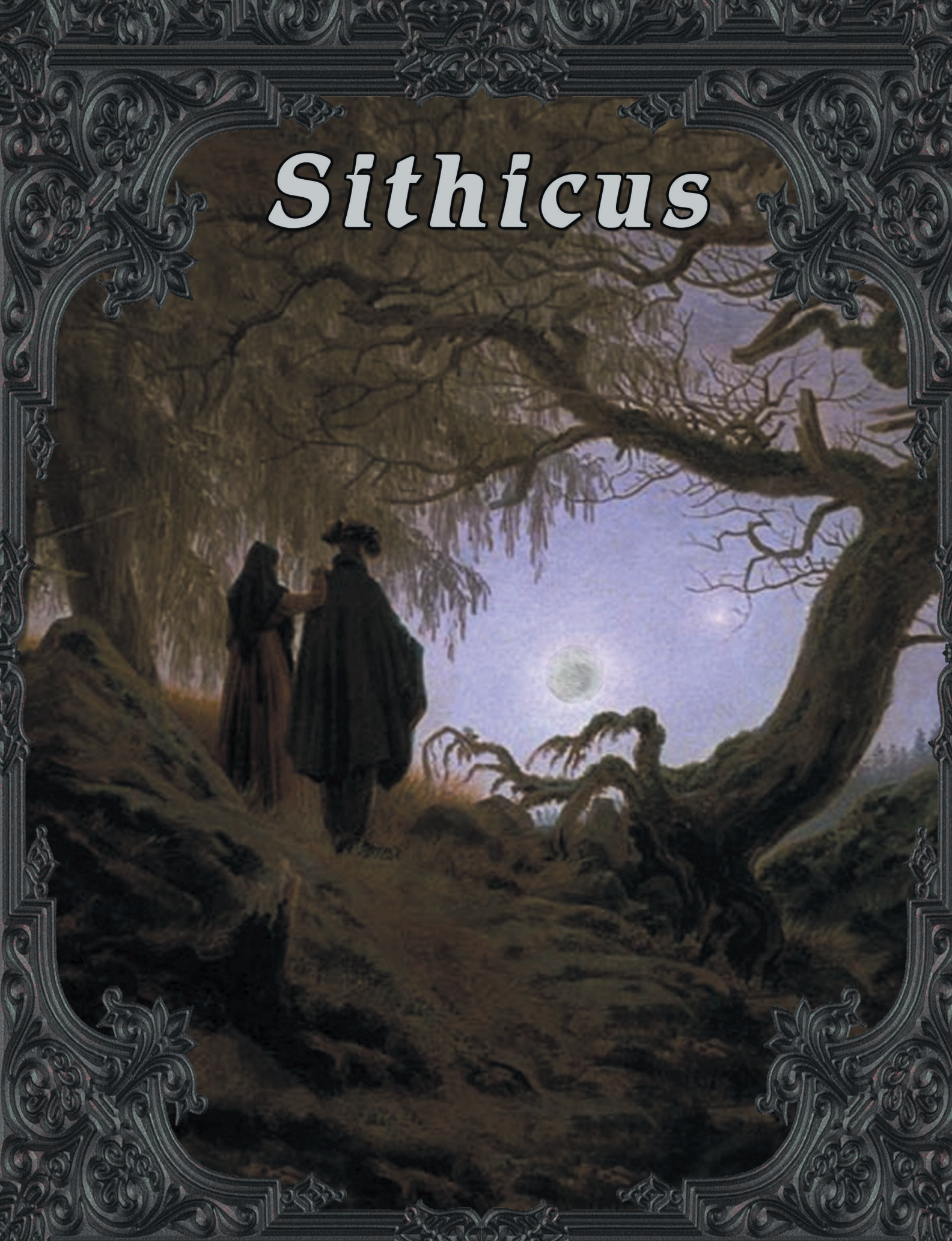
Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Claude makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

Bite (Rat or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

Clawed Glove +1 (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Hand Crossbow +1 (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Sithicus



Sithicus



Sithicus is the land of truths. The land of really uncomfortable truths. While many other domains, such as Dementlieu and Richemulot, lie about their presence and seemingly enhance untruths, Sithicus doesn't. It is a domain where all must face their darkest secrets. It imprints itself upon you to such a degree that those with the darkest memories find themselves unable to continue living. It is a land of melancholy, where many have given up hope and dreams, and merely pass the days as best they can. This takes the form of a strange affliction known as the Guilt of Sithicus.

Those who come here find it increasingly harder to concentrate on the matters at hand, and find themselves lost in reverie over the wrongs they have done in the past. Those who have visited Sithicus report that this malaise disappears when they leave.

The inhabitants of Sithicus stand out in more ways than that. They're in the rare position where the elves outnumber the humans in the domain, and they are quick to take this opportunity against the humans. Elsewhere non-humans are shunned and in some cases persecuted, and here in Sithicus, they return the favor, though at least they do not resort to violence. Suffice to say that non-humans find it difficult to find even decent accommodation and food within the borders of Sithicus.

This has become less pronounced after the Black Rose disappeared, especially as Azrael has attempted to increase opportunities for trade with the rest of the world, leading some of the elves to, reluctantly, accept the presence of human traders in some areas. Ironically, those who are not living in Sithicus are treated better than those who do. Sithicus also messes with visitors in a different way than the Guilt of Sithicus.

Before the Black Rose vanished, those who came here found it difficult to navigate, as no matter how many times a visitor saw a particular landmark, it always felt oddly unfamiliar. With the ascent of Inza however, the domain is just as difficult to traverse, but now it is because everything seems familiar instead, as if a wanderer has passed that way before, making them doubt their own judgment on directions.

Sithicus is also a domain that suffers under its ruler: Azrael Dak. The stunted dwarf rides around the land in his chariot, terrorizing the locals in any way he can. Before the Black Rose disappeared, he did the dark knight's bidding, a king in all but name. But his treachery, and working with Inza, when they caused the Black Rose

to disappear, also changed Azrael's status. While before he had all the power, but not the title, he now has the title but none of the power. As soon as he is out of sight, the locals ignore Azrael's dictates unless one of the local cronies (of which there are many) are watching — strangely, though it is illegal to know the identity of his agents, most locals do, leading to the populace having to pretend that someone isn't an agent of Azrael, even when they know full well that the person is. This has lulled the elven populace, and especially the aristocracy, into a false sense of security, and they only focus upon the known agents.

Little do they suspect that the cunning dwarf has inserted other agents into their midst, pitting them against each other, and preventing them from working effectively against him. In this manner, he manipulates them into doing his bidding far more often than they realize.

The true power in Sithicus lies with Inza, the Vistana who took control of the shadows and even became a unique one, on the Night of Screaming Shadows. She brooks no challenge, and only tolerates Azrael because he makes an excellent cover for her machinations. Once he is no longer useful or becomes too much of a nuisance, she's likely to get rid of him.

Adventures in Sithicus should focus on the themes of regret and betrayal. Perhaps the heroes discover that Azrael is about to punish one of his agents for betraying him and the heroes will need to rescue the elf, only to realize that they themselves have been betrayed and set up.

Perhaps one of the heroes has committed some grave misdeed, and in Sithicus, one of the spirits takes on the form of a person that they have hurt, and they'll need to face the consequences of their actions. Or maybe, the heroes are foolish enough to take an assignment from Azrael himself, sending them into the depths of the Black Chapel and the Lake of Sounds, in an attempt to eliminate Inza — the only way to survive may be to turn double-agent and then work against the dwarf himself.



Sithicus

“Never do today what you can as well do tomorrow, because something may occur to make you regret your premature action” ~Aaron Burr



Sithicus

Culture Level:	Medieval (though the wild elves are at Stone Age)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, and rivers
Year Formed:	720 BC
Population:	4,500
Races (%):	Elves 96% (91% of which are high elves, with the remainder being wild elves), half-elves 2%, humans 1%, other 1%
Languages:	Common, Balok, Mordentish, Sithican, Vaasi
Religions:	Ezra, Hala
Government:	Despotic monarchy and aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Azrael Dak
Darklord(s):	Inza Magdova Kulchevich
Nationality:	Sithican
Analog:	Krynn

Local Fauna:

Sithicus has rather active wildlife due to its thick forest. The forests are almost teeming with life, with boar, deer, elk, hares, red squirrels, and more living here quite happily, serving as a readily available source of

food for the people. The wild elves take great care not to overhunt in any particular area, and in many cases will assure (violently) that no one else does either. The forests are also home to a number of predators such as badgers, brown bears, and foxes — surprisingly though, despite the neighboring domains of Valachan and Verbrek being home to significant numbers of panthers and wolves respectively, Sithicus barely ever sees any of these cross the domain borders. The elven rangers that patrol the wilds near the settlements sometimes ride enormous stag beetles, bugs as big as a horse — creatures that they control, but which certainly aren't tame. According to the locals, Sithicus is also home to types of gigantic ants, spiders, and wasps, but no visitor has ever been able to verify these claims.

Local Flora:

Sithicus is covered in dense, unending forests. They are dense affairs, difficult to move through unless by someone who has trained to do so. The forests are mainly evergreens, but large stands of broadleaf trees such as oak and elm can be found here as well. Yews are usually found near the elven settlements, with their rangers and guards using the wood to craft their bows. This denseness also hides a problem for the travelers. Sithicus has many carnivorous plants hiding underneath the shady boughs, where they grow with unnatural vitality. They pose a grave danger to anyone who doesn't keep their wits about them when moving through the domain.

Native Horrors

For all its creepiness, Sithicus is remarkably safe. But there are monsters that hide here, mainly spirit ones — especially around the ruins of Nedragaard Keep. And of course, everyone watches the shadows that Inza controls. Even if they do not know who is behind it, everyone has heard stories of locals being dragged into a nearby shadow, never to emerge again.

Terrain type

Sithicus is fairly hilly, but this is buried beneath the forests, and hardly anyone notices. The rivers that traverse the domain are a lot more noticeable, but they're not as well-traveled as they would be if Sithicus was located further north in the Core, though that may be as much due to the rivers themselves as well as the elven inhabitants. What is noticeable however is the great chasm that separates the ruins of Nedragaard Keep from the rest of the domain, almost like a gigantic moat.

Sithicus

Important Landmarks

Great Chasm

The Great Chasm is almost a dozen miles long, stretching from north to south, and over a mile wide at the widest point. It plunges down so far that it's not possible to see the bottom of the rift, but in the middle, a mountain climbs a few thousand feet into the air, capped with Nedragaard Keep.

Last Stand of the Vistani

The Last Stand of the Vistani is not something that you can find on any map. It is barely a place, and more a memory. It was the site where Inza killed her mother Magda and destroyed her tribe.

It is only recognizable by the few rotten and broken vardos and a few unmarked graves. Sithican legend has it that the graves are rich in loot, but anyone who comes here is overcome with a sense of dread, and the legends claim that the site is haunted. There has never been a report or anyone successfully looting the graves, lending credence to the tales.

Nedragaard Kep

Now a ruin, Nedragaard Keep was the Black Rose's castle. From here he ruled Sithicus with the help of Azrael. For the first number of years, the Rose was present often, threatening the populace into submission and utterly destroying those who did not submit to his rule.

In the latter years of his rule, the knight fell to melancholy and lost himself in a series of magical mirrors that showed twisted versions of the past and stories of what could have been.

Now the ruin is home only to the spirits left behind when the Black Rose disappeared. Most of these are weak ghosts, but a few are extremely powerful banshees, the spirits of elven women who, according to legend, once led the knight himself astray.

The Black Chapel

The Black Chapel is buried somewhere in the Great Chasm, underneath the rocky mountain that holds Nedragaard Keep. It is accessible through a mine shaft that once yielded great riches to Azrael Dak, as captives were forced to mine salt.

Now the mine is abandoned and the Black Chapel only ever hosts a single person: Azrael. Here he beseeches the Dark Powers that once helped him overthrow the Black Rose, desperately hoping that they'll help him in

his fight against Inza — a fight that he ultimately knows is already lost, but his inborn tenacity means that he refuses to accept defeat.

The Lake of Sounds

The Lake of Sounds lies even deeper than the Black Chapel and is where Inza now lairs. A vast lake of liquid shadow, deep underground, filled with what locals think are the black souls of sinners. None have ever seen this lake and lived to tell the tale beyond noticing that it is a lake. Perhaps there are islands in the lake or something lies deep beneath it — only Inza knows, and she is not talking.

Towns and villages:

Har-Thelen

Har-Thelen, in spite of being one of the smaller settlements with only 500 inhabitants, is often considered to be the unofficial capital of Sithicus. As it sees the most traffic from foreigners outside Sithicus, it has suffered the most from the attention of first the Black Rose, and later Azrael Dak. It lies the closest to Nedragaard Keep. Its docks are the single most profitable area in Sithicus for Azrael, and his agents ensure the smooth running of operations there, as well as tax collection. The docks are well-maintained and in good condition, courtesy of the former mayor (or Speaker as they're known in Sithicus). The man stood up to Azrael one time too many, and he was forced to vacate his post or lose his life. Now, the elven noble organizes a resistance movement within Sithicus.

The resistance is few in number for now, but gaining in strength, and causing increasing problems for Azrael. Meanwhile, the nobles of Har-Thelen, as well as some of the spellcasters of the capital are engaged in building a new vineyard outside of Har-Thelen.

The few vintages that have left the area, are highly prized and praised throughout the Core, for their sweet taste that fills the imbiber with melancholy (as well as a near-irresistible temptation to tell those around them about their darkest secrets), and while most nobles merely like the taste, those of Dementlieu, Borca, and Richemulot, in particular, see ways to interrupt the scheming of their fellow nobles.

So far, surprisingly, most of the bottles of wine have gone to Falkovnia, where torturers use them to extract information from suspected spies.

Sithicus

Hroth

The small town of Hroth is home to 1,000 souls. It is surrounded by extensive marshlands that are often used by the inhabitants to dispose of the dead. It is a reclusive place with little to recommend itself for the weary traveler. The inhabitants prefer it that way, and those who visit find themselves ushered on as quickly as possible.

Kendralind

Kendralind may as well be a myth. Supposedly it is home to nearly 200 halflings, a variant known as kender, with more than half of them being vampires. But no one has ever seen the village. What has been seen are the warning signs that the bitterkinder (a term coined by a visitor from Darkon that means "bitter children") have left out. Surrounding their territories are hundreds of poles and spikes, each set with the head of a victim. Anyone trespassing into their territory is hunted down with ruthless abandon, though a lot of this seems to be out of fear. None of them approach travelers on their own, always traveling in packs, and even when forced to have some form of interaction with others, they are skittish, constantly checking around them and watching out for some form of treachery.

Mal-Erek

About half the size of Hroth, and approximately the size of Har-Thelen, Mal-Erek is a run down, and ramshackle place, with the docks, in particular, being in bad condition. Like elsewhere, Mal-Erek does little to recommend itself to a traveler, but it does have one feature that stands out:

The Library of Mal-Erek. It was once a great library, with tomes filled with magical knowledge, enough knowledge as to rival any mage throughout the Core. But now, the pages are filled with mold, and the once-grand shelves are rotten. Even the librarian herself seems to be suffering from illness, as she seems to EAT the pages, rather than read them.

What a traveler will not see is that the Library is a front, and the librarian an illusionist. The library still stands, though less grand than it once was. It serves as the center of learning for all Sithican spellcasters, though they normally shun those that do not have to study to learn. Only elves can gain access, and if they're not from Sithicus, then only after they've proven themselves to the locals.

Neighboring domain(s):

Barovia
Invidia
Kartakass
Valachan
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

Sithicus used to have a black moon that could only be seen when it blotted out the stars behind it. On the Night of Screaming Shadows, when the Black Rose disappeared, two other moons briefly appeared. One was a silver-white disc, the other a deep blood red one. After the Night of Screaming Shadow, the black and red moons disappeared, leaving only the same moon that can be seen throughout the Core.



Inza Magdova Kulchevich

"She is my curse. Because of her, everyone I have ever loved has died by my hands. I will not rest until I have brought her screaming into the light. I can hear her whispering in the back of my mind. Her promises and lies. Her endless damned corruption. She took my family. She took my tribe. Magda willing, I will take her life."

~ Ganelon

Inza Magdova Kulchevich has two forms, a human form and a shadow form. Inza is a young Vistani woman of exceptional beauty in her human form. Her hair is midnight black and perfectly complements her bright green eyes. Inza is bright and charming, able to put anyone at ease with just a few minutes of conversation. She has a knack for telling people exactly what they need to hear. Despite her friendly demeanor, Inza is cold and calculating. She is a driven woman that has no compulsion about sacrificing others for her benefit.

Inza's second form is a roughly human sized pool of black semi-liquid. The only recognizable part of Inza is her glowing green eyes. Inza doesn't move so much as flow in this form. No matter which form she takes, her blood is black.

Background: Inza was born the night Duke Gundar was assassinated. Vistani legends say that the storm that raged through Gundarak on the night that its darklord died touched her soul. Her mother, Magda, was the leader of her Vistani tribe, the Wanderers. Her father had been slain by Duke Gundar's soldiers for some imagined slight before she was born.

Inza showed signs of inner darkness from an early age. She had a gift for manipulation and theft, sometimes making life difficult for her mother and tribe. Inza hates and fears animals, who can see through her manipulations, and will attack her if she gets too close.

As Inza got older, she became a skilled thief and developed considerable skill as a wizard. Spellcraft came easily to Inza and she has amassed a sizable magical library in her travels. When Inza was 16, she conspired with Azrael Dak, a dwarven werewadger, to slay Sithicus' darklord Lord Soth and her mother Magda Kulchevich. The pair hoped that Inza would replace her mother as the raunie of her tribe, and Azrael as the new lord of the domain. Azrael had discovered a ritual that would steal the shadows of every being in Sithicus and turn them into his loyal troops.

Even with an army Lord Soth was too powerful for the conspirators to overcome on their own, so Inza and Azrael contacted Malocchio Adere, the son of the darklord of Invidia, Gabrielle Adere, for troops and aid.

Inza told Azrael when and where to ambush her tribe, and Magda was mortally wounded. Inza was able to use the ambush of her tribe and the death of her mother to secure the protection of Lord Soth and access to his castle, Nedragaard Keep. Once inside Soth's keep Inza told the darklord about the ritual Azrael would perform at the Lake of Sounds to create his shadow army. Lord Soth would allow no threats to his power and immediately left to crush the dwarf.

Inza used her magic to erect powerful wards around the keep that allowed Azrael and living soldiers from Invidia to enter the castle while forcing Soth's undead troops to flee. Azrael began the ritual to steal the shadows of Sithicus and create his army.

Soth, realizing he had been tricked, was beyond reason with rage. He stormed back to his keep, the wards meant to keep him out shattering at his approach. Inza fled while Soth and his undead warriors slaughtered the Invidian troops.

Azrael, his ritual interrupted, lost control of the shadows he stole and they swarmed above the keep, taking on the shape of a massive mountain that crashed down into Nedragaard.

Inza ran into the waiting arms of the few remaining Wanderers. The Wanderers drew sharp knives but a mountain of shadow slammed into the ground. In the chaos that followed, Inza escaped and dove into the Great Chasm. The darkness embraced her and Inza became the new darklord of Sithicus.



Inza Magdova Kulchevich

Current Sketch: Azrael survived the Night of Screaming Shadows and is now the political leader of Sithicus. Despite his bluster and shows of power, he is nothing to Inza. The darklord makes her lair in the Great Chasm. The darkness in the chasm speaks to her and follows her commands.

Inza uses a crystal ball to scry on all of Sithicus and speak with anyone she wishes. She delights in tempting good people onto a path of evil. A father that murders their son, lovers that murder each other on their wedding night, a mother that abandons a babe, these are dreams that make Inza smile.

The remaining Wanderers are a constant thorn in Inza's side. They seek to thwart her at every turn, and are sometimes successful.

Darklord's Tactics: Inza hates daylight and prefers to strike from darkness. She uses her spells to disorient and confuse her enemies before she closes in for the kill. Inza has an irrational hatred of animals and children and will target them first unless her opponents are well armed or are obvious spellcasters. If her victims cannot fight back, Inza will torture the children just to hear the parents scream. Inza has a viper familiar (poisonous snake (MM, pg. 334) which she uses to distract or scare her enemies before she strikes them. She rarely uses her Shadow Demon form but will do if she deems that the situation calls for it.

Borders: The borders become a mass of dancing shadows. Any creature brave enough to enter the shadows exits one hour later inside Sithicus.



Inza Magdova Kulchevich

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 82 (8d6+7d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +4, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +10, History +6, Perception +4, Persuasion +6, Stealth +10

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Patterna, Balok, Draconic, Luktar, Sithican

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Evil Eye. Inza's foes crumble and fail under the force of her derision and baleful glare. As her reaction, Inza can cause any creature within 60 feet of her to take disadvantage on any attack roll, ability check or saving throw it is currently making. Inza can use this ability twice before she needs to finish a short or long rest.

Casts of the Eye. Inza can use her evil eye to cast enchantment spells. For example, if she has memorized *charm person*, she can cast it, without expending a spell slot and without the need for spell components. When Inza uses this ability, her eyes flash and narrow like those of a cat.

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

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Inza can see hits her with an Attack, she can use your Reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.

Mage Hand Legerdemain. When Inza casts *mage hand*, she can make the spectral hand invisible, and she can perform the following additional tasks with it:

Stow one object the hand is holding in a container worn or carried by another creature.

Retrieve an object in a container worn or carried by another creature.

Use thieves' tools to pick locks and disarm traps at range.

Perform one of these tasks without being noticed by a creature if she succeeds on a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check contested by the creature's Wisdom (Perception) check.

In addition, Inza can use the bonus action granted by her Cunning Action to control the hand.

Jinx. Inza absorbs all the luck from the creatures near her to improve her survival rate. Sadly for her allies, this means that their luck runs dry quickly. Inza always rolls saving throws and ability checks with advantage while there is at least one ally within 10ft of her but all of her allies within range, roll the same rolls with disadvantage.

Inza Magdova Kulchevich

Spellcasting. Inza is a 15th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Inza has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *encode thoughts, green flame blade, mage hand, message, mind sliver, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (8 slots): *charm person, disguise self, distort value, earth tremor, expeditious retreat, fog cloud, mage armor, puppet, shield*
2nd level (5 slots): *blindness/deafness, crown of madness, darkness, mind spike, misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, fireball, haste*

4th level (2 slots): *confusion, greater invisibility*

Summon Salt Shadows (1/Day). Inza can summon 1d4 salt shadows by using an action. The salt shadows act as allies to Inza and fight till they are destroyed or they are dismissed by her with a free action.

Temptress (1/Day). Inza loves to tempt people to walk the path of evil. By utilizing her charming presence and silver tongue, she can force a target that can see and hear her to change their ways if they fail a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. A creature that fails changes their alignment to any Evil alignment (chosen by the DM) for 24 hours.

Gifts of Novgor. As long as Inza is wielding the Novgor dagger, she has the following benefits:

She has advantage on sleight of hands ability checks to open locks.

She can cast *color spray* at will provided that there is a light source larger than a candle within 15ft of her.

Once per week the dagger can be used to cast *major image* which has a duration of 15 hours. This ability exhausts Inza, reducing her Strength and Constitution Score by half for 24 hours.

Portent. Glimpses of the future press in on Inza's awareness. When she finishes a long rest, roll two d20s and record the numbers rolled. Inza can replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check made by her or a creature that she can see with one of these foretelling rolls. She must choose to do so before the roll, and she can replace a roll in this way only once per turn. Each foretelling roll can be used only once. When she finishes a long rest, she loses any unused foretelling rolls.

Expert Divination. Casting divination spells comes so easily to Inza that it expends only a fraction of her spellcasting efforts. When she casts a divination spell of 2nd level or higher using a spell slot, she regains one expended spell slot. The slot she regains must be of a level lower than the spell she casts and can't be higher than 5th.

Legendary Crystal Ball. Inza can cast each of the following spells once per day without expending a spell slot or having the need of material components: *augury, see invisibility, locate object, clairvoyance, divination, locate creature, scrying.*

Affect From Distance. Inza can cast *message, mind spike, charm person* and *crown of madness* or use her temptress ability on a target she can see through a divination spell such as *scrying*, ignoring the distance between the two.

Warcaster. Inza has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage. She can perform the somatic components of spells even when she has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. In addition, when a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Shadow Form. Twice per day, Inza can transform into a shadow demon (MM, pg. 64) for 1 hour or back to her true humanoid form using an action. In this form she keeps her original ability scores and Hit Points, she cannot cast spells but she can wield items and use her other abilities.

Actions

Novgor Dagger +4. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing + 1 damage which the target takes each turn until it succeeds on a DC 15 Medicine check to stop the bleeding or is magically healed. This damage stacks up with each successful hit. On a roll of 20, Inza beheads her target.

Significant Possessions

Novgor Dagger, Crystal Ball (legendary version DMG, pg. 159),



Lord Soth

"I have watched my world burn with the wrath of the gods. I have watched a mother hold her child out of the pyre while begging me to save it, and I did nothing. I have no remorse. I have no pity. I am death."

~ Lord Soth

Lord Soth, the Knight of the Black Rose, rules over the blighted land of Sithicus. Lord Soth is a massive knight in plate mail. His armor is intricately decorated with rose and kingfisher icons but looks blackened as if by fire. Lord Soth's helm covers his face, but his eyes can be seen to burn like bright coals behind his visor. Soth rarely speaks, but when he does his voice is deep and assured. He has led soldiers and undead on a thousand battlefields, and expects to be obeyed.

Background: Lord Soth was born in a distant, forgotten world. He was a knight and a powerful warrior for good, but his pride and lust led to his downfall. As devastation rained on his world, he was reborn as a death knight. Soth was bored for decades until he met a general that stirred his cold dead heart. He planned to kill and raise her as his undead consort. As his plan came to pass, Soth and the ghost of his treacherous seneschal, Caradoc, were pulled into Ravenloft. Soth appeared in Barovia and found the Kulchevich family, a Vistani clan. The meeting quickly became hostile. Soth slaughtered the entire family and forced the only survivor, Magda, to serve as his guide. Magda took the death knight to the lord of Barovia, Strahd von Zarovich. Soth and Strahd initially got along, but it did not last. Two creatures of immense pride, both with a desire to rule quickly became hostile to one another. Soth rampaged through Castle Ravenloft and escaped. He attempted escape from Ravenloft through a portal that he discovered, but was deposited back in Barovia. After Soth returned to Barovia, Strahd sought out the death knight and offered an appeasement. Strahd told Soth to travel to a neighboring domain, Gundarak and kill the son of the darklord Duke Gundar. If Soth could kill the Duke's son, a portal would open and he could leave. The death knight traveled to Gundarak and stormed the duke's castle. Gundar was forced to flee and Soth killed Gundar's vampire son. Much to Soth's dismay, nothing happened. Soth was incensed. He returned to Castle Ravenloft and tore through an army of zombies and mercenaries that Strahd had summoned. As the last of his opponents fell, Soth saw Caradoc fleeing the castle. The death knight realized that the ghost must have been in league with Strahd all along. Caradoc fled to the border of Barovia, where he was caught by the death knight. As Soth strangled his seneschal, the mists closed in.

Current Sketch: Sithicus resembles Soth's ancient home in many ways, but it brings him no comfort. Sithicus is conquered and none of his subjects could even dream of challenging the death knight. Soth has found an unconquerable enemy. Boredom. The death knight's only respite comes from the occasional rumor of a dark haired warrior woman that roams Sithicus. Soth is convinced this is his lost love and pursues even the most implausible rumor, but has yet to even catch a fleeting glimpse of this mysterious warrior. Lord Soth must atone for his crimes. He must go on a quest to right a terrible wrong. This quest will undoubtedly end with his death. While on this quest Lord Soth cannot use any of the abilities granted to him as a death knight.

Darklord's Tactics: Lord Soth is an honorable combatant. He gives his opponents a chance to ready their weapons before he attacks, and enemies that beg for mercy are granted a swift death. If Soth slays his opponent's mount, he will dismount to avoid unfair advantage. Given Soth's tremendous power, these concessions don't count for much. Soth has been fighting for centuries and seen every battlefield tactic and trick. He has dozens of carefully thought out plans for any scenario.

Borders: Death knights must sing about their crimes when the moon is full. Lord Soth can repeat this song when he wants to seal the borders of Sithicus. Every intelligent creature in Sithicus will join Lord Soth in his song and the sound encircles the domain in a wall of sound. Any creature that tries to cross the barrier is driven back by the horrid sound. A creature that touches the wall is driven hopelessly mad.

Lord Soth's Lair: Nedragaard Keep: Nedragaard Keep is Lord Soth's center of power. High walls surround a tower that gracefully rises into the sky. From a distance the tower appears to be a rose bud carved from black stone. As you get closer the stone looks as if it has been blackened by fire, and here and there the pale pink of the stone's natural color peaks through. Lord Soth hates his home, even though he refuses to leave. The keep constantly changes. Lord Soth is often lost in his own fortress, and it is almost impossible to plan a defense. The few invaders that have had the courage or stupidity to enter the keep have found it has its own defenses, much to their dismay. Lord Soth encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 22 (41,000 XP).

Lord Soth



Lord Soth

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (Adamantine Plate +3)

Hit Points 333 (35d8 + 175)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex ++, Wis +11, Cha +12

Skills Intimidation +10, Perception +11

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Undead Nature. Lord Soth doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Adamantine Plate. Lord Soth treats critical melee hits as normal melee hits.

Well of Fear. Any creature that starts its turn or moves within 10 feet of Lord Soth must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail are frightened of Lord Soth for 1 minute. Creatures may repeat the Wisdom saving throw at the end of their turn to end the condition. This ability ignores immunities.

Greater Magic Resistance. Lord Soth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. If Lord Soth succeeds by 10 or more, the spell is reflected back to the caster.

Marshal Undead. Unless Lord Soth is incapacitated, he and undead creatures within 60 feet of him have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead.

Control Undead: Lord Soth can exert complete control over any lesser undead of up to CR 3 and control other undead up to CR 8 as if he was casting *command*.

Turn Immunity. Lord Soth is immune to effects that turn undead.

Shadow Walking. Lord Soth uses his move action to step into an area of shadow within 5 feet of him and reappears in another area of shadow within 120 ft.

Soth's Rejuvenation. When Soth is killed, his body turns to mist and dissipates. After 2d6 days, he reforms on his castle's throne with all of his hit points

Innate Spellcasting. Lord Soth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: At will: *bestow curse*, *detect magic*, *wall of ice* 1/day each: power word (kill, pain or stun), symbol.

Spellcasting. Lord Soth is a 20th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *compelled duel*, *searing smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *hold person*

3rd level (3 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*, *elemental weapon*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *staggering smite*

5th level (2 slots): *circle of power*, *destructive wave*

Actions

Multiattack. Lord Soth can make 4 attacks with his longsword +1, *Traitor's Lament*.

Traitor's Lament. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 7) slashing damage or 13 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage. *Traitor's Lament* also functions as a *sword of wounding*.

Rod of Elemental Fire. Lord Soth won this rod in a battle on the Plane of Fire. The Rod is three feet of blackened steel with one constantly burning end. While Lord Soth holds the rod, he is immune to fire damage. The rod has 7 charges. The rod regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges at dawn.

Spells. Lord Soth may use an action to expend 1 or more charges to cast one of the following spells:

burning hands (1 charge)

searing ray (2 charges)

fireball (3 charges)

incendiary cloud (6 charges)

Summon Fire Elemental. Lord Soth may use an action to expend 1 or more charges from the rod. For every charge he expends, a fire elemental appears in the closest empty space. These fire elementals are friendly to Lord Soth and remain for 1 minute before fading into a pile of ash.

Lord Soth

Hellfire Orb (1/Day). Lord Soth hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point he can see within 120 feet. Each creature within a 20 foot radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 42 (12d6) fire damage and 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Reactions

Parry. Lord Soth adds 6 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

Lord Soth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lord Soth regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Wall of Ice. Lord Soth casts *wall of ice*.

Shadow Walks. Lord Soth uses his *shadow walking* ability.

Traitor's Lament. Lord Soth makes one melee attack with *Traitor's Lament*.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Lord Soth can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

-The spirit of a beautiful woman appears next to Soth. After a second, her face transforms into a hideous mockery of beauty, and she wails. Every creature within 30 feet of Lord Soth must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail are reduced to 0 hit points. Constructs and undead automatically pass the save.

-A disembodied voice sings a song of loss and despair. Every creature within 50 feet of Lord Soth must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures take 28 (8d6) psychic damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

-Nedragaard Keep suddenly changes. Walls appear where none were before, doors and windows flow like water around the room. Creatures in the same room as Lord Soth must make a DC 16 Dexterity check. Creatures that fail are pulled into a different room from the rest of their companions and enemies. They must find their own way back to their companions. Lord Soth can choose to succeed or fail on this save.

Lord Soth can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.



House of Lament



House of Lament



The story of the House of Lament is one of pure dread and misery. Originally built some 350 years ago by a bandit warlord named Dranzorg, it was created as a monument to his power. In fact, he was powerful enough that the actual lord of the area, who at that point was an aging man, simply wanted peace for his country, and he offered up his beautiful daughter Mara's hand in marriage, hoping that Dranzorg would lessen his attacks on the local populace. While it did accomplish that, the old man never expected that he'd never see his daughter again.

Dranzorg, instead of waiting for the girl to arrive, attacked her caravan and captured her. He told her of an ancient ritual of his people, where a cat or dog was interred within the foundations of a new building to ensure its strength. And he had a new tower that he'd built. Screaming out her fear and cursing them, the young girl was entombed in the tower.

Dranzorg and his men expected the girl to die within a day, but the screaming continued for weeks. Eventually, the men had enough and begged Dranzorg to release the girl before they all went mad. When the tomb was opened, the girl was gone.

What followed was nothing short of a massacre. Over the next few weeks, one of the soldiers went mad and killed themselves each day. Eventually, only Dranzorg was left, utterly crazed. When he woke in the middle of his last night, he heard the young girl's voice calling "Mara is lonely". He went to the still open tomb, sat down, and died.

Mara is still lonely. And she wants company. The power of the House was greatly diminished when it arrived in Borca. Before this, it was able to move between domains, settling itself wherever it wished, but now it is stuck in a single spot. Somehow, in spite of the locals knowing the danger, people still go to the building. And never leave.

Adventures that involve the House of Lament should focus simply on escape and on the desperation that House is feeling. It, or at least the part of it that was Mara, is truly alone and lonely, ever seeking company. But how the heroes arrive within the House will inform their methods. If the heroes simply arrive on a late cold night and find an empty house where they can take shelter from a snowstorm or inclement weather, they will have no idea of what faces them. All they will know is that they cannot escape this strange man-

sion and that it is slowly getting madder and stranger. Noises are everywhere as if someone is there — floorboards creak, doors open and close at random, potentially hinting at someone walking around for the heroes to attempt to follow. And when enough time passes, the heroes will slowly realize that the draft from the chimney sounds like someone breathing. A dull regular thumping noise can be heard as well, mimicking a heartbeat. And then they'll realize that they won't be able to leave until Mara gets her due, her chosen one.

Those who enter the House knowing what it is are likely better prepared — they might seek someone lost in the past, or perhaps the House is rumored to hold information that they need. Regardless, they might have some idea of what awaits them, and attempt escape through magical means like teleportation or even an exorcism. They might even be successful, or at least they might think so. The House will not be easily denied.

"I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in."

~Edgar Allan Poe, The Cask of Amontillado



House of Lament

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	None
Year Formed:	First recorded sighting in 703 BC, settled in Borca in 746 BC
Population:	0
Races (%):	None
Languages:	Balok, Luktar, Vaasi, Sithican, Forfarian, Thaani
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	The House of Lament
Darklord(s):	The House of Lament
Nationality:	None
Analog:	Legend of Rozafa Castle and the Cask of Amontillado

Local Fauna:

There are no living creatures within the House of Lament apart from those that visitors bring.

Local Flora:

As with creatures, there are no flowers or plants within the House of Lament, except the greenhouse that is attached to the kitchen. Even here, the plants are dead and rotted away to almost nothing. A few empty vases are found around the house as well, but the tower is devoid of any signs of life at all.

Terrain type

The House of Lament consists of two different parts. One is an old tower, once part of a much older castle or fort, but which is now long gone. The mansion was added several hundred years later when a now-forgotten merchant bought the old tower and built the rest of the estate. His choices were odd, to say the least, and quite possibly affected by the spirit of Mara. The windows are extremely tall and narrow, often starting seven feet from the floor, and culminating in a spire 15 feet up, just shy of the ceiling. The rooms on the first floor mostly do not have windows at all, leaving many of the rooms shrouded in darkness.

The mansion itself is furnished as you'd expect from a rich merchant's mansion. The mansion itself is surrounded by a tall, thick, stone wall and it even has a small moat and a (now-dead) kitchen garden. Above everything towers the central tower, where Mara originally died. Well-appointed rooms with bespoke furniture are everywhere, adorned with high-quality artwork. All of the art is subtly corrupted, such as the carved wood nymphs on the two-story curving staircase that is found inside the foyer. The wood

nymphs look normal and frolicking at a distance, but up close their faces are contorted in pain and hatred. The same is true of the paintings around the place. Nothing is truly what it seems in the House, as it can change everything at a moment's notice, and doors often lock and unlock on their own. Most worryingly is the one consistent message that all visitors get, whenever a victim has been chosen. Letters scrawled in blood manifest upon a nearby wall with the words "Mara is lonely".

Native Horrors

Just like for animals and plants there are no monsters located within the house. Those that make their way here, whether living or dead, are absorbed just like normal humanoid visitors would be.

Important Landmarks

The Tower

Looming above the rest of the estate is the old tower. The tower is completely empty and has been since it was created. From the top of the tower, the surrounding countryside can be seen, but it always appears to be autumn, regardless of the actual season. At the basement of the tower lies the final resting place of Mara and Dranzorg. Leaning against the wall, next to an open section of the wall, sits the skeleton of the bandit lord, its form contorted in pain. Of Mara's body, there is no sign, and the tomb beyond the wall is empty.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Borca

Fun Fact:

The House of Lament, or the spirit of Mara, releases the "guests" after the chosen one is left behind, but even if every member of a visitor's group is killed, the House seemingly never kills unintelligent animals. These are released unharmed, and scholars have theorized that this is Mara recognizing that animals, especially cats and dogs, have suffered similar fates to her.

House of Lament

"I'm so sorry Pietro. She wants one of us to stay. She won't let us out otherwise. She wants people in the walls you see, not their bodies, just their souls. If I'm ever going to leave, I have to give you to her. Now...please stop crying. The knots are tight, there's no point in struggling. I promise I'll make it quick. I've always been good with knives."
~Vladimir Yoshenko, deceased

The house of Lament is unique. It is both the domain and the darklord. The angry spirit of a young girl named Mara and the spirit of the house itself have merged to become something new. The house is a large stone house that is well appointed, but not opulent. In one corner sits an ancient tower that is connected to the house. The tower is clearly older than the rest of the house.

Background: Dranzorg was a ruthless bandit king who relentlessly raided the villages that surrounded his keep. One aging lord, tired of the constant raids, of watching children starve in winter and desperate for any kind of relief, offered his daughter, Mara, to get the raids to stop. Mara hated Dranzorg but agreed to try and save her people. Dranzorg had other plans. He raided the caravan escorting Mara and claimed she never arrived. Dranzorg burned her village to the ground and enslaved her people. Mara was taken to Dranzorg's keep and bricked into the wall of the tallest tower. Dranzorg thought this would make his tower invulnerable to attack. Mara's screams reverberated through the castle for days after she should have been dead. When Dranzorg and his men opened her tomb, she was gone. Not long after Dranzorg's men would claim they heard a woman calling to them in the night. Anyone who went to investigate never returned. Soon only Dranzorg remained. No one knows what happened to the bandit lord. The locals fled from the castle and never returned. Soon the castle fell into disrepair, and in time only the tallest tower remained. Years later a merchant found the tower and became enamored. He built his home attached to the tower and moved in with his family. Soon they were all dead.

Current Sketch: The House of Lament is an amalgam of souls trapped together in rage and pain. Mara is the oldest and most powerful aspect of the house, and she constantly craves more souls. Whenever a group enters the house, one must be left behind to appease Mara. Despite the hundreds of souls that have been absorbed into the house, Mara always craves more.

Darklord's Tactics: The house cannot be harmed. Stabbing or smashing the walls makes them bleed, but the damage heals in seconds. Elemental attacks have no effect on the house. The house cannot directly attack anyone in the house but the spirits of the absorbed souls roam the house, and if enough blood is spilled the house can form a blood elemental.

Borders: Mara can close the borders by sealing the doors and windows. The doors and windows refuse to open and attacks bounce off harmlessly. If a group enters the house Mara will seal the borders until at least one of them is given to the house.



House of Lament Map

Storage Room

To Second Level

To Cellar

Base of Tower

Sealed Door

Moira's Tomb

Porch

First Floor (Ground)

1 square = 5 feet

Flaming Torches = Light Places

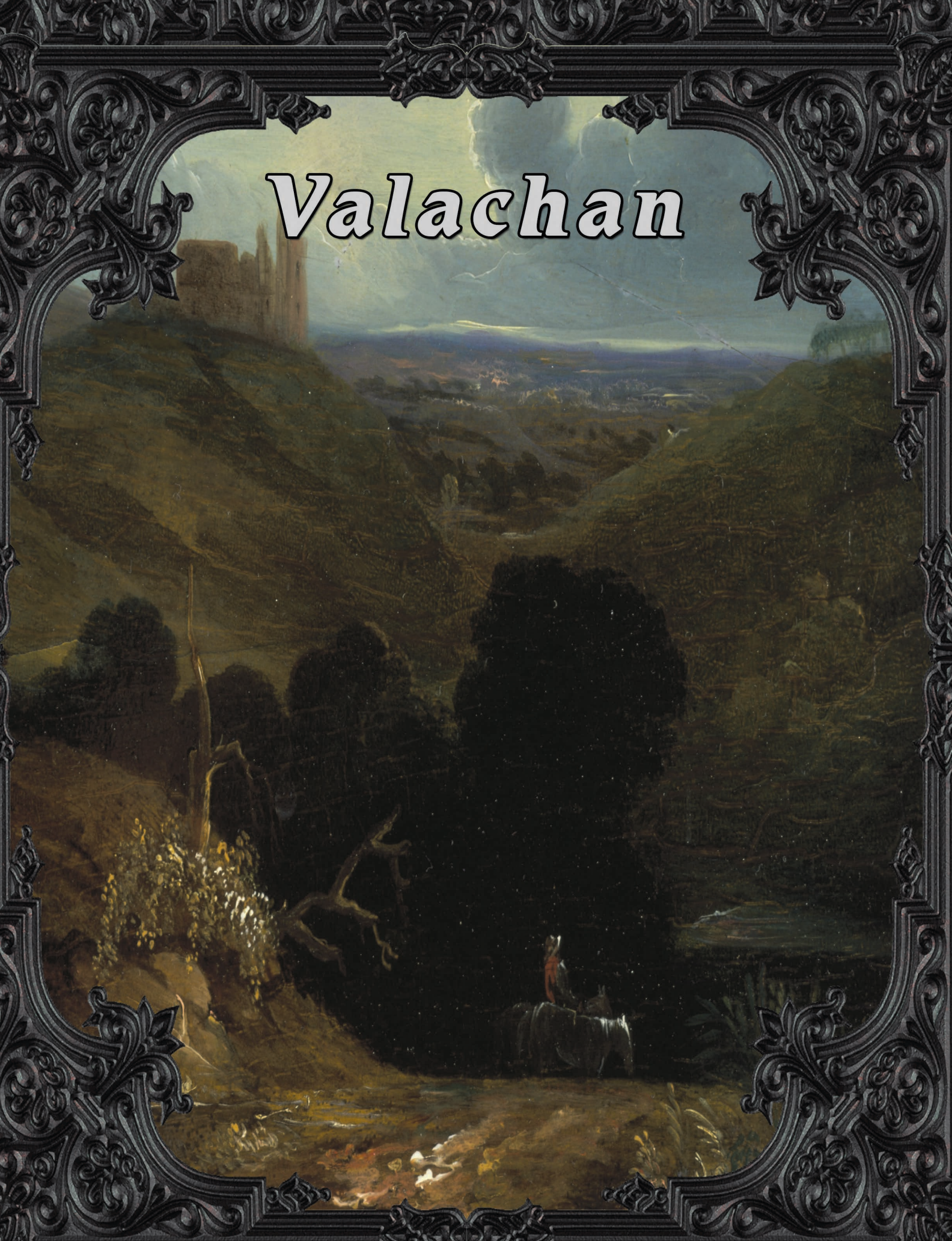
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Foyer | 11. Throne Room |
| 2. Receiving Room | 12. Round Table Room |
| 3. Front Parlor | 13. Conservatory
(Dry/Dead Plants) |
| 4. Gallery | 14. Garderobe |
| 5. Parlor | 15. Servants' Day Room |
| 6. Library | 16. Pantry / Scullery |
| 7. Music Room | 17. Kitchen |
| 8. Game Room | 18. Butler's Pantry |
| 9. Smoking Room | 19. Dining Hall |
| 10. Ladies' Sitting Room | |

House of Lament Map

Second Floor



Valachan



Valachan



Valachan is the story of the beast — turned man — turned monster. The story of Urik von Kharkov, and the story of the domain itself, are intertwined in this manner. Nothing in the domain is ever straightforward, even travel is difficult as the ground is broken apart, and the trees that cover the domain in trackless greenery are ancient, and blot out the sun and sky above.

Here, life is cheap, both for man and for the beast, and neither knows who is the hunter. But above them all rises one beast, one man, and one monster more powerful than all of them. Urik von Kharkov himself.

Law enforcement in Valachan is handled by the Black Leopards, a group of soldiers, woodsmen, and essentially monstrous sadists who enforce the will of Urik von Kharkov, including collecting taxes and running the bridal lottery. Each and every one of them is unknown to the populace, werepanthers, or those aspiring to be. Even the name, Black Leopards, is a sly nod to this fact.

Unique to Valachan is their worship of Yutow the Peacebringer, also known as the Dead God. The belief of Yutow is one of unflinching stoicism and endurance of the trials of life. Even the history of Valachan itself is a nod to this fact, as Yutow supposedly died to pacify Valachan. Now his faithful do the same, believing that those who follow the rules will be rewarded, and those who don't will be eaten by animals or swallowed by the mists.

Adventures in Valachan should focus on this man vs. beast theme that's present in the domain. There should always be a feeling of "Am I in the right here?" for everything that happens, as adventurers question their own decision-making process, and are forced to reevaluate their own motives. Are they doing what they do for a higher purpose, or have they fallen to some baser desire? And of the danger of arousing the animals to a wave of instinctual anger that you cannot understand.

*"If you rile a tiger, he's going to show his claws."
~Rob James-Collier*

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forests and hills
Year Formed:	625 BC
Population:	19,000
Races (%):	Humans 97%, Gnomes 2%, Other 1%
Languages:	Gnome, Mordentish, Sithican, Vaasi
Religions:	Yutow (main religion), Ezra, Hala
Government:	Aristocratic monarchy
Ruler(s):	Baron Urik von Kharkov
Darklord(s):	Baron Urik von Kharkov
Nationality:	Valachani



Local Fauna:

The forests of Valachan are full of life. Teeming in fact, with both deer and boar common everywhere, while moose roam the south and wild sheep flock in the canyons between the hills. Wolves are only common around the *Bakkelande* (hill country in the Vaasi tongue) in the south, close to the borders with Verbrek and Sithicus. Everywhere else, dire versions of weasels, badgers, and wolverines take precedence. Brown and black bears are common sights as well, but the alpha predator of the forests of Valachan is the black panther (or *mørkenkat* in the Valachan dialect of Vaasi). These panthers range from about 4 feet long, but there are stories of *mørkenkatte* that reached monstrous sizes of 35 feet in length.

Valachan

Local Flora:

Redwood is the dominant plant type here, with the huge trees growing everywhere, and providing the vast majority of the limber from the domain. These redwood trees are prized across the Core, due to their ability to repel insects and rot. It is said that anything built from Valachan redwood will never succumb to things like termites. That may be an exaggeration, but they are incredibly resistant to problems that afflict other types of wood. In the north of the domain, there are also a number of cheery, willow, yew, and beech trees, and an impressive array of different ferns that make navigation through the domain difficult. To the south, especially near Ungrad, this turns into an incredible array of mushrooms, toadstools, and various forms of fungi. In the north, barley hops and apples are both cultivated by local farmers, and grow wild. The most successful crop though is wheat, which grows extremely well in Valachan after having been imported from Mordent a few decades ago. The most notorious plant of Valachan is the lily of eternal slumber, also known as Yutow's blood. It can only grow in Valachan and local legends say that it only grows where the god Yutow's blood fell as he pacified Valachan. For 24 hours after a lily is plucked, it is effective against vampires. A wreath of four flowers, when placed around the neck of a vampire, works as if the vampire is exposed to sunlight, potentially killing it, if it is not removed in time. If a lily is placed in the coffin of a sleeping vampire, it'll force that vampire into a deathlike coma, until the lily is removed.

Native Horrors

There are a number of fey and ghostly creatures here, drawn to Valachan due to the age of the forests. But strangely, in spite of this evidence of the supernatural, the inhabitants of Valachan are in an almost pathological denial of the existence of magic, viewing it as superstition at best and consorting with demons and devils at worst. One strange threat in Valachan is the White Fever. A disease that temporarily debilitates those who are infected with it. No treatment has proven effective. The reason for this is that it is not a disease, but the predations of the large population of nosferatu vampires in the domain. They're kept in check by Kharkov's power and only rarely overfeed. This prevents the general populace from realizing the presence of these foul monsters. Anyone who gets too close to finding out the truth is eliminated, either by the nosferatu or by the Black Leopards.

Terrain type

Valachan is practically an unending forest. Small villages and hamlets dot the land, separated by broken roads, with hills rising in the south of Valachan. There are no completed roads in Valachan, and due to the nature of the domain, and how the wildlands reclaim everything, trying to build one is folly. There are some remnants to show that in the past there have been attempts to do so anyway, but these have all been unsuccessful. The main trade routes, therefore, are the rivers as they bend and wind their way from north to south.

Important Landmarks

Castle Pantara

The seat of power for Baron Urik von Kharkov, and indeed the seat of power for all of Valachan, is a menacing gray fortress sitting on a hilltop and overlooking the Broken Road, south of Helbenik.

It is constructed to look like a crouching panther, with a wooden block house straddling the nearby road. The Black Leopards control the road from this blockhouse, search, inspect, and note down all travelers along the road. From the blockhouse to the castle is a small winding path that eventually reaches the panther's tail.

The castle is home to the Baron, a small group of servants (who all eventually contract White Fever), and a garrison of Black Leopards. On top of that is his ever-changing position of wife — which the locals believe is a cursed position: everyone who gets it either ends up running away, being an adulterer, or succumbing to White Fever. In reality, the Baron kills them in an animalistic rage when he loses control. Only for him to believe that he can now handle it, a year later, and the cycle repeats itself once again.

Towns and villages:

Helbenik

Helbenik is a town of 3,500 which lies in the northern part of Valachan, surrounded by a score of smaller hamlets, all within about a day's travel. It is the richest town in Valachan, a point of contention with those surrounding villages, who all believe that those in Helbenik have forgotten how to do an honest day's work. This is somewhat mitigated by the fact that Helbenik is also closest to Castle Pantara, and as such is the one most often selected for the bridal lottery of the Baron, and also the one that suffers the most from the White Fever. Helbenik is home to two remarkable features: The Gastre, which is a colossal tree that never bears leaves, but each autumn comes alive with scarlet flow-

Valachan

ers. The locals use the tree as a part of their festivals, decorating it with garlands and ribbons during festivities, to keep its spirit happy. They believe that this spirit is a fertility spirit of some sort, one that grants her boons if she is pleased, and who blights crops if she is not. The other feature is Felkovic's Tower, a near-ruined, blackened heap of decay that was once home to a local wizard. The locals believe (correctly) that the ruin is haunted by the ghost of the old man, who went mad after his wife died from the White Fever. In reality, she was turned into a nosferatu by Urik von Kharkov, and he died following an attempt to kill the Baron. No one knows her current whereabouts, nor that of the weapon, the *Cat of Felkovic*, that he created to kill the Baron.

Rotwald

Rotwald is well-named. To most Valachani it is the seat of rot, as it is where every revolution, every revolt, and every uprising comes from. The reason for this is quite simple, though the Valachani themselves would never ever admit to it. The rest of Valachan is under the control of Urik von Kharkov or his minions with almost everyone in power being *charmed* or *dominated* by the Baron or one of his underlings. If they're not directly under that control, they're influenced in other ways instead, such as by being bossed around by those who are or simply living in terror of the Black Leopards.

In Rotwald, that terror falls away as once per year, the witches of Hala that inhabit the Hospice of Healing hands read aloud from a tome called the *Tales of Ages*. It is a holy relic that prevents any lycanthropes from entering the hospice (keeping the witches safe from Kharkov's retribution), and which, once per year allows the reader to cast *dispel magic* (as a 6th level spell) affecting anyone within earshot. In this manner, the witches dispel the enchantments and abilities that are holding the natives captive. Of course, the spells and such are quickly reestablished, but this allows them all to, at times, recall all the atrocities inflicted upon them - which in turn leads to the revolts.'

The Hospice is the main attraction of Rotwald, which is an otherwise relatively unremarkable town of 4,500 inhabitants. It has a vast library that would be the envy of any wizard, librarian, or lich elsewhere, and which attracts those interested in knowledge from afar.

Ungrad

Ungrad is the smallest of the main towns of Valachan, holding only 1,500 souls. But it is the ugliest. It is a backwater of mud, rust, and fungus. The inhabitants are friendly but completely deluded about the benevolence of their ruler, which is all down to the work of Dr. Antianette Despini-Hoyer, the mayor and an extremely capable physician. She just happens to be a nosferatu claiming to look for a cure for the White Fever, her drinking from her subjects. Her clinic is a good place to seek out a cure for certain illnesses, but one must make sure not to fall to the depredations of the "good" doctor while being cured.

Neighboring domain(s):

Mordent
Sea of Sorrows
Sithicus
Verbrek

Fun Fact:

Those from the city of Valaki are often mistaken as Valachani when speaking in Vaasi. The Barovian accent of these villagers makes it almost impossible for a Vaasi speaker to hear the slight difference in intonation between Valakani (from the village of Valaki) and Valachani (from the domain of Valachan). Both Valakani and Valachani take great offense at this. There is no such confusion in any other language.



Baron Urik von Kharkov

"The beast came out of nowhere. Suddenly Rordrick was clutching at a bloody hole that should have been his throat. While he gurgled the beast returned and bit Eleanor and me before disappearing into the night.

When I sleep I can still see its eyes! I know it's a beast but I can hear its voice!"

~Pietro (last name unknown), Patient 34

Baron Urik von Kharkov is a black man over six feet tall. Broad shouldered and heavily muscled, he moves with the grace and speed that would bely a man of his size. The pupils of his golden eyes change from round to the slits of a great cat when he is angry. His hair is worn long and straight, and Kharkov is always impeccably dressed. He wears black leather gloves and no one has ever seen him without them. Kharkov's hands are covered in fine black fur and his fingers are tipped with retractable claws. Kharkov is intelligent, well spoken, and charming when he wishes.

Background: Kharkov was born a panther in Toril. A Red Wizard of Thay, Morphayus, polymorphed Kharkov into a human to use him as an agent against a rival wizard, Selena. Morphayus wiped out Kharkov's memory and sent him to be educated and trained in combat. When Morphayus thought Kharkov was ready, he had an ally introduce him to Selena. Selena and Kharkov soon fell in love. When Selena was at her most vulnerable, Morphayus removed the polymorph spell and returned Kharkov to his panther form. In the confusion, Kharkov tore Selena to shreds with his claws before passing out. When Kharkov woke up, he had returned to his human form. Kharkov was convinced Morphayus was going to use him as a sleeper agent against all of his enemies. Kharkov would fight a war in the shadows, taking on increasingly more dangerous foes until Kharkov was slain.

Kharkov fled that night. He was enveloped by the mists and soon found himself wandering the domain of Darkon. Perhaps Kharkov had already started to draw power from Ravenloft, but he found he could transform from human to panther form at will. Kharkov found killing easy and his bestial side, what Kharkov would come to call the "Beast." Kharkov didn't want to be used as someone else's private murderer, but had no problems killing for his own pleasure. After a few years he was recruited into the Kargat, Darkon's secret police. Kharkov served in the Kargat for 20 years, becoming a vampire in the process, before fleeing into the mists when his vampire master was slain. Kharkov wandered the mists for a time. Even Kharkov is unsure which domain he was in when he ran into Morphayus. Kharkov willingly became the Beast when he saw Morphayus, shredding him and the corpse. As Kharkov feasted, the mists closed in.

Current Sketch: Baron von Kharkov is suave and intelligent. He has a fierce temper but is able to control it until unleashing can further his plans. Kharkov has unique abilities as a vampire, panther, and human and uses them to catch his opponents off guard. Kharkov hates wizards and does not allow them in Valachan.

Darklord's Tactics: Kharkov frequently uses a bite attack, preferring to bite one or two victims before disappearing. Kharkov has a unique ability that lets him telepathically contact and charm any person he's bitten in Valachan. Kharkov uses these people as unwitting spies and agents.

Borders: When Kharkov seals the borders, the forests become impassable. The trails become a maze and the underbrush reaches out to snag passerbys. When the trails finally let you out of their grasp, you are back in Valachan. Anyone that tries to fly over the forests is driven back by an endless horde of bats and dire bats.



Baron Urik von Kharkov



Baron Urik von Kharkov

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 144 (17d8 + 68)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +10, Wis +6, Cha +9

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +9, Deception +8, Investigation +8, Perception +5, Stealth +9

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

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned, sleep

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Vaasi, Mordentish, Draconic, Sithican

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Shapechanger. If von Kharkov isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a medium panther back into his true form. While in panther form, von Kharkov can't speak, his walking speed is 50 feet, he can move with complete silence, he can leap up to 30 feet in the air, much higher than an ordinary member of the species and he has a climb speed of 40 feet. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If von Kharkov fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Regeneration. Von Kharkov regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight. If von Kharkov takes radiant damage or damage from red wine, this trait doesn't function at the start of von Kharkov's next turn.

Vampire Weaknesses. Von Kharkov has the following flaws: Aversion to wine and holy water. If von Kharkov drinks red wine or is splashed with holy water, he takes 20 acid damage.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into von Kharkov's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, von Kharkov is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Von Kharkov takes 20 radiant damage when he starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Contact the Bitten. Anyone who has been bitten by the Baron can be telepathically contacted by him anywhere in Valachan. A creature that is bitten rolls a saving throw against being charmed by von Kharkov with disadvantage. This ability functions so long as the target is in Valachan.

Turn Immunity. Von Kharkov is immune to any effects that turn undead.

Feline Spies. As an action, von Kharkov can share the senses of any feline creature in Valachan. For as long as von Kharkov maintains his concentration, as if he were concentrating on a spell, von Kharkov can see and hear through its senses in addition to his own. He cannot control the animal in any way, but he experiences everything that the cat experiences. His human body is in a trance during this process and is completely unaware of its surroundings. Only the pain of a wound can bring him out of the trance before he decides to break it.

Misty Escape. If reduced to 0 hit points, he is forced to assume a gaseous form and flee to his coffin or resting place. He must remain there for eight hours before he can rise again, fully restored. If he cannot reach a coffin or appropriate resting place within two hours, he is utterly destroyed. While he has 0 Hit Points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then Paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 Hit Points, he regains 1 hit point.

Limited Spider Climb. Von Kharkov can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check but only while in his panther form.

Weather Manipulation. Once per day, von Kharkov can alter the weather in a 6-mile radius centered on his lair. Von Kharkov doesn't need to be outdoors; otherwise the effect is identical to the control weather spell.

Cloak of Protection. Von Kharkov has advantage on all saving throws.

Baron Urik von Kharkov

Actions

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + STR) piercing damage plus 1d4 Constitution damage. Von Kharkov regains 10 hit points per lost constitution point. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its constitution point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under von Kharkov's control. If a victim's score reaches 2, then he is at death's door, and only an immediate blood transfusion will save its life. Otherwise, the victim's score continues to drop by one point per day, whether or not von Kharkov attacks. When the Constitution score drops to 0, the victim dies. If the victim is not reduced to a score of 2 or less, it recovers one point per day until the original score is regained.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, von Kharkov can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Longsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Strengthened Longbow +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Felines of the Night (1/Day). While outdoors, von Kharkov can call 3d6 panthers, provided that the sun isn't up. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of von Kharkov and obeying his telepathic commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until von Kharkov dies, or until von Kharkov dismisses them as a bonus action.

Charming Influence. Von Kharkov targets one humanoid he can see within 30 ft. of him. If the target can see von Kharkov, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards von Kharkov as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under von Kharkov's control, it takes his requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for von Kharkov's bite attack. Each time von Kharkov or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until von Kharkov is destroyed, is in a different domain than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect. If von Kharkov uses this ability on the target while charmed, the target forgets everything that has happened during the last 5 minutes as if under the *modify memory* spell.

Legendary Actions

Von Kharkov can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Von Kharkov regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Von Kharkov moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Weapon attack. Von Kharkov makes one weapon attack.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Von Kharkov makes one bite attack.

Significant Possessions

+1 Longsword, +1 Strengthened Longbow, Bracers of Defense, Ring of Protection, Cloak of Resistance





Verbrek

Verbrek



Verbrek is an uncivilized place at the best of times, in spite of its cultural level. That is because its primary inhabitants are not humans or what most people consider humanoids. Instead, they are lycanthropes. They are the primary predators here, and atop that pile sit the werewolves. Here, they are in charge, and the humans living in the forests with them are prey to be eaten, turned, or sacrificed to the Wolf God. The worship of the Wolf God and the myths of the god permeate the stories of both humans and werewolves alike. In human society, the "beasts that walk" are told of in myths where they are able to talk, but they're always outwitted by the humans. In werewolf society they tell the same stories, but with a subtle twist so that it's the werewolf that comes out on top.

The Cult of the Wolf God rules the life of the werewolves and none stand above Alfred Timothy, the high priest of the Wolf God. He does not brook any challenge from those under him, and in years past, he would have destroyed them in his anger. Now, as he becomes human whenever he suffers strong emotions, he has to hold them back. This leads many of the packs underneath him to challenge him for being weak, and unaggressive, and for refusing to take a mate. This is also what has led to some splintering among the wolf clans, though they usually do not last long before Alfred moves to reassert his dominance. Any traveler moving through the domain had best beware the howls of the wolves in the night, as many are werewolves under his control. And like him, they HATE non-werewolves.

These elements should be visible when the heroes are exploring and adventuring in the domain. At any given point, ANYONE they run into can turn out to be a werewolf, a beast in disguise. And even when they're not, some of them act as bad as the animals themselves. There should never be any respite from paranoia.

That's why humans hate Fantastica and everything comes from here. They want to destroy it. And they don't realize that by trying to destroy it they multiply the lies that keep flooding the human world. For these lies are nothing other than creatures of Fantastica who have ceased to be themselves and survive only as living corpses, poisoning the souls of men with their fetid smell. But humans don't know it. Isn't that a good joke?

~Michael Ende, The Never ending Story



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, swamp
Year Formed:	730 BC
Population:	830 (plus a further 1,140 natural werewolves)
Races (%):	Humans 97%, half-Elves 1%, half-Vistani 1%, other 1%
Languages:	Balok, Common, Mordentish, Vaasi, Sithican
Religions:	The Wolf God, Ezra, Hala
Government:	Independent settlements and farms (usually led by family elders)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Alfred Timothy
Nationality:	Verbreker
Analog:	Warm Norway infested by wolves

Local Fauna:

The vast woodlands of Verbrek are home to all kinds of animals, such as boar, deer, elk, otters, weasels, hares, and red squirrels. In short, prey is plentiful for the predators that call Verbrek their home. The woods house bears, foxes, badgers, wild cats, and most notably the gray wolves that Verbrek is notorious for. The wolves deserve their own special mention, as they are enormous in Verbrek, stronger than elsewhere, and as cunning as most humanoids. They're such a threat and so vicious that even goblins who'd normally engage with these creatures avoid them. In this manner, while

Verbrek

being a threat themselves, the wolves scare away the goblins that infect the woods of the rest of the Core. The people living in Verbrek loathe and fear the wolves, as they attribute so many qualities to them, and view them as the very living representation of evil. (This is also why wolves feature in so many of the Verbrek tales). They're accused of stealing babies, slaughtering families, and killing the old and infirm in the dead of night.

Local Flora:

Like most of the Core, the trees in Verbrek are of the deciduous type. They're essentially untouched by humanoid hands, with the virgin trees in the center of the domain left untouched since the dawn of time. Only the animals and werewolves that call the domain home can make it safely there. Along the rivers, the land has been cleared and there are small patches of wheat, rye, and the like.

In the forests' deeper parts, an unwary traveler might come across carnivorous plants as they grow large, and strong here — just like the local fauna. Many herbs and useful lichen and mosses can be found here too, making Verbrek a haven for herbalists and practitioners of medicine. This has also led to most Verbrekers having a rudimentary knowledge of herbalism and of useful plants for things like easing headaches and cleaning wounds.

Moonflower plants grow only in Verbrek, and ONLY in the circles dedicated to the Wolf God. His disciples view them as holy and prevent outsiders from attempting to harvest them. Each plant produces blossoms from spring to fall, with 1d4 blossoms appearing at the height of the lunar cycle each month. This supposedly helps afflicted lycanthropes alleviate the effects of the cycle, enabling them to prevent themselves from transforming during the full moon. This also affects others who have been afflicted with similar polymorph effects, giving advantage on saving throws to avoid changing, for 24 hours after being imbibed.

Native Horrors

Worryingly for the populace is the fact that any wolf may turn out to be a shape-changer, ones that attack even armed people without fear (where at least the normal wolves avoid armed parties), and of course, they can hide in their midst and infect others.

Wolves of all kinds can be found in Verbrek. Normal wolves, dire wolves, wargs, werewolves, winter wolves, and more. The same goes for all lycanthropes except wererats. The main exception to the wolf rule is wolfweres. As Kartakass and Verbrek are separated

by Invidia, the two types of wolves do not interact often, but when they do, they are not friendly to each other — even if Alfred Timothy likely envies the wolfweres their natural forms of being wolves, rather than the human form of werewolves.

Deadly plants are common in the centers of the woods, and the occasional incorporeal undead cannot be avoided. Perhaps the gruesome fates of so many humanoids is what causes so many to linger on after death.

Terrain type

Verbrek is one large uninterrupted forest. To the uninitiated or casual visitor that's all there is to it, but within the forests, one can find hilly parts and deeper dells. The various parts of the forests tend to be of the same tree types, enabling experienced woodsmen to find their way across the domain with relative assurance. But to everyone else, the rivers that crisscross the domain are a far safer method to use, even if one runs the risk of running into Captain Nathan Timothy. (See Arkandale for more details on Nathan Timothy, the father of Alfred Timothy).

Important Landmarks

Duskpeace Lodge

Duskpeace Lodge is a heavily fortified and extremely well-built stone structure that more resembles a fortress than a house. Every single one of the steel doors and barred windows has sturdy locks, both on the inside and the outside.

Run by two siblings, Argent and Celia Whitmoor, the Lodge is a sanctuary for the lost outcast in Verbrek, and hosts at least a dozen guests at any given time. However, their hospitality is limited to warm meals and the like. Staying at the lodge is only permitted by invitation of the owners.

This is because Duskpeace Lodge IS a sanctuary, but only for those suffering from lycanthropy — which includes both of the hosts. They work with those who want to prevent themselves from causing damage to those around them, either by barring them in their rooms or by allowing them to roam the woods nearby. The location of Duskpeace Lodge is so remote, that the guests are unable to harm anyone — simply put, no one can travel that far in a single night without the use of some form of transport, and the rest of the world is thereby kept safe.

Verbrek

The people who come here are afflicted lycanthropes, those who have been infected, rather than born with the curse. Both Argent and Celia were adventurers of some note before succumbing to the curse and becoming werewolves. Through their ministrations and efforts, both they and many of their guests, have managed to avoid succumbing mentally to the curse (i.e. retaining their normal alignment, rather than becoming chaotic evil — both of the Whitmoors are capable warriors. Argent is a level 7 paladin, and Celia is a level 4 fighter. Both are lawful good). Only those lycanthropes who come here willingly are helped, and these are allowed to follow their own path, whether that involves being locked up, or allowed to roam freely and hunt. Whatever helps them accept and overcome their condition. Some werewolves in Verbrek talk about how the Whitmoors have cured some of the afflicted of lycanthropy, but this is unverified.

The Circle

This stone henge is the center of the worship of the Wolf God. Every night, rituals are performed here by the werewolves to the Wolf God, and while they're not as common as Alfred Timothy would like, sacrifices of intelligent creatures happen at least once a month. The henge itself looks to be thousands of years old, and gatherings of up to 200 are not unusual, with some even claiming that the Wolf God himself appears on some holy days. Whether this is true or not is unknown, but it is claimed by many werewolves. However, part of the rituals partaken in by the faithful includes burning types of incense that may induce hallucinations. The Circle is the domain of Alfred Timothy. Here he is the (mostly) unquestioned master, and from here he leads the worship of the Wolf God, directing their hunt across Verbrek, and trying to destroy all of humanity whom he despises.

Vale of Memory

The Vale of Memory was once a settlement with several peaceful hamlets, but it was destroyed several decades ago by an angry Wolf God, who sent packs of wolves to steal babies, had the rivers dry up and the trees reclaimed the vale. Now all that remains are ruined farmhouses that have been long covered in moss and vines and exposed to the elements. Among the ruins can still be found human skeletons, as well as rusted tools.

Towns and villages:

Alyssum

Alyssum is the most deceptively dangerous village in Verbrek. Harboring some 60 people, it appears on the surface to be a normal village of humans, going about their lives, though one where the majority are dedicated to hunting and fur trading as opposed to farming. Traders and merchants often dock here to pick up good-quality furs and animal meat.

The people here are welcoming and open to strangers, often taking them into their homes. But this is all a ruse. The entire village IS trading in furs and hunting, but it is also inhabited solely by werewolves who are scouting their next victims at any given point. Anyone staying here should do so in large companies, or at the very least claim that they have large families that they hear from regularly. Those who will not be missed by others are inevitably lost.

Fylfot

Fylfot is a typical village for Verbrek. Small, at some 70 people, its people survive by farming vegetables and gathering nuts and berries in the nearby forest, with the village's hunters sometimes bringing back bountiful meat. Like other villages, Fylfot has a palisade, but the one in Fylfot is far bigger and more imposing than those found elsewhere. Furthermore, it has been strengthened by the presence of gated areas, traps, and primitive siege defenses. Whether this is all needed or a result of the paranoia of Tremeur Hallowmore (the village's watch commander) is unknown, but the hamlet has a distinct "under siege" feel, and is ready to repel the persistent wolf and werewolf attacks that it suffers from.

Neighboring domain(s):

Borca
Invidia
Mordent
Richemulot
Sithicus
Valachan

Fun Fact:

Verbrekers have no written tradition and instead rely on oral deliveries of their history. They do not remember wars and scandals but instead focus on natural events like rainstorms, droughts, and famine. These stories are couched in myths, usually blaming whatever hardship happened on the wolves and anything good on the cleverness of the local humans.



Alfred Timothy

"You have one hour. Make it to the border and you can go with the Wolf God's blessing. Now run little deer. Run!" ~ Alfred Timothy

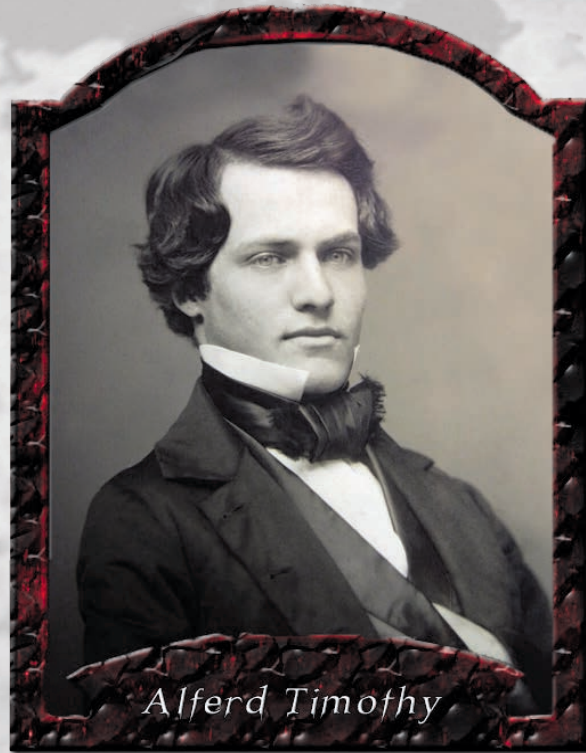
In human form, Alfred Timothy is frail and sickly. His skin is pale and hangs off his bones. In his hybrid form, Alfred is fast even for a werewolf. In every form he takes, he wears the holy symbol of the Wolf God.

Background: Alfred is one of six children born to Nathan Timothy, the darklord of Arkandale. Alfred rejected his father's desire to live peacefully with his human subjects. Alfred thinks people are little better than cattle, and he would be hard pressed to choose the more intelligent species. At a young age, Alfred embraced the Cult of the Wolf God. The Cult sacrifices victims to their savage god on the night of the full moon and takes joy in hunting sentient creatures. Disgusted with his father, Alfred left Arkandale at a young age. He wandered Ravenloft for years until he was captured by a group of shepherds while slaughtering their sheep. Alfred was rescued by a Vistani tribe. The Vistani offered to set Alfred free if he swore he would never attack one of them again. Alfred agreed. Once he was free, he immediately tried to kill the Vistani's leader. The Vistani drove him off and forced Alfred to flee into the mists. When the mists cleared he was in Verbrek. Verbrek was south of Arkandale and absorbed that realm during the Grand Conjunction.

Current Sketch: Alfred fears the Vistani and allows them free passage through Verbrek. Anyone else is fair game. One of Alfred's favorite pastimes is to capture a traveller and take their possessions. The traveller is given one hour to run before Alfred and his pack track them down. If the traveller makes it to the border they are safe (as safe as they can be in Ravenloft with no means to defend themselves). Sometimes the pack is too anxious to give the traveller the full hour. Alfred enjoys these hunts but has to be careful. If Alfred fully gives into his natural instincts, he changes back to his human form. He considers this a test from the Wolf God and kills anyone who finds out.

Darklord's Tactics: Because of his curse, Alfred is cautious in battle. He will send in his pack mates and let them wear his opponents down. Alfred casts spells to hinder his foes and aid his allies until his opponents can't fight anymore. Once his opponents are bloody and beaten Alfred moves in for the kill.

Borders: Timothy summons dozens of packs of werewolves and dire wolves to patrol the border. He cannot seal the borders of Verbrek completely.



Alfred Timothy

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 in humanoid form, 14 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 110 (13d8 + 52)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +8, Wis +8

Skills Nature +5, Perception +12, Persuasion +6, Religion +5, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common, Mordentish, Balok (can't speak in wolf form)

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Shapechanger. Alfred can use his action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Alfred has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Shadowless. Alfred never casts a shadow.

Alfred Timothy

Gifts of the Wolf God. Alfred can once per day cast animal friendship and as a bonus action increase his Strength to 19 for one round.

Amulet of Resistance. Alfred has advantage on saving throws while wearing this amulet.

Channel Divinity. Alfred gains the ability to channel divine energy directly from the wolf god, using that energy to fuel magical effects. Alfred can choose from the following effects. He can use his Channel Divinity twice and must then finish a short or long rest to use his Channel Divinity again.

-Channel Divinity: Turn Undead

As an action, Alfred presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear him within 30 feet of him must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Alfred as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

-Charm Animals and Plants

Alfred can use his Channel Divinity to charm animals and plants. As an action, he presents his holy symbol and invokes the name of the wolf god. Each beast or plant creature that can see him within 30 feet of him must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is charmed by Alfred for 1 minute or until it takes damage. While it is charmed by Alfred, it is friendly to him and other creatures he designates.

Dampen Elements. When Alfred or a creature within 30 feet of him takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage, he can use his reaction to grant resistance to the creature against that instance of the damage.

Destroy Undead. When an undead fails its saving throw against Alfred's Turn Undead feature, the creature is instantly destroyed if its challenge rating is at or below (CR 1/2).

Spellcasting. Alfred is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Alfred has the following Cleric spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, cure wounds, healing word, speak with animals, wrathful smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, calm emotions, hold person, spike growth, spiritual weapon, warding bond*

3rd level (2 slots): *glyph of warding, plant growth, spirit guardians*

4th level (1 slot): *dominate beast, guardian of faith, locate creature*

Curse of the Wolf God. Alfred has near perfect control over his shapeshifting ability. He is cursed however, to automatically transform to his human form while he is overcome with passionate anger, lust or fear.

Shadow Walk. Alfred can, with an action, use the shadows to move within his domain. To use the shadow walk, he must be in an area of shadowy illumination. He is then transported along a coiling path of shadow-stuff to the edge of the Material Plane where it borders the Plane of Shadow. The effect is largely illusory, but the path is quasi-real. In the region of shadow, he moves at a rate of 50 miles per hour, moving normally on the borders of the Plane of Shadow but much more rapidly relative to the Material Plane. Thus, he can travel rapidly by stepping onto the Plane of Shadow, moving the desired distance, and then stepping back onto the Material Plane. Because of the blurring of reality between the Plane of Shadow and the Material Plane, he can't make out details of the terrain or areas he passes over during transit, nor can he predict perfectly where his travel will end. It's impossible to judge distances accurately, making the spell virtually useless for scouting or spying.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Alfred makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with his claws.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with Alfred lycanthropy.

Claws (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.



The Northern Core

"Magic is never totally scientifically explainable, but science has always been, at one time or another, considered magic." ~ Anton LaVey

Overview

Knowledge is power. Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is not always the knowledge itself that perverts. Sometimes the pursuit becomes an obsession. When the ends justify any means, dark paths are discovered; and those paths lead into The Mists.

Within the Northern Core lie lands more advanced in many, dreadful ways, than their southern neighbors. Each gain in technology, be it scientific, arcane, or military is borne from the unhealthy fixations of their Dark Lords, and allowed to metastasize, like a tumor, throughout their citizenry.

When one of these dark inspirations takes root, a scab is placed in the mind. That scab screams to be picked and scratched at until it begins to bleed. Once the putrid liquid begins to flow, rivulets of infection soak into every vital tissue. At the point of pestilent saturation, not even one's own sanity or mortality can staunch the hot, sickly flow. These lands are stained by the creations of their lords.

Scientific instruments like The Apparatus, Doomsday Device, and Rift Spanner; Arcane Anomalies such as The Key to the Abyss, The Soulstone, and the Bell of Doom; and tactical military mistakes known as The Dead Man's Campaign, The Starving March, and the Tepestani Inquisition all owe their existence to the 'advancements' of infected minds. Each has a dreadful impact beyond its intended consequence – but for the obsessed each loss, greater than the last, remains the price of progress.

The Domains of the Northern Core (**Darkon**, **Keening**, **Lamordia**, **Falkovnia**, **Tepest**, **Dementlieu**, **Castle Island**, and **Necropolis**) each strive for knowledge. They care not whether it be magical, technological, or religious. All seek to expand their influence, yet all remain acutely unaware of the price they pay for their relentless obsessions.

Mistways

The Heretic's Egress connects southwestern G'henna with north-central Darkon.

The Shrouded Way connects southern Paridon with north-western Darkon.

Via Corona connects eastern Nidala with north-eastern Darkon.

Chronology

579 BC – Azalin slaughters those who refuse to acknowledge his rule. **Darkon** forms.

588 BC – Tristessa curses the land as she and her child die. **Keening** forms.

683 BC – Adam brutalizes Elise, and kills Eva Mordenheim. **Lamordia** forms.

690 BC – Vlad Drakov pikes those slain by his army. **Falkovnia** forms.

691 BC – The Mindefisk Sisters become Hags. **Tepest** forms.

707 BC – Dominic d'Honaire manipulates his nanny to suicide. **Dementlieu** forms.

740 BC – **THE GRAND CONJUNCTION**
Darkon absorbs **Arak**.

744 BC – The Lady of the Lake sacrifices her offspring to avenge her husband. **Castle Island** forms in Lake Kronov, **Tepest**.

750 BC – Azalin unleashes **The Requiem**, and loses his corporeal form.

755 BC – Death is punished for causing the Shrouded Years. **Necropolis** forms.



Castle Island



Castle Island



Castle Island is inspired by two myths from England and Wales. The tales of King Arthur (specifically the Lady of the Lake) and a Welsh mythological creature known as the Avanc. The story of Castle Island combines both, but adds a twist to them as well, meshing them into a new whole. At the same time, it manages to add a tragic and horrific twist to the story of both. The story told here is one of lost love and vengeance gone wrong. The Lady loved the man who became the avanc, but when he died in an accident (after having been cursed to be a monster by a hag), the Lady took vengeance — not on the hag who originally cursed the man, but on the people who had slain what they thought to be a monster. And the way she did it was truly horrible, slowly tearing a family apart, killing the lord of the castle's wife, and watching him die as he realized he had been seduced and betrayed. As he slipped into oblivion, she was taken by the Mists, and the lord was released from what she had intended to be eternal pain.

Adventures centered around Castle Island will be short, simply by virtue of its size, and they should revolve around the idea of lost love or vengeance. Perhaps someone that the heroes care for heard the siren song of the Lady and disappeared (likely eaten by the avanc), or perhaps one of them descends from the original lord, and they now want to restore the keep, not knowing that it is “haunted” by the Lady of the Lake. In order to move here, they will have to deal with the Lady and the avanc both, though likely not at the same time.

*“So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
the scenery of a fairy dream”*

~ Sir Walter Scott, The Lady of the Lake



Culture Level:	Savage (currently), Dark Age (ruins)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, hill and lake
Year Formed:	744 BC
Population:	1
Races (%):	Siren 100%
Languages:	Aquan, Sylvan, Testani
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Lady of the Lake
Nationality:	Tepestani
Analog:	Wales

Local Fauna:

Castle Island is too small to have much in the way of wildlife. The only things that go there are birds, as they are the only creatures that can safely cross the waters of Lake Kronov without being eaten by the Avanc. As a result, Castle Island feels strangely devoid of life, as not even rodents scurry through the undergrowth, though the occasional frog might sit and croak in the reeds surrounding it.

Local Flora:

Castle Island is partly overgrown with weeds and moss, of types that do not match those in the rest of Tepest. However, for a ruin and island that has been abandoned for centuries, it is still quite tidy without any of the excessive overgrowth that could be expected. Weeds and grass, along with some creeping vines are the mainstays here, but the waters surrounding the island are filled with the expected reeds, algae, and pond scum..

Native Horrors

Castle Island, and Lake Kronov itself, is home to only two monsters: The Lady of the Lake herself, and the avanc. The locals believe that the avanc was once an evil man, one that had been cursed by a wicked fey being, paying for his crimes with transformation into his current monstrous form. Most believe that it was the Lady of the Lake herself who did so when he broke an agreement between the two. Whatever the case, the avanc is the cause of many a lost catch of fish, and sightings of it are frequent. The locals do not begrudge the creature its food: The simple reason is that it's better for it to eat their fish than for it to eat them instead. In the past decade, they've learned that the larger the meal the avanc has, the longer it'll remain dormant at the bottom of the lake, giving them some measure of safety.

Castle Island

Terrain type

Castle Island consists of a small hill in the middle of a lake. There are only two trees on the island that have grown through the floor of part of the ruined castle, but grass, moss, and weeds are everywhere. The water that surrounds the island, from the shore and about a quarter-mile out, is colder than the rest of Lake Kro-nov, and has less life than the rest of the lake. There are simply fewer fish, fewer frogs, and fewer of everything than in the rest of the lake.

Important Landmarks

Demnach Keep

Demnach Keep dominates Castle Island. There is barely room for anything else beyond the tiny keep itself. The keep isn't even much more than a single tower, a grand hall, and a defensive wall around it. Occupying all of the island, it sits in a highly defensible position, should it ever be restored. However, it has been neglected for centuries and has fallen into ruin, with the grand hall partially collapsed, though the tower remains strong. From within its stone walls is where the Lady's song can be heard. Anyone lucky enough to come here when the Lady is out in the waters will find that the furniture has rotted away into nothing, with only the barest hint of a throne remaining at the place of honor at the grand hall.

The wooden floors are strong, but rotted through in places, making moving across them precarious for heavier creatures. Any signs of the previous inhabitants are long gone, save for two very different skeletons. The first skeleton lies near the outer wall of the keep and is of monstrous proportions.

Standing tall, the creature would have been around twelve feet, but the hunch on its back would have reduced it to about eight. It vaguely resembles a human being, but its proportions are all wrong. From the way it has fallen and the stones around it, it's clear that the creature was strong enough to break through the outer wall, but what killed it isn't clear. The other skeleton lies near the throne and is a normal human being, curled up as if it died in agony.

Towns and villages:

None

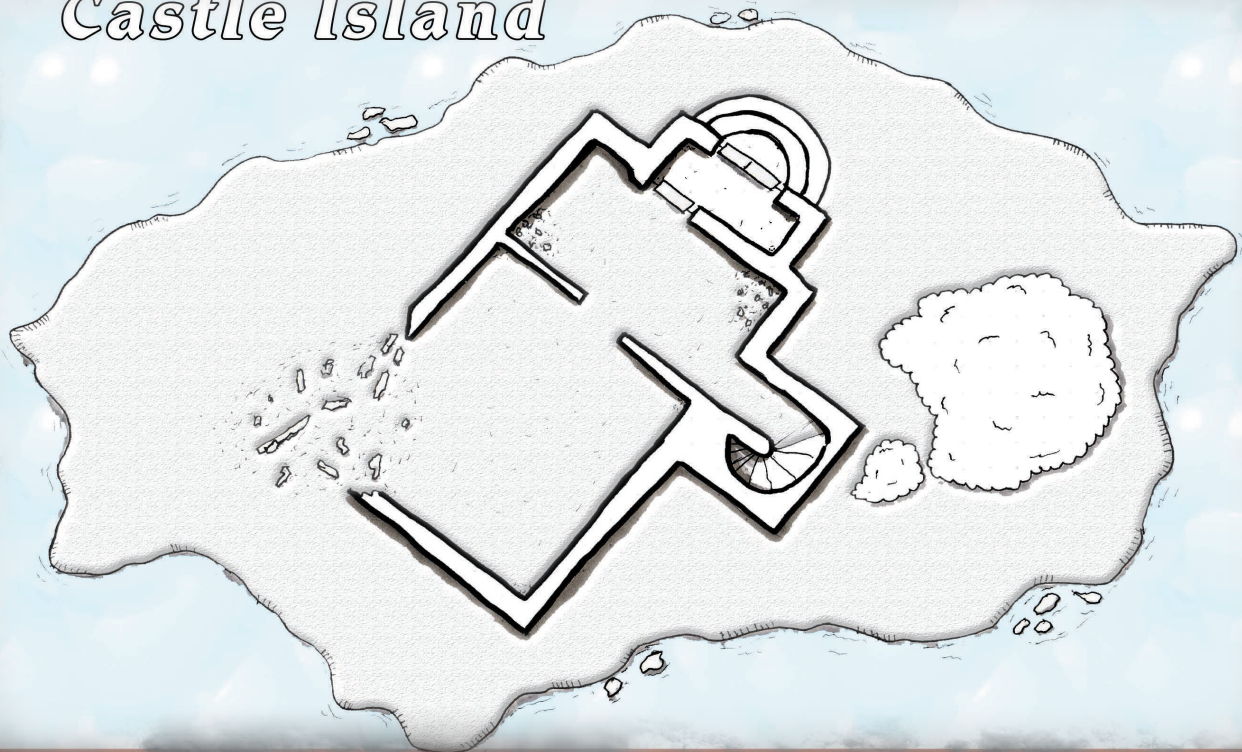
Neighboring domain(s):

Tepest

Fun Fact:

The avanc never attacks the Lady of the Lake and was once her lover. The real avanc was killed before Castle Island sprung into life, and the current avanc is a terrible monster, though as intelligent as a human. Its personality and spirit bear no semblance to the original avanc, a cursed man that the Lady once loved.

Castle Island



Lady of the Lake

"Can you hear her now? That voice. That lovely voice. The wind carries it for miles around here.

It's the Lady of the Lake and that is her song. Her song is beauty given form. It is the very definition of sublime. Now get the hell out of here and never return."

~Gregor, resident of Viktal (missing)

The Lady of the Lake is cloaked in a powerful illusion, appearing as the ideal of beauty to any creature looking at her. To each creature she appears in a different semblance. To anyone that can see through illusion, the Lady looks like a bloated corpse, with near transparent skin, and dark blue veins snaking under her flesh.. Her lips are blue and her green hair sways as if moving in an invisible current. Her fingers end in long sharp claws and a short sword is belted at her hip.

Background: The Lady formed years ago, although whether she was called into being or if she was spontaneously formed, even she doesn't know. One day she was just there, in the shallows of the lake. A hermit that lived on the north side of the lake gained the Lady's attention, and they fell in love. Soon the Lady and the hermit were expecting their first child, a girl.

As the Lady drew close to her time to give birth, an evil fey cornered the hermit. The fey, a hag of prodigious power and vicious temper, demanded the hermit help her with her plans to gain magic and power. The hermit refused.

In a rage, the fey turned the hermit into an avanc, but left his soul and mind untouched. The hermit was trapped in the body of a monster, and soon the local townspeople were terrified of the beast.

The tales of a monster in the lake drew the attention of lone Demnach, a paladin and member of the famed Demnach clan, monster hunters one and all. The Demnach clan had a keep on the island in the middle of the lake. They had been prosperous once, but had started to dwindle. lone trapped the avanc in shallow water and slew the hermit.

The Lady was beside herself with rage. She left her lake and searched for creatures that could give her revenge. She found a coven of hags in the domain of Tepest and sung her bitter song. The hags offered the Lady a deal. Her daughter would grow up and die in a fraction of the time a mortal normally received, but

she would be a sorceress of incredible power. The Lady agreed without hesitation.

The Lady's daughter, Katherine, was born a few days later and grew to beautiful adulthood in a few years. The Lady sent Katherine to seduce lone, who rapidly fell victim to Katherine's beguiling spells. lone's wife discovered the tryst and fled to the lakeshore. There the broken hearted woman wept. She was answered by a beautiful song. The wife found a sirine, the Lady, singing to her about the beauty of the Fae Realm and the treachery of men. The sirine offered to take lone's wife away from all the pain and suffering. lone's wife accepted and took the Lady's offered hand. The woman's body was found the next day.

Katherine soon gave birth to lone's son, a caliban with fish features, thick scales, and arms strong enough to uproot trees. For one year, the Lady fed lone's son, whom she called Madchen, nothing but hate.

After the year had passed the Lady sent Katherine and her son back to Demnach island to end the clan. Katherine fell to the arrows of the guards, but Madchen tore the gate from its hinges and slaughtered everyone inside the keep.

While dueling lone, the last of the keep's defenders, Madchen was slain and lone was mortally wounded. The Lady took her chance, she approached lone with a vial of magical poison. The poison would never let lone die, but would also never let him heal. lone would be in pain for all eternity.

As lone drank the potion, the Lady sang of her victory. She closed her eyes to savor the moment, and when she opened them, everything had changed. Demnach Keep was in ruins and lone was a brittle skeleton. Something had robbed her of her revenge and trapped her on her island.

Current Sketch: The Lady of the Lake is stuck on her island. If she moves more than a quarter mile beyond its shores, she's immediately teleported back. The Lady is bored and has a blinding hatred of men. She uses her song to lure men to her island, and as they reach land, she uses her powerful charm ability to force the men to serve her. The men are tortured and starved until they are too weak to survive. The Lady has her other servants dump the bodies in the water and sings to attract more men.

Lady of the Lake

Darklord's Tactics: The Lady will try to charm as many people as possible before combat begins. The sirine possesses a powerful charm ability and anyone charmed by her will immediately leap to her defense when she is attacked. If the Lady is forced into combat, she will use her greater invisibility ability and her short sword of quickness. The sirine is lightning fast and will target spellcasters and rogues before moving on to tougher targets.

Borders: The Lady of the Lake cannot close the borders to her domain.



Lady of the Lake

Medium fey (humanoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (7d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +7, Cha +9

Skills Medicine +7, Performance +9, Stealth +6, Survival +7

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

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, telepathy 30 ft.

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The Lady has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Amphibious. The Lady can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The Lady's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *fog cloud*, *ray of frost*, *shape water*, *thaumaturgy*, *water walk*

3/Day each: *charm person*, *sleep*, *water breathing*

1/Day each: *control water*, *greater invisibility*, *polymorph (self only)*, *wall of water*

Poisonous Touch. Creatures touched by the Lady must succeed on a DC 17 saving throw or become poisoned for a minute, their Intelligence dropping to 2. The touch automatically succeeds on charmed individuals, but requires an attack roll for others. A successful dispel magic restores the victim's Intelligence, as does the Lady's touch if she so desires.

Immune to Gas attacks. The Lady is immune to all gas attacks such as *cloud kill* or *poisonous gas*.

Sword of Quickness. The Lady's magic sword allows her to always act first during combat. The lady does not need to roll for initiative and cannot be slowed down to act at a later initiative score.

Actions

Stupefying Touch. The Lady touches one creature she can see within 5 feet of her. The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw or take 13 (3d6 + 3) psychic damage and be stunned until the start of the Lady's next turn.

Shortsword +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Legendary Actions

The Lady can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Lady regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Shortsword Attack. The Lady makes a shortsword attack.

Misty Escape. The Lady momentarily becomes mist and reforms 20ft away from her previous position.

Drowning Kiss (2 Actions). The Lady chooses a creature within 5ft and kisses it to forcefully draw the breath from its lungs. The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or begin to suffocate. The effect ends if the creature succeeds at a constitution saving throw rolled at the end of each of its turns.

Darkon



Darkon

"Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings"
~Walter H. Cottingham

Darkon is by far the largest domain within the mists, taking up the northern third of the Core, with a population that is far bigger than any other domain. Ruled by a lich obsessed with the search for power, and his attempts to escape the grasp of the mist, Darkon has in some ways suffered more than any other domain. His attempts to escape have nearly destroyed Ravenloft itself more than once, and resulted in the loss of the capital Il Aluk, to a former underling. Now ruled by Death, and named Necropolis, Azalin has yet to establish his capital elsewhere, continuing instead to rule from his seat of power at Castle Avernus, where he continues to rule, disguised as a mortal man. The ruler of Darkon is the wizard king Azalin Rex — a careful illusion crafted by the real Azalin, who is a lich. While he appears as alive in his guise as the king, many suspect that he is not, and his agents most often know the truth. Darkon itself is an extension of both his powers, but also of his limitations. Those who visit Darkon for more than three months find themselves losing their memories and becoming other people (they can regain their memories by leaving once more, but with their new personalities, they most often do not want to). While this allows Azalin to more easily manipulate the populace, it also reminds him of his own limitations and how he's not able to acquire new spells, even if he has become a master at manipulating the ones he already knew. No discussion of Darkon is complete without mention of the Kargat. These are the spies, assassins, and secret police of Azalin, both in his formal rule of a king and in his informal rule as a powerful undead. Many of the Kargat are undead themselves, led by Lady Kazandra, Beryl Silvertress, and Venrith Chole — the first two of these are vampires, while the last is a werewolf. The Kargat also employs plenty of living agents, but only the undead or truly monstrous make it to the top of the Kargat. All must be able to pass off as living in one form or another. Adventurers in Darkon should rarely tangle with Azalin as he is far too powerful for most to handle, especially with his ability to modify the memories of anyone in his domain and control the hordes of undead here. Instead, heroes are far more likely to run into the Kargat, and stories of memory loss and forgotten trinkets and objects should abound, as such intrigue and the theme of escapism from not just Darkon but the Mists in general. Adventurers should focus on the accumulation of knowledge and power, in a similar vein to Azalin himself. While they shouldn't run into him, perhaps they're working for

one of his agents in trying to obtain a rare spellbook or some strange components that Azalin needs to complete a new experiment. Or perhaps they're trying to find a friend who is in Darkon, one who stayed for more than three months and lost themselves. Or perhaps, the heroes themselves are beginning to drift from their memories, and they're now in a race against time to escape.



Culture Level:	Dark Ages to Chivalric (depends on area)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forests, hills, plains, mountains, and swamps
Year Formed:	579 BC
Population:	117,300
Races (%):	Humans 75%, Halflings 14%, Gnomes 5%, Elves 3%, Half-Elves 1%, Dwarves 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Darkonese, Dwarven, Elven, Falkovnian, Gnome, Halfling, Lamordian, Mordentish, Tepestani, Vaasi
Religions:	The Eternal Order, Ezra
Government:	Feudal hereditary monarchy
Ruler(s):	Azalin Rex
Darklord(s):	Azalin
Nationality:	Darkonian
Analog:	Europe

Local Fauna:
Within Darkon, there are two types of areas: Those that have been civilized, and those that have not. The throng of humanity overrun certain areas, especially near the cities, to the point that there are no large predators as they've been hunted to extinction by the

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locals. The most dangerous native creature that you're likely to encounter in that area is a rabid dog. In the wild regions, bears and wolves are common, while the waters off the Darkonian coast have a relatively high amount of sharks, attracted by the readily available food supply from the coastal cities, especially near Rutledge. Even in the wilder regions though, large animals are rare, with deers being the biggest ones commonly found. Smaller animals, like birds, rats, rabbits, and the like are far more easily found. In the Mountains of Misery, in the south and south-eastern parts of Darkon, large spiders are rather common, to the point where the locals often have a small bounty going for anyone able to take down some of the spiders.

Local Flora:

Darkon, due to its sheer size, has great variety in the plants found within its borders. The trees are mainly deciduous, though conifers are the majority near the border with Falkovnia (though they do not have the black bark of their Falkovnian cousins). There are a number of fruit trees in Darkon, mainly pear and apple trees, but only the apple trees are considered useful by the locals. Pears are a "poor man's fruit", eaten or fermented only by those who cannot afford better. Apples are often used as a food source, and Darkon is well known for an extremely potent apple wine that the locals near the smaller towns bottle. Near the larger towns, the fields are dedicated to various types of grain, with wheat being the main harvest. Darkon is also known for two distinct types of plant: Spuma Vitae and Somnos Berries. Spuma Vitae is a type of algae that when devoured causes the body's system to close wounds at an astonishing rate. When eaten, the imbiber regenerates one hit point per round, but once reduced to zero the regeneration stops. If a creature dies within a week of imbibing the algae, the algae that are left in the system infect the body, preventing it from being resurrected. A week after death, the body turns into a vine blight. The somnos berries are used for a type of wine that causes the imbiber to lose their inhibitions — the wine, as a result, is illegal within Darkon, but the berries are too plentiful to be eliminated. Instead, certain homemade distilleries and smugglers still brew the wine and then sell it in places like Dementia and Richemulot.

Native Horrors

Darkon, due to its size, is filled with the horrors that populate the domains of Ravenloft. But none are more prevalent within the domain than the undead. Ghosts, ghouls, and worse populate the ranks of the unliving, with Azalin himself sitting atop the heap amid (true) rumors that he is a lich. The undead are so prevalent,

and so under the control of the darklord, that they have become known as the Eyes and Ears (and Voice) of Azalin, capable of bringing information to him from within anywhere in the domain. Less known, but perhaps more horrifying than the undead is the memory loss inflicted on those who spend time in Darkon. Within the space of three months, the memories of any creature in the domain are modified, so that they always believe that they have been a resident of the domain, and often ignore signs that should tell them otherwise.

Only upon leaving Darkon do they regain their memories, but most do not feel so inclined. There are two exceptions to this: Anyone who lives in Martira Bay is apparently immune to this effect, and anyone who visits regains their lost memories. This means that the city tends to be overrun with those from elsewhere, who desperately cling to their true memories and personalities, afraid of losing themselves upon leaving. (Of course, those actually from Darkon are unaffected, and believe these to be tall tales).

The other group of unaffected are those rare few who have visited Castle Avernus and somehow gained access to its vast library. Hidden within this repository of knowledge is said to be a book (called the Book of Names) that contains the true memories of anyone who has ever been in Darkon, and had their memories changed. Upon touching the book, the creature regains all its lost memories and becomes immune to the mind-altering effects of the domain. Only an extremely rare few adventurers have survived the trek to Castle Avernus, and many of them have died subsequently. They report that while they can read the stories of other people, and see if they did indeed have a past (as well as their true name), but were unable to regain the memories of others.

Terrain type

Due to its size, it's possible to find all kinds of terrain within Darkon. Grasslands, forests, hills, and mountains are all present, as are swamps and marshes. In many ways, Darkon is a country of extremes and opposites, and this is evident in the land as well. There are more living creatures than anywhere else, but also more undead. Summers are extremely hot, and winters extremely cold, with springs and autumns brief but blissfully pleasant by comparison. In the fertile areas, it is nearly as lush as neighboring Darkon, but in the inhospitable ones, no living (sane) soul would dare to tread.

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Important Landmarks

Castle Avernus

Sitting a few miles south of Il Aluk, Castle Avernus is the lair of Azalin. Named not after the first layer of Hell, as so many outsiders believe, but because of a peculiar property of the castle that means that only a few types of bird (named avis in Darkonese) will fly over the castle, such as vultures, crows, and ravens. Any other type of bird that flies over simply drops dead as soon as their shadows hit the spires of the castle. Castle Avernus is built as a defensive fortification. The windows are narrow arrow-slits, about six inches wide, allowing the defenders to see out while remaining protected. The spires, while appearing ornamental, actually give a commanding view of the countryside and are sturdily built to withstand a siege. And on the walls of Castle Avernus patrol Azalin's doom guard — armored skeletons and zombies, though he keeps the more outrageous types of undead out of sight. Here is where Azalin holds court when he wishes to do so, and there are even chambers for living guests. It is rare for Azalin to have company unless it is a captive either being interrogated or used for magical experimentation. During the night, visitors can hear a spirit moaning from the tallest, central spire, and while it tugs at their life strings, it is too far away to affect them. Anyone inside the castle buildings (apart from the central spire) cannot hear it — unless they are of elvish descent, in which case they hear it far more clearly than anyone else. Underneath Castle Avernus lies the best-kept secret of Azalin, even beyond the location and nature of his phylactery. It used to be the lair of Ebb, a shadow dragon ally of Azalin. He maintains the pretense that she still lives there, but in fact, she has moved to the Mountains of Misery to be with her mate Gloom. They keep the fact that there are two of them secret by only venturing out one at a time. And known only to Ebb, Gloom, and Azalin is the fact that they have eggs, and that these are about to hatch.

Forest of Shadows

The Forest of Shadows is a large deciduous forest that dominates the south and west-central regions of Darkon. While relatively unremarkable, apart from its size, during the few years when Azalin was inactive, a halfling wererat bandit leader took up the mantle of leadership in the region. While less powerful than Azalin, he's managed to amass a small fortune and become enough of a nuisance in the region that local merchants have reached out to Azalin, asking for his assistance in dealing with the bandit. Galf Kloggin, the bandit leader, committed at least one murder before being infected with lycanthropy and is considered incredibly dangerous by the locals.

Forgotten Hills

The Forgotten Hills are the foothills to the Mountains of Misery, the mountains that once bordered the domain of Arak, and were a part of it. Following the Great Upheaval, the old Arakian lands were added to the holdings of Darkon, and the people who'd previously lived there mostly disappeared. Instead, the Forgotten Hills have become far more dangerous as they're inhabited by brigands, bandits, and monsters who often prey on merchants and travelers heading to and from Nova Vaasa. Azalin has yet to take action against them. There are a few ruined buildings left, following what appears to be a side effect of the Scouring of Arak (see Keening for more), but otherwise, the original Arakian population has vanished. Scholars debate if these are now the undead of Keening, or simply died during the Scouring, but none know for sure.

Strigos Road

The Strigos Road ("Rawboned Road" or Via Strigos in the local tongue) is one of Azalin's newest projects. Established to facilitate trade between Darkon and Nova Vaasa and circumventing Keening, The eventual aim is to link up with the Old Svalich Road in Barovia, but no one knows what Azalin's timeframe for finishing the road is, nor has anyone else got an idea of how far along construction is. One thing that is known is that it should, once completed, drastically decrease the amount of bandit and monster attacks that a traveler suffers while moving through the Forgotten Hills.

Vuchar River

The Vuchar River was once a major trade artery that ran through Il Aluk. It carried more trade and had more fish and the like in it, than any other river in Darkon. However, after the turning of Il Aluk this is no longer the case. Upstream from Il Aluk things remain the same, but downstream, the water is rotten for miles, and not a single living thing resides in it. Only once you get more than ten miles away does it return to some semblance of normality, and only those who have no choice use it for transport. No one dares to fish in it downstream anymore.

Towns and villages:

Corvia

Corvia lies near the Tempe Falls, and relies on those for the raw materials that are brought into town, and which supplies the craftspeople there. The town also contains the Baronial Tower, which belongs to the dwarven Baron Urjo Mustanen, the ruler of the town. The tower holds the royal mint, responsible for the pressing of all Darkonian coins, as well as the treasury of the domain. Rumor has it that this treasury is a front

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for the real one, that lies somewhere in Castle Avernus, but heavily armored and escorted carriages certainly come and go here often enough for it to contain the real treasury. Due to the wealth of the city, it is particularly well-protected. It is also home to the powerful dwarven woman Beryl Silvertruss, though she does not tolerate intrusions into her private life.

Creeana

Creeana was destroyed some time ago by the Whistling Fiend, which has left the town in ruins. While it could be rebuilt, only the truly desperate have returned here (giving it a population of only around 30 people). As a result, only the barest of repairs have been attempted to any of the buildings, and those few that have been properly restored resemble fortresses more than they do homes.

Delagia

Delagia lies partly upon an island, and partly above Lake Korst and the Foaming River, standing on sturdy poles. The mainly halfling population subsists on fish farming, but there is a strong trading community here, though traders have to use riverboats in order to reach the town. It (and neighboring Sidnar) is currently ruled by the siblings Baroness Almeta and Baron Kasen, from the Constantine family. The family is new to nobility, as they only replaced the previous rulers within the last few years (who were killed by Azalin following his return).

Karg

Karg is a medium-sized town, with a large number of non-humans as part of the accepted population. It is divided into the Upper and Lower Wards, with the rich inhabitants living in the Upper Ward alongside the city's industries, with the Lower Ward left to the poor. The Upper and Lower definitions refer not only to the economic strength of the inhabitants but also to its physical location, as the Lower Ward is in a shadowy depression in the land. Surrounding the city are ancient fortifications, giving the town an air of imprisonment. It is one of the safest cities in Darkon, however, at least from outside attacks. Karg is ruled by Baron Lucien Warbois, but the true power behind the throne is Venrith Chole, a former werewolf (now a ghost, after dying near Il Aluk) who was caught in mid-transformation on death, making this the ghost's true form. Venrith is no longer fully trusted by Azalin, as he has been exposed to potentially corrupting influences from Death and Il Aluk, and is simmering in his own anger.

Martira Bay

Martira Bay with its more than 10,000 inhabitants is Darkon's biggest city — at least after the loss of Il Aluk. Normally that would put it next in line to be the capital, but a peculiar feature of Martira Bay prevents Azalin from doing that. The presence of the night hag Styrix presents him with a problem. She affects reality around her in such a way that the memory loss that visitors and inhabitants suffer elsewhere in Darkon falls away here, in a similar manner to them leaving the domain. This makes it very difficult for him to directly influence events there (at least in a subtle manner), though he still has full control over the undead there. Styrix is also the builder responsible for an artifact known as the Rift Spanner — a device that may be of interest to Azalin's ongoing attempts to escape. So far, it has not been activated and remains hidden somewhere within the city. The local Kargat is led by Lady Kazandra, a beautiful and cunning woman with a rakish eyepatch. She owns the Cosmopolis Club, a posh club in town (and a suspected brothel, but nothing's been proven), and is influential behind the scenes, though the local ruler, Baroness Karimana Reldkasen, has firmly rebuffed attempts to control her directly. Kazandra posed a threat to Azalin's rule upon his return, but she was firmly put in her place, and his protection seems to extend to the Baroness.

Maykle

Maykle is a mostly human town that sprouted almost organically from a particularly deep natural harbor along the Vuchar River. It used to be a thriving trade community, but the fall of Il Aluk has severely limited its ability to send trade on from here, even though it still gathers it as quickly as before. Unlike most Darkonian cities, it is only fortified with a crude wooden palisade, as there are fewer undead in the region than elsewhere in Darkon. Apart from the now faltering trade, Maykle's claim to fame comes from the Clangor Asylum, where more than a hundred patients are under the care of Dr. Quentin Clangor (the great-great-grandson of the original founder), and his staff. It is at the cutting edge of the medicinal arts, second only to the Asylum for the Mentally Disturbed in Dominia, though Dr. Clangor keeps a far tighter rein on the methods employed - though they still range from strange to practically torture. Its most infamous inhabitant is Errol Sturlock, the father of the current Baroness of Maykle (his daughter Iris Sturlock) — he was found one day, eating his elven wife, and now is kept in a cell, his head locked in a cage to prevent him feasting on his own flesh. Evil tongues wonder whether his daughter caused his madness in a power-grab, or if she'll inherit a similar disturbance.

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Mayvin

Mayvin is a primarily gnome settlement, that is — to most others — incredibly disturbing to visit. No two buildings are the same, with a multitude of different styles on display, ranging from classic to outrageously dissimilar. Sculpted archways, glass domes, strangely shaped or weirdly proportioned windows and more dominate the landscape. Everyone in Mayven seems to love to experiment, though happily, most buildings are on a scale where an average human can still stand upright comfortably. Mayvin is primarily known for the Patent Hall and the Clockworks. The Patent Hall is where inventors in Darkon register the patents of their devices, but as part of this process, they must provide a functioning scale model which then goes on permanent display. Unfortunately, Baroness Narglin's ability to enforce the 20-year exclusivity license that each inventor gets is limited, so most simply seek it as a matter of pride. Something seems to inhabit the Patent Hall, as many of the devices seem to develop a malignant intelligence, though no one knows if this is the devices being possessed by a spirit, or if they're actually gaining sentience on their own. The Clockworks is an ornate wooden clock tower that stands in the center of town. Entirely autonomous and powered by an underground conduit, it rings out every hour on the hour, with automated dancers appearing. For some reason, it sometimes refuses to chime, and several of the figures have disappeared over the years. Most simply believe that it's a matter of vandalism, but some local drunks claim to have seen the figures walking off on their own.

Nartok

Nartok is a fortified lumber town, with the operations of most of the lumber companies centered in the Old Town. The Old Town has walled fortifications that surround it, built after the First Dead Man's War to ward off Vlad Drakov's forces and the undead that repelled them. Beyond the lumber operations, Nartok is home to a temple dedicated to the Eternal Order. Locals believe that this is where Death, the lord of Il Aluk, was born, and it remains desecrated as a result.

Neblus

Neblus is a large town with a slight elven majority. Though the difference is slight, it feels like more, as many of the human residents have assimilated into the elven culture, and wear the same clothes, and have the same manners. The town is quiet, and eerie, as the buildings are somber, and the ancient gravestones have been used to pave the streets — the locals have a saying for this "By keeping the dead underfoot, we keep them from rising to claim our city". This obsession with death and the afterlife seems to carry over

into other aspects of life in Neblus, meaning that the locals rarely raise their voices. In fact, they barely acknowledge each other in the open streets, though they speak normally when inside. Neblus is also home to the Shrine of the Spirits, the oldest temple of the Eternal Order in Darkon.

Nevuchar Springs

Nevuchar Springs is a small town, with an almost entirely elven population, built on the extreme eastern end of Darkon. It's often forgotten, which suits the locals just fine. It's only notable for being the source of the Vuchar river and for lying in an optional location for having a port to the Nocturnal Sea. However, the locals have no interest in expanding, so no port is being made. The Vuchar River also powers the Baths, a set of mineral pools used for recuperating those with various ailments. During the years where Azalin was missing, some of the pools and baths spoiled, and while they've since been cleared of the slime, rumors persist that some pools now drain the bathers rather than recuperating them. Nevuchar Springs also houses the Library Pharmacologiae, an archive of text that describes various herbal and medicinal cures — all of which have been assembled by a group of elven mystics, who guard the Nevuchar Shrine. They're worried, as some of the books have started changing in recent years, first slowly, but then increasing in speed. Necromantic passages suddenly appear, spreading through the books, like a blighted disease in a tree. Finally, Nevuchar Springs is the birthplace of the Darkonian arm of the Church of Ezra and is home to The Last Redoubt. Run by Bastion Teodorus Raines, the upper portions act as a temple, while the catacombs underneath serve as prisons and torture chambers for Raines' prisoners. These prisoners are usually monsters, as the Church of Ezra seeks to eliminate them from Darkon, however, the man is ambitious enough that some might be political enemies.

Rivalis

Rivalis is a small village close to the Darkonian border with Lamordia, and rare within the Mists for the fact that the majority of its population are halflings. It is the original home of Galf Kloggin who now terrorizes the surrounding Forest of Shadows. It has only two claims to fame beyond the population. First is the botanical gardens that it houses, called the Crystal Garden — the gardeners of the places are often looking to hire adventurers to deal with the dangerous plants that the Garden somehow seems to attract, even though they are extremely rigorous in ensuring that no such seeds make it in. Its other claim to fame is more along the lines of infamy: It smells badly of cheese, due to the

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Two Brothers, a small factory that produces Underjack, a hard type of smelly cheese.

Rookhausen

Rookhausen is a failed experiment to establish a colony in Darkon on the edge of the Nocturnal Sea. The community lasted about 5 years and sat not far from the border with Nova Vaasa together with Rutledge to the south. Unlike Rutledge, the town has been abandoned and the town has fallen into ruins.

Rutledge

Rutledge is a port on the border between Darkon and Nova Vaasa. While unclear which state controls it, it lies within Azalin's control and as such should be considered part of Darkon. Home to some 250 people, its main source of income is fishing, but it has gained notoriety as a pirate haven, as four islands just off the coast (known as the Dismal Four) provide shelter for the harbor. The lighthouse that sat on the smallest island was destroyed in a storm a few years back and has yet to be restored. Surprisingly both the mayor and the sheriff of the town are law-abiding citizens and only tolerate the presence of the pirates on three conditions: they behave while in town, they don't kill anyone unless they have to, and they're only welcome as long as the community requires the coin that the pirates put into their coffers. Once any of these three conditions end, they'll be happy to wave goodbye to the pirate haven reputation.

Sidnar

The sister city to Delagia, Sidnar lies on the other edge of Lake Korst and is also ruled by the Constantine family. Unlike its sister city, it has mainly an elven population who reside in the hills. The inhabitants here are capable miners and many of their products make it to the center of Darkon, though it is not as common as the products of Temple Falls, especially as recent washouts, rockslides, and more, have rendered access to the town impossible to reach, except on foot. Once the Strigos road is completed, it is expected to pass through Sidnar, and give the city a significant trade boost.

Tempe Falls

Tempe Falls is a dwarven mining town in the Mountains of Misery. It takes its name from the spectacular waterfalls that cascade down the nearby mountains, and which arcs rainbows across the sky on sunny days — on gloomier days though, the rainbows are more like twisting whirlwinds that the locals say are the spirits of the dwarves who died in the mines. Tempe Falls is home to the Nova Vaasan embassy (the chief envoy is Myar Hiregaard, the son of Tristen Hiregaard — one of the few who have retained their memories, on the

command of Azalin). It is also the home of Geraldine Enrich, an elderly human woman who has completely immersed herself in dwarven culture, and who runs the well-guarded Geraldine' Gem Emporium that sells figures made from the gems mined beneath the town. She even worships at the Ancestral Vault, the local dwarven temple.

Tidmore

Tidmore sits north of the ruins of Rookhausen and is governed by Burgomeister Borganov. It is a small fishing port and is not welcoming to strangers at all, with rumors abounding in Rutledge of the locals performing strange rituals and sacrifices on the beaches. They also say that the real rumor is his sister Hilde, who has strange powers, rather like a werewolf, but transforming into a strange fish instead.

Viaki

Viaki is one of the bigger cities in Darkon, but despite this, feels much smaller than it actually is. This is because it has allowed itself to spread far further across the land than is normal, giving it the nickname "the village that never ends". The people in Viaki are incredibly poor, subsisting on trapping and farming, as well as peat harvesting and other simple trades. Despite their poverty, the local leaders still attempt to squeeze every last bit of coin out of the locals that they can, particularly with the help of a local midwife and healer named Glennis McFadden. Unknown to the locals, Glennis is actually a green hag, who is trying to subvert Viaki, in revenge for the murder of the rest of her coven — only the woman named Isha Goldtree (who the locals call the Lost Seer, for her supposed ability to foresee the future) knows the truth, of which she's failed to convince anyone else. As such, to avoid attracting attention from Glennis, she now plays the role of Seer, hoping to direct powerful adventurers to destroy the hag.

Neighboring domain(s):

Falkovnia
Keening
Lamordia
Liffe
Nova Vaasa
Tepest
The Nocturnal Sea
The Shadow Rift

Fun Fact:

Darkonians put great value on memorabilia, possibly due to their false memories. As such, many shops in Darkon cater to these needs and sell small trinkets to adults and children alike.

Azalin Rex

"I know more about the ground you stand on than any other. I have studied the arcane arts for centuries. I am the doom of the powers that keep me prisoner here. I will escape. I will break my curse. Then I will drag these Dark Powers into the light. I will cast them down into hells of my creation and watch them suffer. I am eternal. I am their doom. I am Azalin."

~ Azalin Rex

Azalin is the lich lord of Darkon. In his true form Azalin is an emaciated corpse, reeking of decay, with eyes glowing like red pin pricks. The flesh around his mouth has pulled back, revealing cracked yellow teeth. If Azalin wishes to shock someone, especially if that person is going to be dragged to one of his many torture or experiment chambers, then he wears a loin cloth, and black cape with blood red trim and several expensive pieces of jewelry. Usually Azalin wears flowing robes and several rings. The rings are powerful magic items.

When Azalin appears before his subjects, he cloaks his appearance in powerful illusions. In these illusions, Azalin looks like an ancient human. He regularly changes his features, but it's unknown if Azalin changes his appearance for esoteric reasons or merely because it suits his whims.

Azalin is prone to quick decisions and has a dangerous temper. His vanity doesn't allow him to admit a mistake, so he will never admit error during one of his outbursts. Instead Azalin will use magic or intimidation to force a minion, even one that couldn't possibly have made the choice, to admit their guilt. The poor minion is quickly dragged away to Azalin's laboratory. Azalin wore a heavy iron crown mounted with a spike until the events of the Requiem. The crown was lost during the planar chaos that rocked Ravenloft.

Background: Firan Zal'honan was the second son of Duke Tiralitan Zal'honan, a minor noble in a forgotten world. At birth his prospects were bleak, Firan couldn't inherit land and he did not have the strength of arms to join a company of mercenaries. The duchy was small and surrounded by hostile tribes of humanoids. The young noble respected his father and older brother, Ranald, but had no love for them. The only person Firan developed any connection for was his younger brother Irik. Irik was kind and slow to anger. He was the only person who could calm Firan's temper when the young noble lost control. Firan's father hated magic in any form and forbade it in his lands. At first Firan respected his father's rules and avoided magic, but as he grew Firan realized magic offered him what nothing else could, control. The discipline necessary to study

the arcane arts gave Azalin control over himself and the spells he studied gave him control over others. As Firan grew in ability he realized another desire magic could achieve. Power.

Firan soon confided in Irik about his arcane pursuits, the pair soon joining together in studying under the wizard Quantarius. Quantarius was a powerful wizard who kept to the shadows to avoid the wrath of the boy's father. Firan mastered magic quickly, but soon his grasp exceeded even his considerable reach. When he was 15, Firan and Irik tried to summon a fiend. The fiend quickly overpowered both of the young mages and went on a rampage. Quantarius was able to slay the fiend, but not before Irik lost his life. Quantarius had saved the duchy, but was outed as a mage, and banished. Firan chose to follow Quantarius into exile and continue his studies.

Over time, Firan mastered powerful magic. He could drain the vitality of others to extend his life and heal his wounds. He could steal spells from the minds of other mages and learn them in an instant. Firan studied dark magic and soon moved beyond what Quantarius was willing to teach him. When Firan studied on his own he learned even faster.

During his exile, Tiralitan died, and Ranald inherited the duchy. Under Ranald's rule his people suffered. Ranald was a harsh and petty tyrant who drank and whored the treasury to nothing. The people suffered, both from Ranald's drinking and from the raids of the surrounding tribes. Constant drinking and feasting took its toll on Ranald and within a few years he passed. Firan returned from exile as an Azal'Lan, a Wizard King.

Azal'Lan was a harsh but fair ruler. Magic was embraced and Azal'Lan conducted a series of brutal mercenary campaigns against the neighboring tribes. His duchy became powerful militarily and economically. His people procured, as long as they obeyed. Anyone who broke the law was severely punished, even Azal'Lan's own son, Irik. Irik, like his namesake, was a kind soul. When Azal'Lan imprisoned several political prisoners Irik led a doomed attempt to free them. Irik was tried for treason and found guilty by his own father. While Irik's conspirators and the prisoners were executed by a headsman, Azal'Lan beheaded Irik himself. After the death of his son Azal'Lan became obsessed with immortality and restoring his son to life. He would race toward any hint of new magic to add to his immense library. It was a shock when the secret to lichdom was offered to Azal'Lan by a shadowy figure in his own lab. Azal'Lan was wary, but could not resist the power un-

Azalin Rex

death offered. After his apotheosis, Azal'Lan ruled for decades, greatly expanding his territory and power. Despite the decades Azal'Lan still desired to resurrect his son. One day a traveller told the lich king of a new magic that would bring the dead to life without the interference of the gods. Azal'Lan took a small retinue of guards and set off after the rumors. Once outside of his duchy Azal'Lan and his guards were ambushed by a combined force of tribal warriors and mercenaries. Azal'Lan's guards were slaughtered but the lich was more than a match for his assailants. He laughed as he drained their lives away, dissolved their bones, and shattered their minds. As the last tribeman died the mist came for Azal'Lan.

When the mists cleared Azal'Lan was in Barovia. The first person he met mispronounced his title as Azalin. It was a name Azal'Lan quickly adopted in his new home. Azalin traveled for a time and eventually found Strahd von Zarovich, the lord of Barovia and the only creature in Barovia that Azalin could consider an equal. Even then Azalin knew he could kill Strahd if he so wished. Azalin stayed at Castle Ravenloft for years. He quickly learned about his prison and began to experiment with the nature of the demiplane and the Dark Powers. One of his earliest experiments involved creating the arcane machine, the Apparatus, that opened a portal to Mordent and in the chaos that followed dragged the entire country through to become a new dark domain. After the experiment failed, relations between Strahd and Azalin, already strained, reached a breaking point. Azalin knew he could destroy Strahd, but was concerned Barovia would dissolve into the mists with the death of its lord. Because Mordent had been pulled into the mists and now lay outside of Barovia's borders, Azalin deduced that new countries may exist or be created in the mists. Azalin left Castle Ravenloft and walked into the mists. He was gifted the realm of Darkon. For a time after the creation of Darkon, Azalin was split into two beings. Firan was a mage who couldn't remember anything about himself. Firan helped those in need, but felt pulled to Castle Avernus. There Firan fought and defeated a powerful undead entity called Daraculas. When Daraculas was slain, its undead essence merged with Firan and Azalin was reborn. At first Azalin raged against the Dark Powers and swore to break free of their control and get his revenge. After some time and research, Azalin has come to believe that the Dark Powers had granted him a chance as Firan to escape Ravenloft and return home. Azalin established his rule at Castle Avernus, but the nearby city of Il Aluk became the political and economic center of Darkon. While exploring the castle, Azalin found the crypt of his son, Irik in the catacombs beneath the castle.

Azalin himself is unsure, but at some point after he was taken by the mists, he lost the ability to learn new magic. Azalin remembers creating new types of golems and researching the complicated magical rituals for his first attempt to breach Ravenloft. He also remembers teaching Strahd the spells needed to activate the Apparatus. Azalin's memory changes every time he tries to remember, and interrupting one of these reveries is a sure way to die a painful death.

Azalin quickly established his rule in Darkon. He assembled the Kargat, a secret police of human informants, werewolves, and vampires, charged with crushing dissent and ferreting out spies. Over the years the Kargat expanded their activities to carry Azalin's will to other domains as spies and assassins.

Azalin continued his research into the nature of the demiplane of dread. He tried to escape several times, all of which have failed. One such attempt, now called the Grand Conjunction, nearly tore the demiplane apart and reordered the domains that were trapped. His most recent attempt, the Requiem, drained the life force of an entire city, Il Aluk, and created a new dark lord, Death. The events of the Requiem were supposed to grant Azalin enough energy that he could break free of his corporeal body and escape Ravenloft. Instead Azalin's body was blasted apart and his mind scattered across Darkon. Azalin struggled to reassemble his mind for five years. Finally Azalin could possess the body of his son and be reborn.

Current Sketch: Azalin has recovered some of his ability to learn new magic. If the subject is extremely closely related to a subject that he is familiar with, then Azalin can learn about this new magic, though it will take him decades longer than a mortal mage to master the new magic. Since his return Azalin has also gained a new ability to look into the minds and alter the memories of anyone currently in Darkon. Azalin retains his abilities to control any undead in Darkon, even intelligent undead. Neither of these abilities extends to creatures in Il Aluk, which causes Azalin considerable alarm Azalin's new experiments have moved beyond escaping Ravenloft. He has sent an agent known only as "S" into the neighboring domains. It is unknown what S is looking for, but S is searching with a feverish intensity. In his absence, members of the Kargat attempted to take over Darkon, leading to shadow war between different factions of the organization. Azalin devotes considerable time and effort to stamping out any faction of the Kargat that denies his right to rule. Azalin's subjects believe he is draconian, but human. They admit he uses dark magic to extend his life through unnatural means, but even if presented

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with incontrovertible proof of his true nature they will dismiss it and accuse the presenter of manufacturing lies. If the presenter persists Azalin's subjects will become increasingly distressed and quickly escalate to violence.

The Eternal Order. Azalin concocted a faith from whole cloth, The Eternal Order, with themes of ancestral worship, lawful conduct, and reverence for the dead. The Eternal Order is the state religion of Darkon and is practiced by a majority of Darkon's citizens with varying degrees of attentiveness. Despite its made-up origin, clerics and paladins of The Eternal Order nevertheless receive divine powers, and their healing evocation spells which normally exclude undead may heal them for half effectiveness when cast using a spell slot at least one higher than base level. Most ranking clergy are simply another arm of Azalin's intelligence and state control apparatus and have little faith, but some sects are truly faithful and call upon the powers of the dead to protect the living, investigate cold cases, protect tombs, judge and aid the undead with valid grievances against the living, and put to rest those they cannot help. Players who want to create a character with a background in The Eternal Order should choose any non-chaotic alignment, but barbarians following the Path of the Ancestral Guardians are always welcome in the Order's ranks.

Darklord's Tactics: Azalin has mastered magic for longer than anyone in Ravenloft has been alive. He scries his enemies in Darkon and other domains and his informants everywhere. Azalin will dispatch members of the Kargat to deal with a potential threat long before it gets close to Azalin. If his enemies manage to repeatedly avoid or slay his agents, Azalin will become involved. He will carefully watch his enemies until he knows all their abilities. Azalin will choose the ideal spot for an ambush. When Azalin attacks he will unleash his most devastating spells and flood the area with mindless undead and kargat members. Azalin doesn't care if his minions are incinerated by his spells as long as his enemies are slain. Azalin's phylactery is a massive golden dragon skull. The skull weighs more than 1,000 pounds and its bone has been magically hardened beyond the strength of adamantine. Azalin has woven dozens of protective spells over the skull, and has undead and fiends nearby to protect it.

Undead Nature. Azalin doesn't require air, food, or drink. Azalin is cursed to sleep at intervals, but does not require it.

Utility Belt. Azalin wears a belt with several wands, scrolls, and other items that are situationally useful. The belt also holsters a spell component pouch, costly spell components like silver soul cages, a mirror for scrying and cornering spells, consumable items, and whatever else appeals to your sensibilities. Items specifically prepared for the belt easily release and reattach, but never fall off during the chaos of combat. The utility belt was designed by a master thief to allow the user to swiftly exchange the objects they are holding. If Azalin is holding an object he drew from the belt, instead of dropping it, he may stow it without consuming his free action. Azalin poisons or minorly curses valuable items to deter thieving hands. The nature of those curses is left as an exercise for the GM.

Book of Knowledge. While studying the Book of Names which replaces memories with false ones, Azalin had a curious idea. Could he overwrite a wizard's memory of the spells he has prepared? Could he implant the memory of a spell he has never used, thus allowing him to cast spells he cannot learn otherwise? Braiding several threads of thought on the nature of the mind, magic, and time into one research project, Azalin created the Book of Knowledge, a memory-altering tome that targets his own mind and rapidly replaces spells he has prepared with the memories of ones he has prepared in the past. Although Azalin's goal to cast new spells has proven elusive, being able to swap spells in the chaos of battle is the envy of any wizard, no less with a book stored in a secure location. Azalin's Book of Knowledge is an absolute secret, even from his son.

Borders: Instead of closing Darkon's misty borders, Azalin can command an army of undead forces to rise from the ground and defend it or prevent specific targets of Azalin's ire from leaving. In battles, slain enemy creatures stand back up to fight their former comrades. The crowd of undead is at least 20 creatures deep. The undead at the border cannot be turned. If a creature attempts to fly over the horde they are forced down to the ground by an invisible force. Any attempt to teleport past the horde partially fails. The creature is instead teleported into the middle of the undead horde. Undead near the border inerrantly know the location of creatures Azalin does not want to leave Darkon, and the undead relentlessly assemble and attack in greater and greater numbers until the targets turn back from the border — in which case they are harried no further. Azalin himself doesn't automatically learn about attempted escapes of creatures he forbade from leaving Darkon, but he is likely to receive reports of an unexplained mass rising of undead and put two-and-two together.

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"The lust for power, for dominating others, inflames the heart more than any other passion."

~Tacitus

Azalin Rex

Medium undead (humanoid), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (20d8 + 80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	23 (+6)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +11, Int +13, Wis +8

Skills Arcana +20, Deception +10, History +13, Insight +8, Intimidation +10, Investigation +13, Perception +8, Persuasion +10, Stealth +10

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Darkonese, Balok, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Mordentish, Vaasi

Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Azalin fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Rejuvenation. If Azalin has still his phylactery, he gains a new body in 3 days, regaining all his hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery.

Spellcasting. Azalin is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). Azalin has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *All wizard cantrips*

1st level (4/6* slots): *alarm, charm person, comprehend languages, disguise self, fog cloud, identify, magic missile, protection from evil and good, silent image, Tasha's hideous laughter, Tenser's floating disc, thunderwave, unseen servant*

2nd level (4/6* slots): *alter self, arcane lock, darkness, enlarge/reduce, flaming sphere, hold person, invisibility, knock, locate object, magic mouth, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, see invisibility, shatter, suggestion, web*

3rd level (4/6* slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, clairvoyance, daylight, dispel magic, fireball, fly, gaseous form, haste, lightning bolt, nondetection, sending, wind wall*

4th level (3/5* slots): *arcane eye, charm monster, confusion, dimension door, Evard's black tentacles, ice storm, phantasmal killer, stoneskin, summon greater demon*

5th level (3/5* slots): *Bigby's hand, contagion, dominate person, geas, hold monster, legend lore, planar binding, scrying, telekinesis, wall of stone*

6th level (3/5* slots): *contingency, disintegrate, eyebite, flesh to stone, globe of invulnerability, guards and wards, summon fiend, true seeing, wall of ice*

7th level (2/4* slots): *finger of death, forcecage, project image, symbol*

8th level (2/3* slots): *feeblemind, maze, power word: stun*

9th level (1/2* slots): *foresight, gate, power word: kill, prismatic wall, wish*

Turn Resistance. Azalin has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Switch Spells. Four times per day, Azalin can use a bonus action to use his book of knowledge and switch one of his prepared spells with any other from the wizard spell list. The spells switched must be of the same level.

Illusory Appearance. Azalin uses illusions to disguise himself as he appeared in life. Divination spells falsely detect Azalin as a living human, not undead, with no aura of necromancy emitting from him. Azalin can dispel these illusions as a bonus action, or if he uses Frightening Gaze, drops to 30 hit points or fewer, or a dispel magic spell is cast on him.

Inability to Learn. Azalin is cursed to not be able to learn new spells. His known spells never change.

Grasp of Details. Azalin knows who has visited his kingdom in the past and current. He can identify any Darkonian by name, on sight. He can also peer into the memories of anyone inside his domain.

Modify Memories. Azalin can shape the false memories created by Darkon. Azalin can shield specific individuals from having their memories stolen, restore such memories once taken or even imprint new, false memories at any time in any subject

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within Darkon's borders. Unlike the *modify memory* spell, there is no limit to the amount of time Azalin can rewrite in the subject's mind. The target receives no saving throw. However, as with Darkon's standard memory drain, subjects immediately regain their true memories the moment they leave the domain. In addition, whenever Azalin enters the memories of his subjects, their minds subconsciously touch his thoughts as well. Thus, people whose recollections Azalin reads or alters will always have disturbing, incongruent elements subtly woven into their relevant memories.

Undead Dominion. Azalin can animate any humanoid corpse in Darkon as a zombie or skeleton, as the *animate dead* spell without a limit on the number he can raise and control at any time. Azalin automatically commands all undead creatures in Darkon and can see, hear and even speak through any non-intelligent undead he commands.

Immunities. Azalin is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form, induce sleep, lower his Strength score, or affect his mind. Spells like *disintegrate*, *finger of death*, or other similar death magic spells damage him but do not affect him otherwise. Creatures of 6 hit dice or less cannot harm him by any means.

Contingency. The first time a creature attacks Azalin from behind is hit by a *flesh to stone* contingency spell.

Imp Assistants. Azalin's Imps, Skeeve and Squalimous, grant him a regeneration of 5 hit points per turn and extra spell slots while at least one of them is alive.

Sleeping Curse. Azalin's curse cuts into his productivity by forcing him to fall asleep. On average, Azalin's sleep to wake cycle is one:five, so he could choose to take four hours off every day or one day out of every six. He varies the schedule to avoid predictability. If Azalin pushes himself he can stay up for weeks on end, but the curse weighs more heavily upon him until he is forced to fall asleep wherever he may be. While asleep, Azalin experiences the collective unconsciousness of Darkon's citizens. Azalin becomes aware of topics and figures who have earned the attention of the nation's psyche. While asleep, Azalin can mass alter the memories or dispositions of Darkon's citizens — rewriting a name, disappearing someone from everyone's memory, encouraging a certain bias, or heightening a fear. Like *mass suggestion*, Azalin can't force Darkon's citizens to believe or act unreasonably. Newcomers to Darkon are immune to Azalin's mind tampering, but their vulnerability increases the longer they spend in Darkon.

Spell Resistance. Azalin has advantage on saving throws from spells or spell attacks

Archlich Reborn 1/Day. Azalin regains an 8th level or lower spell slot. All creatures in a 15ft burst are pulled back 10ft and must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Prepared. As part of his daily/weekly routine, Azalin casts the following spells upon himself outside of battle: *contingency*, *mind blank*, *disguise self*, and *Nystul's magic aura*.

Synaptic Static (3/Day). Azalin chooses a point within range and causes psychic energy to explode there. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw. A creature with an Intelligence score of 2 or lower can't be affected by this spell. A target takes 8d6 psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Avernus Phylactery. A minuscule amount of life energy is collected from Darkon's living people when they conduct sunset ritual prayers for The Eternal Order and the other religions that Azalin has subverted. The tithe is channeled into a pool of defensive energy in Azalin's phylactery. This grants Azalin's Avernus phylactery temporary hit points unless he expends the energy for himself. Stopping Darkon's citizens from performing prayers and rituals diminishes the pool of defensive energy available for the next day. Some scheduled disruptive events, like holidays and country-wide festivals, increase truancy. A widely-seen, well-timed disturbance may also suffice: interesting skywriting, a volcanic eruption, a vivid meteorite, a dragon flyover in a populated area, etc. Mass death or religious conversion also weaken or negate the Avernus phylactery's energy collection. If the Avernus phylactery's ability has been weakened, make the following change:

Weakened Avernus Phylactery. While Azalin maintains a link to his phylactery in Castle Avernus, once per day, Azalin may choose to activate one of its two abilities. He cannot choose another until the phylactery's defensive energy pool regenerates at sunset.

-Damage Absorption: Activated at the start of Azalin's turn, the next 20 hit points of damage that he takes is transferred to the phylactery. Azalin takes any leftover damage. This ability terminates at sunset.

-One-turn damage resistance: As a reaction to an attack or other imminent source of damage, all damage to Azalin is halved until the end of the turn.

Azalin can, as a bonus action on his turn, break his link to the Avernus phylactery and cancel any ongoing effects. This does not affect his Rejuvenation. Azalin can re-establish his link to the Avernus phylactery as a bonus action on his turn, but only while in Castle Avernus or its environs. The abilities of the Avernus phylactery are suppressed if it or Azalin is fully within an *anti-magic* field. (If weakened, subtract 1 from Azalin's CR.)

Actions

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Night Blade. *Melee weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (1d12+6) force + 1d8 necrotic damage.

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Legendary Actions

Azalin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Azalin regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cantrip. Azalin casts a cantrip.

Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions). Azalin uses his Paralyzing Touch.

Frightening Gaze. (Costs 2 Actions). Azalin fixes his gaze on one creature he can see within 10 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become Frightened for 1 minute. The Frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Azalin's gaze for the next 24 hours. Azalin's false appearance is dispelled by this action.

Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions). Each living creature within 20 feet of Azalin must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Azalin can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Azalin can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Azalin targets one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. A crackling cord of negative energy tethers Azalin to the target. Whenever Azalin takes damage, the target must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, Azalin takes half damage (rounded up), and the target takes the remaining damage. This tether lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round or until Azalin or the target is no longer in Azalin's lair.

Azalin calls forth the spirits of creatures that died in his lair. These apparitions materialize and attack one creature that Azalin can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 38 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success. The apparitions then disappear.

Azalin orders the hidden dead to muster. During the next round, 1d6 undead creatures appropriate to the environment with an individual CR of 1 extricate themselves from the surroundings within 120 feet of Azalin. They obey Azalin's commands and act on initiative count 20. The undead remain for 1 hour, until Azalin dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Azalin can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Significant Possessions:

Azalin has accumulated a vast collection of scrolls and magic items, many crafted by his own hand, including a wide variety of cursed items. If Azalin has time to prepare, he will often wield magic items specifically tailored to his foes' weaknesses or see to it that cursed items fall into his foes' hands



Dementlieu



Dementlieu



Dementlieu was built in France during the Renaissance amid the machinations and infighting that were common among the nobles of that time. As a result, it is highly civilized and technologically advanced (one of the most advanced domains in existence), and outwardly claims to be a republic. In reality, it is run by Dominic d'Honaire. Dominic is the darklord of Dementlieu and prefers to remain the "power behind the throne" of his puppet, Marcel Guignol, an old man too feeble to defend himself from Dominic's mental onslaught. Dominic has no real ambitions of expanding his domain and spends his time setting his subjects upon themselves through his manipulations and schemes. However, he is being challenged by a newcomer to the domain, the Living Brain. The Living Brain is a brain that somehow survived the care of Dr. Mordenheim and was transferred from its body into a waiting receptacle, a glass jar, with mechanical legs. The Living Brain escaped and found that its unlocked mental powers made it a formidable foe for Dominic. Adventures based in Dementlieu should contain an element of manipulation. The heroes should always feel like someone is trying to pluck their strings and control or direct their actions. They might get involved in the power struggle between Dominic and the Living Brain, and while they might attempt to avoid getting entangled, this should prove difficult at best. Dominic is likely destined to win this battle, as his powers are stronger than that of the Living Brain, but it has emerged as the first real contender that Dominic has ever faced. Furthermore, if any of the heroes is an attractive female, they should be able to see the true monster that hides behind Dominic's smiling visage, even if the rest of the heroes might never discover it.

"Look at the orators in our republics; as long as they are poor, both state and people can only praise their uprightness; but once they are fattened on the public funds, they conceive a hatred for justice, plan intrigues against the people and attack the democracy." ~Aristophanes, Plutus

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest and plains, inland lakes
Year Formed:	707 BC
Population:	14,000
Races (%):	Humans 95%, Halflings 2%, Other 3%
Languages:	Common, Falkovnian, Halfling, Lamordian Mordentish
Religions:	Ezra (officially recognized), Aristocratic Republic
Government:	Lord-Governor Marcel Guignol
Ruler(s):	
Darklord(s):	Dominic d'Honaire
Nationality:	Mordentish
Analog:	France

Local Fauna:

Dementlieu is remarkably safe when compared to many other domains, and the beasts native to the domain are all of the common varieties that you'd normally expect to find within a temperate country. Bears, boars, and wolves comprise the most common predators, but they are far outnumbered by deer, rabbits, pheasants, and the domesticated animals of the Dementlieuse commoners. In particular cows and sheep, though pigs are somewhat uncommon. Horses are often too expensive for any but the wealthiest farmers, though most nobles have at least a stable of some few horses to show off.

Local Flora:

The soil in Dementlieu is rather sandy, which makes it difficult for most large forms of vegetation to grow. As such the forests are rather sparse, and the undergrowth is light. The soil is hard to till, but the grass (which is plentiful) feeds the local animals. Most fruits and vegetables are imported, especially from the breadbasket that is Falkovnia. Gardening is a popular pastime among the Dementlieuse, with frequent competitions held to show off the wealth of the nobles, by having unusual and exotic plants imported, but even among commoners, there is a sense of pride with these. Here they grow colorful flowers and spices that they use to liven up their food, and popular spices include lavender, thyme, rosemary, hyssop, and marjoram. One plant, in particular, deserves special mention here, a herb called dapplewort. It seems capable only of growing in the wild, as all attempts to cultivate the plant have failed. As it grows on the sandy dunes of the western shore, a select few of the populace make a living harvesting the herb, and supposedly disposing of it safely. Ingesting dapplewort makes the recipient

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susceptible to manipulation of both magical and mundane nature, and rumor has it that some of the nobles use this to lure secrets out of their rivals. Dapplewort is easy to recognize, as the flower is a beautiful pink, with a yellow center. The yellow center is the seed of the plant, and once it has swollen to its full size, it can be squeezed, and a thick fluid that tastes like honey can be harvested. This fluid is what has the intoxicating effect, leaving many locals to harvest the seeds early, destroying them, and then simply enjoying the view. Or so they say...

Native Horrors

Dementlieu is one of the safer domains, at least from monsters. It is as civilized as few others, but even here, the supernatural makes an unwelcome appearance. Doppelgangers, mimics, and other creatures capable of impersonating humans, or who enjoy manipulating other creatures. Rumor has it that those creatures that would use psychic powers to do so, avoid the domain, complaining of an alien force trying to invade their minds. Other dangers include incorporeal undead, like ghosts and wraiths. Corporeal undead are normally disposed of quickly by the local gendarmes (guards). Near the coast, the locals speak of sahuagin, sea hags, and monstrous creatures under the water, though the local authorities deny such rumors. Nonetheless, locals do go missing from time to time when traveling near the water, so caution is advised.

Terrain type

Dementlieu is a rather flat and open country. The forests are small and sparse, and most of the countryside is grasslands, ideal for cattle. The lakes of the interior are shallow, though Pernal Bay on the western coast has one of the largest and deepest natural harbors in the Core, with Sable bay being slightly shallower. The weather only rarely reaches any sort of extreme, though rain is common especially in spring and autumn, while the temperatures are stable and rather comfortable. In winter, Dementlieu only gets the lightest sprinkling of snow, while only the very heights of the summer season get uncomfortably warm.

Towns and villages:

Port-a-Lucine

Port-a-Lucine is the capital of Dementlieu and is considered something of a hotbed of both fashion and intrigue in the Core. It has several museums, an opera house, a grand library, and a theatre. All of these are considered among the most eminent institutions of their kind. The capital is also home to several boarding schools and many young men and women from wealthy families in Lamordia and Mordent are educated

here before returning to their homelands. All the nobles of Dementlieu keep a residence within Port-a-Lucine, even if they do not live there normally. If they do not, they visit the town at least bi-weekly to keep up with the current rumors and movements behind the scenes, as well as take care of business. The ever-changing fashions of Dementlieu mean that many of these nobles have tailors and seamstresses on retainer, who live well in Port-a-Lucine, and whose job it is to keep track of the fashions and ensure that their employers are always appropriately attired. Finally, Port-a-Lucine also houses the Council of Brilliance, the leadership of Dementlieu, though the wise traveler is careful when around the City Watch, as most are not only in the employ of the city, but also secretly on the take from one of the nobles that sit on the Council of Brilliance.

Chateaufaux

Chateaufaux is, to most outsiders, the same as Port-a-Lucine, but smaller. But to the scientific community, Chateaufaux is the hotbed of science and crafts within the Core. Here, various inventions and new-fangled devices can be found. Some even say that the firearms that have recently started becoming popular with the more developed domains come from here. A current (and long-running) argument in town is whether to consider magic a science as well and allow for it to be established in town. So far, most of the city's leadership has been against such a thing, but it is discussed openly and often, especially when news of any recent inventions of Dr. Mordenheim reaches town. Incidentally, most inhabitants admire Dr. Mordenheim for his prowess but think that the man has on occasion gone too far. Nevertheless, he has an open invitation to visit, though he has never accepted.

Edrigan

Edrigan is the smallest settlement in Dementlieu, and in many ways completely indistinguishable from the many other villages in the Core. Its sole claim to fame is a visit in years past by Dr. Rudolph van Richten when he was involved in driving out a fiend that had possessed several generations of the Madrigore family in Edrigan. The good doctor was able to capture the creature and imprison it in a magical gem, but this device has since disappeared.

Neighboring domain(s):

Falkovnia
Lamordia
Mordent
Sea of Sorrows

Dominic d'Honaire

Fun Fact:

The people of Dementlieu are incredibly fashion conscious, something that they show off often. It becomes something of a competition among nobles, and pretenders to that title often bankrupt themselves in an effort to keep up. The discarded fashions are often picked up by nobles of other domains, but normally too late. This leads the Dementlieuse aristocrats to look down upon the nobles of other domains as being somewhat backward.

"You are surrounded by beauty, by intrigue, by danger, what more can a man want?"

~Alexandre Dumas, Man in the Iron Mask

Dominic is a slightly portly, but attractive man in his mid-50s. His hair and beard are styled in the latest heights of fashion, and he carries himself with an undeniable air of confidence and assuredness. While not the official ruler of Dementlieu (he sits on the Council of Brilliance with a title of Chief Advisor to the Lord-Governor), Dominic is responsible for the setting of law and dispensation of justice. But, through his machinations, he is indirectly in control of everything that happens in the domain. And all the people living in it are his obedience. Dominic has been a member of the Council of Brilliance for 44 years, succeeding his father — who fell ill due to Dominic's manipulations. For some time before then and certainly after his ascension, Dominic has used his powers to affect life throughout the domain, often using his powers simply for his own entertainment, rather than against a concerted goal.

Background: Dominic was born in Mordentshire after the domain was pulled into the Demiplane of Dread. Even as a small child, Dominic was able to suggest ideas so subtly that no one realized Dominic was controlling everyone he knew.

As he grew older, Dominic began to use his power to pit his enemies and friends against each other. When Dominic desired chaos, duels would erupt all over Mordentshire, riots tore through the streets and leaders would be assassinated in their beds.

Dominic was always a handsome boy and was especially popular with women. He inherited more than one fortune from aged dowagers before he was twenty. Accusations of impropriety never seemed to find any traction against the young noble.

The few who discovered Dominic's manipulations had two choices; either become his willing servant or suffer

a tragic accident. The few hotbloods that challenged Dominic to a duel suffered tragic accidents the evening before the duel's appointed date.

When Dominic was finished with Mordentshire, he convinced the rest of his family it was time to move on. Dominic's grandfather initially resisted the idea, but unfortunately the aged patriarch passed soon after refusing the request.

When Dominic and his remaining clan entered the Mists, the domain was formed around them with Dominic its undisputed lord.

Current Sketch: For nearly all of his life, Dominic has ruled Dementlieu, and all its people have succumbed to his mind control and manipulations. Dominic has had plenty of people removed with his powers, manipulating others to do his dirty work for him. Dominic has only committed such a deed himself once, in his early years. This experience caused him to shy away from physical confrontation.

Dominic is the darklord of Dementlieu and prefers to remain the "power behind the throne" of his puppet, Marcel Guignol, an old man too feeble to defend himself from Dominic's mental onslaught. However, a new threat has appeared. Someone has started to interrupt Dominic's plans. One of Dr Mordenhiem's twisted experiments, a living brain captured in a jar, has found its way into Dominic's domain and is trying to usurp his rule. Dominic has never faced a real threat before, and is just starting to plan his retaliation.

To most people, Dominic is an attractive man. But to those that he feels an attraction to, this otherwise callous man starts to appear as a hideous monster. The more attracted he is, the uglier he becomes to that person. Frustratingly for Dominic, even his powerful mind-powers are unable to overcome this revulsion.

Darklord's Tactics: Dominic prefers not to engage in combat if at all possible. If forced to engage in combat, he uses his *domination* power and forces the enemies to fight themselves. He reverts to his spells when needed, and only uses his pistol or rapier when absolutely unavoidable.

Borders: When the borders are sealed, Dementlieu is surrounded by a shimmering mirage. Anyone that enters the mirage finds themselves walking somewhere in the domain. At the seashore, the Sea of Sorrows disappears and any ships are lost in a mist until the borders are opened.

Dominic d'Honaire



Dominic d'Honaire

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (*bracers of defense, amulet of natural armor +2*)

Hit Points 54 (12d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	22 (+4)

Saving Throws Intelligence +7, Charisma +8

Skills Deception +12, Insight +5, Intimidation +8, Perception +5, Persuasion +12

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Balok, Elven, Falkovnian, Lamordian, Mordentish

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Cloak of Charisma: When Dominic casts *friends* or *charm person*, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw to know that it was subjected to the spell.

Spellcasting. Dominic is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard* spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, message, minor illusion, poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, hideous laughter, illusory script, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, detect thoughts, hold person, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear, hypnotic pattern, sending*

4th level (1 slot): *confusion, phantasmal killer*

*Dominic can only prepare enchantment spells as he is not truly a wizard and his powers come from his silver-tongue.

Actions

Pistol +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10 +1) piercing damage.

Rapier +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8 +1) piercing damage.

Domination. Dominic targets one creature he can see within 60 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by Dominic for 1 week. The charmed target is under Dominic's control and can't take reactions. Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from Dominic. Should the target fail three of these saving throws, Dominic can give them the Obedient trait (as described under *Legendary Actions*) without spending an action.

Legendary Actions

Dominic can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Dominic regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Assault of the Senses. Dominic bombards the mind of a single creature within 60 feet with disturbing and unreal images. That creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be confused (as per the spell *confusion*) for 1 round.

Cast Suggestion (Costs 3 Actions). Dominic casts *suggestion* as if it was a normal spell. This does not use or require a spell slot.

Enforce Obedience. (Costs 2 actions) One creature that is under the effects of *domination* by Dominic becomes permanently dominated until Dominic dies or leaves Dementlieu. While a creature is such an Obedient, it fails all saving throws against Dominic, while gaining advantage on all saving throws against being charmed by other creatures.

Significant Possessions:

Rapier +1, Pistol +1, Amulet of Natural Armor +2, Bracers of Defense, Cloak of Charisma +2.

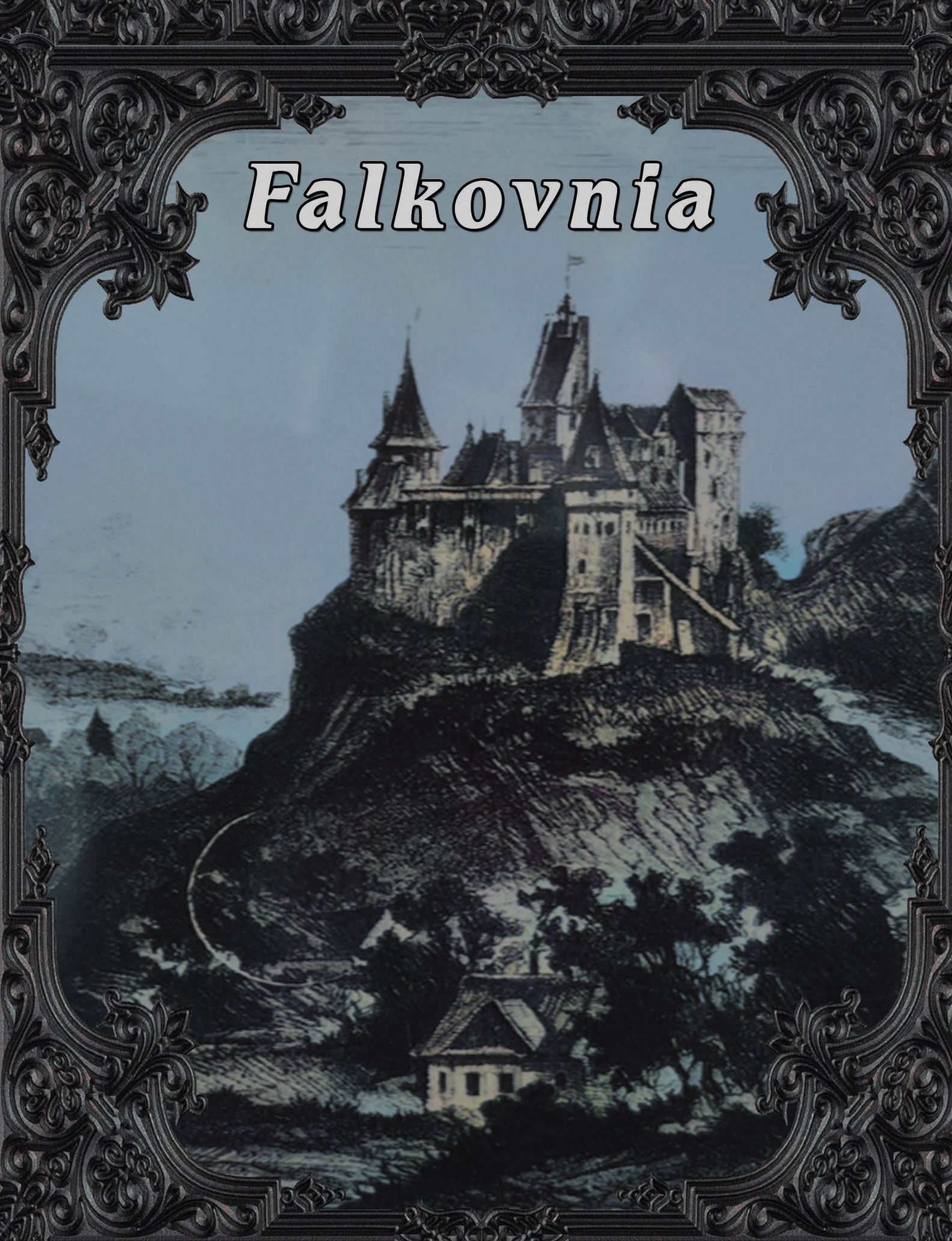
Regional Effects:

Dementlieu is affected by Dominic's presence, which creates the following effects:

Anyone who has lived in Dementlieu for more than a year is obedient to Dominic. They automatically fail any saving throws against Dominic's suggestion and domination abilities. They gain advantage on saving throws against all charm effects from any other source. The people who live in Dementlieu spend the majority of their time trying to manipulate or coerce others.

Dominic seals off his domain through the use of mirages and illusions. When a creature that wishes to leave stands at the border, they see Dementlieu both in front and behind them, and no matter which way they move, they find themselves moving back somewhere into the domain, though they might not notice this at first. Dominic must be aware of the creature leaving to use this ability. At the seashore, the Sea of Sorrows disappears and any ships are lost in a mist until the borders are opened again.

Falkovnia



Falkovnia



Falkovnia draws upon several sources of inspiration. The main source is the story of the actual Dracula of history, i.e. the man known as Vlad Dracul (the Son of the Dragon), Vlad III, or most infamously, Vlad the Impaler. Along with this are inspirations that hail from the fascist regimes of both Hitler and Stalin (in the way that he suppresses the populace of Falkovnia). Finally, and most well-hidden is his inspiration from Alexander the Great, in his insatiable lust for conquest. The quote (which, incidentally isn't correct) that sums up Vlad Drakov is the one that Hans Gruber mentions in Die Hard: "And when Alexander saw the breadth of his domain, he wept, for there were no more worlds to conquer." — Here though, Vlad is even more frustrated. He can SEE the domains around him, but he cannot ever conquer them. Adventures in Falkovnia should run into these points. The populace should be oppressed by the military, with everyone being a potential recruit. They're suspicious of everyone, and try to avoid attracting the attention of the soldiers, who are above them in status. The masses are treated little better than slaves, and all their labor is owned by the state (and the state IS Vlad Drakov). But they're so indoctrinated into a cult of hatred, that they hate and fear foreigners, outsiders, and those of other races, seeing themselves as inherently superior, despite their harsh lot in life. This should be evident in all interactions with the natives of Falkovnia. Furthermore, the heroes should constantly be reminded of the Hawk's cruelty and find that all lawbreakers are punished harshly, with even relatively minor infractions being punished with impalement. The populace is poor, overworked, and underfed, in spite of the fertility of the land around them. Only the barest minimum of food is distributed to the locals, while everything else is exported to the domains around Falkovnia, in return for the coin that the Kingfuhrer required to keep his war machines running.

Falkovnia



*"History has shown there are no invincible armies."
~Joseph Stalin*

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, marsh and plains
Year Formed:	690 BC
Population:	64,000
Races (%):	Humans 93%, Halflings 2%, Half-Elves 2%, Gnomes 1%, Elves 1%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Balok, Darkonese, Dwarven, Elven, Falkovnian, Gnome, Halfling, Lamordian, Mordentish
Religions:	Hala, Ezra (no official state religion — Falkovnians generally do not believe in an after life)
Government:	Military Despotism
Ruler(s):	Kingfuhrer Vlad Drakov
Darklord(s):	Vlad Drakov
Nationality:	Falkovnian
Analog:	Transylvania (mixed with inspiration from Germany and Russia)

Local Fauna:

Falkovnia teems with wildlife, though there are few if any, monsters native to the domain. Beasts of all kinds flourish here, with many growing to extreme sizes, becoming extremely vicious as a result. They remain natural (if dangerous) however. In particular, deer, boars, and ermine are hunted here (the first two for their meat, the latter for their warm coat). Wolves and bears can be found here too, though as with other animals they sometimes reach an extreme size, known to sages as Dire creatures. Hunting birds are extremely common here as well, especially hawks and falcons. Crows and ravens are a common sight in the domain, due to the proliferation of the unburied dead — a result of the harsh laws of the domain. They're so common and so associated with the dead that they feast upon, that the populace sometimes refers to them as the "dead birds". Unique among the hunting birds of Falkovnia are the zweifalk — a species of vicious two-headed hunting falcons, whose favorite tactic is to rip out the eyes of their prey — a tactic which the Talons of the Hawk often use during one of their "escaped slave hunts".

Falkovnia

Local Flora:

Tragically, for the local populace, the countryside is truly beautiful. As with the local fauna, the flora of Falkovnia grows strong, wild, and tall. The forest consists mostly of massive older trees, such as oak, beech, cherry, spruce, and some pine. The broadleaves tend to dominate, but the pines (and other evergreen trees) are far more common in the eastern and northern parts of the domain. Strangely, no matter where they're originally from, all trees grown in Falkovnia have a strange black bark, though this does not change the color of the lumber itself. Beyond the trees, the land is covered in choking vines and creepers, in the areas where the populace doesn't venture often. However, while the land is covered in lush forests, it is mostly known for its rich crops. While the fields themselves are relatively small compared to the size of Falkovnia and its forests, they are incredibly fertile and grow far more crops than Falkovnia needs to feed its own people. Many therefore call Falkovnia the "Breadbasket of the Core" and imagine it as lush fields stretching from horizon to horizon, but this is not so.

Native Horrors

One type of "monster" that is common in Falkovnia though, are the ones that could in theory be classified as "animals". These are things like hippogriffs, griffons, and owlbears. All of them tend to have animal intelligence and can be avoided with caution. However, while the countryside is relatively safe, the same cannot be said for the teeming masses of humanity that call Falkovnia's settlements home. These places are home to all kinds of shapechangers, from doppelgangers and lycanthropes to humanoid undead and hags. Anything that can hide its presence and at least pass as human can be found here. There are two exceptions to this: The Spawn of the Lizard, who have encamped between Morfenzi and Aerie. This group of kobolds is led by a large and vicious specimen called the Basilisk. The Spawn of the Lizard has proven to be a thorn in the side of the Hawk himself, sometimes waylaying his soldiers and using guerilla tactics against his forces. Generally speaking, they're a minor threat, but they remain one of the most effective resistance movements in the country. No one is sure what is the cause of the other problem: a strange mutating disease known as the Blight. Some Falkovnians tell tales of the Green Maiden, a beautiful fey creature, citing it as the source of the disease. It warps the creatures infested with it into an unimaginable horror of eyes, tentacles, mouths, and worse – all while retaining only the slightest recognizable connection to its original appearance.

Terrain type

Anyone visiting Falkovnia will likely first note the beauty of the land. The trees are tall, strong, and plentiful. The grass is green and lush, and the crops are strong. The rivers flow deep and strong as well. Had these been any place else, Falkovnia would be a godsend of resources for a generous ruler. The heartland, around Blacksoil Vale, is covered in crops, making it a true bread-basket for many domains (though not for its own citizens). Falkovnia has a few marshes that can be treacherous for people, but mostly the land is safe in and of itself. The weather is temperate, but uncomfortably warm in the summer, filled with aggressive bees and wasps that swarm, especially around bodies of water. Locals also like to complain that it rains a lot, but this is far less common than they say, and generally, the weather is ideal for growing crops. Occasional storms rage the country at times, and these are very powerful, and wise travelers make sure that they seek cover before it breaks.

Important Landmarks

Castle Draccipetri

Draccipetri is Vlad Drakov's main castle. It is a foreboding and intimidating construction of stone, one that towers above the nearby city of Lekar. The castle is squat and ugly, built more for the purpose of dominating the land around it than anything else.

It is located on an island, connected to the mainland by a bridge, making its sole entrance easily defensible. No maps of the castle exist anywhere in Falkovnia, and any that are rumored to have surfaced in the Core will be sought out by agents of Drakov and destroyed. What is common knowledge is that the building is steeped deeply in the atrocities committed by Vlad Drakov and his soldiers, as every night, Drakov sits in the main courtyard, eating his evening meal, while music plays from a gallery above. All accompanied by the screams of impaled criminals from around the realm – brought here, specifically for the entertainment of the Kingfuhrer.

The only thing that the inhabitants of Lekar appreciate of this, is that at least it's not as bad as the city of Silbervas, which is the home of Silberkopf, Drakov's summer palace. At least in Lekar, they can't hear the screams.

Selberhas Aerie

Located in Aerie, this huge stone spire (500 feet in diameter and over 60 feet tall) towers above the city around it. A set of tall narrow steps leads from the bottom of the spire to the jagged outcrops at the top, but

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while the landmark makes the locals feel ill-at-ease, no one knows what it was originally used for or why. However, every six hours, the city guards check that the gates to Crucea Park (where the Selberhas Aerie is located) are locked – ensuring the safety of the populace.

Those who claim to be able to see into the spirit world report that numerous ethereal doorways lead off from the stairs surrounding the spire, and into it. But these are not visible to the naked eye, and no one has been allowed into Crucea Park for decades.

Silberkopf

Silberkopf is Drakov's summer residence, sitting on the edge of Lake Kriegsvogel near Silbervas. The palace is beautiful, looking more like what an outlander would find in decadent Dementlieu than in stoic and down-trodden Falkovnia. Unfortunately, for the inhabitants of Silbervas, the REAL centerpiece of Silberkopf is not its magnificent appearance, but the generous acoustics of the main court, that allows the screams of the executed to be heard all over the city, rather than just within the walls of the compound.

Towns and villages:

Aerie

Aerie is the southernmost city of Falkovnia, and in comparison to the others, it is positively open and welcoming, being far more cosmopolitan than the rest of them. It is still a Falkovnian city, despite its focus on trade, and the Stadtfuhrer Igor Feiggein is constantly coming up with new and inventive methods of cruelty to lawbreakers. Only the combined efforts of the city's Wachekapitan and Handelleutenant (trade lieutenant) keep Igor from going overboard. This means that Aerie still completes its shipments of prisoners to Draccipetri while keeping it open and (somewhat) inviting to visiting merchants. Aerie lives up to its name in that it is far more spacious than other Falkovnian cities, with little of the closed-in and brooding feeling that the other towns are mired in. However, it is still filled with dangerous alleys and shadowy warrens that are home to thieves, beggars, and worse.

Grashen Falls

Grashen Falls is a small village located near a waterfall where the Grashen River meets the Drogach River. Its sole claim to fame (or infamy) is that it was once haunted by a succubus that has since moved on from Falkovnia to prey upon the more sophisticated domains of Borca, Dementlieu, and Richemulot.

Lekar

Lekar is the capital of Falkovnia and the seat of Draccipetri. It is a large walled city with a population of nearly 16,000. While more urban than most of the other cities of Falkovnia (and having a population of more non-humans than the other cities), it is also far more subdued. The soldiers and officers that are stationed here know that they are under the watchful eye of Vlad Drakov himself, and as a result, they're much harsher in their enforcement of his laws than anywhere else in the domain. This results in nearly a quarter of the city being in a state of ruin and ashes, after the various punishments and pogroms of the soldiers. The city itself is built with an eye for defense, with each of the city's districts walled off separately, though this is more often used as a means of quarantining and detaining parts of the civilian population by the soldiers, than for defense. In fact, apart from Drakov's own campaign when he conquered the domain, Lekar has never fallen to enemy hands, nor even been threatened. Lekar is also home to a large number of vampires that hide under the protective cloak of the Slumlord Vladimir Ludzig, who owns a large portion of the buildings in Lekar, all with the implied protection of the Drakov family. Lekar is also home to the Radiant Tower – the only place in Falkovnia that is openly receptive to practitioners of arcane magic. Drakov innately distrusts magic but has in recent years realized that he needs such methods to combat the lords and ladies surrounding him, so while the tower in years past was a dilapidated ruin, today its white walls rise above the city, striking even more fear into the populace than in the past.

Morfenzi

Before the Grand Conjunction, Morfenzi (or Butcher's Burg as it is nicknamed) was far more important than today, as it served as a trade hub for much of the eastward trade from Falkovnia. Now instead it sits on the edge of the Shadow Rift, diminishing a little in trade importance every day. Fortunately for Morfenzi, it is unlikely to ever fade entirely from prominence in Falkovnia, even if its influence is diminished, for the reason that almost all Falkovnian livestock is slaughtered here, in one of the many abattoirs that fill the city. It is named Butcher's Burg for this simple reason. The region is also home to the finest livestock in all of Falkovnia and the Northern Core. The amount of livestock that passes through Morfenzi has led to a local custom of bringing animal totems out into the streets in the morning, to ensure that the animals stay calm when being brought to the butcher's block. At night they're taken back into the houses and placed in positions of honor to placate the spirits themselves. The vast amounts of animals being butchered in Morfenzi

Falkovnia

mean that the city is constantly surrounded by a miasma of death, with vast mounds of dung and animal blood clogging the streets, while the stench of tanneries fills the air. All this is coupled with enormous clouds of fat flies that are a constant reminder of the city's claim to fame. These stinking mounds and the amount of animal refuse in the city lead to rampant diseases in the town, as its aging drainage system cannot possibly keep up with the sheer amount of industrious waste. That is of little concern to the local government, as they are only interested in keeping up or increasing production further.

Rumors persist of a creature that lives underneath the city, the Dark Lurker of Morfenzi. Supposedly the creature has a humanoid form and comes out at night to prowl, but no one knows for certain. As such, Stadtfuehrer Weistocht Theodorn has put out the call for experienced monster hunters to take care of the creature, as the local soldiers are incapable of containing the threat.

Silbervas

Silbervas is the "Jewel of Falkovnia". Unlike the militaristic cities of Falkovnia, Silbervas looks more like something that you'd find in Dementlieu or Richemulot. Its walls remain thick and sturdy, but they are white and have artistic crenellations, rather than simply being for defense.

Silbervas is also the unfortunate home to Silberkopf (described above), and people here have learned to turn a deaf ear to the screams coming from Drakov's palace. The screams are at their worst around dinner time, as new victims are impaled for Drakov's entertainment.

Holding 6,000 people, Silbervas is dependent on the fishing that can be found in the nearby lake Kriegvogel. Recently, the fishermen have been worried about a monstrous creature lurking in the depths of Kriegvogel. Seen only once, it resembles a great grey eel and is referred to as the Grey Wyrms, but Drakov has so far stalled any investigation into this.

Stangengrad

Stangengrad lies close to the Falkovnian border with Darkon. And it is by far the most restrictive city in Falkovnia, which, for a military domain, says a lot. It is in a constant state of curfew and readiness for warfare. The Stangengrad Military Academy calls the city home as well, and it is filled with more soldiers than any other city in Falkovnia.

Surrounded by strong stone walls, the city is a hotbed of activity at any time of day, building war machines for Drakov's next incursions, while blacksmiths hammer out weapons and armor for his armies. It is also home to some of the strangest sites in Falkovnia, including the Tower of Horns (a building that was locked up decades ago – no one currently knows what lives inside. But every night, at the start of every hour, horns sound from the tower, echoing across the city).

Nothing is stranger than the Gears. Sitting inside a warehouse in the south quarter of Stangengrad, it is bigger than most houses, a hissing, clanking, noisy square block of machinery that no one knows what it does. Some believe it's a dormant clockwork monstrosity of some sort, others that it's a faulty war machine of Drakov's fiendish imagination, or that it's a doomsday clock counting down to the end of the world. No one knows for sure, but speculations run rampant. Stangengrad also holds the distinction of having the highest-ranking female officer in the Falkovnian army serving there, Wachekapitan Lana Dusklicht (none have reached the rank of Falkenfuhrer or Talon, the personal bodyguard/company of Drakov himself). In patriarchal Falkovnia, that is no small feat indeed, and evidence of the woman's ambition, ruthlessness, and efficiency.

Neighboring domain(s):

Borca
Darkon
Dementlieu
Lamordia
Richemulot
The Shadow Rift

Fun Fact

Falkovnians marry very young, often as young as 12 or 13, due to the extremely short lifespan that most Falkovnians face. This also ties into a particularly despicable Falkovnian custom, that of the "right of the first night". For a couple to be legally married in Falkovnia, they must go to a local brandtoffizir (or a ranking military officer), hand over some legal papers, and pay 1 gold piece. The paperwork is then processed, which takes roughly a week. After this, the Falkovnians normally marry in a quiet, personal gathering. The "right of the first night" can then be evoked by any Falkovnian ranking officer, giving them the judicial right to spend the first night with the bride. And Vlad Drakov often partakes in this himself, saving the most beautiful brides for himself. This has led to Drakov having the largest extended family of any darklord, even if most of these bastards are never recognized officially.

Falkovnia

"I am the fury of the thunderstorm. I am the conqueror. One day I will ride across this land and force these petty lords to kneel before me and exclaim my greatness. I will listen to them plead as I strip the flesh from their bones. I will create a forest of my impaled enemies and dip my bread in their blood."

~Vlad Drakov

"I have no idea who that person is."

~Azalin Rex

Vlad is a large human in his mid eighties. Despite his advanced age, he has the health and physical vigor of a warrior half his age. His unkempt hair is still light brown and is only starting to turn grey at the temples. Vlad is always armed and armored, and never wears a crown. The symbol of his authority is a black cape, trimmed with winter wolf fur, held together with a silver clasp in the shape of a screaming eagle. Vlad's paranoia is all encompassing. He regularly slaughters his own advisors and bodyguards for minor failures or imagined slights.

Background: Vlad started his life as a mercenary on a continent far from the Domains of Dread.. Little is known about Vlad's childhood, and none are keen to ask. Vlad's history seems to begin when he became a mercenary for the followers of the cruel god, Hith. Vlad's ruthless nature and obvious intelligence served him well as a mercenary, and soon his coffers were overflowing with gold and his services in demand all across the continent. Despite this, Vlad felt empty. His clients fought for his services and paid him well, but they looked down on him as little more than a rabid dog. This scorn drove Vlad to vent his fury on his victims, engaging in ever greater acts of cruelty and torture. After decades of bathing in the blood of innocents, he was pulled into Ravenloft by the Dark Powers. After one particularly long night of torture and mutilation, Vlad and his men found themselves in Darkon, the realm of Azalin the lich.

Vlad tried to conquer Darkon, severely underestimating the lich lord of the realm and his defenses. As Vlad's troops were slain by hordes of undead, they rose as zombies and joined the endless ranks of the enemy. Vlad's considerable experience and tactical brilliance accounted for nothing and his troops fell before the relentless attacks of the undead. Before he knew what had happened, he was pushed back into the mists surrounding Darkon.

Current Sketch: Vlad rules his domain with an iron fist. His men are fiercely loyal and follow his commands to the letter. Even the impossible ones. Despite this, Vlad feels hollow. Falkovnia is a small realm and Vlad yearns to conquer. This is impossible, as all of his neighbors within Ravenloft are far more powerful than he. Vlad has attempted to invade Darkon no fewer than five times over the decades and been repulsed with heavy losses every time. Azalin hasn't even bothered to send an envoy demanding an end to the attacks or asking for peace. It seems no matter what Vlad does, Azalin hasn't even noticed him. Vlad takes this out on the people of his domain. He demands at least one execution a day, and eats his dinner while watching his victim being tortured to death. On special occasions Vlad will have as many as forty people executed. His favorite method is impalement, but Vlad is always on the lookout for fascinating new ways to slowly and painfully kill. Falkovnia is the breadbasket of the Domains of Dread, and Vlad could starve the armies of his neighbors by the simple act of just not sending them grain. Vlad will never even consider this, as to his mind that is how a coward conquers.

Darklord's Tactics: Vlad has been fighting longer than most people have been alive. Intelligent and ruthless in the extreme, no trick is too dirty, no tactic too underhanded. Vlad will regularly sacrifice men for tactical advantage, to save his own life, or because he wants to watch them die.

Borders: Vlad cannot seal the borders of his domain.

Vlad Drakov's Lair: Castle Draccipetri

Castle Draccipetri is a massive edifice that sits outside the city of Lekar. Castle Draccipetri's thick walls and tall towers are covered in spikes, hooks and cages. Commoners and nobles alike are impaled on the hooks or spikes and left to die. Others are locked in the cages and left to succumb to exposure and starvation. Screams rebound from the stone walls and high towers. The walls, once light grey, have become dark with dried blood. Guards line the walls day and night, as Vlad is always ready for an attack. Local legend says that you only walk through the gates to the castle once. Vlad Drakov encountered in his lair has a challenge rating of 16 (15,000 XP)

Vlad Drakov



Vlad Drakov

Medium human, neutral evil

Armor Class 23 (plate mail + 3, shield +3)

Hit Points 158 (15d10 + 75)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 21 (+5) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 20 (+5) **INT** 16 (+3) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +10, Wis +6, Cha +9

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +11, Insight +7, Intimidation +10, Investigation +9, Perception +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, prone

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Falkovnian, Darkonese, Mordentish

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Rod of Flailing +3. Vlad keeps the rod of flailing in a sheath in his belt. While the rod is closed it counts as a light mace +3 that inflicts plus 1d8 necrotic damage. As a bonus action Vlad can depress a button on the shaft and turn the rod into a flail +3 that inflicts plus 1d8 necrotic damage. Vlad can use a bonus action to depress a second button on the shaft that gives the flail +3 reach ability. The rod of flailing +3 is attuned to Vlad's thoughts and emotion and can appear in his hand with a thought. Vlad does not need to use an action to draw the rod. If Vlad drops the rod it returns to his hand at the start of his next turn.

Hand Axe of Throwing. The magical hand axe can be thrown as a normal hand axe and returns to Vlad as soon as it strikes or misses the target. The hand axe of throwing twists around obstacles to strike its target, ignoring cover.

Alert. Vlad is paranoid in the extreme and expects a threat round every corner. Vlad has +5 to initiative rolls and cannot be surprised.

Arcane Hatred. Despite using magic items himself, Vlad hates magic and magic users. He will target magic users first in combat and the land grants him advantage on all saving throws versus spells and spell-like effects.

Limited Magic Immunity. Vlad is immune to any spell of 3rd level or lower. Vlad cannot voluntarily suppress this ability, even against beneficial spells.

Rule through Fear. Vlad doesn't care if his minions are afraid of his enemies, as long as they fear him more. If an ally of Vlad's within 10 feet becomes frightened they take 5 (1d10) psychic damage and they become immune to the frightened condition for 24 hours.

Feeding off the Common Folk: If Vlad is reduced to 0 hit points then his body dies. He will be reborn with full hit points in his castle's bed chambers 24 hours later. The only way to kill Vlad permanently is to convince the people of Falkovnia to rise up and take back their land. Vlad's constant aura of fear, his massive army of loyal guards, and the stifling of any hope makes this an impossible task. A commoner must inflict at least 100 points of damage in melee combat to Vlad for Vlad to permanently die.

Sense Disruption. Vlad senses any disruption to his land, such as those created by the spellcasting of a paladin or the reality wrinkle of a fiend or celestial creature. Vlad immediately knows the approximate direction of the disruption but not exact location.

Boots of Speed: While Vlad wears these boots, he can use a Bonus Action and click the boots' heels together. If he does so, the boots double his walking speed, and any creature that makes an opportunity Attack against him has disadvantage on the Attack roll. If Vlad clicks his heels together again, he ends the Effect. When the boots' property has been used for a total of 10 minutes, the magic ceases to function until Vlad finishes a Long Rest.

Fighter's Abilities: Vlad is a 15th-level fighter. He can use the following Fighter traits, Second Wind and Action Surge once before needing to take a long rest.

Indomitable: Vlad can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll. Vlad can use this feature twice between long rests.

Charger: When Vlad uses his action to Dash, he can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack or to shove a creature. If he moves at least 10 feet in a straight line immediately before taking this bonus action, he either gains a +5 bonus to the attack's damage roll (if he chooses to make a melee attack and hit) or push the target up to 10 feet away from him (if he chooses to shove and he succeeds).

Vlad Drakov

Combat Superiority:

-Maneuvers. Vlad knows 10 maneuvers. He can use only one maneuver per attack. He knows the following maneuvers which are explained in the fighter's martial archetype: Battle Master, PHB 72pg: Bait and Switch, Disarming Attack, Distracting Strike, Feinting Attack, Lunging Attack, Precision Attack, Quick Toss, Sweeping Attack, Trip Attack Commander's Strike.

-Superiority Dice. Vlad has six superiority dice, which are d10s. A superiority die is expended when he uses it. Vlad regains all of his expended superiority dice when he finishes a short or long rest.

-Saving Throws. Some of Vlad's maneuvers require his target to make a saving throw to resist the maneuver's effects. The saving throw DC is 19.

Thrown Weapon Fighting: Vlad can draw a weapon that has the thrown property as part of the attack he makes with the weapon. In addition, when he hits with a ranged attack using a thrown weapon, he gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Vlad Drakov uses his aura of dread ability and makes 3 attacks with his rod of flailing +3 or hand axe of throwing or three ranged attacks with his hand axe of throwing.

Aura of Dread. Each creature of Vlad Drakov's choice within 50 feet and that is aware of Vlad Drakov must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. That creature is immune to this ability for 24 hours.

Rod of Flailing +3. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 or 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Hand Axe of Throwing. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Legendary Actions

Vlad Drakov can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Vlad Drakov regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Rod of Flailing +3. Vlad makes one attack with his Rod of Flailing +3.

Tactical Repositioning. Vlad and up to three allies within 30 feet of him can move up to 30 feet. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Potion of Greater Healing (2 actions). Vlad drinks a potion and heals 20 (8d4) hit points.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Vlad Drakov can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

The crossbowmen that line the walls pepper Vlad's enemies with bolts. Every enemy within 30 feet of Vlad must make a DC 18 dexterity check. They take 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

The spikes that line the walls of several of the floors in the inside of Castle Falkovnia twist and lengthen to impale a creature Vlad chooses with 100 feet. That creature must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. Creatures that fail take 40 (10d8) piercing damage and are grappled until initiative count 20 of the following round.

Horns of battle fill the air. Vlad and any allies within 30 feet fight with renewed vigor. Vlad and his allies make attack rolls and saving throws with advantage until initiative count 20 of the following round.

Vlad Drakov can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Significant Possessions:

Belt of Giant Strength, Rod of Flailing +3, Boots of Speed, Hand Axe of Throwing, Plate mail + 3, Shield +3



Keening



Keening



To visit Keening is to look upon the despair of a woman who has lost her child. The desolate lands, and the woman screaming out her anguish. One who is willing to do anything to restore that which is lost, and who, in her obsession, has lost all semblance of sanity. One who in her madness has taken to inflicting that same loss, that same devastation, upon anyone who enters her realm bearing a child. Those who travel here are doomed. Those who come here, prepared, face fates even worse than that in the afterlife. Adventures in Keening should focus on sorrow and loss. Coming here, without being willing to sacrifice an orphan is to invite death. People only rarely come here, and only then if they believe that they can find something of interest in the ruins of civilization. Perhaps the heroes have come here to find information that was lost when Tristessa fell, or perhaps they're seeking information on the Spider Queen's worshippers. If Tristessa could be made to listen to reason, she could prove a font of great knowledge. Of course, convincing an insane banshee of this is no easy task. Or perhaps they simply come here to plunder the riches in the underground portions of Mount Lament, left behind when everyone died.

*"In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune"
~Edgar Allan Poe, "The Bells"*

Culture Level:

Remnants of a Chivalric culture (mostly attire worn by the undead and architecture). The undead of Marbh-Cathair range anywhere from Stone Age to Medieval.

Climate & Terrain:

Temperate, mountains

Year Formed:

588 BC

Population:

970 undead (in Marbh-Cathair), Unknown (elsewhere)

Races:

Humans 90%, Halflings 4%, Gnomes 2%, Half-Elves 1%, Elves 1%, Dwarves 1%, Other 1% (these are the numbers for the undead in Marbh-Cathair, or at least were before they died)

Languages:

Common, Darkonese, plus whatever languages they spoke while alive.

Widderribhinn speak Arak or Sylvan

Religions:

None, though the widderribhinn worship the Spider Queen

Government:

None

Ruler(s):

Tristessa

Darklord(s):

Tristessa

Nationality:

None anymore

Analog:

A devastated Ireland, but Keening has no direct real-world analog

Local Fauna:

There are no living animals in Keening. Any brought in, even from outside, try to leave as soon as possible. Those that are not able to leave end up panicking and seemingly dying from fright. The only creatures encountered within the borders of Keening are the undead. Most of these are gathered in the village of Marbh-Cathair (whose name means City of the Dead in the Arak language), all of whom died during the Scourge of Arak that laid waste to the land, and created Keening. The ones living here are skeletons — seemingly intelligent, though they do not respond to interactions with the living. Later arrivals — those who die in Keening subsequently — rise up as zombies. Again, intelligent, but unable or unwilling to interact with the living. Finally there are the widderribhinn, a kind of fey undead. These are all incorporeal, and resemble ghosts. They work as the ears and eyes of Tristessa within her domain, and while they do not

Keening

Keening

normally attack the living, they do not ignore them like the inhabitants of Marbh-Cathair. They instead stop and interrogate them as they go about their business. After the interrogations they either let the living continue on their journeys, or they attack. There seems to be no rhyme nor reason behind which outcome it is, though those who bring a new-born child with them are inevitably brought to Tristessa. The child is never hurt by these undead (presumably because they'll be punished by Tristessa herself), though if the guardians of the child do not act as the undead bid, they will be slaughtered.

Local Flora:

Keening has no fauna to speak of as such, especially at the higher elevations of Mt. Lament. Only the lower slopes have a yellow, almost-dead, type of grass, and only the hardiest of lichens and mosses grow here under whatever feeble sunlight makes it through the persistent cloud cover.

On these lower steps it is worth looking out for two types of moss however, as these, while edible, are dangerous to the unwary. The first is wasp sting moss, which is a pale green and yellow patch of moss that in tiny amounts contains enough nutrients to sustain an average human. Unfortunately harvesting the moss (or even just sticking a hand into it by accident), will embed tens of crystalized needles into any exposed flesh. (A creature touching wasp sting moss must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 4 (1d8) piercing damage and is poisoned for 24 hours. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and isn't poisoned. Ingesting it is safe, if cooked — if eaten raw, the DC increases to 14, and it deals 8 (2d8) piercing damage.)

The other danger to be aware of is trollflesh spores. These are a small deformed brown mushroom that grows in patches between three and five feet across. Anyone disturbing a patch (such as by walking through it), runs the risk of going mad from delusions. Each patch takes a week to regrow its spores, so if it is disturbed by one creature, it is safe to disturb for up to seven days, after which the spores have matured once more. (Anyone disturbing a patch of trollflesh spores must make a DC 14 saving throw. On a success nothing happens. On a failure, the creature is affected, and after a week starts to develop the effects of infinite madness (as per page 260 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*—the *Dungeon Master* should choose a specific madness that fits the character, rather than rolling one at random. The nature of Keening means that most types of madness developed here will be

dangerous, either to the victim or those around them). Apart from these two, there is only one more plant of note in Keening — a small delicate flower known as wilting roeby, which grows on the border of Keening and Tepest. It is a pretty little yellow flower, with a sweet scent. However, it instantly wilts when brought within ten feet of the undead — i.e. not many specimens survive further into Keening.

Native Horrors

Keening is overrun with undead. No other monsters stand a chance here. Most undead creatures are either those who died during the Scouring (turning into skeletons) or those who came later (turning into zombies). A few of the original population, worshipers of the Spider Queen were turned into wights, and these are the most powerful of Tristessa's servants. They are not her favored ones though. That "honor" befalls her crawling claws and Ghulivavos. Thousands of tiny hands and the souls of the dead babies, created from those children that died in her embrace, after being given to her by unscrupulous people seeking passage through Keening. They are her favorites, but she wails pitifully whenever she sees them.

Terrain type

Keening consists mainly of Mount Lament that rises thousands of feet above the surrounding lands. A few canyons break the monotony of the singular mountain, but there is nothing else to hold the interest of the living. No trees grow here to break the wind, and no natural phenomena break the tediousness of the grey landscape.

Important Landmarks

Mount Lament

Mount Lament is one of the highest peaks of the Core, standing at 4,730 feet. It is also the home of Tristessa, the undisputed ruler of Keening, even if she cares little for its governance.

While Mount Lament is devoid of all life on the surface, a life of sorts still takes place in the caverns and tunnels underneath it. There, before the Scourge, was where the shadow elves lived, and where Tristessa held court. Here she still holds court, in these strangely preserved tunnels — still filled with the tools and treasures of those that mysteriously vanished without joining the ranks of the undead. Here, every night, Rutternettle, Tristessa's minstrel (the single creature she seems to favor) retells her story to her, rekindling her rage with each telling.

Keening

Incidentally there is one place on Mount Lament that Tristessa wants to avoid, but finds herself drawn to at least once per day. This spot is where she and her child were left to die in sunlight. Those that explore here can still find the stakes stuck in the ground — but woe betide anyone there when Tristessa comes, as they will suffer greatly for their trespassing.

River of Tears and Kryder River

The River of Tears starts at Mount Nirka in southeastern Darkon in the Mountains of Misery, and from there runs into the northernmost part Keening, but unfortunately even its waters fail to bring life to the area around it. Those who live outside Keening, but are dependent upon the waters of the river are just happy that it does not carry death with it, from inside the cursed domain.

The Kryder River meanwhile starts in Keening and flows west into the Shadow Rift, touching no other domain on its journey. From there it disappears into the shadows beneath, vanishing from view. It is generally believed, though not confirmed, that this is the source of the Hidden River in the Shadow Rift. Certainly, it is part of the cascades, though no one knows which one.

Marbh-Cathair

The city of the dead is populated by literally that: the dead. Where normal people once lived, now skeletons relive their final days. When the Scourge struck, all the Arakans who lived there died an agonizing death as the sand flensed the skin and flesh from their bones. The very mountain that they lived on was ripped apart and flung far to the west, and the buildings took a battering, but emerged standing.

Somehow, the inhabitants of Marbh-Cathair survived — in a sense. Their consciousnesses were caught in their bones, and they “live” now in their city. They survive in an odd half-life though, as if part of them realizes that the world around them still moves — they’ll casually greet each other, and guards will acknowledge the living coming into town, but they will not realize that they are trying to till soil that no longer grows crops, or that their hands may hold no tools. They might gaze into the obscured sun, and wipe the non-existent sweat from their brows, or they might patrol the gates, protecting them from nothing. One thing to note is that none of the animals seem to have suffered in this calamity, as they all died — only humans “survived”. As such, it’s not impossible to see a skeletal coachman trying to move his long dead (but somehow still rotting, as if time stood still) horse, or see a child or adult stroking a long dead pet as if it was merely having a nap. And all of this happens without a sound, as none of the dead can speak, though they sometimes pantomime talking.

There is one point in time where they all make a sound though. At sunrise each day, they return to the exact spot that they stood on the morning of the Scourge in 588 BC. When dawn hits the village, all of the inhabitants raise their faces to the sky and unleash a scream of agony. Any living creature within Marbh-Cathair or within 100 feet of its walls must make a DC 18 Fortitude Saving Throw or be permanently deafened. This has been named the Dawn Scream.

A single living inhabitant lives in Marbh-Cathair, an insane and deaf former member of the Knights of the Eternal Order. Unwald Rottennail had traveled here with his companions in the hopes of purging the undead from Keening, believing them to be a threat. They were slaughtered to the last man, and Unwald’s mind broke from the stress. Now he sees the inhabitants of Marbh-Cathair as his parishioners and the surprisingly powerful cleric joins them in the Dawn Scream.

Neighboring domain(s):

Darkon
Tepest
The Shadow Rift

Fun Fact:

Tristessa slowly draws in undead from the lands around Keening. In particular, since her arrival, there has been a disturbing rise in fey who become undead — joining her domain as part of the Black Troopings — marches of undead through civilized lands that melt away during the day, only to continue during the night.



Tristessa

"She came out of nowhere. She just appeared in the middle of camp, begging us for aid.

She was beautiful and seemed so sad. Her face was a mask of despair. Her shoulders hooked with sobs. She was missing her baby. How could we refuse to help a mother look for her child?

Things went well until we made it to the mountain. Then the screaming started. I watched Johann turn from a young man of barely twenty years to a withered corpse in a matter of seconds.

I'm ashamed to admit I ran. I ran from that blasted mountain and I am not going back."

~Lord Galen Montecrue

Tristessa is a tall, slender shadow elf with onyx black skin and white hair that hangs down to her waist. Her hair constantly shifts around her as if blown in a violent storm, while her eyes are obsidian orbs. Tristessa hovers a few inches above the ground, and on the rare occasion the moon hangs over the sky of Keening, anyone unfortunate enough to meet her can see through her. Like all banshees, Tristessa has a deadly wail. Her mouth opens far larger than should be possible as she wails, the sound of an endless well of suffering and loss. Those fortunate enough to meet her and survive will hear her wail in their nightmares for years to come. Most take a sharp needle to their ears, praying it makes the wailing stop. It never does. Tristessa is often mistaken for a drow, but is a shadow fey from a distant world, nearly forgotten by modern scholars. Her people are ancient and powerful, but find the sun's rays deadly.

Background: Tristessa was born in the domain of Arak, a subterranean kingdom of shadow fey. A small but vibrant human kingdom lay above Arak in the surface lands. The Arakans enjoyed toying with the humans, pitting them against each other in endless cruel schemes. Tristessa was the sister of the domain's king, Loht. Things changed when three outsiders entered Arak. The outsiders, drow elves, looked similar to the shadow fey and were comfortable in the cold lightless tunnels the fey called home. Tristessa, Loht, and the shadow fey welcomed the drow into their kingdom, and the three, lost and harried on the surface because of their appearance and obvious inhuman blood, readily accepted. The drow brought their faith in their venomous spider queen, Lolth, with them. The drow quickly began to convert shadow fey to the worship of Lolth, starting the Church of the Spider Queen. In a few months hundreds of shadow fey had converted to the worship of their dark queen. The shadow fey that converted to the worship of Lolth began to resemble the drow that

led the church, their skin often becoming purple or jet black, and they covered themselves in stylized web and spider tattoos. Loht, sensing a threat to his power and seeing the danger of the growing power of the church, decided to act, but the magic of the shadow fey stayed his hand. The oldest law of Arak was called the Law, and Arak and it was sealed with ancient magic. This law forbade any shadow fey from directly slaying another shadow fey. Because of the Law, the politics and fighting of the shadow fey was always subtle. The fey rarely acted directly against each other, working through hired agents and glamoured minions. Although Loht could not move directly against the shadow fey who had fallen to the Church of the Spider Queen, he was free to move against the drow, who were quickly slain. Tristessa took control of the cult and the war became a bitter family feud. For decades the war raged in silence in the kingdom of Arak. Despite her best efforts, Tristessa was slowly losing. She begged Lolth for aid, but the Spider Queen was neither willing nor able to help. As the noose tightened around Tristessa and her remaining followers, Lolth sent Tristessa a miracle. Tristessa gave birth to a baby girl with spider legs. Her followers demanded to know who the father was, the doctrines of the Church of the Spider Queen required the father to be sacrificed to Lolth. Tristessa insisted there was no father and the baby was a gift from Lolth. The cult shattered and Lolth was finally able to wipe the Church of the Spider Queen from his kingdom. After decades of bitter warfare, Lolth had nothing but contempt for his sister. So great was his hatred, he broke the Law of Arak and staked Tristessa and her child out on the slopes of Mount Lament, so they would be turned to ash by the morning sun. As the sun scorched the flesh from her bones and her baby wailed in agony, Tristessa brought down a powerful curse on the kingdom of Arak. A sandstorm descended on the surface kingdom for over a year. When it finally abated, the kingdom, every human, animal, and building was gone, as if they never existed. The Arakans were largely unharmed, but the surface had become a barren wasteland. On the slopes of Mount Lament, a figure stirred. Although she had been burnt by the hated sun and lay inside a terrible sandstorm for a year, Tristessa still moved. Her body was gone and only her hate-filled psychotic spirit remained. In death, she had become a banshee, and the mountain where she had died became her domain. To her horror, Tristessa's child was missing. There was no sign of the child or her body. Tristessa scoured the mountain, but to no avail. Her cries of pain and rage echoed from the slopes of Mount Lament.

Tristessa

Current Sketch: Tristessa has one goal, to find her child. She doesn't care about anything else and eagerly attacks any creatures that dares to step foot on her mountain. Tristessa can sense the presence of any living creature that enters Keening. She will observe them and has approached a few for aid in finding her lost baby. Vistani tribes sometimes kidnap babies and leave them on the slopes of Mount Lament for safe passage across Keening. Tristessa will attempt to take care of the child but she has no way of feeding or even moving the baby. Eventually the child dies of exposure and thirst, sending Tristessa into even greater depths of despair.

Darklord's Tactics: Tristessa attacks anyone that steps foot on the slope of Mount Lament, even if she has asked them for aid in finding her child. Tristessa begins with her wail, which is more powerful than a normal banshee wail. Any one who dies from the wail rises again as undead under her control. Tristessa's touch also warps flesh and rots the soul. She can hear the thoughts of living creatures that get within 30 feet of her and Tristessa will hide in the ground and boulders of her mountain, then emerge just long enough to wail or grab an opponent then disappear. She is completely fearless, as she has already died once and her greatest fear has already come to pass.

Borders: When Tristessa seals the borders, Keening is surrounded by a terrifying howl of lament. Any creature that approaches the border is forced back into the domain. Even creatures that cannot hear can hear this sound. A creature that comes into contact with the wall ages thousands of years in a few seconds and is turned to dust.



Tristessa

Medium undead (humanoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +10, Cha +10

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +10, Insight +10, Intimidation +10, Investigation +8, Perception +10, Religion +8, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances acid, cold, lightning

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

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Abyssal, Common, Darkonese, Draconic, Elvish, Infernal, Sylvan

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Flyby. Tristessa doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Shawl of Resistance. Tristessa gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws and rolls with advantage except when entering an area with sunlight.

Fey Ancestry. Tristessa is immune to magical sleep.

Weaknesses. Tristessa has the following weaknesses:

- Holy water inflicts 2d4 of radiant damage to Tristessa.
- Dispel Evil forces her to return to her lair and prevents her from using the wail ability for 1d4 hours, otherwise it has no other effect.
- While in sunlight, Tristessa has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, takes 1d6 points of radiant damage per turn and she must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, rolling with disadvantage or be unable to use any of her innate spellcasting abilities, for as long as she is exposed to direct sunlight.

Invisible Adversary. Tristessa can cast *invisibility* (as per the spell) on herself at will. When she uses this ability her speed is halved.

Detect Life. Tristessa can magically sense the presence of living creatures within Keening. She knows the general direction they're in but not their exact locations. Tristessa instantly knows the location of any creature that starts climbing Mount Lament.

Incorporeal Movement. Tristessa can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. She takes 11 (2d10) force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

War Caster. Tristessa has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from her, she can use her reaction

Tristessa

to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Shadowform. Tristessa can use an action to transform into a shadow as though using the *shapechange* spell. Tristessa can remain in this form indefinitely if she wishes.

Rejuvenation. If Tristessa is destroyed, she reforms 2d4 days later in the mines of Mount Lament. Some sages believe that this ability can be stopped if Tristessa is reunited with her child.

Aura of Distress. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of Tristessa that can see her, must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom Saving throw or become frightened, drop their weapon(s) and flee in terror for 2d6 turns. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Tristessa is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Tristessa's Aura of Distress for the next 24 hours.

Crippling Deformity. At will, Tristessa can inflict a crippling deformity as part of her withering touch attack. Any body part that meets her fingers warps and twists until it is useless: a face twists until an eye is obscured, a victim's hand becomes fingerless, a foot twists until the character limps with painful slowness. A creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have its maximum hit points be reduced by 1d8 necrotic damage, their Strength and Dexterity by 1d4 and one part of their body (chosen by the DM) become useless. In addition to such effects, the creature becomes incapacitated until the end of its next turn while the deformity takes shape. These effects last only as long as the character is in Keening, but they have a 50% chance of resurfacing if the victim returns to Keening at a later date. These deformities can be removed with a *greater restoration* spell.

Invoke Duplicity (2/Day). Tristessa can create an illusory duplicate of herself. As an action, she creates a perfect illusion of herself that lasts for 1 minute, or until she loses her concentration (as if she were concentrating on a spell). The illusion appears in an unoccupied space that she can see within 30 feet of her. As a bonus action on her turn, she can move the illusion up to 30 feet to a space she can see, but it must remain within 120 feet of her. For the duration, she can cast spells as though she were in the illusion's space, but she must use her own senses. Additionally, when both her and her illusion are within 5 feet of a creature that can see the illusion, she has advantage on attack rolls against that creature, given how distracting the illusion is to the target.

Innate Spellcasting. Tristessa's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *chill touch*, *dancing lights****, *detect magic*, *levitate*, *mage hand*

3/Day each: *cause fear*, *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *ghoul touch*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *suggestion*

1/Day each: *contagion*, *darkness***, *enervation*, *faerie fire***, *vampiric touch*

These spells are altered as follows:

-*dancing lights*: The number of light sources increased by three and each light can be within 60ft of another one instead of 20ft.

-*faerie fire*: 60 ft. cube instead of 20 ft.

-*darkness*: The area of effect can be anywhere from 5 ft. to 30 ft. and shrink or increase with a bonus action.

Tristessa can move these effects at will, and their range is increased by 100 ft. beyond the norm.

Spellcasting. Tristessa is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Tristessa has the following Cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *decompose**, *resistance*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*, *toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *charm person*, *disguise self*, *inflict wounds*, *wrathful smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*, *pass without trace*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *blink*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *spirit guardians*, *spirit shroud*

4th level (3 slots): *death ward*, *dimension door*, *polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *contagion*, *dominate person*, *modify memory*

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (5d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Wail (3/Day). Tristessa releases a mournful wail, provided that she isn't in sunlight. This wail has no effect on constructs and undead. All other creatures within 60 feet of her that can hear her must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops dead immediately and rises as a Ghoul at the end of Tristessa's next turn. On a success, a creature takes 17 (5d6) psychic damage.

In daytime, the wail works differently, a creature takes 17 (5d6) psychic damage and if it fails the Saving throw it is paralyzed for 1 minute, ending the effect on a successful roll at the end of each of its turns.

Legendary Actions

Tristessa can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Tristessa regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Unnerving Gaze. Tristessa makes her face resemble one of the target's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. The creature must succeed on a DC18 Intelligence Saving Throw or take a -1 penalty on attack rolls against Tristessa for 2d4 turns.

Move. Tristessa moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Attack. Tristessa makes a Withering Touch attack.

The image features a highly detailed, dark grey or black ornate border with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns, framing the central content. The background is a dark, atmospheric photograph of an industrial interior, possibly a factory or a large warehouse, with a complex network of dark metal beams and structural supports. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong light source from the right side, creating a bright, golden-yellow glow that illuminates a curved surface in the foreground and casts deep shadows elsewhere. The overall mood is industrial and somewhat somber.

Lamordía

Lamordia

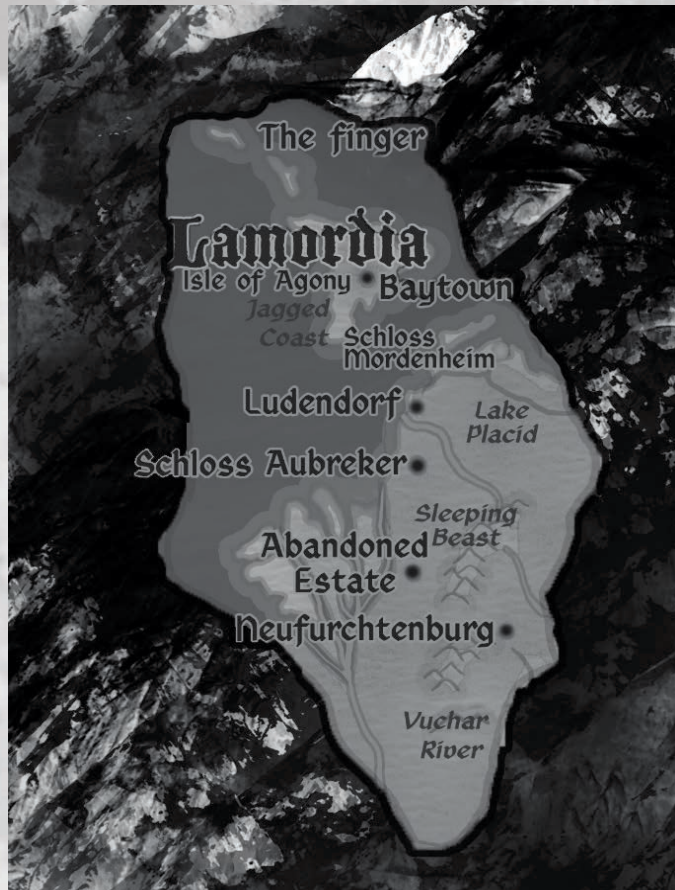


Lamordia is the stronghold of science in Ravenloft. Its people believe in rational thought above all else, to the point where they eschew all forms of religion as superstition and view magic simply as “science that we don’t understand yet”. Ironically this belief has such strength that it affects magic in Lamordia with an effect known as “The Dakj Fe’nunft” (the Dark Reason) where magic is suppressed around a crowd of Lamordians. If in the presence of more than ten Lamordians (and within Lamordia) a spellcaster must make a Concentration check to successfully cast any spell, as the strength of the Lamordian belief tries to dispel the presence of magic. Lamordia is not only the stronghold of science but also of weapon development and medicine. They were the first domain to introduce firearms and have developed medical procedures that students and healers from across the Core come to learn. Vlad Drakov of Falkovnia regards them as an object of hate, as most firearms in the domains surrounding his were supplied by Lamordia. The Lamordians care little about his disregard, as they believe that the dictatorial madman will be defeated by firearms and discipline.

Lamordia as a domain takes its creation from the depths of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein but also takes inspiration from The Island of Dr. Moreau by H.G. Wells. The themes of Lamordia are different to those domains around them, dealing with hubris, the usurpation of the power of gods, and the creation of twisted life. In many ways, it is the epitome of blasphemy – science taking the place of the gods and creating and changing life with the powers granted to those few with the intelligence to do so: Embodied mainly by Victor Mordenheim and Adam. Adventures in Lamordia should show these facts. The Lamordians that the heroes encounter see themselves as intellectually superior, dismissing petty notions of magic and gods. The heroes should face twisted mockeries of life (though importantly, not the undead) with mongrelfolk, flesh golems (but not other types of golems), and many abominations being the primary opponents here. Of course, any run-in with a flesh golem runs the risk of it being one of Adam’s creations, or worse yet, Adam himself. The restoration of life should also be a major theme, but through science, not magic. And ultimately the consequences of failure when such attempts inevitably go wrong.

“Everywhere I see bliss, from which I am irrevocably excluded.”

~Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein.



Culture Level:	Georgian
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, mountains, plains, and swamp
Year Formed:	683 BC
Population:	3,500
Races (%):	Humans 99% Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Darkonese, Dwarven, Falkovnian, Lamordian, Mordentish
Religions:	None
Government:	Hereditary aristocracy (with some settlements run as republics)
Ruler(s):	Baron Vilhelm von Aubreker (who is practically senile), Regent Gerta von Aubreker (designated heir, and ruler in all but name)
Darklord(s):	Adam
Nationality:	Lamordian
Analog:	Weird Science version of Switzerland

Lamordia

Local Fauna:

Lamordia is famous for the thick pelts of its animals, especially those of beaver, polecat, mink, and other small predators. The cold climate of Lamordia and its strong winds means that the fur is thicker than that on animals found elsewhere. All the common animals in colder climates can be found here, such as deer, elk, moose, and boar. The most common predator found in the domain is the wolverine, with the Lamordian variant being particularly fierce and aggressive, to the point where local hunters believe that they feed on something that drives them mad. Lamordia is mostly free of the dangers that infect so many other domains. The undead are unheard of here, as are goblins and lycanthropes. Instead, the forests teemed with unnatural life, dire animals, strange amalgamations of humans and animals, such as the mongrelfolk, and creatures with no set form, like gibbering moutheres and oozes.

Local Flora:

Lamordia is split in two when it comes to its plants. The highlands feature many stands of coniferous trees such as pines, larches, and fir trees, while the lowlands feature oak, beech, and walnut. Almost everywhere is covered in grass, apart from the colder highland tops, that nearly tip into mountain peaks. Many herbs are found in the lowlands as well, but across both the high and lowlands, the visitor to Lamordia will find an astonishing range of toxic and dangerous plants. Local herbalists often gather these and use them for medicine, but locals with fewer scruples often turn these into poisons and sell them outside the domain, especially in Borca and Dementlieu. Special mention must go to the blistercap mushroom, a small hardy mushroom found on the slopes of the Sleeping Beast mountain range. This black mushroom, when ground and mixed with the saliva of the coal toad (which is found on the edges of the dry heaths of the plains) turns it into a virulent poison that causes permanent damage to the nervous system.

Terrain type

The terrain of Lamordia is varied but is dominated by the hills and mountains, with everything else settling in between them and the ocean. The Sleeping Beast mountain range is the largest part of the eastern reaches of the domain and is generally avoided by the Lamordians as their cold peaks hold little of interest, save the blister cap mushrooms and occasional mountain goat. The western part of Lamordia is mostly forested, with some plains and swamps scattered in between, but to the far north-east lies the Finger, a range of islands that the Lamordians surmise are

infected with pirates and dangerous beasts. The Isle of Agony is especially avoided by the Lamordians as they believe that a powerful monster – one that takes human form, resides there and slays all unwelcome visitors.

Important Landmarks

Monastery of the Quickening Thunderbolt

The Monastery is a squat building that sits in an almost inaccessible location in the southern end of the Sleeping Beast. A small group of monks make their home there, never leaving the area of the monastery. Ostensibly, they're attempting to contact their god, Lothurr, a god of storms and lightning – a fact that is often mocked by the Lamordians as being a hopeless quest rooted in superstition. Strangely, all the monks are large and powerfully built, the Lamordians putting that down to healthy living, hard work, and the fresh air of the mountains. Considering that the monks focus on purification of the soul, and have learned many secrets of surgery through dissection and experimentation over the years, they could be right. Unknown to the Lamordians, the monks are not humans, though many appear as such. They are Adam's failed children – flesh golems that he attempted to create in his own image, but who did not live up to his expectations of power and intelligence. They lack souls, and they are looking for them here. Referring to themselves as the Seekers of the Spark, they seek to create their own god from pieces of religion elsewhere, in much the same manner as Adam created them. This is also what leads them to be unable to do anything but cower before him, should he attack – he cannot control them, but neither can they defeat him. Unknown to the Seekers (and anyone else) is the presence of Baltoi, an amarilith tanar'ri that was trapped underneath the Sleeping Beast range (and after whom the range is named). She is of gigantic proportions, held back by strong spells that have caused her to fall into hibernation. She is the most powerful outsider currently trapped in the Mists and her bonds are beginning to weaken. Should she break loose, even Adam might have trouble keeping her in check.

Schloss Ausbrecker

Schloss Ausbrecker sits on a wooded bluff in the western parts of the Sleeping Beast, a little south of Ludendorf. It is a well appointed and well built manor, where Gerta von Ausbrecker spends most of her time with her servants and her aging father. The manor itself looks like a hunting lodge, but some ornamentation has been added, such as false turrets and crenellations, which give it the appearance of an older style of castle. When Gerta is not in attendance, the house

Lamordia

is tended by the servants and guards of the family, keeping it safe from unwanted visitors, though its relatively inaccessible location (at the end of a mountain path that's often only open to those with snowshoes) does just as good a job of that.

Schloss Mordenheim

While the locals refer to Schloss Mordenheim as a castle, the truth is that it's more of a manor. Schloss Mordenheim isn't even its real name, but none of the locals recall that anymore, as the name of the Mad Doctor has completely overshadowed those of his predecessors. The only two living creatures in Schloss Mordenheim appear to be Horg, a hunchbacked servant of bad manners, and Dr. Victor Mordenheim. This is not always the case. On many nights, the doctor is engaged in attempts to either create or recreate life in a doomed quest to save his wife. The manor is truly nightmarish and on those nights when he is awakening another one of his "creations", it is best to stay far away, as not only could the newborn monster be highly dangerous (though most prove unviable and are discarded and left to die by the doctor), but on those nights, Adam is likely to be around – always working to foil the doctor's work.

The Isle of Agony

The Isle of Agony is the single most dangerous place in Lamordia. Baytown, on the southern end of the island, appears to be simply a small fishing village, but it is a community of lycanthropes, an aquatic version of werewolves, known as sea-wolves. They plunder what ships they can, kill and devour any intruders on the island (or infect them). But they are not the biggest danger on the island. The Isle of Agony is home to Adam, known locally as the Snow-Killer, The Patchwork Man, and the Phantom. Any unexplained deaths in Lamordia, especially on the Isle of Agony, are usually attributed to the creature. It is believed that it nests somewhere on the island, and keeps an eye on any visitors to it, with the help of the sea-wolves. Folk think that it is studying the work of Dr. Mordenheim, and attempting to create more of its own kind, as a twisted mirror reminiscent of its creator – never fully being able to create true life.

Towns and villages:

Ludendorf

Ludendorf is the small capital of Lamordia, home to approximately 1,000 people. Its exposed position on the edges of the sea (and high pirate activity in the Sea of Sorrows) has caused them to start building a bulwark along the sea cliffs, fortifying it with cannons to protect Ludendorf from attack from the sea. Old

walls protect the town in case of attack from outside. It is a prosperous town, with many prestigious workshops and schools located here, even having a lighthouse, and the town hall has a large, famous clock built into it. For such a small town it is very well visited, with students and traders from all over the Core coming to learn and trade. On busy weeks, the town's population swells by almost 50%, though the inns and taverns can barely hold so many at once.

Neufurchtenburg

Neufurchtenburg is smaller than Ludendorf, with 750 people living there. But it is a lot less welcoming to visitors, as it lies close to the border with Falkovnia. The city suffered massive wartime damage in the past, though the residents do not remember the details, and while the Falkovnians are welcomed here for their coin, the whole city feels on edge. The town is home to many industries, such as glassmakers, wheelwrights, and makers of musical instruments – anything requiring a degree of finesse that would be difficult to find in other domains. It also has an extensive library that is very popular with both visitors and the locals. Neufurchtenburg is also home to Ivan Dragonov, a man that many believe to be crazy. He is on a personal crusade to eradicate all lycanthropes from Ravenloft and has turned out to be an extremely accomplished hunter. While he has yet to CATCH Adam, he's the only one known to have successfully tracked the creature and escaped with his life. This has meant that for Adam, Ivan makes an exception — Adam is the only creature that is not a lycanthrope that Ivan will consistently try to track down. This has led them to be caught in a "cat and mouse" game, though it is not clear who the hunter is and who is the hunted. Ivan's crusade against lycanthropes has so far been successful. He has survived many encounters with them and killed even more. If given enough time in this life, he might even accomplish his goal.

Neighboring domain(s):

Darkon
Dementlieu
Demise
Falkovnia
The Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Lamordians ridicule religion and magic, but so too are they ridiculed elsewhere for their stubborn refusal to accept this. This often comes in the form of a minor conflict with Darkonians, who'll tell tales of the walking dead, while Lamordians desperately scramble for an explanation.

Adam

*"I expected this reception," said the daemon.
"All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be
hated, who am miserable beyond all living things!"
~The Monster. Frankenstein-Mary Shelley*

Adam is an enormous man. He stands easily over seven feet tall and is heavily muscled, with his gray skin criss-crossed with thick raised scars. Adam's hair is black, long and wild. His small eyes are set back in his skull, and are brilliant blue in color. His thin lips are black. Adam is a flesh golem. Dr. Victor Mordenheim constructed him from dozens of bodies to be his perfect creation. Adam and Dr. Mordenheim are locked in an endless struggle, and one cannot die while the other lives.

Background: Adam was created by the brilliant but unstable Dr. Mordenheim. Dr. Mordenheim was consumed with acquiring knowledge from an early age. He believed that magic was a lie that kept the world in darkness, and science was a force that could bring enlightenment to mankind.

When Dr. Mordenheim was young, he became obsessed with creating life. Science could do anything magic could do, and the creation of life would prove it. After decades of experimentation, he created Adam. Adam was created with the body of a truly massive man and the mind of a child, intelligent but completely new to the world.

It wasn't until he left Mordenheim's castle that he realized that no one would ever regard him as anything but a monster. People grabbed their children and fled from Adam, screaming for help. Adam didn't understand this at first, but eventually he realized the people saw him as a monster. Weeping, he returned to the castle. Dr. Mordenheim tried to socialize

Adam by adopting a half starved orphan child named Eva, as a companion for him. At first, Eva was afraid of Adam, though he tried to be kind to her. According to Adam, after a few years, Eva began to see the man beneath his monstrous appearance and one night begged him for aid. She hated Dr. Mordenheim and wanted to flee, but he wouldn't let her. The doctor wanted Eva to be the subject in his next round of grisly experiments. As Adam and Eva talked, Dr. Mordenheim's wife, Elise, came upon them. Elise thought Adam, standing over Eva, was on the verge of attacking the girl, and she grabbed an ornamental pike from the wall.

She attacked Adam and a vicious struggle ensued. In the struggle, Adam nearly killed Elise, and Eva was thrown from a window. As Adam left the castle, Dr. Mordenheim found his mortally wounded wife. Mordenheim swore revenge that night and the Dark Powers brought Lamordia into Ravenloft.

Current Sketch: Adam is physically the most powerful creature in his domain, but the vast majority of his subjects don't believe he exists. He is a bogeyman that parents use to ensure their children's behavior. Adam spends most of his time in his cave on the Isle of Agony, wanting nothing more than to be left alone. The creature has little need to eat or drink, and doesn't feel the cold. Adam isn't purposefully evil, but isolated and angry.

His frustration sometimes boils over into blind rage. When gripped by this rage, he tears through the countryside, mauling any creature he encounters. Adam has nothing to do with the politics of Lamordia, leaving that to the humans he hates.

Dr. Mordenheim and Adam still share an empathic link. They can feel any pain the other feels, and Adam always has a sense of the general direction and distance of the doctor. Adam has no desire to kill Mordenheim, as the doctor is the closest thing that Adam has to family, and feeling his pain brings an emotional resonance into Adam's isolated world.

Darklord's Tactics: Adam is intelligent and has a natural affinity for using the terrain to his advantage. Unlike most flesh golems, Adam is nimble and fast. He is immune to non magical weapons and can absorb spells cast against him. When Adam absorbs a spell, his wounds close. Because of his unique regeneration, Adam attacks melee combatants first, and hopes the spellcasters will accidentally heal him. Adam prefers to hit and run rather than stand and fight. He doesn't tire, so he will attack his enemies over the course of hours or days. Adam will wait until his foes are resting and then attack, robbing them of their rest. Once his foes have exhausted all their magic and their melee fighters are dead, Adam will close in for the kill.

Borders: When Adam wishes to seal his domain, a driving blizzard hurls back anyone who attempts to leave. These frigid storms have been known to rage even at the height of Lamordia's short summer. The blizzard causes all creatures to be thrown back to Lamordia (No saving throw allowed). Those who somehow get past the icy wind are devoured by the snows and succumb to the unholy cold.

Adam



Mordenheim's Monster, Adam

Large construct, chaotic evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 231 (22d10 + 110)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +11

Skills Athletics +13, Perception +7, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons that aren't adamantine

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Lamordian, Darkonese, Falkovnian, Mordenish.

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Berserk. Whenever Adam starts his turn with 40 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, Adam goes berserk. On each of his turns while berserk, he attacks the nearest creature he can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and Attack, Adam attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than himself. Once Adam goes berserk, he continues to do so until he is destroyed or he regains all his hit points.

Aversion of Fire. If Adam takes fire damage, he has disadvantage on Attack rolls and Ability Checks until the end of his next turn.

Immutable Form. Adam is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever Adam is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Adam's Magic Resistance. Adam has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. If a spell is blocked by this ability, he may pretend that the spell has worked using falsehood to position himself for an escape or a surprise attack.

Magic Weapons. Adam's weapon attacks are magical.

Soul Bound. Adam feels wounds inflicted on Dr. Mordenheim, although it does not hinder his fighting ability.

Spell Absorption. Adam is immune to cold and lightning weather conditions. All spells that deal lightning or cold damage cause him to regenerate hit points at a rate of the damage rolled from the spell cast upon him. Additionally, Adam is able to absorb the energy of certain magical items that do not mimic cold/lightning spells. If a ring, a wand, or other magical item is used against him to cast a spell with an effect of a non-damaging nature, Adam absorbs the energy, regenerating hit points at a rate of 15 hit points per level of the spell the magical device replicates.

Adam's Regeneration. Adam regenerates hit points at a rate of 20 per hour. If Adam is reduced to zero hit points, he can regenerate back to full health from the smallest remaining piece of flesh in 1d10+2 hours. Should Adam's body be destroyed outright, his spirit will seek out the body of another of Lamordia's flesh golems, gradually transforming it over 1d6 days until it resembles the Adam of old. (This ability doesn't work if Mordenheim is dead.)

Strangulation. If Adam hits with both slam attacks, he grapples the target and starts strangling it. The strangulation deals 8d8 bludgeoning damage at the start of Adam's turn and the target cannot breathe. The grapple can be escaped by a contested athletics check against Adam's grapple check.

Adam's Family (Once/Day). Adam calls his "children" for aid, summoning 1d4+1 flesh golems. They arrive in 1d6 rounds and act as allies.

Strong Body: Adam's body has been built with the finest materials providing him with a damage threshold. Any non-fire, non-acid damage that is 10 or lower is ignored.

Actions

Multiattack. Adam makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Legendary Actions

Adam can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Adam regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Adam moves up to his speed without provoking Opportunity Attacks.

Adam

Power Slam. Adam makes one slam attack with advantage. If the attack lands, the creature is knocked prone and is stunned until the end of its next turn. Other creatures gain advantage on their attacks against Adam for the remainder of the turn.

Frightful Roar (Costs 2 Actions). Adam lets out a scream that would unnerve even the bravest adversary. All enemy creatures within 30ft of Adam who can hear him must succeed on a DC 20 Saving throw or become frightened of him for 1 minute. A creature can end this effect by succeeding on a saving throw rolled at the end of its consecutive turns.

Actions

Rapier +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Pistol +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Surgical Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Dr. Victor Mordenheim

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 52 (15d8 - 15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +6

Skills Animal Handling +0, Arcana +6, Deception +3, Insight +0, Investigation +6, Medicine +2, Persuasion +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Lamordian, Balok, Darkonese, Falkovnian, Mordentish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Regeneration. Victor regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point. This ability ceases to function if Victor takes fire or acid damage.

Immortality. Due to his link to Adam, Victor cannot die unless Adam dies with him. Even with this immortality, Victor still feels pain from the wounds he suffers and tries to avoid coming to harm. Victor does not roll death saving throws and falls unconscious instead, unless Adam is also unconscious or dead. If Victor's body is destroyed, his soul is instantly transferred into the most recently deceased male human corpse in Lamordia, regardless of distance. The corpse is instantly restored to life, and its ability scores change to match those of Victor, who retains all of his skills, feats and abilities. Over the course of the next week, Victor's new body is slowly transformed to match his original appearance.

Skilled Physician. When Victor uses a healer's kit to stabilize a dying creature, that creature also regains 1 hit point. As an action, he can spend one use of a healer's kit to tend to a creature and restore 1d6 + 4 hit points to it, plus additional hit points equal to the creature's maximum number of Hit Dice. The creature can't regain hit points from this feat again until it finishes a short or long rest.

Keen Mind. Victor has a mind that can track time, direction, and detail with uncanny precision. He always knows which way is north. He always knows the number of hours left before the next sunrise or sunset. He can accurately recall anything he has seen or heard within the past month.



Necropolis



Necropolis



Necropolis. The Slain City. The City of the Dead. Il Aluk. The city has many names among the Darkonians that live near the domain and the old city.

Necropolis is ruled by Death. Or at least a creature that thinks of itself as the actual incarnation of the Grim Reaper (and resembles it in most ways, to the point that most Darkonians consider the two synonymous). His control over the undead of Necropolis is absolute, and he brooks no dissent. His control is not all-powerful, only extending to those in his immediate presence, nor is he omniscient, limiting his ability to foresee what is happening. This has led to the rise of a minor cult of former priests who continue to worship their old gods, who plot to destroy Death and the other undead while restoring themselves to life. They hide beneath the surface waiting to strike. And they are not the only ones, as whenever Death's attention fades (which it does often), the various factions of undead (often split along the same lines as the undead types) vie for supremacy and rule over the city. Only when Death's attention returns do they return to an uneasy peace once more.

Entering Necropolis carries grave risks for the heroes, due to the Shroud. Any creature that enters it turns into one of the undead eventually, and then, leaving proves incredibly difficult. Only the use of amaranth (described in Fauna below) or various forms of life-preserving magic will prevent them from turning into monsters.

Strangely, in spite of this extreme fixation on the undead, that is not the theme of the domain. Certainly, the idea of life after death is there, but just as much, it is the epitome of the sin of pride. Azalin's pride created Death. Azalin's pride was what caused him to vanish and Death to rise in his place. Death's pride was what caused Azalin to be able to return once more. And his continued pride is what prevents him from launching an effective attack on Azalin now, with any undead sent by Death into Darkon falling under the control of Azalin. On a smaller scale, pride is what is causing the civil war in Necropolis as well. The pride of the various kinds of undead. The pride of Death causes him to spend time delving into his memories and dreams of power and the Requiem itself and thus preventing him from uniting the undead beneath him.

These two should be recurring themes whenever the heroes adventure in Necropolis. They should see a travesty of life wherever they go. Undead creatures go about their day in a horrible mockery of the way that life moves outside the domain. And they should see the

pride that leads to the clashes that the undead engage in with each other, and they should see their own pride exposed whenever they think themselves smarter than the lesser undead. Pride is a deadly sin in Necropolis, and only by taking great care should it be possible to survive.

"Fear not death for the sooner we die, the longer we shall be immortal."

~Benjamin Franklin

Necropolis

Culture Level:	Iron Age (Chivalric before the Requiem)
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, city
Year Formed:	755 BC
Population:	27,000
Races (%):	Humans 65%, Halflings 17%, Gnomes 8%, Elves 5%, Dwarves 3%, Others 2% (before the Requiem, now everyone is undead).
Languages:	Common, Darkonese, Falkovnian, Gnome, Halfling, Lamordian
Religions:	None
Government:	Undead despotism
Ruler(s):	Death
Darklord(s):	Death
Nationality:	Necropolitan
Analog:	The afterlife of the living dead

Necropolis

Local Fauna:

Even before Il Aluk fell, there were few undomesticated animals larger than the size of a rat. There were domesticated animals though, such as horses, cats, and dogs. When the Shroud descended, they all perished and rose again as undead, but their simple minds do not understand the difference, and many act as if they're alive, with skeletal horses pulling carts and eating non-existent oats.

Local Flora:

The name of "The City of the Dead" is not just because of the inhabitants, but also because of the effects that the Shroud (see below) on ANY living thing that enters the domain. Animals die and are turned undead, and plants wither and perish, the petals and leaves blowing away in a cloud of dust and ash. Necropolis is therefore dead in every sense of the word, as not even diseases survive here. There is one notable exception, a strange Darkonian grass called amaranth, specifically the Necropolitan variant. When the Shroud appeared, it was the only plant to survive in this inhospitable place. In Darkonian tales, amaranth supposedly prevented aging and had life-sustaining qualities, but in Necropolis this tall tale became true. When fresh amaranth blossoms (less than three days old) are worn next to the skin, the wearer is unaffected by the Shroud and does not age. However, exposure to any sort of positive energy, such as the wearer being healed with spells, will instantly kill amaranth and remove the protection offered to the wearer. Fresh amaranth blossoms are not normally available, and even when they are from shady dealers outside Necropolis, prices are around 5,000 gp. Inside Necropolis, obtaining the plant is much easier, but comes with its own set of risks.

Native Horrors

Necropolis is completely and utterly infested with the undead, as every single inhabitant became one when the Doomsday Device exploded. The proliferation of different undead types is vast here, ranging from the skeletons to liches, zombies to vampires, and even creatures that act as mummies though without the bandages normally associated with these. There seems to have been no real pattern to what form of undead a living creature became except for spellcasters — those with spellcasting abilities all retained these faculties in their undead forms with most arcane spellcasters becoming liches (though some were quite weak for such a creature) and most divine casters becoming mummies with the more powerful becoming mummy lords. A few vampires appeared of both types as well. The only other commonality between the undead transformations was that families tended to become the same type —

i.e. one family of ghouls and another of skeletons, with the variations usually based around spellcasting ability (so a family of zombies might have a lich in the family who was previously a wizard). The other thing to note is that these undead are all intelligent, even the ones that would normally be considered mindless. Seeing skeletons talking to each other and conversing with zombies can be a disconcerting feeling, especially for undead hunters, once they realize that these normally weak undead are using tactics against them, rather than being unthinking hordes.

Terrain type

Necropolis is a settled domain, the majority being a city. The domain is only four miles in diameter, and this area contains the former Il Aluk itself, along with some satellite villages and surrounding farmland. It is bisected by the Vuchar River — this is where the river fish die. Anything downstream is inedible for miles, though the undead fish mostly still swim within the domain. Il Aluk itself sits in a small hollow with farmlands and villages sat on small hills. The three villages have since been renamed by the undead locals to Despondia, Degradia, and Desolatus (which sit on the northern end of the domain) and Decimus which sits south of Il Aluk. Of these, Despondia stands out as the one furthest away, and only half of it sits within the domain of Necropolis — the shroud bisects it neatly. That said, while only half of the village sits in the "dead zone", the other locals have completely abandoned the place, thinking it to be cursed.

Important Landmarks

Aluk Meridian

Aluk Meridian is larger than all the other areas combined, with a population of 17,000. This is where the city's most important buildings are: the Grim Fastness, the Temple of Eternal Penance, the City Guard's Headquarters, the Hospital, and the famed University of Il Aluk. This is the calmest area of Necropolis as Death's minions keep a tight watch over the area, and do not suffer troublemakers — the main problem is that most of the ghouls of Necropolis lair somewhere in the sewers beneath Aluk Meridian. The Temple of Eternal Penance was the center of the worship of the Eternal Order in Il Aluk, and it was led by Brege Heuss and George d'Arcy. Unknown to George, Brege was a werewolf at the time, one who kept her predations very quiet, often disposing of her kills in the sewers below the city. After the Requiem, when both of them became undead (Brege turning into a wight, and George into a vampire) they came to an odd truce, that allowed them to share control of the Unholy Order — the main religion of the

Necropolis

Necropolitans. This order is dedicated to the worship of Death, and functions as both priesthood and secret police in a similar manner to the Kargat for Azalin. The few who still subscribe to the worship of the Eternal Order consider them heretics and have started worshipping at the Temple of Undying Order in Degradia instead. The Hospital holds one of Il Aluk's best-kept secrets: This is where a few priests gathered during the Requiem to try to stop the Hour of Ascension — the climax of the Requiem. But they failed. They survive as undead and are among the few whose morals have yet to be corrupted. Led by Serinda Brecht, who turned into a powerful mummy lord, they meet here once a month in the nursery of the otherwise abandoned hospital, secure in the knowledge that the ward's association with birth will keep Death and his minions away. The University of Il Aluk was once the highest center of learning in Darkon, and even now, under the auspices of the lich Vice-Chancellor August Montalva, it retains its reputation as a center of learning. He accomplishes this by maintaining a link with "The University of Il Aluk in Exile", which is a traveling center of learning in Darkon. He also invites learned undead creatures from across the Core to visit and partake in its wealth of knowledge, provided they pledge to add to its sizable library.

Aluk Septentrion

Some 150 years ago, Aluk Septentrion was a mere village on the north banks of the Vuchar, but following a great fire, it was rebuilt by one of the local lords to be the homeplace of literacy and culture for Il Aluk. It has since been home to the Botanical Gardens, the Pangolin Theatre, and the Art and Natural History Museum. Even the famed Darkonian Hallad Markets were here, where merchants fought tooth and nail (literally in some cases — it was a very dangerous environment for the unwary) and only the strongest and smartest survived to make a profit. Today, Aluk is home to 4,500 undead, but it retains the value it had back in the day, though with a twist. The Hallad Markets are still an immense bazaar with thugs fighting it out for control of the territory for the various merchants, turning it into a (literal) cut-throat environment. The Pangolin Theatre and the Art and Natural History Museum still stand as well, now tended by immortal undead guardians. The one that has suffered the most is the Botanical Gardens, as all its plants were reduced to dust, and the once lush areas have since been abandoned. One of the quarters of the city is known as the halfling quarter, and since the Requiem, it has been impossible for any non-halfling undead to enter. They fight viciously to keep their territory but show no interest in expanding it. What they're guarding no-one knows, but rumors

abound of them rebuilding the Doomsday Device, of holding some magical secret to restoring life, to an undead abomination being trapped deep beneath the city, one that drives them all insane. No one knows the truth, and the halflings are not willing to talk to anyone.

The Grim Fastness

This was originally a prison and used to be the headquarters of the Kargat within Darkon. It was destroyed when the Doomsday Device exploded, but Death ordered his minions to rebuild the Fastness. It now serves as both his seat of power and the headquarters of the Unholy Order itself. Built from granite and bluestone, it has no windows at all and sits astride an entire city block. Carved with depictions of torture and twisted columns, it has a palpable aura of pain and horror. Even scrying on the building has made some creatures go insane. Scrying on the inside of the building has proven impossible, as it is warded with strong magic. This is perhaps to protect the rumored Black Vault — a repository of all the cursed items that Azalin has collected for study during his reign. If so, Death has not been able to access the Black Vault, and should he succeed, it would spell disaster for everyone else.

The Shroud

The Shroud bears special mention as it encompasses the entirety of Necropolis. Any living being who penetrates it slowly starts to die. For every round that a creature spends there, it must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature takes 4d6 necrotic damage. Should this damage kill the creature then it rises as an undead NPC of the DM's choice after 24 hours. This damage is taken even if the creature is otherwise immune (unless it belongs to one of the four types mentioned below). There are a few creatures that do not come back as undead and which are instead utterly destroyed, beyond the possibility of resurrection. Oozes, plants, and fey are all destroyed, as are elementals. Only celestials, fiends, constructs, and undead are unaffected.

Towns and villages:

All the satellite villages and towns around Il Aluk have something in common: They have all been fortified after the Requiem, but not to protect against the living, but rather against the undead from Il Aluk itself. The villages are rich by comparison, due to the large warehouses and merchant stores that were kept there before the fateful night where Death arose. They've managed to translate this wealth into power, and they are very keen on keeping the balance as it is.

Necropolis

Decimus

Decimus is where the former ruler of Il Aluk (Baron Karl Ranherdt) had his summer residence. Death executed him during the Requiem simply to spite Azalin as the Baron answered directly to Azalin rather than Death. During the Requiem, Jadis was trapped as an impotent shadow on the walls of the summer residence, but unbeknownst to Death, she managed to escape through sheer force of will. While still putting up the pretense of being trapped, she now plots to depose Death and take her rightful place as the Baroness of Il Aluk.

Degradia

Degradia is the second-smallest of the towns that surround Il Aluk and is home to some 1,200 undead. Little distinguished Degradia from the other villages though its Temple of Undying Virtue still draws worshipers from within the city to it for services. It used to be a hotbed of rebellion, but that was stamped out harshly by Death, and the inhabitants no longer have any interest in crossing their lord.

Desolatus

Desolatus is the biggest of the four satellite towns and is the home of the Garden of Amaranth, the easiest place to obtain amaranth within Necropolis, though not the only one. It is also the richest of the four by a wide margin, as it contained the largest warehouses and most popular stores before the Requiem happened. It has managed to translate these stores into great wealth by grossly inflating costs when selling to the inhabitants of Il Aluk proper.

Despondia

Despondia is the smallest of the satellite villages around Il Aluk, being the home to approximately 800 beings on the northern half of the village. The southern half falls outside Necropolis and is uninhabited by both the living and the undead. The undead because they don't like to leave the Shroud, and the living because being that close to the undead poses a risk to their life, and any who attempt to settle there are dragged away by the packs of undead that Death sends he is trying to prevent any spies from gaining a foothold. This is also where the living were corralled at once point, to ensure a steady stream of the living for those who had to feed upon them. It seems that this practice has gone underground, and they're no longer kept here.

Neighboring domain(s):

Darkon

Fun Fact:

Darkonians still fight with the authorities to claim the inheritance of those who died when Il Aluk fell. The lawyers working on this claim that, since the undead are still moving and intelligent they retain the right to their properties, while those who would inherit are claiming that since they are in fact dead, they should be able to claim their rightful inheritances.



Death

"Why should I fear an undead wizard? I am the very incarnation of death. I am a force of nature. Which of his petty magics should I fear? In what way could he threaten me?"

Lowellyn Dachine is a myth, he never existed.

I am death.

I am Death."

~ Death

From a distance, Death looks like a figure wrapped in a flowing cloak. As it draws closer, it becomes apparent that the cloak is shadow and black smoke. Death's eyes glow red, set deep in a human skull. Skeletal hands appear and disappear among the smoke and shadows before launching at opponents.

Background: Lowellyn Dachine was marked for greatness before he was born. Azalin, the lich lord of Darkon, cannot learn new magic and the lich finds this curse almost too much to bear. Azalin sought to break his curse by using a *wish* to cause several women around Darkon to fall pregnant with his clones. Most of the clones died in the womb, but the few that survived, the lich watched. Azalin used magic to make sure that his clones studied the arcane arts and were fanatically loyal to the lich lord. Once the clones had spent a few decades mastering magic, Azalin planned on draining the knowledge from their minds. If Azalin retained what the clones had learned, he would have found a way around the horrible curse the Dark Powers had placed on him. Although Azalin was able to drain several of his clones, the knowledge they had gained fled Azalin's mind as fast as he learned it. Azalin was determined to salvage something out of the experiment, and placed each of his clones into positions of power. Lowellyn Dachine was unusual for a high-ranking member of the Kargat. He was a human while most high ranking members were vampires, or rarely werewolves. Lowellyn was also a cleric in the Eternal Order, giving him powerful positions in the secret police and state religion of Darkon. Because of his powerful will and complete loyalty, Azalin chose Lowellyn to test the infernal machine, the prototype for the Doomsday Device. The Doomsday Device was Azalin's latest attempt to escape the Demiplane of Dread. The infernal machine was designed to steal the life force of dozens and channel them into the creature inside the infernal machine. The machine worked perfectly, transforming Lowellyn from a human into something more. Lowellyn shed his human name and became Death. Death was a powerful elemental, composed entirely of negative energy. The experience shattered Lowellyn's sanity and he began to believe he was the embodiment of death itself. Azalin found the new creature fascinating and moved ahead with his plans for the Doomsday Device, which was the in-

fernal machine on a grand scale. Death was chased from the Eternal Order's temple by adventurers soon after and fled into the mists. Death emerged from the mists in Il Aluk and began helping Azalin with the final preparations for Doomsday Device. When the device was activated, Azalin disappeared and Il Aluk became Death's domain. Il Aluk became Necropolis, the city of the dead. All of its inhabitants had been slain by the Doomsday Device and reanimated by the necrotic energy rampaging through the city. Death is the most powerful creature in Necropolis, and can control any of the undead within its borders, but cannot move beyond the Shroud that surrounds Necropolis. Death worked to stop the return of Azalin, unsure of what would happen if the darklord returned. Death's agents were frustrated when after five years Azalin returned.

Current Sketch: Death works hard to convince himself and others that he is the true incarnation of death, but he remembers his life as Lowellyn Dachine. Death has convinced himself that the memories are fake, implanted by his enemies to drive him insane, but in his heart of hearts, Death knows this is a lie. Death hates anything that reminds it of birth. A baby blanket or toy will send Death into a psychotic frenzy. The cry of a living newborn will force Death to flee. Since no living creature can enter Necropolis, getting a new-born close enough to Death so he can hear may prove impossible.

Darklord's Tactics: Death has lost the faith and connection to the Temple of the Eternal Order possessed by Lowellyn. Death considers it a fair bargain for the powerful abilities that he has gained in their place. Death uses his powerful fear aura to split up groups of attackers so he can finish them with his skeletal hands from a distance and drain their life force. He can see in natural or magical darkness as normal, so Death prefers to ambush his opponents on moonless nights or after a minion has blinded his foes with magical darkness. Death has powerful defenses, attacks pass through his smoke and shadow body and non magical attacks cannot harm his skull or hands. Death can control any undead within 60 feet of him. If the battle starts to go poorly, Death will gladly sacrifice some of his minions or subjects so he can pull back and regroup. Despite appearances, Death is not undead and cannot be turned.

Borders: Death cannot close the borders of Necropolis as other domain lords can. He depends on agents to patrol the borders of his domain. Since no living creature can survive in Necropolis and Death can control nearby undead, he can keep creatures from escaping if he is close enough by force of will.

Death



Death

Medium elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 95 (10d8 + 50)

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

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

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +11

Skills Arcana +9, Deception +9, History +9, Insight +10, Intimidation +9, Investigation +9, Perception +10, Religion +9

Damage Resistances thunder

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Darkonese, Abyssal, Falkovnian, Infernal, Vaasi

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Improved Initiative. Death has advantage on initiative rolls.

Aura of Fear. At the mere sight of Death, any creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 4d4 rounds. Any creature that succeeds on the roll becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Flyby. Death doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Semi-Ethereal. Death's only solid parts of his body are the fleshless skull and hands, which float unsupported in a cloak-like

body of shadowy mist. Death can enter the space of another creature as if they weren't there. There is a 25% chance of any non-spell attack of being a miss.

Command Undead. Death can command any undead creature within 60ft. All undead creatures that have a lower CR than Death, are automatically under Death's control and remain so for as long as Death is within 60ft of them. Death can command an unlimited number of undead minions in this manner, sending mental orders as a free action. Creatures that became undead when they first entered the domain are immune to this effect for 1 day per their level upon entry. Afterwards, Death can command them normally.

Corrupting Essence. Any non-undead creatures that pass through Death's incorporeal form, including creatures that make successful melee attacks against it, take 1d6 points of necrotic damage.

Entropy. Non-magical objects that strike Death explode into hundreds of black, glassy fragments.

Numbing Aura. Enemy creatures within 15 feet of Death must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be Slowed as per the spell for as long as they remain within range. The effect ends 1d4 turns after a creature leaves the aura. Creatures with Cold immunity are immune to this effect.

Touch of the Reaper. Creatures hit by Death's touch attack must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution Saving throw or receive an instant negative death saving throw result when they fall unconscious. A creature can receive a maximum of 2 negative death saving throw results before falling unconscious. When death has bestowed 10 negative death results, it increases its maximum hit points by 5d8 and is healed by the same amount rolled. This increase remains for 24 hours. This ability affects undead creatures.

Life Aversion. Death recoils from objects associated with birth such as an infant's blanket, as a vampire recoils from holy symbols. If Death hears the sound of a crying newborn creature (though not from a figment or other artificial recreation), he loses control of all creatures under his command. As long as he is exposed to the sound, Death cannot use its command undead or touch of the reaper abilities.

Traits of Undeath. Death is immune to disease and mind influencing spells and effects. Death's ability scores cannot be reduced and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Undying Soul. If Death is reduced to 0 hit points, his skull and skeletal hands crumble, leaving behind only the shadowy body. In this form, neither material nor ethereal opponents can strike Death. Death becomes incapable of using the touch of the reaper ability, attacking, casting spells or commanding other undead. His other abilities still function though. Death can be restored to his normal condition after 2d4 weeks with the help of five level 12 or higher necromancers. The ritual requires 50,000gp as material components. The necromancers take five levels of

Death



exhaustion that remain for the same amount of weeks as those needed for Death to return. Death is utterly destroyed if all five crystal death skulls are destroyed before Death is brought back.

Magic Resistance. Death has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Long Arm of Death: Death can elongate any of his skeletal hands to strike at an enemy from afar. The hands can travel up to 20ft per round leaving behind a black trail of energy that connects with the main body. If a creature attacks the trail, the hands are instantly retracted back to Death, this does not damage Death. A creature entering the trail takes 4d8 necrotic damage and forces the hands to retract the same as if attacking the trail. The hands can extend up to 100 ft and Death can instantly recall them with a bonus action or as a reaction to being hit.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Death fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. Death's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bestow curse*, *create undead*, *inflict wounds*

3/Day each: *blight*, *enervation*, *spirit shroud*

1/Day each: *disintegrate*, *finger of death*

Actions

Multiaction. Death makes two reaper attacks.

Reaper. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Touch of the Reaper. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) necrotic damage. Any creature killed through this attack rises as a zombie under Death's control after 1 turn.

Legendary Actions

Death can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Death regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Dimension Door. Death can, by spreading his tainted essence into the environment and instantly reforming at another point, duplicate the effects of dimension door spell.

Touch of Death. Death makes a Touch of the Reaper attack.

Scythe Whirlwind (2 Actions). Each creature in Death's space must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 15 (3d8 + 2) slashing damage and is flung up 20 feet away from Death in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the Slashing damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.

Crystal Death Skull

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d4 + 10)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Vulnerabilities thunder

Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Magic Resistance. The Skull has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rejuvenation. If the Skull is destroyed, it regains all its hit points in 1 hour as long as Death has at least 1 hit point, unless holy water is sprinkled on its remains, at which point a Necromancer will need to perform a 1 hour ritual with 200gp as material components to restore this ability. If Death has no hit points, it remains destroyed until Death is brought back.

Reactive. The Skull can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

Death Burst: When the Skull dies, it explodes in a burst of miasmic cloud. Each creature within 10 ft. of it must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (4d4) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Flyby. The Skull doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Innate Spellcasting. The Skull's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *cause fear*, *sanctuary**, *shield*

3/Day each: *blur*, *counterspell*, *hellish rebuke*

1/Day each: *crown of madness*, *greater invisibility*

*Always active, as it is cast when the duration ends.

Actions

Tackle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* -3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.



Tepest

Tepest



To live in Tepest is to be mired in superstition as the residents of this (barely civilized) domain are convinced that they're under attack by the "fey" at every turn. Their belief that the "fey" are out to get them leaves them so deluded that they can no longer distinguish between actual fey creatures, humanoids, and monsters. Anything that seems to be non-human has a good chance of being convicted as being fey. As has any creature with access to magic, whether this is from training (such as a wizard) or by nature (such as the spell-like abilities of various creatures). There is SOME truth to this idea, as before the emergence of Tepest, the inhabitants were under siege by the fey, but when they erupted into the misty realms of Ravenloft, these "fey creatures" seem to have disappeared into the background. With the rise of the Tepestani Inquisition, this is, even more, the truth, and they now operate in secret (but are no less prominent).

Tepest has no central rulership, as each village is under the control of a local lord or council, but Tepest is the domain of the Mindefisk Sisters. Three sisters who seduced, murdered, and ate men alive before coming to Ravenloft, and who — upon their arrival — were transformed into hideous hags, hiding in the Wormwood, concocting plots, and enjoying bringing misery to the mortals around them.

Adventures in Tepest should focus on the tales of evil hags and fey, and of the danger of greed like the Mindefisk sisters. Perhaps the heroes come here looking for riches, like the famous pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Perhaps they've heard tales of a house made of food or of dwarven mines rich with gold. The greed that drives them here, should bring them into conflict with the fey realms and from there, they'll simply have to follow to see how deep the rabbit hole goes.

"Oh, you dear children, who brought you here? Just come in and stay with me. No harm will come to you." ~Hansel and Gretel, Brothers Grimm

Culture Level:	Early Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hills, and rivers
Year Formed:	691 BC
Population:	15,500
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Darkonese, Goblin, Sylvan, Tepestani, Vaasi
Religions:	Belenus, Ezra, Lugh, The Lawgiver
Government:	Aristocratic and theocratic settlements (each independent of the others)
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	The Three Hags (Sisters Mindefisk)
Nationality:	Tepestani
Analog:	Black Forest of the Brothers Grimm

Local Fauna:

Animals in Tepest are plentiful, with cold-region animals like deer and stoats being common. Boars prowl the deeper forests, and beavers have been known to stem the water flows on some of the smaller river-byways. The lakes and rivers have plentiful fishing, with Lake Kronov having large catches of pike and sturgeon (though the animals in Lake Kronov avoid Castle Island). Tepestani do not keep much in the way of livestock, but when they do, it is usually sheep and goats — smaller and nimbler animals, rather than the pigs and cows common elsewhere. Birds are slightly less common, but hawks, sparrows, and ravens are plentiful. There are an unfortunately large amount of predators, such as wolves, bears, and wolverines. More disturbingly, many of these reach monstrous sizes and appear twisted in both form and mind, being more aggressive than their counterparts elsewhere. The locals refer to these creatures as "goblin beasts", so named after local goblins who often tame them, but elsewhere they're known as "dire" beasts.

Local Flora:

Tepest is a domain covered in thick and ancient forests of hardwood, mainly beech, oak, and hazelnut. It is occasionally interrupted with pine or spruce, but there are none of the warm-weather trees present here. All the forests are gnarled and twisted, far beyond what they should be, even for their age. Even trees that are known to grow straight and true in other lands are twisted here, almost as if the land itself is trying to scare away the unwary, giving the domain the appearance of an evil fairytale forest. The trees are strong and healthy, with thick crowns that block out the sun, and in



Tepest

the eternal gloom underneath the boughs, numerous mushrooms and mosses can be found. In the forests are occasional, natural clearings that the locals refer to as “fey rings”. Within these clearings, explosions of colors can be found, as they are covered in flowers and grasses, and some strange property of them causes spring and summer to linger here, longer than in the lands around them. The locals avoid the rings until they’ve been “cleansed” by a priest, as they believe that they’re home to fey creatures, who lure in and trick mortals. Once the clearings have been cleansed, however, they’re favorite spots of local herders. Three plants that are native to Tepest warrant mention: cloudberry, fairy stools, and wicking gourds. Cloudberry grows only naturally in the bogs of the southern woods, and the southern shores of Lake Kronov. Attempts to cultivate them elsewhere have failed, except for a successful planting on the hillsides overlooking the Blackmist River. These cloudberry make for a potent and fruity wine that’s won acclaim and fame in Nova Vaasa in the past 20 years and is quickly becoming a favorite of the nobles of that realm. Fairy stools resemble fly agarics, with red caps and white spots. They grow in lines, circles, or spirals, but a peculiar property of them is that they flourish wherever magic has been cast — sprouting like crazy within 2 hours of being exposed to magic, almost as if they draw some form of sustenance from the magic. The locals believe that these mushrooms sprout only in the presence of fey, but use them as a form of primitive *detect magic*. Moved to a tray and passed across the body of an accused, they believe that if the mushroom sprouts more, it is a sign of fey witchcraft.

Wicking gourds are also believed to only grow when exposed to fey influences, but instead of working like primitive detection devices, the Tepestani have realized that these have two peculiar properties. If the gourds are dried and turned into a rattle, they can be used to great effect for settling infants and the restless. If the dried wicking gourd is rattled, everyone within 5 feet must make a DC 8 Wisdom save. Failure means that the creature is exhausted (at level 1) for 2 (1d4) rounds. Anyone already exhausted must make another DC 8 Wisdom save or fall asleep. A new saving throw must be made each round that the gourd is rattled, though deaf creatures are immune.

The second property affects only fey creatures and outsiders. If a dried ground is broken open, and the seeds spilled in a 10-foot line or 5-foot circle, they must make a DC 12 Wisdom save to avoid having to pick up and count all the seeds. Picking up and counting the seeds requires a DC 10 Acrobatics check, and takes 1d4 rounds. If the creature has failed the Wisdom saving throw, it is incapable of crossing the line or circle, until the seeds have been picked up, forming a barrier similar to a *wall of force* that affects only the creature itself.

Native Horrors

While Tepestani view all monsters as “fey” or controlled by them at least, that isn’t entirely true. While there is a large amount of them present in the domain, such as nymphs and sprites, and more dangerous varieties, they aren’t the only monsters around. Goblins and “goblin beasts” are far more prevalent than any fey, but that is not how the Tepestani view it. There are a number of treats here as well, all corrupted by the presence of the Mindefisk sisters, but their greatest achievement is Blackroot, a twisted undead treat that rules the Hag’s Wood (Brujamonte) south of Viktal. These are all on top of the monsters that wander in from other domains, but there is one thing that the Tepestani are correct in: The fey are NOW a threat — their numbers have increased exponentially since the appearance of the Shadow Rift. Of far greater danger than the monsters or any fey in Tepest is the Tepestani Inquisition. Created by Wyan of Viktal, out of good intent to root out dangerous fey and those under their influence, it has grown and mutated beyond his control. The further away from Wyan and Viktal that the Inquisitors get, the more brazen they become, with some only giving lip-service to the ideals that they supposedly uphold. Many of the Tepestani themselves have come to see the Inquisition as a useful tool to remove obstacles, with many neighbors blaming even minor incidents on each other and accusing one another of consort-



Tepest

ing with fey. To the Tepestani Inquisition there are only 4 levels of guilt: Innocent, the accused is bewitched (*bheict faoihk raiocht* in Tepestani), the accused is a fey consort (*fealltóir*), or the accused is one of the fey themselves. Suffice to say, that very rarely is anyone found innocent, though those who are bewitched are generally treated as innocent by way of being manipulated, so their punishment is light. Those who consort or are one of the fey are often forced to confess via torture and then burned at the stake. As the Inquisition also works as the law enforcement in Tepest, running afoul of them is highly dangerous.

Terrain type

Tepest is fairly flat, with only the occasional peak breaking through the forest canopy. Hills are common but are usually buried so far beneath the trees that it's difficult to see where the hilly terrain begins or ends. The forests are the main dominating feature of the terrain, along with the rivers and the clear areas around them. The weather is fairly harsh, with cold winters and mild summers, but most of the domain avoids the harsh winds that could easily make it far colder, as it shelters among the trees.

Important Landmarks

Castle Island

Castle Island is home to the Avanc and the Lady of the Lake. More details on this pocket domain can be found under the Castle Island heading.

Cottage of the Sisters Three

Located deep in the Wormwood, this ramshackle cottage is surrounded by wooden frames from which hang the skins of both animal and human. Near the entrance is a massive cauldron, constantly bubbling away at all times, nourished by a huge fire. Bones and skulls decorate the ground near it. The wooden cottage is the home of the coven of hags that are the darklords of Tepest. Each sister is more disgusting than the other, and within their hut can be found only the terror of all the dark stories of hags, crones, and old women who eat children and deceive the good folk of the world.

Hag's Wood (Brujamonte)

The deepest and darkest of all of the woods in Tepest, the Hag's Wood is twisted so much that even goblins refuse to enter it. What lies within its dark interior is unknown, though it is the home of Blackroot, the dread undead treant. The presence of this creature seems to be what has transformed the Hag's Wood into a place inimical to life. All natural beasts avoid the place instinctively, and only the bravest, strongest, or most foolhardy enter the wood of their own accord.

Towns and villages:

Briggdarrow

Briggdarrow is the smallest noteworthy settlement in Tepest. It has approximately 300 people living in it who survive mostly by fishing. The outskirts of the village are mostly abandoned and falling into ruin, as many of the inhabitants left when the Shadow Rift appeared, afraid to face the fey that might come from it.

According to the Tepestani Inquisition, this is also the hotbed of fey activity in Tepest, with the village suffering more attacks, and being more under the influence of the fey than any other settlement in Tepest. Whether this is true or not is unknown, but what is certain is that the Inquisition are more active and convicts at least twice as many in comparison in Briggdarrow than elsewhere, even cities far bigger than it.

Of further note for Briggdarrow is that it is home to The Spider House, the singularly best public house available in Tepest, with the owners Kerwin and Maryan ensuring that everyone feels at home in their inn.

Keelee

Keelee is the most open community in Tepest. Run by the aging Gerald Ferrier, it is utterly pristine in appearance, to the point where the militia will admonish inhabitants for letting their houses fall into disrepair, and children can be seen collecting dung from the animal pens twice per day, for it to be distributed on the surrounding fields. The one exception to the pristine appearance of the city is the cottage of the town's best trapper, a man named Leobe.

He seems to take sadistic glee in annoying Ferrier and is incredibly rude and antisocial in general. Ferrier is an expatriate from Falkovnia and runs the Hawk's Haven (apart from being the town's mayor) and his love of organization and harsh adherence to discipline probably comes from his upbringing in Falkovnia. His inn is immaculate as a result, and the favorite stop of Nova Vaasan traders, as the food is an intriguing mix of Vaasi, Tepestani, and Falkovnian fare, that most travelers seem to enjoy.

Keelee was, until recently, the only place in Tepest where it was possible to avoid the Tepestani Inquisition, as Ferrier did not allow them to operate within the township's borders. Instead, he has his own militia (the only really organized armed force in Tepest, as the Inquisition is quite disorganized). That changed when his wife, the local priest of Belenus, was murdered along with all the visitors that were at the Hawk's Haven that night. Ferrier was innocent, as he was not present, and

Tepest

the Inquisition judged the culprit, a visitor from Nova Vaasa, to be fey, and burned him at the stake. Privately Ferrier has his doubts about the veracity of this, and still curbs the Inquisition presence in Kelee, but to a much lesser degree than before.

Linde

Linde is marginally bigger than Briggdarrow, with only 10 or 20 more inhabitants than the other village. Before the appearance of the Shadow Rift, it was experiencing a minor boom period, as the main growing area for cloudberry, and the subsequent brewing of cloudberry wine. After the appearance of the Shadow Rift, many inhabitants left, and Linde only really clings on because of how easy it is to grow and harvest the cloudberry. Once harvested, some people brew the cloudberry wine in their own breweries, but most congregate at the Nocturne (the local inn) where they brew the wine and subsequently sell it on to traders.

Linde is also home to the nicest Inquisitor in Tepest. A huge bear of a man, Mannen is not only an Inquisitor but also the mayor of Linde, as well as a priest of Belenus. He is openly critical of many of the other members of the Inquisition, thinking that they have gone too far in their zealous pursuit of the fey and that they've lost sight of the reasoning behind the Inquisition. His lack of bloodthirst is often a worry to those who believe in the Inquisition, leading many to avoid him. Those who don't find him to be a wise man who is always willing to help.

Viktal

Viktal, with its population of 3,500 is the largest town in Tepest and the de facto capital. Small fields surround the town, and on most days fishing boats can be seen plying Lake Kronov - and avoiding Castle Island. Most of the buildings in Viktal are unremarkable, with two exceptions. The first is the temple to Belenus, which is the only temple to the god in Tepest that does not have an open-air area. It is instead a much darker brooding structure than other temples and features pews of the worshipers to sit on (The open-air affairs that are normal to Belenus do not have places for the lay-folk to sit). The other structure is the home of Wyan, the founder and leader of the Tepestani Inquisition. Both of these structures sit within the same compound, and on the outside, Wyan's house is ostentatious when compared to the four buildings in Tepest. Inside, it is clear that the man is humble, but values knowledge, having the only (small) library in Tepest within his house. Furthermore, the man has invented a written language for Tepestani (which doesn't feature writing of its own). But while the man is smart, he is also driven. The death of his sec-

ond wife at the hands of the fey broke something in him, and he created the Inquisition and led hundreds of courts, which led to the death of many fey. His record-keeping is immaculate and he was always thorough, but when his own daughter fell under the sway of the fey and nearly caused him to condemn an innocent to death, he withdrew to heal his daughter and search his records and feelings to see if he had been too vigorous. Only in the last year or so has Wyan reemerged as the leader of the Inquisition, but he now spends most of his time curbing their worst excesses. This has many of the other influential Inquisitors worried as Wyan acquits far more people than any other member of the Inquisition, but his immaculate record-keeping (that he insists other Inquisitors follow) reveals that he still performs his work to the best of his ability.

Neighboring domain(s):

Darkon
Keening
Nova Vaasa
The Shadow Rift

Fun Fact:

Contrary to popular belief, the fairy mushrooms of Tepest aren't hallucinogenic. Instead, they're nutritious and filling, but the locals avoid them as they see it as simply another way for the fey to corrupt the populace.



The Three Hags

*"Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble,
Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches mummy; maw and gulf."*

~Macbeth-William Shakespeare

The three hags of Tepest are sisters that live deep in the Wormwood. They can change their appearance at will, and alter their features on a whim. Laveeda prefers to have dark hair and long black nails. Leticia's hair and clothes flow around her like she is in a strong current, and wears elaborate necklaces. Lorinda is always well dressed in animal skins of questionable origin.

Despite their outward appearance, the sisters see each other's true forms. They are twisted and hunched ogresses. They have razor sharp nails and thick teeth perfect for crunching bones.

Laveeda is an annis hag. She is the strongest of the sisters and her nails and teeth are made of iron. Leticia is a sea hag. Her skin is a deep blue and she is covered in small scales. Seaweed grows in her hair and she smells of rotting fish if she doesn't use magic to cover the odor. Lorinda has become a green hag. Her skin is green and rough like the bark of an ancient tree.

The sisters have a cozy cottage in the middle of the Wormwood, and regularly entertain travellers and lost adventurers. Laveeda will cook them a splendid meal while Leticia and Lorinda distract their guests. The hags are talented potion makers and their guests are left awake but helpless after dinner is served. Once the hags have slain their victims no part of the body is left to waste. The skin and bones are eaten, the teeth and any organs not needed for an immediate potion are crafted into beautiful jewelry. The remaining organs are either used to craft potions or preserved for a snack later.

Background: Rudella Mindefisk desperately wanted daughters. She and her brutish husband, Holger, had several sons, but Rudella prayed for a daughter. In her desperation Rudella didn't think about who she was praying to.

One morning the sound of a baby crying met Rudella when she awoke. She followed the cries to the door of her house and, much to her joy, found three baby girls left on her doorstep. Holger wanted to drown the infants in a nearby river. They were sickly and weak, but Rudella didn't care. They were her beautiful baby girls and Rudella would die before she let any harm

come to them. Rudella named them Laveeda, Leticia, and Lorinda.

Under Rudella's care the three girls regained their strength quickly. In a few years the girls grew strong. As the girls grew strong Rudella started to weaken. By the time the girls were three, Rudella was sickly. By the time the girls were five Rudella was too weak to leave her bed. Right after the girls turned six, Rudella died.

Holger wasted no time grieving for his wife. Instead, he considered taking the girls into the forest and leaving them to die of exposure, but decided to keep them around as long as they would keep the house clean and cook for him and his sons. For years Holger and his sons would ignore the sisters until they wanted to be fed or have something cleaned.

The girls grew into intelligent and talented teenagers. Laveeda was a brilliant cook, with the exception of mutton, which she always burnt or under cooked. Laveeda could take almost any ingredient and make wonderful meals. She got a job at a local inn and her cooking brought in travellers for miles around. Laveeda was happy at first, but her father demanded her wages. Holger forced Laveeda to work sick, and never let her rest. Laveeda soon quit the tavern.

Leticia fashioned beautiful jewelry, often out of worthless stones and polished animal bones. On the rare occasion Leticia had actual gems, she could craft astounding works of art. Leticia even attracted the attention of a few local nobles, who paid a hefty sum for Leticia's art. Holger took the gold and drank it away. Leticia soon stopped making jewelry.

Lorinda was a seamstress beyond comparison. Lorinda had a natural talent for stitchery and how fabric fell around a body. Lorinda could work with any material, animal skins, wool, even silk when she could find some. The local villagers even became suspicious of Holger and his sons. How could a poor farmer afford such elegant clothing? Lorinda refused any commissions, no matter the cost. She had seen the greedy look in her father's eyes as he took her sister's money. Lorinda would be damned before she would become a slave for her father.

The three sisters were desperate to leave their abusive father, but knew they needed gold to survive. They saw their chance when a wealthy stranger stopped at their farmhouse. The stranger had gold and was willing to pay gold for any food the sisters could spare. A silent agreement was reached in an instant. Leticia and Lorinda entertained the traveller while Laveeda

The Three Hags

cooked a wonderful meal. Laveeda could mask any flavor and the stranger never tasted the poison that killed him. The sisters took care of the body quickly. Laveeda cooked the meat into stew for Holger and her brothers. Leticia polished his bones and turned them into jewelry. Lorinda tanned the skin into wonderful new vests for her father and brothers. The sisters had found a way to get the gold they needed, while taking a small amount of revenge on Holger and their brothers. They continued to murder innocent strangers for years, amassing a vast fortune buried in the woods. One day an absolutely beautiful man appeared at the gates to the farmhouse. He was witty, intelligent, and told the sisters exactly what they wanted to hear. The three sisters fought for the man's affections, showering him with gold and gifts. The man spent the money on a lavish lifestyle, and disappeared as soon as the money was gone. The sisters realized they had been played and were furious. They tracked him down and took their time cutting him to ribbons. The sisters were broke and hungry. They had no food and no way to get any, so they turned to the only meat they had on hand. As they devoured the dandy, the Mists clouded in. When the Mists cleared, the sisters had changed. They were hags now and revelled in their new power and abilities.

Current Sketch: The hags are the darklords of Tepest, but have no political power. Most of the inhabitants don't even know the hags exist. Anyone that goes missing is blamed on the goblins that infest the Wormwood. The goblin tribes in that terrible forest pay nominal obedience to the sisters, but it's a loyalty born of fear. The sisters don't care about the loyalty of goblins or if the locks know they exist.

They have become talented potion makes and have found the powerful Cauldron of Resurrection. The sisters enjoy their life and have become cannibal gourmands. Laveeda can smell humans at half a mile, and can hear the quietest footfalls. She has never been surprised by an enemy. Lorinda is the only creature that has ever snuck up on her, as the plants of the forest move out of her way so she can pass and Lorinda never makes a sound.

Darklord's Tactics: The three hags have known each other their entire lives and their tactics compliment each other perfectly. Laveeda likes to dig in with her iron claws. Her jaws are strong enough to crush bones in armor. Laveeda's favorite trick is to bite the arms off the biggest warrior in the enemy party, then crush their head in her vice-like grip. Leticia will cast spells to protect her sisters then indulge in a bizarre obsession for a sea hag, fire. Leticia loves to burn things with her magic and floods the battlefield with fire. Against opponents that are immune to fire Leticia uses her deadly gaze. Lorinda holds back and uses her magic to heal her sisters and strip beneficial magic from their opponents. Lorinda will also use defensive magic to counter any enemy spellcasters.

Borders: When the hags seal the borders of Tepest, a violent storm encircles the domain. Wind and lightning bar the way of anyone who tries to get through. If a creature presses on into the storm the lightning drives them to their knees while the wind flays the skin from their bones. Magic has no effect on the storm.



Laveeda, Leticia and Lorinda

The Three Hags

Shared Hag Traits

These traits are common and shared by all of the three sisters, Leticia, Laveeda and Lorinda. Treat them as part of their stat blocks.

Shared Spellcasting (Coven Only). The three hags can each cast the following spells from the wizard's spell list but must share the spell slots among themselves, because they are telepathically linked, they need not be near each other as they cast. The connection is natural and instantaneous, although engaging one of them in battle or any other preoccupying activity prevents them from casting their group spells if they are not within 30ft from each other.

1st level (4 slots): *identify*, *ray of sickness*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *locate object*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *counter-spell*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *phantasmal killer*, *polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *contact other plane*, *scrying*

6th level (2 slot): *eye bite*

7th level (1 slot): *forcecage*, *mindblank*

8th level (1 slot): *control weather*

For casting these spells, each hag is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability. The spell save DC is 12+the hag's Intelligence modifier, and the spell attack bonus is 4+the hag's Intelligence modifier.

Hag Eye (Coven Only). A hag coven can craft a magic item called a hag eye, which is made from a real eye coated in varnish and often fitted to a pendant or other wearable item. The hag eye is usually entrusted to a minion for safe-keeping and transport. A hag in the coven can take an action to see what the hag eye sees if the hag eye is on the same plane of existence. A hag eye has AC 10, 1 hit point, and darkvision with a radius of 60 feet. If it is destroyed, each coven member takes 3d10 psychic damage and is blinded for 24 hours. A hag coven can have only one hag eye at a time, and creating a new one requires all three members of the coven to perform a ritual. The ritual takes 1 hour, and the hags can't perform it while blinded. During the ritual, if the hags take any action other than performing the ritual, they must start over.

Shy The Sun. While in sunlight, the hags have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. They take 1 radiant damage per turn and cannot cast magic such as *polymorph* to alter themselves.

Cackle Mimicry. The hags can mimic any sound made from a creature they have heard, though after two rounds of this, there is a 35% chance they will cackle strangely. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check, if the hag cackled, the creature rolls with advantage.

Ravenous Appetite. The hags can devour an unconscious medium-sized opponent in just 10 minutes.

Telepathy Amongst Sisters. The three sisters can communicate telepathically. They are not limited by distance, nor does a rock wall or any other substance impair them. They always know what each other thinks, where they are located and their emotional state.

Riddle Match. The sisters underestimate an opponent's intelligence. Perhaps this is why they enjoy riddle matches. They rarely resist a challenge to engage in one. If a victim yells out a clever riddle before the hag strikes (as a reaction), there's an excellent chance the hag will pause, venture an answer, and pose another riddle to the opponent. In theory, this can continue until the opponent misses an answer (and is eaten). The hags may pose virtually any riddle, but here are two of their favorites: 1) What walks on four legs when young, two when mature, and three when old? (A man; the third leg is a cane.); 2) Blue mirror of midnight's soul, sometimes half but always whole. (The moon). When asked a riddle in return, the hag rarely offers a response it is unsure of, and instead remains stunned for a single turn or until it can think of an answer. It may offer a wrong answer, but it may never admit it, and the match will continue until it misses several more and becomes disgruntled. (Posing riddles that are difficult can be just as dangerous as posing none.) If the opponent is clever and lucky, the match will last until sunrise, when the hag trundles away to avoid the light. For a stranger or new opponent, the chance this riddle match will occur at all is 75%. But if the hag knows the victim and has been aggravated by him for a while, this is far less likely, only 25%.

Cauldron of Regeneration. Tepest's hags appear dead if they are reduced to 0 hit points. If one sister survives, however, she has an excellent chance of re-creating the others. By placing any shred or particle of her sisters' bodies in their cauldron of regeneration (mixing in other vile, slimy ingredients), a hag can re-form her lost sisters over the course of a day. The special cauldron is located in the woods, not far from the hag's cottage. If a hag cannot be re-created in this way, it is likely that one of her children will take her place.

Shapechange and Magic. The hags can cast *polymorph* (self only) twice per day. They can also cast *fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals* and *alter self* at will.



The Three Hags

Leticia Mindefisk

Medium fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor(19), Bracers of armor(2), Ring of Protection(1))

Hit Points 119 (3d8 + 10d4 + 65)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +1, Dex +10, Con +11, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +9,

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +8, Investigation +8, Medicine +7, Nature +8, Perception +7, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances fire, poison

Damage Immunities cold

Condition Immunities poisoned, restrained

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Aquan, Common, Giant, Sylvan, Tepestani

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Amphibious. Leticia can breathe air and water.

Horrific Appearance. Any humanoid that starts its turn within 30 feet of Leticia and can see her true form must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Leticia is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Leticia's Horrific Appearance for the next 24 hours. Unless the target is surprised or the revelation of Leticia's true form is sudden, the target can avert its eyes and avoid making the initial saving throw. Until the start of her next turn, a creature that averts its eyes has disadvantage on attack rolls against Leticia.

Curse of the Sea. When Leticia hits a creature with a spell's attack or when a creature fails a saving throw against that spell, she can curse the target until the end of her next turn or until she curses a different creature with this feature. Once per turn when she casts a spell, she can trigger the curse with a bonus action, if that spell deals cold or lightning damage to the cursed target or forces it to move. Doing so reduces the target's speed by 15 feet until the end of her next turn. If the spell already reduces the target's speed, use whichever reduction is greater.

Alert. Leticia is always on the lookout for danger; she can't be surprised while she is conscious. She gains a +5 bonus to initiative and other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against her as a result of being hidden from her.

Watery Form. Leticia has the ability to defend herself by momentarily assuming a watery form. As a reaction when she is hit by an attack and takes bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage from it, she can reduce that damage by 18, and then she can move up to 30 feet without provoking opportunity attacks. Leticia can also enter a liquid state while moving. When she moves on her turn, she takes only half damage from opportunity attacks, and she can move through any enemy's space but can't willingly end her move there. On her turn, she can move through any space that is at least 3 inches in diameter and do so without squeezing. When she stops moving, the regular squeezing rules apply if she is in a space one size smaller than her. She can't willingly stop in a space smaller than that, and if she is forced to do so, she immediately flows to the nearest space that can fit her, back along the path of her movement.

Spellcasting. Leticia is a 15-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Leticia has the following Sorcerer spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *frostbite*, *mending*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *color spray*, *ice knife*, *mage armor*
2nd level (3 slots): *chromatic orb*, *flaming sphere**, *Melf's acid arrow*, *scorching ray**
3rd level (2 slots): *lightning bolt*, *suggestion*, *Snilloc's snowball swarm*
4th level (2 slots): *fire shield**, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire**
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*, *dominate person*, *hold monster*, *passwall*, *teleport*, *wall of stone*
6th level (2 slots): *flesh to stone*, *mass suggestion*, *wall of ice*
7th level (2 slots): *delayed blast fireball*, *reverse gravity*

*All of Leticia's spells that deal fire damage, deal cold damage instead. Their visuals are adjusted accordingly.

Actions

Rending Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Deadly Glance. Leticia can cast a deadly glance, up to three times per day, on any creature within thirty feet. If the victim fails a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, roll a percentile die, on a result of 1–25 the creature instantly dies of sheer horror, on a roll of 26–100 the creature becomes paralyzed for three days, rolling a new saving throw every 24 hours, ending the effect on a success. A *greater restoration* spell, removes the paralysis on the target. A creature that succeeds on the initial saving throw becomes immune to the Deadly Glance for 24 hours.

Significant Possessions.

Bracers of Armor, Hag Eye, Ring of Protection, Cloak of Charisma, Wand of Slow (7 charges).

The Three Hags

Laveeda Mindefisk

Large fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (7d8 + 6d4 + 65)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +10, Wis +8

Skills Arcana +8, Deception +9, Insight +8, Investigation +8, Nature +8, Perception +8, Stealth +9

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Draconic, Goblin, Sylvan, Tepestani

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Laveeda is an 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Laveeda has the following Sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *true strike*,

1st level (4 slots): *enlarge/reduce*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, *darkness*, *detect thoughts*

3rd level (2 slots): *earthbind*, *lightning bolt*

Alert. Laveeda is always on the lookout for danger; she can't be surprised while she is conscious. She gains a +5 bonus to initiative and other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against her as a result of being hidden from her.

Combat Caster. Being within five feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on Laveeda's ranged attack rolls. She has advantage on Constitution saving throws that she makes to maintain her concentration on a spell when she takes damage.

Blind-Fight. Laveeda does not suffer penalties to attack rolls from effects that obscure vision such as darkness or blindness.

Keen Scent. Laveeda has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell. She can smell any humanoid within half a mile, regardless of wind direction. She can even detect the humanoid's race. If Laveeda has detected a particular individual before, she automatically recognizes its personal scent.

Chew and Rake. If Laveeda makes three successful attacks in a single round against a single target, she automatically grapples her opponent; all subsequent attacks automatically hit as she heartily rakes and chews her victim alive.

Dark Devotion. Laveeda has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Pack Tactics. Laveeda has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Reckless. At the start of her turn, Laveeda can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls she makes during that turn, but attack rolls against her have advantage until the start of her next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. Laveeda makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d6 + 10) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Crushing Hug. Melee Weapon Attack: +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 38 (9d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends, the target takes 38 (9d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of Laveeda's turns. Laveeda can't make attacks while grappling a creature in this way.

Significant Possessions: *Bracelets of armor*, *Shawl of Charisma*, *Hag Eye*, *Oil of Levitate*, +3 *Amulet of Mighty Fists*



The Three Hags

Lorinda Mindefisk

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 131 (9d8 + 4d4 + 65)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +9 **Skills** Arcana +7, Deception +7, Nature +7, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Sylvan, Tepestani
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Amphibious. Lorinda can breathe air and water.

Absolute Silence. Lorinda can move through forests in absolute silence. She also imposes a -5 penalty upon an opponent's ability checks to try to spot her within the forest.

Weakness 3/Day. Lorinda targets a creature and tries to weaken it. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take a -5 penalty on any two attributes chosen by Lorinda. The reduction remains for 24 hours and can be removed with a remove curse spell.

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Lorinda can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

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

Favored by the Dark Powers. Unholy power guards Lorinda's destiny. If she fails a saving throw or misses with an attack roll, she can roll 2d4 and add it to the total, possibly changing the outcome. Once she uses this feature, she can't use it again until she finishes a short or long rest.

Empowered Healing. Whenever Lorinda or an ally within 5 feet of her rolls dice to determine the number of hit points a spell restores, she can reroll any number of those dice once, provided she isn't incapacitated. She can use this feature only once per turn.

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

Hocus Pocus. Lorinda can cast Hex and witch bolt at will.

Spellcasting. Lorinda is a 6th-level spellcaster. her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Lorinda has the following spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, dancing lights, mending, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, healing word, inflict wounds, jump, silent image, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *levitate, misty step, prayer of healing, shatter, web*

3rd level (2 slots): *hypnotic pattern, stinking cloud*

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Invisible Passage. Lorinda magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

Significant Possessions: *Bracelets of Armor (as bracers), Ring of Counterspells, Shawl of Charisma +4 (as cloak), Hag Eye*



The Western Sea

*“Danger is near thee, beware, beware.
Many brave hearts are asleep in the Deep, so
beware, beware.”*

~Asleep in the Deep, traditional sea shanty

Overview

Off the Western Coast of Darkon, Lamordia, Dementlieu, Mordent, Verbek, and Valachan lies the vast, churning, inhospitable expanse known as the Sea of Sorrows. If one sails far enough, they simply meet the Mists. There the journey ends horribly or takes them to some other uncharted sea, with minimal hope of finding even the most alien of shores. Nowhere is more isolated than the Sea of Sorrows, and trust in your captain and crew is perhaps the only thing that might sail you onward. But what if this trust is misplaced?

Within the sea lie several Domains (Ghastria, Blaustein, The Isle, Demise, Markovia, Dominia, The Sea of Sorrows itself), some consisting of no more than what appears to be a deserted island – where you might beg for human interaction; others are inhabited, but once you meet the population, you’re likely to plead for another destination.

Some of the greatest adventures ever written follow the odysseys of brave sailors through danger, survival, and their triumphant return as heroes. Sailing the Sea of Sorrows is likely to have a much more dismal outcome.

Mistways

-The Sea of Sorrows borders the western Core Domains of Darkon, Lamordia, Dementlieu, Mordent, Verbek, and Valachan.

-*The Emerald Stream* connects the Sea of Sorrows to Sri Raji.

-*The Leviathan’s Clutches* is a one-way connection from the Sea of Sorrows to Saragoss.

-*The Way of Venomous Tears* connects the Sea of Sorrows with Rokushima Taiyoo.

-There was once a Mistway between Ghastria and Sithicus, but this has been lost since the Grand Conjunction.

Chronology

584 BC – Marquis d’Polarno orchestrates the Pasques Massacre. **Ghastria** forms near Sithicus.

630 BC – The Sea of Sorrows forms, but no Dark Lord is chosen.

643 BC – Bluebeard kills his fourth wife. **Blaustein** forms.

658 BC – Dr. Blake Ramsay kills his wife and sons to remake his daughter. **The Isle** forms.

686 BC – The crew of the Doma Ordana fall victim to Althea and her Labyrinth. **Demise** is discovered.

698 BC – Dr. Markov butchers his wife and begins his experiments. **Markovia** forms.

740 BC – **THE GRAND CONJUNCTION**

Captain Pieter van Riese damns the crew of *The Relentless* to eternity and becomes the Dark Lord of **The Sea of Sorrows**. The connection between Ghastria and Sithicus is severed. Dominia becomes an Island. Dr. Dominiani is the Dark Lord.

Markovia is replaced by the Shadow Rift, and becomes an Island in the Sea of Sorrows.

742 BC – d’Polarno poses as his son. Ghastria becomes an Island in the Sea of Sorrows.



Blaustein



Blaustein



The tale of Blaustein and Bluebeard is inspired by the mythological French story of Bluebeard, the Maiden-killer. But where the Bluebeard of myth was killed by the brothers of his final wife, the Bluebeard of Blaustein got away with his crimes, having killed at least eight women before entering the Mists of Ravenloft, and at least two thereafter. In some ways, the tales of Bluebeard within the context of Ravenloft also feel like a retelling of the story of King Henry VIII and the killing of his wives. There is, of course, the recurring theme of violence against women in this domain, and it is a horrific subject – it should be presented as such. There is NOTHING that can redeem Bluebeard's actions in the eyes of outsiders, but the second theme is where it gets complicated. It is a theme of unending loyalty and trust. Not a matter of earning or having received such trust in accordance with one's actions, but having gained it either through subterfuge or power. Adventures in Blaustein need to be carefully planned out, as not every group will be comfortable with the first of the two themes in this domain. Any group that decides to touch on this should check with all the players and even the Dungeon Master whether they are comfortable with such a subject or not. If they are not, it should be avoided as it is one that comes dangerously close to real-life experiences. Adventures that choose to focus on the second theme should involve trust, the breaking thereof, and the deadly consequences that one might face if one does not obey (instantly) the lord of Blaustein.

"What's the point of being alive," she said, "if you're not going to communicate?"
~ K. V. Bluebeard



Culture Level:	Early Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, hilly island, with small settlement
Year Formed:	643 BC
Population:	300
Races (%):	Humans 90%, Caliban 8% Other 2%
Languages:	Common, Darkonese, Lamordian, Mordentish
Religions:	None
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	Bluebeard
Darklord(s):	Bluebeard
Nationality:	Blaustein
Analog:	French myth

Local Fauna:

There are few wild animals left on Blaustein, with sea-birds, especially gulls, being the most common. The villagers of Blaustein keep sheep that survive handily on the sparse vegetation and which provide milk and meat, and wool for their clothes. The waters surrounding the island are quite bountiful, and the fishermen of Blaustein commonly return home with their catches of haddock, cod, herring, whiting, and monkfish.

There are no monsters native to Blaustein, if one does not include Bluebeard himself and his former wives. His wives rise up from the grave shortly after he kills them, reanimating as specters who, ironically, remain completely devoted to him in death. Currently, there are at least ten of his past wives haunting the island. How many he has actually killed over the years is unknown.

Local Flora:

There is no real vegetation left on Blaustein, only the hardy grass that manages to cling to the stony soil. Crops grown include oats and barley; however, the soil is not overly fertile and most crops struggle to gain a foothold here.

Terrain type

Blaustein is hilly and inhospitable. For its temperate climate, it is very cold and windswept, with only the buildings and the hills providing any respite from the biting winds.

Blaustein

Important Landmarks

Castle Bluebeard

Castle Bluebeard sits atop a hill, on the edge of Blaustein village, at the end of a rutted dirt track. Crouching like a squat ugly gargoyle looming over its prey, from here Bluebeard can keep an eye on the comings and goings in the village below.

The keep itself is a massive rectangle in shape, with four octagonal towers, but strangely no walls to protect against a siege. In fact, just inside the entrance to the castle is a massive pit that plunges down so deeply that the bottom cannot be seen. During peace, two heavy doors cover the pathway, but in wartime, they're left open, in the hopes that an attack will storm in and fall into the pit below.

The castle is mostly empty with only a few servants kept during the night. Any soldiers and most of the serving staff spend their nights in the village of Blaustein, happily and blissfully out of range of the screams that can sometimes be heard from Bluebeard's victims.

At the top floor of the castle are a series of locked rooms, each door leading to the residence of one of Bluebeard's now dead wives. Each new wife is given a new room of her own, and once she passes on, he leaves the room locked.

Towns and villages:

Blaustein

The 300-strong village of Blaustein would be utterly unremarkable anywhere in the Core, was it not for the fact that the villagers here seem happy. They're utterly devoted to their lord, believing him completely incapable of causing any intentional harm to them, and they all believe that he simply has incredibly bad luck when it comes to his wives, perhaps a curse that has been laid upon Castle Bluebeard itself.

They are always searching for a beautiful wife to finally bring happiness to their lord, and will descend on anyone with pitchforks and torches who they believe has betrayed the trust of their lord. This extends to both villagers and outsiders alike – inviting Bluebeard's displeasure is to invite destruction upon oneself.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Blausteiners are, ironically, the most faithful spouses that can be imagined, as they never allow themselves to be led astray by their own passions.



Bluebeard

"Alas my beloved, duty calls me away. I have a gift for you. This ring of keys can open any door in the castle. This castle is your home now and you are welcome to explore its many rooms and treasures, with one exception. Do you see this little gold key? This little gold key opens a door at the top of the tallest tower in the castle. Under no circumstances are you to enter that room. To do so would invite disaster on yourself and our marriage. But I must away! I shall count the minutes until I see you again!"
~ Bluebeard

Bluebeard is a tall human male in his mid thirties, with an unremarkable appearance. He is tall, but not too tall, and his eyes are brown, as is his hair. Bluebeard is in shape, but has neither the muscular build of most fighters or the lithe grace of a rogue. The only unusual thing about him is his beard, which is midnight blue.

Background: Before he was brought into the Demiplane of Dread, Bluebeard would have considered his current physical appearance to be a gift from the gods. Bluebeard was, to say in no uncertain terms, hideous. His skin was red and blotchy, his lips were swollen and a disturbing shade of purple. If Bluebeard didn't concentrate, his tongue would protrude from his mouth. His beard was cobalt blue and hung in thick braids to his chest. He looked for all the world like a corpse. Despite this, Bluebeard was very popular with the women of his small kingdom, Blaustein. Undeniably charming, Bluebeard always had a humorous story or ribald joke at the ready. It didn't hurt that he was fabulously wealthy, owning gold and silver mines that he used to fund successful trading ventures all over the world. His castle was large and well appointed, with rarities such as mirrors and gear driven clocks in every room. Bluebeard was often away on business ventures that took him far from Castle Bluebeard and Blaustein, but he would return as soon as possible. The people of Blaustein considered Bluebeard a just lord, but whispered about his great tragedy. They didn't whisper about his looks, which you grew accustomed to after a while, but his wives. By the time Bluebeard was in his early twenties he had been married three times. Each time he had only been married for a few months before his wife met a tragic end. The people of Blaustein whispered that Castle Bluebeard was haunted, that the spirit of either Bluebeard's first wife, or his long dead mother, haunted the castle and killed the wives when they were alone. Others thought the castle itself was evil and devoured the young women. The truth was far darker. Bluebeard's fourth wife was Marcella, a beautiful and cunning young woman. Marcella was as witty

as her new husband, and helped him make several shrewd business decisions soon after they were married. She also learned some important facts about her husband. Bluebeard treated his opinions like facts and hated it when someone disagreed with him. Even reasoned and well thought arguments that he disagreed with would be met with disdain and a refusal to accept that he could be wrong. Marcella soon learned her life with Bluebeard would be much happier if she agreed with her husband, no matter what she actually thought. It didn't hurt that Bluebeard showered his new bride with gifts when she agreed with him.

A month after their wedding, Bluebeard left to attend to business affairs in a neighboring kingdom. Before he left, Bluebeard gave his wife a large ring of keys. He told her that the keys would open every room in the castle, and she was free to explore as long as she followed one rule. Bluebeard held up a small golden key and told Marcella that it unlocked the room at the top of the tallest tower in the castle. Marcella was not to enter that room under any circumstances. To do so would invite disaster for her and their marriage. She agreed and Bluebeard left the next day. For a month she explored the castle, and the room at the top of the tower was never far from her mind. Twice she placed the key in the lock but lost her nerve at the last second. Finally after a few months of wondering, Marcella couldn't stand it any more. She stole up to the room and, before she could think twice, placed the key in the lock and opened the door.

The first thing that told her what a terrible mistake she had made was the smell. The room was dark, and reeked of carrion and stale blood. When her eyes adjusted to the darkness, Marcella shrieked in horror. Bluebeard's three past wives were in the small room. They had been hung from hooks and their throats had been slit. The cuts were so deep that the spine of one of the wives had been gouged and nicked by the blade.

Marcella slammed the door and ran screaming back to her chambers. Once she returned to her room she realized, much to her renewed horror, that the little golden key had turned blood red. Marcella stared at the key, realizing it spelled her doom, when she heard her husband's voice behind her demanding to know what she had done. Bluebeard dragged his wife through the castle, bemoaning his fate. Marcella had been his favorite, but now she couldn't be trusted. He hauled her up the stairs and they disappeared into the room. No one knows how many wives Bluebeard had before he was claimed by the mists, although Bluebeard himself thinks he may now be on his eighth wife.

Bluebeard

Current Sketch: Bluebeard still rules Blaustein from Castle Bluebeard. His people love him and consider him responsible for every time of prosperity and even good fortune. Bad luck or unfortunate circumstances are blamed on evil spirits living in and around Castle Bluebeard. Bluebeard's looks have improved over the last century. The change was gradual at first, but after the first 50 years Bluebeard realized his skin had cleared and his lips were no longer purple. The change seems to have sped up in the last decade or so, and Bluebeard checks his reflection eagerly every day.

Bluebeard still longs to marry, but will never marry a woman from Blaustein. Whenever he looks at a woman from his country, he sees one of the faces of his dead wives smiling back at him. Because of this, Bluebeard looks for wives from outside Blaustein. His people know of his preferences and look for a suitable bride from anyone drawn into his domain by the mists. His last wife was an outlander named Lorel that came into Blaustein seeking him. Bluebeard gladly took her in, became her teacher, and in time her husband. Sadly Lorel was killed under mysterious circumstances but a month after the wedding.

Bluebeard is beloved by his people, which is good for him as he routinely avoids Castle Bluebeard at night. If the darklord actually sleeps in his castle, he is awakened by the spectres of his former wives. His wives dote on him and fulfill his every desire, but Bluebeard is overwhelmed with revulsion and guilt just by looking at the women.

Darklord's Tactics: Bluebeard is an intelligent and experienced combatant. He is accompanied by guards and usually has a skilled court wizard or cleric nearby. During the first round of combat, either one of Bluebeard's guards or Bluebeard himself will raise an alarm and attempt to summon reinforcements. Bluebeard will not sacrifice the lives of his men without good cause and they are fanatically loyal to him. At night the specters of his wives will join the fray, howling for the blood of anyone that threatens their beloved.

Borders: Bluebeard cannot close the borders of his domain, but the local villages keep a close eye on any strangers, especially attractive females, and report everything they know to Bluebeard or one of his lieutenants.



Bluebeard

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +5

Skills Deception +3, Insight +3, Intimidation +3, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Pack Tactics. Bluebeard has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Parry. Bluebeard adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Bluebeard must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Detect Lies. Bluebeard automatically understands if any piece of information is a lie.

Modify Minds. Bluebeard can cast the *modify memory* and *charm person* spells at will. The *modify memory* spell can only be cast upon a native of Blaustein.

Two-Weapon Fighting. When Bluebeard engages in two-weapon fighting, he can add his ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

Second Wind. Bluebeard has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 9. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Bluebeard

Action Surge. Bluebeard can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Indomitable (1/Day). Bluebeard can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

Combat Superiority (5/Short Rest). Bluebeard knows many maneuvers which he can use to enhance an attack in some way. He can use only one maneuver per attack. Bluebeard has five superiority dice, which are d10s.

-Bait and Switch

When Bluebeard is within 5 feet of a creature on his turn, he can expend one superiority die and switch places with that creature, provided he spends at least 5 feet of movement and the creature is willing and isn't incapacitated. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. Roll the superiority die. Until the start of his next turn, he or the other creature (Bluebeard's choice) gains a bonus to AC equal to the number rolled.

-Commander's Strike

When Bluebeard takes the Attack action on his turn, he can forgo one of his attacks and use a bonus action to direct one of his companions to strike. When he does so, choose a friendly creature who can see or hear him and expend one superiority die. That creature can immediately use its reaction to make one weapon attack, adding the superiority die to the attack's damage roll.

-Commanding Presence

When Bluebeard makes a Charisma (Intimidation), a Charisma (Performance), or a Charisma (Persuasion) check, he can expend one superiority die and add the superiority die to the ability check.

-Disarming Attack

When Bluebeard hits a creature with a weapon attack, he can expend one superiority die to attempt to disarm the target, forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it's holding. He adds the superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it drops the object that Bluebeard chooses. The object lands at its feet.

-Feinting Attack

Bluebeard can expend one superiority die and use a bonus action on his turn to feint, choosing one creature within 5 feet of him as his target. He has advantage on his next attack roll against that creature before the end of his turn. If that attack hits, add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll.

-Sweeping Attack

When Bluebeard hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one superiority die to attempt to damage another creature with the same attack. Choose another creature within 5 feet of the original target and within his reach. If the original attack roll would hit the second creature, it takes damage equal to the number he rolled on his superiority die. The damage is of the same type dealt by the original attack.

-Riposte

When a creature misses Bluebeard with a melee attack, he can use his reaction and expend one superiority die to make a melee weapon attack against the creature. If he hits, he adds the superiority die to the attack's damage roll.

Know Your Enemy. If Bluebeard spends at least 1 minute observing or interacting with another creature outside combat, he can learn information about its capabilities compared to his own. Bluebeard learns if a creature is his equal, superior, or inferior in regard to two of the following characteristics of Bluebeard's choice: Strength score, Dexterity score, Constitution score, Armor Class, Current hit points, Total class levels, if any, Fighter class levels, if any.

Actions

Multiattack. Bluebeard makes three Scimitar attacks and one Dagger attack with a bonus action.

Silvered Dagger +3. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d4 + 7) piercing damage.

Scimitar +3. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) Slashing damage.

Legendary Actions

Bluebeard can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Bluebeard regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

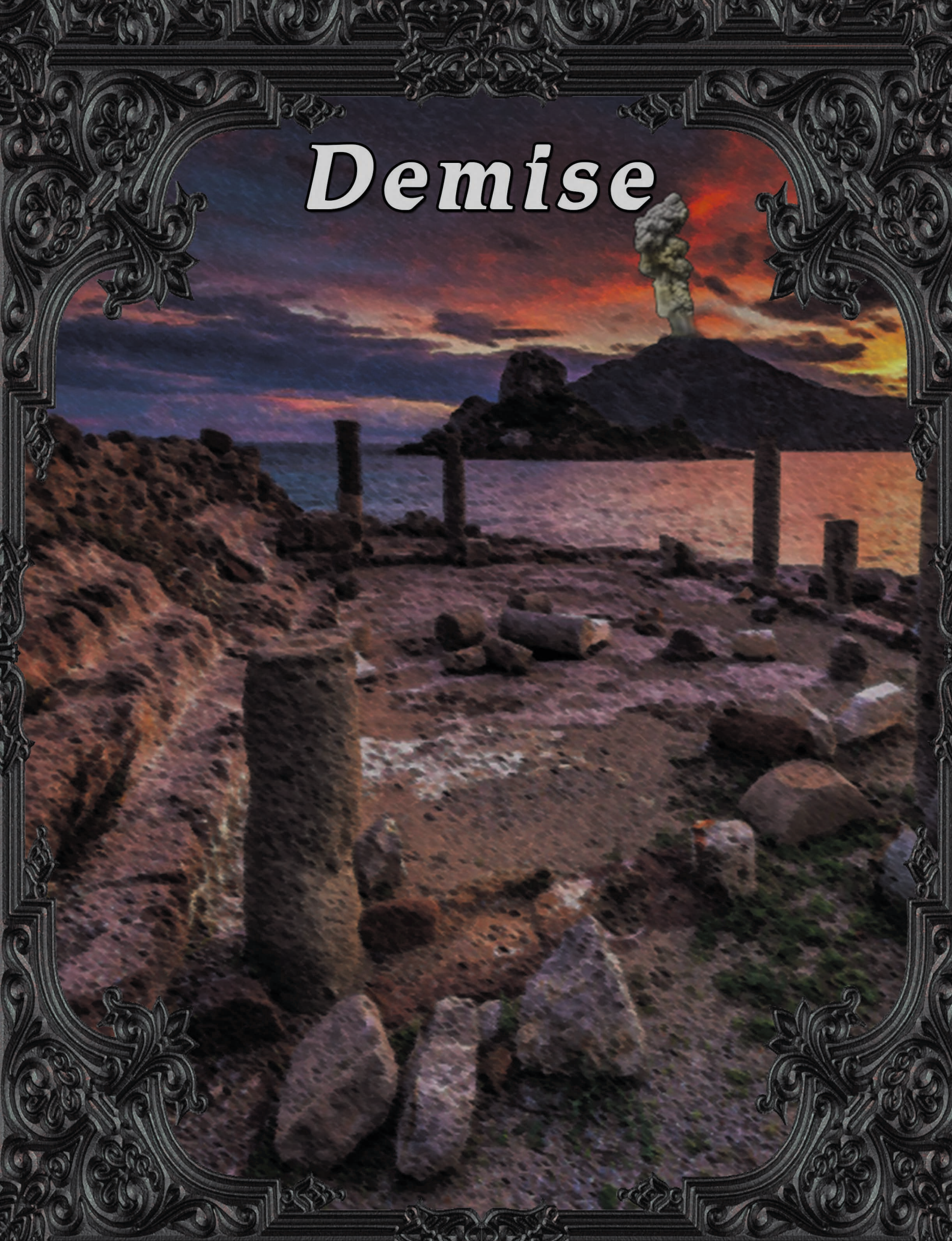
Coward's Way. Bluebeard throws dust at the eyes of one of his opponents within 10ft of him and disengages, moving 30ft away. The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 dexterity saving throw or roll with disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) and attack rolls until the end of their next turn.

Scimitar Attack. Bluebeard makes one Scimitar attack.

Crippling Strike (Costs 2 actions). Bluebeard cuts and slashes at the tendons of his target's legs to cripple their movement. Bluebeard makes one Scimitar attack and if it lands, the enemy's movement speed is reduced to half until it regains at least 1 hit point.



Demise



Demise



Demise and its darklord Althea are inspired by Greek mythology. Her name, Althea is derived easily from Athena (and is evidenced by her ranged attacks), she is a medusa (like the famous Medusa of the Gorgon sisters, the one killed by Perseus), and her prison is inspired by the maze that kept the minotaur of Minos away from prying eyes.

Her island of Demise is equally embedded in myth. The name of it suggests that Althea is the Medusa of Greek legend, the one who died at the hands of Perseus, but was sent here to suffer. Perhaps she is a slightly different version, one who became monstrous not by accident (unlike our Medusa who was cursed by a goddess), but by her own actions.

Perhaps she killed the men who came to see her, ever-seeking a perfect but non-existent, mate. The island itself, and its build-up bring those parables to mind as well. A barren island to those who pass it by (like the Cyclopean Islands of the Odyssey), even the lush caldera at the center of the volcano can be likened to the eye of the Cyclops — alive, but alone.

Adventures on Demise should focus on Althea and her search for a mate, but maedar (male medusae) are incredibly rare, and she'll try to lure others into her embrace. Her greatest hope is that one day she'll find a mate, someone to spend her time with, though of course, with her deadly gaze, such an idea is folly. Adventurers who come to Demise should come here of their own volition, as Althea will not set traps to lure them here — she believes her mate will come willingly.

Over the years, rumors have spread of the beautiful princess caught at the center of a deadly maze, and each year, more men come here, only to disappear.

"When Medusa looks in the mirror, she sees the Lady of Sorrows."

~Mason Cooley



Demise



Culture Level:	Bronze Age
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, mountain and volcano, warm jungle in the caldera
Year Formed:	686 BC
Population:	1
Races (%):	Medusa 100%
Languages:	Common
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Althea
Nationality:	None
Analog:	Greek Mythology, Ancient Greek Island of Thera

Local Fauna:

Demise is, in many ways, an island of death. There are no living creatures on the island, and even birds and fish stay at least a mile away from the island. Animals forced onto the island are skittish and will bolt for it as soon as they can.

Local Flora:

The outside of Demise's volcano has no plant life, and it is completely barren. This seems to be no fault of the earth itself there, as, if it is transported away from the shores, plantlife will grow extremely well in it. Inside the caldera is a plethora of plants, but the first thing that strikes those who go there is simply the heat. It is much warmer in the caldera than it has any right to be this far north. The plants make this clear as well, as the caldera is filled with jungle and enormous trees. It is rich in fruit and water (though the water is fairly bitter). The fruit here is dominated by coconuts, pineapples, oranges, and bananas.

Demise

Native Horrors

Nothing lives on Demise, with the only living thing being the monster that is Althea. The closest thing to a living creature are the victims that were turned into statues. They occasionally animate as gargoyles.

Terrain type

The waters around Demise are filled with jagged rocks, and any boat larger than a rowboat or a small dinghy is likely to flounder and break apart. As a result, most sailors give the island a wide berth. It is almost impossible to climb the outside of Demise and enter the caldera itself, as the terrain is mountainous and rocky. Most of the stones on the outside are loose, so even those able to use magic to climb find it difficult to do without falling. The caldera hides a thick jungle, with trees and bushes growing very close together. Contrary to normal jungles, which are fairly passable at the forest bottom, the jungle in Demise is densely packed, making progress through it difficult. Any paths carved disappear in a matter of days, with the jungle reclaiming any openings.

Important Landmarks

The Labyrinth

There is only one building on Demise, the Labyrinth. Made from white marble, it is a style of building that is unlike any seen elsewhere within the Mists. It is dominated by columns and decorated in reliefs that call upon ancient human-like gods. Inside, the Labyrinth is far bigger than on the outside, with long, empty, echoing corridors, and cavernous rooms.

They are all empty of furniture, but the columns dominate the walls here too. Every so often, a trespasser will come across lifelike statues, beautifully carved, of the same white marble as the columns, but all bearing horrific expressions of fear.

The halls are silent, though sometimes beautiful and haunting songs can be heard echoing through the emptiness, calling the listener, urging them to find the source.

The Labyrinth is both larger than it looks and completely immersed in illusions. These are designed to keep anyone entering from escaping, turning even the most experienced explorers around, and getting them hopelessly lost. The illusions are mostly visual and have only the slightest effect on other senses. This makes it easier to escape if a creature is able to navigate without the use of sight.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Lamordia

The Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Earth or dirt transplanted from Demise is extremely fertile, and plants grown in it usually achieve at least twice the size of similar ones. Rumor has it that these plants when fully grown and treated correctly, are capable of turning petrified creatures back into flesh.



Althea

"I know now the nature of the beast that stalks me. After the petrification of Varshon, I knew that I must confront the thing or die myself. Escape, it seems, is no longer an option"

~Johan Wehner

Northwest of the domain of Lamordia, past the horrible Isle of Agony, lies a little island referred to only as Demise. Mariners who travel to this island almost never return, for the main thing to be found on the island of Demise is death. Althea, its ruler, is a medusa, one of that horrible race that sport braids of fatal snakes rather than hair on their heads. Like all her kind, Althea's body is that of a thin, even shapely human woman. Her face is awful, having the overall highlights of a human face, coupled with the scales and surface of a reptile. Her eyes are simply dark spheres, her mouth however is a lipless cut through which her forked tongue slips in and out to taste the air for human sweat and other odours.

Background: Althea is not a native of Ravenloft, but no one knows where she came from. Her island's terrain is volcanic and differs greatly from the other island in the Western Sea. The island may be a relic of Althea's world, or another twisted nightmare of the Dark Powers made real. No one knows.

Demise was first discovered nearly fifty years ago by a Lamordian fishing boat that was blown off course in a storm. The captain, Johan Wehner, and his men found themselves offshore of a small island with formidable cliffs and dense forests.

Johan and his crew explored the forest and found an immense structure in the center of the forest. Runes ran along the entrance archway and the whole structure was made of white stone. Wehner and his men decided to explore the building after using their knives to fashion crude spears for protection.

Inside, Wehner and his crew discovered featureless white walls and twisting corridors. They were soon lost in the Labyrinth. Wehner and his men began to discover statues so lifelike they expected them to move. Most were locked in positions of pain and fear.

After a day of exploring, Wehner called for a camp and posted a guard. He and his men quickly fell asleep, hopeful they would find the way out tomorrow. Wehner awoke to horror. During the night something had turned the guard to stone. What's more, as they walked that day, they all caught glimpses of some

dark creature following them. Soon, one by one, the men were disappearing. After a few hours only Wehner was left. He tied a blindfold around his eyes and tried to meet his fate bravely. To his shock the creature didn't charge him, but instead approached him slowly, entreating him to stay, to enjoy her wealth and companionship. Her voice was lovely, but offset by the sibilant hissing of serpents. Wehner lashed out and felt his blade connect. The creature screamed and ripped off Wehner's blindfold. Something spat venom in his eyes, burning them in the sockets. Wehner turned and ran. He miraculously made his way out of the maze and back to his ship. The remainder of his crew took him back to Lamordia. He has since vanished without a trace.

Current Sketch: Althea lives caught in a maze at the center of the volcanic crater that comprises the greater part of the island. The maze isn't of her manufacture, and she is similarly as helpless against the confounding deceptions within as any intruders are. Fine sculptures of men, ladies, and demihumans are found everywhere within. For each situation these were so similar and complex that Wehner and his men believed that these statues may rather be magical, instead of being sculpted. The sculptures speak of an incredible number of voyagers, adventurers, and pirates. Despite their numerous distinctions, they all share one attribute: the very essence of the sculptures share a sense of sickening terror and repugnance. Inside this white marble labyrinth, isolation and loneliness devours Althea, as she hopes to eventually discover a mate to live with her. *"You need not fear me, brave sailor. I shall not harm you. I, Althea, have chosen you above all others. You and I are meant to be together. Look upon me, am I not attractive in your eyes?"*

Darklord's Tactics: As a medusa, Althea's main weapon is her petrifying gaze. This gaze is even more powerful than most medusas, extending into the ethereal and astral planes. If her gaze doesn't work or the creature she is fighting is blindalthea is still a deadly combatant. The snakes that crown her head can bite and spit their terrible venom at opponents. Althea also wields a short sword and short bow with precision and grace. The shortsword is highly ornamented with gems and the bow is polished and made of a rare type of wood not found in the Demiplane of Dread. Althea will cover her arrows and blades in her venom if she has time to prepare.

Borders: Creatures that enter Demise are lost in an endless labyrinth of twisting corridors and shifting stone walls. Even Althea cannot escape.

Althea



Althea

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, Cloak of protection)

Hit Points 228 (24d8 + 120)

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +11, Cha +12

Skills Deception +11, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +9, Performance +11

Damage Resistances acid

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Mobile. Althea is exceptionally speedy and agile. When she uses the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost her extra movement on that turn. Also, when she makes a melee attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether she hits or not.

Can't Escape. The power of Althea's gaze is so great that it extends into the Astral and Ethereal planes. Indeed, she is able to see creatures moving about in these nether regions as plainly as she sees those on the Prime Material Plane.

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see Althea's eyes starts its turn within 30 ft. of her, she can force it to make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw if she isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Althea until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at her in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If Althea sees herself reflected on a polished surface within 30 ft. of it and in an area of bright light, she is, due to her curse, affected by her own gaze.

Even in Death. Death does not instantly halt the effect of Althea's deadly gaze. Looking into the eyes of the slain medusa's head still requires a saving throw, although this is made with a +1 bonus per day that has passed since the creature died. Any natural roll of 1 is an automatic failure on this saving throw, no matter how many days have passed. This gaze weapon still has a 5% chance of functioning for centuries after the actual death of the creature. Though if she is turned to stone, looking upon her petrified remains no longer carries the risk of petrification. Her head becomes non-magical until it is returned to flesh.

Apply Poison (1/Day): As a Bonus Action, Althea applies a powerful poison to her weapons that increase the poison damage from 2d6 to 4d6 for 1 minute. While this effect is active, any creature that is hit by Althea's weapon attacks, must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become Poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. A creature that saves successfully becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Althea's Spit. Althea's snakes can spit their venom to blind her enemies. At the beginning of her turn, every enemy within 10ft radius must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw DC 19 or become permanently blinded. The victim is unable to see until a greater restoration spell is used on them.

Medusa's Charm chain

Althea has advantage and a +5 bonus to all performance checks made for singing and attracting creatures. She can also cast Charm Person once a day by singing (DC 19).

Innate Spellcasting. Althea's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *hold person*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *ray of sickness*

3/Day each: *elemental bane*, *mirror image*, *stinking cloud*

1/day each: *cloudkill*, *storm of vengeance*

Althea

Actions

Multiattack. Althea makes either three melee attacks — one with her Deadly Snake Hair and two with her shortsword — or two ranged attacks with her Shortbow.

Deadly Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage. Any creature hit by this attack must succeed on a Constitution saving throw DC 19 or die instantly. Creatures immune to poison damage automatically succeed on this roll.

Shortsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage + 2d6 poison damage.

Shortbow +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Legendary Actions

Althea can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Althea regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Look at Me! Althea casts *hold person*.

Slither Away. Althea disengages and makes one attack with her short bow or takes the *hide* action.

Miasma. Althea spits forth bolts of venom in a 20ft straight line at a targeted area within 30ft range, leaving toxic clouds of debilitating *Poison* which remain until the start of her next turn. Any creature that enters the poisoned area takes 2d6 poison damage. This area is considered as difficult terrain for the remainder of the effect.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Althea can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects which affect Althea the same as the other creatures:

Althea provokes the Labyrinth's ability to cast *mental prison* or *maze* (DM's choice) to a random target within the lair (up to DM's discretion).

Althea commands the Labyrinth to alter the illusions of the lair as if she has cast *hallucinatory terrain*.

Althea commands up to three petrified creatures within 50ft range to animate and fight on her side until they or Althea are destroyed. These creatures use the same statblock as a Gargoyle.

Althea can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and she can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Regional Effects

The Labyrinth housing Althea's lair is affected by her presence, which creates one or more of the following effects which affect Althea the same as everyone within:

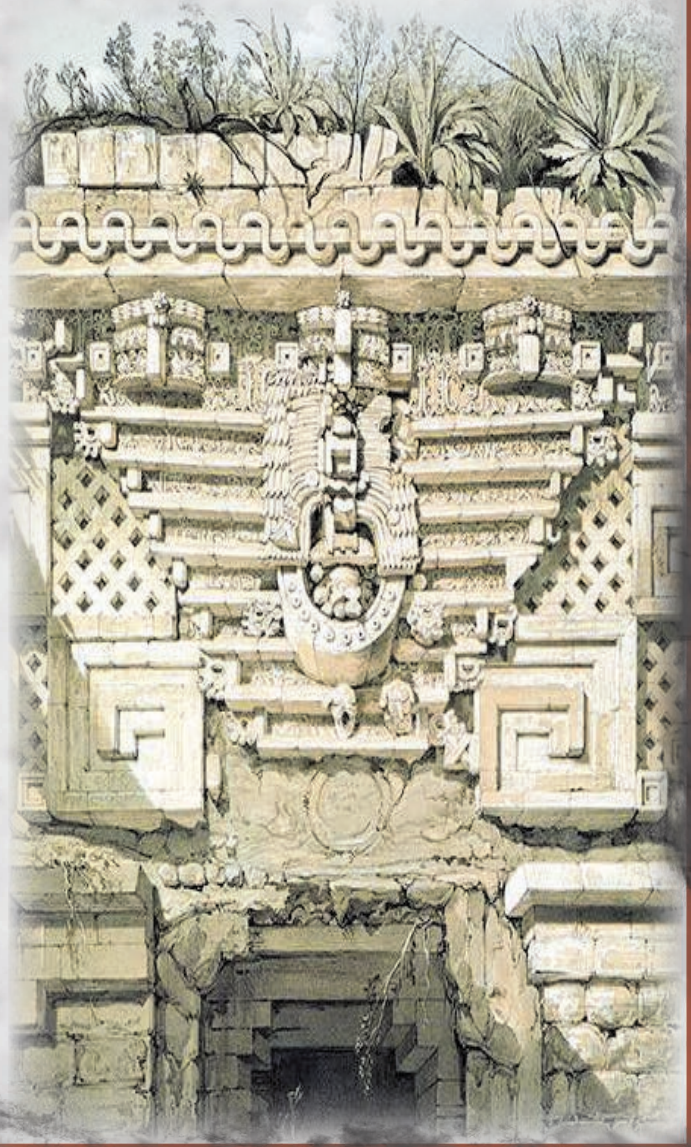
Four times per day, the Labyrinth casts *mental prison* or *maze* on a random target within its walls (up to DM's discretion). The *maze* spell functions the same as the standard spell, with one difference; the creature is teleported inside the Labyrinth instead of a labyrinthine demiplane.

The Labyrinth is always under the effect of *mirage arcane*. The effects of the spell change randomly (up to DM's discretion).

The layout of the Labyrinth changes three times per day, making it almost impossible for anyone to leave.

Significant Possessions

Bracers of Archery, Cloak of Protection, Medusa's Charm chain



Dominia



Dominia



Dominia lies within the Sea of Sorrows and is the personal domain of Dr. Dominia, also known as Daclaud Heinfroth. Dominia is the domain of mental anguish as the doctor performs experiments and torture on subjects at the Asylum for the Mentally Disrupted (known to some as Heinfroth's Home for the Mentally Ill).

Dominia is a small island, some five miles long and wide, but worryingly it is a domain that is expanding. The darklord briefly held control over Gundarak before the Grand Conjunction, but his interests did not include running a domain, and he was a poor ruler. His interests lie in the many afflictions that can affect the human mind as he tries to save himself from the madness that runs in his family.

When the island originally appeared, it was no more than a mile across, barely able to contain the compound of the Asylum, and it was adrift in the mists. As Daclaud delved deeper and deeper into his atrocious experiments, inflicting greater and greater anguish on his subjects, the domain grew, and eventually joined the Sea of Sorrows as an island. With each step as it grew, he gained more power and more control. Something else strange happened, as Daclaud disappeared in 740 BC, creating his small domain in the mists, but he remembers spending several years here. However, everyone else knows that the island-domain in the Sea of Sorrows appeared that same year.

Given time, if he is allowed to continue his experiments, the island may grow to rival the size of the domains of the Core, but what then will happen?

There are two overriding themes in Dominia — mental suffering and total control. The doctor conducts his gruesome work and has learned more about mental illness than anyone else in Ravenloft and his facility is the most advanced in these areas, with the possible exception of Dr. Illhousen and Dr. Tasker at the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed. When that facility vanished from Nova Vaasa, Dr. Heinfroth became the “destination of choice” for the suffering. Anyone who comes here has a mental illness or issue that they're dealing with — and if they don't, the Dr. conducts experiments on them until they do.

The second overriding theme is one of control and oversight. Everyone here, whether orderly or patient, dresses the same, in neutral gray-colored robes, and wearing smiling, white, clay masks. This is all to cause a loss of individual identity and arouse

suspicion so that you never know when you're safe. The masks especially reinforce this, as the smiling masks look friendly, to begin with, but the longer one looks on them, the more mocking they become.

Adventures in Dominia should naturally revolve around these: Perhaps one of the heroes has suffered great trauma and magic has proven unhelpful, and the heroes bring their friend here in the hopes of a cure. Or perhaps they come here looking for a patient that was sent here, but which no one has heard from. Finding someone who has lost their identity amid a sea of gray robes and clay masks should prove difficult. They should also always feel that they're being watched. Daclaud is ALWAYS watching, whether through the prying eyes of his orderlies or through magic.

“Science and moral absolutes do not make easy bedfellows.” ~Hugo Strange, Gotham



Dominia

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest and cliffs
Year Formed:	740 BC
Population:	100 (estimated, amount of patients vary at any given time)
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Other 2%
Languages:	Common, Balok, Luktar
Religions:	None
Government:	Medicinal Technocracy
Ruler(s):	Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth
Darklord(s):	Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth
Nationality:	Dominion (no natives)
Analog:	Horror mental institution, hospital from <i>One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest</i>

Dominia

Local Fauna:

Dominia is such a small island that it has no real animal life. There are a number of gray seagulls and a few very large wolves, as well as a couple of animals that keep the wolves alive. Beyond that Dominia has nothing much to call attention to itself. The only other livestock or animal life on the island is what the orderlies keep for the patients of the Asylum.

Local Flora:

There really isn't much to stand out on Dominia, as it is dominated by forest, atop a 500-foot tall cliff. Essentially the island is one great mesa set in the Sea of Sorrows, covered in forest, with only two tracks leading through it. One from the docks to the Asylum, and one from the Asylum leading to the dump. The trees of Dominia are mainly pine, though a few conifers can be found. There are no flowers of any kind on the island, and the groundcover consists only of grass or moss.

Native Horrors

There are no natural monsters on Dominia, apart from those brought in to help at, or created at, the Asylum, making it relatively safe IF one can escape the notice of the orderlies and the doctor. Of course, with the orderlies and the doctor being vampires, escaping their attention could prove very difficult.

Important Landmarks

Asylum for the Mentally Disrupted

The Asylum sits like an ugly, stone octagonal building in a large clearing, behind a sturdy stone wall reinforced with iron spikes. Surrounding it are a few other timber buildings, of similar — if less severe — design. As ugly as the Asylum is on the outside, it's much worse on the inside.

Here are rooms created solely for the purpose of triggering anxieties, instilling paranoia, and generally making anyone coming here worse. Ironically most casual visitors will never see this, as the physical needs of the patients are always well-tended to, so they're in good shape and live for a long time when there. Underneath it all is where the horror hides. In the cellar, in hidden rooms, and in the attic.

Everywhere that is out of bounds to the casual visitor is a nightmarish horror scene where Dr. Heinfroth or one of his assistants can conduct their horrible work. Only rarely are the vampires allowed to feed, and Heinfroth does not want any more of his own kind to appear.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Dominia is dependent on the mainland for much of its food supplies, but the sailors, who are tasked with bringing food and patients to the island, are strictly forbidden from dining on those who come with them. The ship known as the *Mercy* is the ultimate irony of this. Because there is no mercy for those who come within the grasp of its captain, as the sadistic vampire brings them to the Asylum for the doctor to work on.



Doctor Daclaud Heinfroth

"You will feel better after I'm done, don't worry.

Yes, the needle is quite large, but it has to be.

First we slide the needle in between the vertebrae. You feel the shock, yes? You cannot move?

Excellent.

Soon you will lose sensation in your fingers and toes. The more fluid I take the more numb they will become. Next your arms and legs will go numb. Then you will not be able to speak. Strangely, I believe the last thing to go will be your eyes, but by the time that happens you will have long lost the ability to speak, so I can't be sure..."

~ Dr Daclaud Heinfroth

The good doctor appears to be a thin human standing slightly shorter than average. His hair is dark and his eyes are set deep into his skull. The doctor always seems to study any intelligent creature he meets. Heinfroth asks probing questions and always seems to consider an answer very carefully before responding. After talking with an intelligent creature for a surprisingly short time, Doctor Heinfroth seems to lose interest. He is a keen judge of character and talented psychologist and can anticipate the answers and motivations of any intelligent creature he talks to after a short conversation.

Heinfroth dresses in dark, well tailored suits with no decoration. The suits are made of the finest materials and indistinguishable from each other.

Background: Heinfroth's obsession with madness began when he was a boy growing up in the domain of Gundarak before the Grand Conjunction. His mother was a serious, driven woman that was the matriarch of a small but prosperous clan of textile merchants. When Heinfroth was seven, she was suddenly struck with a violent disease that rapidly eroded her ability to reason. After a few weeks she could no longer recognize her only son. After a month she could not speak more than two words at a time and had trouble remembering basic concepts. By six months she had to be bound to keep herself and others safe. She died screaming in fear and rage a few days later. In six months the disease had torn her mind apart, then taken her life.

After her funeral, Heinfroth began to research his ancestry. He found that every single one of his relatives on his mother's side had died of the same disease, most before the age of thirty. The disease always

worked the same way, their minds were rapidly torn apart by a mysterious disease, then death.

Heinfroth was determined that he would not suffer the same fate. He began to kidnap anyone that wouldn't be missed and experiment on them. He would break the mind of his victims through torture and manipulation, then try to heal them of the afflictions he caused.

Within a few years Heinfroth was no closer to curing the madness that had taken his mother, but was a master at psychologically damaging innocent people. What's more he found he enjoyed tearing apart the minds of his victims, and had a natural affinity for it. His half hearted attempts at curing the madness he caused were no match for the zeal he had in inflicting it on his victims.

After a few years of torturing vagabonds and transients, Heinfroth finally had a breakthrough. He used long syringes to take spinal fluid out of healthy victims and injected it directly into the spine and skulls of suffering patients. To his surprise, the patients showed some improvement.

Using his new techniques, Heinfroth was accepted to study at the Asylum for the Mentally Disturbed. The asylum provided the perfect cover for Heinfroth's work. Heinfroth began to refine his technique and soon was a master at draining every last drop of spinal fluid. It killed his victims, but sacrifices in the name of science were acceptable losses for him.

By the time he was twenty eight, Heinfroth was recognized as the premier medical doctor in all of Gundarak. It was just after that birthday that Heinfroth noticed the tremors for the first time. His hands began to shake, ever so slightly. Then he began to forget things. Small things at first, but soon he was forgetting the names of people and places he had known all his life. The madness had him in its grasp and it was only a matter of time before he fully succumbed.

Heinfroth found a woman near his home in the prime of health and quickly spirited her away. He bound her and drained every last ounce of spinal fluid from her, then injected it directly into his brain. Unfortunately for Heinfroth, Duke Gundar, a powerful vampire and lord of Gundarak had chosen the woman to be his next vampire bride. Her spinal fluid, steeped in the life draining energies that were the result of a feeding vampire, mixed with his to create a new and powerful undead. The cerebral vampire is a type of undead that must drain its victims of spinal fluid rather than blood. Their fangs are longer and stronger than a traditional vam-

Doctor Daclaud Heinfroth

pire, perfectly formed to slip in between vertebrae or puncture the skull.

Duke Gundar was furious with Heinfroth and nearly killed him. The only thing that saved his life was his total obedience to Duke Gundar and his weakness versus the Duke's mind dominating gaze. Gundar forced the doctor to move into his castle and serve as his full time physician.

After years of dominating Heinfroth, Gundar conceived a plan to make the doctor the lord of neighboring Kartakass, the domain of Harkon Lukas. Gundar tried to manipulate a party of adventurers into killing Harkon, but the wolfwere proved too canny a foe. The adventurers uncovered the plot and returned to Gundarak, seeking revenge. Duke Gundar sought to lure them into a trap by using himself as bait. Gundar thought of his control over Heinfroth to ensure he would release the duke from his cage and Gundar could slaughter the fools at will.

Much to the dismay of Gundar, Heinfroth was finally able to resist the mental domination of Duke Gundar. The adventurers wasted little time in staking the duke and fleeing the domain.

With the death of Duke Gundar, Heinfroth assumed control of the domain. He moved back to the asylum to continue his research and ignored the rest of Gundarak. When the Grand Conjunction shattered Ravenloft, Gundarak was dissolved and the asylum became its own domain in the Core.

Originally Dominia was small, just the asylum and its grounds, but as Heinfroth began to give into his sadism and cruelly experimenting on his victims, Dominia has slowly expanded.

Current Sketch: Heinfroth lives in constant fear of his heritage of crippling madness. He is willing to try any experiment, no matter how cruel on one of his patients or another cerebral vampire that he believes has the slightest chance of curing or preventing the lunacy. Unfortunately, most of his victims are not suffering from madness, so Heinfroth has no way of knowing whether the experiment worked or not.

Heinfroth has started injecting his own spinal fluid into patients that are displaying signs of actual lunacy. This practice has even brought respite to his patients, albeit temporarily. Trotting out these poor victims has convinced the people of Dominia that Heinfroth is a living saint, living his life to bring succor to the mentally ill. In truth Heinfroth is nothing but a sadist that uses his

keen understanding of psychology to torture the people in his care.

The good doctor knows the secret to making more cerebral vampires, but rarely does so. He prefers for their numbers to stay low, and thus be hidden from the monster hunters that occasionally traverse the Demiplane of Dread.

Darklord's Tactics: Heinfroth makes full use of his cunning mind and deep understanding of the drives of intelligent creatures in combat to torture and confuse his foes. Heinfroth plays on their insecurities and hidden fears to keep his opponents confused and off guard until he is ready to close for the kill. Because of deep understanding of the motivations of intelligent creatures, Heinfroth is rarely caught off guard, especially in the massive asylum that serves as his domain.

Heinfroth is a cerebral vampire, and is even stronger than the average specimen. Heinfroth revels in luring opponents into a false sense of security and then tearing them to shreds with his inhuman strength. Cerebral vampires are a rare strain of vampirism and Heinfroth uses its unique nature to confuse hunters in his domain. Heinfroth does not fear the rays of the sun and has developed a love of garlic. He makes a show of eating garlic raw. By the time most hunters are stalking Heinfroth through his asylum, they think the Doctor is a werewolf.

Borders: When the doctor closes the borders of Dominia, the borders are cloaked in impenetrable darkness. No light, magical or mundane, functions inside the darkness. Creatures take 1d10 cold damage every round they spend in the darkness. This damage ignores resistance and immunity. It is very easy for creatures to get confused and lost inside this darkness.



Doctor Daclaud Heinfroth



Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth

Medium undead (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d8 + 42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +8

Skills Deception +4, Medicine +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +4, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Luktar

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If Daclaud isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat, a Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form. While in bat form, Daclaud can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. his statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. He reverts to his true form if he dies. While in mist form, Daclaud can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water.

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

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Daclaud fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When he drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, Daclaud transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If he can't transform, he is destroyed. While he has 0 hit points in mist form, he can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. He is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, he regains 1 hit point.

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

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

Vampire Weaknesses. Daclaud has the following flaws:

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

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

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Daclaud's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, Daclaud is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. Daclaud takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Partially Immune to Sunlight. Daclaud is partially immune to the effects of sunlight and can withstand exposure to it for a full round before suffering any harm.

Werewolf-like Visage. Heinfroth plays up his werewolf-like visage to fool his opponents into thinking he is a lycanthrope instead of a vampire. His odd affinity for (and immunity to) garlic gives him another tool of deception in concealing his vampiric nature. A creature that tries to understand the real nature of Daclaud rolls with disadvantage.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, Daclaud can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Turn Resistance. Daclaud has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Doctor Daclaud Heinfroth

Actions

Fluid Drain Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Daclaud, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 1d6 Intelligence or Wisdom damage (Daclaud's choice). The reduction is permanent. The target becomes mad if this effect reduces its intelligence score to 0. Nothing short of a wish spell can revert this madness.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, Daclaud can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Charm. Daclaud targets one humanoid he can see within 30 ft. of him. If the target can see Daclaud, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards Daclaud as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under his control, it takes Daclaud's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Daclaud's bite attack. Each time Daclaud or Daclaud's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Daclaud is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Read Thoughts. Daclaud magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 15 ft. of him that he can see. While the target is in range, Daclaud can continue reading its thoughts, as long as Daclaud's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Daclaud has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

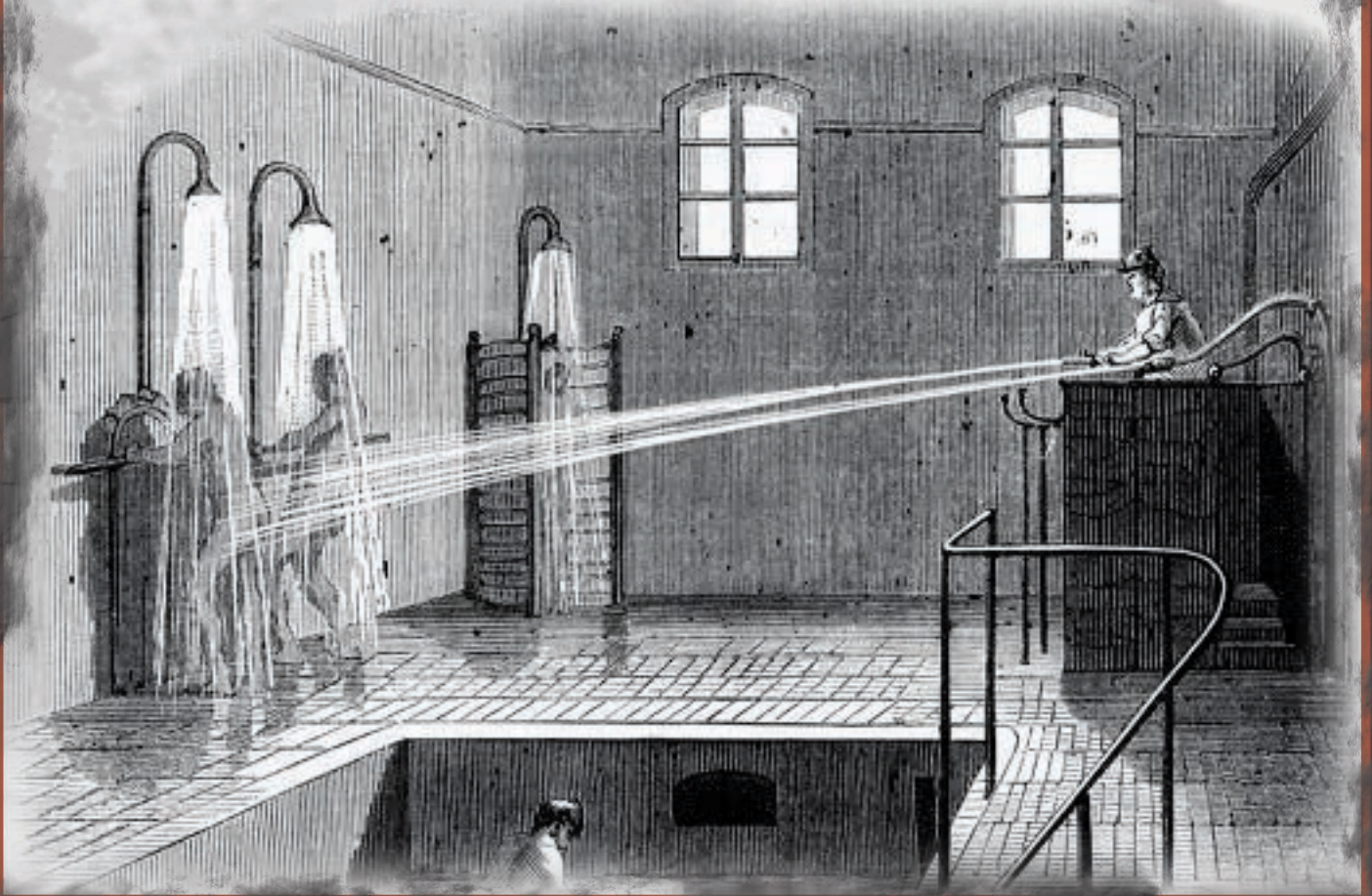
Legendary Actions

Daclaud can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Daclaud regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Daclaud moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Daclaud makes one unarmed strike.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). Daclaud makes one bite attack.



Ghastria



Ghastria



Ghastria once existed within the confines of the Core, but after the Grand Conjunction, it found itself in the Sea of Sorrows.

Ghastria is a domain that embodies the lack of sensation and emotion. The Darklord was a man who indulged his every vice and interest while hiding under a cover of popularity, as an important man that was at the king's hand and a popular politician within the court.

Eventually, as his corruption became more and more popular, the king took a dislike to him, and saw him as being less and less useful and more of a danger to his own influence, and had a painting created that magically took away that which Stezen cared for the most: his feelings and sensations. Stezen became a man of grays, a man who took no joy in anything and received no pleasure from any sensation. In frustration, he murdered the king and found himself exiled to the Mists. But it was not enough.

The Dark Powers cursed the man so that the painting could never be destroyed, but he can receive some amount of pleasure by exposing people to his picture. For the few hours that the murders he commits, using the painting, give him any sensation, he reverts to his old ways of indulgence, lust, and worse.

Ghastria reflects this as well — nothing conveys any feeling or emotion. There is no taste to the food, and the people there, while they love Stezen as a ruler, have no other emotion for him, and he has had to curb his killings to avoid attention. Only when his passions are up do they sense anything. Unfortunately for visitors to the island, they are usually the ones that arouse his passions, and the ones he can get away with murdering. This is also what should drive any adventures in Ghastria. Stezen is virtually immortal, but he is practically addicted to the short fixes of emotions that he gets. He wants people to see his portrait so that he can leech what little joy he can, not to see them die to anything else, even his own hand. Adventures in Ghastria should revolve around the rising passions and emotions and the strange lack of them that the inhabitants have. Perhaps an artist friend of the heroes has come here to paint the landscape, or perhaps someone they care about went missing on the island, whether to Stezen or one of the carrion eaters on the island.

"I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them."

~Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray



Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Mild, forest, hill, and plains
Year Formed:	584 BC
Population:	700
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Mordentish
Religions:	None
Government:	Monarchy
Ruler(s):	Marquis Stezen d'Polarno
Darklord(s):	Marquis Stezen d'Polarno
Nationality:	Ghastrian
Analog:	A mix of The Picture of Dorian Gray and Marquis de Sade

Local Fauna:

Ghastria has a somewhat odd selection of animals, in that hardly any of the animals here are predators. There are a number of deer, rabbits, and wild pigs, but no wolves or other large predators. Even when it was still a part of the Core, rather than in the Sea of Sorrows, it was never under much pressure from animals. Hunters from outside the domain used to complain of the utter lack of taste in the meat, so this is likely the reason for it.

Ghastria does have a large number of carrion eaters though, such as carrion crows, maggots, and carrion crawlers. These creatures are in abundant numbers here, as so much meat and food are left out to rot by the inhabitants.

Local Flora:

Ghastria has a mild climate for its location, and trees, crops, and plants grow well here. They simply have no taste when harvested, but the village of East Rid-

Ghastria

ing has managed to use the trees for lumber and created a thriving (if shoddy) ship-repair business. There are plenty of wildflowers around the island, dotted among the small deciduous forests (consisting mostly of beech and elm trees), but they're nothing that you couldn't find in many of the domains of the core. The one plant that truly stands out is umbral weed. Umbral weed, when boiled, creates a paste called umbral gray that is highly valued among artists for its smokey gray color — perfect for many moody paintings depicting dark clouds and storms. When this paste is mixed in a manner known to only a few people on Ghastria, it becomes a very powerful poison, but one that stinks to the high heavens and which tastes even worse. As the only one, the marquis has discovered when umbral gray poison is mixed with the venom from carrion crawlers it becomes completely odor- and taste-less, making for it almost impossible to detect without the use of magic.

Native Horrors

Ghouls, ghosts, and other monsters that live off corpses are very common here, but only really come out after nightfall.

For some reason, none of these creatures ever chase the marquis. Adventurers at one point asked one of the intelligent undead why they left the marquis alone and were told that he has a horrendous smell to them. These adventurers did not survive to leave the island.

Terrain type

The terrain of Ghastria is low and rolling, consisting of hills, plains, and forests. Even along the coastline of the island, it is remarkably pleasant and natural harbors abound, though the one at East Riding is the only one deep enough to accommodate larger ships. It is a very pleasant-looking land that has drawn in artists from all over to paint the beautiful terrain. Many never return home, which has been put down to the dangers of the travel to get here — after all, the Sea of Sorrows is not safe, and such a beautiful island couldn't possibly hide anything bad enough to cause so many to disappear. Could it?

Important Landmarks

House on the Coast

Home to Marquis Stezen d'Polarno, the House on the Coast is a marvel of engineering and architecture. Easily the finest building in Ghastria, it is painted in bright vivid colors and features a fest and dance hall of enormous proportions, one that accommodates almost half of East Riding's inhabitants at once. Stezen has several magnificent bedrooms and a chef beyond

compare at his disposal, but one room is the jewel of his eye. Only a select few are ever invited to see his art gallery, wherein hang many pieces of great fame and renown. The famous balls that Stezen holds are infrequent, but he always hosts at least one every season — sometimes when he is in a good mood, and others while he is in a foul mood. Locals have learned to avoid his wrath when he is having one of his moodier periods. At the back of the house is one of its greatest secrets though, a secret chute where Stezen can send the bodies of his victims into an underground burrow of carrion crawlers (and the occasional ghoul), and eliminate any evidence that they were murdered by him.

Towns and villages:

East Riding

East Riding is a village of 600 people. It is a pretty village, but the people in the town seem to have lost a lot of their joy of life, though they admire their marquis greatly for the lavish and extravagant parties (and, it is rumored, orgies). Their houses are somewhat shoddily built as if they don't really care what they look like and whether they're well-done. They serve a purpose and that is it, and most of the village and its inhabitants seem to live up to this.

Two exceptions exist to this: The House on the Coast and the village shipyard. It has a reputation for doing quick, though sometimes shoddy work, but the two owners (the twin Mical and Micaela) are trying to overcome this. They're not natives from Ghastria, but came here from somewhere else. No one is quite sure where, but they speak with Nova Vaasan accents, and their skills are undeniable. It's said that they've refused several invitations from the marquis, but none of the Ghastrians understand why they would do so.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

None of the produce grown in Ghastria has any taste, so imported food is very valuable to the Ghastrians. Only the food planted when Stezen has one of his "emotional periods" will have any taste — that food tastes far more vibrantly than food has any right to, described by some connoisseurs as angelic.

Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

"Yes the likeness is spectacular isn't it?"

The artist was quite talented.

Look closer, see the fine brush strokes. The technique is flawless.

She put her heart and soul into this portrait.

Well, someone's soul anyway.

But look at it, everyone, observe the masterwork that sits before you. And thank you."

~Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

Stezen is a tall human male with dark auburn hair and long sideburns. His eyes are grey or dark blue depending on his mood. He is always impeccably dressed in the latest fashions and carries an elaborately decorated rapier at his side. Stezen surrounds himself with beautiful women. These women never hold his fancy for long, but are showered with elaborate gifts if Stezen has had his vitality restored.

If the marquis hasn't drained the vitality of anyone with his painting, he is listless and depressed. His tone is curt and nearly insulting to anyone who can get him to speak at all. Stezen may leave the room or take a nap in the middle of a conversation.

If Stezen's vitality has been restored by the painting, the marquis' mannerisms are exaggerated to the point of foppishness. He laughs, sings, makes love, and is eager for new experiences. With his vitality restored, Stezen is quick to take offense and demand a duel. He seems quite the rake with women and always has a ready joke or bawdy tale.

Background: Centuries ago, Marquis Stezen d'Polarno was a vassal to the powerful King Oderic IX on a forgotten world far from the Demiplane of Dread. Stezen's father was a drunk who had squandered most of the family fortune on drink and disreputable company, but the young marquis was determined to erase this stain from his family's honor. Stezen's lust for life and magnetic personality made him tremendously popular with the commoners in Oderic's realm and his quick wit and deadly rapier made him popular with the courtesans of Oderic's court as well. Oderic had been king for a long time, and knew an ambitious noble with designs on his throne when he saw one. It was only a matter of time

before the old king and the young noble would decide the fate of the kingdom.

During a particularly harsh winter, Stezen thought he saw his chance. One of his spies in the king's inner circle told the marquis about Oderic's huge grain stores held under the capital city. Even better, the spy had procured a map. The common people were starving in their homes and rebellion hung heavy in the air.

Stezen laid his plans carefully. He gathered his allies in the capital and then leaked the map to the commoners of the capital. The city was rocked by riots, urged on by Stezen and his followers. Stezen had several prominent nobles dragged into the streets to be torn to pieces by the howling crowd. Commoners and merchants that had slighted the vain marquis were given to the howling mob's tender mercies as well. Stezen rode a wave of blood to the very gates of Oderic's palace. Then it all went wrong.

Oderic had secretly brought an army into the capital. Hundreds of loyal knights, thousands of pikemen and archers flooded the streets. The commoners fled for their lives, leaving Stezen and his noble followers to their fate. The son of the nobles Stezen had fed to the vicious crowd joined the fray searching for the treacherous marquis.

In a matter of hours it was all over. Oderic had Stezen's noble followers beheaded and their heads mounted on pikes. Grain was taken from the massive underground store houses and distributed to the people to quiet their stomachs. Unfortunately for Oderic, Stezen presented a problem. His grip on the common man was far too tight to make beheading safe, so Stezen was left to rot in the dungeons beneath Oderic's castle.

Eventually one of Oderic's mistresses, a powerful spellcaster, came upon a solution. She painted a beautiful portrait of Stezen, and cast a complicated variant of the *trap the soul* spell. The spell only trapped part of Stezen's soul in the painting, leaving the marquis a bitter shell of what he was. Stezen's temper became short and his mood was foul. There was an undeniable wrongness about him and even the rats of the dungeon fled his presence. When Oderic saw what was left of his rival, he gleefully released him.

Stezen became a sullen drunk, his lack of a soul and bitter demeanor made him an outcast. Stezen was ignored and forgotten. Only Oderic was ever happy to see the broken nobleman, and let the marquis have room in his castle. The king's overconfidence would prove his undoing.

Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

After a year of living as a bitter wretch, Stezen seized upon a desperate plan. Stezen waited until the feast that marked his defeat a year before. To show his penance Stezen served the king himself. Oderic gleefully allowed the disgraced marquis to serve him. After the first bite, Oderic's throat closed and his face turned a disgusting purple. Stezen leaned forward and drank in Oderic's final moments with glee. As the guards reached for Stezen, a thick mist covered the castle. When it cleared, Stezen was gone.

Stezen found himself in his manor house, a servant girl offering him a glass of his family's wine. The portrait that Oderic's mistress had painted of him hung in the middle of the grand ballroom. The servant girl stopped to look at the painting just as Stezen wished he could drain her soul to replace his own.

The painting flashed red and the servant girl dropped to the ground, dead. Stezen felt a surge of vitality and joy for life. In that instant he knew what the painting could do and how often it would work. Stezen embraced his new life and began planning his first ball.

Current Sketch: The marquis is largely apathetic toward Ghastria and his subjects. As long as the crops are brought in on time and the taxes are paid, Stezen doesn't care about his domain. Ghastria is a small domain, and Stezen's magnetic personality (when rejuvenated) or his small cadre of guards (when he is not) are more than enough to keep the peasants in line.

Only once a season is Stezen permitted to throw a grand ball at his country estate. He never invites the peasants of Ghastria, the smell would be intolerable, and someone has to work the fields, but makes sure to invite every stranger within his domain. The marquis will appear at the ball around midnight, and invite everyone to gaze upon the portrait of himself that hangs in the middle of the grand ballroom. With an act of will, Stezen can drain the souls of up to fifty people and have them transferred to himself, revitalizing himself for an hour for each soul consumed. The marquis has been known to secret away particularly beautiful women to a side room before draining the souls of his party guests.

The painting itself is huge and seems impervious to harm. It cannot be burned or cut, and any attempt to paint over it fades away, leaving no trace of paint behind. Furthermore Stezen appears exactly as he does in the painting in the flesh. He has not aged a single day since coming to Ravenloft, and his wounds heal with startling rapidity, as long as he has not had his

vitality restored. If the painting has revitalized the marquis, then he can be killed, but will return to life once vitality has worn off. Stezen hates dying when he has been revitalized, as it wastes the little time he has as a whole person.

Darklord's Tactics: When the marquis has not been revitalized by his painting, he is an efficient and straightforward combatant. He is deadly with his rapier and keeps a dirk hidden in his tall boot. Stezen will use his speed to move from one opponent to another, leaving each one with a wound designed to hamper their movement before isolating weak opponents and moving in for the kill.

After his vitality has been restored, Stezen is still a deadly combatant, but much more flamboyant. He laughs, trades insults, and may even spare an opponent if they fight well. Stezen is even faster when his vitality is restored, his rapier becomes a blur of thrusts and ripostes and his feet seem to move faster than is possible.

Borders: Stezen can only close the borders of Ghastria when he hasn't been restored by the rejuvenating powers of his painting. When he does close the borders, they are sealed with gigantic paintings. The paintings are so realistic that creatures will walk into them before they realize they are massive landscapes. It is impossible to fly over or dig under the paintings.



Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

Marquis Stezen d'Polarno

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (+1 Studded leather)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 17 (+3) 12 (+1) 14 (+2) 10 (+0) 7 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, History +5, Perception +3, Persuasion +1, Sleight of Hand +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Mordentish, Balok, Lamordian, Vaasi

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Mighty Swing. When Stezen attacks without moving during his turn, he makes his rapier attacks with advantage.

Magic Resistance. Stezen has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Reactive. Stezen can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

Indomitable. Stezen can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Improved Critical. Stezen's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Mobile. When Stezen makes a melee attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether he hits or not. Additionally, when Stezen uses the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost him extra movement on that turn.

Second Wind. Stezen has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 10. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Stezen can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Painting's Regeneration. Stezen regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point. Stezen is able to restore lost limbs and body parts. Even if he is dismembered and burned, his body will fully reform in 24 hours in front of his painting. After he has reformed, his ability to restore body parts and regeneration ceases to function for 5 hours. If he is slain in this time period, he is permanently destroyed.

Drain for Immortality. Stezen does not age. Not a single gray hair has graced his head since he appeared in Raven-

loft. Once every three months he can use his magic portrait to drain the life force of up to 50 creatures that gaze at the painting. This effect is similar to the *magic jar* spell. All creatures that gaze at the painting while Stezen makes his wish for longevity must succeed on a DC 20 charisma saving throw or die. A creature wearing an amulet of health is immune to this effect. Stezen gains an extra week of life per drained creature and his alignment changes to chaotic evil and his Charisma becomes 17 for one day for each drained creature.

Unnatural Resilience Stezen is immune to disease and the effects of aging. In addition, he cannot bleed and Umbral

Gray paint does not affect him.

Actions

Multiattack. Stezen makes two rapier attacks and one as a bonus action.

Rapier of Speed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) piercing damage.

Reactions

Redirect Attack. When a creature that Stezen can see targets him with an attack, he can choose another enemy within 5 feet of him. They swap places, and the chosen enemy creature becomes the target of the attack instead.

Significant possessions

Rapier of Speed (as scimitar of speed), Umbral Gray (poison), Stezen's Portrait



Markovia



Markovia



arkovia is a land where man meets beast in the most literal way possible. There are no men, nor even humanoids here. Instead, there are animals, half-transformed into humanoids, the legendary Beast-Men, who make their living here. The island wasn't even always an island, as it used to lie in the Core, but when the Grand Conjunction happened, it was ripped from its place and thrust into the Sea of Sorrows. The island's master and the darklord of the domain is Dr. Frantisek Markov, named so only by himself. He has no formal education, instead once being a Barovian butcher, but one who fled into the mists when it was discovered that he had experimented on animals, performing gruesome surgeries on them, and one day had turned his skills upon his wife when she discovered his experiments. Everyone on the island is one of two things: One of the Beast-Men or one of Markov's victims-to-be. The doctor has performed many experiments and surgeries on the only readily available subjects on the island: the animals. And he has achieved a level of success with this that can only be rivaled by the performance of Victor Mordenheim in Lamordia. The doctor is capable of turning animals into thinking beings without the use of magic. Unfortunately, this requires extensive surgery, vivisection, transplants, and even brain surgery to a horrific level, using various surgical and alchemical techniques, and it leaves most of the subjects in constant pain. Apart from the pain is the fact that none of them remember their past lives - both those that were animals and those that were once humanoids have their minds erased as part of the surgery. Markov also has high expectations of his subjects, and so far only three have been deemed successes in his eyes, though a fourth one escaped him — likely his greatest success to date. One day he hopes that the surgery is perfected enough that he can attempt it on himself, and retain his memories at the same time. Adventures in Markovia should focus on the things that Markov has dodged: responsibility, human identity, and the fact that humans should not try to interfere too much with nature. Any heroes who run into the darklord should be in danger of being experimented on by a man or creature completely devoid of emotion or compassion, where they should find that the subjects — the Beast-Men — who appear horrific are the compassionate and human ones who lend a hand. But they should also find that the more “successful” these creatures are in the eyes of the doctor, the more horrific their actions should be — as evidenced especially by his three assistants (Orson, a brown bear Beast-Man, Felix, a leopard Beast-Man, and Delphi, a dolphin Beast-Woman) and Akanga (described below in Akanga's village)...

“An animal may be ferocious and cunning enough, but it takes a real man to tell a lie.”

~H.G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*



Markovia

Culture Level:	Stone Age (Beast-Men), Renaissance (Dr. Frantisek Markov)
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, forests or jungle, hills, and mountains
Year Formed:	698 BC
Population:	Unknown
Races (%):	Beast-Men 100%
Languages:	Balok, Common
Religions:	Diosamblet
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Dr. Frantisek Markov
Darklord(s):	Dr. Frantisek Markov
Nationality:	Markovian
Analog:	The Island of Doctor Moreau

Local Fauna:

Markovia is ALIVE. There are animals of all kinds here, mostly of tropical varieties. Great cats, colorful birds, monkeys, bats, and more are all here in large numbers, living off the fertile plants that make up the forest of Markovia. Jungle is a more appropriate word for it or will be in a few more years, once the plant and animal life has removed all traces of its old position. There are still a few of the tougher animals alive here as well from where it was before, including a few older brown bears and at least one colony of badgers. For the most part, they've become extinct, unable to survive in the new environment where they suddenly found themselves competing with animals more suited for the temperature.

Markovia

Local Flora:

The fauna of Markovia is an odd mix. The currently vibrantly alive plants are all tropical, such as palms and beautiful flowers and orchids, but the overturned trunks of trees and the dead grass that lies in certain places are all from a much colder climate. The transition that happened when Markovia moved from the temperate climate in the Core to the tropical climate that it now has was not perfect, and as such many plants are still coming into their full size now, many years later.

This has given rise to a few unique plants, such as a needle-covered palm tree, referred to by the Beast-Men as "pine palms" and several other odd mixes. As time has passed, the island has been taken over mostly by the plants you'd expect in a warm and humid climate.

Native Horrors

The only monsters present on the island are the Beast-Men that Dr. Markov has created, as well as the doctor himself. Whether the Beast-Men really ARE monsters can be debated, but Dr. Markov certainly is.

Terrain type

The island is covered in forests except near the House of Diosamblet, and some of the villages where land has been cleared to make way for crops. Most of the domain sits on hills and mountain tops, a relic of its old placement within the Core, where it sat in the area between Hazlik and Barovia, high in the mountains. Strangely the ground became more fertile and less rocky when the domain moved, allowing for more of the Beast-Men to subsist on a decent diet.

Important Landmarks

House of Diosamblet

Surrounded by a 7' tall wooden palisade, the House of Diosamblet (the God Who Walks Among Us) is both a place of holiness and terror to the Beast-Men of Markovia. It is a rough-hewn manor made from the lumber that was available when Markovia was still in the Core, so it has an imported look. It sits on a low hill and is surrounded by a well-tended grassy field filled with flower and vegetable gardens - often tended to by the beautiful Delphi. While rough-hewn, the manor is well built from spruce, fire, and the like and is so tightly jointed that even a tropical storm and high winds cannot penetrate the walls, even with the roof being made from thatch.

There are plenty of windows, but no glass and shutters hang open during the day and are closed during the night. The House has four inhabitants, Dr. Frantisek Markov himself rules the house with a firm hand, performing his surgery in the laboratory whenever he can. Orson is his most trusted Beast-Man, created from a brown bear. Orson is slow, methodical, and loyal to a fault, but is not the smartest creature around, the only thing that Markov regrets about him. Orson spends most of his day tending to the grounds and during the night he retreats to a smaller building near the manor.

Felix is the cook of the house and was created from a leopard. Felix makes all the appearance of being a loyal servant, but sharp observers will note that he sometimes sneaks off to Akanga's village to report the goings-on at the House. Delphi is the final inhabitant and was created when a wounded dolphin washed ashore on Markovia. She's the youngest of the house's inhabitants and incredibly beautiful, but young and unaware of how the world works. She sees the doctor as her father, and while not accepting of his behavior, she is too cowed to do anything about it and simply sees it as "his nature". She is very curious and will try to observe any newcomers to the island, but when not distracted in this manner, she'll spend her time tending to the house and the gardens.

Monastery of the Lost

On the southern edge of the island stands a single stone monastery, and here can be found a splinter cell of the Order of the Guardians located in Hazlik. When Markovia moved, their monastery was moved with it, but they retained their original mandate: to keep magical artifacts and cursed objects away from the outside world and keep the world safe. The order hides a terrible secret though. One of the items that they keep safe is the Tablet of Life. Unfortunately, it



Markovia

was able to affect them when the domain moved, and they were all turned into mummies upon the transition. This is not readily apparent to any unwanted visitors (the monks do not generally let anyone in), but Dr. Markov has realized that there is something different about these monks, though he's not sure what. As such, the Beast-Men who are still loyal to him keep an eye on the monastery, but he and they leave it in peace.

Great Stone Men

The Great Stone Men are several large statues that are partially sunk into the northern beach and only appeared after Markovia was moved during the Grand Conjunction. They are partially submerged into the sands and only their heads, arms, and bare shoulders are visible. They seem to be stretching and trying to escape the pull from underneath the ground, and their faces, both male and female, are all contorted in pain and agony.

Towns and villages:

Abandoned Villages

There are several abandoned villages strewn across Markovia, all of which show varying degrees of technological refinement, far beyond that of the Beast-Men. These are the remnants of prior inhabitants of Markovia or the failed attempts of settlement here. The latest one was from Lamordia, and while the rest have fallen into decay, the Lamordian settlement is still recognizable. A small sign at the edge of the village read "Zuhauseweg" (translated into common it means "Home Away"). The ruins are often scoured by the Beast-Men looking for tools to use, while the inhabitants were taken away by Markov to be experimented on. None of the inhabitants survive in their old forms, and those that survived the drastic surgery of the doctor have forgotten who they were.

Akanga's Village

Akanga is perhaps the greatest success that Markov has ever experienced, but to the doctor's great disappointment the tiger Beast-Man turned out to be a traitor who turned his back on him. Akanga sought to overthrow the doctor but failed, and now spends his time licking his wounds and readying himself for another try.

This village of 100 souls is his fiefdom, and the Beast-Men that live here are all utterly loyal to him (as is Felix who lives within Markov's compound at the House of Diosamblet). The village is not very developed, with the huts being made from simple mud and sticks. For the Beast-Men though, they serve their purpose.

Neighboring domain(s):

Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Those who have been under the tender care of the doctor refer to those who haven't as clearskins — a clear sign that they know that they would no longer be considered as fellow members of whatever race they were before.

Frantisek Markov

"Hidden deep within the bowels of every living creature is the secret of life. By mastering the secret of life I will find the cure for my...condition.

So really, your sacrifice is for the greater good. You may be hiding the secrets to all life somewhere in your heart or stomach. At the very least I may learn how you handle pain.

Even that will be worth learning. "

~Frantisek Markov

Frantisek Markov is a tall man with broad features. He stands well over six feet tall but walks hunched over, sometimes even using his heavily muscled arms for support. He wears thick robes and leather gloves. Markov's eyes are black, perfectly matching the thick black hair he keeps slicked back. Frantisek talks slowly and carefully considers his words before speaking. If he is talking to someone that knows very little about the sciences, especially biology or chemistry, he will speak very slowly and use small words, as if the person he is speaking to is a particularly dense child.

Background: The Markovs were a minor noble family in Barovia when it was taken by the Dark Powers to form the first domain of Ravenloft. Several Markovs were in Castle Ravenloft the night that Strahd became a vampire and slew his brother. The lucky Markovs in the castle were slain when Strahd vented his rage and bloodlust on the wedding guests. The unlucky ones disappeared into the bowels of the castle and were never seen again.

The remaining Markovs fled the village of Barovia and settled in and around the village of Vallaki. It was on a small pig farm outside Vallaki that Frantisek Markov was born. Frantisek was an intelligent child, quick to outpace the tutors his family could afford, especially in the sciences of biology and chemistry. Despite his quick and eager mind, Frantisek seemed doomed to the life of a pig farmer.

Perhaps because of his interest in biology or because Frantisek seemed to have a certain way with knives, his family allowed him to butcher the hogs that were ready to go to market. Butchering the hogs gave the young boy a chance to study anatomy in a far more real way than studying books, and Frantisek began to indulge his curiosity. At first he would choose one pig from a herd and see how long it could last before the pain of being butchered killed it. He perfected a vari-

ety of alchemical concoctions that would paralyze the poor animal while he sliced it open. Frantisek made sure his custom elixirs wouldn't dull the animal's pain, lest some secret of its anatomy escape his notice. Soon he was vivisectioning two and three hogs at the same time while happily and efficiently butchering the rest of the herd for sale. Once Frantisek had learned all he could of hogs, he began to seek new prey.

At first, it was small animals around his farm, birds, cats, dogs, and rats. Then Frantisek would go into the woods and set traps for the animals that lived there. Soon he was experimenting on wolves, squirrels and even the occasional bear. As Frantisek grew older, strangers that visited his village sometimes disappeared. Their clothes and money would be found in the woods around Vallaki. The villagers assumed the fools had tried to save some coin by spending the night in the woods around the village and paid for it with their lives. The truth was far worse. Frantisek started his greatest experiments, grafting parts from one creature to another. The surgery proved fatal for both creatures, but Frantisek never worried. The ones that lived were abandoned to the forest, and the ones that didn't were given to the pigs.

If his family knew of his experiments, they indulged them. It gave the boy something to do and good butchers were hard to find. If nothing else Frantisek was a talented butcher.

When he was a young man his family arranged for him to marry one of the local women in Vallaki. Ludmilla was beautiful, friendly, and several of her suitors were crushed to see her married to a butcher, even if his family was well connected.

Frantisek took money he had saved from butchering animals for the local farmers and the occasional trusting stranger and opened a butcher shop in the village. At first things went well. Frantisek and Ludmilla made a decent living carving animals and always had something to eat, and when the butcher shop closed Frantisek retreated to his labs to continue his experiments. At first Ludmilla was glad to be away from her distant and intimidating husband, but soon became curious about his experiments.

One night Frantisek, usually so careful, left the door to his laboratory unlocked. His wife, overcome with curiosity, opened the door and screamed at what she saw inside. Dead animals, twitching halves of beasts and unholy combinations of animals no god ever dreamed of stared at her with pleading eyes. They were silently begging her for release from a life of pain. She only

Frantisek Markov

stopped screaming when she saw her husband, staring at her, eyes wild with rage. Lady Markov berated her husband and threatened to tell the village of Frantisek's sick secrets. Frantisek grabbed his wife and drug her into his lab, slamming the door shut. She lived for three days. When Ludmilla could no longer serve his curiosity, Markov dumped her body in the forest as he had with so many other victims, but it proved to be a nearly fatal mistake. At first hunters thought they had found a horribly mangled beast, but when they moved closer they saw the once familiar face on the butchered corpse. Ludmilla was pretty and popular, and when her corpse was found, the village wanted answers. They came to the butcher shop at night and broke down the door. Frantisek was found in his lab and the dozens of missing travelers, hundreds of dead mutilated animals, and unnumbered vile experiments suddenly had a cause. The mob dragged Frantisek into the village square and began pelting him with stones. Markov, desperate to escape, charged through the mob and dashed headlong into the mists. When the mists finally cleared, he had been given his domain, Markovia.

Current Sketch: Frantisek is a master at surgically vivisecting creatures and combining the best and worst aspects into one hideous whole. The monstrous creatures Frantisek creates live, even though they shouldn't, and spend their lives in hideous pain. The creatures won't attack Markov, but any creature not given Markov's protection will be immediately attacked.



Markov is desperate to get his human body back. He frantically operates on creatures he finds on his island to try and uncover their secrets. He is convinced that the Dark Powers have hidden the secrets of his human form inside one of the animals on his island. Frantisek spends long hours in his labs dissecting creatures,

making new monsters, and desperately searching for a cure for his condition. Since Markovia was flung into the Sea of Sorrows during the Grand Conjunction, his test subjects have become increasingly few and far between. Because of this, Markov is careful to make sure his subjects are thoroughly vivisected, and every inch of their anatomy explored and observed before he combines them with other creatures and casts them aside. Markov descended into madness long ago, and the dark power will never let his research succeed.

Darklord's Tactics: The Dark Powers have gifted Markov with the ability to shapechange into any beast at will. Markov gains the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution plus any special abilities of his new form, while retaining his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Markov's attacks vary with his form, but he is a master at playing to the strengths of his many forms. No matter what form he chooses, Markov's head always remains the same, meaning he can never have a bite attack or any other ability associated with a bite attack (venom for instance). Markov can no longer assume his original form, but usually chooses the shape of a gorilla. Markov tries to pass himself off as a massive human and hides his body under thick robes and heavy gloves..

Borders: When Markov closes the borders, the seas around Markovia become rough and push any boats back towards the rocky shore. Sharks swim in the waters waiting for any sailor unfortunate enough to fall into the water.



Frantisek Markov

Frantisek Markov

Frantisek Markov

Huge monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 287 (25d12 + 125)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +9, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +11, Deception +8, Medicine +11, Perception +6, Performance +8, Persuasion +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Balok, Common, Mordentish, Tepestani, Vaasi

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Blessing of the Mists. Frantisek is shielded against divination magic, as though protected by a *non-detection* spell.

Keen Senses. Frantisek has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, hearing, or smell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Frantisek fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Frantisek has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mimicry. Frantisek can mimic simple sounds he has heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Shapechanger. Frantisek can use his action to polymorph into any Huge or smaller beast with a CR equal to or lower than his own. When he does so, he regains 2d6 hit points and gains the statistics of the chosen animal with the following exceptions.

- He retains his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores.
- He always has his own face and not the face of the animal. Because of this, Frantisek can never have a bite attack.
- He can only take the Move and Frightening Gaze Legendary Actions.
- He retains his own hit points but gains temporary hit points equal to twice the chosen animal form's CR. These temporary hit points disappear if Frantisek changes form again.

Rampage. When Frantisek reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, Frantisek can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make an unarmed strike attack.

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Frantisek can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls he makes during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Create Broken Ones. Markov can transform any Medium-size or Large animal, beast or humanoid into a broken one (see appendix). The creature must be helpless, and Markov must devote at least eight hours a day to the meticulous surgeries that the transformation requires. The process takes 3d6 days, after which the creature emerges as a broken one. Creatures rescued after the transformation has begun but before it is complete suffer 1d4 permanent Constitution drain each day they are out of Markov's care.

Actions

Multiattack. Frantisek makes three unarmed strikes or hurls two rocks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (7d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Legendary Actions

Frantisek can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Frantisek regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. Frantisek moves up to his speed.

Fist Attack. Frantisek makes an unarmed strike.

Rock Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Frantisek hurls a rock.

Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). Frantisek fixes his gaze on one creature he can see within 10 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Frantisek's gaze for the next 24 hours.

Lair Actions

While Frantisek is in the House of Diosamblet, he can take lair actions as long as he is not incapacitated. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Frantisek can take the following lair action options, or forgo using any of them that round:

Until initiative count 20 of the next round, Frantisek can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there. As he does, he appears to disappear into them like a chameleon.

Frantisek channels his power as a Darklord in an attempt to deform one creature he can see in his lair. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of the polymorph spell until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Frantisek does not need to concentrate on the spell when cast this way. Frantisek can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

The image features a dark, atmospheric landscape of a sea and mountains, framed by an ornate, gothic-style border. The scene is dimly lit, with a low sun or moon casting a soft, golden glow across the water and the peaks of the mountains. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, and the overall mood is somber and melancholic. The title "Sea of Sorrows" is prominently displayed in the upper center of the image, rendered in a stylized, white, serif font with a subtle shadow effect. The border is highly detailed, with intricate scrollwork and floral motifs, characteristic of gothic or Victorian-era decorative arts.

Sea of Sorrows

Sea of Sorrows



The Sea of Sorrows is the only domain that was created without a Darklord, though one did eventually emerge to take control of it. The Sea is an exercise in futility, made even more so after the arrival of Captain van Riese. The Sea was supposedly created to house the Islands of Terror, and has become home to a number of pirates, such as Urdogen the Red (a ghost pirate who has been soundly trounced by Captain Pieter in the past when he became too unruly), to the Seawolves of the Finger in Lamordia and others. As such, it is a dangerous domain, but made more so by the presence of the mists that obscure everything. This means that routes can differ for different ships. Two ships that set out on the same heading do not always arrive at the same location, nor is the location always the same later on. This is not helped by the inability of those travelling on the seas to distinguish between the Sea of Sorrow itself and the surrounding mists. As such they often end up in entirely different locations that have no physical connection with the Sea of Sorrows.

This effect became more pronounced after the arrival of van Riese, always frustrating his attempts to map the sea and plot out routes. Only when his ship has been chartered by others will he arrive at the location he intends.

Adventures on the Sea of Sorrows should feature this frustrating inability to carefully plan where a ship is headed. Dungeon Masters should use this to their advantage and introduce complications or new adventures where they can.

"Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and oftentimes we call a man cold when he is only sad."

~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Culture Level:
Climate & Terrain:

Varies by island and ship
Temperate to cold, ocean
with the islands varying from
that

Year Formed:
Population:

630 BC
1,300 (does not include
those living on the islands
belonging to other domains)

Races (%):
Languages:

Humans 99%, Other 1%
Common, Darkonese,
Lamordian, Mordentish
Any (most sailors revere
Ezra or Hala)

Religions:

Government:

No government — each
island might have its own

Ruler(s):
Darklord(s):
Nationality:
Analog:

None
Captain Pieter van Riese
None
The cold oceans of the
world

Local Fauna:

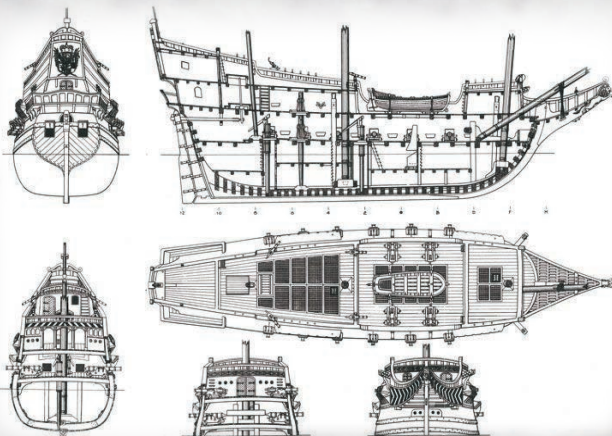
The islands in the Sea of Sorrows vary wildly in who or what lives on them. But the Sea of Sorrows itself is a mostly cold ocean, one that holds whales, herrings, the occasional giant squid, and salmon. Mackerel and other types of fish can be caught as well, though the exact types vary by location — especially near the isles the change in species can be drastic. Of all the normal species of animals that live here, sharks are the greatest threat as they are plentiful in these cold waters.

Local Flora:

There are no flowers or grasses that grow on the Sea itself, though the islands can hold all kinds of plants. The main vegetation in the Sea of Sorrows are things like algae and seaweed, but these are all so far below the surface that most travelers across the Sea itself see nothing more than the mists that hang above the waters.

Native Horrors

No one seems to know what lurks beneath dark waves, apart from the fish and such, but there are rumors of all kinds of monsters lurking beneath the waves, from weresharks, sirens, and the seawolves to rumors of a kraken. Of course, ghost ships are the most famous threats, with the Relentless being the primary one among them.



Sea of Sorrows

Terrain type

The Sea of Sorrows itself is featureless, broken only by the islands. It is cold for most of the year and perpetually swathed in mist.

Important Landmarks

Relentless

The Relentless is the ship that Captain Pieter van Riese brought with him when he entered the mists. It is a ghost ship, but with concentration, the captain can force it to become physical. He normally does this to take on passengers and fare or bring new sailors into the fold. The ship is only crewed by the Captain himself when it is in its ghostly form, but when in physical form its crew reappears — though none of them know where they went in the meantime, which causes temporary crewmembers a degree of difficulty with finding out where and when they are — especially as the ship appears capable of traveling both in place AND time — but the Captain can only direct the direction when he has active passengers. The ship itself is a large ship, an exploration vessel more than a trading vessel, built for speed and combat when needed.

It appears heavily armed but has never really needed them, due to its ghostly nature. Only when van Riese wants to show his power does it retain physical form in combat.

Towns and villages:

None on the sea itself, though several islands are inhabited.

Neighboring domain(s):

Blaustein
Darkon
Dementlieu
Dominia
Ghastria
Lamordia
Markovia
Mordent
Valachan

Fun Fact:

Captain van Riese isn't the only captain who has had trouble plotting the islands and routes of the Sea of Sorrows, as the islands move around in unpredictable patterns. This is normally not visible from other islands due to the heavy fog that always hangs over the ocean.



Captain Pieter van Riese

"I do not fail.

I have been through fields of ice as far as the eye can see. I have braved storms that froze men to the decks of my ship.

I do not fail.

I do not know where my ship and I sail. I do not know where this damnable sea and its shifting, floating islands comes from, but I will tame it.

I will find its secrets and I will bend it to my will. I do not fail."

~Pieter van Riese

In life Pieter van Riese was a broad shouldered man with weathered features, his dark eyes constantly scanning the horizon. His hair and beard were dark, a touch of grey appearing at the temples and at his mouth's corners. In death he appears much the same, yet a chill clings to him, and his hair and beard shift and move as if he was in a violent storm. When he speaks his breath is visible, as if he talks in the depths of winter. Despite this, Pieter never complains of the cold and seems comfortable, no matter the weather.

Captain Riese's ship, the *Relentless*, is an extremely well armed and maintained merchant ship. Its timbers have been worn by years of harsh weather and the sea. Like its master, the ship is an apparition, and perceptive individuals see through the ship and captain, especially at the hours of dawn and dusk.

Background: Captain Pieter van Riese spent his life on the open sea, and continues to do so in death.. He started as a cabin boy serving on a merchant ship hailing from the Netherlands of Gothic Earth, and through hard work and boundless ambition, slowly rose up the ranks of sailors until he could afford to purchase and outfit his own ship. This, Riese christened the *Relentless*. The Captain seemed to have an innate understanding of the ocean and sailing, predicting storms and sailing his ship through the worst of them without losing a single sailor. Despite his mastery of the sea, Riese cut a haunting figure amongst the sailors of Gothic Earth. Discipline was strictly enforced on his ship, with harsh punishment meted out for the smallest of infractions. Any sailor that questioned the captain or his methods would soon find themselves bound hand and foot and thrown to the sharks that followed the *Relentless*.

Riese was a wealthy man, but money meant nothing to him. His sole cares were his ship and his reputation for doing the impossible. It was this reputation that would spell Riese's doom.

In a forgotten port in the Far East of Gothic Earth, whilst unloading cargo, Riese first heard of the legendary Northwest Passage. The means to travel from Europe to Asia by traveling through the icy waters north of the American continent, a ship that could find that passage could transport cargo from Europe to Asia in less than half the time of other ships, and gain fame and untold wealth.

Riese attempted to find the Northwest Passage twice, but crushing icebergs and violent blizzards made him turn back each time. For Riese, this was completely unacceptable. Riese had sailed his ship through hurricanes, pirates, and doldrums, only to be defeated by ice. He began to obsess about finding the passage. When he sailed to find the passage a third time, Riese would not be defeated.

As ice and snow closed in around the *Relentless*, Riese ordered the ship onward. The crew grew nervous as the ice closed in, and lost their nerve when the *Relentless* was battered by high seas, icebergs the size of mountains threatening to smash the ship to tinder. A blizzard was closing in, and already the air was freezing, as the snow fell heavily. The crew appointed a spokesman to take their concerns to the captain. They wished to abandon the *Relentless*, and man lifeboats back to safety and civilization.

Riese was far past simple enrageement. He strangled the spokesman with his bare hands, and told the crew that they would either find the passage or die trying. The crew, defeated, returned to their positions and prayed to whatever gods they held dear. The blizzard grew stronger and stronger, the air seemed to freeze and snow fell so thick it was a white sheet that obscured everything.

Riese, realizing he and his ship were doomed, called out to any being that would listen, offering up the lives of his men if any entity would allow himself and the *Relentless* to make the passage. Something dark reached out from the edges of sanity, accepting Riese's offer. The crew was torn from the ship, and the *Relentless* and her captain lost their physical forms and became apparitions sailing through a mist bound sea. When the mist cleared Riese found himself in a new sea.

Captain Pieter van Riese

Current Sketch: Riese travels the Sea of Sorrows endlessly. He seeks to return to Gothic Earth and prove that the Northwest Passage is real and that he discovered it. He charts the islands he finds in the Sea of Sorrows, but this relatively simple task constantly vexes him.

The island of the Sea of Sorrow moves. Riese constantly corrects his charts, only to sail further and find the same island in a new location in a different area of the sea. As a proud sailor and ship master, this is intolerable. Riese cannot leave the *Relentless*, nor can the ship leave the sea. The *Relentless* endlessly crisscrosses the Sea of Sorrows, desperately trying to make sense of the madness.

For sailors on the Sea of Sorrows, the *Relentless* is a dark omen of storms and bloodshed. Haunted stories are told of the *Relentless* appearing just before plague descends on a ship, rogue waves shatter the hull, or a storm appears on the horizon.

When Captain Riese wills it, the *Relentless* can become solid and can even carry cargo and passengers for an extended period of time. Riese can control the ship with an act of will, the sails adjusting themselves, and the ropes tying and untying themselves from the rigging at his command. Riese will not act like this is unusual or respond to any questions about it.

Darklord's Tactics: Riese is a fearless combatant. His touch freezes skin, and saps the heat from the bones of his victims. Riese attacks with a scooping motion that tears large gobbets of flesh from his victim. Riese can dominate the minds of any creature that meets his gaze, and uses these poor fools as his lackeys on land.

Any creature seeing the *Relentless* will be frozen in fear at the dire portents that surround the ship. Some unfortunate victims will stay that way until the ship passes from sight.

Borders: When Riese closes the borders of the Sea of Sorrows, the sea is surrounded by a thick wall of fog. Ships that sail into the wall find themselves leaving it seconds, hours, or weeks later in a different part of the Sea. Riese can prevent ships from reaching the islands in the Sea of Sorrows, but cannot land on the islands themselves, or enter the domains of other darklords and Riese has no control over them.



Captain Pieter van Riese

Medium undead (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Cha +7

Skills History +6, Investigation +6, Nature +6, Stealth +6, Survival +3

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Summon Bowlyns. Pieter calls upon the damned spirits of the sailors that were doomed in the seas to assist him. 2D4+1 bowlyns appear to assist him. This ability can be used two times per day.

Summon Shadows. Pieter draws power from the negative energy of the seas to summon 1d6 shadow monsters to aid him. This ability can be used once per day.

Captain Pieter van Riese

Misty Escape. Pieter's instinctive connection to the Mists allows him to escape from the danger of certain area effects, such as a red dragon's fiery-breath or a *fireball* spell. When he is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, if he succeeds on the saving throw he may use his reaction to Misty Step to the nearest unoccupied square, up to 20ft away and instead he takes no damage.

Misty Vision. Fighting in heavily obscured areas no longer troubles Pieter. Pieter can see through mist as if he had a 15ft blindsight.

Misty Form. Pieter moves so fluidly through the Mist, it is difficult for his foes to track him. When he uses Misty Step, he may then cast *mirror image* as part of the same bonus action without requiring spell components. These duplicates move with Pieter as normal. He may use this ability three times per day.

Mist Clone. Pieter can shape the Mist around him to form a tangible duplicate of himself to aid him in combat. As an action, choose an unoccupied space within 20ft. A clone of Pieter appears in that square and is physically identical to him in appearance, including carried equipment— with the exception that all carried equipment on the clone has no magical properties. This ability lasts for 1 minute and cannot be used again until he finishes a long rest. The clone's ability scores, hit points, proficiency bonus and AC are identical to Pieter's stats at the moment of activating this ability, excluding any additional magic bonus(es) he might have had active— with the exception that the damage it deals is magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. In addition it uses Pieter's Charisma modifier for all attack and damage rolls, and any attacks that the clone makes use only the base damage for the weapon it is wielding, regardless if the weapon(s) you were wielding had additional magical properties when activating this ability. If the clone is required to make a saving throw, roll a d20 and add 3 to determine whether it succeeds or fails. As the clone is formed through Pieter's deep connection to the Mist, it can fight alongside him without requiring actions to issue it commands. Acting on Pieter's turn, he may have the duplicate take the following actions, in addition to its move action: The clone can take the attack action and can take a bonus action to attack if Pieter was wielding two weapons when he created the duplicate. The clone can interact with an object. The clone can Misty Step. The clone can take the Help action. The clone cannot speak or take any additional actions, reaction, or bonus actions other than the ones listed above, except actions taken in an attempt to free itself from a spell or condition— like escaping a grapple or trying to break free from a *web* spell. If the clone's hit points drop to 0 or if a spell or effect would cause it to no longer be on the same plane of existence as Pieter, it is destroyed. It is also immune to being charmed, frightened, petrified, poisoned and paralyzed.

Ethereal Sight. Pieter can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Pieter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. Pieter can manipulate the mists found in the seas. Pieter's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *fog cloud*, *misty step*

3/Day each: *dominate person*, *solid fog**, *tidal wave*, *wall of fog**

1/Day each: *cloudkill*, *conjure air elemental*

Cloak of Mists. Tendrils of mist form and constantly wrap around Pieter protectively. Creatures targeting Pieter with ranged attacks suffer disadvantage on their attack rolls. A spell that creates strong winds such as *gust* stops the cloak from protecting the wearer for 1d4 turns.

Actions

Shortsword +1. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) Necrotic damage + 1d12 cold damage.

Pieter's Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of Pieter that can see him must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to Pieter's Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring. If a target dies from this effect, they are transformed into Bowlyns and become part of Pieter's crew after 24 hours.

Etherealness. Pieter enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. He is visible on the Material Plane while he is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet he can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Reactions

Misty Veil. Pieter adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Pieter must be able to see the attacker.

The Isle



The Isle



The Isle has no other name as none of the natives care, Dr. Ramsay doesn't care either, and few enough people survive landing here to provide it with any other name. At this point, since it's been there for more than 100 years, the sailors of the Sea of Sorrows simply name it the Isle or "The Midnight Isle" due to the fact that it is always night on the island and the waters immediately surrounding it. The Darklord of the Isle, Dr. Blake, is obsessed with harvesting a pair of fresh blue eyes for his daughter Liza — who is kept restrained, as a flesh golem, in the basement of the Ramsay Manor. He has played with life, trying to sustain her after an accident killed her, following which he raised her in her current monstrous form. To this end, he slaughtered his wife and his two boys, for parts to keep Liza alive. Adventures on the Isle should focus on surviving the attacks of Dr. Blake and his attempts to obtain new eyes for his daughter, or on the destruction of the monstrous man and his dread creation. They should show the folly of trying to sustain life beyond a certain point, and the manic insanity of a man obsessed with preserving his legacy.

The soul, fortunately, has an interpreter - often an unconscious but still a faithful interpreter - in the eye."

~ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, mountains
Year Formed:	652 BC
Population:	Unknown
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	None (the natives), Common, Falkovnian, Mordentish, Vaasi (Dr. Blake)
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	None
Darklord(s):	Dr. Blake Ramsay
Nationality:	None (the natives), Mordentish (Dr. Blake)
Analog:	English countryside

Local Fauna:

There are a large number of deer on the Isle, which helps sustain the natives. Apart from these, only smaller animals survive here, and there are no natural predators. However, a large population of bats swarms the island, and they attack larger animals and people. There are many poisonous spiders on the Isle, which tend to crawl into sleeping bags and under blankets during the night.

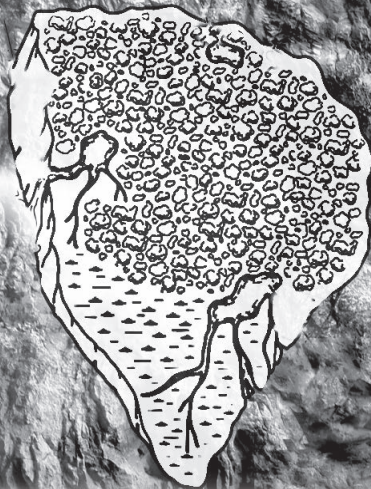
Local Flora:

The Isle is mostly covered in grassy areas and the deciduous forest that the natives hide in. There are no strange plants or weird creations here, only the natural plants and vegetation that are to be expected in a temperate forest. The forest is unusually dense, and progress off the beaten path is slow. The natives use this to their advantage to avoid both the zombies and the loose flesh golem as well as any visitors to the island. Somehow the trees and other vegetation that survive on the island do so without sunlight.

Native Horrors

The Isle is remarkably safe for a domain, with the only threats posed by Dr. Ramsay, a flesh golem (an attempt to create an entirely new body for his daughter Liza, an attempt that failed and subsequently escaped), and a large number of zombies. The zombies are Ramsay's victims that underwent torture and surgery (all have at least one eye missing, and many miss limbs or both eyes) in his insane attempts to harvest new eyes and invent new procedures. These creatures escaped and mindlessly stalked the island.

The Isle



The Isle

Terrain type

The Isle is a small island, some 20 miles wide by 30 miles long, with the south side of the island descending towards the sea, while the north rises to cliffs several hundred feet high. Forest covers the northern end, and a large lake dominates the center. The main feature of the island is the perpetual darkness. As with the clock in the Ramsay Manor (see below), the whole of the Isle is stuck at the cusp of midnight on All Hallow's Eve. The moon is always visible in the sky, nearing its apex.

Important Landmarks

Ramsay Manor

Ramsay Manor is a large manor sitting on the northern edge of the Isle. It is made from strong, but aged wood and it is caked in the dust of a century of disuse. Behind the house is a large hedge maze. The rooms inside are as they were when the tragedy happened a century ago, with the only room that is impeccably clean being that of Liza — Dr. Ramsay takes great care to keep that room EXACTLY as it was for when his daughter comes back to him. A large grandfather clock stands in the living room of the manor, stuck at one minute to midnight, unable to move until the day the curse is lifted. Like it, the Isle itself is stuck in time and will not move forward until it does. While the rooms in the manor are unremarkable in themselves, several of the rooms are haunted by the ghosts of Dr. Ramsay's family — the remains of the wife and two sons who he brutally murdered, and later burned in the wood stove to keep warm as he worked on his daughter's body. They are perpetually stuck here, a constant reminder to the doctor of his failure. Underneath the manor lies true horror, as it is here, in the basement, that the doctor conducts his experiments. A large operating theater is where he conducts his gruesome experiments, never using anesthetic or any other form of sedation on his victims as he carves out their eyes and removes their limbs. This is where his daughter, now in the form of a flesh golem, is strapped to a gurney in a side room, and cells hold the victims that he plans to use, and the ones who have been discarded afterward. Sometimes some of the discarded ones escape, but Ramsay never spends time on improving security. It has no importance to him.

South Lake of the Isle

The lake is quite large and the source of freshwater for the natives of the Isle. It isn't as filled with life as Squirrel Pond to the north of it. It is a favorite hunting ground for the natives as they lie in wait for deer to come here to drink.

Squirrel Pond

Located to the west of Ramsay Manor, Squirrel Pond is the main source of freshwater for the manor itself. It is cleaner than is normal for a pond and teeming with fish like carp and trout. The natives sometimes sneak up here, when food is scarce, to access its resources while attempting to remain unseen by Dr. Ramsay.

White Falls

White Falls is a series of waterfalls on the western edge of the Isle. The footing is treacherous here and freak gusts of wind rise up out of nowhere, which is strong enough to even knock over powerful creatures.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Sea of Sorrows

Fun Fact:

Due to the lack of sunlight on the Isle, the natives are so pale that in other domains they would be considered albinos. In truth, they bear a stark resemblance to many cave-dwelling animals who never see the sun either, including pale skin and oversized eyes.



Dr. Blake Ramsay

"You have blue eyes! Excellent. Her eyes were blue before she fell.

Can you see? I mean, do you have good eyesight?

Don't mind the spiders, several varieties live on the island.

Don't change the subject, is your eyesight good?

Actually a large group of spiders is called a cluster, not a swarm, stop changing the subject.

CAN YOU SEE?

You can? Excellent, excellent.

Now, you are going to feel a few dozen painful stabs, that's the fangs. You will be dead soon.

You were dead the second you set foot on my island, but don't worry, your eyes will live on."

~ Dr Blake Ramsay

Dr Blake Ramsay is a short rotund man with thinning black hair and beady eyes. The doctor dresses in well tailored but functional clothes without decoration. He wears glasses connected to a gold chain that runs to his lapel. Ramsay has quick sure hands that constantly twitch as if looking for something to do. Ramsay doesn't like people and never looks someone in the eye when he talks to them. The good doctor is only capable of short conversations with anyone other than his daughter before he becomes irritable and starts looking around, almost as if he wants to flee. If Ramsay becomes angry or annoyed by a chatty guest, he will summon a pack of wolves or swarm of stinging insects to bedevil his guests, and take the opportunity to make his exit.

Background: In the dead of night, Dr Blake Ramsay loaded his wife, Lady Helen Ramsay, and daughter, Lyza, into a boat he had purchased in secret, and fled the domain of Mordentshire, scant minutes ahead of ruthless bounty hunters. Ramsay was a brilliant researcher who was relentless in his search for the truth, and that was why he had to flee. Ramsay cared little for such mundane things as curing a disease or replacing a defective organ without killing the patient. Such things were child's play for the doctor. What Ramsay wanted to discover was the nature and limits of pain.

How much pain could someone take? A man? A woman? A child? What would happen if he removed an organ without anesthesia? What would happen if he removed the pain centers of the brain? What would happen if he stimulated the pain centers beyond what a mortal could possibly endure? Ramsay had to know the answers to these questions.

Understandably, Blake had trouble finding volunteers to help him with his research. He began to take them from the undesirables of Mordentshire. At first he took in beggars and homeless, but soon he wanted different patients. Undesirables were sickly and poorly fed. Their ability to withstand pain was limited compared to a healthy patient, so Ramsay began to find his subjects from the wealthy. Soon the children of the elite began to disappear, only to reappear two weeks later with their organs removed, their scalps pulled back and their brains pierced with silver needles. The lucky ones were found dead.

None of the survivors knew what happened. All they remembered was blinding pain and a cold detached voice asking them questions they couldn't possibly answer.

As Ramsay pursued his research on his unwilling subjects, he began to lose all caution. Things fell apart one night when a cry was raised as he struggled with a surprisingly strong subject. The doctor turned to see nearly a dozen people racing to stop him. They had seen his face, as had his hapless "volunteer". Desperate, Ramsay slit the throat of the man and fled into the darkness. He and his family left Mordentshire less than twelve hours later.

Ramsay and his family sailed for days before reaching a lonely island. Ramsay began to build a house and a laboratory for himself and his family. He was aided by a group of silent islanders that appeared to aid him, then vanished from the island.

The doctor realized he would never be able to complete his research on this island, and began to look for an heir to complete his work after his passing. Blake was fond of his daughter, who had a brilliant mind, but he wondered if he could produce an heir that was better able to continue his research. Ramsay's wife soon fell pregnant and their second child, Gregory, was born. Gregory's body was covered in weeping sores and his body was sickly and twisted. After a few years, Blake's wife gave birth to a second son, Blake Jr. The child was cold and distant, but never developed his father's brilliance. Blake soon dismissed his

Dr. Blake Ramsay

son as a dullard and concentrated all his efforts on his daughter. The doctor made his daughter study endlessly, with very few breaks to sleep, eat, or play. It was during one of these breaks that as she took the airs, Ramsay watched her slip from the cliffs that surrounded the island. Blake sprinted down the three hundred foot cliff face, to find the broken body of his daughter.

Ramsay brought her body back to his laboratory and started working. He would not be robbed of his only chance at immortality by something so trivial as death. For two weeks Blake labored to fix his daughter, refusing food and sleep. The accident had driven Blake mad, and in his madness he found strength.

After two weeks of failure Ramsay heard a voice in the back of his mind telling him to use his wife and sons to fix his daughter. Ramsay raced to his home and slaughtered his family. He brought the corpses back to his lab and carefully repaired his daughter. At midnight her eyes snapped open and she asked what had transpired. Although his daughter seemed like she was alive, Blake was horrified to discover that her eyes, once a deep blue, were now an almost venomous green. Blake has tried dozens of times since that night to replace his daughter's eyes, but they always revert to green.

Current Sketch: Despite his intelligence and careful note taking, Ramsay doesn't realize he's been on the Isle for over a century. The doctor believes he has been on the island for a few years at the most, but is desperate to restore his daughter so she can take over his research before he dies. Ramsay continues to kill any trespassers on his island to try and find the eyes he believes will make his daughter whole. When the mists and the sea don't present victims for his daughter, Ramsay spends his time in the lab. His research into the border between life and death is his only true love.

The ghosts of his wife and son continue to haunt him, interrupting his research and helping anyone foolish or unlucky enough to find the Isle. They cannot physically affect anything on the Isle, but the animals and beasts that live on the Isle find their presence deeply unsettling. The good doctor also possesses a copy of *The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight*, and an intellect syringe. *The Revelations* is an ancient tome whose teachings are so heretical that the Church of Ezra and the church of bane consider it heresy. The Church of Ezra condemns anyone who reads the book. The Church of Bane has the book burned and its owner slain or burned with the book.

The book was written in 702 by Renthon Vorishtok, a monk of the Borcan order. Renthon was a cleric of exceptional ability that claimed he could cure plagues and banish famine through acts of faith alone. At first the Borcan order thought Renthon was a font of holy power, but he soon descended into hubris and madness. Renthon demanded to be the head of the order, and was forced to flee the wrath of angry monks.

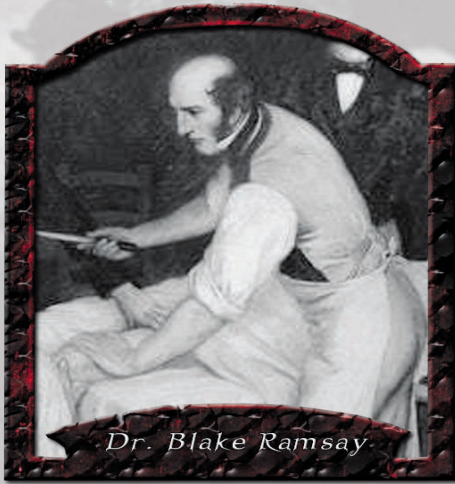
He wondered the domains until he came to the broken shores of Lamordia. The domain was in the depths of winter and Renthon was weak from lack of food and shelter. As night fell Renthon was visited by the Prince of Twilight. The Prince talked to Renthon, telling him how every mortal had been cheated and damaged years ago. Mortals used to possess two souls. The Prince told Renthon how to summon his other soul from the beyond, and instructed the cleric to write his instructions down. Renthon disappeared shortly after the Grand Conjunction, leaving over 1,000 copies of the text in his house.

The intellect syringe is a syringe with a sturdy six inch needle, magically hardened and sharpened. By driving the needle into the brain of an intelligent creature and drawing out their cerebral fluid (a process which takes about 10 minutes and kills the victim), and then injecting the fluid directly into his own brain, the doctor can increase his intelligence dramatically for a short time.

Darklord's Tactics: The good doctor has no combat abilities, and has no interest in learning. Learning how to fight would take away from his research and Blake doesn't need the skills anyway. Ramsay is effectively immortal, even grievous wounds healing instantly. The doctor can step into a shadow and reappear in any shadow on the island. Ramsay can control any monster on the island and enjoys swarming his enemies with stinging flies and monstrous hairy spiders. No matter how desperate the combat becomes, Blake will never go for his opponent's eyes, his daughter may need them.

Borders: When Dr Ramsay closes the border, any ship or desperate swimmer attempting to flee disappears once it reaches 100 yards from shore and reappears on one of the beaches of the Isle.

Dr. Blake Ramsay



Dr. Blake Ramsay

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Int +6

Skills Deception +4, History +6, Medicine +8, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +5

Senses passive Perception 23

Languages Common, Mordentish, Falkovnian, Vaasi

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shadow Door. Ramsay can step from one shadow into another. When he is in dim light or darkness, as a bonus action he can teleport up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see that is also in dim light or darkness. He then has advantage on the first melee attack he makes before the end of the turn. If Ramsay is restrained while he uses this ability, his shackles are left behind and he is freed. He can use this ability only within the confinements of his manor.

Rejuvenation. Due to the powerful curse that the doctor has brought onto his family, he can be killed only if flames engulf his entire family and him at once. Any blow that would indicate death merely places him in a deathlike state for 1 round, from which he awakens fully rejuvenated and aware. All of his hit points are healed and any missing body parts are regenerated.

Timeless. Ramsay is not affected by the passing of time. In addition, he is immune to age affecting abilities

Control Over The Unnatural. Ramsay has total control over all of the unnatural creatures such as the Demonic Sawflies, Death Linen, Living Webs and Zombies, found in his domain.

Trapped Inside. Blake Ramsay cannot leave the manor. If forcibly removed from the premises, he immediately fades away and reappears somewhere inside the house within 1 round.

Healer. Ramsay is an able physician, allowing him to mend wounds quickly and get his allies back in the fight. When he uses a healer's kit to stabilize a dying creature, that creature also regains 1 hit point. As an action, Ramsay can spend one use of a healer's kit to tend to a creature and restore 1d6 + 4 hit points to it, plus additional hit points equal to the creature's maximum number of Hit Dice. The creature can't regain hit points from this feat again until it finishes a short or long rest.

Observant. Quick to notice details of his environment, if Ramsay can see a creature's mouth while it is speaking a language he understands, Ramsay can interpret what it's saying by reading its lips. In addition, Ramsay has a +5 bonus to his passive Wisdom (Perception) (included) and passive Intelligence (Investigation) scores.

Create Horror. Ramsay can spend 12 hours to create a Zombie or 30 days to create a Flesh Golem provided that he has the appropriate materials such as body parts.

Homunculus Servant. Ramsay was given a pet homunculus by a wizard. As a bonus action, Ramsay can command the homunculus (MM, pg. 188) to take an action.

Actions

Scalpel. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Extract Eyes. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one incapacitated humanoid. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) slashing damage and one of the target's eyes is extracted. If both eyes are extracted, the target is permanently blinded.

Intellect Syringe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated and restrained humanoid. *Hit:* The target remains incapacitated and dies if a *greater restoration* or a *heal* spell is not cast on it within 10 minutes. Ramsay immediately gains 1d6 points of Intelligence, up to a maximum of 20. The Intelligence increase lasts for one month, after which the points fade away at the rate of one point per week. Immediately after injecting the foreign brain fluids, Ramsay must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or lose one point of Wisdom. If Ramsay's Wisdom is reduced to 3 or less, the recipient immediately becomes homicidally insane, with no saving throw allowed. The insanity can be cured by a *wish* or a *heal* spell.

Significant Possessions

Intellect Syringe, Book: "The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight"

The Eastern Sea

"I'm drowning in the violent seas.....Shallow end of misery, please take me away.....Screaming for a place like home."

~Violent Seas, Taproot

Overview

What lies beneath the surface of dark and violent waters? Sometimes it is best not to know, but uncertainty fills in the gaps within our minds. What is worse – to know the terror lurking, stalking, and waiting; or to imagine the threat is real, when nothing is there? To see your blood staining the water, your entrails no more than chum for aquatic demons, as you beg for the cold, dark silence of drowning? Or to watch as the shadows beneath the waves reveal the true size of the leviathan that pursues you?

The unrelenting squalls of The Nocturnal Sea have been the downfall of many a daring captain and crew. Forging into the unknown is their calling. Their reluctance to turn back their doom. There is a fine line between bravery and folly, and the violence of the waves obscures it mercilessly.

The Domains within The Nocturnal Sea (**Vechor, L'île de la Tempête, The Isle of Ravens, Liffe, and the islands of Nebligtode in the nocturnal sea**) are difficult to reach, and even more difficult from which to return. The geographies and climates of the islands, even at the same latitude, vary greatly.

Preparing an excursion to one is likely to leave a crew unprepared for reaching the shores of another. When the winds assail the masts and the waters cover the decks, solace in one's own thoughts becomes just as hard to find.

Mistways

-The Nocturnal Sea forms the Eastern border of Darkon and Nova Vassa. Reportedly, navigating the Sea can lead to The Nightmare Lands.

-*The Jackal's Ruse* leads from the Nocturnal Sea into Western Har'Akir.

-The *Wake of the Loa* connects the Nocturnal Sea with Souragne.

Chronology

600BC – Easan the Mad uses living subjects to learn of spirits. **Vechor** forms.

635BC – Meredoth poisons and reanimates the Graben Family. **Nebligtode** forms.

677BC – Captain Monette curses his mutinous crew & becomes a werebat. **L'île de la Tempête** forms.

740BC – **THE GRAND CONJUNCTION**

Vechor (an Island of Terror) disappears from The Core.

750BC – Meredoth's continued necromantic research continues. The Nocturnal Sea appears.

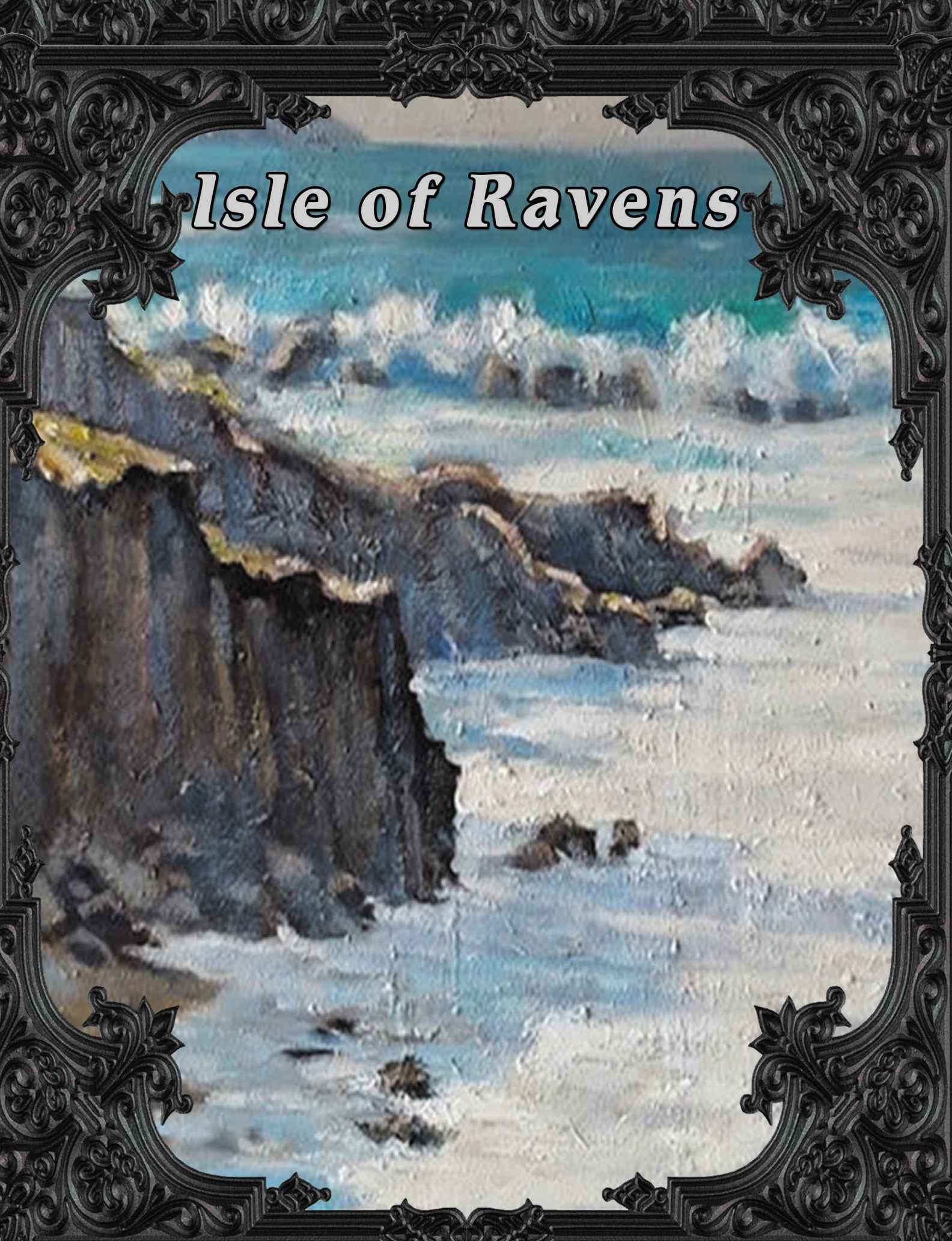
Vechor reappears within the Nocturnal Sea.

Baron Evensong's desire for magical knowledge dooms him. **Liffe** forms.

The Lady of Ravens uses her flock to kill her 'lover' and his betrothed. **The Isle of Ravens** forms.



Isle of Ravens



Isle of the Ravens



The Isle of the Ravens is so named for the clouds of ravens that surround it. Created by the vindictive woman known only as the Lady of Ravens, it is her vengeance upon the world: to turn the men who angered, hurt, and betrayed her, into ravens. Leaving her evermore lonely to wallow in her misery. The Isle of the Ravens is small, so any adventures here should revolve around its main feature: the ravens and the Lady herself, though she may well be out of the reach of many adventurers to face directly. Adventures should involve the telling of revenge, of those who came here, spent time with the Lady and inevitably betrayed her by trying to leave — suffocating in her attention, and ultimately desperately trying to escape, not just in spite of her best efforts, but because of them. Adventurers might be sent here to rescue someone, or even to ask the Lady for ways to revert magical transformation. Nonetheless, a great risk lurks in such a journey. Adventurers will face great dangers and will have to take great sacrifices. After all, the Lady may take a liking to one of them. And those she likes, never get to leave. And if they try, they'll spend the rest of their lives as ravens, following in her flock.

"Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

~William Shakespeare, Hamlet

Culture Level:	Dark Ages
Climate & Terrain:	Cold, forest
Year Formed:	750 BC (unknown if it existed before this time)
Population:	1
Races (%):	Human 100%
Languages:	Common, Draconic
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Lady of Ravens
Darklord(s):	Lady of Ravens
Nationality:	Unknown
Analog:	Aeaea, Isle of Circe, Homer's Odyssey

Local Fauna:

The Isle of the Ravens does not have much in the way of wildlife, though the waters around the island are full of fish. The skies, however, are dominated by the ravens that give the island its name, hundreds, if not thousands, of these birds in the sky at any given time. They so completely dominate the Isle that no other birds can be found, not even seagulls from the Nocturnal Sea. How the ravens sustain themselves is unknown, though most expect that they survive off grubs and worms and whatever they find underneath the

bark of the dark trees. There are no known monsters on the island, as none have ever been seen. The few sailors brave enough to sail close to the shore swear that, alongside men, they have seen monsters turned to ravens by the Lady of Ravens, but many suspect that these stories are merely tales or the result of too much drink.

Local Flora:

Given the climate, most expect pine trees to be the main tree that dominates the mile wide island, but it is mainly covered by twisted oaks, often hundreds of years old. There are a few tangerine trees, and most expect that there are other trees further in, but none have ever come back to confirm this. There are no other living plants found on the island, though moss and lichen cover many of the trees near the shores.

Terrain type

The Isle of Ravens is only a mile in length and width, and completely covered in trees that grow right up to the waterline. The landscape appears to be slightly hilly, rising up near the middle of the island, but it is impossible to tell with any degree of accuracy as the treeline plays havoc with the perspective of any viewer.

Important Landmarks

Tower of the Ravens

Located at the center of the Isle of Ravens, the Tower of the Ravens reaches hundreds of feet into the sky. Built in an old style, it appears rickety and in danger of blowing over in the slightest wind. Nevertheless, witnesses report that it stands rock-solid against even the strongest gale. The tower looks to consist of many levels, though any degree of accuracy is restricted to those who go close to the tower, and those unfortunates are never heard from again. Flashes of fell green come from the top level of the tower at night, as if the occupant performs some foul ritual.

Neighboring domain(s):

Nocturnal Sea

Fun Fact:

In spite of the tragic nature of the ravens of the Isle of Ravens, many of those who sail the Nocturnal Sea consider it good luck to have acquired the feather of one of these, as long as they did not kill the raven. They believe it wards off bad luck.

Lady of Ravens



"I know you think I'm a useless old waste, but I've been here longer than most captains. I saw plenty of pretty boys like you come and go. Take my advice and get yourself a raven. Take care of it. Make sure it's fed and watered, even if it means you have to go without.

Then pray you never go near that island. If you do, release the raven and pray she likes it more than you."

~Morgan "One Eye" LeBlanc. Quartermaster on the merchant ship "Rellin's Ghost"

No one knows the Lady of Raven's true name, including the Lady herself. She is a petite woman with long dark hair styled around elaborate combs. Her eyes are the same color as her hair and both are a perfect complement to her pale skin. Her demeanor is cold and haughty. The Lady of Ravens looks at people the same way she might look at something she just stepped in. The Lady rarely allows her icy demeanor to crack, and when she does, she can stun people with the force of her personality. Her emotional highs and lows are captivating, to behold. She can dominate a group of people through sheer force of personality alone. The Lady is more likely to relax around the isle of ravens.

Background: The Lady of Ravens was born into a world of silence and isolation. She was the last in a long line of nobility that had long fallen into inbreeding and insanity. Her mother died when the Lady was a toddler and the Lady of Ravens neither remembers her nor cares. The Lady's father spent his days in a drugged haze and wandered the halls of the castle, talking to unseen spirits and friends long dead. The Lady never talked to the servants that raised her or took care of her day to day needs, not considering them important enough to matter in any way. The Lady de-

spised the other children that lived in the castle, and they soon learned to avoid her altogether. The Lady of Ravens's only joy was the Tower of Flint. A 400 foot tall edifice of gray stone that sat in the middle of her castle, hundreds of ravens roosted in the tower. The Lady of Ravens had inherited the ability to talk to ravens, passed down by her mother. The Lady spent hours in the tower, telling the ravens stories, and listening to the tales they told her in return. After her father's death the Lady rarely left the tower, spending days in conversation with her ravens. This was the way of things until the Lady reached her late teens. Looking from the windows of her tower, she spotted a handsome young man. The Lady became obsessed with the man, the son of a servant, and set her ravens to follow his every move. When he departed to fight in some nameless war, she was devastated, barely sleeping or eating for a year. She was overjoyed to hear the news from one of her ravens—the man had returned. Her joy turned to rage when the young man immediately fell into the arms of another woman. Devastated and enraged, the Lady sent her ravens to tear the young lovers apart. Grief stricken, the Lady spent several days in her tower mourning the death of her obsession. When she left she found the Tower of Flint was standing alone on an isle in the middle of a vast sea. To make matters worse, the Lady found she could not remember her own name. Even more devastating, although she could command the ravens of her isle with an act of will, she could no longer talk to her friends.

Current Sketch: The Lady of Ravens is obsessed with talking to her beloved raven friends again. She believes that finding her lost name is the key to this, as the ability was passed down from her ancestors, and her name represents her ancestry. If a group of humans lands in the Lady's isle and appears to be well learned or intelligent enough to aid the Lady in her quest, she may offer them treasure or hospitality if they agree to aid her. If they don't agree to help the Lady then she will force them to serve with her magic. The Lady has magical means to track and communicate with her minions. Occasionally, the Lady of Ravens becomes enamoured with a handsome sailor or adventurer. That individual is gifted a raven as a mark of the Lady's favor. While the raven is alive, that individual will have great fortune in the seas around the Isle of Ravens. The individual will amass great wealth and avoid the worst storms, so long as that raven survives. If the raven dies, the individual loses the Lady's favor instantly, and all his good luck turns to ash—their treasure will be stolen, food will rot in their mouth, and their friends will abandon them or die. Eventually the Lady of Ravens will appear, and change her paramour into a raven to replace her lost

Lady of Ravens

friend that she entrusted to that sailor. No raven gifted in this way has lived longer than two months.

Darklord's Tactics: Combat revolts the Lady. If she believes her opponents have nothing to offer her, she will use her Circe's Eye ability to change them into ravens as a warning to others. If pressed into actual combat, the Lady will use her powerful spells to crush her enemies from afar. If hard pressed, she will command her ravens to attack her foes, but is loath to put her precious birds in danger.

Borders: When the Lady of Ravens closes her borders, storms encircle her isle. Any attempt to move through the storm is hopeless. The winds and lashing waves will blind and disorient anyone attempting to cross and push them back to the Isle of Ravens.



Lady of Ravens

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (Robe of the archmagi)

Hit Points 108 (18d6 +36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +7, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +11, History +7, Persuasion +11

Damage Resistances necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Improved Initiative. The Lady gains a +5 bonus to her initiative rolls.

Feather Roost. If slain in combat, the Lady of Ravens will disappear in an explosion of mist and black feathers; one week later at sunrise one of the ravens circling the tower will swoop to the floor of the highest room in the tower and transform into a petite woman with black hair and eyes and white skin. The transformation takes 10 rounds and if the Lady is slain during this transformation she is permanently killed. During that week, the border will remain open and the Lady's summoned minions and the transformed humanoids will be under no authority; they may flee, attack, and protect the Lady depending on circumstances. Turning them back into their original form however is impossible, short of a *wish* spell.

Raven Telepathy. The Lady can communicate with any raven within her domain telepathically. Additionally, as an action, she can see through the raven's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of her next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the raven has. During this time, she is deaf and blind with regard to her own senses.

Touch of the Claw. When the Lady casts a spell with a range of touch, a raven that she can see can deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. The raven must be within 100 feet of her, and it must use its Reaction to deliver the spell when she casts it. If the spell requires an Attack roll, she uses her Attack modifier for the roll.

Permanent Tongues. The Lady is permanently under the effect of the *tongues* spell.

Circe's Eye (1/Day). Once per day, the Lady may cause any and all persons she can see to make a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or be transformed into a raven. There is no maximum number that can be affected, and she may protect selected individuals from the spell. If she is unaware of a person, (for example, due to invisibility) this ability does not affect that person. Persons transformed into ravens in this fashion instantly fall under her control. All creatures transformed revert to their original form if they leave the domain, if the Lady dies or with a *wish* spell.

Magic Resistance. The Lady has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Claw of the Raven. The Lady's spells that deal Cold or Necrotic damage deal 6 additional damage. In addition, whenever she kills a creature on her turn, she gains 9 temporary Hit Points. Temporary points taken from this ability stack. She can also spend 2 sorcery points to double the temporary hit points gained from this feature.

Staff of the Black Claw. Whenever the Lady scores a critical hit with a spell attack, the target takes an extra 3d6 necrotic damage.

Lady of Ravens

Spellcasting. The Lady is a 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The Lady has the following Sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *chaos bolt, charm person, enlarge, featherfall, protection from evil and good, shield*,
2nd level (3 slots): *augury, blindness/deafness, detect thoughts, hold person, invisibility, rope trick*
3rd level (3 slots): *fly, speak with dead, suggestion*
4th level (3 slots): *death ward, greater invisibility, polymorph*
5th level (3 slots): *dominate person, geas, hallow, telekinesis*
6th level (2 slots): *disintegrate, Otiluke's freezing sphere*
7th level (2 slots): *symbol, teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *maze, power word stun*
9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

Wing of the Raven(1/Day). The Dark Powers have gifted the Lady the ability to change her form. She can use an action to magically transform into a raven or back into her true form. While in raven form, she replaces her statistics with that of a raven except for her Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma scores. While she is transformed she cannot speak, attack, or cast spells. Transforming doesn't break her concentration on a spell she has already cast, or prevent her from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as *call lightning*. She can still use class features while transformed. If she is reduced to 0 hit points or falls unconscious she transforms back into her true form. Any excess damage from being reduced to 0 hit points is carried over to her true form.

Call of the Raven. Spells the Lady casts ignore resistances to Cold and Necrotic damage and treat immunities to Cold and Necrotic damage as resistances. In addition, the lady can spend 5 sorcery points to unleash the power of the Ravens. Each creature of the Lady's choice in a 60-foot cube originating from her must make a DC 22 Charisma saving throw. A cloud of frozen feathers rain from above, causing 5d10 Cold damage and 5d10 Necrotic damage to a target on a failed save; this damage is halved with a successful save.

Spell Sniper. When the Lady casts a spell that requires her to make an attack roll, the spell's range is doubled. Her ranged spell attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

Font of Magic. The Lady has 18 sorcery points. She regains all spent sorcery points when she finishes a long rest. She can use her sorcery points to gain additional spell slots, or sacrifice spell slots to gain additional sorcery points. Creating Spell Slots/sorcery points. She can transform unexpended sorcery points into one spell slot or vice versa as a bonus action on her turn. The Creating Spell Slots table of the Sorcerer shows the cost of creating a spell slot of a given level. She can create spell slots no higher in level than 5th. Any spell slot she creates with this feature vanishes when she finishes a long rest.

Metamagic. The Lady can alter the effects of her spells by using Metamagic. She can use only one Metamagic option on a spell when she casts it, unless otherwise noted. She knows the following Metamagic options: Careful Spell, Extended Spell, Heightened Spell, Quicken Spell, Subtle Spell. Each option is described in the Sorcerer class in the Player's Handbook.

Actions

Masterwork Dagger +2. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Touch of the Raven. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. if the attack is successful and the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or be transformed into a raven under the control of the Lady

Children of the Feather (1/Day). The Lady magically calls 2d6 swarms of ravens. While outdoors, the Lady can call 3d4 giant ravens instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the Lady and obeying her spoken commands. The birds remain for 1 hour, until the Lady dies, or until she dismisses them as a bonus action.

Significant Possessions:

Staff of the Black Claw, Robe of the Archmagi, Cloak of Charisma



L'île de la Tempete





L'île de la Tempête

he story of L'île de la Tempête is the story of cruelty against your fellows. Those who should be looking up to you, and keeping you company, but whom you mistreat. It is the physical embodiment of Alain Monette as he fed off the misery of his crews, before coming to the island, where he fed upon the bats, as they fed upon him, in a strange cycle of mutual misery and sustenance. Now that he has become the master of the island, and left the cave behind where he originally came across the bats, he has discovered the true misery. He is alone and doomed to be forever stuck on the rocky outcropping of his own misery. Adventures on the island should focus on the idea of loss, and the physical danger that Alain Monette poses. Even in his best mood, he is a predator, and he hunts down those that are shipwrecked on his island. But he takes pleasure in prolonging the agony, so each night, when he attacks he'll take out only one. And during the day he'll hide and enjoy the misery that he is causing.

L'île de la Tempête



Culture Level: Chivalric
Climate & Terrain: Cold, cliffs and forest
Year Formed: 677 BC
Population: 1
Races (%): Human (werebat) 100%
Languages: Common
Religions: None
Government: None
Ruler(s): Captain Alain Monette
Darklord(s): Captain Alain Monette
Nationality: Gothic Earth French
Analog: The island from Robinson Crusoe

Local Fauna:
 There aren't any living animals on L'île de la Tempête that are bigger than an insect. Anything else is hunted down and drained by the enormous population of bats that the island does manage to sustain. These bats hide during the day, but during the night they flock in swarms of thousands. The drone of their

wings can be heard from miles around when they do so, often in the company of Alain himself. Beyond that though, the only animals of any size are grubs, insects, and the occasional fish that washes ashore.

Local Flora:

Plantlife is sparse on the island. There are a few lonely trees, but the main ground cover is simply shrubs that cling desperately to the rocky soil. Nothing here has much chance of growing unless it is exceedingly hardy, and none of it is edible to humans.

Native Horrors

The only inhabitant of the island is Alain, and while the bats are frightening, they are just normal ones.

Terrain type

The 10-mile long island is cold and windswept, offering little cover outside of the cliffsides that ring the island. Those rockfaces are not only treacherous and dangerous but also riddled with caves. It is easy to take refuge in one of these if you can get to them, but be prepared to deal with the bats in them. As treacherous as the rock faces are, they are nothing compared to the dangers hidden in the reefs around the island. The sharp jagged rocks there are capable of tearing through the hull of even the strongest ship. And the currents, while unpredictable on their own, become even worse with Alain awake, as he is able to control, change, and redirect them at will.

Important Landmarks

The Lighthouse

The lighthouse of Alain Monette isn't a lighthouse as such. It is a huge pile of rocks, topped with a skull that sends out a beam of light for miles around. Unlike a normal lighthouse, the beam is constant, and therefore attracts ships to it, thinking it a safe harbor. Only when it is too late do they realize the peril that they are in, and by then, as Alain can control the tides and currents around the island, it is too late. Unfortunately for the sailors of the multiverse, the beam of light from the lighthouse isn't limited to the waters of the Nocturnal Sea. It reaches into the planes and beyond, and those following it may well find themselves drawn into the cold embrace of the mists.

Neighboring domain(s):

Nocturnal Sea

Fun Fact:

While Alain kills the crews of the ships that he causes to wreck on the rocks, he doesn't do anything with the cargo. The area around L'île de la Tempête is therefore filled with treasure and valuables, for those brave or stupid enough to try their luck.

Captain Alain Monette

"If this island is to be my Hell, then it shall be Hell for every man that washes ashore.

Only the damned come here and only the dead shall leave." ~Captain Alain Monette

Alain Monette has three forms: human and a macabre hybrid of man and bat. In his human form Monette is nearly seven feet tall and almost impossibly thin. His eyes are as gray as a stormy sky and he never seems to blink. His face is craggy and marred by a jagged scar. Monette's expression is stern, even when his words are friendly. Alain is a captain and still wears a spotless blue uniform. The uniform is blue, but so dark it appears to be black. His gold buttons are polished until they shine.

In his hybrid form, he's a grotesque mix of bat and human, covered with gray fur, with his arms becoming wings tipped with vicious claws. The captain's head is crowned with large ears, his eyes become red and bloodshot and his mouth is full of needle sharp fangs. Monette cannot control his transformations, but only hunts in his hybrid shape.

Background: Alain Monette was the infamous captain of the privateer vessel *Ouragan*. Monette was an incredible captain. He knew every rope, nail, and barrel of ballast on the *Ouragan*. He had seen every hazard on the open sea and feared no obstacle, whether natural, magical, or man made. Monette's skill as a captain and his legendary conquests brought sailors flocking to his flag. Once the new sailors were at sea, they found out why Captain Alain Monette constantly took on new crew. Monette was an absolute despot on his ship. Even minor infractions of his complicated and extensive code resulted in brutal beatings and floggings. The shredded skins of the sailors that Monette had keelhauled were hung from the yard arms as grisly trophies. Eventually the crew had too much. Monette had gaff hooks inserted under the rib cage of a sailor who violated one of his obscure codes then dragged the poor fool behind the ship. It didn't take long before splashes of the sailor and trail of blood attracted the attention of sharks. After the sailor stopped screaming the crew, angry and tired of being whipped like dogs, spontaneously mutinied. The officer's joined the crew and Monette was dragged from his cabin and savagely beaten.. The crew tied ropes to his hands and legs then keelhauled. Much to the crew's surprise, Monette survived. The crew simply keelhauled him again, and when he survived a third time. Monette stubbornly clung to life, cursing and swearing revenge. The crew stripped Monette and tied him to the mast. The captain was flogged for over an

hour. Still Monette refused to die. Out of ideas and tired of the stubborn captain's refusal to die, the crew simply threw him overboard and sailed away. When the crew was out of sight, the captain finally surrendered into unconsciousness. Monette awoke in a cave. Dozens of furry bodies covered him, licking the blood out of his wounds. Bats. Monette was covered in dozens of small bats. He survived the next few days by catching what bats he could and devouring the screeching creatures raw. At night when his wounds proved too much the bats descended and fed on him in turn. Monette didn't know it, but the Dark Powers had noticed the captain and refused to let him die. As he feasted on the bats, the Dark Powers made them one. After a week, Monette could move around and explore his surroundings, finding himself on a small barren island in the middle of a vast sea. At night the constellations were similar to the ones from his home, but somehow wrong. The seas surrounding Monette's island were treacherous and full of shipwrecks. The beaches were covered in the desiccated skeletons of hundreds of sailors. Almost unconsciously, he started stacking the bones at the top of the tallest point of his island. Impossibly the bones fused together, forming a tower. Monette worked tirelessly for over a month, living off the bats he caught and the plants that grew in the thin soil of his island. The last bone Monette placed was a skull. The skull was set on top of a pillar of fused spines in the highest room of the tower. When the skull was set, it began to glow and raised into the air above the pillar of spines. Monette's tower, a lighthouse he called the Eye of Midnight, was complete. Monette tried to escape the island on a small boat that he cobbled together from detritus that washed ashore on his island. The further he sailed from the island, the weaker Monette became. Before he had sailed a mile, Monette knew he would be dead if he sailed any further. He was trapped.

Current Sketch: The light of the Eye of Midnight reaches far beyond Ravenloft into hundreds of other worlds. Sailors that see its light inevitably follow it into the treacherous reefs that surround L'île de la Tempête. Their ships are dashed upon the rocks. The few sailors that survive the storm and the waves to make it ashore are far from safe. If Monette is in his human form, he will greet the sailors and ask where they came from. Monette can be polite, even charming when he wants to be, but it's all a facade. Monette is merely buying time until he can transform. Monette is an afflicted lycanthrope. He cannot control when he changes, but knows it has no connection to the moon. Monette isn't positive, but has recently started to suspect it is connected to the changing of the tide. Once he becomes the beast, Monette relentlessly hunts the sailors on his

Captain Alain Monette

island. He devours the first few victims he kills but toys with his remaining victims. When Monette changes back to his human form, he will pretend to help them remaining prey on his island, telling them about the beast that lives in his island and begging them for help, reveling in their fear and helplessness. When Monette becomes the beast, the hunt starts again. Monette finds the isolation and boredom of L'île de la Tempête maddening. He constantly searches for a way off the island, but to no avail.

Darklord's Tactics: Alain avoids combat in his human form. If he is trapped, he is expert with his ornate cutlass and flintlock pistol. In hybrid form, Monette prefers to pick off his opponents one at a time. Small victims are snatched and carried to great heights before being dropped onto sharp rocks or into the sea. Larger victims are cut into bloody ribbons with claws and fangs while Monette stays in the air, using his ability to fly to keep out of harm's way.

Borders: Monette can control the seas around L'île de la Tempête. Any ship trying to escape will be swamped by rogue waves and dashed against jagged rocks. Anyone foolish enough to try and swim will be dragged under the waves and never seen again. Monette has to concentrate to use this ability, so it is possible for a ship to escape if he can be distracted for long enough.

Captain Alain Monette

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 103 (5d10 + 4d8 + 7d6 + 32)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +4, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Shapechanger. Alain can use his action to polymorph into a Medium bat-humanoid hybrid or back into his true form, which is humanoid but not during the tide whence he unwillingly changes to his hybrid form for the duration. His statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Sunlight Sensitivity (Hybrid Form Only). While in sunlight, Alain has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Rejuvenation: Alain's hatred for his crew burns so hotly that not even death will keep him from exacting his revenge. If Alain is slain, he and his equipment melt to bat guano. A week later, a flock of bats start frantically flitting above the Eye of Midnight from dusk to dawn. At first light, they merge together and in a dark light explosion, Captain Alain emerges in his hybrid form with his equipment on hand. During this week, the borders of the domain remain open for anyone to escape. The only possible way for Alain to truly die is for the ship and mutineers to happen upon the island. If the mutineers are slain and the ship is burned while within the domain, then Alain loses the ability to rejuvenate.

Keen Hearing (Hybrid Form Only). Alain has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Echolocation (Hybrid Form Only). Alain can't use his blindsight while deafened.

Nimble Escape (Humanoid Form Only). Alain can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Second Wind. Alain has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 5. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.



Captain Alain Monette

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Action Surge. Alain can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Ranged Fighting Specialist. Alain gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls he makes with ranged weapons (included).

Gunner. Alain has a quick hand and keen eye when employing firearms. He ignores the loading property of firearms. Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on his ranged attack rolls.

Trick Shots. Alain knows two trick shots. Each use of a trick shot must be declared before the attack roll is made. He can use only one trick shot per attack.

Disarming Shot. When Alain makes a firearm attack against a creature, he can expend one grit point to attempt to shoot an object from their hands. On a hit, the creature suffers normal damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or drop 1 held object of Alain's choice and have that object be pushed 10 feet away from them.

Dazing Shot. When Alain makes a firearm attack against a creature, he can expend one grit point to attempt to dizzy his opponent. On a hit, the creature suffers normal damage and must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or suffer disadvantage on attacks until the end of their next turn.

-Grit. Alain has 1 grit point. He regains 1 expended grit point each time he rolls a 20 on the d20 roll for an attack with a firearm, or deals a killing blow with a firearm. He regains all expended grit points after a short or long rest.

Sneak Attack. Alain knows how to strike subtly and exploit a foe's distraction. Once per turn, he can deal an extra 2d6 damage to one creature he hits with an attack if he has advantage. The attack must use a finesse or a ranged weapon. He doesn't need advantage on the attack roll if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, he is within 5ft of the target, no other creatures are within 5 feet of him and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Fancy Footwork. Alain knows how to land a strike and then slip away without reprisal. During his turn, if he makes a melee attack against a creature, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against him for the rest of Alain's turn.

Rakish Audacity. Alain's confidence propels him into battle. He rolls initiative with a +1 bonus on the die.

Master of Reach. Alain can keep his enemies at bay with reach weapons. When he takes the Attack action and attacks with a reach weapon, he can use a bonus action to make a melee attack with the opposite end of the weapon. The weapon's damage die for this attack is a d4, and the attack deals bludgeoning damage. Also, other creatures provoke an opportunity attack from him when they enter his reach.

Sentinel. Alain has mastered techniques to take advantage of every drop in any enemy's guard, gaining the following benefits:

- When he hits a creature with an opportunity attack, the creature's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.
- Creatures within 5 feet of him provoke opportunity attacks from him even if they take the Disengage action before leaving his reach.
- When a creature within 5 feet of Alain makes an attack against a target other than himself (and that target doesn't have this feat), Alain can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against the attacking creature.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). In humanoid form, Alain makes two Great Trident attacks or two Pistol attacks. In hybrid form, he can make one bite or claw attack and one weapon attack.

Great Trident +1 (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Pistol +1 (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Bite (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Legendary Actions

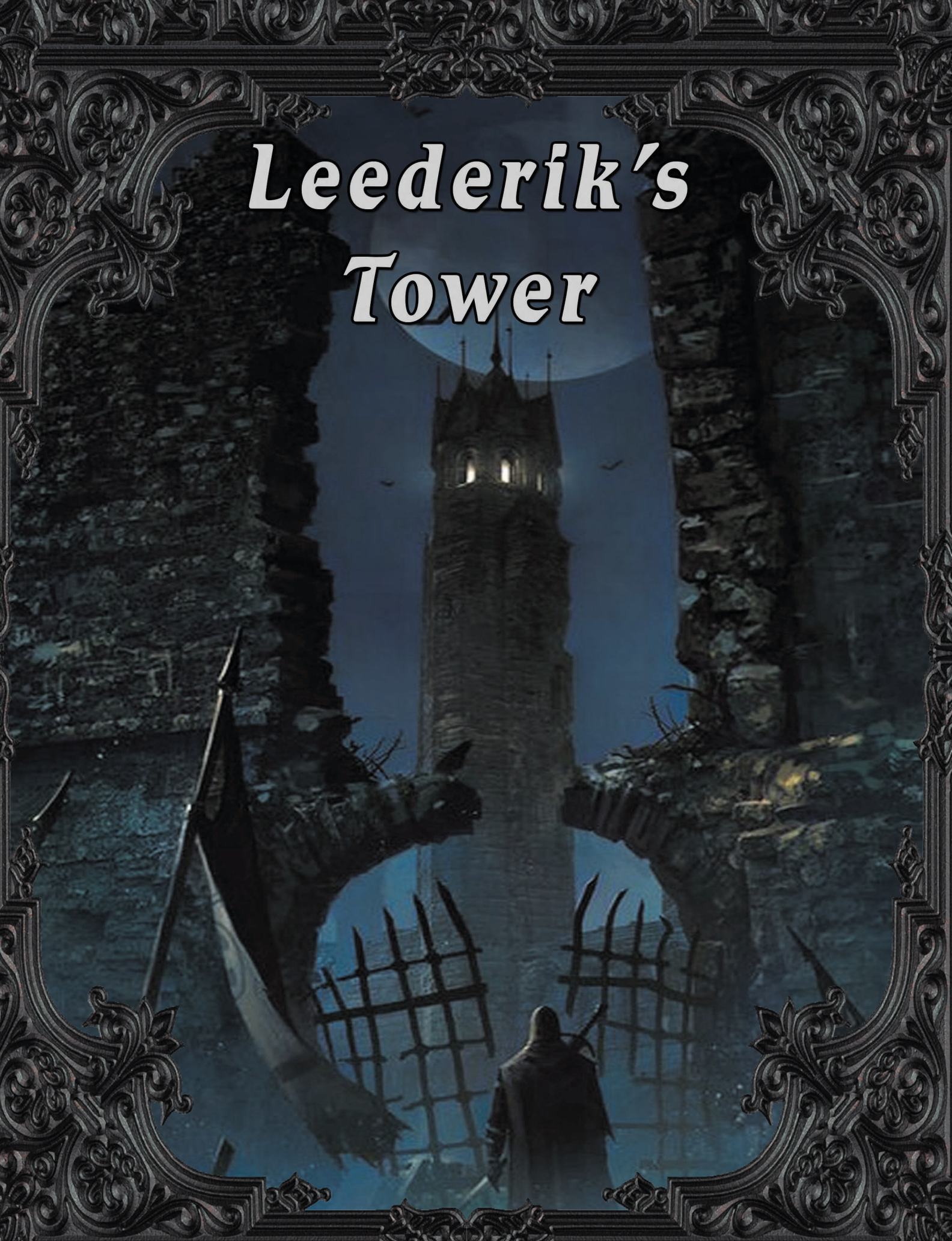
Alain can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Alain regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Detect. Alain makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Attack. Alain makes a weapon attack of his choice.

Tidal Wave (2 Actions). Alain conjures up a wave of water that crashes down on an area near the coast of his island. The area can be up to 30 feet long, up to 10 feet wide, and up to 10 feet tall. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 4d8 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. The water then spreads out across the ground in all directions, extinguishing unprotected flames in its area and within 30 feet of it, and then withdraws back into the sea. At this point, a creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pulled 40ft. into the furious sea.

Leederik's Tower



Leederik's Tower



Leederik's Tower, or the Tower of the Phantom Lover, is a unique construct, even within the Mists of Ravenloft, in that it can reliably send sections of itself into extremely limited parts of the multiverse. The biggest part sits in the Mists of Ravenloft and consists of the Tower itself as well as a maze that stretches around it. The second part consists of the bedroom of a grieving widow, one whose grief is so deep that she is willing to do anything to get her dead husband back. And the third part consists of the nearest cemetery.

Leederik is the worst perversion of consent and a living embodiment of gaslighting. When he senses a widow who misses her husband so much that she's willing to do anything, he will open a portal for one hour to her bedroom. The door will become locked, and while she can leave at any time that she wants, no one else can enter, and he cannot leave. He then spends that time convincing the grieving widow that he is the spirit of her dead husband, leading her to believe that she can still be with him if only she can rescue him. This goes on night after night, though he seeks consent at each stage, and only moves on if she lets him. This is of course increasingly unlikely as time goes on, as her will is destroyed and she starts to disappear into her own shell during the day, only for her to come out at night for the one hour that she has with him. Eventually, she becomes willing to steal, lie, and even murder for his attention — because he instills the fear that he'll never return and she'll lose her husband permanently. And that is when he makes his ultimate move. On the final night, he beckons to her, asking her to forsake the rest of the world and follow him where he leads. This is to the graveyard, where they appear at the gates of the cemetery, and then they wander onwards to an open grave. There, in front of a stone engraved with the woman's name is a large rectangular pit, with no bottom. This is a portal to his domain, to the labyrinth itself, and the woman is never seen again. The only thing left behind is a single garment at the grave.

In fact, she does not die, and anyone can use the portal while it's open. (It opens every night at the cemetery for the hour that he is in her bedroom — anyone observing the grieving widow could put this together, as the victims tend to haunt the cemetery during the day (where the portal is closed and the Phantom Lover is in their domain) without knowing why. The poor victim instead languishes in the labyrinth, unable to survive in the damp, dark realm, and unable to leave. Perhaps she is simply too weak, or perhaps she is paralyzed by the realization of what she has done. This eventually

leads to her death, and the cycle then starts again, as the Phantom Lover is doomed to always experience loneliness, no matter how much they want it otherwise. Adventures within this domain should involve foiling the Phantom Lover. For while they cannot be slain while grief and sorrow exist within the multiverse, they can be stopped — at least temporarily. Perhaps the heroes know a friend who has suffered a terrible loss and has become a widow. She might mention that she's been having visions of her husband (perhaps she's even somewhat resistant to his advances), but in order to truly save her, they'll need to confront the Phantom Lover directly, and destroy them within their own domain.

*"Loneliness will sit over our roofs with brooding wings."
~Bram Stoker, Dracula*



Culture Level:	Chivalrous
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, underground
Year Formed:	565 BC
Population:	1
Races (%):	Other 100%
Languages:	Common, Any
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	The Phantom Lover
Darklord(s):	The Phantom Lover
Nationality:	None
Analog:	Dracula

Local Fauna:

There are no animals of any sort within the domain that contains Leederik's Tower. Nothing lives here, and there is nothing here to sustain anyone.

Leederik's Tower

Local Flora:

Like animals, there are no plants here. The underground environment is empty, while water drips from the sky above the tower (the labyrinth has no sky as it is entirely underground, and the tower sits within a large cavern). Even light dies here — torches and fire sputter out almost immediately after arriving, and even magical lighting only lights up a small five-foot square in a strange red glow.

Native Horrors

There are no natives here, except for the Phantom Lover.

Terrain type

The entirety of the domain is encapsulated within an underground cavern, but only the tower can see the “sky”, as the labyrinth itself is entirely underground. Everything here is stone, though slick and shiny from the water that drips down everything.

Important Landmarks

Leederik's Tower

Leederik's Tower is a tower with no windows, but a small stair at the bottom of the tower leads into a room at the top where he keeps his living victims when they're not in the labyrinth. From this top room, the roof can be accessed, but one cannot see much from the crenelated top of the tower. All that lies beyond the tower is eternal darkness and fog. Even the ground is not visible, and a dropped stone will fall for all eternity. At least, no sound is ever heard.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Nocturnal Sea (in theory the Phantom Lover has access to a tiny part of all other domains)

Fun Fact:

The Phantom Lover **MUST** obtain consent in order to continue with their escapades. If a woman that they are attempting to enthrall resists and denies them, they cannot continue their pursuit of her and must start over elsewhere.



The Phantom Lover

"Erik returned to me last night!

He was here! As handsome as ever and as real as myself!

We will be together soon. He says so. He just has to prepare the way.

Soon. I cannot wait. Soon."

~ Diary of Ingrid von Schloss (deceased)

Describing the Phantom Lover is like attempting to describe a dream. Their form changes to match his victims' ideal of beauty, yet no matter what form they take, their left foot remains scaled and clawed, like that of a dragon. Their hair can be of any color or any style; long, short, bald, blonde, auburn or whatever. One reported form that they take is that of a great black snake with solid blood red eyes; none can tell whether this is their true form or just one of the many in their repertoire.

Background: The first record of a victim of the Phantom Lover is from the world of Toril. There is no name associated with this, so the victim may be one woman or many that fell to the Phantom's wiles.

The woman's fiancé was brutally taken from her on their wedding day. His corpse was found suspended from the ceiling, nailed to it by his wrists, his organs ripped out and looped on the floor beneath him. Like an abattoir, blood coated the ceiling, walls and floor. His family and friends had been outside the door and not one of them had heard a single sound.

The young woman never recovered, and withdrew from her family, rarely eating or sleeping. Never talking. As time went on she grew pale and gaunt.

Then one night her lover returned to her. It was impossible. She knew that, but here he was. She wept and gladly accepted him into her arms. He smelled sweet. He told her all would be well. It was just a matter of time. She smiled for the first time in months.

Her lover returned night after night. Telling her it was almost time. The woman's family wondered at the sudden change in her mood, for now she ate and laughed, even though with the passing of every night she seemed to become increasingly pale and gaunt. This continued until the night her lover appeared and told her that it was time. Finally they could be together forever. They would be wed beneath the stars. The woman took out her wedding dress. She had not touched it since the wedding day. She dressed herself, brushing her long hair, and as she put on

her garter, her fiancé held out his hand. She followed him, all the way to her family graveyard. Her husband-to-be beckoned her to an open grave. This is how they could be together. This would be their marital home. He beckoned once more. Her family discovered she was missing the following morning. The only evidence that was found was her garter, lying abandoned at the bottom of an empty grave. She was never seen again.

Current Sketch: The Phantom Lover's domain is one of the few domains that travels past the misty borders of Ravenloft. The Lover seems to open a small portal through into other worlds, reaching the chamber of a woman whose heart has been broken through the darkest tragedy. As the Phantom Lover enters the woman's chambers, the windows and doors lock and magically become almost impregnable. Sweet smelling mists loop and curl around the windows.. The portal only opens at night, when the woman is alone, and closes with the rising of the sun, taking the Lover with it.

Darklord's Tactics: The Phantom Lover will not fight within the chambers of their conquest. They merely disappear with a longing look toward the bride-to-be. In their domain, it is another story entirely. The Phantom Lover can move any object or person with powerful telekinesis, raise the remains of their past victims, and is possessed of tremendous strength and vitality. Their abilities have been compared to a vampire, and the comparison has some merit, though the Lover seems to have none of their weaknesses.

The Lover may try to *charm* some of their opponents into protecting them. Against foes that can't be *charmed* the Lover will use their life draining touch. If one of their opponents is a female with a high Charisma (15 or higher), the Phantom Lover may try to take abduct them and imprison within their tower, where they will drain her of her force of will and love of life before returning to the Material Plane to search for more victims. It is unknown if the Phantom can die. Their wounds heal no matter how grievous. The Phantom thinks they are immortal, but is unwilling to test the theory.

Borders: The Phantom Lover's domain is surrounded by mists, and when the Lover closes their borders, the labyrinth that leads to them turns into an impossible series of loops and turns that eventually returns to the base of the tower. A creature who jumps from the tower disappears and awakens somewhere in the labyrinth, unharmed but still at the mercy of the Phantom.

The Phantom Lover



Leederik, the Phantom Lover

Medium fiend (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 157 (21d8 + 63)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12/18(+1/+4)*

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +7, Cha +6

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +8, Deception +11, Perception +7, Persuasion +6, Stealth +11

Damage Resistances acid, cold, necrotic, poison

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical and non blessed attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Draconic, Vaasi, Giant

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Shapechanger. If the Phantom Lover isn't in sunlight, it can use its action to polymorph into a medium snake, a medium cloud of mist, a medium gargoyle, or back into its true form. While in snake or gargoyle form, the Phantom Lover can speak normally. Its statistics are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies. While in mist form, the Phantom Lover can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Phantom Lover fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

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

Control Doors. The Phantom Lover can cast the *knock* spell at will and open/close any door or window within the house of the victim. The door to the victim's chambers does more than simply prevent access from the outside. When someone's hand is on the knob, it alerts the Phantom Lover as if an *alarm* spell was casted on it, the Phantom Lover with a bonus action can change the knob's shape, so that it holds fast to the person's hand and strives to crush it even as it heats to sear the skin, dealing 1d4 bludgeoning and 1d4 fire damage. The wood of the door may twist and warp to form another hand that reaches for the throat of someone nearby, gouging their skin with shards of wood. It has a +6 to hit and deals 1d6 points of piercing damage.

Ethereal Entity. As a bonus action, the Phantom Lover can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa. It can see 60ft into the Ethereal plane from the Material plane and vice versa. If it wishes, it is visible on The Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

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

Magic Resistance. The Phantom Lover has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mysterious Powers. The Phantom Lover can cast the *plane shift*, *misty step*, *darkness*, *hold person*, *tongues*, *telekinesis* and *sleep* spells at will. The Phantom Lover can use the *plane shift* spell to exit its Domain but only to either enter the chambers of a victim or to return back to its Domain, and only itself can benefit from the spell. The *sleep* spell affects Creatures that are immune to sleep such as Elves too. The *hold person* can affect any number of creatures that are guarding the chamber of the victim from within and they become frightened for as long as they can see the Phantom Lover and take 1d6 psychic damage at the start of their turn for as long as they remain paralyzed. The *darkness* spell can only be casted as he arrives into the victim's chamber. Every time the Phantom Lover uses the *misty step* spell, a swarm of poisonous snakes is left behind at the Phantom Lover's place and it disappears at the end of the Phantom Lover's next turn. The *telekinesis* spell can only be used as a Legendary action.

In the Eyes of the Victim. The Phantom Lover's Charisma score becomes 18 when it comes to rolls against its main victims. The main victim of the Phantom Lover does not notice the Phantom Lover's grotesque serpent-like leg or any other traits that might alienate it.

Draining Love. Any creature that spends the night with the Phantom Lover loses 1d4 Strength points. A creature dies if its Strength score reaches 0.

The Phantom Lover

Limited Reach. The Phantom Lover can only affect victims that are found within their chambers. A victim that spends three consecutive nights outside of any room that can be considered a chamber and in open air, is freed from the Phantom Lover's grasp. Moving the victim to another room does not thwart the Phantom Lover; it simply invades the new chamber. Only keeping the victim in the open air can dissuade the Phantom Lover. The victim will resist staying outside until the charm is broken and will try to return to their chamber if they can. A *protection from evil and good* spell will not stop the Phantom Lover.

Weaknesses. Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The Phantom Lover takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Holy Water. If holy water is sprinkled on the Phantom Lover, it becomes incapacitated until the end of the next creature in initiative order's turn.

Driving the fiend away. A *dispel evil and good* spell or a *sunbeam* spell will force the Phantom Lover to return to its domain although it can still try to succeed at its saving throw to avoid it. It is unlikely that the Phantom Lover will return to the same victim again after this is accomplished.

Immortality. The Phantom Lover enjoys (or suffers) true immortality. They cannot be completely destroyed, and will return time and time again for as long as there are sorrows and grief of immense proportions. When the Phantom Lover is slain, it will reform at the top of its tower, ten nights later.

Actions

Multiattack (True Form Only). The Phantom Lover makes two attacks, only one of which can be a Wisdom Drain attack.

Wisdom Drain. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target's Wisdom score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) Slashing or Bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the Phantom Lover can grapple the target (escape DC 16).

Charm. The Phantom Lover charms one humanoid it can see within 30 ft. of it. If the target can see the Phantom Lover, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw rolling with disadvantage, against this magic or be charmed by the Phantom Lover. The charmed target regards the Phantom Lover as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the Phantom Lover's control, it takes the Phantom Lover's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. Each time the Phantom Lover or its companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw with a -5 penalty, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Otherwise, the effect lasts for 3 nights or until the Phantom Lover is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target for more than 3 nights, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Serpentine and Stone Children (1/Day). The Phantom Lover magically calls 4d4 poisonous snakes or 2d4 gargoyles, provided that the sun isn't up. The called creatures arrive 1 round later, acting as allies of the Phantom Lover and obeying its spoken commands. The creatures remain for 1 hour, until the Phantom Lover dies, or until it dismisses them as a bonus action.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the Phantom Lover's choice that is within 120 feet of the Phantom Lover and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Phantom Lover's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Actions

The Phantom Lover can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Phantom Lover regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The Phantom Lover moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. The Phantom Lover makes one unarmed strike.

Telekinesis (3 actions). The Phantom Lover casts the *telekinesis* spell.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair, the Phantom Lover can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), it can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

-The ground of a 40ft square of the Phantom Lover's choosing erupts as arms claw their way out of the earth to grasp the ankles of a passerby, and then slowly rise up to attack, like common zombies. A creature caught in this effect must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or become restrained for 1 turn. One turn later, 3d4 zombies rise from the ground and attack.

-Low drifting veils of mist rise up and conceal the Phantom Lover making it invisible and heavily obscuring the Phantom Lover's shape. Rustles of leaves, footsteps or other noises betray the Phantom Lover's current location granting advantage to any pursuer that tries to detect it.

- The Phantom Lover takes on the visage of someone its attackers know. Either one of them, or a companion who recently died or a loved person. The Phantom Lover is considered to be under the effects of the *sanctuary* spell.

The Phantom Lover can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and it can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Liffe



Liffe



Liffe is the home of Baron Evensong, a vain bard, who believes himself to be an arbiter of what is moral and right. The man craves attention, so of course, the Mists deny him this for years on end.

Liffe itself is actually a relatively large island, but a quiet one. Home to only three settlements, and less than 7,000 inhabitants, it has become something of a stopover for sailors on the Nocturnal sea — a useful place for someone to restock supplies and food, and maybe trade off a few wares. As a result, Liffe is the kind of place that the locals describe as “nothing interesting ever happens here”, but they’d be very wrong. Neverwere mansion is the crux of many (true) local rumors about disappearances and the like, while Moon-dale has been subjected to not only vampire attacks but those of werewolves too. The town of Armeikos, meanwhile, was subjected to a strange ghost that possessed people and forced them to commit murders on his behalf. So “nothing ever happens” is patently untrue. With everything going on in such a small place, it’s difficult to nail down a particular theme, but the stories that take place are often the ones that Baron Lyron Evensong creates during the centuries that he spends in his exile during the night in Neverwere Mansion. Of course, he believes that he is only writing stories about heroes overcoming evil, and his murders during the night never strike him as wrong. Adventures in Liffe almost inevitably involve going to Neverwere Mansion for the night, as the Baron invites anyone interesting to spend the night, knowing full well that he cannot prey upon the locals without arousing suspicion. Long-lived heroes, like elves and dwarves, are particularly likely to be invited, as is anyone that the Baron might find attractive. Of course, getting into the Mansion is the easy part. Slaying the Baron or surviving 100 years might not prove as easy.

*“Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil.
Are empty trunks o’erflourished by the devil.”
~William Shakespeare*



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, forest, hill, and plains
Year Formed:	750 BC
Population:	6,000
Races (%):	Humans 98%, Other 2%
Languages:	Common, Sithican, Vaasi
Religions:	Ezra, the Lawgiver
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Baron Lyron Evensong
Darklord(s):	Baron Lyron Evensong
Nationality:	Liffen
Analog:	Orkney islands

Local Fauna:

Liffe is mostly tamed, with little in the way of wildlife. Most of what you’ll find on Liffe are livestock — especially sheep, as the Liffen grow them hardy and strong, as they’re able to subsist on the grass that grows here.

Local Flora:

Liffe is a place of farmland, grass, and light forests. The forests here do not hide much in the way of wild-life or monsters, as they’re far too light to do so, and the grasslands are mainly home to herds of sheep. The farmland produces plenty of crops, but because of the lack of nutrients in the soil, they’re considered slightly sub-standard by most merchants. Liffe does have one particular crop that stands out, a strange blue type of wheat. Used correctly during distilling, it produces an excellent whiskey that retains its blue color. It has proven to be the Liffe’s most profitable export, and one of the only reasons that the island’s nobles still have wealth to work with, as they would otherwise have spent it all on foreign merchants’ wares.

Native Horrors

There are few wolves or any of the predators found elsewhere, but there are enough so that a casual sighting of one doesn’t have the locals screaming “werewolf”. But there are werewolves here, as well as vampires and other monsters. And they are the real danger — monsters that take on the appearance of the people around them.

Terrain type

Liffe has a mild climate and should be able to grow more crops than they do, but the quality of what comes out is, unfortunately, sub-par due to the poor soil. The forests, while filled with conifers, aren’t deep enough to supply much lumber, so while it’s enough to have a small fishing fleet, and keep it

Liffe

in repair, that's all it can do. The natural harbor at Armeikos is what brings people to Liffe as it's an excellent stopover on the Nocturnal Sea, and the locals have built warehouses to keep goods flowing to and from the island.

Important Landmarks

Neverwere Mansion

Neverwere Mansion is the home of Baron Evensong, and situated in Claveria. It is a place with a dark reputation among the locals. They tell stories of people entering every day and then disappearing without a trace during the night over the last fourteen days. As this happens every night, it has aroused a lot of suspicion, and it is being investigated though Baron Lyron Evensong appears to be unworried about this. The mansion is well-built, but nothing special. It's solid and nice looking and quite sizable with a lot of guest rooms. Inside the mansion, time passes differently. Each night inside lasts 100 years and there is no escape, except for an endless void.

For those unlucky enough to be caught inside, they either die of old age while stuck there — forced to entertain the Baron for a century. Or they get close to discovering his secret and the way to escape, and he murders them. Either way, the Baron finds his entertainment one way or another.

Towns and villages:

Armeikos

Armeikos is the largest settlement on Liffe, with some 3,000 inhabitants. It has a deep natural harbor, and it is the seat of the emerging middle class of merchants. A number of warehouses line the docks here enabling the merchants and the visiting sailors to conduct business. Armeikos is also home to the only institute of higher learning on Liffe, a college, though it is not dedicated to any particular line of learning. So far, the study of economics and trade stands out, but should any gifted teacher appear or be hired here, they could easily take it in any direction.

Armeikos suffered at the hands of a strange killer recently — Ejrik Spellbender, a disembodied ghost that inhabited the body of an unknowing adventurer. Using the body, Ejrik took great pleasure in murdering the weak and hearing their pleas for mercy. Ejrik was defeated and his heart, the one that magically allowed him to take control over others and live on, was supposedly destroyed.

Claveria

Claveria is a quiet town of 1,100 souls, without much to speak of. It is surrounded by farms that grow wheat and other crops. The locals are a very solemn bunch, who do not think highly of their town leader, Baron Evensong, even though they are all his tenants. Rumors fly of people who enter his mansion and how never leave again. This is seemingly a daily occurrence, but every time that the Baron emerges he carries with him a new song or book, making him easily the most prolific writer and song maker on the island.

Moondale

Moondale is a town of 1,600. It is the home of the Liffe militia but often suffers from unseemly winter weather, with the whole place sometimes being cut off from the rest of the island for weeks on end by extremely deep snow drifts. During those times, the militia usually tries to disperse across the island, before the winter storms hit.

Moondale has had a troubled past. Almost twenty years ago, it suffered under the depredations of a number of vampires, who were eventually fought off by visiting adventurers. The only surviving adventurer was Dante Lysin, who settled down and took over the local inn, which he has ever since. More recently, the town suffered a number of werewolf attacks, where suspicions had been laid on some traveling mercenaries. They turned it around and revealed that the true werewolf was a captain of the militia, a man named Alec Rapacion.

Whether that is the end of Moondale's troubles remains to be seen.

Neighboring domain(s):

The Nocturnal Sea

Fun Fact:

The Liffen whiskey has become famed across the Core and is the main export from the island. The blue liquid is said by some to have magical powers, though this is patently untrue. It is extremely potent, and local doctors in Lamordia and Richemulot have discovered that the whiskey can be used as an anti-septic. This makes it much cheaper than the normal methods for cleaning that the doctors would use, though it does stain the area blue for a few weeks afterward, making it very easy to see where surgery has taken place.

Baron Lyron Evensong

"Greetings!

Welcome to my home, brave adventurers!

Please eat, drink. Join me in conversation.

The feast is already laid out.

Eat like it's the last day of your life."

~Baron Lyron Evensong

Baron Lyron Evensong is a tall thin man with blonde hair and blue eyes. The baron dresses well, preferring brighter colors, especially white and bright red. When he first meets someone, he is friendly and outgoing, but soon loses interest.

Lyron is a natural talker who has a way with people, instantly likeable, but will quickly turn every conversation to his favorite topic, himself. Lyron is a natural actor who creates a convincing illusion of normality for a time, but it always falls apart, revealing the truth; that Lyron is a complete sociopath who cares about no one save himself.

Background: Lyron Evensong was a bard of exceptional ability, who came from the same world as Lord Soth and Vlad Drakov. His bardic talents were only exceeded by his complete self absorption. Lyron was incapable of seeing other people as anything but tools to be used and discarded. It mattered not whether his victims were women nor men, rich nor poor, royalty nor the basest peasant, as long as they did what Lyron wanted. He thought this was the natural way of things, and that anything he forced his victims to do was inherently good, because Lyron himself was inherently good.

As his fame as a performer grew, Lyron amassed a better treasury than most kings. He paid a wizard to enchant his favorite instrument, a harpsichord, to ensnare the senses of those who heard it. If the wizard did his work well, the harpsichord would play of its own accord any song Lyron knew just as well as he could, and it would cast a spell on anyone who heard it, making them into Lyron's slaves. But something went wrong. Horribly wrong.

The wizard didn't make the harpsichord part of Lyron, he made Lyron part of the harpsichord. The bard couldn't move more than a few hundred feet from the instrument. The harpsichord couldn't play on its own, but Lyron could change from a living, breathing being

to an immaterial specter. While he was immaterial, Lyron couldn't be attacked by blade nor spell, but could cast spells of his own.

Lyron continued to manipulate everyone around him to gain himself more wealth and favors, but with a new sadistic streak. The bard thought he was untouchable. A god. He could get away with murder, blackmail, and thievery, and no one could stop him.

The few that resisted Lyron's powerful compulsions soon became the target of his undying hatred. Most met their end thanks to Lyron's wickedly sharp dagger. The few that Lyron thought might prove able to defeat him were betrayed by enspelled friends or family.

One night, Lyron was the guest of a small noble family, well off, but extremely well connected. For some unfathomable reason the mother resisted Lyron's spells. Lyron, infuriated beyond comprehension, her children slaughter their mother, then feast on the remains. The Dark Powers took Lyron into Ravenloft and gave him his own domain, Claveria.

Current Sketch: Lyron cares little for his domain. During the day he roams around his manor house, keeping an ear out for rumors from the village about new or interesting strangers that entered into the domain. Adventurers are a particular favorite. Once he finds these strangers, he invites them to his manor house for a feast.

In addition to his domain, the Dark Powers gifted Lyron with a unique curse. Every night the library within his manor house becomes its own domain. Lyron and any guests that are in the library when the sun sets are trapped in the library for a century. Only a single night passes in Claveria. The library never runs out of air and the living trapped in it have no need of food or water, yet continue to age normally. Lyron himself does not age, and has spent over a thousand years trapped in the library of his own home. The only way out is to destroy his enchanted harpsichord, sitting in a quiet corner of the library.

Darklord's Tactics: Lyron disdains combat, finding it boring. The Dark Powers won't let their plaything die anyway. He's been killed several times, only to be returned to life twenty-four hours later.

When Lyron is immaterial, no attack can affect him, but Lyron cannot inflict any hit point damage. Lyron can cast spells from the illusion and enchantment schools. When he is in his material form he can be

Baron Lyron Evensong

attacked normally. Lyron is always armed with a dagger and has several weapons hidden around the library. Lyron will ignore any physical threat, unless they attack his harpsichord. If the instrument is in danger Lyron immediately returns to material form and attacks.

Borders: Lyron cannot close the borders to Claviera. During the night the library of the manor house becomes a pocket domain that everyone, including Lyron, is trapped inside.



Baron Lyron Evensong

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +6

Skills Acrobatics +5, Performance +9, Persuasion +9, Sleight of Hand +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Sithican, Darkonese, Draconic, Vaasi, Graben, Elven, Halfling, Sylvan, Dwarven, Gnome, Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Delusional. Lyron does not recognise the evil of his character and believes himself to be lawful good. He will never attack other characters himself unless they attempt to destroy his harpsichord.

Immaterial. Lyron does not possess a physical body and only his spirit roams around. If a creature tries to attack or even touch Baron Lyron, the creature's weapon or limb simply passes through him as though he were smoke. He is immune to all damage while immaterial. Otherwise, Lyron appears perfectly solid and cannot pass through the walls or doors of his mansion. Lyron can only materialize if his harpsichord is attacked. It takes a full turn for him to become material.

Seemingly Immortal. Time does not run the same for Lyron as it does for other creatures. One hundred years for each day he spends in Claviera pass for him. Thus, when a week passes in the outside world, Lyron has lived 700 years in his study. Lyron shall live a full life of 75 years, one century at a time. If he is defeated, by the time of sunset, he will reappear in his study. He can only be truly slain if his harpsichord is destroyed. The harpsichord has an AC of 15 and 100 hit points.

House Arrest. Lyron can never leave his mansion and that, no matter where he is in the mansion, when the sun goes down, he reappears back in his study.

Innate Spellcasting. Lyron's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *color spray*, *expeditious retreat*, *friends*, *grease*, *hideous laughter*, *mage hand*, *message*, *vicious mockery*

3/Day each: *counterspell*, *healing word*, *hold person*, *hypnotic pattern*, *mirror image*, *tongues*

1/Day each: *dominate person*, *haste*, *slow*

Countercharm. Lyron's musical notes or words of power can disrupt mind-influencing effects. As an action, he can start a performance that lasts until the end of his next turn. During that time, he and any friendly creatures within 30 feet of him have advantage on saving throws against being frightened or charmed. A creature must be able to hear Lyron to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if Lyron is incapacitated or silenced or if he voluntarily ends it (no action required).

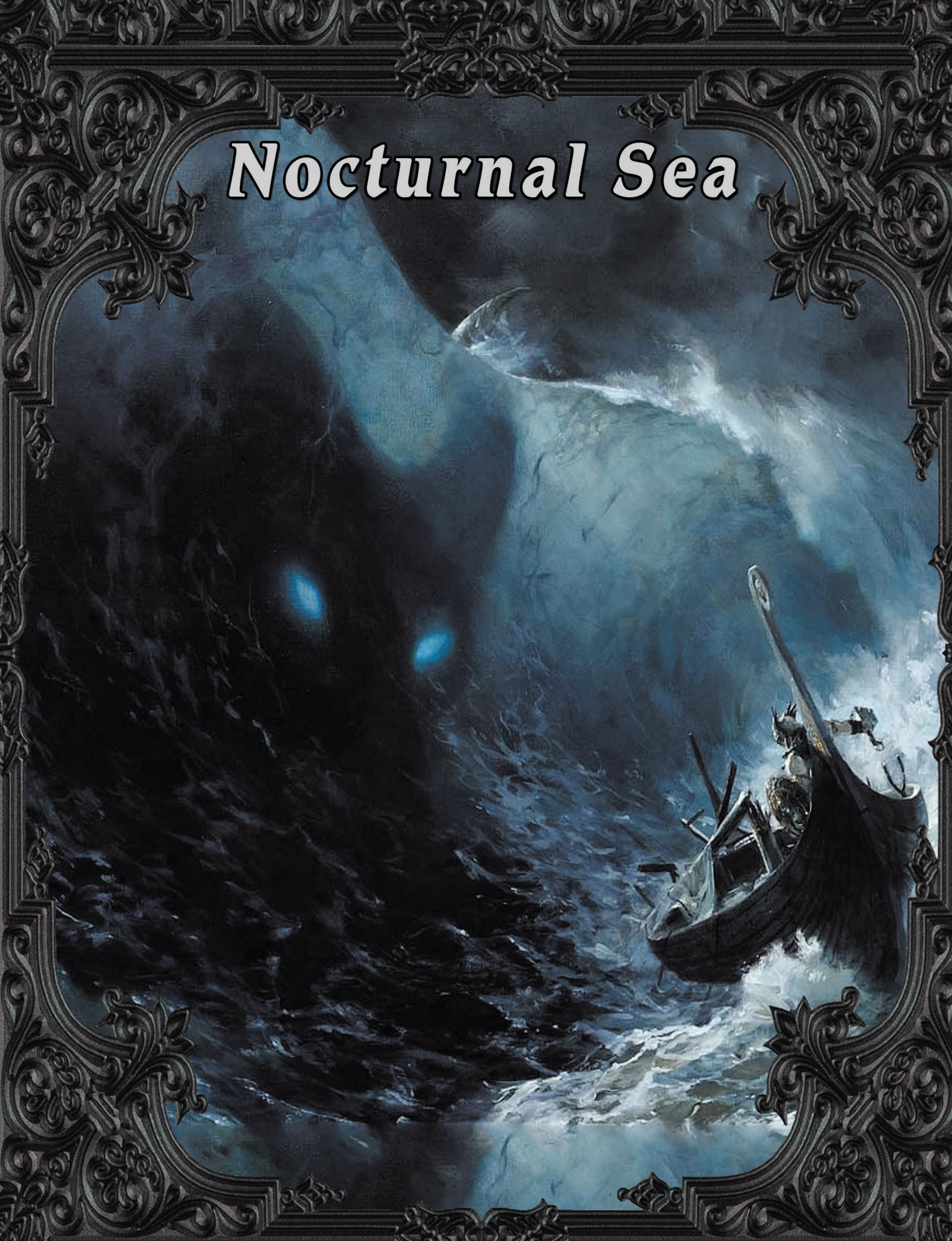
Taunt (2/Day). Lyron can use a bonus action on his turn to target one creature within 30 feet of him. If the target can hear Lyron, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of Lyron's next turn.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

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

Nocturnal Sea



Nocturnal Sea



The Nocturnal Sea was once a much smaller domain, called Nebligtode, that consisted only of Graben, Todstein, and the surrounding smaller islands. Lost in the mists, it only really attracted those from outside the mists into its grasp, with many of them ending up in barrels before being shipped off to Todstein and the clutches of Meredoth the necromancer lord.

Meredoth hailed from a far-off land, and was an accomplished wizard that came to the attention of the Empire. He was given a lordship and sent to rule a far-off northern realm. Initially, Meredoth considered this to be a blessing that would give him time and peace to study magic and necromancy away from intrusions and prying eyes.

Unfortunately, the reality of the thing was different. He had only been there for a few months before the locals started taking up his time with their inquiries and needing help with arbitration, and he found himself with less and less time for what he really wanted to do.

By the time that the second winter came around, this was taking up way too much of his time in Meredoth's opinion, and what was worse was that the people were starving, and demanding his help. During those long months, Meredoth had dedicated himself to finding a solution to their intrusions in his work, and he presented them all with a feast. As they feasted, they were poisoned, and died. Moments later, they all started rising once more as living dead — undead that look alive.

It was at this point that Meredoth was drawn into the Mists, and Nebligtode was formed. His first act here was to create more undead, the Graben family, who would provide him with subjects for his work.

The domain, following the Grand Conjunction in 750 BC, expanded into the Nocturnal Sea, and smaller islands, domains, started appearing. While Meredoth doesn't have control over those domains, he controls access to them, at least in part, as they have to move through it. Meredoth rarely cares to interfere in that however, as he is deep in his studies of life and death.

Adventures in the Nocturnal Sea could have many themes, such as fighting monsters that live below the waves, though these are rare. Most adventures in the Nocturnal Sea would center around the smaller domains, and the themes that they address or around the islands that once formed Nebligtode.

Centered around Graben and Todstein, life here is quiet and unassuming, but nefarious undercurrents run

thick around the Village of Graben, a place that unknowingly is the center of body trafficking. Whenever someone dies here, the Graben family secretly digs them, having done so successfully for over a century, sticks the body in a barrel, and ships it off to Todstein for Meredoth's latest work. This happens at least once a month, sometimes more often, if the family feels like it can get away with it.

Adventures within that part of the domain should center around "body trafficking" and around the grave robbing of the Graben family. Perhaps they come across them exhuming a body in the middle of the night, or they happen across one of the ships used to send the bodies to Todstein, inside one of the specialized barrels that the Graben family uses. Disturbing the flow of bodies to Todstein draws the ire of Meredoth, but it's unlikely to be right away. The Necromancer is patient, but more importantly, so engrossed in his work that he won't notice the interruption for weeks. At that point, he would take steps to ensure that the flow is restored, and if annoyed or provoked, that the heroes are punished.

Should the heroes be unfortunate enough to get to Todstein, they come into direct contact with the necromancer himself and the mausoleum that he lives in. The mausoleum is essentially a large death trap, designed to capture and slowly kill those who come here, so that their bodies remain intact for Meredoth to work on. Only in the most dire circumstances does the necromancer risk himself in direct confrontation.

"Sometimes dead is better"

~Stephen King, Pet Sematary

The Nocturnal Sea



Nocturnal Sea

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Cold, forest, hills, swamp and prairie (arctic on Todstein)
Year Formed:	635 BC (Expanded from Nebligtode to the Nocturnal Sea in 750 BC)
Population:	3,000 (on the islands, unknown in the sea)
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1% (on the islands, unknown in the sea)
Languages:	Common, Grabenite, Sithican, Vaasi
Religions:	Ezra, the Lawgiver
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Graben family
Darklord(s):	Meredoth
Nationality:	Grabenite
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

The waters of the Nocturnal Sea are filled with sea-life and fish, especially around the various islands. The island of Graben, in particular, has teeming schools of fish, so the few fishermen here need never travel far from the coast to feed their families. There are monsters here too, aquatic ones such as giant squid, sahuagin, and twisted merfolk. The more powerful types of aquatic creatures such as aboleth do not live here, or if they do, keep to themselves in the deepest and darkest parts of the oceans.

The individual islands of the Nocturnal Sea are covered in their respective domain headings, but Graben, Knammen and the Schlamholme Islets all share several commonalities as they are close together. All have been mostly tamed, so there aren't any animals more dangerous than bears, cougars, and wolves here. Sheep and goats are everywhere, but especially on the northern edge of Graben, where they produce a particularly rich wool. Other animals tend to be smaller, such as otters, beavers, squirrels. The beavers that live near Seeheim and Kirchenheim are considered a nuisance as they often attempt to dam up the rivers, reducing the rivers to mere trickles in the heights of summer.

Knammen is much the same as Graben, though with fewer wild animals and sheep. The people who live here, mostly around Meerdorf are the main fishermen of the islands, and provide fresh fish for the village of Graben where most of the islands' commerce happens.

The Schlamholme islets aren't home to any wildlife, though some crabs can be found here sometimes. The tides often obscure the islets completely, so that they're gone during high tide and uncovered again at low tides.

Todstein is much, much colder than the rest of the islands, having an arctic climate (where the other islands are merely cold). It is home to white hares, wolves, and winter grouse.

Local Flora:

Most of the islands of the Nocturnal Sea have their own unique flora that's described in their domains, but for the islands of Graben and Knammen, the flora is pretty much the same. The island is mostly grasslands or prairie and swamp, but there are a few wooded areas where the trees are mostly birch and hazel trees. Both trees make for excellent kindling for the colder months and provide lumber for the few boats that the local fishermen need for their work.

The grasses of both prairie and the rocky areas are what support the sheep and goats of the island. Most vegetables, fruit, and herbs have a hard time growing here, but basil, strawberries, and lettuce grow well here, along with an incredibly hardy variant of wheat. This particular wheat, while hardy as no other, has an extremely bland taste, and only the most desperate sailors and merchants would take it off the islanders' hands. Along with what does grow here, and what fish and meat they can scrape together, the islanders make a decent living.

On Todstein, the island is covered by pine forest and a variety of hardy evergreen shrubs. The permafrost prevents much growing here apart from these, though these plants seem to be doing well, in spite of the harsh conditions.

Native Horrors

None of the islands are plagued with monsters, with Knammen being the most serene. The inhabitants of the island of Graben sometimes have to deal with outbreaks of ghouls and ghosts, though no one has been able to track down the source. They're very rare, so no coordinated search has ever been attempted. Todstein is lethal, but home to only three kinds of monsters: Meredoth, the undead servitors that he uses (skeletons in particular) and a unique type of golem that he has created called a snow golem. These snow golems resemble gigantic carved ice sculptures and have a touch that causes instant frost burn to most creatures.

Nocturnal Sea

Terrain type

Graben and Knammen consist of plains, hills, rocks, swamps, and woods, while Todstein is a rocky island covered in snow and pine trees.

While Graben and Knammen are rather normal, that is not the case for Todstein. The snow here is packed extremely heavily and thickly, reaching depths of 20 feet in some places. The permanent frost means that it's strong enough to support even the heavy golem servants of Meredoth. Human-sized creatures are at no risk of falling through the thick snow, though they need to be wary in some areas, where the snow is shallower and therefore less solid.

Important Landmarks

Graben Family Estate

The Graben Family estate lies just to the south of the Village of Graben, on the Island of Graben. And within lives the Graben family.

An outsider might easily get confused by the same names being used for everything, but to the locals, it makes total sense, within the context of each conversation.

This large family estate consists of three large main buildings where the elders of the family live, along with a guest house and two servant houses (all three are the smallest buildings on the estate) and six more buildings that house the extended Graben family, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the matriarch and patriarch of the family, Marietta and Ezekiel. Both are too old to leave the house and the day-to-day business of the family is handled by their eldest child Colin and their grandson Blaine.

Even the villagers don't see anyone from the family often as they keep to themselves, except for the rare occasions when they, once a month, come into town for supplies or to hand off a casket to a passing ship's captain.

It's been this way for over a hundred years and no one questions it anymore.

The family has a dreadful secret though. All of them are members of the living dead or lebentod. Undead creatures that can detach their limbs as needed, but who, to all inspection, look to be alive. They maintain their charade of life by going so far as to pretend to sleep at night in their beds, though in reality they simply rest in their beds. Some of the family members ARE in fact alive, but all are in on the secret, and

those who dare to break the shroud of silence around the family are killed off in "accidents", in short order. They make their wealth, and they are wealthy indeed, through grave robbing. Taking any valuables from the corpses that they find, before shipping the corpses to Meredoth. In this manner, they can maintain a lifestyle that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

The Mausoleums

On Todstein stand two buildings, two mausoleums, seemingly preserved for all eternity amid the cold. Guarded by snow golems, they're usually left alone, but they hide a bigger secret. Meredoth himself claims a lair beneath them, and it is from here that he works his magic. Admittedly, most of his magic stays within the confines of his frozen home, but that is only because he doesn't bother much with the outside world, unless he needs fresh supplies (i.e. corpses) or because some unfortunate adventurer has irritated him. His home is therefore created to be a death trap to anyone coming here, but one built so that Meredoth may observe the deaths of the unfortunate victims and one which leaves their bodies intact for his gruesome experiments.

Towns and villages:

Kirchenheim (Graben Island)

Kirchenheim is the second-most northerly village on Graben. Home to roughly 300 people, it holds most of the fishing fleet outside of Meerdorf. It, like all the other villages, is an insular place, where the locals keep to themselves and only rarely do their merchants make the trek to other villages. For Grabenites however, they are downright amicable (which would make them only slightly standoffish elsewhere), and are the most welcoming to strangers, though they keep a wary eye on those who claim that their destination or homeland is Vechor, as they believe only madmen would come from there, and only the insane would go there on purpose.

Meerdorf (Knammen Island)

Meerdorf is the smallest village of what was once called Nebligtode, with only 150 people making it their home. It is an unremarkable town, except for the fact that it has the largest fishing fleet of any of the Grabenite villages, and therefore supplies much of them with fresh fish.

Village of Graben (Graben Island)

Calling Graben a village is a bit of a misnomer, as it, with its just over 1,000 inhabitants, is in fact a town. However, old habits die hard in a place like Graben, and the name has stuck for longer than anyone can

Nocturnal Sea

remember. It's a basic place but it has what a visitor would come to expect of a small town such as a bakery, a fish market, a butcher, a tailor and cotton spinner, a mill, and the Black Sheep Inn. The Inn isn't of particularly great quality but it suffices in a place such as a Graben and thrives due to the lack of competition.

Heroes digging around will find that the weirdest place in Graben is the city's large cemetery, which is much bigger than Graben would really ever need, with tombstones for everyone interred here. Or, for the less macabre, the cooper, who makes barrels. And who makes a specific barrel, five feet tall by three feet wide, solely for the Graben family. Of course, unknown to the cooper is the fact that these two are connected. The barrels are packed with a body after it has been disinterred from the cemetery and then dropped into the ocean near Todstein by passing ships. (See Todstein below for more details on what happens next).

Schlammholme Islets

The Schlammholme Islets are a series of rock outcroppings that jut out from the sea just south of Graben. Most of the time, they're exposed and easy to see, but when the tide is high, they're hidden just under the surface, and pose a grave threat to any passing ship, as they're capable of tearing through a ship's hull with ease.

Seeheim (Graben Island)

Seeheim is about the same size as Kirchenheim just to the south, but while Kirchenheim hosts a fleet of ships, Seeheim is where that fleet is built. Its 300 inhabitants are all involved in the shipbuilding process in one form or another, whether cutting down trees from the forest nearby, shaping the lumber into usable planks, making ships, or even just cooking for the crews; everyone is involved.

This has led to the Seeheimers being incredibly insular, and lately, they've started taking up the worship of a strange sea god. While the practice isn't widespread yet, it is spreading quickly as everyone in Seeheim feels that they have a special connection with the sea. Surely they must be blessed by a benevolent sea god?

Todstein

Todstein is the home of Meredoth, a small island that he hardly ever leaves. It is guarded by his snow golems, undead creations, and many devious traps. Anyone coming here had better be prepared to fight

for their lives. Those who do visit here, and who manage to hide (a rare feat indeed) might have the dubious honor of discovering the floating barrels of dead people. These barrels have been tossed overboard by sailors from passing ships (see Village of Graben above), and the wind and tides that Meredoth controls have them brought to his shore as a tribute from his loyal servants in the Graben family. These barrels are normally collected by the snow golems and brought to Meredoth in his mausoleum, but occasionally one of the barrels is caught where they can't be retrieved, and then the barrel is simply left to float there, pickling the corpse inside them with briny water from the Nocturnal Sea. Anyone unlucky enough to open one of these barrels should prepare themselves for a gruesome, and disgusting, sight.

Neighboring domain(s):

Darkon
Isle of the Raven
L'île de la Tempête
Liffe
Nova Vaasa
Vechor

Fun Fact:

While the islanders of Graben and Knammen are extremely insular, they've had to open up more in recent years, as the islands found themselves in the Nocturnal Sea rather than Nebligtode. Some of the elders have great difficulty adjusting to this and still refer to the chain of islands by their old name. There is also a rumor of an old man surfing the waves around the islands of the Nocturnal Sea on a flying disc but these rumors only help to lighten the spirits of the islanders.



Meredoth

"I don't see why it matters.

They were starving. They would have been dead soon anyway.

Now they cannot die. They no longer need to eat. They can still spend time with their loved ones.

I have elevated them. Lifted them above the mundane concerns of food and shelter and warmth.

I should be praised, not condemned.

The living really are a bunch of useless fools. I can't wait to be rid of all of you."

~Meredoth

Meredoth is a tall human male who appears to be in his late eighties. Rail thin, with a long white beard and eyes the color of a glacier, he wears long gray robes and covers his bald head with a hood during the frequent storms of the Nocturnal Sea.

He often stares into the distance while others are talking to him, giving the impression he has far more important things to do than talk to living beings. Meredoth regards other living creatures as an annoyance, but one that he has to put up with. Although he appears to be daydreaming or contemplating far off places, he is always completely aware of his surroundings. Life in Ravenloft has taught the old wizard to be careful at all times. The cagey arcanist has undead minions nearby, and will gladly sacrifice them to ensure his own survival.

Background: Meredoth was a powerful necromancer and a famous adventurer on his homeworld. When he was ready to retire, his king granted the wizard the title of baron and tasked the necromancer with founding a colony to the north of the kingdom. Retainers looking to prove themselves and make their fortunes presented themselves before him, who accepted their service. Meredoth had no interest in ruling a colony and hoped the retainers would reign in his stead. The king hoped that Meredoth's power and reputation would attract people looking to settle in a new region, wanting the wizard to expand the kingdom into the wilderness beyond its borders. Meredoth wanted to continue his research in peace, but unfortunately for him, the king proved correct.

Hundreds flocked to the new colony. The necromancer used magic and undead servants to construct a

castle on an island and told his retainers to run the government in his stead.

The first winter was unbelievably harsh. Freezing winds and constant storms isolated the colony from aid and soon the colonists were freezing and starving. Hundreds died. For Meredoth, this was a useful boon. The dead colonists could be reanimated to perform simple tasks, and needing neither food nor warmth, could work until they literally fell apart. When some of his retainers objected, they joined the ranks of the risen dead.

When spring returned a new group of colonists, thousands strong arrived at the bedraggled colony. Meredoth could barely retain his rage. The new colonists greatly increased the scope of his barony and constantly sought his attention. They slaughtered his zombies before he could stop them, then acted like heroes. Meredoth couldn't kill them all, and was forced to stop his studies to deal with their petty demands.

When winter returned, with its heavy snows and storms, Meredoth finally had a chance to resume his studies. Soon he had made his most important discovery yet. A new form of undead, intelligent and fiercely loyal to him. Meredoth called them the leb-entod.

With almost perfect timing, the colonists again appeared at his door. The winter was harsh, and they were starving and freezing. The storms had torn apart their homes and forced the residents to stagger into the night seeking aid. Most were found frozen in heaps the next day, vainly trying to use their bodies to shield their loved ones. Hundreds had died. Food stores ran low and it was whispered that some of the far flung settlements had resorted to cannibalism and beastly rituals. Wendigo haunted the night. Meredoth was about to turn around and leave the colonists to their fate when he had an idea. He brought all the colonists his castle could hold into his fortress and sealed the doors. The fires were stoked and great food stores were unlocked.

Meredoth promised the colonists a feast. That night the colonists drank their fill and toasted their lord, who walked among them, pledging to them that it would be alright, and he had a plan. By morning every colonist that had come into his castle was dead. Meredoth had poisoned the meal. The few scant survivors were no match for a powerful wizard and his horde of undead. Once every living thing in the castle was slain, Meredoth set to work. As he raised his new minions, the

Meredoth

mists closed in. When they cleared, Meredoth found that he now lived on an island. Nearby islands would supply the people the arcanist needed for his experiments, and the whole area was surrounded by a thick wall of mist that allowed no escape. Meredoth was undisturbed and continued his experiments. After a century, he was given the Nocturnal Sea as his domain and it connected to Ravenloft's growing core.

Current Sketch: Meredoth has explored his island, Todstein, thoroughly and is familiar with two other islands, Graben and Knammen. He has turned the ruling family of Graben into lebentod and uses them as his primary enforcers. While he knows there are other islands in the Nocturnal Sea, he does not know which ones he can control and which belong to other dark lords, but he is learning rapidly. Meredoth views the living as lab rats. They exist so that he may find the answers to the questions of life and death that plague him. Anyone captured by the Graben ruling family or that is caught in the traps that honeycomb Todstein are set for a short life of cruel, often meaningless experimentation before being raised as lebentod and forced to endlessly toil in some forgotten part of his castle.

Darklord's Tactics: Meredoth is calculating and extremely intelligent. He is also cold, and cares nothing about sacrificing minions to further his own goals. One of his preferred tactics is to have a group of lebentod or zombies hold his opponents down so the wizard can fill the area with fire. His minions can die as long as his opponents die with them. Undead with a CR of 5 or less will not attack him, even if magically compelled. Meredoth always has lebentod and nastier undead nearby to aid him if necessary, and he loathes melee. Meredoth is a master of magic and spell combat. He prefers to keep his distance from any combatant and blast them with powerful spells, ripping the souls from his opponents, to experiment on them later. If hard pressed, Meredoth will retreat to a distant part of his island to heal and rest. When he is rested Meredoth will return to wreak his horrible vengeance.

Borders: Meredoth can summon a storm that makes travel on the Nocturnal Sea impossible. Any boat foolish enough to try is shattered by crashing waves and howling winds. A creature that tries to swim under the surface gets pulled down into the depths by long inky black tentacles.



Meredoth

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (Cloak of Protection +3, bracers of defense (22 with *mage armor*))

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50ft. (Disc of flying)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +4, Con +4, Int +13, Wis +10, Cha +0

Skills Arcana +14, Deception +2, History +14, Insight +6, Intimidation +2, Medicine +6, Nature +9, Religion +9, Sleight of Hand +8

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic; damage from spells; non magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stonewood)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Grabenite, Aquan, Auran, Balok, Elven, Abyssal, Darknese, Draconic, Infernal, Sithican, Vaasi, permanent tongues

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Meredoth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. Meredoth is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He can cast disguise self and invisibility at will. Meredoth knows and has prepared all wizard spells found in the Wizard class of the Player's Handbook. He need not spend time memorizing spells each day, but may instead cast these spells whenever they are needed, up to his daily limit of spell slots as written below:

Cantrips (at will): *Any Wizard cantrip*

1st level (4 slots): *Any 1st level Wizard spell*

2nd level (3 slots): *Any 2nd level Wizard spell*

Meredoth

3rd level (3 slots): *Any 3rd level Wizard spell*

4th level (3 slots): *Any 4th level Wizard spell*

5th level (3 slots): *Any 5th level Wizard spell*

6th level (2 slots): *Any 6th level Wizard spell*

7th level (2 slots): *Any 7th level Wizard spell*

8th level (1 slot): *Any 8th level Wizard spell*

9th level (1 slot): *Any 9th level Wizard spell*

* Meredoth casts *mage armor*, *stoneskin* and *mind blank* on himself before combat.

Extra Spell Slots. Meredoth can cast one Necromancy spell of each level without expending a spell slot. Only one spell of each level can be cast by using this ability. The extra necromancy spell slots are generated each time Meredoth finishes a long rest. Any unused necromancy spell slots are lost at the end of the day.

Control Over the Sea. Meredoth has control over the seas that surround his islands. Ordinarily, he keeps the waters in a 50 foot radius around his islands calm and peaceful. Beyond that border out to one mile, the sea boils with turbulence. Meredoth can cast *control weather* and *wall of water* once each day but these spells can only affect the seas around the islands and not the islands themselves.

Aware of Intruders. Meredoth is instantly aware of anyone setting foot on the island of Todstein or other islands found in the Nocturnal Sea.

Strong Immunities. Meredoth is immune to diseases, gasses and gas spells that affect breathing, and loss of hit points from bleeding.

War Caster. Meredoth has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from Meredoth, he can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Telekinetic. Meredoth can cast the *mage hand* cantrip without verbal or somatic components, and he can make the spectral hand invisible. Its normal range increases by 30 feet. As a bonus action, Meredoth can try to telekinetically shove one creature he can see within 30 feet of him. When he does so, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 17) or be moved 5 feet toward or away from him. A creature can willingly fail this save.

Undead Mastery. Meredoth is immune to all attacks, spell and spell-like abilities of Undead creatures of CR 5 or lower and his hit point maximum can't be reduced.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Meredoth finishes a Short Rest, he can choose expended Spell Slots to recover. The Spell Slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 10, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Grim Harvest. Meredoth reaps life energy from creatures he kills with his spells. Once per turn when he kills one or more creatures

with a spell of 1st level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times its level if the spell belongs to the School of Necromancy. Meredoth does not gain this benefit for killing constructs or undead.

Undead Thralls. When Meredoth casts *animate dead*, he can target one additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another zombie or skeleton, as appropriate. Whenever he creates an undead creature using a necromancy spell, it has additional benefits:

The creature's hit point maximum is increased by 20.

The creature adds 5 to its weapon damage rolls.

Command Undead. Meredoth can use magic to bring undead under his control, even those created by other wizards. As an action, he can choose one undead that he can see within 60 feet of him and that is intelligent or controlled by another spellcaster. That creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. If it succeeds, Meredoth can't use this feature on it again for the next 24 hours. If it fails, it becomes friendly to Meredoth and obeys his commands until he uses this feature again. All other non-intelligent undead that are found on his domain, are friendly to him and obey his commands. Intelligent undead are harder to control in this way. If the target has an Intelligence of 8 or higher, it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails the saving throw and has an Intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of every hour until it succeeds and breaks free.

Ugly to Behold. Meredoth's physical appearance is so imbued with the necrotic energies that he commands that he reeks of death and decay. Meredoth suffers disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) rolls.

Actions

Dagger +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Arcane Blast (Recharge 5–6). Meredoth magically emits arcane energy in a 30-foot radius by sacrificing a spell slot. Each creature in that area takes 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage + 1d6 for each level of the sacrificed spell slot and is unable to cast spells for 1 minute or take half damage if they succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Variant Spell (Recharge 5–6). When Meredoth casts a spell he can choose to use a customized version, choosing one of the effects below:

Chilling: The damage of the spell becomes either cold or necrotic.

Lingering. When Meredoth ceases concentrating on the casted spell, its effects last until the end of his next turn.

Rapid: If the spell has a casting time of 1 action, Meredoth can instead cast the spell a bonus action until the end of this turn.

Significant Possessions.

Cloak of Protection +3, Bracers of Defence, Ring of Shooting Stars, Disc of flying (same as Broom of flying), Decanter of Endless Water, Bag of Holding, 6 Potions of Supreme Healing.

Vechor



Vechor



Vechor is the land of folly, the result of a man who tried to stand up to an insane god-like being, luz the Evil, and who, for his hubris was punished with a fiend being bound eternally to his soul, and forced to live with the consequences of daring to ask the demi-god how he could understand the wood elves, and arguing that they should be allowed to arm themselves for war against his force. As a result, Easan was driven irrevocably mad, spending his time fighting the fiend inside his head, unable to distinguish between his wood elven self and the whispers of the demon.

Easan found temporary respite in a land named Vechor, whose mystics were able to calm the demon inside his head for a period of time — how long even Easan doesn't know as his madness was already made manifest. Eventually, the island of the mystics was destroyed, likely by either luz or the actions of the fiend in Easan's head, though he doesn't know or remember which it was. After this, Easan's madness came back stronger than ever before, and he became fixated on discovering the nature of souls, believing that these are somehow tied to his suffering. He made many experiments, each one more horrendous than the next, and eventually the Mists took note and drew him into the realms, depositing him in a land that reminded him of his time on the island of Vechor. Thus he gave his new kingdom the same name.

Vechor is a land of constant change due to Easan's madness, with everything potentially in flux, whether that is the people, the land, the animals, the weather, or anything else. Vechor has only two constants, and the inhabitants have learned to live with this. In fact, in spite of this, they're a contented lot and have learned to take oddities in their stride. They are also an emotional one though, subject to extreme mood swings that overtake them when they're faced with particular crimes, especially that of adultery. In those times, visitors discover why there are no sheriffs or constables in Vechor, as the inhabitants turn to mob justice. The two constants enforced by Easan are these: 1) only wild magic is allowed — magic of any other kind is illegal and the practitioners are to be killed on sight, and 2) everyone born to the realm must bear the letter E on their forehead, branded there at birth as a way of honoring their king. Adventures in Vechor should focus on the constantly changing nature of the domain, there should always be a change of something changing in the blink of an eye. Sometimes this will be something weird but relatively inconsequential (like the sky go-

ing from blue to pink in a matter of seconds), but at others it might be far more wide reaching, like a rabbit turning into an angry bear, or the river that the heroes were sleeping next to suddenly having moved three miles away and now flowing with bees.

Adventures should also focus upon the nature of a soul: What is a soul? Does everyone have one? What does it do? What happens if you don't have one or it is corrupted? These are the things that take up Easan's time and which subconsciously suffuses his domain.

"Rummaging in our souls, we often dig up something that ought to have lain there unnoticed."

~Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina



Culture Level:	Classical
Climate & Terrain:	Warm, forest (jungle), hill, and swamps (normally)
Year Formed:	600 BC (joins the Nocturnal Sea in 740 BC)
Population:	16,000
Races (%):	Humans 99%, Other 1%
Languages:	Common, Elven, Vechorite
Religions:	None (Easan is considered a god, but not worshipped)
Government:	Ochlocratic Despotism
Ruler(s):	Easan the Immortal
Darklord(s):	Easan the Mad
Nationality:	Vechorite
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:
Speaking of the flora and fauna of Vechor is practically impossible, as they can change at any moment. However, during his lucid moments, Easan's domain is warm and humid and infested with mosquitoes

Vechor

and insects that swarm over those not protected. This leads many inhabitants to wear fully covering clothes in certain areas, especially near the rivers and swamps, despite the heat and humidity. Other animals include tigers, snakes, monkeys, and brightly colored tropical birds whose cries can be heard from sunrise to sundown.

Local Flora:

Like the animal life of Vechor, the plant life is liable to change rapidly and randomly at any moment. During Easan's calmer moments though, the plant life is what you'd expect in a typical jungle. Vines, tall trees with wide leaves and fast-growing trunks, and smaller bushes. Everywhere is normally green and lively, but the humidity is high and the air is heavy. Most of the plants bear luscious fruits, meaning that the locals don't bother with having farmland, and instead focus on gathering fruit and avoiding the beasts that hide among the plants.

Native Horrors

All kinds of monsters can be found here when Easan is changing the layout of Vechor, but most are impermanent for that reason. The exception is a dread mechanical golem (a variant of an iron golem) that was one of Easan's first victims after Vechor was created. Unlike other golems of its kind, it is intelligent as it is inhabited by the soul of a ranger named Ahmi Vanjuko who has sworn vengeance on Easan for his crimes against life and the afterlife. Ahmi normally keeps to himself, as he has no physical needs that he has to attend to, but he sometimes contacts adventurers and merchants who are passing through, offering his assistance.

Terrain type

Vechor is normally covered in swamps, rivers, and jungle with a single, large shoreline on the western end, and a tall mountain range (the Cliffs of Vesania) on the eastern end. No one wants to brave the mountains as they house Easan's Manor House and the locals consider it to be sacred ground.

Important Landmarks

Easan's Manor House

The Mansion is a large building, made from white marble and other hard stone. It is located in the Cliffs of Vesania and it is a maddeningly impossible place, a mix of wood elf taste and fiendish tendencies. So it's heavily fortified, though whether to keep people out or Easan in is impossible to tell. It has several large spires, but they're not straight, and instead are twisted and crooked. Window openings are present along the inner walls, but all are of different sizes and shapes,

and set at different heights, ranging from those comfortable for a halfling to look through, all the way up to giants having to stand on their toes to look through. Inside the mansion, it gets worse. The rooms constantly shift around, there is no rhyme or reason in them, but no matter when you go in or where, surgical equipment and magical paraphernalia surround you, as well as books focusing on the nature of the soul. These range from philosophical debates on the existence of souls to fiendish treatises focusing on how to extract them from mortals and turn them into abyssal larvae.

Towns and villages:

Abdok

Abdok is a small city of 8,000. And describing it is impossible. There are buildings of all kinds of styles ranging from mud huts and hovels all the way up to grand mansions (though the biggest of them, Easan's city house) stands empty. The locals here are keen on trade and social life, leading happy lives in spite of the edicts of Easan. There is no prison nor even a local militia house, as the locals enforce their own version of mob rules. Punishment for crimes (whether real or perceived) tends to be light unless it is practicing magic (of any kind other than wild magic) or adultery. On the northern edge of town stands a single building, almost a ruin. It was once dedicated to St. Cuthbert, the deity who the mystics of the original Vechor worshipped. Here it stands empty, the only solid in a land of change and chaos, and the only constant that no local acknowledges. No matter the guise that Vechor takes or the appearance and behavior of the inhabitants, the monastery stands firm and never-changing. Visiting heroes have postulated that perhaps this is where the last sane part of Easan's psyche hides, seeking refuge in a memory before insanity, but no one knows for sure.

Neighboring domain(s):

The Nocturnal Sea

Fun Fact:

Vechorites have few social rules and almost no taboos, except for one: Marriage, and the bond between those who marry, is sacred. Regardless of gender, race, sexuality, or amount of people in the marriage. Once that bond is set, it cannot be broken. And those who are found to break that bond are subjected to the death sentence, by the mob. Usually, this is by burning or hanging. If only one person in such a tryst is married, then only the married person is punished, as the other(s) are considered to have been corrupted by the married one.

Easan the Mad

"Initially his story was tragic, a man driven to madness by evil.

It wasn't even his own evil, but one summoned by a creature that could one day rule a domain itself.

But that was years ago. Now his soul and the soul of the fiend are so intertwined, it's impossible to see where one ends and the other begins.

Now I think he prefers it this way."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Even for a wood elf of his world, Easan is short, standing barely over four feet in height. His skin is a deep woodland nut brown, almost the same shade as his wild and unkempt hair. The most disturbing feature is his eyes. Anyone staring at his eyes will notice that his pupils occasionally split into two. When Easan blinks or looks down, the second pupil disappears. The second pupil is a slit, like that of a cat, and bright red.

Background: Easan comes from the same world as Vecna and Kas the Betrayer. His small kingdom of wood elves was peaceful, but sat next to the lands of a vicious empire ruled by a demigod. Easan knew it was only a matter of time before the aggressive empire turned its gaze to his small, isolated kingdom and attacked. After decades of cajoling and arguing, the council of elders reached an accord and started preparing for war.

The demigod, the son of Grazz't and a powerful witch queen, had heard the bleating of the small wood elf, but never thought the kingdom would actually make preparations to resist. The demigod sent his agents to kidnap Easan and bring them to the capital of the demigod's empire, a city covered in skulls.

There the demigod demanded to know why Easan would charge his kingdom to prepare for war. Easan foolishly spat at the demigod and told him that he would never know the mind of a wood elf. His simple brain was incapable of complicated thought.

The demigod's eyes flashed in anger, but then he smiled. Easan was correct, the demigod said, he didn't know the mind of a wood elf, but that could be remedied. The demigod summoned a fiendish minion and forced it into Easan's body. The sudden mind of a fiend sharing his mind and body drove Easan to madness. The demigod let Easan go, to let him wander the forests as a lesson to others.

Easan used his rare lucid moments to head back to his kingdom. There he beseeched the priests and the elven gods to cure him, but none could undo the madness or remove the fiend from his body. His lucid moments becoming shorter and farther apart, Easan turned to the monks of a nearby monastery, Vechor.

To his surprise, something about the monastery and the monks quieted the demon. Easan stayed at the monastery for decades trying to find a way to exorcise the demon, but to no avail. Even though he could not remove the fiend, Easan had at least found peace.

The demigod, having heard of Easan's respite, boiled with incandescent rage. He sent his demons and undead to the monastery and in one short night it was razed to the ground. The demon returned twice as strong as before and shattered Easan's psyche into splinters.

Denied any peace, Easan became desperate. He began to abduct travellers and the poor. He locked them in makeshift dungeons and used arcane tools to start tearing their souls apart. He hoped to find the secret to the creation of a soul. If he could not extract the demon from his soul, maybe Easan could build a new one.

Dozens of innocent people were tortured to death under Easan's blades and spells. After years of twisted experiments, the Dark Powers brought Easan to Ravenloft. Easan was so enamored of his work by this time, he didn't even notice the change for well over a month.

Current Sketch: Easan spends most of his time in his isolated manor, deep in the woods of Vechor. The fiend designed the manor house, and it is an abattoir of torture and death. Creatures brought into the manor house are never seen again. Inside Easan and the fiend continue their experiments into the secrets of the soul. When Easan is inside the manor house, he lets his madness take full reign over his actions. Most of the time Easan forgets why he is torturing the poor creature in front of him, but continues anyway for the sheer love of the act.

Although the fiend designed the manor house, Easan designed the massive hedge maze that surrounds it. Easan, in his more lucid moments, is trying to keep anyone from approaching the manor so the fiend and himself cannot tear them to pieces with malicious glee. Easan encourages the largest, most dangerous creatures he can find to enter the maze. He has had some success in limiting the number of creatures he

Easan the Mad

can torture in the manor. Because of this, Easan and the fiend attempt to keep the captives they do get to last as long as possible.

The mad dark lord has recently heard of a device, called by a variety of names, but usually the Apparatus. This remarkable artifact is rumored to be able to rip the soul out of the body, change the soul at its most basic level and even split the soul in half. In his rare lucid moments, Easan hopes this device can rip the demon from his soul and send it screaming back into the Abyss where it belongs. The creator is a mystery, and Easan has only been able to discover a possible name, the Alchemist. Easan has dispatched dozens of agents to every corner of Ravenloft. He will find this Alchemist, and make them repair his tortured soul.

Easan spends time in the elaborate palace his mind created, but rarely and never for long. His only real source of amusement is shifting the terrain of his domain, ensuring the poor souls that live there can't even count on the very ground to remain the same.

Darklord's Tactics: Easan is a powerful wizard whose spells tug at the loose threads of reality. His spells deal far more damage than other spells of a similar level from similar mages. Easan's madness bleeds into the domain around him. When he casts his spells, the ground flows like water, the sky burns and spectral skulls form in the air and howl. To fight Easan is to fight a world gone mad.

To make matters worse, when Easan is slain his body turns into a fine grey dust. Easan will awaken in a new body one week later. He may not even remember that he was slain or who killed him, but may also awaken filled with rage, plotting an elaborate and bloody revenge. Easan has a raven familiar following him at all times. The familiar does not have a name as Easan calls it whatever name flashes in his maddened mind, regardless, the raven understands that he is referring to it.

Borders: When Easan closes the borders of Vechor, the domain is wreathed with maddening laughter. Any creature trying to leave the domain loses one point of Wisdom every minute they attempt to cross the border. When the creature turns back toward the center of the domain the Wisdom loss stops. The character regains Wisdom at the rate of 1 point a day.



Easan the Mad

Medium humanoid (fiendish wood elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (bracers of defense) (19 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 45 (13d8 - 13)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +8, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +13, History +13, Intimidation +3, Investigation +8, Perception +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire; damage from spells; non magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from stonewood)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal, Sithican, Sylvan, Vaasi, Elvish, Vechorite, Darkonese, Abyssal

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The archmage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mask of the Wild. Easan can attempt to hide even when he is only lightly obscured by foliage, heavy rain, falling snow, mist, and other natural phenomena.

Trance. Easan does not sleep. Instead he meditates deeply, remaining semi-conscious, for 4 hours a day. After resting in this way, he gains the same benefit a human would from 8 hours of sleep.

Rejuvenation. When Easan is slain, his body turns into a fine grey dust. Easan will awaken in a new body one week later. He may not even remember that he was slain or who killed him, but may also awaken filled with rage, plotting an

Easan the Mad

elaborate and bloody revenge. The only way to permanently destroy Easan is to cast a *wish* spell on his unconscious body and exorcise the fiend that is possessing him. The fiend uses the statblock of a glabrezu (MM, pg.58) and even if it is killed, it will return if Easan is not killed within 1 hour after the fiend was removed.

Hideous Laughter. Easan's laugh is contagious and infiltrates even the deepest parts of a creature's thoughts. Easan can cast the *hideous laughter* spell at will without the need of any material components. Easan can target up to 3 creatures with this ability. Creatures that are immune to charm or that can block telepathic messages are immune to this ability.

Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Easan finishes a short rest, he can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 6, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Wild Magic Surge. Easan can unleash surges of untamed magic. Immediately after he casts a wizard spell of 1st level or higher, the DM can have him roll a d20. If he rolls a 1, roll on the Wild Magic Surge table of the sorcerer class to create a random magical effect.

Tides of Chaos. Easan can manipulate the forces of chance and chaos to gain advantage on one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. Once he does so, he must finish a long rest before he can use this feature again. Any time before he regains the use of this feature, the DM can have Easan roll on the Wild Magic Surge table immediately after he casts a wizard spell of 1st level or higher. He then regains the use of this feature.

Servant of Chaos. When a wild surge is activated, Easan may now add or subtract 12 to wild surge results choosing between the two results (Results that are less than 1 count as a 1).

Telepathic. Easan can speak telepathically to any creature he can see within 60 feet of him. His telepathic utterances are in a language that Easan knows, and the creature understands him only if it knows that language. Easan's communication doesn't give the creature the ability to respond to him telepathically.

Fey Touched. Easan can cast *misty step* and *charm person* without expending a spell slot. Once he casts either of these spells in this way, he can't cast any of them in this way again until he finishes a long rest.

Regeneration. Easan regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point. Nothing deals lethal damage to Easan, even starvation, thirst or suffocation. When he reaches 0 hit points, he is rendered unconscious for 1d4 hours. With a long rest, he can regrow limbs without reattaching them and can even regenerate from disintegrated

tion, which deals enough subdual damage to render him "unconscious" for one week before his regeneration takes effect again.

War Caster. Easan has advantage on Constitution saving throws that he makes to maintain his concentration on a spell when he takes damage. He can perform the somatic components of spells even when he has weapons or a shield in one or both hands. When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from him, Easan can use his reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

Sense Magic. Easan senses magic within 120 feet of him at will. This trait otherwise works like the detect magic spell but isn't itself magical.

Shielded Mind. Easan is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense his emotions, read his thoughts, or detect his location.

Wand of Demon Summoning. Easan can use his magic wand to cast one of the following spells: *summon fiend* (TCE pg. 112), *summon greater demon* (XGE pg.166), *summon lesser demons* (XGE pg.167) as long as the wand has the required charges.

Fey Ancestry. Easan has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic cannot put him to sleep.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Easan fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Easan is a 12th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will. Easan knows and has prepared all wizard spells found in the Wizard class of the Player's Handbook. He need not spend time memorizing spells each day, but may instead cast these spells whenever they are needed, up to his daily limit of spell slots as written below:

Cantrips (at will): Any Wizard cantrip
1st level (4 slots): Any 1st level Wizard spell
2nd level (3 slots): Any 2nd level Wizard spell
3rd level (3 slots): Any 3rd level Wizard spell
4th level (3 slots): Any 4th level Wizard spell
5th level (2 slots): Any 5th level Wizard spell
6th level (1 slot): Any 6th level Wizard spell

*Easan casts *mage armor* and *stoneskin* on himself before combat.

Easan the Mad

Actions

Dagger +1. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Dart +1. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage.

Read Thoughts. Easan magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within his domain that he knows that is within the domain and he is familiar with. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is within Vechor, Easan can continue reading its thoughts requiring no concentration. While reading the target's mind, Easan has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Legendary Actions

Easan can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Easan regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. Easan casts a cantrip.

Dart Attack. Easan makes a Dart attack.

Warp Reality (2 Actions). Easan takes a lair action.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, Easan can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), he can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Easan warps the terrain, creating or repositioning up to five 10-foot square walls or similar barriers in a space he can see within 60 feet. The ground shifts under Easan's will, becoming a slick ooze of clinging mud. A 40-foot radius pool forms from a point Easan can see within 60 feet. of him. The area of this pool is difficult terrain and deals 1d6 acid damage to any creature that starts its turn in it.

The reality bends and glitches around Easan. Easan and all creatures within 100ft range of him have duplicate illusory selves appear within 5ft of them as if a mirror image spell was cast upon them. Easan can see through the illusory copies.

Easan can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Regional Effects

The land of Vechor shifts randomly with Easan's mood and mental state, with forest paths shifting, the color of the sky and size of the moon changing, and the weather altering dramatically.

◇ Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate, determine the weather, or forage for food are made with disadvantage.

◇ The impermanence of the land make it more challenging to maintain one's wits. Creatures who spend more than a week in the land have disadvantage on saving throws to avoid madness.

If Easan is permanently slain, these effects fade over the course of 3d10 days.

Significant Possessions:

10x Darts +1, Dagger +1, Wand of Demon Summoning, Bracers of Defense



Wandering Domains

"There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign."

*~Robert Louis Stevenson, **The Silverado Squatters***

Overview

"Ladies and Gentlemen! Come one, come all and gaze upon these wonders!" shouts the brightly dressed barker. "Step right up! You have to see to believe!" he continues. "What your eyes perceive — you will never forget!" he concludes ominously.

Polite society takes comfort in knowing those that live within their community. Fear of outsiders can be a healthy survival skill. When nomadic performers from parts unknown arrive on the outskirts of town it is novelty and curiosity that draws us in. Mistrust abates, coin is exchanged, and once purses are empty, the attraction moves on.

In the case of Wandering Domains (**The Winding Road, Carnival, The House of Dark Strategy, The Eyrie, Scaena, and Aggarath**), all of the bright colors and oddities are never exactly what they seem. There is something more sinister lurking below the surface, and drawing in the unsuspecting mark while earning their trust is just the beginning of the macabre fun! Step right up, indeed!

Mistways

The Wandering Domains can appear within the borders of any other Domain, and can serve as a type of Mistway themselves. Entering from one Domain, you may find you exit into another.

Chronology

690BC – The Horseman seeks vengeance against van Hassen, but kills indiscriminately. **The Winding Road** forms.

????? – Isolde pursues The Gentleman Caller. **Carnival** forms.

????? – Lord Malkant Hilfin bargains for eternal victory. **The House of Dark Strategy** forms.

????? – The Baron slays Highlord Kravon. **The Eyrie** forms.

732BC – Lemot Sedium Juste burns his audience for laughing at his tragic play. **Scaena** forms.

751BC – Chardath Spulzeer gives in to the influence of Maleffluent. **Aggarath** forms.



Aggarath



Aggarath



Aggarath exists within the life-stealing dagger that shares its name. Whenever the dagger kills someone by destroying their life force, their souls are imprisoned within the rubies of the seventh facet. That was not the fate of Chardath Spulzeer however. He was drawn into the dagger as punishment for the evil he had perpetrated when he succumbed to the call of his lich ancestor and slit the throat of his sister. His own exposure over the years to numerous evils further doomed him, so that when he finally was able to confront the lich, he was no better than the undead creature.

His obsession with his sister, first with keeping her safe, then with making himself and her happy, and finally with revenge over her death, coming as it did at his hands, had driven him beyond the point of reason. Acquiring the *Maleffluent* didn't help things either, as the magical axe drove him deeper into madness, causing him to embrace it. The *Maleffluent* resents being imprisoned, and sees Chardath's imprisonment as a weakness, and works to free itself from his grasp.

The dagger Aggarath now exists somewhere within the domains of dread, floating in the mists, or perhaps wandering the various lands. It is not intelligent in and of itself, but the mind of Chardath subconsciously guides it to those who would use the dagger and thereby expose themselves to being drawn in, alongside their victims.

Adventures involving Aggarath (both dagger and domain) are likely to be a matter of the heroes coming across the dagger, and accidentally having one of them or the people they're fighting dragged into the jewel, as their soul leaves them. The remainder of the party would be able to follow, using *teleport* or *plane shift* style magic, as long as they hold the dagger and the gemstone. Once there, in order to get out, they'll have to rescue those caught within. Adventures in Aggarath will therefore always involve Chardath, as he holds the key to escaping the domain, though he is stuck in the eleventh facet himself. Meanwhile, *Maleffluent* helps those who find themselves imprisoned, reasoning that if they get out, it can too.

"I wanted to see you again, touch you, know who you were, see if I would find you identical with the ideal image of you which had remained with me and perhaps shatter my dream with the aid of reality."

~Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Depends on the facet
Year Formed:	751 BC
Population:	1 (not counting the captives in the seventh facet)
Races (%):	Humans 100%
Languages:	Common, Chondathan, Sembian
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Chardath Spulzeer
Darklord(s):	Chardath Spulzeer
Nationality:	Tethyrian
Analog:	Minotaurs and the Labyrinth

Local Fauna:

There are no natural animals within Aggarath. Anything created here is a result of the facet in which the heroes find themselves at that point and is described in the facet below.

Local Flora:

Like animals, there are no plants native to the domain of Aggarath. Anything here is either the heroes or a result of the facet that they find themselves in at that point.

Native Horrors

There is only one "real" threat within the confines of Aggarath, that being Chardath. However, as the various facets are reflections of his shattered mind, his unconscious can conjure up monsters of all kinds that fit with that particular facet.

Terrain type

Each facet has its own unique terrain, but none of it is real, and does not follow any logic apart from that imparted by the mad mind of Chardath.

Aggarath

Important Landmarks Conduits

The conduits are the passageways that exist between the various facets of Aggarath. They're gleaming corridors of rainbow-colored light. It isn't possible to break these connections, and the "doorways" in each facet are locked in place, so they can always be found in the same place. Each conduit always connects two facets.

First Facet

The first facet of Aggarath is made of ruby-hued glass and resembles an endless plain with a black sky above it. No stars, clouds, or anything else breaks the sky, save enormous cascading arches of crimson lightning, filling the air with ear-shattering claps of thunder. Remaining in this facet for too long will slowly kill you as the dagger drinks your lifeforce, without you being caught in the seventh facet. The only way to exit this facet is to cast a spell, any spell, upon which a fifteen-foot-tall ruby monolith grows from the ground. Touching it will send you to a random facet of those connected to the first.

Second Facet

The second facet of Aggarath is a sliver of Chardath's childhood, from when he was exposed to his mother's gambling and lust. This imprinted on his psyche and any who come here will see a great gambling hall filled with games of skill and chance, ranging from card games to roulette to dice and more. The people here are exaggerated representations of the people that Chardath met in such places during his childhood. As such, they all seem threatening and as if they try to exploit you. They are violent and lascivious men and women, and anyone who finds themselves here must beware of indulging in their vices.

Exiting the second facet requires the use of one of the five doors here. But opening them is not something that a visitor will be able to do on their own. Instead, they'll need to ask one of the inhabitants (called reflections) to do so for them or engage in behavior that gets them beaten up by the guards of the place and thrown out of one of the doors.

Third Facet

The third facet of Aggarath is dictated by how Chardath sees himself as a warrior without equal. This is a gigantic colosseum where gladiators fight each other for the entertainment of the non-existing audience. The building is made of black stone, while the arena floor is covered in gravel. A blood-red sky covers the air above it, like an unbroken ocean of blood, while

ten pits dug directly into the arena floor spew flames more than thirty feet into the air, bathing the colosseum with heat and light. In order to exit the domain, a hero will have to defeat an opponent, potentially with their party's aid, and then throw themselves into one of the firepits. The problem here is that only half of the firepits are illusory, and therefore conduits out of the facet. The other half are very real, and the power of the flames is so intense that anything put into them is *disintegrated*. Nowhere is Maleffluent's disdain for Chardath more visible than it is here. It knows that the darklord is a mediocre combatant at best, and while he sees himself as a great warrior, the weapon knows better. As such, all the creatures that fight the heroes here do so with disadvantage on every check.

Fourth Facet

The fourth facet of Aggarath stems from another childhood memory of Chardath. This one is of a bedtime story that frightened him, and the world resembles the worst nightmares of a child. It is a twisting underground labyrinth that ends in a single cave filled with a nightmarish dragon, Tyravinorr. Tyravinorr resembles a great wyrm red dragon, but it is hundreds of feet long, and far more dangerous (dealing double damage and has double the hit points of a normal dragon of his kind), with eyes that glow like magma and teeth the size of lances.

Defeating the dragon does not send one into another facet. But Tyravinorr guards a storybook, one that tells the story of the nightmarish dragon. A pen lies next to it and writing "The End" in the book ends the nightmare and sends the writer and his allies on to the next facet.

Fifth Facet

The fifth facet of Aggarath is a reflection of Chardath's love for his sister, and his loathing for all other women, starting with his first love who spurned him. The facet presents itself as a garden filled with flowers and sweet smells as well as insects and humming bees. Like the fourth facet, it too is covered by a crimson sky. The place is populated by the Ladies of the garden, who appear as innocent young women, dressed in diaphanous silk dresses. While they claim to protect "the Sleeping Princess" in reality they're servants of the evil Esmerel, the harpy queen. Until such a time as Esmerel attacks, the Ladies will try their best to put any heroes at ease, even going on romantic walks with them, and warning about the presence of Esmerel, who they claim to be the great enemy. They will describe her as any kind of female monster (drider, siren, medusa, and so on) except for the real one, a

Aggarath

powerful harpy. And for the first 10 hours, the Ladies will be of lawful good alignment. However, their alignment slowly shifts and after 10 hours, their alignment changes to chaotic evil, and Esmerel strikes. At that point, they shed their bodies and become vampire spawn. Only by defeating Esmerel, can the heroes leave. Once she is slain, all the spawn drop dead immediately. After this, a pool opens beneath the feet of each of the Ladies, and through these, it's possible to leave the facet. The Sleeping Princess is real. She is a beautiful young woman, entombed in a crystal coffin that cannot be opened. She is perfect in every way with alabaster skin and blond hair like a golden crown. She is impossible to wake and represents how Chardath saw his sister Marble — as perfect, even though she was mute.

Sixth Facet

The sixth facet appears as a haven to those who move through Aggarath, looking like a grand temple dedicated to one of the gods that the heroes worship (if a divine magic user is present, it will be their god). Great stained-glass windows adorn the halls of the place. Chardath was never a pious man and saw the gods as evil and opposed to him. In essence, he believed that they were deliberately plotting against him to hold him down, and spending enough time in the domain reveals this. Any sin against the gods, as they are perceived by the travelers themselves, will come back to haunt them. Defilement, blasphemy, and the presumption of favor from the gods all bring death. Golems will come alive and attack anyone there. Anyone who worships the god of the temple finds that their magic doesn't work, and they'll have to enter into combat without it. Defeating the golems shatters the stained glass windows of the temple, and each opens up into a conduit.

Seventh Facet

The seventh facet is, unlike most of the other facets, not an outgrowth of Chardath's mind. Instead, this is where the dagger *Aggarath* stores the souls that it seals from its victims. The terrain looks exactly like the first facet, except for the innumerable ruby monoliths that can be found everywhere. Instead, each monolith is a ghostly body, the perfect reflection of the soul that it stores. Each one of them appears to be in horrible pain, and trapped within. A few crystals are empty and exiting this facet is a simple matter of touching one of the empty crystals with naked flesh.

Eighth Facet

The eighth facet of Aggarath is a reflection of Chardath's guilt, as it replays the night when he murdered his sister. This facet is a single room, a large chamber made from crude bricks, with a low ceiling. An ancient altar stands here, covered in cobwebs, and upon it lies Marble, Chardath's sister, her throat slit, with a river of blood pouring from the open wound. Next to the altar is a closed sarcophagus, into which the blood constantly pours through holes in the lid, without ever overflowing. The woman on the altar appears to be still breathing but is caught in her death throes. Unfortunately, any attempts to help her triggers an event where the ceiling starts dripping blood — first a few drops, and then a downpour. And then the room starts filling up, and within an hour, the entire room will have filled with blood, drowning anyone in it. Moving the lid of the sarcophagus triggers the arrival of a blood elemental. In order to exit the facet, the blood elemental, a variant water elemental composed of blood, will have to be slain.

Ninth Facet

The ninth facet is born from Chardath's belief that his intellect is superior to everyone else's and appears to be a gigantic library. The books here contain every single memory and idea that he's ever had, and could reveal the true nature of Aggarath, both dagger and domain, if studied for long enough. The library is logically built up with sections devoted to his childhood, teenage years, adulthood, and so on, as well as the stages he went through. Moving through these times carries its own risk, especially traveling far back, as the further back one moves, the less recognizable the books become, as his memories are twisted by time. Those from his childhood are almost amorphous blobs, rather than books. The future is not available, with that section merely a black void that cannot be entered. Exiting this facet is simple if one has access to *detect magic* or similar magic, as five books scattered around the domain can provide an exit. These five books light up for 10 minutes, any time such magic is cast within the library, no matter how far away the caster is. Finding the books without magic would take a lifetime.



Aggarath

Tenth Facet

The tenth facet is a direct result of Chardath's madness. It is an ocean of blood, except the blood is much thicker and viscous, almost solid, and cold to the touch. It constantly churns and moves, with never a single moment of stillness. The exit here is also the only inhabitant of the facet. A variant beholder dwells in the sea of blood, though it only has its central eye, and two claws instead of eye-stalks. It is extremely hostile, attacking on sight and it is fully adapted to the facet's watery environments. It is also the only way out of the domain, as a creature will need to touch the central eye in order to leave, something it is not likely to allow while it is alive.



Eleventh Facet

The eleventh facet holds Chardath. It is a reflection of what he is really like. A vast chamber in the shape of a pentagon with stone pentagonal walls on all sides. At the center, on a twenty-five feet high pedestal is a throne, upon which Chardath is found. No steps lead up to it, while a shaft of white light descends from above, illuminating it, like a depiction of a saint in a painting.

In order to leave here, and Aggarath in general, a visitor will need to take the silver key from around Chardath's neck. It is a reflection of the master key to his chambers before he was dragged into the domain. Only with this can the heroes leave the facet and Aggarath.

Any fights here will once more be impacted by *Malefluent* who will secretly whisper into the minds of the heroes, telling them of Chardath's tactics and plans and trying to warn them of what he's doing. In return, it hopes to be taken with them, back out into the real world.

Twelfth Facet

The twelfth facet is the way out. Physically it resembles the first and the seventh facet, though a single triangular silver platform rises up. It's small, only six feet per side, and about three feet high. When the silver key comes near it, it comes alight with magical brightness, and anyone who steps onto it is deposited back into the material world, near the dagger Aggarath.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

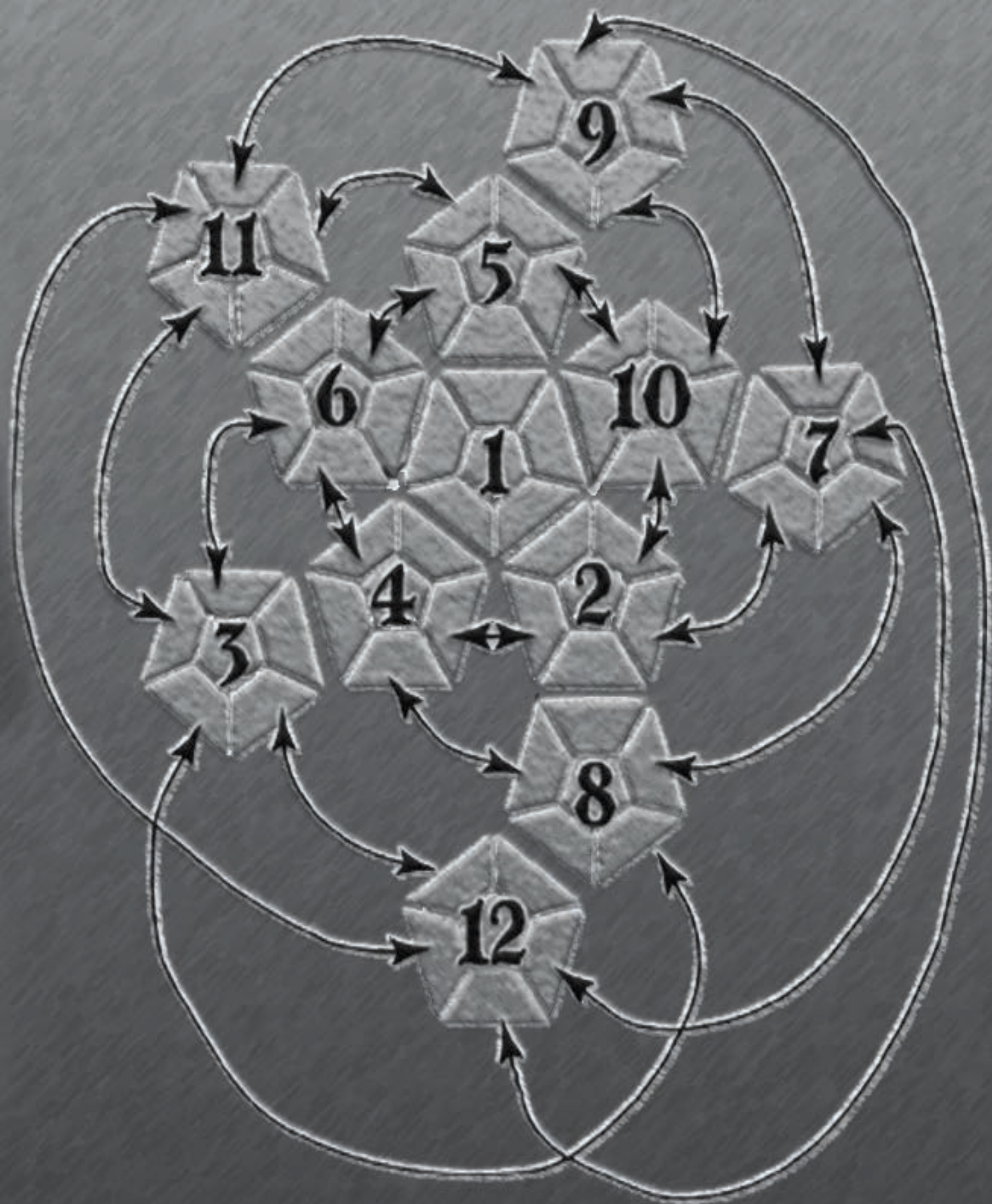
None

Fun Fact:

Marble, Chardath's sister, sometimes exists within some of the facets of Aggarath too, having manifested as a banshee. Where she appears is unpredictable, but her animosity towards Chardath and his actions have driven her crazy with the thirst for revenge.



The Domain of Aggarath



Chardath Spulzeer

"Our great castle is gone. Trapped in the pommel of a dagger.

My line is finished, beset by madness.

I can only hope the dagger is taken soon and destroyed, ending the cursed domain and my line."

~ Kartak Spellseer

Chardath Spulzeer is a human male in his early twenties. His hair is sandy blonde with an upturned nose and thin lips. His teeth are thin and his eyes are small. He gives the impression of being less a man and more a rodent. Spulzeer talks to himself constantly. His ramblings range from salient insights into local politics to screaming at invisible enemies only he can see.

Background: Kartak Spellseer was one of the greatest arcane spellcasters in Faerun in his day. His research pushed the boundaries of magic, especially necromancy. His reputation and life's work came crashing down when a party of adventurers discovered the fourteen children he kidnapped. Kartak planned to sacrifice the children to fuel his ascendancy to lichdom. The adventurers attempted to interrupt the ceremony at a crucial moment, but failed. The souls of the children were devoured and Kartak disappeared. The adventurers barely escaped with their lives.

Kartak's remaining family were deeply stigmatized by the actions of their most famous member. They changed their name to Spulzeer and tried to move on with their lives.

Generations passed.

Chardath Spulzeer was born to Kaisha Spulzeer. His youth was not a happy one. The family could never recover from the stigma placed upon it by Kartak. Kaisha and Chardath eked out a living offering wealthy patrons bloodsports and other more exotic entertainments. Kaisha cared little for her son and seemed to care even less for her daughter who was born a few years later. Kaisha alternated between berating and ignoring her children. Chardath tried to shield his sister from the worst of it, but she never spoke. He took to calling her Marble to mark her silence and pale beauty. Kaisha died unmourned and forgotten by her children when Chardath was in his late teens. Chardath became lord of Castle Spulzeer and all its lands, but didn't care.

Kartak, in the meantime, had transported himself and all of his magical research to a lair in the Kuldin Peaks. After a few centuries, he ran afoul of a group of adventurers that destroyed his lair and ended his wretched unlife. Kartak was a powerful spellcaster and had planned for this eventuality. His soul was transferred to an ancient spellbook deep in the bowels of Castle Spulzeer. His evil corrupted everything around the castle. The lands yielded few crops and winters became long and bitterly cold.

One night Chardath woke from a fitful sleep. He wandered the castle as if listening to spectral voices that only he could hear. He found the ancient spellbook in a library he never knew existed in the bowels of Castle Spulzeer. There he read the spellbook as if it was a novel. With every page Kartak took more and more of Chardath's mind. When he finished the spellbook, Chardath was in a daze. Chardath watched what he was doing, but could not stop himself. Kartak instructed him where to find a cursed dagger with a ruby pommel, long hidden under Castle Spulzeer.

Chardath climbed to Marble's room. He took the dagger and slit her throat as she slept. Chardath was suddenly in control of his body and realized what he had done. The thought broke Chardath's sanity. When he realized there was someone else in the chamber with him, Chardath picked up his sister's body and fled.

Kartak, his body restored by the sacrifice, smiled, and walked out of the castle.

Chardath buried his sister the following morning. Then sank into despair. He knew he couldn't fight the lich, but he desperately wanted revenge. Kartak, for his part, was gone. He had left the castle, but was compelled to return to Marble's chamber once a year on the anniversary of her death. Chardath was never in the castle on the anniversary, having found the reminder of his sister's fate too painful.

Chardath continued to search for a means to have his revenge, and one day found something that might just do it. He found a lamp in the catacombs of his ancestors that summoned a noble djinn. The djinn stole a portion of Kartak's power and gave it to Chardath.

Kartak immediately hired a band of adventurers to infiltrate the castle and retrieve the dagger used to kill Marble. The adventurers found the dagger at the same time that Marble's ghost, Chardath, and Kartak arrived to claim it. A tremendous battle ensued. Spells rebounded from the walls and blood spattered

Chardath Spulzeer

the books of the library. A mystic vortex surrounded the castle and pulled it into Ravenloft. Only Kartak realized what was happening and quickly teleported to safety.

Current Sketch: Spulzeer is a broken man. Kartak's escape eats at him constantly. Spulzeer daydreams about dragging the lich into his domain and watching his domain's life-draining power slowly weaken the undead spellcaster. Spulzeer knows the lich is forever beyond his reach, but cannot face that fact. Marble's ghost is especially disturbing to Spulzeer. He blames himself for her death and imprisonment in Aggarath. He tries to help her in a variety of ways, but everything he does falls apart.

Beyond these two concerns Spulzeer has no direction. His behavior is erratic. One day he might be manic, then sullen and depressed the next. If attacked Spulzeer will defend himself, but if he sees a creature he is as likely to attack it as bring it lunch.

Darklord's Tactics: Spulzeer attacks with his battle axe, Maleffluent. The battle axe is an intelligent and powerful weapon that keeps its own tally of creatures it's decapitated. In battle the axe sings their names. If Spulzeer is slain, the Dark Powers bring him back to life the next day. Maleffluent has no care whether Spulzeer is torn to shreds, so he is fearless in battle. Spulzeer is direct in combat, charging toward the closest enemy and killing them. Once the first creature has died, Spulzeer charges the next closest creature.

Borders: The borders of Aggarath are always closed. A creature cannot leave the domain without three magic rubies and the silver key Spulzeer wears around his neck. If Spulzeer is feeling generous, he may give a creature the key, but he is far more likely to attack anyone who asks for it.

Shattered Mind. Chardath is always under the effects of a *mind blank* spell. His body is permanently controlled by his intelligent axe, Maleffluent. Each minute that passes, roll on the table below to determine his current emotional state. Sudden changes or surprise also cause Chardath to undergo radical mood swings. Whenever he suffers more than 10 damage (even by accident) or is called upon to make a saving throw of any kind roll for his new personality.

1d20 Emotional State

1. Hot-tempered and antagonistic
- 2 Arrogant and aloof
- 3 Mischievous and irreverent
- 4 Careless and absent minded
- 5 Courageous and foolhardy
- 6 Curious and prying
- 7 Stern and exacting
- 8 Friendly and trusting
- 9 Covetous and greedy
- 10 Generous and kind
- 11 Morose and vengeful
- 12 Naïve and gullible
- 13 Bigoted and blustering
- 14 Cheerful and pleasant
- 15 Cynical and sarcastic
- 16 Quiet and retiring
- 17 Level-headed and reverent
- 18 Paranoid and scheming
- 19 Boorish and crude
- 20 Violent and sadistic



Chardath Spulzeer



Chardath Spulzeer

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 58 (9d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +2, Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Elvish, Orc, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Summon Earth Elemental. Chardath can use an action to summon an earth elemental (MM, page 124) to assist him in combat. This ability can be used 3 times before he needs to take a long rest to use it again.

Maleffluent's powers. Through the powers of Maleffluent, Chardath can at will, detect if a character is good aligned or detect traps in a 10-foot radius. He can also create illusions within 120 yards of himself (as per the *major image* spell) twice each day. Once a day he can also be empowered for eight turns as if he was wearing a Belt of Hill Giant Strength.

Head Remover. When Chardath attacks a creature that has at least one head using Maleffluent and rolls a 20 on the attack roll, he cuts off one of the creature's heads. The creature dies if it can't survive without the lost head. A creature

is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, doesn't have or need a head, has legendary actions, or the DM decides that the creature is too big for its head to be cut off with this weapon. Such a creature instead takes an extra 6d8 slashing damage from the hit. Maleffluent ignores resistance to slashing damage. The magical bonus of Maleffluent becomes +5 when it strikes incorporeal undead creatures.

Great Weapon Fighting. When Chardath rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for Chardath to gain this benefit.

Innate Spellcasting. Chardath's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dissonant whispers*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*
3/Day each: *counterspell*, *dimension door*, *thunderwave*
1/Day each: *confusion*, *phantasmal killer*

Second Wind. Chardath has a limited well of stamina that he can draw on to protect himself from harm. On his turn, he can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + 9. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Action Surge. Chardath can push himself beyond his normal limits for a moment. On his turn, he can take one additional action. Once he uses this feature, he must finish a short or long rest before he can use it again.

Indomitable. Chardath can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll, and he can't use this feature again until he finishes a long rest.

Brutish Durability. Chardath's toughness allows him to shrug off assaults that would devastate others. Whenever he makes a saving throw, roll 1d6 and add the die to the total. If applying this bonus to a death saving throw increases the total to 20 or higher, he gains the benefits of rolling a 20 on the d20.

Actions

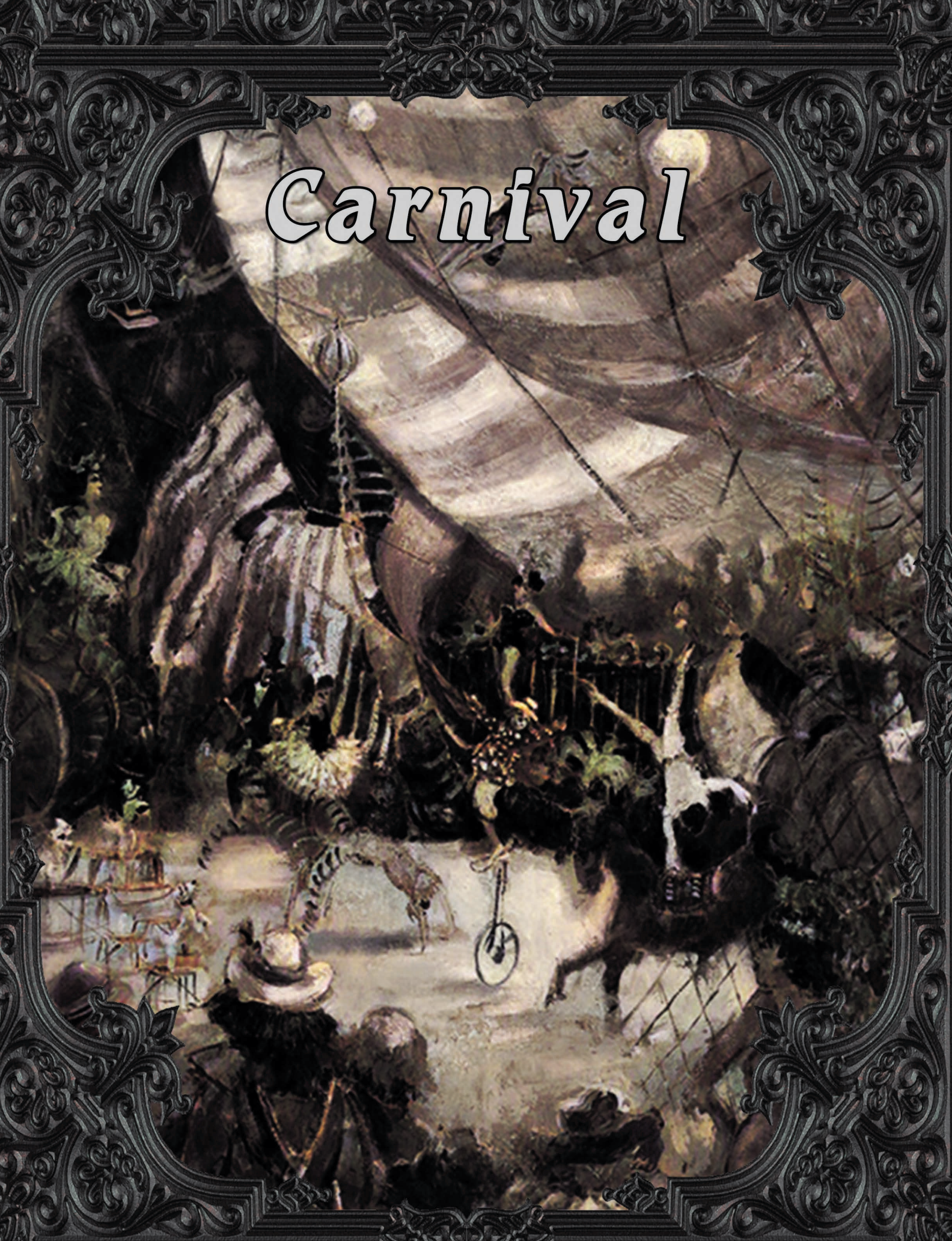
Multiattack. Chardath makes two attacks.

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

Reactions

Interposing Axe. Chardath adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Chardath must see the attacker and be wielding his axe, Maleffluent.

Carnival



The Carnival



When the big top goes up, and the Carnival arrives in town, the residents nearby come out to see the “freaks”. The irony is that what others see as freaks is the Carnies showing their real nature, while the “normal people” wear their disguises, and hide behind whatever is considered acceptable for their society. This goes for both those who are considered the Abominations (those that have been punished by Isolde) or one of the Troupers (those that have been helped by her to release their true selves). The third group of people involved in the Carnival is the Skurra. A group of Vistani who paint themselves with potentially magical face paint, but who are either mute or choose never to speak to anyone. They are outside the normal life of the Carnival, and simply accepted and respected as part of the scenery by the performers (Troupers and Abominations). They can be found helping to set up the tents, tending animals, and dealing with the day-to-day activities of the Carnival, while the other carnies perform. The Carnival represents things that are not possible to see, as well as being the living embodiment of poetic justice. The “monsters” that people fear, the “freaks” that people come to visit and see, are all much closer to their real selves than any of the visitors will ever be. Helped by Isolde, they’ve found their true being. Whether that is a reward or punishment depends upon the Carny in question. The Carnival is not restricted like other domains. It is like a “pocket domain” that moves from one domain to another, entirely free of the restrictions imposed by the Darklords over those domains. It can appear anywhere that Isolde wishes, and the inhabitants near where it appears always seem to know that it’ll arrive — often knowing so up to a week in advance. Adventures that involve the Carnival should revolve around these themes, punishing those who behave badly and rewarding those that do good by others, whether or not they recognize that. They’ll also revolve around those members of the carnival (especially to be found in the Hall of Horrors) that chafe under the punishment meted out by Isolde, and who plot to one day take her down.

“God put us here, on this carnival ride. We close our eyes never knowing where it’ll take us next.”

~ Carrie Underwood

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	None (whatever is prevalent in the domain that the Carnival has entered)
Year Formed:	680 BC
Population:	60
Races (%):	Other 100% (none here identify as anything other than Carnival members any longer)
Languages:	Any (languages vary by Trouper and Abomination)
Religions:	None
Government:	Directorship
Ruler(s):	Isolde, Mistress of the Carnival
Darklord(s):	Isolde, Mistress of the Carnival
Nationality:	Any
Analog:	Traveling circus and carnival

Local Fauna:

The Carnival has no local fauna since it consists only of the performers, the animals they bring with them, the wagons, and the places that they use to perform, such as stages. There are many strays that seem to follow the Carnival around, perhaps lured in by some of the performers, but whenever the Carnival moves they follow along. These strays are everything from dogs and cats to rats and whatever other animals are frequent in the domains that the Carnival last visited. Only rarely do true predators follow the Carnival, almost as if they’re afraid of Isolde. Those who travel with the Carnival for a short time quickly learn to leave snakes and serpents alone, as they likely belong to the Snake Mistress, Silessa.

Local Flora:

Like the animals, there isn’t much in the way of plants that stand out with the Carnival. On occasion one of their performers will have a rapport with plants or even be one themselves, and they’ll then use this as one of their acts. Currently, there is no such performer with the Carnival, though that could easily change.

Native Horrors

The inhabitants of the Carnival are — to most people, the horrors. But that is not correct. The real monsters are the audience, along with the Abominations (See The Hall of Horrors below).

Terrain type

Apart from setting up all their wagons, stages, and the Hall of Horrors, the Carnival does not have any special

The Carnival

terrain type. Isolde tends to set up the Carnival on flat land within easy reach of a nearby settlement, so there will usually be a road or path leading to the Carnival.

Important Landmarks

Isolde's Wagon

Isolde's wagon, or vardo, always stands at the center of the Carnival. It is a beautifully crafted, old wagon, painted in greens, browns, and reds. It is strictly forbidden for any of the carnies to enter the wagon, and the only ones who have ever seen the inside are those who have been directly punished by her. They never speak of what they see. The carnies believe that either Isolde or her wagon is at the center of the Twisting. The Troupers tend to see it as a benevolent effect that shows off their true nature as it — over time — twists their bodies and appearance to match the nature hidden within. For this, they praise Isolde as they believe that she is doing this for the greater good. The Abominations believe that it turns them into monsters, to be shunned by all. They blame Isolde for her inability to curtail the effect. This causes a great schism within the Carnival with the three factions within (Trouper, Abomination, and Skurra) often playing off against each other. The Abominations, led by Professor Pacali (see the Hall of Horrors below) are trying to overthrow Isolde, in the belief that she is causing them grief, and that only through her death will they be free of the effects of the Twisting. The Skurra, led by Madame Fortuna — a true Vistani seer, who speaks (unlike the other Skurra), believes that Isolde is an angel, one that has blessed them with their presence, and who metes out justice as they see fit. The Troupers, unofficially led by Tindal, the Chief Barker of the Carnival, aren't sure what to believe, but they do know that the Twisting has helped, rather than hindered, them. For that, they are grateful to Isolde. This internal schism is heading towards a confrontation, but Isolde is well aware of what is happening, though she has taken no outward steps to prevent it.

The Hall of Horrors

The Hall of Horrors is the home of the Abominations, chief among which is Professor Pacali, an alchemist who shows off little demons in jars that he refers to as his "pickled punks". In reality, these grow as pustules on his body, before he cuts them off — they're the living embodiments of his petty jealousy and his many plots, primarily with the intent of ousting Isolde. The other abominations include the "squid woman" (a lycanthrope with tentacles instead of arms), the Gargantuan (a 1000 pound plus schemer who lives off the life force of the Living Skeleton (detailed in The Wagons), the Fire Eater (a woman with a breath of fire and blood

that combusts instantaneously) and the man known as The Geek — a term coined from the original meaning of the word, which was "a performer at a carnival or circus whose show consists of bizarre or grotesque acts." — in this case, the man who eats offal. All of the abominations, with the exception of the Fire Eater, can be termed as "terrible people". They are the people who got what they deserved. And all of them, punished by Isolde.

The Wagons

The Wagons belong to the Troupers, such as the Imp (a young man and a demonic-looking half, that is the better person of the two souls inhabiting the one body), the Snake Mistress (an asp that was polymorphed permanently into a young elven woman, and who has since embraced that), Tindal (a former illusionist whose soul split into good and evil parts. The evil part is now visible only through mirrors as it is trapped in a mirror dimension), the Illuminated Man (a man with tattoos all over, originally an Abber shaman, now voluntarily exiled from the Nightmare Lands), the Living Skeleton (a once beautiful woman, who was used and abused by her brother, the Gargantuan. Now, whenever she eats, only he gains weight. He never eats, but she eats like a horse, and in spite of his abstinence from food, his girth increases every year, and she grows ever thinner — though this at least has not seemed to affect her vitality) and more. All of these have been twisted, as have the Abominations, but while the others received their just punishment, here they were given their rewards. As an example, the Imp had two souls inhabiting its body. One was a callous monster of a man, but he was a good-looking man and the main inhabitant of the body. The other was the demonic-looking twin, who had spent his life stuck, watching the cruel work of his brother. Only Isolde saw the good in him and enabled him to overcome his evil twin and gain control of the body. In this manner, Isolde has gained their undying loyalty, and here, in the Carnival, they're free from judgment, beyond that which they can control on stage.

Neighboring domain(s):

None (Whichever domain the Carnival is currently in)

Fun Fact:

There are three types of people in the Carnival: The Troupers, the Abominations, and the Skurra. While the Skurra do not speak, the other carnies share a trouper lingo that is nearly incomprehensible to others. So much slang is included that anyone who speaks the language of the carny must still succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence check to understand what is said if the speaker doesn't want to be understood.

Isolde

"I have fought knee deep in acid swamps against ancient evils. I have faced down masters of the demonic hordes and outwitted an arcanaloth on a technicality. I have fought evil across the length and breadth of the multiverse, but I never would have believed a place like this could exist. Evil is in the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the food you eat.

My work has just begun. Finding and slaying the Gentleman Caller is but the first step in the greatest crusade in history. I do not think it's a crusade I can win, but I will fight it all the same."

~Isolde

Isolde looks like a human woman in her mid-twenties. Her long black hair contrasts her marble pale flawless skin. Her eyes seem to look past the physical and into the soul of whomever she sees. Favoring well-made but simple clothing, Isolde favors blacks and dark blues. A simple but well-made and balanced sword hangs at her side, and at the first sign of trouble leaps into her hands as if by magic. Kind by nature, Isolde hides her compassion behind a stern countenance. She is powerful, but her life is in constant danger. Isolde carefully plans her moves as any misstep will be devastating for her and her family in the Carnival.

Background: Isolde's greatest secret is her very nature. She is a ghaele, a powerful Celestial that wages eternal war against evil on a cosmic scale. Isolde is a natural crusader and was dispatched by her lords to innumerable worlds to lead rebellions against petty tyrants and the diabolic forces of the Nine Hells. Isolde was rightly lauded as unbeatable in combat, yet all fell apart against one specific incubus. Isolde sought to convince a baroness on a forgotten world to treat her subjects as valued people and improve the lives of all under her leadership. The incubus, rather, wanted the baroness to tax her subjects into abject poverty to fund a lifestyle of debauchery and insatiable lust. Unfortunately, Isolde failed and the baroness and her subjects were set on the road to ruin. Isolde swore revenge against the incubus and tracked him across the planes. The incubus, who Isolde came to know was known as the Gentleman Caller, was intelligent and had allies over thousands of worlds. Relentless, Isolde finally managed to corner her prey. The Gentleman Caller, desperate to escape her, fled to the one demiplane he knew Isolde could never enter, Ravenloft. Isolde returned to her celestial lords and begged permission to follow the incubus into the demiplane. Her lords agreed but set conditions. She would have to remain in human form, and, once she entered Ravenloft, would never be allowed to leave. Isolde agreed at once. In truth, Isolde would have gone whether her lords gave her permission or not.

Isolde has existed for thousands of years but never expected that somewhere like Ravenloft could exist. So much evil, so much suffering, it took her breath away. Isolde tries to help where she can, but the Gentleman Caller is her obsession. She investigates all leads thoroughly and will not rest until she has impaled the incubus upon the end of her sword. Until that day, Isolde takes care of the Carnival and the performers that call it home. They have become a family to Isolde and she would sacrifice her life for any of them.

Current Sketch: Isolde travels the Demiplane of Dread trying to do good where she can. She chooses her battles carefully. Ravenloft is steeped in evil, indeed, the very ground crawls with it. If Isolde were to throw off her disguise and start a crusade to save the people that are suffering all around her, she would draw the ire of every evil creature in the demiplane. She would drown in a sea of thousands of raging werewolves, vampires, and creatures of the night. Isolde finds this situation incredibly frustrating but can see no alternative. Instead, Isolde helps where she can and continues her search for the Gentleman Caller. When the opportunity arises and Isolde can vent her frustration on one of the evils of Ravenloft, she almost feels sorry for the beast. All the lords of Ravenloft are cursed by the Dark Powers, and Isolde is no different. Every intelligent creature within 300 feet of Isolde begins to change. Their physical form twists to match their soul. A brutal mass murderer's hands may turn to knives, a vain person may become trapped in a mirror. Isolde calls this the Twisting. Isolde doesn't mind the Twisting, she feels it should have always been this way.

The Dark Powers are aware of Isolde, but prefer to torture her, rather than kill her. The phantom flyers that announce the arrival of the Carnival are a curse from the Dark Powers. Evil creatures that touch the pamphlets instinctively hate the Carnival and most especially Isolde.

Darklords Tactics: Isolde is a devastating combatant. She has thousands of years of experience with her longsword and has fought every conceivable opponent across existence. In addition to her devastating melee abilities, Isolde can manipulate reality within 300 feet of herself. Large changes take time and concentration, but small changes can be created almost instantaneously. Isolde has honed this ability to give herself an advantage in combat while ensnaring her opponents weapons and dragging them to the ground.

Borders: Isolde cannot close the borders of the Carnival.

Isolde

Isolde

Medium greater eladrin (ghaele), chaotic good

Armor Class 20 (+2 plate)

Hit Points 195 (23d8 + 92)

Speed 30 ft.

STR **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

19 (+4) 18 (+4) 19 (+4) 20 (+5) 16 (+3) 25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +11, Wis +9, Cha +13

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +13, Perception +9, Persuasion +13, Religion +11

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't cold iron or made with a weapon of +3 or better enchantment

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Isolde has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

The Twisting. All living beings inside a 300 ft sphere centered on Isolde, slowly change; their inner natures gradually become manifest in their outer appearances and abilities. Isolde cannot control the changes and does not mind them. A creature that stays within the radius of the Twisting for 1d4 days has a dark power gift manifest on its body, depending on the character's alignment and personality. Each body alteration of the Twisting is unique.

Hunt the Chaotic. Isolde's attacks deal 1d10 extra radiant damage to creatures of Chaotic alignment.

Innate Spellcasting. Isolde's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *command*, *detect evil and good*, *light*, *thaumaturgy*

3/Day each: *bestow curse*, *blade barrier*, *blindness/deafness*

1/Day each: *divine word*, *reverse gravity*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Isolde fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Altered Divine Sense. The presence of chaotic creatures registers on Isolde's senses like a noxious odor, and lawful creatures ring-like heavenly music in her ears. As an action, she can open her awareness to detect such forces. Until the end of her next turn, she knows the location of any Lawful or Chaotic aligned creature within 60 feet of her that is not behind total cover. She also knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence she can sense, but not its identity except if it is a Darklord of a domain. Within the same radius, she also detects the presence of any place or object that has been

consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell. She can use this ability eight times. When she finishes a long rest, she regains all expended uses.

Lay on Hands. Isolde's blessed touch can heal wounds. She has a pool of healing power that replenishes when she takes a long rest. With that pool, she can restore 60 hit points. As an action, she can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in her pool. Alternatively, she can expend 5 hit points from the pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. She can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. Isolde can also stop the Twisting for a period of time that she wishes or even completely remove it from an affected character with the use of 10 hit points from the pool. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Celestial Blessing. Isolde can cure the wounds and hasten a creature of her choice within range. Isolde cures 1d10+7 hit points and the affected creature's speed is increased by 10ft until the end of its turn. Isolde can use this ability 7 times before she needs to take a long rest.

Divine Judgement (1/Day). As a bonus action, Isolde makes an allied creature within 15 ft. invulnerable and calls upon the spirits of Justice to purify a 15ft area around her target with a holy rain of swords. The targeted creature becomes immune to all damage until the end of its next turn and all enemy creatures in that area take 4d6 Radiant damage or half if they succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. The area is then considered hallowed ground as per the *hallow* spell, for 24 hours.

Exalted Flames (2/Day). Isolde's sword lightens up with divine flames to attack all evildoers within range. Isolde's melee attacks gain 10 ft. reach and all enemy creatures no more than 10ft away from her primary target automatically take 1d6 radiant damage as she strikes. This ability lasts for 1 minute.

Aura of Protection and Courage. Whenever Isolde or a friendly creature within 10 feet of her must make a saving throw, the creature gains a +7 bonus to the saving throw. Isolde must be conscious to grant this bonus. Friendly creatures within 10 feet of her can't be frightened while she is conscious.

Channel Divinity (1 option/Long Rest). Abjure Enemy. As an action, Isolde presents her divine aura and speaks a prayer of denunciation. She chooses one creature within 60 feet of her that she can see. That creature must make a Wisdom saving throw unless it is immune to being frightened. Fiends and undead have disadvantage on this saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. While frightened, the creature's speed is 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. On a successful save, the creature's speed is halved for 1 minute or until the creature takes any damage.

Isolde

Vow of Enmity. As a bonus action, Isolde utters a vow of enmity against a creature she can see within 10 feet of her. She gains advantage on attack rolls against the creature for 1 minute or until it drops to 0 hit points or falls unconscious.

Relentless Avenger. Isolde's supernatural focus helps her close off a foe's retreat. When she hits a creature with an opportunity attack, she can move up to half her speed immediately after the attack and as part of the same reaction. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Isolde can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that she can see within 30 ft. of her makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Isolde. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Isolde is incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. Isolde makes two melee attacks.

Longsword +4. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing + 6d8 radiant damage, or 13 (1d10 + 8) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Parry. Isolde adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Legendary Actions

Isolde can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Isolde regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Radiant Wave (Costs 2 Actions). Isolde emits magical, divine energy. Each creature of her choice in a 20-foot radius must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) fire damage plus 14 (4d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Undead creatures roll with disadvantage.

Radiant Splinter. Isolde conjures a portal, summoning a celestial sword that pierces through her enemies. All creatures in a 10 ft. straight line must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity Saving throw or take 4d8 Radiant damage and have their speed reduced by 10 feet until the start of their next turn. A creature that succeeds takes half damage and is not slowed.

Move. Isolde moves up to half of her speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.



House of Dark Strategy



The House of Dark Strategy



The House of Dark Strategy belongs to Lord Malkant Hilfin, a master strategist, and a gracious winner, but a terrible loser. He had been undefeated for years, traveling elsewhere to show off his skills. Later in life, he took to calling others to him from within his house, relying upon his reputation as “the man to beat”. Every eight years he would announce such a competition and every eight years, the best players of their kind would descend upon the tournament, only to leave a few days later in defeat. For many, many years, such was the pattern until finally one day, Selmar Callista, a hated rival, looked set to win the tournament. In his despair, Malkant listened to the Dark Powers and killed Selmar and his other guests. This drew in the domain and sealed him within it, only able to send out a new call every eight years, hoping that someone would come to face him, and like those before them, lose and die. Any adventures taking place in the House of Dark Strategy will not involve combat. The challenges here will be those of puzzles and skills. Also as Malkant only invites those that are of interest to him, at least a few of the characters should be highly intelligent and skilled in strategy and tactics games. He has no time, and no respect for those that rely on luck. He knows that while he can't always pick and choose, he does try to keep it as challenging as he possibly can due to a particular person's companions. In many ways the House of Dark Strategy is inspired by an old film called *The Seventh Seal*, where a knight plays Death at chess, holding him up, and believing he'll stay alive as long as the game is going on. Here, the players would be the knight and Malkant would be Death, though winning here would destroy Malkant.

*“I met Death today. We are playing chess.”
~Antonius Block, The Seventh Seal*

General information of the domain:

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	None (One House)
Year Formed:	Unknown
Population:	0
Races (%):	None
Languages:	Common
Religions:	None
Government:	Aristocracy
Ruler(s):	Lord Malkant Hilfin
Darklord(s):	Lord Malkant Hilfin
Nationality:	None
Analog:	None

Local Fauna:

There are no living creatures within the House of Dark Strategy apart from those brought in by Lord Hilfin himself.

Local Flora:

The House of Dark Strategy has no plants inside it. Any plants brought in from outside slowly perish due to the lack of sunlight.

Native Horrors

The closest that one can get to life within the House of Dark Strategy is a type of gray ooze called residue. The Residue is formed from the intense despair felt by those who are defeated and destroyed by Lord Malkant Hilfin. There is also a single ghost, that of Selmar, but which cannot leave the guest bedroom where it is held.

Terrain type

The furniture of the House of Dark Strategy is of high quality, but it is showing its age, coming in at a style that went out of date at least 64 years ago. Time does not seem to pass within the House, with only Malkant able to discern how long has passed. In essence, he only ages as much as he wants to for the eight years that pass between each appearance of the house.

Important Landmarks

The House of Dark Strategy is built up exactly like most mansions. Except for the layers of dust. A hallway, a foyer, a games parlor, dining room, a study, a guest bedroom (capable of holding six people), a master bedroom, a study, and a kitchen that has fallen into disuse. Add to this an attic and a wine cellar. All of the rooms are filled with puzzles and games of strategy, except the two bedrooms. The guest bedroom is covered in a thick layer of undisturbed dust, one so thick that centuries would have to pass for the dust to collect there naturally. The dust is not dust but is in actuality bone dust — the remnants of those who died in their attempts to defeat Malkant at his sick games. The master bedroom appears clean and unused and without any of the dust that is visible elsewhere. It is an illusion hiding a throne room. This is where Lord Malkant spends his time in between the games every eight years, reading up on books of strategy, preparing himself for the next challengers.

Neighboring domain(s):

Any (the house appears whenever Malkant wants it, but it can only appear once every 8 years).

Lord Malkant Hilfin

Fun Fact:

Malkant has a strange liking for obscure books, though his main hobby is games of strategy. As such, any books that his guests carry are added to his library, in the condition they enter the house.

"Do not mistake his games for innocent revelry! Those that lose to Malkant's games lose part of their soul. They are forever diminished. Eventually they become ghosts in his domain, empty shadows of their former selves. I can only imagine it's a fate worse than death."

~ Rudolph van Richten

Lord Malkant Hilfin is a human male in his late sixties. His hair and beard are grey with a few stubborn strands of brown hair holding on here and there. His eyes are bright and observant. Malkant always knows more than he lets on, and is a true master of psychological warfare. Malkant loves games of all types. He revels in making the perfect move and where his opponent will go before they even know themselves. He even designs his own games. His games are inevitably quick to learn but nearly impossible to truly master.

Background: Lord Malkant Hilfin was one of the best strategic minds of his age. He earned his fortune and title serving in well over a dozen wars as his kingdom became an empire. He never learned to fight, as he well knew that melee combat was base and dirty, but more than made up for it with his mind for logistics and an amazing ability to predict his enemies moves. Malkant always led his armies from the rear, yet they never lost. After his career in the military was over, Malkant turned his genius to games. Every eight years, he would invite the best and brightest minds in the empire to compete with him in a series of increasingly fiendish games. Malkant always played fair, and was gracious in victory, but a raging tyrant when he lost. Malkant considered losing a stain on his honor, and it drove him mad. Only one person was ever able to beat him regularly, Selmar Callista. Selmar was a general of incredible talent that had nearly beaten Malkant a half dozen times on the battlefield. Malkant's reputation was only saved by the vast disparity in numbers he could commit to the battlefield. Even then, Callista had gotten close to winning more than once. Although he would never admit it to himself, Malkant was afraid of the general. One night Selmar wasn't just winning, he was crushing Malkant. Everything Malkant tried failed, and Selmar laughed long and hard as he won. Telling old war stories and lamenting how close he came to crushing Malkant on the field of battle. It was too much for Malkant to bear. While Malkant took advantage of an opportune break

to devise a strategy to turn this crushing defeat into a merely humiliating defeat, he was approached by one of the party guests. The woman wore all black, and try as he might, he still cannot remember her face. He only remembers her piercing green eyes. She offered Malkant a deal. If he would kill Selmar then Malkant would never lose again. He accepted without a second thought. He turned and grabbed a fire poker and began to rampage through his own house. He beat every person he found to death. Women, children, servants that had loyally served the general for years all died under his clubbing blows. Selmar was the last to die. As Selmar's last breath left his body, he cursed his foe for a fool and a pathetic egomaniac. Malkant laughed. Once he was finished, he threw back the curtains and opened the windows to ease the smell of blood and fear. He was shocked to discover the house was shrouded in mist.

Current Sketch: Most of the time Malkant spends his days devising games and torturing the ghosts that inhabit his domain. Every eight years he can open his home and invite outsiders in to face his diabolic games. For that one night, Malkant can lose. Malkant has opened his home to new guests eight times so far. Every time he has emerged victorious, and trapped the spirits of his guests in his house so he can force them to play him whenever he wishes. Most of these spirits went insane years ago.

Darklord's Tactics: Malkant has no interest in combat and cannot be defeated through physical attacks. He can only be beaten by a soul wise enough to defeat his games and prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Borders: The borders of the House of Dark Strategy are always sealed. Doors and windows will not open and they cannot be broken or forced. The doors will only open when Malkant has been defeated.



Lord Malkant Hilfin

Lord Malkant Hilfin

Lord Malkant Hilfin

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Damage Immunities all damage from all attacks and spells that aren't made with a holy avenger

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages All

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spell Immunity. Malkant is immune to all spells and spell-like effects.

Immune to All Conditions. Malkant is immune to all conditions.

Telepathy. Malkant can telepathically communicate with any creature within the House of Dark Strategy.

Create Residue. Malkant summons a residue to attack his enemies. Malkant can have up to two residues summoned at a single time. Each residue remains until destroyed or until Malkant dismisses it with a free action.

Only Weakness. Malkant's only weakness can be revealed when one wields a Holy Avenger. The weapon counts as +10 against him and if he is struck, he immediately crumbles to dust.

Summon Cloud of Bats 1/Day. Malkant summons a cloud of bats to attack his enemies. The cloud of bats is identical to a swarm of bats (MM, page 337) except that it has 100 hit points instead of 22. The cloud of bats is immediately destroyed if it is hit by a *fireball*, *stinking cloud*, *flaming sphere* or *web* spell.

Modify Memory 1/Day. Malkant can cast the *modify memory* spell once per day.

Summon Defeated Victims 1/Day. Malkant, as an action, summons, exactly next to him, up to three defeated characters of a level no higher than 3. The defeated victims fight to the death and use their own initiative. They follow Malkant's commands or act on their own to protect him. If Malkant is defeated before the defeated victims are slain, their souls are freed.

Resurrection. Even if Malkant reaches 0 hit points and crumbles to dust, he cannot die. His conscience transfers into the house waiting to resurrect in a newly formed body within 1d6+1 days. He can only be truly defeated if his enemies decide to participate in the final game and sacrifice themselves instead of choosing to walk away into their freedom. If they choose to escape, their dead allies are trapped within the House to be used by Malkant for eternity.

Actions

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Reactions

Parry. Malkant adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, The House of Dark Strategy, Malkant can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Malkant can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Animated Objects: Objects come to life and attack Malkant's enemies as per the *animate objects* spell. At the start of the next turn, the objects turn inanimate.

Distress: A feeling of distress clouds the minds of Malkant's enemies forcing them to make mistakes. This functions exactly like the *Bane* spell except that it has an unlimited number of targets.

Atmospheric Device: An illusion plays tricks on the minds of Malkant's enemies. This functions like the *major image* spell. Check the list for ideas but feel free to make your own.

Malkant can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Atmospheric Devices

The following is a list of atmospheric devices that you can hand to players to heighten the tension. None of these are caused by anything but the character's own nerves and no one but the recipient notices anything. Feel free to add any that strike you as appropriate.

-The air currents in the room suddenly change direction and the temperature drops by 10 Fahrenheit / 12.2 Celsius.

-As you step into the room, the floorboards give way beneath you and you spill forward, grabbing furiously at the door jamb to regain your balance. Your fingers slip and the feeling of vertigo passes and the room returns to normal.

-The shadows in the corner of the room swarm together and head towards you.

-Listening to the wind beat against the house, it seems as if a single voice cries, "Doom, doom, all is lost".

-You feel a drop from the ceiling land on the back of your neck, then two, then many. As you reach your hand to touch your neck, it feels sticky. Pulling it forward it is covered in blood. Looking again, you see that it is just sweat.

-"Character name" is not acting like themselves (insert character's name).

Note: This last device can be used very effectively if someone is misplaying their character.

Scaena



Scaena



Lemot Sedam Juste was once considered one of the greatest actors in the world. He was an astounding performer with a sense for comedy and drama and was widely recognized as such. But, he wanted more, he wanted to be a renaissance man of the stage, able to direct, write, and perform any role. Regrettably, his skills did not lend themselves to tragedy — which he considered the pinnacle of his art — and he was even worse as a director. While his stories were great, gripping people in with their relatable characters, he somehow always undermined his own stories, and they became melodramas or comedy. Unable to accept that it was his own shortcomings, Lemot believed that the actors and stagehands that he worked with were undermining his work and that they wanted to destroy his legacy. Finally, one day, he wrote a play where every participant died and then proceeded to change all the stage-props for the real thing. During the play, all the actors died, whether to daggers, torture, or poison. But, as he sat in the audience, Juste heard the booing of the crowd who thought that the gore-fest that they had just watched was ridiculous. In his rage, he locked the doors and torched the theatre, burning everyone inside. As the theatre was full, more than 500 people lost their lives in the conflagration.

Seeking to escape notice, Juste ran and hid in the theatre of one of his friends. He fell asleep and the Mists claimed him.

When he woke, he found himself in an empty theatre, and after frantically searching for a way out, he eventually grew bored and started writing down ideas for new plays. As he did, he noticed that the stage around him changed, and obeyed his every thought. And when the play was written, an audience came to his door as bidden. Those who wandered onto the stage became actors in the play, while those who stayed in the seats became a spellbound audience. Juste's perception of others has changed as a result. He now sees everyone as part of his play — not real people, but characters to be played, discarded, and killed as needed. And he still prefers his tragedies and takes criticism extremely poorly. Many are the people who have lost their lives when they gave a negative response to his plays, and he proceeded to torch the theatre. He too burns as the theatre does, but he always comes back, and while the experience is excruciating, he believes it's better than to have people spread word of a less-than-perfect play. Adventures within Scaena should take their inspiration from the theater. Great plays such as Hamlet, Oedipus Rex, Tartuffe, and The Persians can all serve as inspi-

ration. And for the heroes to take part, all it requires is for them to head out for an evening's entertainment before they find themselves at a nice looking theatre, that's putting on the premier of a new show just that evening. Only by breaking through the veils of illusions and somehow finding a way to survive in a world where one man controls and knows everything, can the heroes make it out alive.

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."*

~William Shakespeare, As You Like It

Culture Level:	Renaissance
Climate & Terrain:	None (inside of a theatre)
Year Formed:	732 BC
Population:	1
Races (%):	Human 100%
Languages:	Any
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Lemot Sedam Juste
Darklord(s):	Lemot Sedam Juste
Nationality:	British (Gothic Earth domain)
Analog:	William Shakespeare

Local Fauna:

There are no natural animals present within Scaena, as anything here is the result of Lemot's twisted imagination.

Local Flora:

As with animal life, there are no natural plants within Scaena. Everything here is merely an illusion created by Lemot as he stages his latest play.

Native Horrors

There are no monsters native to Scaena, but occasionally one makes its way here from outside the domain, as part of the audience being dragged in. They're usually just as confused about what's going on as any heroes might be. Many of them are likely to lash out in anger if caught, and Lemot is happy to oblige, as he can keep that in his latest play.

Scaena

Terrain type

The inside of the theater is wood, old and dried, but in good condition. Everything about the theatre indicates that it's an upper class, though not opulent, venue of entertainment, one that allows people from all walks of life to come and enjoy a respite from their daily worries. Outside, the theatre takes the form of whatever building it temporarily displaces, even taking on its appearance. Usually, this building is some other form of theatre — whatever is popular in that region is what Scaena will look like.

Important Landmarks

Scene

This is where everything happens in Lemot's little world. Everything that he writes down in his show notes appears here. While they are illusions, they seem so real that only the strongest-willed can tell the difference. Not even magic can penetrate these illusions unless Lemot decides that the story justifies the action. Juste regrettably has the propensity and desire to write the greatest tragedies of the ages, so these stories often do not end well for the participants. And as the heroes of the stories tend to be larger than life, he will only accept "actors" who fit that description, i.e. heroes instead of common people.

Seating

The audience sits here during Juste's plays. The stories, whether bad or good, are always so enthralling that the audience cannot tear away their attention until the play finishes. To them, the illusions on stage become real as well, allowing them to see the world that Juste has written and that the "actors" are experiencing.

Backstage

This is the domain of Juste, where he keeps the coins that he collects from the entrance fee, though he has no use for money. Usually, the place is littered with pages, inks, and broken pens as when the muse takes him, he will write on every available scrap of parchment.

Towns and villages:

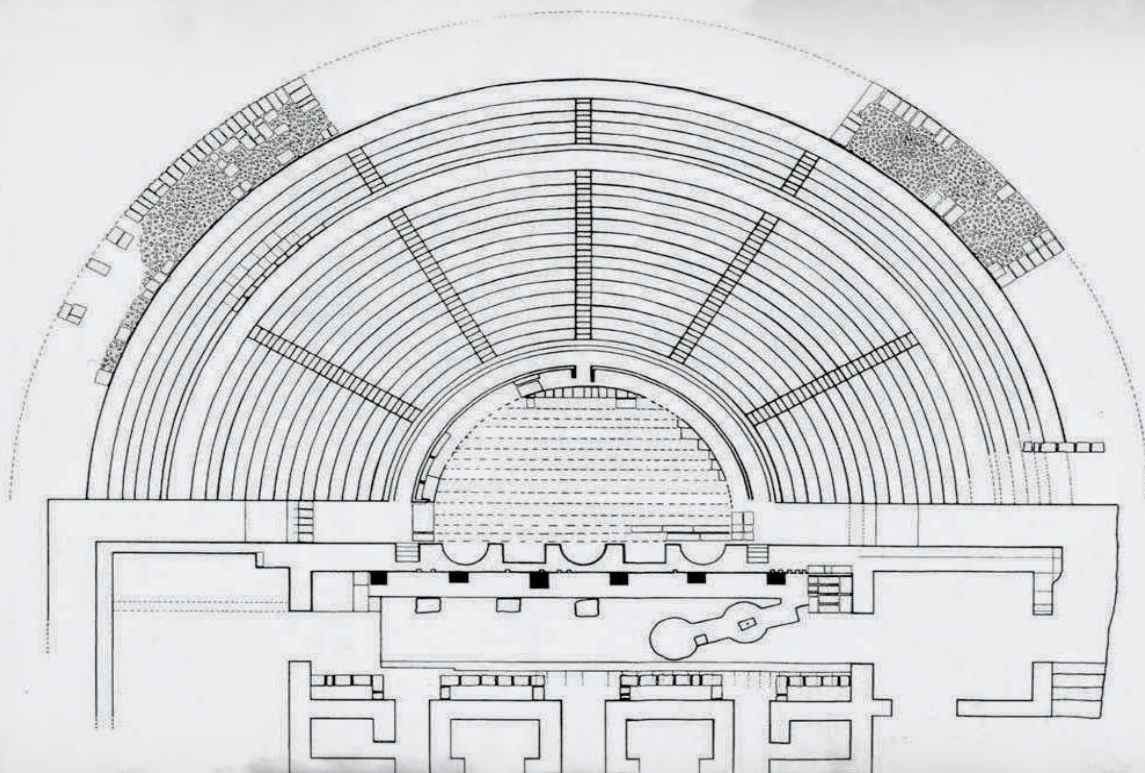
None

Neighboring domain(s):

Any

Fun Fact:

Juste does on occasion let his performers and audience leave, but ONLY when he gets a positive reaction from them. As such, escaping could be relatively easy, if the audience can be convinced to like the show. Usually, this is up to the performers themselves to carry off, as Juste's stories are rather questionable.



Lemot Sedium Juste

"His world is a hollow one.

Nothing he creates is real, nothing is lasting, it's all an endless illusion.

Damn good show though."

~Gondegal

Lemot Sedium Juste is a skeletally thin human male standing over six and a half feet tall. His hair is black and greasy, hanging in thick strands around his face. His clothes are threadbare and ink stained. Juste is often distracted, talking to himself about salient plot points. Any who talks to him while Juste is talking to himself is stared at as if they are the most boorish of thugs.

Lemot's most striking feature is his eyes. His eyes are black pits, soulless but mesmerizing. Weak willed creatures get lost in Juste's eyes and will remember him as a pleasant, talkative fellow, no matter how Juste actually acts.

Background: Lemot Juste was the leading playwright and dramatist of his day. The stage was his home and as he performed he lived a thousand lives. Audiences flocked to his theater to watch him perform. Juste was also a brilliant playwright, but he had one weakness. He had no understanding of the nuance and subtlety of tragedy. His attempts to create a sublime tragedy failed time and again. Audiences would howl with laughter as his characters died.

Eventually Juste's company began to lean into the comedic aspects of his tragedies. Audiences laughed harder and longer than ever before. Lemot pleaded with his company to play into the tragedy of their deaths, but they refused. Juste had tried to write tragedies, but he just wasn't able. He could write comedies, dramas, but never a tragedy. The company wouldn't endanger their own careers or artistic integrity by trying to turn a play into something it wasn't.

Juste had had enough. His new play was a masterpiece. Every single character died a horrible death. The bodies were left on the stage for the rest of the play. By the time the curtain closed, the stage would be a monument to pain, degradation and death.

But Juste wasn't finished. The night the play opened, he stole away to the prop room and in place of all the props, he left actual weapons. He replaced the harmless water from the poison bottles with horrifying deadly toxins. Finally, he placed a real blade in the guillotine. The audience would never forget the finale to this play.

Juste watched the play from the wings. When the assassins struck the young lovers, the audience gasped. When the mayor choked on his tongue swallowing poisoned wine, his face turned black and children cried. When the tragic heroine was led to the guillotine and her life taken by the falling blade, the audience howled.

Juste walked onto stage as the curtain closed. He expected to hear raucous applause, but instead he was booed. The audience screamed in rancor, they demanded their money back, they cursed the playwright.

Juste fled the stage. The audience stood in the auditorium, venting their disgust and rage. Juste locked the doors that led from the theater, then set the building on fire. Lemot fled into the darkness as flames lit the night sky.

He found his way to a friend's theater, and seeking to escape a gathering mist, crept inside to watch the show. Exhausted by his activities, Lemot soon fell asleep.

When he awoke the theater was empty. Juste, although he was familiar with his friend's theater, felt something was wrong. Details had changed. This theater had neither a prop room, nor shop to create new props. Juste found the auditorium, which was appropriately huge, a small writing room which doubled as a bedchamber and kitchen, and backstage.

Juste tried to leave through the front doors, but was overwhelmed with dread at the thought of stepping foot through the doors. Frustrated, he returned to the writing room and started to create.

Hours later when Juste looked up from his script, he found himself in the middle of a haunted forest. Spirits leered at him from the shadows and the skeletal remains of a castle loomed in the distance. Juste was amazed, but not afraid. He wandered through the forest, and soon found himself on stage. He was back in the theater. Juste was elated. He wrote again and again, creating illusionary world after world. He could write anything he wanted, and the theater could create the illusion for him.

Lemot began writing a masterpiece. He knew that when he opened the doors he would find a willing audience.

Current Sketch: Scaena wanders the other domains of Ravenloft, always looking for a new audience. Le-

Lemot Sedium Juste

mot is constantly writing new plays and is desperate for new audiences. If the play is enjoyed and the audience treats the production with the appropriate amount of respect, Juste will probably let the audience live. When the play ends, the door opens and the audience simply leaves. Scaena moves frequently, and the audience will find themselves in a distant domain when they leave.

If the play isn't well received, Juste will seal the doors and set the theater on fire. Although Juste feels the pain of his flesh cracking and his blood boiling while he burns, he finds the panicked screams of the burning audience rather soothing.

Darklord's Tactics: Juste never engages in direct combat, he doesn't need to. He can surround himself in layers of illusion and slip through the folds in his reality, while his attackers fight the darkest corners of their own imaginations or escape some hideous trap. A creature that becomes lost in the illusion begins to lose bits of their personality and mental focus. The more enraptured the creature is by the fantastic illusory world around them, the faster Juste can drain their intelligence,

Lemot's illusions are so realistic that he has even convinced living creatures they are just products of his imagination. If a creature comes to truly believe this, they fade away to nothingness.

If attacked by a creature that can defeat his illusion, Juste can merge with any part of Scaena and appear elsewhere. As a final resort, Juste can cause the theater to burst into flames with an act of will. Juste feels pain as the fire singes his flesh, but he knows he will be resurrected after he dies. His quarry will not.

Lemot has to live vicariously through the audience. He hates his own plays and never finds them fulfilling. The theater that used to give his life meaning is now a hollow joke.

Borders: Lemot can close the borders in a few ways. His preferred choice is to craft an illusion of swirling mists that confuses any creature that enters it and brings them back to the doors of Scaena. He occasionally creates the illusion of a terrifying monster that lurks outside the doors of the theater. Finally, Juste can create a wall of fear that surrounds his domain. Even creatures that are immune to being frightened are affected by this wall.



Lemot Sedium Juste

Medium humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 24 (7d8 - 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +8, Insight +5, Performance +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +5

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Displacement (Recharges after Juste casts an Illusion Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, Juste projects an illusion that makes him appear to be standing in a place a few inches from his actual location, causing any creature to have disadvantage on attack rolls against him. The effect ends if Juste takes damage, he is incapacitated, or his speed becomes 0.

Spellcasting. Juste is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Juste has the following Wizard spells prepared: Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*
1st level (4 slots): *color spray**, *disguise self**, *mage armor*, *magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *arcane's magic aura*, *invisibility**, *mirror image**, *phantasmal force**
3rd level (2 slots): *hypnotic pattern**, *major image**
4th level (1 slot): *phantasmal killer**

*Illusion spell of 1st level or higher

Lemot Sedium Juste

Innate Spellcasting. Juste's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *charm person*, *earth tremor*, *mislead**, *shatter**
3/Day each: *hallucinatory terrain**, *programmed illusion**, *seeming**

1/Day: *illusory dragon**

Burn the Theater (1/Day). Juste, in a desperate attempt to defeat his adversaries, sets the theater's interior on fire. All creatures within the theater must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the targets take 5d10 psychic damage from the illusory flames and are restrained. On a successful save, the targets take half damage. Juste is also affected by these fires but always succeeds on the saving throw, taking half damage. The target's vision is obscured by the smoke and their hearing is limited by the screams of the illusionary audience. The visual effects last for 1d4+5 turns and then end revealing the illusion.

Meld into Wood. Juste can meld into the wooden walls of the theater with an action and exit through another wall anywhere within the theater. If Juste is ever slain, his body melts into the wood of the theater, and he arises again in one day. While regenerating, Juste is at his most vulnerable. If anyone burns the theater during this time, he is permanently dead.

Summon Actor. Juste can use a bonus action to summon an "actor" to assist in his plays. The actor can be any defeated character of up to level 5 that Juste has defeated in the past or any option from the Deck of Illusions list, other than the Red Dragon, the Beholder or the Lich. All the summoned actors have a will of their own and are allied with Juste. They use the original stat blocks of the creatures they portray but with half hit points. The actor stays in play until defeated or recalled as a free action by Juste.

Disbelief Resistant. A character rolls with disadvantage when they try to see through Juste's illusions. Even if they manage to see through the illusion, another one takes its place instantly.

Magic Resistant. Juste has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Charming Influence. Juste is a persuasive man, especially so because of his charismatic personality. A person that falls victim to his charm person spell, remains charmed for a whole week, rolling a new saving throw at the end of every day. A person that succeeds, is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Join the Troupe. The characters that stay in an active play of illusions, lose 1 point of Intelligence every 24 hours as long as they remain in the theater. The character regains 1 point of Intelligence per week when outside of the theater. If a victim reaches 0 Intelligence, he becomes a minor character completely under Juste's control, and his existence is entirely dependent on Juste's will. If Juste wills the character to disappear, that character's existence is completely obliterated until Juste wills him to return. Even then, the character will be only a pale shadow of what he used to be, for his personality is only a memory for Juste.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d8 - 2) slashing damage, or 3 (1d10 - 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Legendary Actions

Juste can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Juste regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cast a Spell. Juste casts a spell.

Now You See Me. Juste takes the hide or disengage action.

Follow the Script (2 Actions). Juste targets a creature and commands it to follow the script. This works exactly as the *suggestion* spell but lasts until the end of the creature's next turn.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside the theater, Juste can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Juste can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

The illusionary audience of the theater either boos the actors or cheers them on.

Cheer: All actors except the characters are inspired. The inspiration can be used once anytime before the end of the turn.

Boo: All actors who are not allied to Juste are affected by the *bane* spell until the end of the turn.

Through the magic of illusion changes the scene (furniture, scenic, terrain etc.) to depict the one viable to his script as to progress the play.

The play is paused for 1 turn to let the actors prepare for the next scene. All actors other than the ones not allied to Juste are healed by 1d8+5 hit points. During this turn, up to two actors can be summoned or recalled.

Juste can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

The Eyríe



The Eyrie



The Eyrie was once a flying castle, involved in a draconic war of continent-spanning, if not world-spanning, proportions, created by the dragonlord Kravon when he lost his red dragon mount. Even those who follow a man who could work with a dragon in this manner have their limits, and Kravon grew increasingly volatile and violent — slaughtering innocents and his own followers alike. He grew so violent that in a fit of rage, he murdered every single other occupant of his castle, finding himself alone, and trapped in his keep. First physically as he was the only one there, but then by the Mists as he was cursed to never leave the keep.

The state of affairs didn't last long, as five werebats came to the keep, and their leader, whose name has been lost to time after he started referring to himself as the Baron, slaughtered Kravon and drank his blood. Unknowingly the curse transferred to the Baron, but the domain's nature remained unchanged, staying as it was under the previous lord, with one exception — the previous lord could control the movement of the flying citadel, the Baron cannot. While neither could control the domains that the citadel appears in, Kravon was at least able to control it within the domain itself.

Both of them were imprisoned, and that is what adventures that involve the Eyrie should involve, as the Baron cannot feed himself without the use of his minions. He loathes them for his dependency, and they in turn hate him for utterly controlling them. Both sides remain unaware of that animosity, however. Which is where the heroes might come in. The minions would be forced to abduct a victim for the Baron, perhaps one of the heroes' friends, bringing that person to the Eyrie, but while they cannot work directly against the Baron, they could leave clues as to where the friend went. They would likely even greet the heroes when they arrived, treating them as guests — though hiding their true nature — and subtly pushing them into a conflict with the Baron, a task that would be complicated by the werebat leader acting and working as the cook, while one of the minions is forced to pretend to be the Baron himself.

Controlling the flying castle is impossible without intimate knowledge of how it works, which might be obtainable in Sithicus, and many darklords would dearly like to have something like this added to their arsenal.

"Often a man endures for several years, submits and suffers the cruelest punishments, and then suddenly breaks out over some minute trifle, almost nothing at all."

~Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The House of the Dead



Culture Level:	Medieval
Climate & Terrain:	Temperate, mountains
Year Formed:	723 BC
Population:	5
Races (%):	Werebat 100%
Languages:	Common, Balok
Religions:	None
Government:	Despotism
Ruler(s):	The Baron
Darklord(s):	The Baron
Nationality:	None
Analog:	Flying Citadels

Local Fauna:

The Eyrie is home to many birds, mainly hunting birds and scavengers, such as a small population of falcons and a rather larger population of crows. Several spider hives are found in the underground part of the Eyrie. There are no mammals or other creatures present here, as they're quickly eaten before they can make much of an impact.

The Eyrie

Local Flora:

The only plants that make their home on the Eyrie are three different types of hardy grass, none of which can support any population.

Native Horrors

The werebat population, though small, are the rulers of the Eyrie with the Baron leading the small band, despite hating them intently. A group of five winged ghouls also make their home here, though they coexist relatively peacefully with the werebats, as the bats drink blood, while the ghouls eat flesh. Whichever side finds a way to feed at any given time will usually benefit the other as well.

Monstrous spiders make their home on the underside of Eyrie, and anyone wishing to climb up to the top of the island must contend with them. Unlike the ghouls and werebats, the spiders do not live in peace with the others, often attacking them as they make their return to the Eyrie. In many cases, this is the only way for the spiders to obtain food.

Terrain type

The Eyrie barely has any terrain, except for some patches of dirt and grass that surround Eyrie Keep itself. It was torn from a mountain and bears some semblance to the stone there. Underneath the floating "island" are clumps of dirt, infested with spiders.

Important Landmarks

Eyrie Keep

Eyrie Keep is a large fortress that's a few hundred years old. Ill-maintained, it has clearly weathered a storm or two, as its towers are close to falling. Many windows adorn the walls and sides of the citadel, allowing for archers or spellcasters to defend the place. Nowadays the werebats and the winged ghouls use them to spy upon those below the Eyrie, hoping to find their next victim.

Inside, the citadel is clearly affected by strong magic, as it floats aloft, even with the poor maintenance, as well as scars of wars from battles with dragons, it's still holding together, though it's impossible to see what magic is used to make the castle fly.

The Baron is confined here, but not simply to the floating island that makes up the Eyrie, but directly to Eyrie Keep — his direct inheritance from killing the previous lord of the castle. The keep is also somewhat haunted, but not by ghosts. Spirits are here, but they cannot hurt any-

one and are merely an unsettling presence of voices, those of both the victims of the current Baron, the previous lord, as well as the underlings of Kravon.

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

Any, depending on where the Eyrie is.

Fun Fact:

Inside the castle can be found plans drawn up when Kravon was attempting to rule the continent, with notes referring to the five dragon armies and lords, though there is no mention of names, numbers, or locations.



The Baron

"Welcome to my island!

*It is rare for someone to find my floating home.
Tell me. I seek a man. He goes by the name of
Gunderling, and it seems death cannot hold him.
Have you seen him?*

No? A shame.

*Ah well, you can take his place in my larder until I
find Gunderling.*

I do so love when guests stop by."

~The Baron.

The Baron rarely assumes his human form, not seeing the point, as he doesn't have to blend in and none in the Eyrie have the power to threaten him. In werebat form, the Baron stands slightly over six feet tall with a massive chest and powerful arms. His fangs are long, even for a werebat, and his eyes are bloodshot. The Baron revels in violence, especially against those foes that can't hurt him. Flying creatures are drawn to the Baron, while crows, and even the occasional hawk, land upon his shoulders when he stands still. The Baron has taken to conversing with his bird companions, and they act as if they know what he is saying.

Background: The lycanthrope called the Baron was the leader of a small group of werebats that inhabited a distant mountain pass in Barovia. He and his clan whiled away their nights stalking unfortunate peasants. Some, they devoured as a clan. Others they dropped from great heights into steep ravines. For sport, the werebats would judge the length and volume of the peasant screams, the number of ledges they slammed into and how the broken body landed. One day, everything changed. A colossal flying fortress appeared in the sky above the werebat's mountain. Curious, the lycanthropes flew to the fortress and discovered its sole inhabitant, a human dressed in elaborate ornate armor. The human said he was Kravon, a Lord of Dragons. Lance in hand, the human commanded the werebats to bow to him and become his slaves. The werebats attacked. As the last blow fell, only the Baron and two of his companions lived. The Baron declared himself lord of the flying fortress, which he dubbed the Eyrie. When one of his companions challenged the Baron's right to rule, the Baron shredded the fool's wings and threw him from the fortress. The remaining werebat swore unending loyalty to his new lord and master. The Baron soon discovered he couldn't fly far from the Eyrie without being pushed back to the fortress by powerful winds. Even worse, the Eyrie seemed free to travel in any direction, but only those directions contrary to the Baron's

wishes. The werebat minion soon returned, along with innocents from the ground below. The Baron infected the innocents with the curse of lycanthropy and found they were loyal minions that would follow his every command. The Baron tested his new troops by ordering them to tear apart the last remaining threat to his rule of the Eyrie to shreds.

Current Sketch: The lycanthrope rules the Eyrie with an iron fist. He can see and hear through any flying beast or animal in his domain, so the Baron is aware of everything that happens in his fortress. He recently kidnapped three siblings, Jerzi, Pietr, and Liza. The Baron has turned them into werebats and now uses them as his servants and scouts away from the Eyrie. The trio are currently looking for the Baron's newest intended possession, an immortal man named Mikel Gunderling. The glory of meeting an immortal means nothing to the Baron. He views Gunderling as an endless food source, ripe to be hung in his larder. The Eyrie flies above the other domains of Ravenloft as the Baron continues his search.

Darklord's Tactics: The Baron is an intelligent combatant with a variety of magical and mundane minions at his disposal. He can control any beast or animal that can fly and is in his fortress and can summon a flying invisible servant. At night he can command all the infected werebats to assume their hybrid forms and control them as if they were subjected to a *dominate monster* spell. The Baron will send his minions against his foes first and fling his most destructive spells after. If anything is left, the Baron will finish his foes with tooth and claw, making sure to save the burliest opponent for his larder. The Baron knows he can replace any of his minions with ease so he has no concern for their safety.

Borders: When the borders of the Eyrie are closed, the flying fortress is surrounded by a howling gale. Any attempt to bypass the wind with magic fails and the hurricane-like winds are impossible to fly or walk through.



The Baron



The Baron

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (14d6 + 32)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +5

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common (can't speak in bat form)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. The Baron can use his action to polymorph into a bat or hybrid form, or back into his true form. His statistics, other than his size, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Spellcasting. The Baron is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The Baron has the following Wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *gust*, *sapping sting*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *fog cloud*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *web*

3rd level (2 slots): *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*

4th level (1 slot): *minor globe of invulnerability*

Avian Controller. The Baron has total control over all non-magical winged creatures of his domain. At any given time, the Baron can communicate with any such animal telepathically. Additionally, as an action, he can see through the animal's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of his next turn, gaining the benefits of any Special Senses that the beast might have. During this time, he is deaf and blind with regard to his own senses.

Limited Flight. The Baron cannot fly more than 60ft from the ground of his domain. If he tries to fly or is forced to go past that point, strong winds sweep him back to the surface.

Summon Aerial Servant. The Baron can summon an air elemental once per long rest to assist him in battle.

Flyby. The Baron doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Hearing. The Baron has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

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

Nimble Escape. The Baron can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Actions

Multitask (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). The Baron makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

Bite (Bat or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

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

Legendary Actions

The Baron can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Baron regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Detect. The Baron makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Move. The Baron takes the move action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The Baron beats his wings. Each creature within 20 ft. of the Baron must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (4d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The Baron can then fly up to half his flying speed.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside his lair, the Baron can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Baron can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

2 hawks, 1d10 ravens or 1d4 swarms of bats are summoned from the surrounding cliffs to assist the Baron in battle. The beasts remain until slain or dismissed by the Baron.

A wall of wind is created at a point decided by the Baron. It functions like the wind wall spell.

A cloud of avian creatures limit the line of sight of the Baron's adversaries. 100ft in a radius centered on the Baron becomes heavily obscured. This does not affect the Baron as the birds move to clear the way of his line of sight.

The Baron can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

The background of the cover is a dark, atmospheric photograph of a forest. A path or road winds through the trees, leading towards a bright light source in the distance, possibly a clearing or a window. The trees are tall and thin, with bare branches. The overall mood is mysterious and slightly ominous. The entire scene is framed by a highly detailed, ornate border with gothic and Art Nouveau influences, featuring intricate scrollwork and floral patterns.

***The Winding
Road***

The Winding Road



The true story of the Winding Road has been impossible for scholars to discover. Some accredit it to a bard who lost his head when he failed to please Ivana Boritsi, and while this is the generally accepted story, it is not the only one. Soldiers of Falkovnia talk of a mad general, while elsewhere they tell the story of an evil soldier — one who lost his head in battle, and who made a deal with the devil to never die. But he found himself without his head when it was chopped off by his enemies and hidden with the aid of witchcraft, cursing the head to be among those of the living. In vengeance, he slaughtered them all and set out on a killing spree, riding along a road, killing everyone, and trying their heads for his own. Soon he found himself stuck on the Winding Road. One final story tells of a man named Eli van Hassen, the man responsible for the death of the Horseman originally. Now one hunts, while the other hides. Adventures on the Winding Road should have little in the way of logic. Anyone can find themselves the target of the Headless Horseman, though he usually only attempts to kill trespassers once, merely riding them down. In order to leave the Winding Road, one merely has to survive the encounters, as well as the heads that follow.

*"One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back."
~Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky"*

Culture Level:	Chivalric
Climate & Terrain:	Varies, road
Year Formed:	704 (Presumed)
Population:	0
Races (%):	None
Languages:	None
Religions:	None
Government:	None
Ruler(s):	Headless Horseman
Darklord(s):	Headless Horseman
Nationality:	Borcan (Presumed)
Analog:	The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Local Fauna:

As the name suggests, the Winding Road winds through the lands but has no set location of its own. There are no native animals to the domain, and any animals that come into contact with the Winding Road immediately flee unless restrained.

Local Flora:

There is no natural flora on the Winding Road since it is only the road itself that is part of the domain, but it does affect the surrounding areas. The moment that the Winding Road comes into being, the plants surrounding the road twist and turn, becoming — at least temporarily — dark reflections of themselves.

Native Horrors

Apart from the Headless Horseman, the Winding Road is home to only two more types of monsters, both linked to the Horseman. Following close behind the Horseman are the heads of his former victims. They bounce along, cackling and laughing hysterically, and try to bite anyone that they pass. These heads seek nothing more than to be put out of their misery and will fight to the death. Following that comes silence, but there is one final horror on the Winding Road. After the bouncing heads come the bobbing heads of six medusae, five females and one male. The bouncing heads retain all the properties of medusae, except for the male, maedar, head. It is able to cast any spell back on travelers that they have used against the Horseman or the cackling heads (though not the other medusae). This last set of heads do not fight to the death, instead choosing to flee when it looks as if the fight is lost.

Terrain type

The Winding Road itself follows the terrain of the domain or lands where it has manifested, but it takes on the appearance of a typical road there. So if it appears in the Wildlands, it might appear as little more than an animal track, while if it appears in Odiare, it would appear as a cobbled road. Generally, it follows whatever technological level is present where it appears. Those who attempt to leave the road before encountering the Headless Horseman find themselves sinking into quicksand — a slow and dreadful death.

Important Landmarks

None

Towns and villages:

None

Neighboring domain(s):

None (though tied with the Endless Road)

Fun Fact:

Rumor has it that if someone manages to stay on the Winding Road and follow close behind the Headless Horseman, it is possible to come to the Eternal Road, and find the estate of van Hassen as the Horseman rides past his eternal quarry.

The Headless Horseman

"We knew we shouldn't be on the road at night, but we had guards and were so close we decided to brave the dark. We thought we were clear, no howls, no moans, when we heard the sound of thundering hooves. Sertri screamed, grabbing at a face that had become a fountain of blood. One of the guards, Klyne, I think, just stood there, his head gone, his body refusing to fall from sheer shock. We had met the Horseman. I don't know why he let me live. I still hear the thundering hooves in my nightmares. He will come for me again, and this time I can't escape."

~Anton Du'Lac, Merchant (Missing)

Background: Borcans believe the Horseman was previously a bard who had the disastrous fate of meeting Ivana Boritsi, the ruler of Borca. Ivana welcomed him to her private baths (an offer he was unable to decline). Sadly for him, she was feeling under the weather, and was displeased with him. Inspired by the sickle shape of the moon, she had him decapitated so she could shower in his blood. Once she was finished, the headless body was thrown into a stream, close to Levkarest. The body floated downstream until it approached Sturben, where it became tangled underneath a wooden bridge. The evening of the following sickle moon, the body emerged. Ravenloft's Dark Powers provided it with a phantom horse and a sickle shaped with a sharp edge. Since then, the Horseman has ridden forward to sever the necks of unfortunate adventurers. Running cannot save you. By the time you hear the thundering hooves of the Horseman's steed, it's already too late. The Headless Horseman charges down the road that is his domain, taking heads in a futile quest to reclaim his own. The Headless Horseman looks like a gentleman dressed in black, and rides a black stallion named Spitfire. It would be a normal sight, except that the rider's head is gone. Despite missing his head, the Horseman doesn't have any trouble finding his victims or using his weapons to deadly effect.

Current Sketch: The Headless Horseman is unique among the lords of Ravenloft. His domain is moved by some unknown agency. When a crescent moon hangs in the sky and the mists rise, any road can become the Horseman's domain. He has been seen as far away as Faerun, and if rumor is to be believed, the city of Sigil.

Darklord's Tactics: The Headless Horseman never sits still. He rides at full gallop through his foes, striking with sickle and whip before disappearing into the mists that surround his domain. He always charges from a new angle, catching his victims off guard. Even

worse, the Headless Horseman is followed by clouds of decapitated heads. These heads follow the Horseman wherever he goes. The heads laugh, howl, cry, and scream. The heads assist the headless horseman when they are called upon and haunt the dreams of survivors for years.

Borders: The borders of the Winding Road are always shrouded in mist. Anyone who runs into the mists reappears wherever the Horseman wants them too. The borders of the Winding Road are always closed. The Horseman and domain move together and only after they have had their fill. Survivors don't escape the domain, the domain leaves them behind.

The Headless Horseman's Lair: The Winding Road

When a crescent moon hangs in the sky, the Headless Horseman rides across the Domains of Dread. The Horseman is the lord of the Winding Road, a unique domain that doesn't have static boundaries. Instead the Winding Road can appear on any road, even outside of Ravenloft. The Winding road is 15 feet across and 1 mile long. The road changes to match the surrounding terrain, but the borders are always shrouded in mist. Creatures that try to leave the road are lost in mist for what feels like hours. They are constantly harassed by shadowy shapes that never seem to materialise, only to return back to the road the instant they left. Sharp eyed creatures even see the backs of themselves stepping off the road into the mists a few feet away. The Headless Horseman is always encountered in the Winding Road.



The Headless Horseman

The Headless Horseman

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 143 (15d10 + 60X)

Speed 80 ft. fly 40 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +8, Dex +10

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical attacks, necrotic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, prone, restrained

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Lord of the Winding Road. The Headless Horseman can appear without warning and disappear just as quickly. Attacks of Opportunity against the Headless Horseman are made with disadvantage.

Strike from the Mist. The Headless Horseman always acts first in initiative order.

Headless. The Horseman is immune to damage from vorpal weapons.

Turn Immunity. The Headless Horseman is immune to effects that turn undead.

Relentless Movement: The headless horseman is unaffected by spells that impede movement such as Slow or Hold person. Difficult terrain does not affect him either. His speed can never be changed.

Evasion. When the Headless Horseman is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw and half damage if he fails.

Undead Nature. The Headless Horseman doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the headless horseman fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The Headless Horseman attacks once with his Spine Whip and once with his sickle.

Vicious Sickle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. If the target fails, they take 4d6 necrotic damage. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more than they take 8d6 necrotic damage. If the target fails by 10 or more they are decapitated by the Horseman and are instantly slain. When the Headless Horseman rolls a 20 with this magic weapon, the target takes an extra 2d6 slashing damage.

Spine Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail they are blinded for 1 minute. Blinded creatures may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turns to end the condition

Legendary Actions

The Headless Horseman can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Headless Horseman regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Gallop. The Headless Horseman may move up to his move speed.

Winding Road. The Headless Horseman can choose to teleport a creature within 50 feet of him instead. That creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that fail are teleported up to 100 feet to an empty space of the Horseman's choice.

Spine Whip. The Horseman makes a Spine Whip attack.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Headless Horseman can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects:

◇ The Headless Horseman points at a creature with Int 3 or higher and laughs. The creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Those that fail see the screaming faces of the Horseman's decapitated victims and are frightened of the Horseman for 1 minute. Creatures may repeat the saving throw at the end of their turns to end the condition.

◇ The Headless Horseman summons 2d6+3 of The First to Follow. The next time this ability is used, five of The Last to Follow are summoned instead. This ability cannot be used a third time

◇ The air is filled with the sound of thundering hooves. Creatures within 30 feet of the Horseman must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures take 18 (4d8) thunder damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. The Headless Horseman can't repeat an effect until they have all been used, and he can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

How to defeat the Darklord

The Headless Horseman wants the return of his head. Unfortunately, no one knows who he was or when it was taken. The Headless Horseman has advantage on all attack rolls against any creature that hands him the wrong head until that creature dies.

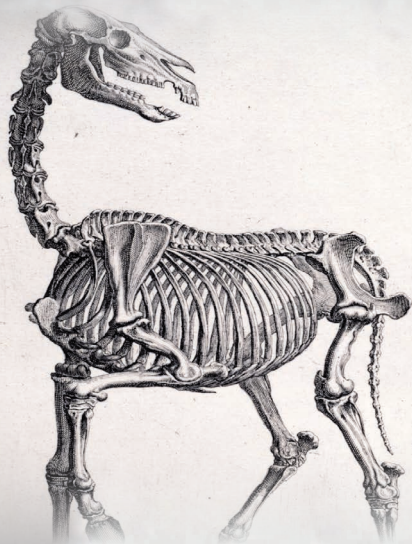
Appendix A



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Strahd's Skeletal Steed

Strahd is a potent necromancer who has reanimated the carcass of a dead horse into a skeletal steed to serve his dark purposes. The skeletal steed is stronger than a normal horse in many ways as its breath can petrify or even kill those unlucky enough to stand in front of it.



Strahd's Skeletal Steed

Large undead, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +6

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common but cannot speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the steed moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Permanently Damaged. Any damage the steed takes is permanent and cannot be healed.

Play Dead. The steed can collapse into a pile of bones making it indiscernible from any other pile of bones until it decides to take horse form again. Attacks that target it while in this form have advantage.

Resistant to Turning. The steed rolls saving throws against abilities that try to turn it, with advantage.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (1/Day). The steed exhales a noxious cloud in a 10-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save and be petrified to the spot for 1d4+1 rounds, or half as much damage on a successful one. A petrified creature can end this effect on a successful roll, making the save at the end of each of its turns.

Strahd's Shadow

Strahd has found a way to detach his shadow from his body and utilise it as one of his greatest tools. Strahd's shadow acts as a spy for Strahd and shares everything it learns with its master. It can siphon the thoughts and memories of any victim making interrogation needless.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Strahd's Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)

Speed ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6

Skills Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant, Infernal but cannot speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action. Its Stealth bonus is also Improved to +10.

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

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

In My Shadow. The shadow and Strahd can communicate telepathically as long as they are on the same plane. Any new information that the shadow gains is presumed to be immediately learned by Strahd. Strahd also senses when his shadow is killed and where it is, and may resurrect it by personally visiting that location.

Shadowy Informant. Strahd's shadow is his primary information-gathering agent (though far from his only one). It lurks in the shadows, listening to conversations, reading minds, and sometimes siphoning thoughts. If seen or caught it will try to modify a witness's memory and hide and/or flee, and will only fight if it has no other option.

Magic Resistance. The shadow has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The shadow's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/Day each: *detect thoughts, fear, invisibility, modify memory, mind spike, telekinesis*

Actions

Multiattack. The shadow makes one bite attack and two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) Slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Siphon Thoughts. The shadow touches an unconscious creature, which makes a DC 15 Wisdom save. On a failure, the shadow learns all of their memories. On a success, the shadow only learns the target's memories of everything since they last woke up, usually only a day or so.

Trapped Aboleth of Lake Zarovich

This unfortunate Aboleth was resting inside Lake Zarovich when Barovia was dragged into the mist and got trapped in Ravenloft. The beast sought out Vistani victims in particular, hoping to learn the secrets of navigating the mists and fleeing Ravenloft. For years, the Vistani in the area have warned visitors to give Lake Zarovich a wide berth.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Aboleth of Lake Zarovich

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (21d10 + 63)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover), swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +8, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +8, History +12, Perception +11, Religion +8, Stealth +3

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; thunder (only when in ethereal form)

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons (only when in ethereal form)

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

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Void Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the trapped aboleth to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the trapped aboleth drops to 1 hit point instead.

Void Aura. The trapped aboleth is surrounded by a chilling cloud. A living creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of it must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be slowed until the start of its next turn. In addition, any creature that has been infected by the trapped aboleth takes 7 (2d6) cold damage every time it starts its turn within the aura.

Infecting Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with the trapped aboleth, or uses a psychic attack against it, the trapped aboleth can spread its disease to the creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom save or become infected with the same disease caused by the trapped aboleth's tentacle attack.

Actions

Multiattack. The aboleth makes three tentacle attacks or three withering touches, depending on what form it is in.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target creature is hit, it must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become diseased. The disease has no effect for 1 minute; during that time, it can be removed by lesser restoration or comparable magic. After 1 minute, the

diseased creature's skin becomes translucent and slimy. The creature cannot regain hit points unless it is entirely underwater, and the disease can only be removed by heal or comparable magic. Unless the creature is fully submerged or frequently doused with water, it takes 6 (1d12) acid damage every 10 minutes. If a creature dies while diseased, it rises in 1d6 rounds as an abolethic zombie. This zombie is permanently dominated by the aboleth and uses the zombie statblock but has a swim speed of 30ft.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) necrotic damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Enslave (3/Day). The trapped aboleth targets one creature it can see within 30 ft. of it. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by the trapped aboleth until either it dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the trapped aboleth's control and can't take reactions, and the two can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance. Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from the trapped aboleth.

Reactions

Constitution of the Void. The trapped aboleth can reduce the damage it takes from a single source to 0. This doesn't apply to radiant damage.

Legendary Actions

The trapped aboleth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The trapped aboleth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The trapped aboleth makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Swipe. The trapped aboleth makes one tail attack.

Psychic Drain (Costs 2 Actions). One creature charmed by the trapped aboleth takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and the trapped aboleth regains hit points equal to the damage the creature takes.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the trapped aboleth can take a lair action to create one of the magical effects listed below. The trapped aboleth cannot use the same effect two rounds in a row.

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- Detect: The trapped aboleth makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- Tail Swipe: The trapped aboleth makes one tail attack.
- Psychic Drain (Costs 2 Actions): One creature charmed by the trapped aboleth takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage, and the trapped aboleth regains Hit Points equal to the damage the creature takes.
- Void Absorbance: The trapped aboleth can pull the life force from those it has infected to replenish its own life. Any one infected within 30ft of the trapped aboleth takes 18 (6d6) psychic damage and heals the trapped aboleth by the amount rolled.

Regional Effects. The regional effects of the trapped aboleth's lair are the same as that of an aboleth, except as follows.

- Underground surfaces within 1 mile of the trapped aboleth's lair are slimy and wet and are difficult terrain. Water sources within 1 mile of the lair are supernaturally fouled and can spread the disease of the trapped aboleth. A creature who drinks from such water must make a successful DC 14 Constitution check or become infected. (This is countered by the lake's peculiar nature and the radius is only limited to the lair of the trapped aboleth). Enemies of the trapped aboleth that drink such water will vomit it back up within minutes.
- As an action, the trapped aboleth can create an illusory image of itself within 1 mile of the lair. The copy can appear at any location the trapped aboleth has seen before or in any location a creature charmed by the trapped aboleth can currently see. Once created, the image lasts for as long as the trapped aboleth maintains concentration, as if concentrating on a spell. Although the image is intangible, it looks, sounds, and can move like the trapped aboleth. The trapped aboleth can sense, speak, and use telepathy from the image's position as if present at that position. If the image takes any damage, it disappears.



Werewolf/Giant Spider/Gargoyle Meld

This horrid creature is the result of Strahd's machinations and spells. An amalgam of three different creatures, it hunts any living being out of spite and madness.

Werewolf/Giant Spider/Gargoyle Meld

Medium undead (construct), unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Understands the language of its creator but cannot speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the meld knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The meld ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The meld makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 13 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

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Azrael Dak

Azrael Dak is a Dwarven Werebadger. After Lord Soth's departure, he became the political ruler of Sithicus. In the aftermath of Soth's departure, Azrael Dak became the temporary leader of Sithicus, although he did not become Darklord as he had anticipated. That "honor" fell to Inza, who melded with the darkness on which Dak had previously relied so heavily.

Azrael Dak

Medium humanoid (dwarf, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 in humanoid form, 15 (natural armour) in badger or hybrid form

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 25ft., 30 ft.; burrow 10 ft. in badger form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +7, Wis +4

Skills Animal Handling +4, Deception +4, Insight +4, Intimidation +4, Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances poison

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Balok, Sithican (can't speak in badger form)

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Shapechanger. Dak can use his action to polymorph between the forms of a badger-humanoid hybrid, a giant badger, or his true humanoid (dwarf) form. Other than AC, his statistics remain the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Berserk Axe. If a creature other than Dak touches his axe, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or go berserk. While berserk, it must use its action each round to attack the nearest creature. If there are multiple possible targets, it attacks one at random.

Fury (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When Dak takes damage, he can choose to descend into a wild fury. He fixates on a single creature that has dealt him damage since his last turn, and until the fury ends he has advantage on all attack rolls against that target. The fury lasts for 1 minute, or until Dak chooses to attack another creature or is rendered unconscious or incapacitated.

Innate Spellcasting. Dak's spellcasting ability is Wisdom. Dak can innately cast the following spell, requiring no components: 1/Day: *animate dead*

Licking Wounds. When Azrael transforms back to his dwarf form, he heals 5d6 hit points. This ability can be used 3 times per day.

Keen Smell. Azrael has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell and there is a 75% chance to detect hidden creatures that are within 30ft of him.

Chemical Bane. Poppyseeds and poppy seed oil are poisonous to werebadgers. A weapon that strikes Azrael with this, or a food that contains it, deals 1d6 poison damage to Azrael. Azrael has a 75% chance to detect the poison.

Dwarven Resilience. Azrael has advantage on Saving Throws against poison not made out of poppy seeds.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Azrael can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

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

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Azrael can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls he makes during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Rage. On his turn, Azrael can enter a rage as a Bonus Action. While raging, he gains the following benefits if he isn't wearing heavy armor.

- He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength Saving Throws.
- When he makes a melee weapon Attack using Strength, he gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- He has Resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

He can't cast spells while raging. The rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a Hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. He can also end his rage on his Turn as a Bonus Action.

Actions

Multitattack (Hybrid Form Only). Dak makes three attacks, only one of which can be with his claws. He can use a bonus action to attack once with his battleaxe.

Battleaxe of Speed (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit:12 (2d8+6) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow +2. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws (Badger or Hybrid Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (3d6+4) slashing damage. If the target is a dwarf, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werebadger lycanthropy.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d6 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werebadger lycanthropy. Werebadgers created through Azrael's bite do not transfer lycanthropy to others when they bite them.

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Salt Shadow

Found in Sithicus' Veidrava Salt Mines, salt shadows, unlike conventional shadow monsters, are corporeal, but they also have the ability of possession, since they can literally enter their victims' bodies through natural orifices such as the mouth and control them from within causing the victim suffers excruciating pain.

Salt Shadow

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +3, Wis +2

Skills Investigation +0, Perception +2, Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities fire, radiant

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

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

Turn Resistance. The shadow has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead as long as it is not in sunlight.

Splash Damage. Each time a salt shadow is damaged in combat, blobs of the semi-liquid shadowstuff that forms its body spray in all directions, inflicting 1 point of acid damage to all living creatures within 5 feet of the salt shadow.

Create Spawn. Any humanoid reduced to 0 Strength by a salt shadow becomes a salt shadow under the control of its killer within 1d4 rounds. Newly created salt shadows may automatically possess their own corpse using their possession special attack the same round in which they rise as undead. Salt shadows that possess their original bodies can

pass unnoticed among the living since the possessed corpse does not decay, but is instead preserved as it appeared at the moment of death.

Actions

Corrosive Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic and 1d6 acid damage. Each creature within 5ft of the target is splashed and takes 1 acid damage.

Salt Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d6. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the shadow can see within 5 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be possessed by shadow as it enters its body through the nostrils, ears and mouth; the Shadow then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The Shadow now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The shadow can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the Shadow ends it as a bonus action, or it is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When the possession ends, the Shadow reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to this Shadow's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.



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Avanc

The Avanc is a malevolent magical beast; the first to be formed was a human who was cursed by Loht with six finned limbs and crocodile-like features. The other Avanc were later created by various means and methods. The Avanc is a solitary beast that is frequently observed lurking around Castle Island and Lake Kronov in Tepest.



Avanc

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +6

Skills Investigation +2, Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Sylvan

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Hold Breath. The avanc can hold its breath for 40 minutes.

Ambusher. The avanc has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Aquatic Camouflage. The avanc has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in aquatic terrain.

Reckless Attack. The avanc can throw aside all concern for defense to attack with fierce desperation. When it makes its first attack on its turn, it can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives it advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until it's next turn.

Danger Sense. The avanc gains an uncanny sense of when things nearby aren't as they should be, giving it an edge when it dodges away from danger. It has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, it can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Grappling Beast. The avanc rolls with advantage when it tries to grapple a creature and it has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

Aquatic Empathy. The avanc can communicate simple concepts with crocodiles and fish. It can order them to come to its aid, though they are not compelled to do so.

Water Dependent: The avanc can survive out of water for 1 hour per point of Constitution; after that, it risks drowning.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Avanc can't bite another target.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or fall prone.

Shadow Unicorn

Shadow Unicorns are terrible magical beast unique to Ravenloft. Legend has it that they are the offspring of Addar, a pure unicorn, and a female nightmare. When Shadow Unicorns mate, they always have twin offsprings, with a small possibility that one of the newborns will grow up to be a genuine unicorn. When the Vistani happen upon a shadow unicorn's area, they know enough about them to keep them calm and even ride them. Darkon's and Falkovnia's woods, Invidia, the Shadow Rift, and Valachan are all home to shadow unicorns.

Shadow Unicorn

Large fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 50 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +7

Skills Intimidation +5

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Charge. If the unicorn moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a horn attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

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Rampage. When the unicorn reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the unicorn can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a Horn attack.

Magic Resistance. The unicorn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The unicorn's weapon attacks are magical. **Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the unicorn takes 10 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The unicorn makes two attacks: one with its hooves and one with its horn.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Horn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Healing Touch (3/Day). The unicorn touches another creature with its horn. The target magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points. In addition, the touch removes all diseases and neutralizes all poisons afflicting the target.

Teleport (1/Day). The unicorn magically teleports itself and up to three willing creatures it can see within 5 ft. of it, along with any equipment they are wearing or carrying, to a location the unicorn is familiar with, up to 1 mile away.

Terror Scream (Recharge 5–6). The unicorn utters a terrifying scream. All creatures within a 30-foot-radius that can hear the unicorn must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the unicorn's Terror Scream for the next 24 hours.



Ebb, Adult Shadow Dragon

Ebb is a chaotic evil female Adult Shadow Dragon that served as Azalin's mount and is originally from Oerth. She used to live at Castle Avernus, but now she makes her home in Mount Nyid in the Mountains of Misery.

Ebb, Adult Shadow Dragon

Huge dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 287 (25d12 + 125)

Speed 80 ft., fly 150 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +11, Wis +13, Cha +13

Skills Arcana +13, Deception +13, Perception +19, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses blindsight 240 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 29

Languages Abyssal, Common, Darkonese, Draconic, Sylvan
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Amphibious. Ebb can breathe both air and water.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ebb fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Flyby. Ebb doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Innate Spellcasting. Ebb's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bane, comprehend languages, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, inflict wounds, light, mage hand, resistance,*

3/Day each: *blur, darkness, mirror image, nondetection, see invisibility, sending, speak with dead, spirit guardians, vampiric touch*

1/Day each: *conjure shadow demon, death ward, dimension door, slow*

Unnatural Constitution. Ebb is immune to spells and spell-like effects that would put her to sleep, lower her max hit points or alter her form.

Shadow Blend. During any condition other than full daylight, Ebb can fade into the shadows with a bonus action, making herself heavily obscured. No magic illumination short of a daylight spell or radiant sunlight can negate this ability to reveal her.

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Mother's Rage. If a creature attacks Ebb's eggs within her lair, she becomes enraged and focuses her attacks against that creature. Ebb has advantage against the attacker and other creatures gain advantage when attacking her. The creature that attacked the eggs does not gain advantage when attacking Ebb as long as she is focused on them.

Improved Initiative. Ebb always rolls initiative with advantage.

Mist Form. Ebb as an action can assume a mist-like form that functions like the gaseous form spell. She can remain in this form for as long as she desires and revert back to her true form of a dragon with an action. While in mist form, she has a fly speed of 30ft.

Actions

Multiattack. Ebb can use her Frightful Presence. She then makes three attacks: one with her bite and two with her claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Ebb's choice that is within 120 feet and aware of her must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Ebb's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Enervating Breath (Recharge 5–6). Ebb exhales billowing enervating shadows in a 60-foot cone. Each living creature in that area must make a DC21 Dexterity saving throw, 4 levels of exhaustion on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shadow Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). Ebb exhales shadowy scalding steam in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area of effect must make a DC21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A humanoid reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies, and an undead shadow rises from its corpse and acts immediately after Ebb in the initiative count. The shadow is under Ebb's control.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from

the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. Ebb makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Ebb makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Ebb beats her wings. Each creature within 10 ft. of the dragon must succeed on a DC21 Dexterity saving throw or take 19 (4d6 + 8) necrotic damage and be knocked prone. Ebb can then fly up to half her flying speed.



Zweifalk

Zweifalk are a breed of two-headed hawks that are only found in Falkovnia. They're fierce, wild, and territorial, but make for excellent hunting birds if they can be trained. Falkovnian officers often use them when hunting runaway slaves.

Cunning Minds. Zweifalk are intelligent, more so than their regular counterparts, probably due to their two heads. Unlike many two-headed creatures, they do not have a dual consciousness, but instead only a single consciousness and personality. They

Savage Hunter. Zweifalk, whenever possible, will attack the eyes in an attempt to blind their prey. Once the prey has been killed, they tear the corpse apart in an attempt to get to the heart, which they then consume.

Hunt Master. Zweifalk are trainable, but it takes a great deal of time. Furthermore the bird will only ever obey a single master, so the training must be done by that person. Poor trainers find themselves blinded or killed by the bird, while successful ones gain the services of a great hunting bird, one with the intelligence of a well-trained, though vicious, dog.

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Zweifalk

Tiny beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 49 (9d8+9)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	6 (-3)

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Two-Headed. The zweifalk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Keen Sight. The zweifalk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The zweifalk makes 2 bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +X to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage. On a critical hit, the target is blinded for 3 (1d6) rounds, as the zweifalk tears at its eyes.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +X to hit, reach X ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Ghuliavo

Ghuliavos are the spirits of still-born or aborted babies that have been trapped in the border ethereal. Their spirits have collected all the guilt, resentment, anger, sadness and negative feelings of the parents and use them to feed their revengeful nature. Their goal while in incorporeal form is to impregnate a body and be born through the corpse of the victim in a corporeal form. They look like a floating fetus. While corporeal, they look like normal babies and will try to lure their next to-be victim and draw their spiritual essence to feed on.



Ghuliavo (Incorporeal)

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 31 (7d6 + 7)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3

Skills Stealth +4

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghuliavo can see 60 ft. into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

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

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) necrotic damage.

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

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 ft. of the ghuliavo that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 x 5 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghuliavo's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a greater restoration spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possessive Fertilization (Recharge 5-6). One humanoid that the ghuliavo can see within 5 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghuliavo; the ghuliavo then disappears inside the stomach of the target, and the target is incapacitated as it passes out for 1 minute. The target becomes pregnant, but this can only be identified after two hours of possession. The ghuliavo now controls the feelings of the target, and makes it want to

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protect it, and hide the fact that they are pregnant. The ghulivocan't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghulivoc ends it as a bonus action, or it is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. 1d6+2 hours later, if the ghulivoc is still possessing the target, the target gives birth to a seemingly normal humanoid baby and must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or die. The baby uses the ghulivoc (Corporeal) statblock. The target is immune to this ghulivoc's ability for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or if it survives giving birth to it.



Ghulivoc (Corporeal)

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (10d6 + 10)

Speed 40 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +8, Insight +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Nimble Escape. The ghulivoc can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Mimicry. The ghulivoc can mimic humanoid sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Naturally Stealthy. The ghulivoc can attempt to hide even when it is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than itself.

Ambusher. The ghulivoc has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Inscrutable. The ghulivoc is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the Ghulivoc's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Surprise Attack. If the ghulivoc surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Turn Resistance. The ghulivoc has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead. If it succeeds on the saving throw its nature is not betrayed and appears as if unaffected.

Baby's Wail 1/Day. The ghulivoc lets out a horrific wail. Any non-undead creature within 60 feet of it that can hear the wail must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the ghulivoc's next turn. There is a 50 percent chance that it will summon 1d3 specters coming to its aid. A summoned specter materializes within 30 feet of the ghulivoc in an unoccupied space. The specters vanish when they drop to 0 hit points or when the ghulivoc is safe.

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

Feverish Hunger. As a bonus action, the ghulivoc can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that is unconscious. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw against this magic or gain 1 level of exhaustion. The ghulivoc then permanently increases its maximum Hit Points by 1d6+1. It cannot increase its maximum hit points to more than double its normal hit points.

False Appearance. The ghulivoc is indistinguishable from any ordinary humanoid baby. It takes its normal appearance when it enters combat or when it is turned from an ability such as the cleric's turn undead.

Influence. The ghulivoc targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC14 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by it. The charmed target regards the ghulivoc as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the ghulivoc's control, it takes its requests or actions in the most favorable way

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it can. Each time the ghulivao or its companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the ghulivao is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect. The ghulivao can only have one target under its influence.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 2) piercing damage.

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Read Thoughts. The ghulivao magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 15 ft. of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the ghulivao can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the ghulivao's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the ghulivao has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

Baltoi

Baltoi is a tanar'ri marilith that lives in a comatose condition beneath a mining shaft in Lamordia's Sleeping Beast Mountains. She was a key figure in the ongoing Blood War on the lower worlds. The armies of Chaos suffered a devastating loss under her command, and as a result, she was imprisoned in Ravenloft by another significant evil power, as her ability to gate was taken away. The Dark Powers saw fit to compensate for her loss with a gift of increased overall size and power, making one of Ravenloft's most fearsome foes even more dangerous. A sorceress called Eserine confined her within her mountain lair once she was discovered. Though she still slumbers, the spell's potency is dwindling on a regular basis. Baltoi drives things insane, causes confusion, corrupts life, and induces hyper-regeneration within a 400-foot radius of where she is dormant. This reality wrinkle will expand to 40,000 feet when she awakens. Her phylactery is a massive, uncut black diamond.

Baltoi

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10, Wis +8, Cha +10

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +9, Deception +10, Insight +8, Intimidation +10, Sleight of Hand +10

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Lamordian, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Baltoi has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Baltoi's weapon attacks are magical.

Reactive. Baltoi can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

Cause Insanity. All living creatures within 60ft radius centered on Baltoi must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or gain a permanent madness.

Hyper Regeneration. After Baltoi reaches 0 hit points, she regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn. When her hit points completely regenerate, she regains consciousness.

Alert. Baltoi can't be surprised while it is conscious. It gains a +5 bonus to initiative. Other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against it as a result of being hidden from it.

Mind Fortitude. Baltoi is immune to illusions and mind affecting spells and spell-like abilities. In addition, magic cannot put her to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. The Baltoi's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: comprehend languages, *detect magic, inflict wounds*
3/Day each: *animate dead, bestow curse, darkness, mass*

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suggestion, polymorph(self only), project image, see invisible
1/Day each: *cloudkill, telekinesis, teleport*

Actions

Multiattack. Baltoi can make seven attacks: six with her longswords and one with her tail.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, Baltoi can automatically hit the target with her tail, and the Baltoi can't make tail attacks against other targets.

Teleport. The Baltoi magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Reactions

Parry. The Baltoi adds 5 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Baltoi must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Variant: Summon Demon (1/Day). The Baltoi chooses what to summon and attempts a magical summoning. A Baltoi has a 50 percent chance of summoning 1d6 vrocks, 1d4 hezrous, 1d3 glabrezus, 1d2 nalfeshnees, or one marilith. A summoned demon appears in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of its summoner, acts as an ally of its summoner, and can't summon other demons. It remains for 1 minute, until it or its summoner dies, or until its summoner dismisses it as an action.

Cerebral Vampire

The cerebral vampire is a rare form of undead created by Dr Daclaud Heinfroth, the dark lord of Dominia. Only he knows the secrets of their creation. Unlike normal vampires, cerebral vampires drain the spinal and cerebral fluid of their victims. Cerebral vampires look much as they did in life, save that their canine teeth are exceptionally long. Easily able to pierce a victim's skull or slide in between vertebrae, these teeth are tremendously strong.

Sadistic Mind Games. Cerebral vampires are intelligent and remarkably cruel, enjoying discovering the deepest fears of their victims and mercilessly torturing them. They claim the fear gives the spinal and cerebral fluid of their victims a pleasant tang that only that emotion produces.

How Does That Make You Feel? Cerebral vampires are not as powerful as traditional vampires. They are very aware of this fact and will go to great lengths to hide their

true abilities and weaknesses. A cerebral vampire will readily retreat from a dangerous situation to seek allies and return to take their revenge later.

Undead Nature. A cerebral vampire doesn't require air, food, or sleep.

Cerebral Vampire

Medium undead, evil (any)

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7, Cha +4

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses Darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the cerebral vampire fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Regeneration. The cerebral vampire regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the cerebral vampire's next turn.

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

Vampiric Weaknesses. The cerebral vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire cannot enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The cerebral vampire takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the vampire's heart while the vampire is in its resting place, the vampire is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sensitivity to Alcohol. The smell of pure alcohol is painful to the cerebral vampire. The cerebral vampire will not move into a

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thirty foot range of an open container of pure alcohol. If a container of pure alcohol is opened within 30 feet of a cerebral vampire, the vampire will move farther away than 30 feet at the start of its next turn.

Hypersensitivity to Sunlight. The cerebral vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Multiattack. The cerebral vampire makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage. If the cerebral vampire hits with both slam attacks its target must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. If they fail the vampire bites them. The creature takes 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage and 18 (4d8) psychic damage and is paralyzed until the end of the creature's next turn.

Drain Spinal Fluid. If the cerebral vampire is next to an incapacitated creature it may use its action to drain their spinal fluid. The creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails they take 27 (6d8) psychic damage and spellcasters lose their highest level spell slot.

Psychic Spike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) psychic damage. A creature damaged by this attack must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of the cerebral vampire's next turn. The cerebral vampire regains 7 hit points.

Broken One

Broken ones are twisted fusions of people and animals who live in Markovia, but they can also be found in other regions. They are also dubbed as "beast men" and "animal men." Broken ones are extraordinarily resilient and regenerate wounds at a rapid rate, despite their misshaped form. A broken one's food and behavioral patterns are usually related to its animal origin. A broken one may also have a single exceptional skill gained from their animal ancestors. Broken ones may also be found in Darkon, Falkovnia, Forlorn, Hazlan, Lamordia, Nova Vaasa, and the Shadow Rift.

Broken One

Medium monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Regeneration. The broken one regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Variant Broken Ones. Broken ones are derived from countless different animals and may have one or more of the special characteristics described below.

Badger Ancestry. This broken one gains a burrowing speed of 5 feet. It has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Crab Ancestry. This broken one has claws that deal piercing damage instead of a slam. It can breathe both air and water and has a swim speed of 30 feet.

Panther Ancestry. This broken one has claws that deal slashing damage instead of a slam. It has the following additional trait.

-Pounce. If the broken one moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the broken one can make one claw attack against it as a bonus action.

Spider Ancestry. This broken one has a bite that deals piercing damage instead of a slam. It has the following additional traits.

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

-Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the broken one knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

-Web Walker. The broken one ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Frenzy 1/Day. Once per day the broken one can go into a frenzy, giving it a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and a -2 penalty on its AC. It remains in a frenzy until it or its opponent is slain.

Actions

Multiattack. The broken one makes two attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage.

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Ghost Ship

When a ship sinks with its crew still on board, there is a rare chance that a ghost ship will be created. The restless souls of the sailors on board merge and animate the sunken ship, raising it to the surface to wreak havoc across the open sea. When a ghost ship battles against another ship or creature, it charges directly into them, ramming them with the keel of the ship and firing bolts from the ballista mounted on deck. Ghostly apparitions rush across the deck, manning the ballista, and working the rigging.

Undead Nature. A ghost ship doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Ghost Ship, Relentless

Gargantuan undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 279 (18d20 + 90)

Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +10

Skills Intimidation +8, Stealth +4

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Floating. The ship can only move along the surface of the water. The ship takes 6 (1d12) cold damage if it starts its turn completely submerged under water.

Haunted Deck. A living creature that ends its turn on the ship must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.

Immutable Form. The ship is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Run Over. The ship can move through the space of a large or smaller swimming creature. A creature whose space the ship enters for the first time on a turn must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Siege Monster. The ship deals double damage to objects and structures.

Sight of Death. The sight of the Relentless forces living creatures to make a DC 19 Wisdom Saving throw or be paralyzed with Fear for as long as she remains in sight. A creature which succeeds on this roll is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Damage Threshold. The ship's sturdy hull can withstand even the mightiest hit. The ship has a damage threshold of 15.

Actions

Multiattack. The ship makes three attacks: one with its slam and two with its ballistas.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target the ship has moved at least 10 feet straight towards on its turn. Hit: 19 (2d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Ballista. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 120/480 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (3d10 - 1) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Bowlyn

The bowlyn (or sailor's demise, as it is often called) is a strange and dreadful spirit that haunts ocean going vessels. In many ways, the creature has been likened to a poltergeist or similar restless spirit that haunts their place of death, usually ships. Like the poltergeist, a bowlyn is typically invisible. Unlike the former, however, it can become visible when it wishes to. When visible (or invisible and viewed by someone who can see such things), the bowlyn appears as a gaunt and skeletal seaman, although the creature's features are torn and twisted by the trauma of its death.

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Bowlyn

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +2

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

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

Invisibility. The bowlyn is invisible until it manifests.

Manifestation. The bowlyn cannot attack or be attacked, except by using its Telekinetic Thrust, before it manifests. When it manifests, all living creatures that are within 30ft and can see it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom Saving Throw or be frightened until the end of its next round.

Actions

Seasick Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) psychic damage. The target must also succeed on a DC 15 Constitution Saving Throw or become incapacitated with sea sickness and be unable to take any action other than Move. The sea sickness lasts until the creature regains 1 hit point.

Telekinetic Thrust. The bowlyn targets a creature or unattended object within 30 feet of it. A creature must be Medium or smaller to be affected by this magic, and an object can weigh up to 150 pounds. If the target is a creature, the bowlyn makes a Charisma check contested by the target's Strength check. If the bowlyn wins the contest, it hurls the target up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward. If the target then comes into contact with a hard surface or heavy object, the target takes 1d6 damage per 10 feet moved. If the target is an object that isn't being worn or carried, the bowlyn hurls it up to 30 feet in any direction. The poltergeist can use the object as a ranged weapon, attacking one creature along the object's path (+4 to hit) and dealing 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage on a hit.

Demonic Sawfly

Demonic sawflies are parasitic insects that feed on blood. They can shrink down to the size of a regular bug to hide their true natures, despite being around the size of a human. Demonic sawflies were originally formed via the use of dark magic, but now repopulate by laying their eggs in wet environments like swamps or beneath the skin of unfortunate victims. They are endemic to the Isle, where they are all under the control of Dr. Blake Ramsay.

Demonic Sawfly

Medium beast, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Stealth +6

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

Condition Immunities poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shrinking. As an action, the sawfly can shrink itself to the size of a normal tiny mosquito or back to its medium sized true form.. While it is tiny, it has advantage on stealth rolls. If the sawfly loses 50% of its maximum hit points or more, it automatically shrinks and uses half of its speed to fly away as a reaction. The sawfly cannot turn back into its true size unless it has more than 50% of its maximum hit points.

Blood Frenzy. The sawfly has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Conjure Swarm. The sawfly can cast the *conjure swarm* spell once per day but can only conjure insect swarms. A spellcaster that rips off its wings, can use them both as a single-use scroll of 4th level *conjure swarm* spell, but can only conjure insects.

Impossible to Spot. While the sawfly shares its area with a swarm of flies or other insects, it is indistinguishable from any other insect in the swarm. There is a 20% chance that a hit that targets the swarm strikes the sawfly instead.

Lay Eggs. When out of combat, the sawfly lays 1d4+1 sawfly eggs every 3 days. The eggs are medium sized and have 10 AC and 10 Hit Points. The eggs hatch after 8 hours and the newborn sawfly is combat ready. A creature can harvest the fluids of the egg to make an Enlarge/Reduce potion.

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Implant Eggs. While the sawfly is attached to a target, it can implant its eggs under the victim's skin, instead of drawing blood. As an action, 1d2 eggs are implanted. The eggs take 1d4+1 hours to hatch and the new born sawfly is combat ready. The implanted eggs can be spotted on the skin with a DC 15 Investigation check and removed with a DC 12 Medicine check.

Protective. A sawfly defending sawfly eggs gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and saving throws.

Flyby. The sawfly doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Naturally Stealthy. The sawfly can attempt to hide even when it is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than itself.

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage and the sawfly attaches to the target. While attached, the sawfly doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the it's turns, the target loses 7 (1d6 + 4) hit points due to blood loss and the sawfly regains Hit Points equal to the amount. The sawfly can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 20 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the sawfly.

Lebentod

Lebentod are a rare form of undead invented by Meredoth, the dark lord of the Nocturnal Sea. Meredoth has come to view lebentod as an improvement upon regular humans. Lebentod are immune to the cold, don't need to eat, and are fanatically loyal to the necromancer that created them.

Human Appearance. Lebentod can appear much as they did in life, and try to live normal lives. They farm fields, eat, and even pretend to sleep. They go out of their way to be friendly to strangers. If their secret is discovered, then lebentod do their best to convince whoever knows their secret that they are the victims of a horrible accident. If they can get the stranger to trust them, they wait until they sleep and slit their throat, or convince them to eat poisoned food.

Cult of the Nocturnal Sea. The lebentod hate Meredoth, but are completely loyal to him. They follow his commands even if they violate the lebentod's personal morals or will obviously cause the lebentod pain or even death. The lebentod hate Meredoth, but cannot resist his commands.

Undead Traits. A lebentod doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Lebentod

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Concentration +5, Deception +1

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Senses Darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Veil of Life. Lebentod may appear as they did in life. This is an illusion with an unlimited duration that the lebentod must concentrate (as a spell) to maintain. Damage can cause the lebentod to lose its concentration. The lebentod may reveal their true forms at will, but are loath to do so. The lebentod may use an action to restore the illusion.

Fanatical Frenzy. Lebentod are fanatically loyal to Meredoth. If he is attacked or tells the lebentod to attack, they will fly into a frenzy for 1 minute. While they are frenzied they gain twenty temporary hit points, and become immune to the charmed and frightened conditions. They also gain the following action:

Multiattack. The lebentod makes two slam attacks.

The Dead Move. If the lebentod takes 10 or more hit points from a single slashing attack, one of their hands is cut off. At the start of the next turn the hand animates and attacks. Treat the hand as a crawling claw (pg 44 of the Monster Manual). If the lebentod still has a hand remaining, it may make slam attacks. If the lebentod is under the effects of its **Fanatical Frenzy** ability it will still make two slam attacks. These slam attacks inflict piercing damage, as the lebentod tries to stab its opponent with the sharpened bone jutting from its wrists.

The lebentod may use an action to reattach its hand.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.



Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

Madman of Vechor

Pitiful people that have experienced and somehow retained the memory of the ever-changing nature of Vechor tend to be driven mad. The domain's magic has found its way into their brains and constantly tortures them with visions of an impending apocalypse that will reset everything. They roam aimlessly around, whispering about the end of the world and an approaching doom.

Madman of Vechor

Medium humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4

Skills Athletics +3, Deception +5, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Vechorite

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Dark Devotion. The Madman has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Doom Saying. Any creature that ends its turn within 20 feet of the Madman and can hear it, must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on all Wisdom saving throws until the beginning of its next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The Madman can innately cast once each of the following spells: *dissonant whispers* and *Tasha's hideous laughter*, requiring no material components. In addition it can cast *Vicious Mockery* at will. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma and the spell save DC is 13.

Actions

Makeshift Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing, piercing or bludgeoning damage.



Residue

Residues are psychic phenomena created by the will of incredibly evil beings. In this case, the residue reflects Malkant's competitiveness and will attack the party, should they refuse to play in the games provided. It appears as a greenish ball of force which emits light and usually grabs any item it can find to attack. Even though the creature is composed of green necrotic intangible energy, it can be defeated with normal weapons, since strikes against it destabilise its field. Because of its taint, the residue has an aura of discomfort which poisons everyone within range.

Residue

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 35 ft., fly 25 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

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

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Aura of Taint. Because of its taint, the Residue has an aura of discomfort which affects all living creatures. Everyone within sixty feet of the creature must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. Regardless of the result, all creatures suffer a -1 penalty to hit and damage.

Necrotic Absorption. Whenever the Residue is subjected to Necrotic damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the Necrotic damage dealt.

Sickly Light. The Residue emits a sickly green light in a 10ft radius centered on itself.

Discomfort (5–6). The Residue emits a weakening pulse in a 20-ft cone which forces weak willed creatures to drop the items they are holding and refuse to participate in combat until the end of their next turn, if they fail on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw.

Actions

Residue's Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing, piercing or bludgeoning damage.

Appendix A. Creatures & NPCs

The First to Follow

A group draws near, or so it appears, coming from the Mists that brought the horseman. At first this threat can't be seen, just heard, cackling and giggling insanely. As the travelers soon find, this is no normal group. It is about twelve heads, bobbing, drifting, and moving up the street, turning frantically to uncover their sneering smiles, blood dripping necks, and soiled, tangled hair. This is the fate of the horseman's casualties. The first to follow is a gathering of flying, reanimated humanoid heads that follow not long after an assault of the headless horseman. They aim to assault the victims of the horseman as a huge mob, gnawing and clutching any adversary they hit. In any case, they just stay for a brief moment before taking off.

The First to Follow

Tiny undead (humanoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	3 (-4)	3 (-4)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the attack is successful, the head latches on to the target dealing 1d6+1 points of damage each turn until it is either removed or slain.



The Last to Follow

The Last to Follow is the third and last rush of assaults in the Headless Horseman's arsenal. Like The First to Follow, the Last to Follow is a horde of revived heads of the Horseman's previous victims. They normally swarm the enemies of the Horseman's assaults as a group. In contrast to the First, The Last to Follow is a gathering of flying undead heads which are not the typical humanoid heads; rather, they are the heads of medusae. The flying head of a medusa can bite with its numerous snakes, however, the ordinary medusa's gaze for petrification has been replaced with one that causes paralysis.

The Last to Follow

Tiny undead (medusa), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d4 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Paralysing Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 10 ft. of the the last to follow and the two of them can see each other, the the last to follow can force the creature to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw if the the last to follow isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature becomes paralyzed. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see the last to follow until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at the last to follow in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If the last to follow sees its reflection within 10 ft. of it in bright light, it is affected by its own gaze.

Actions

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus (3d4) poison damage. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw DC 15 or become poisoned and fall unconscious to the ground seemingly dead. At the end of each round, until the victim regains consciousness by having the poison effect cured, it must succeed on a constitution saving throw DC15 to end the effect. The creature dies if they fail the saving throw twice. Anyone who touches the poisoned victim without protection such as gloves, must also succeed on a Constitution saving throw DC15 or fall unconscious for 1d4 turns

Appendix B



Appendix B. Items

Regalia of Arak

The Regalia of Arak is a collection of nine items which belonged to the legendary Arak warrior whose name they bear. These nine items are not all of great power individually.

Assembled, however, they may be used for great evil by opening the Obsidian Gate.

Another relic, the Sword of Arak, is part of the regalia but described separately. In the hands of any non-Araki these items cause the same obsessiveness already described under the Sword of Arak entry.

The items that were to become the Regalia of Arak were created by shadow elf craftsmen, prior to their arrival in Ravenloft. The items belonged to the warrior Arak, when the shadow elves lived a harsh existence on the Demiplane of Shadow. When he perished in battle with the Sorcerer-Fiend Gwydion, Maeve pulled the items through the gate. After the shadow elves had reached Ravenloft, Maeve and Loht presented the pieces to the princes and princesses of each of the Nine Breeds as a sign of office. Maeve retained the crown and Loht the sword, as tokens of their own status as Princess of the Shee and Prince of the Sith respectively. Recently, however, Loht has been gathering the regalia together again. Like Maeve, Loht is aware that uniting the regalia is the key to operate the Obsidian Gate, but she naively does not realize this is actually his plan. Once all nine pieces are in his possession, he plans to open the portal.

Loht now possesses eight of the nine items he needs; only the Crown of Arak is missing, hidden by Maeve somewhere within the Malachite Palace. If Loht, or some other person, was able to recover these items, terrible things would be sure to happen.

Powers

Each of the components of the regalia has its own abilities. In addition to their individual powers, together these items also boost the wearer's Charisma to 22.



Amulet of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Amulet of Arak is a pendant of eight concentric rings suspended on a thin silver chain. The rings alternate between loops of silver and obsidian. Anyone wearing the amulet receives the standard bonuses associated with an amulet of life protection. If the owner is slain, however, their spirit remains in the amulet until magically extracted or forced out by the arrival of a new spirit.



Boots of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Boots of Arak are normal looking, knee-high boots sewn from soft black leather. A trio of rune-scribed gold bands secures the tops of the boots from within. These boots function as boots of elvenkind. In addition, the wearer can walk across pressure plates, trap doors, and other such objects without setting them off.



Appendix B. Items



Cloak of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Cloak of Arak is a magical, hooded cloak, utterly black in color, with a silver clasp to secure it around the neck and a gold middle strip at its opening. When worn, it acts as both a cloak of elvenkind and a cloak of displacement.



Crown of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Crown of Arak is a delicate-looking knotwork of fine silver strands with a large black opal set in the front. When worn, it bestows upon its owner the power to cast *charm person*, *command* and *geas* once per day each. These spells can only be used against humanoid. The powers of this relic affects even normally resistant or immune races such as elves and Araki both of whom suffer a -2 penalty to their saving throws.



Dagger of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Dagger of Arak is a slender stiletto with a blade of pure silver and a hilt wound tightly with black leather. In combat it functions as a +2 mithril dagger. In addition, the magical energy of this weapon is such that it can strike and injure any creature despite the target's weapon resistances. Thus, it can wound a monster that normally could be hit by only +3, +4, or even +5 or better magical weapons, and it could harm a creature normally affected only by a special kind of material such as silver, wooden or cold iron weapons.



Gloves of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Gloves of Arak are long tight-fitting gloves sewn from soft black leather. From the wrist to the elbow, delicate silver threads have been sewn into the leather to create ornate knotwork. When worn, these magical gloves give the wearer a bonus of +1 to their Dexterity score. The score may not be increased higher than 20 by the gloves, however. In addition, when you wear these gloves and use finesse weapons such as a dagger, you can spend a bonus action to grant advantage to one of your attacks.

Appendix B. Items



Scepter of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Scepter of Arak is a slender baton made of polished obsidian and set with a globe of gleaming silver. A single large opal is set into the top of the silver sphere. This relic grants the user the ability to cast *cure wounds* up to ten times per day as a fifth level spell. The power is triggered by touching the opal to the flesh of a wounded person



Signet of Arak

Wondrous Item, unique relic, legendary item

The Signet of Arak is a broad magical ring fashioned from a single piece of mithril-silver. It has a fey glyph mark which is in sylvan. If this ring is worn, the wearer is affected as if carrying a stone of good luck. In addition, it improves the character's Armor Class by one point.

Although these items are not especially potent as artifacts go, they are every bit as hard to destroy. The only sure ways to be rid of these magical items is either to expose them to direct sunlight for seven consecutive days, for at least ten hours each day, or to return them to the Demiplane of Shadow. Once in the place where they were created, the objects simply fade away over the course of 1d4 rounds.



Sword of Arak

Wondrous item, unique relic, legendary item

The Sword of Arak is a slender long sword forged long ago on the Demiplane of Shadow by Arak the Erkling. The blade is forty inches long and forged of black mithral, a rare alloy found only on that demiplane. The hilt is cut from ivory and carved in the shape of a wailing banshee (said to be the likeness of Arak's mate, Fingalla). This magical blade was meant to be wielded only by shadow elves, thus, it is used by those of other races only at great peril to the wielder. In the grip of an Arak, however, the weapon is far more effective.

Outside the Shadow Rift, the Sword of Arak functions as a sword of sharpness +2, although it can wound creatures that need a +4 weapon enchantment to be damaged. While within the Arak, it is a sword of sharpness +4. The sword of Arak criticals on a roll of 17 or above. Unlike other swords of sharpness, the Sword of Arak never sheds light. It does, however, grant its owner darkvision (ninety feet), the range if the owner can already see in the dark.

Those who know the proper command words (currently Loht and Maeve) can order the sword to employ many unique powers. By speaking the name of the various races that make up the Nine Breeds, a series of special spell-like abilities can be called into effect.

Appendix B. Items

Sword of Arak Command Words

“Alven” *antilife shell*

“Shee” *dominate*

“Fir” *summon shadowspawn*

“Portune” *heal*

“Brag” *globe of invulnerability*

“Muryan” *Otto’s irresistible dance*

“Teg” *conjure animals*

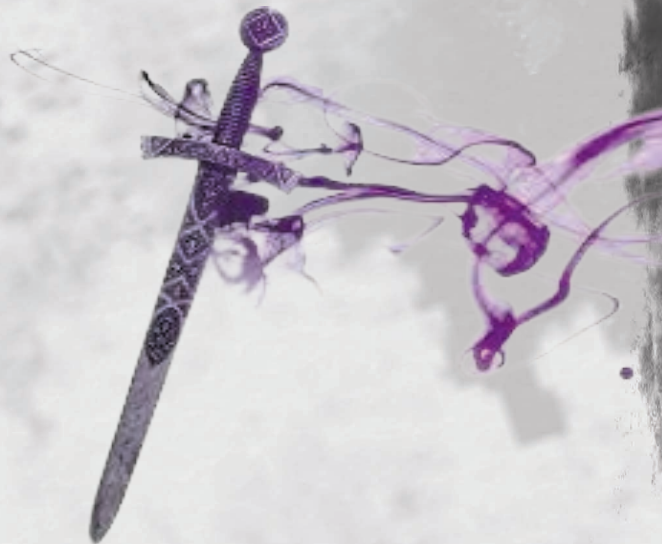
“Sith” *raise dead*

“Powrie” *true seeing*

Each power can be used once per day. If the weapon is being wielded by a non-Arak, every time one of these abilities is used there is a 5% chance that the alignment of the user changes to Neutral Evil or Chaotic Evil depending on the intention that the spells were used for. The Sword of Arak has two special powers. First, it can be used to operate the Obsidian Gate, which links the Shadow Rift to the Demiplane of Shadow. Second, since it was originally created to battle the Sorcerer-Fiend, it inflicts triple damage in combat against Gwydion.

Curse: In the hands of a shadow elf, the Sword of Arak has no curse. Each day that the sword is in the possession of anyone but a shadow elf, the Sword of Arak must taste blood. In other words it must be used to kill a creature of size Small or larger. If the sword’s thirst is not quenched each day, the owner becomes slightly less tangible. The wielder’s very reality erodes at the rate of 1% per day. This loss is permanent, but the decline only takes place on days that the character doesn’t take a life with the weapon. The afflicted owner will gradually become more and more transparent and intangible, eventually fading entirely from existence (when the total reaches 100%). This curse is obviously linked somehow to the power that prevents anyone from piercing the Shadow Rift’s misty barrier. The Sword of Arak is a seductive weapon. Anyone who willingly employs the blade in battle will never knowingly let it out of their sight thereafter. If the unthinkable happens and the owner is separated from the sword, they do whatever it takes to recover the blade. During this time, the character must attempt a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw each day that passes without the weapon; failure indicates a dangerous, frantic obsession to recover it at all costs. Woe be unto the poor fool who comes between the bereft owner in such a state and the weapon that they claim for their own. With five successive and successful Wisdom saving throws while separated from the blade, the weapon’s hold upon the owner is broken.

Means of Destruction: The black mithral from which the Sword of Arak was forged makes it almost invulnerable to physical harm. There are, however, two ways by which this powerful weapon can be unmade: The Sword of Arak is partially composed of shadowstuff. It can be destroyed if exposed to the unfiltered light of the sun for seven consecutive days, for at least ten hours each day. Also, if returned to the Demiplane of Shadow by being cast into the Obsidian Gate, the Sword of Arak will begin to break down. It loses one magical ability per round, starting with the invoked powers, and simply evaporates the round after its final enchantment point has decayed away.



Floating Dagger

Wondrous item, very rare, requires attunement

Simple weapon, melee weapon

1 lb. 1d4 piercing — *finesse, light, thrown*
(20/60 ft.)

This intricate and magical dagger grants its user a swimming speed bonus of 30ft and the ability of water breathing for up to 10 minutes per day. The dagger acts like a compass when thrown in the water, and as it floats, it directly alters its position to point straight north.



Appendix B. Items



Blacksteel Longsword +3

Wondrous Item, legendary, requires attunement
Martial weapon, melee weapon
3 lb. 3d10 slashing + 2d8 necrotic

The magically enchanted blade of this +3 longsword becomes dark, silent, and non-reflective. It makes no noise when striking creatures or objects, even if it hits against a shield or something similar. Blood clings to the weapon, neither spraying away or dripping off it. The sword becomes invisible to spells like *locate item* and similar divination magic.

The sword can be summoned with a bonus action to the hands of the attuned creature. Every time the blade inflicts damage to a creature with blood, it stores half of the necrotic damage inflicted in its blade as charges with a maximum of 50 charges. The wielder can use an action to heal for the same amount of charges.



Strahd's Animated Armor

Heavy armor (plate armor), legendary (requires attunement) 65 lb.

This armor was infused with the malignancy and hatred of Strahd at the time of his betrayal during the royal wedding, giving it life. This +2 armor grants the following benefits to the creature that wears it.

-Condition Immunities: A creature that wears this armor is immune to the blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed and petrified condition.

-Summon Armor: As a bonus action, the creature attuned to this armor can don it, effectively replacing the armor and/or clothes that it was wearing. The creature can use another bonus action to animate the armor and have it fight alongside it. The statistics for Strahd's animated armor can be found on CoS, page 227. The creature attuned to this armor gains no benefits of it when the armor is animated.

Legendary Action: Shocking Bolt.

The wearer gains the ability to cast the shocking bolt spell as a legendary action once per turn.

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

Appendix B. Items

Strahd's Black Carriage

Vehicle (land), wondrous Item, legendary

By speaking its command word (Black Carriage), you can use an action to place or throw this 2 inch wooden carriage figurine to a point on the ground you can see within 60 feet of yourself. At the end of your next turn the figurine becomes a full sized carriage. The enlarged carriage is 12.5ft wide, 20 ft long, and 12 feet tall with a 9 foot tall interior. If the space where the carriage would appear is occupied by creatures, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 5d10 bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful one. In either case creatures or unsecured objects are pushed to an unoccupied space next to the carriage. The carriage is made of expensive black wood and satin red cloth; it has 150 hit points and an AC of 15. Any damage to the cart can be repaired either by a creature with proficiency in; carpenter's tools, woodcarver's tools, and tinker or smith's tools while at full size, or by regenerating 2 hit points per dusk. If the Black Carriage is reduced to 0 hit points it is destroyed and returns to its original size. Any creatures and objects inside are cast out of it. The Black Carriage can fit up to 6 medium sized creatures comfortably inside. The driver's seat has room for 2 medium sized creatures. The speed is determined by the creature pulling it. The Black Carriage is surprisingly light and has a weight of 500 lbs. Any creature or object travelling upon the carriage does not contribute to its weight. Four magic lanterns hang from the sides of the carriage which emit violet light, granting 60ft darkvision to anyone riding it, and boosting undead creatures in the same radius by granting them both advantage to turning and increasing weapon damage by 1d6 necrotic damage. The lanterns can be turned off with a command (lights out) or turned on with the command (lights on). The lamps can be removed from the Carriage and still function but if they are not returned within 12 hours, they disappear and reappear by the sides of the carriage. The Black Carriage is usually controlled by an invisible coachman similar to an unseen servant which is summoned with it when the figurine takes its carriage form. It can assume the role of driver and direct the carriage, although it can't perform any complex or dangerous driving, and fails any checks made to drive the carriage in such conditions. Any intelligent undead or humanoid creature can replace the unseen servant as the driver. The humanoid creature needs to succeed on a DC 15 Athletics check to be able to control the Black Carriage and rolls with disadvantage when it tries to perform any complex or dangerous driving. The Black Carriage does not have any horses pulling it. Any living

horses that are tied to it, permanently transform to their undead versions and when they are removed from the cart, they immediately die. Usually the cart is pulled by Strahd's Skeletal Steeds. Inside the back bench seat is an area of extradimensional space that can hold up to 2000 lbs of creatures and/or materials. Storing or retrieving an item from the bench requires an action. Breathing creatures inside this space can survive for a number of minutes equal to 10 divided by the number of creatures (minimum 1 minute), after which time they begin to suffocate. Placing a Bag of Holding, Portable Hole, or other extradimensional item inside this space instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the border ethereal. Any creature and items within 10 feet are sucked through it to the border ethereal. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way and can't be reopened. When the Black Carriage is in figurine form it can be placed in extradimensional space. By saying the command words "Black Carriage reduce", the carriage shrinks back to its original size at the end of your next turn. During this time any creature inside must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be cast into the border ethereal.



Appendix B. Items



Crown of Souls

Unique wondrous item, artifact, requires attunement by an evil aligned creature

The *Crown of Souls* is a beautiful crown made of pure gold inlaid with rubies and platinum. The *crown* was created by the ruthless necromancer Daglan, who is currently trapped inside his own creation. The *Crown of Souls* is currently in the possession of his last remaining descendant. Daglan is desperate for her to die so that he may finally escape his prison.

The Crown of Souls is a dark and evil object which bestows the following powers upon its owner:

- If a good aligned creature attempts to attune to the crown, they take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail they are incapacitated for 10 minutes. The attunement attempt fails.

- Upon the brow of an evil being, the crown bestows the following special powers: +2 AC, +2 on all attack and damage rolls, +2 on saving throws, +20 hit points, and all class abilities (not hit points) will function as if the wearer were two levels higher and inflict plus 1d6 necrotic damage with any melee attack (weapon, spell, or natural). In addition 3 times a day the creature may use its reaction to gain advantage on a saving throw.

- The Crown of Souls can be used to transform humans (though not other humanoids or demi-humans) into goblins. To do this the wielder of the crown merely holds it on the head of the victim with both hands, and speaks an ancient incantation. As the transformation

occurs, the victim will scream out in anguish and terror as they lose their mind and will and are filled with evilness. Once per day, you may grasp the head of a target and force them to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail, they are polymorphed into a goblin. The new goblin is loyal to the creature attuned to the crown for the rest of its life. The new goblin doesn't remember any of its former friends or family but may display the odd tic or character trait from their past life. This change can only be undone by divine intervention or a wish.

- Anyone wearing the crown must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw every day. Failure means the character's alignment suffers a change. The Dungeon Master is encouraged to adjust the check based on the character's past adherence to their alignment. Regardless, their alignment will slowly become neutral evil. The lawful/chaotic aspect will first change to neutral. Next the good/evil aspect will become one place closer to evil (good becoming neutral, and neutral becoming evil). Once this transformation is complete, the Crown will be in complete control of the wearer. The spirit of the warlock Daglan will drive them to kill Radaga without the crown on. The crown can also protect itself from harm. This can only be done if it is physically attacked or threatened (i.e. attempts to smash it, throw it off a cliff, melt it in a fire, etc.) In such a case, it can perform the following spell-like abilities once per round as often as needed: *blink*, *Bigby's hand*, *create bonfire*, *gust of wind*, *levitate* and *chill touch*. These spells will be performed at the 13th level of proficiency. Only one who is pure of heart (that is, lawful good) can remove the Crown of Souls from the domains which it lies in.

- Only a lawful good creature can move the crown from one domain to another.

- If you cast a spell that creates undead, those undead will remain under the control of the creature for as long as they are attuned to the crown. If the creature becomes unattuned the undead will attempt to slay them immediately.

- Daglan can telepathically speak to the creature attuned to the crown. He may offer advice, insights, outright lie or insult the creature wearing the crown, but cannot directly affect their actions.

- The crown has 8 charges. You can use an action to expend one or more charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 18): *blink* (1 charge), *protection from good and evil* (1 charge), *slow* (1 charge), or *chill touch* (3d8 necrotic damage, 1 charge).

Appendix B. Items



Skin Merger

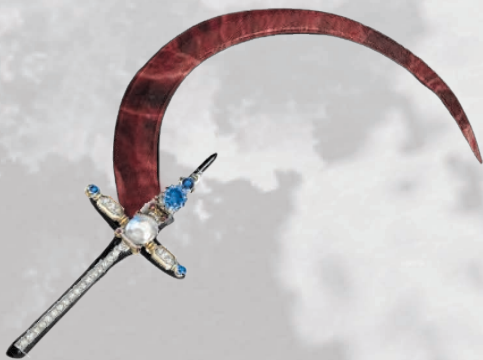
Adventuring gear (poison)

Category: Items

Item Rarity: Very Rare

Weight: 0.3

Camille formulated a bizarre contact poison that merges skin surfaces. This viscous, transparent, odourless substance forms a permanent adhesive bond between any two skin surfaces. It must be stored in an opaque glass jar or flask. The poison must be applied on the skin's surface and touch another skin surface within one hour. If it doesn't, then it dries out. One ounce of the poison will cover a 1-foot square surface. The poison takes one minute to set. Once it has done so, the bond it creates can be broken only by the application of Universal Solvent, Oil of Etherealness, or with a *wish* spell.



Blade of the Crescent Moon

Weapon (shortsword), very rare, martial weapon, melee weapon, 2 lb.

This rare blade is made out of a silver alloy mixed with moon dust, and smelted under the moonlight of a blood moon. Its pommel is encrusted with blue gemstones and pearls while its silvery-red blade is curved to resemble the crescent moon. The blade is enchanted, while it strikes any non-shapechanger opponent, it counts as enchanted with a +1 bonus, while against any shapechanger this bonus becomes +3.

Tarroka Deck of Madam Eva

Wondrous item, legendary (Requires Attunement)

This 78-card Tarroka deck looks identical to all other decks of its kind, except when it comes to details of the expertly drawn figures. In reality, this is a unique deck, once owned and made by Madam Eva herself who vested some of her powers within the cards. The deck was passed down to Isabella Aderre. It is currently owned by Gabrielle Aderre, who took it from her mother's belongings after leaving her to die. A creature attuned to this item gains the ability to cast one Divination spell from the Wizard's spell list, one time per day. After using this ability, a non-Vistani user must succeed on a DC 16 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned for 1d4 hours. Regardless of the roll's outcome, the user will have headaches for 1d6 hours.



Ethereal Musket

Rifle, weapon, rare (requires attunement by an incorporeal creature or a creature that can travel to the ethereal plane)

Firearm, martial weapon, ranged weapon

10 lb.

1d12 piercing - ammunition (40/120 ft.), loading, two-handed

This musket has been forgotten by its owner in the ethereal plane for so many centuries that the materials that made up its body have been altered by ethereal forces. The musket now remains forever anchored to the ethereal plane and can be wielded only by incorporeal creatures or creatures that can enter the ethereal plane. The musket grants the wielder the ability to strike an enemy found on the material plane without having the need to leave the ethereal. This ability can be used 3 times per day.

Appendix B. Items



Novgor Dagger

Wondrous Item, weapon (dagger), legendary, requires attunement

1 lb. 1d4 piercing - finesse, light

According to Inza Magdova Kulchevich, this enchanted dagger remains forever sharp and is the only known blade capable of cutting the wood of the “tree at the top of the world”.

You gain +4 bonus to hit and damage rolls when you wield this weapon. The dagger never dulls and always seems bright and polished. In addition, the wielder has advantage on sleight of hand ability checks to open locks while using this weapon as a tool. As an action, the wielder can cast *color spray* at will provided there is a light source larger than a candle within 15ft. of it. Once per week the dagger can be used to cast *major image* at a duration of 1 hour/per character’s level. This ability exhausts the user, reducing their Strength and Constitution Scores by half (rounded up) for 24 hours. Novgor is a weapon of wounding which, in addition to its normal damage, deals 1 point of bleeding damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds from the weapon result in cumulative bleeding. The bleeding can only be stopped by a successful medicine check (DC 15) or the application of any cure spell or other healing spell. When you attack a creature that has at least one head with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, you cut off one of the creature’s heads. The creature dies if it can’t survive without the lost head. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, doesn’t have or need a head, has legendary actions, or the DM decides that the creature is too big for its head to be cut off with this weapon. Such a creature instead takes an extra 6d8 slashing damage from the hit.

Dagger of Potent Venom

Weapon (dagger), very rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. You can use an action to cause thick, red-black poison to coat the blade. The poison remains for 1 minute or until an attack using this weapon hits a creature. That creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 4d10 poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The dagger can’t be used this way again until the next dawn.



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Berserk's Battleaxe of Speed

Wondrous item, very rare, requires attunement

Damage: 1d8

Damage Type: Slashing

This battleaxe has been enchanted with the essence of angry and fast spirits. When a creature first picks up this axe while they are not attuned to it, they must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or fall into a frenzied fury. The creature attacks any creature that they can see. The rage only ends if all creatures in sight are dead, the axe is no longer in the creature's hands or the wielder is incapacitated. After attuning to the battleaxe, you are not affected by this frenzy, but anyone else who tries to pick it is. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Attack and Damage Rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, you can make one Attack with it as a Bonus Action on each of your turns.



Strengthened Longbow

Ranged weapon (martial, bow)

Category: Items

Damage: 1d10

Damage Type: Piercing

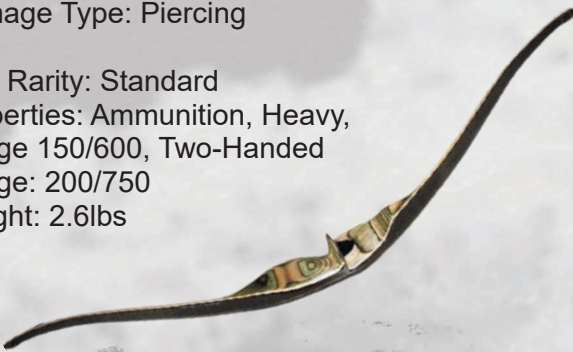
Item Rarity: Standard

Properties: Ammunition, Heavy,

Range 150/600, Two-Handed

Range: 200/750

Weight: 2.6lbs



Night Blade

Wondrous Item, very rare, requires attunement

melee weapon (Greataxe, martial)

Category: Items

Damage: 1d12

Damage Type: Force

Item Rarity: Very Rare

Modifiers: Melee Attacks +2, Melee Damage +2

Properties: Heavy, Two-Handed

Secondary Damage: 1d8 Necrotic

Weight: 7

In Ravenloft, a sun blade is very nearly the physical manifestation of hope. Covetous of its powerful symbolism, Azalin was able to seize one and reforge it in his own corrupt image. Azalin's greataxe-shaped 'night blade' devours light, casting its immediate surroundings into magical darkness and dimming the light beyond that. Those whose eyes can pierce the accursed veil see a blade-shaped black void not unlike a sphere of annihilation. Like a sun blade, the night blade can be shut off. When inactive, Azalin's night blade's shaft appears to be a very utilitarian scepter. The statistics for Azalin's night blade are as follows:

Greataxe Night Blade. This weapon is a rare, heavy, two-handed, martial, +2 axe melee weapon that weighs 7 pounds. If you are proficient with greataxes, you are proficient with this night blade. This item appears to be a greataxe shaft. While grasping the shaft, you can use a Bonus Action to cause a blade of pure darkness to spring into existence, or make the blade disappear. You gain a +2 bonus to Attack and Damage Rolls made with this weapon, which deals 1d12 force damage instead of slashing damage and 1d8 necrotic. The axe's anti-luminous blade emits magical darkness in a 15-foot radius and makes bright light dim, and dim light into ordinary darkness for an additional 15 feet beyond that. While the blade persists, you can use an action to expand or reduce its radius of darkness and dimness by 5 feet each, to a maximum of 30 feet each or a minimum of 10 feet each.



Appendix B. Items

Amulet of Natural Armor

Wondrous item, rare

This amulet is usually made from enchanted bones, scales or twigs. The wearer's body and flesh toughen, giving them higher chances of avoiding a rendezvous with death. A creature wearing this amulet gains a magical bonus to their armor class from +1 to +3 depending on the enchantment of the amulet. This magic effect does not function if the wearer wears armor or carries a shield.



Falkovnian Talon Armor

These non-magical plate armors are specifically crafted for one of Vlad Drakov's Talons. It features a stylized design that looks like a fiendish hunting bird, and has sharp curving talons at the ends of the gauntlets that function like a dagger.

The Falkovnian Talon armor protects like a normal plate (AC 18), and grants the wearer proficiency in Intimidation. If the wearer already has proficiency in Intimidation, it doubles the proficiency bonus instead. These armors are not normally available, but when they are, they cost 3,000 gp or more.

Any non-Talon caught wearing one of these in Falkovnia, is sent to Draccipetri to be impaled - outside of Falkovnia, they'll be hunted down and executed if discovered.



Hawk Helm

Wondrous item, uncommon

This dark metal helmet is twisted into the shape of a screaming hawk, with the visor functioning as the beak. The wearer gains advantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, and can cast *expeditious retreat* once per long rest.



Talon Bracers

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

These solid black metal wristbands are standard issue for any of Drakov's Talons, and are issued when they join. They are welded shut during the initiation and may never be removed. The wearer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects. Furthermore the wearer becomes immune to being frightened, but it makes its wearer utterly loyal to Vlad Drakov. The wearer is charmed by Drakov, a condition that cannot be dispelled or suppressed while wearing the *talon bracers*.



Hand Axe of Throwing

Wondrous item, uncommon

This magical hand axe can be thrown as a normal hand axe and returns to the thrower as soon as it strikes or misses the target. The hand axe of throwing twists around obstacles to strike its target, ignoring cover.

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Shawl of Resistance

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

These garments offer magic protection to the wearer. A creature wearing this item gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws and rolls with advantage. This item ceases to function when the creature that wears it is in an area with sunlight for as long as they remain in said area.



Cauldron of Resurrection

Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement)

The cauldron of resurrection is a massive cauldron nearly five feet across at its widest. The cauldron is made of magically hardened silver blackened by centuries of fire and dark magic. Bas relief sculptures circle the outside of the cauldron of cavorting imps and devils. The inside of the cauldron is lined with engravings of tortured angels. The cauldron easily weighs over 1000 pounds and is full of a vile liquid that seems to boil of its own accord unless commanded otherwise.

Multiple Attunement. Up to three creatures may be attuned to the cauldron at the same time.

Focus of Power. The cauldron can be used as an arcane or divine focus for spellcasters as long as the spellcasters are attuned to it and within 100 feet of the cauldron. The spellcaster can choose to cast the spell from themselves (as normal) or from the cauldron.

Black Brine. The cauldron is full of a thick black liquid that is the detritus of boiled down creatures, poisons, and random whatever random items the sisters have dropped in and forgotten about. Creatures placed in the brine must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If they fail they are poisoned

and incapacitated while they are in the cauldron. If the creature is freed from the cauldron they are no longer incapacitated but are poisoned for 1 hour after they have escaped. Three times per day, creatures attuned to the cauldron can dip a container into the cauldron and fill the container with any poison or potion listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Bubble, Bubble. The liquid in the cauldron can be commanded to boil by a creature attuned to it. Creatures in the cauldron take 1d6 to 5d6 fire or acid damage per round they are in the cauldron. The amount and type of damage are decided by one of the creatures attuned to the cauldron. The hags believe the type and amount of damage changes the flavor and have been known to argue about what will make a better meal, much to their victim's dismay.

Unnatural Life. Three times per day a creature attuned to the cauldron can dump a dead humanoid into its briny waters and choose one of two effects. The humanoid can be *resurrected* as the spell or raised as a zombie. A creature resurrected in this way will be charmed by every creature attuned to the cauldron. A zombie created in this way will follow the commands of any creatures attuned to the cauldron and have maximum hit points. If the darklords of Tepest are slain and placed into the cauldron they are immediately returned to life as if the target of a *true resurrection* spell. The darklord isn't charmed if resurrected in this way. The darklord may be resurrected an unlimited number of times per day in this manner.



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Tincture of Midnight

Potion, rare

The liquid in this small vial seems to drink in the light around it. Even fires and torches within 5 feet of the vial seem to dim ever so slightly.

Drinking this potion lets the imbiber see invisible creatures within 30 feet. If this potion is sprinkled on a creature that is dominated, charmed, or possessed (by an artifact, for example), that creature may make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on a success.



Medusa's Charm chain

Wondrous Item (Necklace), very rare (requires attunement)

The Medusa's Charm chain is a beautiful gold and silver necklace with a symbol of a golden reptilian eye at the center. While attuned to the necklace, the wearer has advantage and a +5 bonus to all performance checks made for singing and attracting creatures. The wearer is also able to cast *Charm Person* once a day by singing (Save DC 10 + Charisma modifier).



Stezen's Portrait

Wondrous item, legendary artifact
130lbs

This beautiful portrait, made by expensive paints including umbral gray, has an adamantine frame that depicts branches of olive trees and various herbs. In the portrait, the beautiful figure of Marquis Stezen d'Polarno is depicted. The portrait was infused with Marquis Stezen d'Polarno's soul by King Oderic's mistress. It drained Stezen's soul but not his life force. Still, losing his soul rendered the marquis a shadow of his former self. After arriving in Ravenloft, the marquis discovered that he could regain his soul once every three months by draining the life force and souls of any who viewed the portrait. The Portrait also functions as a phylactery, granting the Marquis immortality. The portrait itself is nearly invulnerable, only susceptible to damage, should he be killed during the brief time he is in possession of his soul. The portrait grants Stezen the various abilities described in his stat block.



Window Portrait

Wondrous item, very rare

This magical portrait was created by a famous artist who was no stranger to the ways of the arcane. The painter infused his pigments with necromancy and blood taken from various humanoid victims. For that reason, the resulting painting always has a red hue. The scenery depicted is usually that of a valley or a beach. A permanent *illusion* spell is cast on these portraits to make them appear animated, as if they were a closed window looking outside. Any creature that tries to open the window and escape through it, has its soul merged with the painting and its body and any items it wore but not carried, absorbed into the painting. Each painting can absorb up to 6 Medium humanoid creatures that possess souls. The absorbed creatures are aware of their surroundings but cannot communicate with each other or with someone not trapped in the

Appendix B. Items

painting. The absorbed creatures can once per day change their location inside the portrait. If the painting is destroyed, then there is a 65% chance that the trapped creatures are also destroyed, their souls torn like canvas. Only a *wish* spell can mend their souls for them to be raised. Any creature that's soul was not destroyed, is freed, appearing within 5ft. of the portrait, as it was when it was first absorbed. Marquis Stezen has many such portraits in his collection and his victims number even more.



Umbral Gray

Adventuring gear, poison (ingestion)
200gp

Distilled from the umbral weed of Ghastria, Umbral gray can be used both as a paint with a smokey grey colour and as a deadly poison. The poison can only be delivered through ingestion but the substance's strong taste can be detected easily by creatures with a passive perception of 13 or higher. When mixed with carrion crawler venom, the taste goes away and cannot be detected. The method of concealment is known only by Marquis Stezen d'Polarno and Baron Camar D'Marosso. The poison needs 5 minutes to take effect. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned and lose 1d6 Constitution damage per minute. The creature rerolls the saving throw at the end of every minute for the next 5 minutes and ends the effect on a success. Another way was discovered by the inventful Marquis. Even though the skin is usually strong enough to withstand the effects of umbral grey, when exposed for a prolonged period of time (5 hours) then the pigment can still eat into the skin, painting it grey at first and then attacking vital organs. In this state, the poison once again has the same effects associated with umbral grey but the victim is not allowed a saving throw. Also, if the poison is neutralized, it still leaves the skin permanently colored gray. A favorite pastime of d'Polarno is to find someone he particularly does not like during a party, restrain or knock the person unconscious, and slowly apply paint over their naked body and watch them wither away until they die.

Cloak of Mists

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

A cloak made out of mist threads that protects the wearer from incoming missiles. A creature has disadvantage on their attack rolls when attacking the wearer of this cloak with ranged attacks. A spell such as *gust* that creates strong winds, stops the cloak from protecting the wearer for 1d4 turns.



Intellect Syringe

Wondrous Item, very rare

Said by some to have originated on another plane (or Demiplane), this frightening device appears to be nothing more than a large, sturdy medical syringe, at least to those familiar with such technology. It has an unusually sturdy needle, about six inches long. To use the syringe, the user drives the needle up through the base of the skull and into the victim's brain, then draws out the cerebrospinal fluids. This process kills the victim, painfully and slowly over a period of some ten minutes, unless a *greater restoration* or a *heal* spell is cast upon it within this time period. Note that the victim must be restrained and incapacitated to complete this maneuver. Next, the user drives the needle up through the base of the skull and into the recipient's brain and injects the fluid. The recipient immediately gains 1d6 points of Intelligence, up to a maximum of 20. The Intelligence increase lasts for one month, after which the points fade away at the rate of one point per week. Immediately after injecting the foreign brain fluids, the recipient must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or lose one point of Wisdom. If the recipient's Wisdom is reduced to 3 or less, the recipient immediately becomes homicidally insane, with no saving throw allowed. The insanity can be cured by a *wish* or a *heal* spell.



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Wand of Demon Summoning

Wand, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

1 lb.

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend a number of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it: *summon lesser demons* (XGE pg. 167) (1 charge), *summon greater demon* (XGE pg. 166) (3 charges), *summon fiend* (TCE pg. 112) (5 charges). You can only have one of these spells active at a time.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles to ash and is destroyed.



Maleffluent, Intelligent Magical Battle

Axe

Chaotic Evil

Maleffluent has an Intelligence of 17 and a Charisma of 21. It can speak the common tongue of Faerun, elvish, and orcish. It is also telepathic and can communicate directly with the minds of others out to sixty feet. This evil weapon always seeks to dominate its owner.

Background: Next to nothing is known about this magical weapon. Chardath Spulzeer discovered Maleffluent in Kartak's laboratory the same night he encountered the djinn, and has wielded it ever since.

It is quite likely that the lich Kartak knows much about this magical battle axe. If pressed on the subject, Maleffluent claims to have created itself. Whether this is true or not may never be known. Maleffluent has been the primary weapon of Chardath Spulzeer since the day he found the axe in the tunnels beneath his ancestral castle. While he claims to own the weapon, however, the reverse is more the case. Maleffluent's mental domination of its master has left Chardath little more than an insane puppet.

Current Sketch: Outside of Aggarath, this weapon all but dominated the actions of Chardath. Since the pair were drawn into the gemstone universe, things have been different. In Aggarath, Chardath is lord and master of all things. Maleffluent is well aware of this reversal and desires nothing more than to be rid of Chardath. The axe constantly schemes to escape from its master. Finding another owner — one that he can control as he once did Spulzeer — would be an ideal solution. During this adventure, Maleffluent acts as a guide and mentor to the heroes. It hopes to use them to free itself from Chardath. This plan will almost certainly involve coming into the possession of one of the player characters, if this event happens, the axe tries to control the character through suggestion and helpful advice. Should that fail, it resorts to more direct methods, exerting the full force of its will to dominate his owner. Details on this power of intelligent weapons can be found in the *Dungeon Master Guide* (pg. 214).

Combat: Maleffluent is a +2 weapon, or +5 when used against the incorporeal undead. It is also a vorpal weapon and delights in being used to sever heads. At will, this evil blade can detect good aligned creatures or detect traps in a 10-foot radius. It can create illusions within 120 yards of itself (as per the *major image* spell) twice each day. It can also empower its wielder as if they were wearing a Belt of Hill Giant Strength, with an eight-turn duration once each day.



Appendix C. Spells

Ground Fog

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (120ft radius)

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration; 1 hour

Classes: Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard

You create a 50-foot-radius ground fog that rises to about 2 feet (knee-high on a Medium-size humanoid), centered on a point within range. The fog swirls mysteriously, so an invisible creature moving through the fog does not create enough of a stir to reveal its presence more readily than normal. The ground fog spreads around corners, and heavily obscures the ground beneath, as well as anything it covers, such as a Tiny creature, a prone human, or a hidden pit. It offers total cover to gaseous creatures, such as a spellcaster or vampire using gaseous form. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it. At higher levels, when this spell is cast using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the radius of the fog increases by 20 feet for each slot level above 2nd.

Rain of Terror

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (100ft radius)

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

You cause a terrifying rain to fall from the sky within a 100-foot-radius centered on you. All creatures other than you within this radius suffer disadvantage on all saving throws versus fear effects. Additionally, you double your proficiency bonus on Intimidation checks while this spell is in effect. Rain of Terror can manifest in a variety of grotesque and horrifying ways, from torrents of hot blood to a hail of writhing snakes. Regardless of its form, this gruesome rain has all the effects of heavy rain, lightly obscuring everything within the area, and giving all creatures within the area disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight and hearing, as well as extinguishing open flames. The animals and effects of this spell are summoned, not illusory, and the caster has no control over them. Living creatures that rain down are 50% likely to survive. Thus, after a rain of toads, half are alive and hopping around and the other half are dead, killed by the impact. None of these animals are dangerous or able to harm anyone, yet their presence is no less unnerving. Roll on

the following chart to see how rain of terror manifests with each casting.

If you wish, you can make a DC 20 Constitution check to concentrate on controlling the type of rain (failure results in a random roll).

1d8 Type of Rain

1 Black, putrid water

2 Ash and embers

3 Steaming blood

4 Frogs or toads

5 Dead bats

6 Snakes

7 Spiders

8 Reroll for a combination of 2 types (ignore any further results of 8)

Shadowbind

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100ft

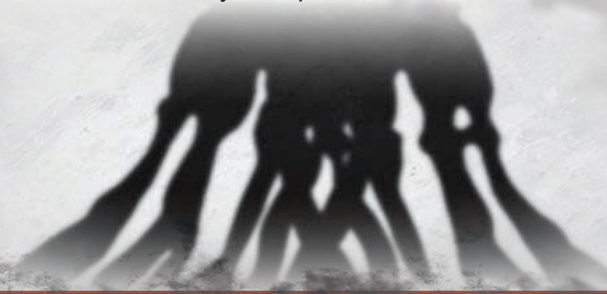
Components: V, S

Duration: 10 minutes

Area of Effect: 1 to 6 creatures

Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You target up to six creatures that you can see. Each creature must be adjacent to (within 5 feet of) at least one other creature targeted by this spell. Each targeted creature must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the saving throw fails, its shadow becomes quasi-real and merges with the shadows of all the other creatures that failed their saving throws. For the duration of the spell, creatures with merged shadows must remain within 5 feet of at least one other creature with a merged shadow. For the sake of simplicity, all of the creatures can move together on the turn of whichever creature comes last in the initiative order, at the speed of the slowest creature in the group. There are likely to be gaps of more than 5 feet between creatures, caused by creatures making successful saves. Affected creatures must move to become adjacent to other affected creatures at their first opportunity. Each affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn; a successful save ends the effect for that creature. The spell ends entirely when only one creature is affected by the spell.



Appendix C. Spells

Strahd's Baneful Attractor

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120ft

Components: V, S, M (a few bits of broken glass)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Bard, Warlock, Wizard

You cause spells to divert from their original paths to strike your target. Upon casting this spell, you surround the target with a 15-foot-diameter invisible aura that attracts spells aimed at nearby creatures. Any ranged spell that deals damage and targets a specific creature (such as disintegrate, magic missile, or scorching ray) within 15 feet is diverted to strike the target of this spell instead. The diverted spell strikes the creature affected by Strahd's baneful attractor, even if this would cause it to exceed its normal range. The aura of this spell does not pass through barriers that would impede line of effect. Ranged beneficial spells with a specific target, or area-affecting spells (like fireball, flame strike, or lightning bolt) are not affected by Strahd's baneful attractor. Potentially harmful spells that don't directly deal damage (like magic jar, silence, or many enchantment spells) are also not diverted by this spell.

Create Skeletal Steed

2nd-level necromancy

Casting time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (The skeleton of a large horse or horse-like creature and a bail of hay)

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Cleric, Paladin, Warlock, Wizard

This spell created by Strahd animates the skeleton of a large horse or horse-like creature. Missing bones reform as long as at least half of the skeleton exists. The creature created lasts until it drops to 0 hp. When it does so, it collapses into a pile of bones, dropping any items carried onto the ground. You can then reuse the pile of bones to cast this spell again to recreate the skeletal steed. The skeletal steed is immediately able to draw a large wagon. You will need to have special saddles created in order to ride it. The mount uses the Strahd's skeletal steed stats. The steed can kick and charge like a warhorse. It will not be able to fly even if it has bony wings. It has an intelligence of 6 and can understand and will follow basic commands in any language the caster knows. It can carry up to 500 lbs and may be assigned to a particular rider.

Allergen

5th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30ft

Components: V, S, M (an item to pose as an allergen)

Duration: 10 minutes

Classes: Bard, Druid, Paladin, Ranger, Wizard

This spell plays upon the deep psychological and physiological revulsion towards certain objects that some creatures possess. If the targeted creature fails its Wisdom saving throw, it becomes convinced that the focus item the caster presents is its allergen. How it reacts depends on the creature's personality, how strong its aversion is, and how threatening the caster chooses to be. If the allergen fascinates the subject, enrages it or prevents it from approaching (like garlic to a vampire), then that takes effect normally. If the allergen would normally kill the creature (as wolfsbane does to a werewolf), then the creature must make a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the item for as long as it can see it. Particularly aggressive creatures that succeed at the saving throw may attack, however, trying to wrest the illusory allergen away from the caster. Once the spell ends, the subject's senses return to normal. If they can still see (or otherwise sense) the focus, they realize that the caster has made a fool of them, if not, they may continue to believe that the caster still possesses their allergen. This spell can be used against lycanthropes, vampires, any ghost or ancient dead that has an allergen due to some salient power, and any other creature that has a chemical vulnerability or crippling reaction to an object of some kind. People with unnaturally strong phobias can also be frightened by the allergen.

Decompose

Cantrip necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 minute

Classes: Cleric, Druid

You reach out and touch the corpse of a creature. Over the next minute, the corpse begins to rapidly decompose, sprouting fungus and moss as it begins to degrade into compost and mulch. An odd-colored flower or two may also spring from the corpse at this time. Applicable requirements for resurrection are unaffected by this decomposition.

Appendix C. Spells

Frightful Joining

7th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 12 hours

Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

This spell enables a living caster to merge their mind with the body of an undead monster or an undead caster to merge their mind with the body of a living humanoid creature. The caster must target this spell on a living humanoid creature if the caster is undead or an undead creature if the caster is alive. A target that is not a human receives a +2 bonus to their saving throw against this spell. If the saving throw succeeds, the spellcaster is forced back into their original body. If the target's saving throw fails, the spellcaster joins their mind with the target's body. While in the target's body, the caster can use all of the victim's special abilities except memorized spells. Meanwhile, the spellcaster's body remains incapacitated and vulnerable to attacks. Once in the target's body, the spellcaster can travel any distance as long as they remain in the same domain as their true body. Once in the target's body, a living caster makes the undead feel as if they were alive again while an undead caster fills the target's mind with ghastly thoughts. At the beginning of each hour during the joining, if the target is a living creature, it must attempt a madness check. Failure means that the undead caster's mind overcomes that of the victim, no further checks are necessary and the undead spellcaster can remain in control of their mortal victim effortlessly for the duration of the spell. A successful madness check means that the undead spellcaster must roll a DC 15 saving throw to remain in the body. If the check succeeds, the mental battle goes on. If it fails, the undead creature's mind is cast from the body, and the victim regains control. However, a target who successfully ejects the undead spellcaster from their body gains a long term madness. One interesting side effect of the frightful joining is that while in the mortal body, the caster can do things that cannot be done in their own undead body. For example, a vampiric caster can walk in the sunlight and see their reflection in a mirror.

Strahd's Choking Fog

6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Classes: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You create a 40-foot-radius sphere of fog centered on a point within range. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it.

A living creature passing beyond the outer limit of the ring of fog is overcome by a fit of coughing that does 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage per turn (no saving throw) until the victim dies. Lost constitution is restored at a rate of one point per round and it can only be restored while outside of the fog ring. The Vistani sell, at the discretion of Count Strahd von Zarovich, an elixir that makes the one that drinks it immune to this spell for 1d4 hours..

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the radius of the fog increases by 20 feet for each slot level above 1st.



Appendix C. Spells

Strahd's Malefic Meld

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (dead creatures and a pinch of doppelganger's bone powder)

Duration: Permanent

Classes: Cleric, Warlock, Wizard

This spell enables the necromancer to create an undead, golem like monster composed of up to three dead bodies. The caster can choose these parts from any selection of dead animals, humanoids, or monsters, as long as they span no more than two size categories. For example, the caster could meld a giant boar and an elf, since one is Large and the other is Medium. However, the caster cannot not meld a rat and an elf since the rat is Tiny which is more than one size category different from the elf. Similarly, the caster could not meld a Small, a Medium, and a Large creature. Also, none of the creatures melded together can have more than 5 Hit Dice. The advantage of the meld is that the caster can use various attributes from whichever of the original creatures used them best though the monster will always have animal Intelligence. Most attributes are associated with a particular piece of the creature's body, which must be used in the meld. At least one attribute must be taken from each creature in the meld. The created monster will always loyally serve its creator. The created monster inherits four attributes from the original creatures: Hit Dice, Armor Class, movement rate and attacks. The monster's armor class becomes the AC of the creature that had the highest, its type is changed to undead and it has advantage to turning undead attempts. The caster can derive the monster's movement rates from multiple creatures as long as they choose only one movement rate per creature per medium (running, swimming, flying, burrowing etc.). The ability scores of the created creature uses the stats of the original creatures in any combination but in accordance to the parts of the creatures used. Constitution score comes from the creature that grants the creation its total hit dice, Strength comes from the creature that gave its arms, Dexterity comes from the creature that gave its legs and speed, Wisdom, Intelligence and Charisma is always 8(-1). The caster must transfer the number of attacks per round from a single creature but can give their creation attack forms from any or all of the creatures in the meld. The creature will often have more attack forms than its parts normally have. The appropriate body part for the attack form must exist in the meld. Most physical attacks can be retained, including poison, paralysis, web spinning, and breath weapons. Magical or mental powers do not sur-

vive the transition into undeath. This includes gaze attacks, spellcasting, magic resistance, immunity to non-magical weapons, spell-like abilities, a lycanthrope's cursed bite, etc. One of Strahd's favorite melds is a werewolf, large spider, and gargoyle. This foul creature uses the gargoyle's flying movement and the spider's ground movement. (Even though a werewolf is faster than the spider, he can only pick the legs of one of them and therefore cannot have web movement if he uses the lycanthrope's legs). The Hit Dice are drawn from the werewolf, which has 9d8 Hit Dice. The Armor Class of 15 is taken from the gargoyle, as are the number of attacks (2). The creature gets the werewolf's bite and the spider's poison and web-spinning ability. Visually, the abomination has spider legs, a werewolf body and head, and gargoyle wings and arms.

Ghoul Touch

3rd-level necromancy

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a small scrap of a corpse's cloth, wrapped around your hand when you touch the target)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You touch a living creature to imbue a minor magical strain of undeath, paralyzing it. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for the spell's duration. Constructs and undead automatically succeed on this saving throw. A creature paralyzed with this spell exudes a terrible stench that effectively nauseates all other creatures within proximity. During the spell's duration, when a creature first enters or starts its turn within 5 feet of the paralyzed creature, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become poisoned until the start of its next turn. Constructs and undead automatically succeed on this saving throw.



Appendix C. Spells

Wall of Fog

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S, M (a pinch of split dried peas)

Duration: 3 minutes

Classes: Cleric, Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard

A wall of thick mist rises from the ground at a point you choose within range. You can make the wall up to 100 feet long, 20 feet high, and 30 foot thick. You can shape the wall in any way you choose, so long as it makes one continuous path along the ground. The wall lasts for the duration. When the wall appears, each creature within its area must make a Constitution saving throw. A creature begins to suffocate on a failed save as long as they remain within the area of the wall. The wall completely obscures vision and can be dispersed with moderate or strong winds. The strong wind keeps fog, smoke, and other gases at bay. Small or smaller flying creatures or objects can't pass through the wall. Loose, lightweight materials brought into the wall fly upward. Arrows, bolts, and other ordinary projectiles launched at targets behind the wall are deflected upward and automatically miss. (Boulders hurled by giants or siege engines, and similar projectiles, are unaffected.) Creatures in gaseous form can't pass through it.

Solid Fog

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S, M

Component: A pinch of dried, powdered peas combined with powdered animal hoof.

Duration: 1 minute

Classes: Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Wizard

You create a 20-foot-radius sphere of fog centered on a point within range. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. This spell functions like fog cloud, but in addition to obscuring sight, the solid fog is so thick that any creature

attempting to move through it progresses at a speed of 5 feet, regardless of its normal speed, and it takes a -2 penalty on all melee attack and melee damage rolls. The vapors prevent effective ranged weapon attacks (except for magic rays and the like). A creature or object that falls into solid fog is slowed, so that each 10 feet of vapor that it passes through reduces falling damage by 1d6. However, unlike normal fog, only a severe wind (31+ mph) disperses these vapors, and it does so in 1 round.

Minor Globe of Invulnerability

4th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (10-foot radius)

Components: V, S, M (glass or crystal bead that shatters at the expiration of the spell)

Duration: Up to 1 minute

Classes: Sorcerer, Wizard

An immobile, faintly shimmering barrier springs into existence in a 10-foot radius around you and remains for the duration. Any spell of 3rd level or lower cast from outside the barrier can't affect creatures or objects within it, even if the spell is cast using a higher level spell slot. Such a spell can target creatures and objects within the barrier, but the spell has no effect on them. Similarly, the area within the barrier is excluded from the areas affected by such spells.



DM Notes



DM Notes