

For 3-8 players, levels 3-9  
**Advanced  
Dungeons & Dragons**®

9495

# Ravenloft®

Official Game Adventure

## Chilling Tales



# CHILLING TALES

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*evil comes in many forms: the cruel smile of a vampire; the chilling touch of a noncorporeal hand; the glittering eyes of a man in whom the slaving beast lives; and the shuffling footsteps of those whom science or magic has kept alive far beyond their appointed hour.*

*Yet evil also assumes many disguises. The wide eyes of a seemingly innocent child may hide a thirst for blood; the bright colors and lively steps of a Vistani dancer are no more than a front for thievery and murder.*

*You may think me obsessed—one who sees only shadow and never light. You may think it odd that I, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, once a simple herbalist and healer, have dedicated my life to eradicating evil.*

*But you have not seen the horrors that I have. My son, corrupted by a vampire and begging me to drive into his heart the stake that would end his young life. My wife, torn to pieces in an act of murder and revenge.*

*How could I continue to merely heal the bodies of my patients with my simple herbal remedies when their very souls were at risk? Until the evils that feed on our society are forever uprooted and destroyed, not one of us is safe. Not one.*

*Dear companions, I implore you. Give me what aid you can in this long and dangerous task I have set for myself. A strong arm, a keen mind—even a kind word is welcome. We must all do what we can to return decency and kindness to this world.*

*Dr. Rudolph Van Richten*

## For the Dungeon Master

**C**hilling Tales is a collection of short AD&D® adventures that focus on the nonplayer character (NPC) of Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, a man of lawful good alignment who has devoted his life to hunting down and destroying evil throughout Ravenloft.

Each of the adventures in this book is designed for player character heroes of varying levels. The adventures may be played in any order, but should be interspersed throughout a campaign, rather than used back to back. In addition to the core AD&D rulebooks, you need the RAVENLOFT® boxed set to play.

Chilling Tales is designed to complement the Van Richten's Guides. These sourcebooks are not required to play the adventures presented here, but they do contain valuable background information on the monsters found in this book. Portions can be quoted verbatim when Van Richten tells a story or gives advice to the heroes. This information is also summarized in Chapter X of the *Realm of Terror* sourcebook from the second edition Ravenloft boxed set.

Try to keep Van Richten alive throughout these eight adventures. He stays well to the rear of the action during combat, preferring to act only as an

### Terror Tips

Developing an atmosphere of fear and horror is an essential part of the Ravenloft world. Dimming the lights, draping the furniture, and playing soft, spooky music can add a theatrical touch to the game. So too can the "terror tips" that appear boxed throughout this book. Each tip suggests ideas on how to expand the game beyond die rolling and note taking.

Players who react in an appropriate manner to these situations (by having their characters faint, shriek in alarm, or draw back in terror) should be rewarded with more experience points for that encounter, and are exempt from making fear and horror checks.

adviser to the heroes. He lets them take the active role in any investigation.

## Dr. Rudolph Van Richten

10th-level Thief, Lawful Good

Armor Class	10	Str	11
Movement	12	Dex	16
Level/Hit Dice	10	Con	10
Hit Points	76	Int	17
THACO	16	Wis	16
No. Attacks	1	Cha	10
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Nil		
Special Defenses	Knowledge of evil creatures' weaknesses		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

PP 15%   OL 40%   F/RT 85%   MS 40%  
 HS 45%   DN 65%   CW 70%   RL 80%

Dr. Rudolph Van Richten is a middle-aged man, short in stature and not terribly strong. He has graying blond hair that is thinning on top but that he has allowed to grow long in the back. He dresses in unassuming clothes, usually plain brown pants and a tweed jacket or cape.

The introduction at the beginning of this book and several of the passages found in the *Van Richten's Guides* are presented in the words of Dr. Rudolph Van Richten. When role-playing Van Richten, try to speak in a similarly overwrought fashion. This man has stood on the brink of insanity and confronted the world's horrors many times. When speaking about the evil that permeates his world, his eyes open wide, his nostrils flare, and his hands are raised in dramatic gestures.

Emulate some of the doctor's mannerisms. When lost in thought, Van Richten strides about the room, his hands clenched behind his back. When summing up what the heroes have learned, he ticks off points on his fingers. And when thwarted by a powerful monster, he shakes his fist in the air and vows to return to vanquish the fiend another day.

**Background/Current Sketch:** Van Richten's background appears on pages 91–93 of the *Domains and Denizens* sourcebook from the second edition RAVENLOFT boxed set, and in the various *Van Richten's Guides*. When not out hunting supernatural creatures, he makes his home in Mordentshire, a city in the domain of Mordent, where he runs an herbal shop.

**Combat:** Due to occasional battles with creatures that can drain levels, Van Richten's level varies between adventures. For this reason, his hit points and thieving abilities differ in each adventure in this book. The introduction to each adventure notes Van Richten's current level and the adjustments needed to the statistics given above.

The adventures are arranged in order of Van Richten's level, as well as for progressively more powerful parties. If Van Richten has not yet appeared in the campaign, he can debut at a low-level and rise as the heroes do, until he reaches the 10th-level abilities listed here.

If the heroes previously knew Van Richten at a higher ability level, or if the adventures here are run in a different order, he can explain his decreased abilities with some story such as this: "I tracked a spectre that escaped from the haunted Gryphon House in my home of Mordentshire. The trail led me to the local orphanage. You may imagine my horror when I found the spirit leeching the very life out of helpless young children! My companions and I destroyed the spectre, but only at great cost and after the deaths of many innocents."

When traveling, Van Richten carries with him his standard monster-hunting kit. This includes a holy symbol, a vial of holy water, a small mirror, a silver dagger, and a wooden stake. Each adventure gives a list of additional equipment carried by Van Richten in that adventure.

# THROUGH DARKENED EYES



*ven hatred of vileness  
distorts a man's  
features.*

Bertolt Brecht  
*To Posterity* (1938)

"Through Darkened Eyes" is designed for four to eight heroes of levels 3–6. Because this adventure is

combat-heavy, the group should include at least two fighters, preferably of levels 5–6 and armed with magical weapons.

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 4. Adjust his statistics by deducting 6d6 hit points and 180 percentage points from his thieving abilities. He carries with him his standard monster-hunting kit, plus a *scroll of protection vs. poison* and a *potion of sweet water*.

This adventure is set in Tepest, but it could take place in any domain where the Vistani are active.

## Background

Long before Dr. Rudolph Van Richten began his quest to eradicate evil from Ravenloft's domains, he was a happily married man, content to putter about with herbal remedies. But then the Vistani, Ravenloft's wandering gypsies, stole his 14-year-old son and sold the boy to a vampire. Van Richten saved his son—by staking his heart. But ever since, he has harbored a loathing, deep in his soul, for the Vistani folk—and, in particular, for the Radanovich tribe of Darkon.

Van Richten's first step down the path he now walks was the gruesome revenge he took upon the Radanovich tribe, and his subsequent efforts have partly been his attempt to remove the stain of blood from his soul. In this adventure, however, Van Richten's subsiding hatred is fanned to full flame again, and turned upon the Gojanovic tribe of Tepest, whose *oma* (the grandmother who rules the tribe) is sister to the Radanovich *oma*.

Recently the Gojanovic tribe cast out one of its own: Lomar, a man who stole his sister's tarokka deck and sold a number of its cards to *giorgios* (non-gypsies) as curiosity pieces. In return, his sister Vianchi cursed him, making his fingers sticky so that he could not put down any object he touched. Furious, he killed her—and was immediately denounced by the tribe. Even his wife, Sashine, closed the door of her *vardo* in his face, and turned the eyes of Lomar's son, Kinar, from him.

Lomar has become a darkling—a caricature of the proud Vistani man he once was. He seeks revenge on the Gojanovic tribe, and thinks that Van Richten (and his companions, the heroes) will make the perfect tools.

## Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins with a carefully contrived lure that seems to paint Lomar as a victim of the Vistani. Eventually, the heroes learn that Lomar is their true enemy, but initially he appears quite innocent.

The heroes are traveling with Dr. Van Richten in his private coach along a country road in northern Tepest that winds its way past isolated farmhouses. Just ahead, they spot a thin plume of smoke. When they round the bend, read the following:

The smoke is rising from a farmhouse that has burned to the ground. The furnishings are scattered around it, and the bodies of a woman and two children lie in the mud. A thin, dark-haired man sits on a broken stool, his face in his hands, sobbing.

The "farmer" is Lomar. After hearing that the famous doctor would pass this way, the darkling set up this tableau for him. He is about to offer bait that Van Richten is powerless to resist.

Van Richten stops the carriage, alights, and asks if he can help. Assuming the heroes follow and are close enough to overhear the resulting conversation, read the following to the players.

# THROUGH DARKENED EYES

“Those accursed Vistani did this!” the man cries. “A few days ago, they set up camp in these parts. At first they were friendly. But then I learned that they were stealing my chickens, and I gave a severe thrashing to the one boy I managed to capture. This morning, while I was working in the fields, his tribe took their revenge. They killed my wife and daughters—and they stole my son! A curse upon the Gojanovic tribe! They are thieves and murderers all!”

Van Richten visibly pales at the name Gojanovic. His fists clench, and he begins to tremble. “The Gojanovics,” he mutters under his breath. “Kin to those that stole my own dear Erasmus.”

If the heroes have not yet heard the story of how the Vistani kidnapped Erasmus, Van Richten tells it to them now. He makes every attempt to press them into recovering Lomar’s son.

Lomar, who introduces himself as “Brissell,” says the Gojanovic tribe is camped a short distance away. He claims to know the direction they are headed in next—along a road that leads through a narrow valley.

“It is useless to strike at them in their camp,” he says. “But in the valley, we might have a chance. We may yet recover my son, Kinar, and take our vengeance upon the foul Vistani.”

## Lomar Gojanovic

(“Brissell”)

Darkling, Chaotic Evil

AC 8 (10); MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19;  
#AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short sword);  
SA Poison (Inject: immediate death), *evil eye*;  
SD *Foreseeing*; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (9); XP 650.

Str 16	Dex 17	Con 12
Int 12	Wis 13	Cha 7



Lomar looks like the typical Vistani: swarthy skin, flashing eyes, and jet black hair. He has only recently become a darkling, and thus does not have the gaunt and sunken features associated with these creatures—although he is getting a little thin.

Lomar coats each of his weapons with Type E poison. He wears a powerful *ring of regeneration* that restores 3 hp per round. He also wears a frayed black cloak (*wings of the bat*). If cornered in combat, he uses it to escape, hiding by means of his *ring of invisibility*.

## Recognizing Lomar

The first clue that all is not as it seems is that “Brissell’s” grief dries up very quickly. He seems somewhat impatient to get his “wife” and “daughters” buried and get the group on their way. He explains this seeming lack of compassion as a burning desire to rescue his son “before those foul Vistani have worked their evil magic on him.”

The second clue is that he keeps using words from the Vistani language. He is careful not to say anything really stupid, but occasionally words like *varado*, *giorgio*, and *oma* slip out. If the heroes notice this, he simply says that he has a “good ear for languages” and learned these words from the gypsies’ frequent visits to his farm.

The third clue is the darkling’s sticky hands. He is at first reluctant to talk about this, but eventually admits that a Vistani cursed him after he stole something from her. At the same time, he “reluctantly admits” that this theft is the real reason why the Vistani killed his family. He tries to gain Van Richten’s sympathy by explaining that the object he stole was a *jeshka*—a murderer’s heart, studded with thorns, used to summon “powerful evil beings.” Lomar says he stole the *jeshka* to destroy it and prevent its use.

Van Richten, blinded by his hatred of the Vistani, accepts this story at face value. (He has heard of *jeshkas*, but he has no idea what they might summon.) Thoughtful heroes might wonder how an uneducated “farmer” could recognize a *jeshka*—let alone steal such a powerful magical talisman from an armed Vistani camp.

If the heroes think to question the nearest

neighbors (all of whom live several miles away) they learn that the farm is owned by a widow and her two daughters. Her husband’s name was indeed Brissell, but he died five years ago.

If the darkling realizes that the heroes suspect him, he slips away in the middle of the night, making his “disappearance” look like a Vistani kidnapping. Van Richten, of course, insists on “rescuing” Brissell by going through with the ambush.

## The Ambush

The ambush plans seem feasible. There is only one road for the Vistani to take, and the ambush site is perfect. “Brissell” uses a spyglass to learn which *varado* holds his son. He points to Sashine’s *varado*, where Kinar sits beside his mother.

Van Richten plays right into the darkling’s hands, insisting the attack on the Vistani caravan be as ruthless as possible.

The Gojanovic tribe has 35 members. Of these, ten are children or elderly, and do not participate in any battle. Twenty-two are fighters or thieves. The latter attack with daggers coated with a paralyzing poison (Type O). The remaining three (the *oma* Goja, Vianchi, and a woman named Helvia) are wizards who specialize in divination, at 10th, 6th, and 3rd levels respectively.

Finally, the Gojanovic tribe includes four dancing bears. At the first sign of trouble, these highly trained animals are let off their leads and ordered to attack. Rather than mauling their targets, the bears hug them to their chests, holding them until the Vistani can subdue them. (A Strength ability check breaks free of the hug.)

**Vistani thieves (14):** Int 12; AL N; AC 7 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 3; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (dagger); SA Backstab; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (8); XP 120 each.

**Vistani fighters (8):** Int 12; AL N; AC 7 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 6; hp 42 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (sling or broad sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Steady (12); XP 270 each.

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**Vistani wizards (3):** Int 17, 15, 13; AL N; AC 10, 8, 8; MV 12; HD 10, 7, 3; hp 26, 19, 8; THAC0 17, 19, 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Elite (13); XP 3,000, 975, 175.

**Goja's spells:** 1) *burning hands, change self, charm person, identify, sleep*; 2) *detect invisibility, darkness 15' radius, ESP, hypnotic pattern, stinking cloud*; 3) *clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, explosive runes*; 4) *confusion, magic mirror, remove curse* (can be reversed as *curse*); 5) *animal growth, dream, false vision*.

**Vianchi's spells:** 1) *color spray, detect magic, hold portal, jump, mirror image*; 2) *ESP, irritation, locate object*; 3) *clairvoyance, hold person, slow*; 4) *remove curse* (can be reversed as *curse*).

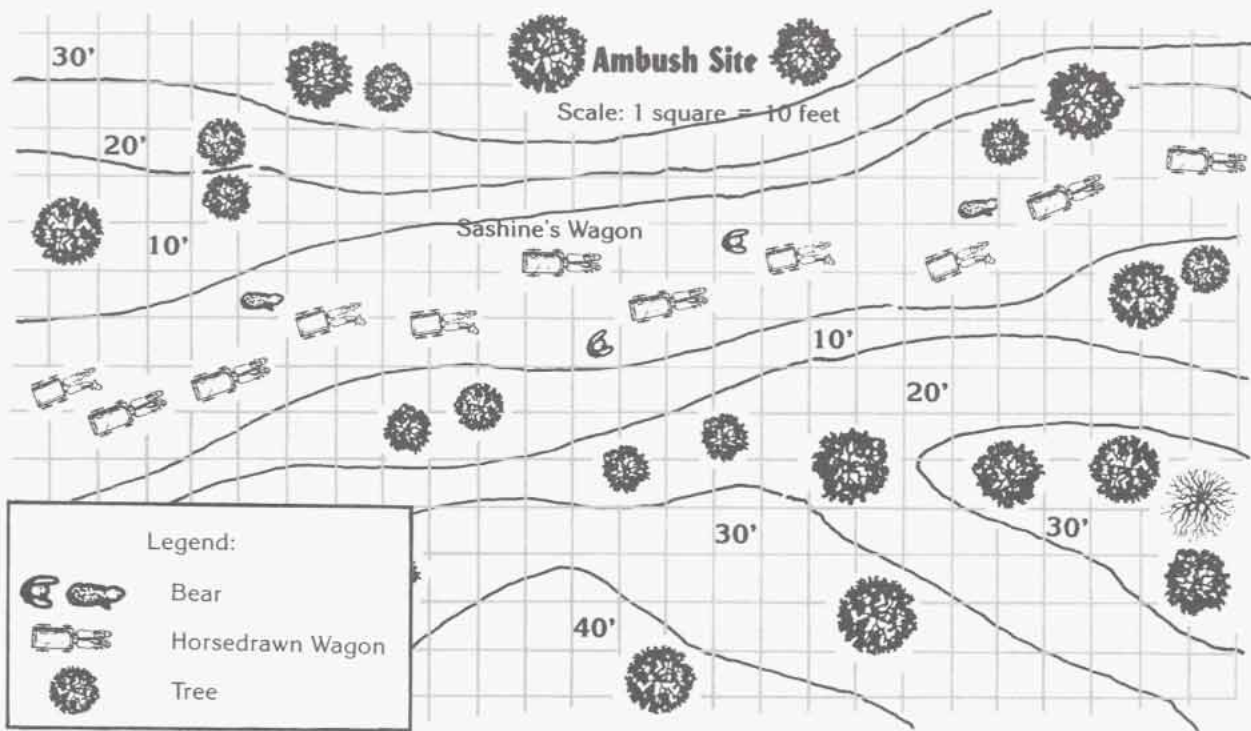
**Helvia's spells:** 1) *charm person, change self, sleep*; 2) *ESP, levitate*.

**Brown bears (4):** Int Semi (4); AL N; AC 6; MV12; HD 5+5; hp 25 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; SA Hug; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ L; ML Avg (10); XP 420 each.

If he sees a chance, Lomar steals his son and immediately flees. Otherwise he keeps to the rear of the heroes, stabbing those Vistani who come close to him with a poisoned dagger. The moment things start to turn against the heroes, he uses his *ring of invisibility* and *wings of flying* to avoid capture. Lomar must escape this encounter, because he appears later in this adventure.

The Vistani pursue their attackers ruthlessly. They try to capture the heroes so that justice may be served. Their chief weapon is a *tambourine of dancing* that Goja carries. Any non-Vistani hearing its tinkling beat must save vs. spells with a -4 penalty or suffer the effects of an *Otto's irresistible dance* spell.

At least one of the heroes should wind up a prisoner of the Vistani. This provides that hero





with an opportunity to interact with the gypsies—and to learn the truth behind Lomar's banishment from the tribe. If none of the heroes is captured, see "What If They Aren't Captured?" below.

The Vistani put captured heroes on trial, rather than killing them outright. This trial takes the form of a sentencing circle, in which the accused sits at the center of a ring of Vistani. The accused gets a chance to defend his or her actions. Then sentence is passed by those who were injured or who lost kin in the ambush.

During the trial, the Vistani ask their prisoner why the heroes inexplicably attacked them. If accused of the attack on the farmhouse, the Vistani vehemently deny any connection with it. "That sounds more like the work of the Radanovich tribe," they say. "That evil band is not worthy to be called by the name Vistani."

If the heroes mention the *jeshka*, the Vistani react with horror. They caution the heroes not to speak of it, and whisper worriedly together. They will not answer any questions about it.

At some point during the trial, one of the Vistani asks the hero why Lomar the darkling was with the heroes. When the hero does not recognize the name, the Vistani describes "Brissell." Whatever the hero's response, the Vistani then launches into a warning about the darkling, and explains Lomar's history. (Summarize the "Background" section.)

The trial concludes with the Vistani pronouncing a death sentence on the captured heroes. They do this by passing a cup around the circle and dropping either a white pebble (innocence and release) or a black pebble (guilt and death) into it. The verdict is announced—but then *Oma Goja* offers a reprieve. If the heroes will agree to hunt down and kill Lomar, the Vistani will spare their lives. *Goja* casts a *geas* spell on the heroes to ensure their cooperation. Captive heroes are then released to rejoin their companions.

If the heroes somehow manage to evade a guilty verdict, through trickery or magic, *Goja* instead asks their cooperation, as a favor to make up for their role in the unprovoked assault on the Vistani camp. Prod the players' consciences, if necessary, in order to get the heroes to accept the

job. The Vistani did nothing to the heroes, and some may have died because of Lomar's evil.

## What If They Aren't Captured?

Player characters have an annoying habit of fighting to the death or escaping the most airtight capture attempts. If the heroes avoid capture, arrange instead to have one of the Vistani become their captive. This might occur in battle, as the Vistani desert a fallen comrade, or a headstrong youth from the tribe could try to assassinate the heroes in a stealthy solo attack on their campsite. Before the heroes can kill him, he begs for mercy. Then he can convey the necessary facts about the ambush and Lomar's history.

## Pursuing Lomar

Since being banished from his tribe, Lomar has resided in an ancient graveyard five miles north of Kellee. He lives in a marble tomb at the center of the graveyard, and it is to this tomb that he flees after the ambush.

If the *geased* heroes have trouble locating Lomar, the *Gojanovic* tribe's wizards assist them by using their divination spells. The spells do not reveal Lomar himself, but give an overview of the graveyard, which is located a half day's journey from the Vistani camp on foot. When the heroes reach the graveyard, read the following:

You stand at the edge of a large graveyard that is obviously quite ancient. Gravestones are toppled, the sickly yellow grass has grown knee-high, and the wrought-iron fences that stand around some of the plots are streaked with rust. An air of malice hangs in the air. The few large trees that dot the graveyard are studded with wicked thorns. Statues that mark several of the graves are pitted with age and indistinct, but seem to have once been the portraits of leering, monstrous figures.

Here and there, a gaping hole has been torn in the earth. Given the shape and position of these holes, it would seem that some of the

# THROUGH DARKENED EYES

graves have been disturbed.

At the center of the graveyard stands a tomb made from black marble. Its walls are set with narrow windows whose panes are of blood-red glass. Its two doors are of heavy black iron.

The heroes probably expect an attack by undead. But the “opened graves” are in fact the exit holes left by burrowing spiders. These huge spiders are extremely sensitive to vibration, and burst up out of the ground to attack anyone crossing the graveyard. (Surprise rolls are made at a -6 penalty.) Alternatively, they crouch in the open holes, leaping up to 30 feet to attack.

Because he wears *wings of the bat*, Lomar does not need to cross the graveyard and thus need not fear attack by the spiders.

**Huge spider (3):** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA Poison, *web*; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (8); XP 420 each.

## Terror Tip: Lurking Spiders

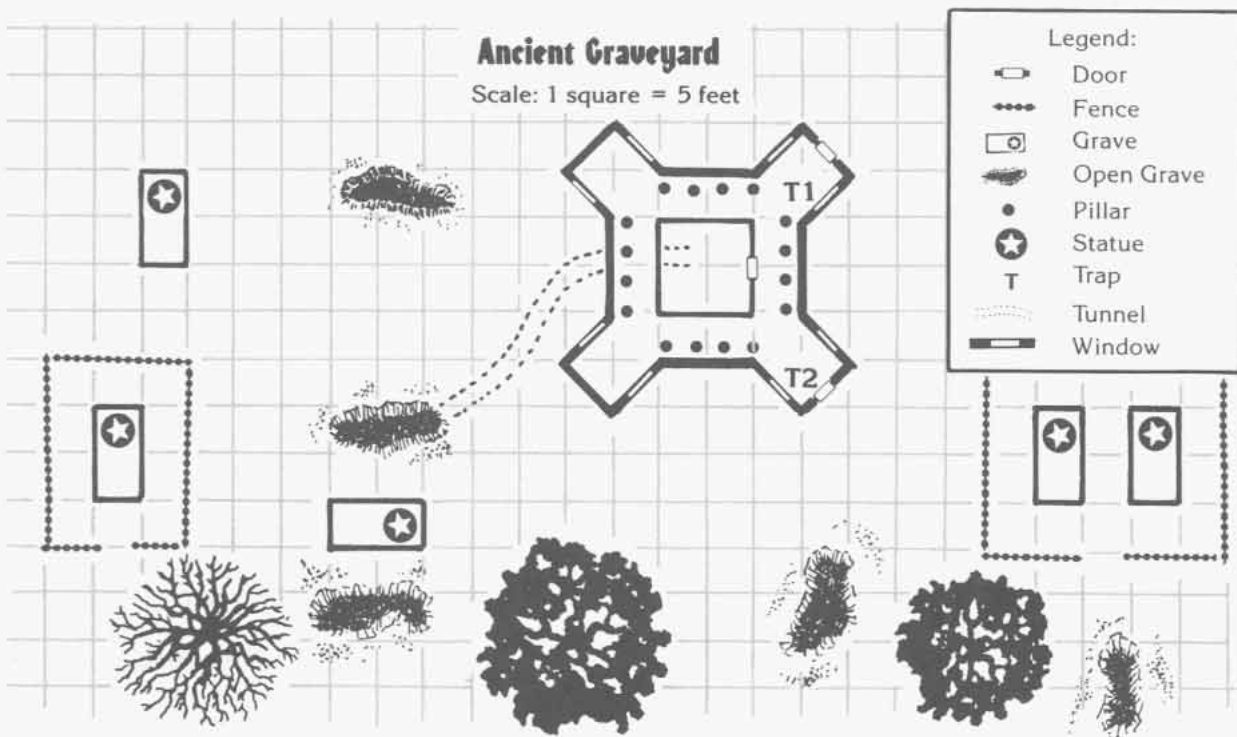
Before the adventure begins, purchase three plastic spiders. Each should be attached with tape to the underside of one of the chairs that the players will sit in. Alternatively, draw spiders on pieces of paper.

As the heroes are picking their way across the graveyard, occasionally tell the players their characters “hear something” and encourage them to stop and listen. As they do, stand behind one player and gently shake his or her chair, telling that player that the character “feels the earth trembling.”

When the time comes for the spiders to attack, ask the players to guess what is causing the tremors. The players should then reach under their chairs and remove the object there, to see if their guesses were correct. The characters of the players who find spiders are the targets of the spider attacks.

### Ancient Graveyard

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet





These huge spiders have one additional attack form. Because they have evolved to capture prey in the open, they can fire sticky, weblike strands every third round. Treat these strands as a *web* spell, using the same range and effect, and give the heroes a save vs. breath weapon to avoid the sticky strands. A spider rushes to any creature it has trapped and begins to feed on its victim.

## Creature From the Grave

Lomar has been trying to work up his nerve for some time to create a *jeshka*—a magical talisman used by evil Vistani to summon a Ravenloft grave elemental. As the heroes close in on the tomb, he at last finds the courage to create this powerful, evil talisman—by pushing long, slender thorns into his own heart. (The *ring of regeneration* he wears keeps him alive, despite the injury caused by the thorns. It also forces him to keep pushing the thorns back into his chest, as the punctures in his heart close over and heal.)

The grave elemental rises out of the soil and attacks the heroes as they approach the tomb. If the attack goes badly for the heroes, have the Vistani fighters from the Gojanovic tribe arrive just in the nick of time to save the heroes. It should be the heroes, however, who lead the attack on Lomar.

**Grave elemental:** Int Low (6); AL N; AC 0; MV 6; HD 8; hp 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4d8; SA *Sink* spell; SD +2 or better magical weapons to hit; MR Nil; SZ H; ML Fanatic (18); XP 3,000.

## Inside the Tomb

The walls of the tomb are two feet thick, and the windows set into them are mere slits, just three inches wide. Each of the doors is of wrought iron, and is stuck (Strength check to force it open).

Before Lomar took over the tomb, it was the lair of one of the huge spiders that the heroes encountered in the graveyard. Although Lomar

blocked the hole by which it once entered the tomb, he didn't bother to clean the place out. As the heroes enter the tomb, read the following:

The hallways are choked with dusty cobwebs that hinder your progress. Just ahead, a human figure hangs suspended in the webs. It is clearly a corpse; the softer portions of the man's flesh have been eaten away, exposing white bone. Yet the figure twitches slightly, as if struggling to be free.

The corpse is the grisly remains of a spider's meal. Sighting it is cause for a horror check. It seems to be animated only because the heroes are disturbing the webs that hold it.

When the heroes reach the inner room, read the following:

Opening the door to the tomb's inner sanctum, you see "Brissell"—or Lomar the darkling, as you now know him. He holds a long narrow thorn in both hands. Grimacing with pain, he slowly pushes it into his chest at a spot directly over his heart. His chest is punctured with dozens of these thorns, and his shirt front is soaked with blood. His gory task done, the darkling turns and leaps into an open sarcophagus.

This gruesome sight is cause for a horror check.

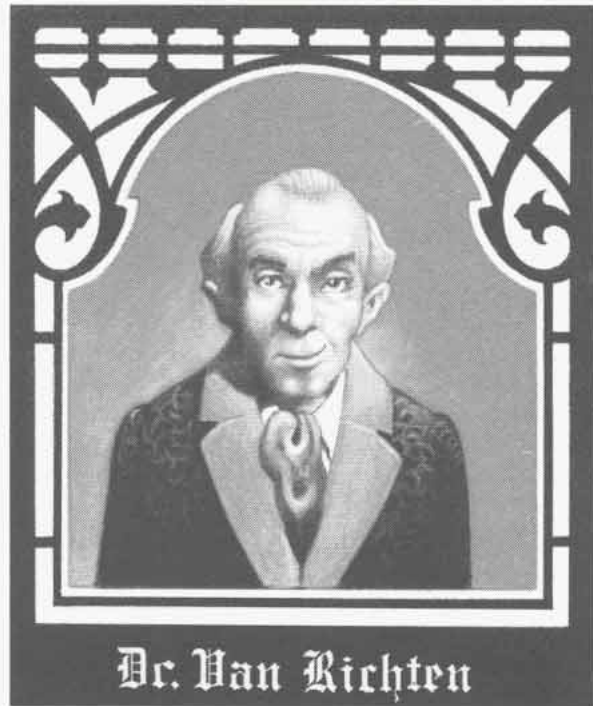
Lomar tries to escape through a hole in the bottom of the sarcophagus. It gives access to a tunnel that leads from the inner chamber of the tomb to one of the old spider holes.

Normally, Lomar keeps the sarcophagus lid shut to keep the huge spiders out of the tomb. If the heroes try to enter via this route, they must push through several spider webs and become covered with tiny spiders. They then must open the sarcophagus lid, a feat requiring a Strength check at -2. They do not, however, encounter any huge spiders in the tunnel.

## Death of the Darkling

Should the heroes succeed in killing Lomar, the Gojanovic tribe arrives a few hours later to lay his body to rest. They remove him from the graveyard (which they say has become "unholy ground") and bury him in a quiet spot in a nearby meadow, using an ancient Vistani rite to ensure that Lomar does not return as a ghost or wraith. The rite is very secret; no *giorgio* is permitted to witness it.

The heroes can observe, however, that *Oma Goja* is directing the burial. Later, she shows signs of intense grief. If asked, she admits that Lomar was her son. This strikes an emotional chord with Van Richten, who breaks down in tears. He admits that he was wrong—that not all Vistani are murderers and thieves, and that he should not have judged *Oma Goja* and her kin by the deeds of her sister's tribe.



# UNDYING JUSTICE



*uman blood is heavy;  
the man who has shed  
it cannot run away.*

African proverb

“Undying Justice” is designed for four to six heroes of levels 3–5.

Any combination of character classes works, because this is primarily an investigative adventure.

The heroes must uncover the reason behind a haunting and release a vengeful spirit that plagues a mansion.

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 5. Adjust his statistics by deducting 5d6 hit points and 150 percentage points from his thieving abilities. He provides the heroes with a standard kit for investigating a haunting, which includes notebooks, quills, and ink for taking notes while interviewing witnesses; jars and sacks for collecting samples; a pocket watch for timing the appearances of the ghost; a scroll with the wizard spell *locate object*; and one with the priest spell *speak with dead*.

The adventure is set in the city of Levkarest in the domain of Borca, but works in any Ravenloft city with a sizable population of wealthy citizens.

## Background

**R**obert Tatenna is a respected member of the Levkarest nobility, the wealthy owner of an elegant manor house at the outskirts of town. He made his fortune in the cooking oil business.

Robert was always considered a lucky man. His wife, Esmerelda, is not only one of the most beautiful women in these parts, but is also due to inherit the Charlesworth fortune when her elderly uncle dies. His daughter Tricia is a teenage debutante whose beauty rivals her mother's. A host of eligible young bachelors seek her hand.

Yet Robert has had a streak of bad luck recently. Two years ago, his beautiful manorhome burned to the ground. The entire house was con-

sumed in an inferno fueled by barrels of cooking oil stored in one of the pantries. So quickly did the blaze spread that one of the servants was trapped in an upstairs room and burned to death.

Fortunately, both Esmerelda and Tricia were visiting relatives at the time, and had taken a number of the servants with them, else there might have been more fatalities.

Robert immediately rebuilt the house along even grander lines. But no sooner did the family move in than strange and unsettling occurrences began. Tiny fires broke out inexplicably, servants heard chains rattling in the night, and Tricia began to have nightmares so terrible she would not speak of them. Now it is whispered that the manor house is haunted. The Tatenna family is forced to remain there (Robert spent every penny that wasn't tied up in his business on rebuilding the home) and is desperate for someone to put an end to this haunting, if such it is.

## Robert's Guilty Secret

**T**he man who died in the blaze was Tommas Dendarich, a faithful servant of the Tatenna family for nine years before his death. He was a dashing handsome man who liked to flirt with the maids—and who wasn't above stealing a glimpse, now and then, at the lovely Esmerelda Tatenna and her beautiful daughter, Tricia.

Tommas served as valet to Robert Tatenna. He pressed Robert's clothes, shined his boots, and kept his personal toiletry items in order. Because he often shared Robert's confidences, Tommas would respond in kind, telling the noble how he secretly yearned to become the paramour of a noblewoman who would keep him in comfort for the rest of his days. Unfortunately for Tommas, Robert took this jest seriously and began to suspect him of courting his wife.

The seeds of Tommas' death were sown one morning when Robert overheard whispered laughter in his wife's powder room. Creeping to the door to listen, he heard Tommas whisper, “You're so beautiful, Esmerelda! Come, let me kiss you!” This was followed by the sound of rustling clothes and a woman's hushed giggle.

## UNDYING JUSTICE

Robert was just working up his nerve to open the door when he heard Tommas exclaim, "Wait! Someone's there!" A moment later, after more rustling noises, the door opened. Robert hid himself behind it and, with a sinking heart, watched his wife walk out of the powder room and down the hall, her bodice unbuttoned and her petticoat showing.

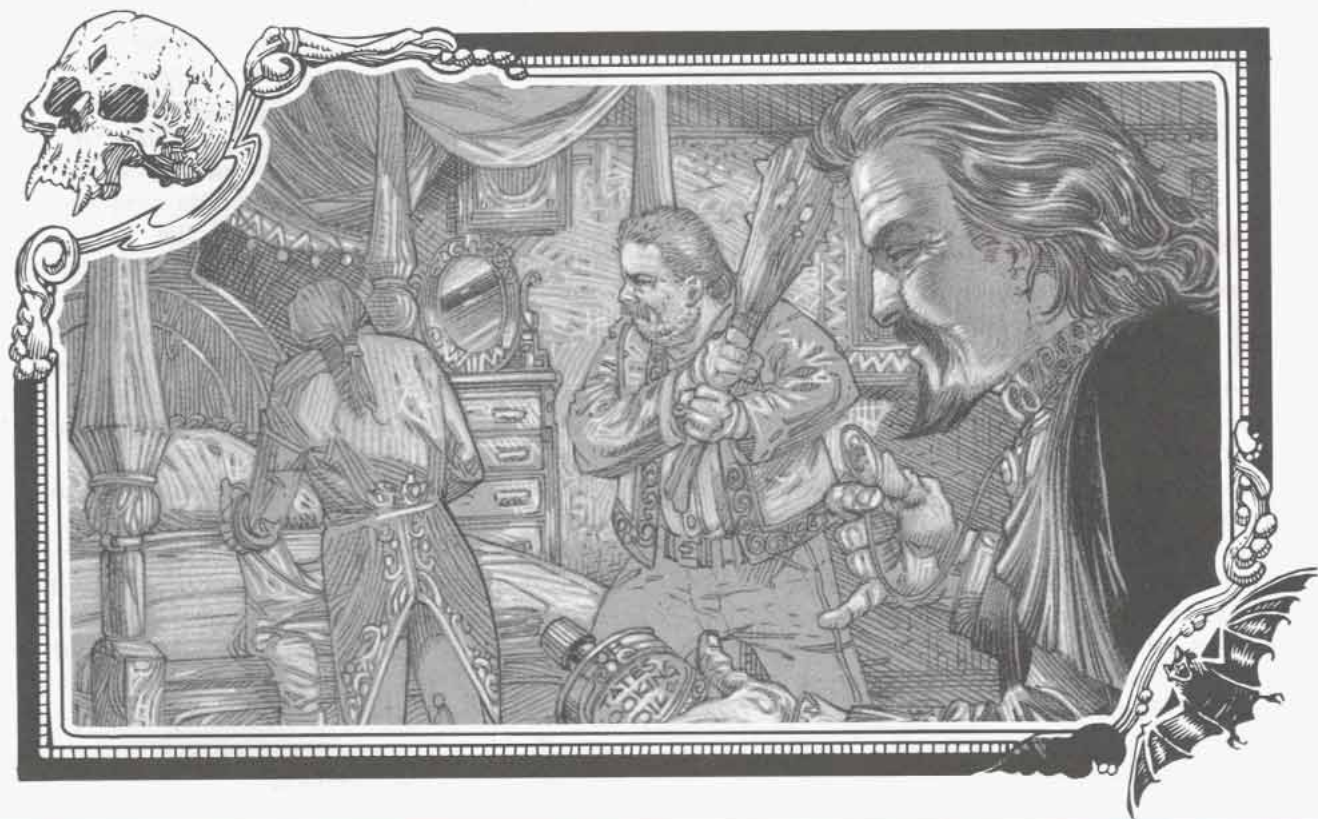
Over the next few days, the fires of jealousy smoldered inside Robert. The spark that finally set them alight was a chance comment by Tommas on Tricia's growing beauty. Fearful that this scoundrel would take his daughter as well as his wife, Robert began to plan Tommas' murder.

Late one night, when Esmerelda and Tricia were out of town visiting relatives, Robert ordered Tommas to come to the master bedroom and lay out his clothes for the next morning. There, with the assistance of a local thug, he subdued the valet and manacled him to the massive oak bed. Ignoring Tommas' baffled protests, Robert accused his valet of seducing Esmerelda, then

doused the bed with cooking oil and set it alight. He helped the thug to escape unseen, then ran to the servant's quarters to warn them of the fire. Once all were safely outside, he stood on the front lawn, savoring his revenge.

Tragically, Robert had lashed out blindly at an innocent man. Tommas had no designs on Esmerelda—the whispered conversation that Robert had overheard was merely Tommas flirting with the lady's maid Rosanna. She had secretly dressed up in one of Esmerelda's gowns that morning, and was modeling it for Tommas in the powder room. The pair overheard Esmerelda coming (she was looking for Rosanna, who normally helped her get dressed) and hid from her. Esmerelda passed through the powder room, "confirming" Robert's suspicions, while Tommas and Rosanna slipped out its back door.

Because the "romantic tryst" existed only in Robert's imagination, and because neither he nor the thug told anyone of the deed they performed that dark night, the murder and its motive have



remained a secret. Robert still firmly believes that Esmerelda cheated on him, but he is tortured by guilt. His personality has subtly altered over the two years since the murder. Where once he was gregarious and cheerful, he now is more reserved. His ready smile has been replaced by a pensive frown. So far, his associates chalk it up to the unnatural “troubles” that have beset his grand new house; none suspect the truth.

### Terror Tip: Voice from the Grave

Before the game begins, record this near the end of one side of a blank cassette tape in a spooky voice: “Hear me! My death shall be avenged! Find the man who ordered my death and make him apologize for what he has done! Only then shall I be free.” Then rewind the tape.

Just before the game begins, hide a small cassette player somewhere in the room and hit the play button. Then keep an eye on the time, making sure things are relatively quiet around the time the message will play.

When the players least expect it, the “ghost” will speak to them from the grave.

## Starting the Adventure

The heroes are staying in Levkarest in the domain of Borca. They attend a dinner party at the home of Doran Muchaka, a wealthy merchant. Doran has heard that the heroes are adventurers, and has invited them to a sumptuous dinner party in the hope that they will liven up the conversation with tales of their adventures.

Doran also invited his old friend Dr. Rudolph Van Richten to his soiree. When the heroes are done telling tales, he presses Van Richten to speak of his ghost hunting exploits. Van Richten agrees, telling either “The Thundering Carriage” or “The Phantom Army.” These tales are found on pages 4–6 and 84–91 of *Van Richten’s Guide to Ghosts*. If this book is unavailable, Van Richten politely declines to tell any stories.

The dinner ends. As the guests are leaving, Van Richten approaches the heroes. After a few minutes of small talk, Robert Tatenna approaches Van Richten. Read the players the following:

A well dressed man in a top hat and cape hurries up to Dr. Van Richten and lays a gloved hand on his arm. “Rudolph!” he exclaims. “Do you remember me? Robert Tatenna. We went to boarding school together in Nartok.”

Van Richten looks surprised, then smiles broadly and shakes Robert’s hand.

“It is ironic that our host should bring up the subject of ghosts,” Tatenna continues. “My own house has, of late, been beset by a malicious spirit. I wonder, Rudolph, if you could assist me in banishing it from my home. I couldn’t pay much, but I would be exceedingly grateful if a man of your knowledge and talent would deign to assist an old friend.”

Van Richten asks for details, but soon seems to lose interest in the case. He says the nature of the disturbances seems to suggest a poltergeist—a common enough creature that poses little real danger.” He regretfully but firmly declines Sir Robert’s request for assistance, saying he has pressing business in another city. He suggests that perhaps Robert might employ the adventurers who attended the dinner (the heroes), who are obviously quite capable.

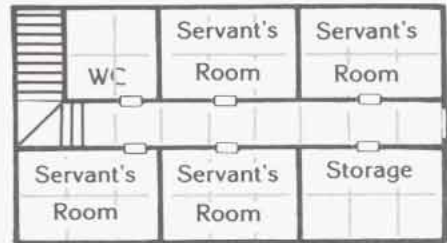
At this point it is up to the heroes to start asking questions. For Robert’s replies, use the material found in the Background section, but have Robert reply only in answer to direct questions; he doesn’t volunteer any other information.

Van Richten leaves town the next morning and thus does not actively participate in this adventure. The heroes can consult him at any time by mail, but it takes two days to get a reply. He only provides them with his ghost hunting kit (described at the beginning of the adventure) if they convince him that they are dealing with something more than a poltergeist and specifically ask for equipment useful in investigating a true haunting.

# TATENNA MANOR HOUSE



## ATTIC



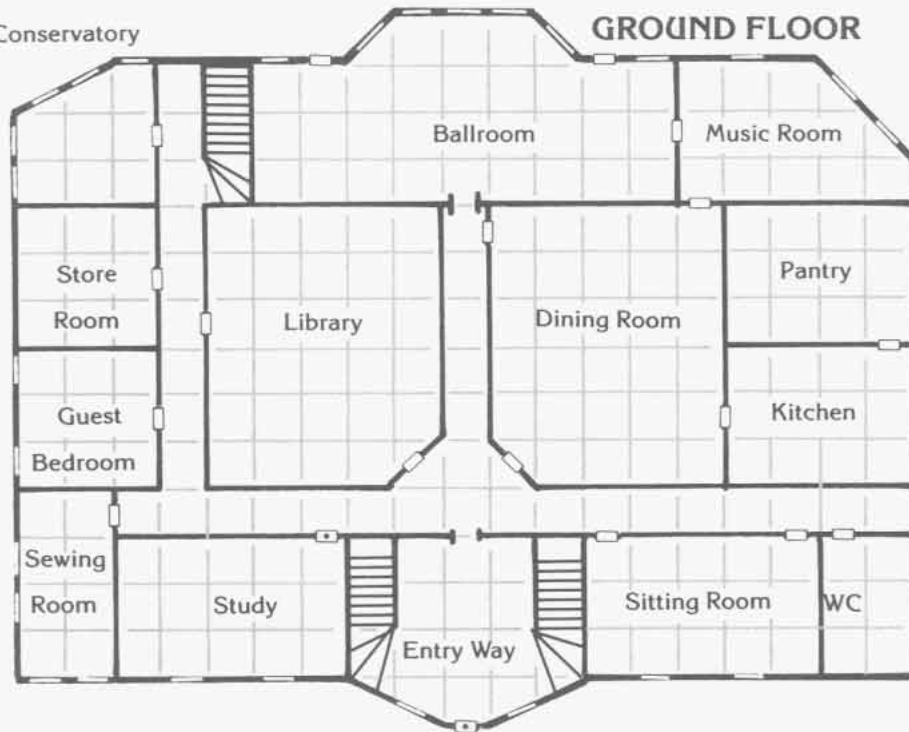
Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

## SECOND FLOOR

Legend:

-  Archway
-  Door
-  Locked door
-  Stairs
-  Window
-  Washroom

## GROUND FLOOR





## The Manor House

**T**he Tatenna manor house is an elegant residence with lots of leaded-glass windows, mahogany banisters, silver door handles and finely detailed carving. It is richly appointed with antique furniture, thick wool carpets, and fine art pieces.

On the main floor much of the entertaining and day-to-day activity takes place. The second floor houses most of the bedrooms. The third floor is a low-ceilinged attic that houses the servants' quarters. A rear staircase leads to this floor.

Robert encourages the heroes to stay overnight as his guests at Tatenna Manor. He puts them up in the guest bedrooms and allows them to roam freely over the house, but asks them to respect the privacy of his study, which he keeps locked because it contains "confidential business letters." He also asks the heroes not to enter either the master bedroom or Tricia's bedroom without prior permission—but he may ignore this rule in an obvious emergency.

## The Haunting

**T**he heroes observe frequent effects of Tommas' haunting. At first, Tommas concentrates his malicious acts on members of the Tatenna family and their servants. As soon as the heroes become an obvious threat, he turns on them. (His goal is to cause suffering, rather than to kill.) The one person he will not harm is the lady's maid Rosanna.

## Daytime Occurrences

- ❖ **Clanking chains**, heard echoing in the hallways of the manor house.
- ❖ **Small fires** spontaneously bursting out in the Tatenna family's possessions. These include Sir Robert's personal papers in the study, Esmerelda's sheet music (she is a talented pianist), and Tricia's party gowns. Fires have also started in bedding—particularly in the master bedroom.

- ❖ **Servants suffering burns** from picking up objects that have suddenly become searingly hot. (The burns are caused by the ghost's touch, which heats the objects.) Tommas is trying to drive the servants away so they will not interfere with his revenge.

## Nighttime Occurrences

- ❖ **Troubling dreams.** In these dreams, phantasms caused by the ghost, the victim sees a friend or loved one. One hero may dream of another hero. Then the loved one bursts into flame, screams, and writhes on the ground. This frightening nightmare is cause for a horror check—and may start the victim wondering if it was a premonition.

Alternatively, the dreamer awakens suddenly to find that one arm or leg is inexplicably paralyzed. This paralysis usually goes away when dawn breaks, although in some victims it lingers for several hours more.

## The Investigation

**G**iven the ghost's propensity for starting small fires, the heroes likely conclude that his death was associated with the fire that burned the first manor house to the ground, two years ago. Any family members or servants can provide the name of the man who was killed (Tommas Dendarich) and his position (personal valet to Robert).

They attest that Robert was fond of his valet and had a cordial, open relationship with him. Indeed, Robert was the first to search for Tommas' body, once he learned that the valet had been inside the house when it burned down.

The heroes can pursue several avenues of investigation:

## The Fire

The local "bucket brigade" (volunteer fire department) responded to the fire, but could not put it out. When questioned, the firefighters remark that the fire burned most fiercely on the

upper floor, particularly near the corner in which the master bedroom was situated. They find this odd, inasmuch as the barrels of cooking oil that they thought caused the fire to spread so quickly were in the pantry downstairs. If pressed, the bucket brigade members admit that they suspected arson.

## Robert Tatenna

If questioned about the fire, Robert blusters that it is “preposterous” to suggest arson. “Why, I haven’t an enemy in the world.” Then he suddenly changes his mind and admits to “business rivals” who might have resorted to arson. Any such “leads” he provides the heroes turn out to be dead ends. Each of the “enemies” has a solid alibi for the night of the fire:

**Raouff Mosely**, owner of a local candle factory, was playing cards with his wife and two daughters.

**Ronaldo Parthar**, a dealer in fine china, was too ill to get out of bed. A local healer confirms this.

**Savaas Stefanis**, a retired cloth merchant, was dictating his memoirs to his secretary.

**Gato Foukal**, a financial speculator, was drinking at the Tinfella Tavern. The bartender confirms this.

## Rosanna

If specifically asked, any of the staff (but not the family) reveals that Rosanna, lady’s maid to Esmerelda, was Tommas’ girlfriend. They do not volunteer this information; Rosanna and Tommas’ romantic liaisons “weren’t proper,” after all.

Rosanna knows little about the fire; she was away with Esmerelda when it happened. But she did notice that Robert became “quite cool” toward Tommas a few days beforehand. She claims not to know why, but if pressed, she tells how she dressed up in one of Esmerelda’s gowns for Tommas. She incorrectly assumes that Esmerelda must have figured this out and told her husband, who then gave Tommas the cold shoulder.

Rosanna did not see Robert outside the powder room door and has no idea that he was there.

## Esmerelda

If the heroes check Rosanna’s story with Esmerelda, she has no memory of Rosanna’s transgression. But she did notice that her husband was short-tempered with her the week before the fire. She assumes he was angry at her for visiting relatives that he loathed. She cites this loathing as the reason for his sudden decision not to come along. She and Tricia left three days before the fire.

## Blackmail

**T**he thug who helped Robert murder Tommas, a local 3rd-level thief named Colstan Eby, has been blackmailing Robert ever since. This blackmail is one reason why the Tatenna fortune is so depleted.

At some point during the heroes’ investigation, Colstan comes to collect his latest payment. He is dressed in expensive clothing but is obviously a commoner by his manner. He strides in as if he owns the place, demanding to see Robert “at once” on a “business matter.”

Robert takes Colstan into his study. He closes the door, draws the blinds, and then gives Colstan his latest payment. If the heroes listen in, they overhear the following:

**Robert:** “This has got to stop, Colstan. I can’t afford to pay what you ask. My accounts are nearly empty. Couldn’t you take a little less this time?”

**Colstan:** “Not if you want me to keep quiet about what we done.” (*Voice drops to a menacing growl.*) “You wouldn’t want that, would ya, Robbie? It’s bad enough she was romancing a commoner, never mind that we went and—”

**Robert:** “All right, you scoundrel. You win. I’ll pay.”

If questioned about this conversation, Robert admits that Colstan is blackmailing him, but he lies about the reason. “My daughter, Tricia, was seeing a most unsuitable young man. I hired

Colstan to frighten him away, and now he's threatening to tell Tricia what I did."

If Tricia is questioned about this explanation, she is baffled by it. She has never dated a commoner, and none of her boyfriends have been frightened off.

If the heroes question Colstan, they can learn how the murder was committed, but not why. Colstan talks only if his life is threatened—or if the heroes offer enough gold (1,000 gp).

## Sir Robert's Journal

**W**racked by guilt ever since he committed murder, Robert has kept a journal that record his inner torments. The journal is locked in a wall safe (-20% penalty to attempts to pick the lock) that is hidden behind a picture over Sir Robert's desk. As an additional safeguard, the door to the study is kept locked.

If the heroes sneak into the study and find the journal, read the following excerpts from it to the players:

*Was it right to take a man's life? He was no more than a thief, trying to steal that which I held most dear. But doubt gnaws at me.*

*How I have longed to confront my dear one with the knowledge of her illicit affair. Yet now I wonder. Did I imagine the whole thing? She does not grieve, tho he is killed. Yet it must be true, for I heard them together, that day, in her powder room.*

*Oh the torment of these past two years! Will you ever forgive me, Tommas?*

## Tommas' Grave

Tommas' charred bones are buried in the local cemetery, under a simple stone marker. Fresh flowers are left there regularly. If the heroes observe the grave, they see who leaves the flowers: the maid, Rosanna.

If the heroes exhume Tommas' body, they see that the lower right leg is missing. Robert was the first to reach the body; he disposed of the

incriminating manacle on Tommas' ankle by breaking off the bone at the knee.

If the heroes search magically for the missing bone (with a *locate object* spell, for example) they find it buried in the back yard of Tatenna Manor. A rusted manacle is fused to the bone by heat. This manacle works as an *allergen* against Tommas: *If presented in the same manner as a holy symbol, it can prevent him from approaching or attacking the wielder.* The discovery of this manacled bone marks an appropriate time for the ghost to manifest and confront the heroes.

If the heroes use a *speak with dead* spell (which requires a powers check) or if they consult a medium, they can learn that Tommas was murdered, and how it was done. But Tommas becomes incoherent with rage when asked who killed him.

## Tommas Dendarich

Third Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Neutral

Int High (13); AC -2/4; MV; HD 8; hp 43; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg Paralysis & see below; SA 1d8 & see below; SD +2 magical weapon to hit (+1 magical weapon if attacker is ethereal); MR 30%; SZ M; ML Special; XP 5,000.

The ghostly Tommas is a hideous, pitiful sight to behold. He appears as he did at the moment of his death: a pain-wracked figure in blackened clothing, with flesh that has been blistered and seared by fire. His eyes are weeping sockets, his body a twisted ruin. The mere sight of him causes a horror check.

Just before Tommas appears, the heroes hear a faint clanking sound—the legacy of the chain that held Tommas to the heavy oak bed as the house burned around him. Careful observers may see a metal band around Tommas' right ankle; from it trails a short length of chain that vanishes into mist.

Tommas is semicorporeal—he can pass through solid objects, and all but magical weapons pass right through him. But he can, if he

desires, temporarily make parts of his body solid (e.g., making one hand solid enough to stroke someone's hair). These touches always leave a streak of soot behind.

Normally Tommas is completely transparent and ghostlike. Those portions of his body that he makes temporarily corporeal have the look of solid flesh.

**Current Sketch:** Tommas' sole purpose in lingering on this earth is revenge. Originally, he focused only on his murderer—Robert Tatenna—but recently he has extended his torments to the entire Tatenna family.

Tommas is “anchored” to the Tatenna home; he cannot leave the site where he died.

**Combat:** Tommas can turn invisible at will, although he must become visible when attacking. He can rejuvenate to full hit points at any time, but then cannot act for 30 minutes. When this happens, he turns invisible and lies down on a bed in an unused room.

Tommas can cause a unique form of paralysis. The touch of his hand on a character's wrist or ankle causes that limb to feel weighted down with heavy chains. A character who fails to save vs. spells (with a -2 penalty) cannot lift the arm or move the leg for 2d4 hours. Because this effect is closer to a *hold* spell than to true paralysis, no racial or magical immunities to paralysis apply.

Tommas also has the ability to create phantasms in character's minds. Unlike illusions, which everyone present can see, the phantasm exists only in the mind of the victim. Unless the victim can make a successful saving throw vs. spells (with a -2 penalty) that character sees an image of a desirable romantic partner. After tricking the victim into kissing or putting his or her arms around him, Tommas ends the phantasm, letting the victim see him as he truly is. The resulting shock is cause for a horror check.

To role-play this scene, make the saving throw for the hero secretly. If it fails, describe the romantic liaison as if it were actually taking place, describing the partner as one of the servants who had been flirting with the hero earlier and who



now is being very forward in displaying his or her affections. At the same time, pass notes to the players of any heroes in the room with the victim, telling them they see their friend embracing the air. (Tommas is invisible to them.) As soon as the heroes point this out to the victim, Tommas drops the phantasm.

Tommas can cause wounds with a touch of his hand. Each touch inflicts 1d8 burn damage, leaving painful blisters behind. Tommas can use this touch to heat metal (which retains the heat for 1d4 rounds, doing comparable blister damage on each round) or to ignite paper or other highly flammable materials.

Before attacking a hero or the hero's armor, Tommas must become visible. If the touch heats an object or ignites paper, Tommas can remain invisible while touching the item.

## Banishing Tommas

Tommas continues to haunt Tatenna Manor until Robert acknowledges that his valet was innocent of any wrongdoing, admits to his murder, and apologizes to the ghost. Tommas then disappears forever.

Until this happens, Tommas can only be banished temporarily. If "killed" or dispelled by the heroes, he returns at 11 pm (the hour of his death) the next night to begin the haunting anew.

Killing Robert does not satisfy Tommas. He wants an apology and acknowledgment of guilt. Tommas would be pleased to see Colstan Eby killed, but this is not necessary to banish Tommas. If the heroes do kill Robert, an apology from his wife or daughter will suffice.



# GAZING INTO THE ABYSS



*When evil acts in the world it always manages to find instruments who believe that what they do is not evil but honorable.*

Max Lerner

"The Case of the Wolf Whistle," *The Unfinished Country* (1959)

"Gazing Into the Abyss" is designed for four to six heroes of levels 4–6.

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 6. Adjust his statistics by deducting 4d6 hit points and 120 percentage points from his thieving abilities. He carries with him his standard vampire-hunting kit (which is inappropriate, because the adversary in this adventure is a vassalich). In addition to the equipment he usually carries, Van Richten has prayer beads blessed by a priest of good alignment (blessed accouterments) and a +1 dagger of venom modified to hold a single vial of holy water. In addition to normal damage, the dagger inflicts 1d6+1 hit points of damage to the undead on an attack roll of 15 or better.

The adventure is set in the city of Karg in the domain of Darkon. It fits in any city with a predominantly human population in another of the other domains in which the Kargatane are active: Lamordia, Falkovnia, Tepest, or Dementlieu.

## Background

A few weeks ago, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten received a letter from Werner Ruscheider, the son of an old friend of his, Dr. Harmon Ruscheider. Claiming to be on the trail of a vampire, Werner asked Van Richten's advice on how to best deal with the monster. Realizing that the boy was too inexperienced to confront such a powerful creature alone, Van Richten rushed to Karg to offer his assistance.

The boy's father, Dr. Ruscheider, died several

years ago in Rudolph Van Richten's arms. He had been driven mad by a prolonged imprisonment by a lich. His son vowed to continue his father's research into methods of destroying these foul undead wizards.

Unfortunately, Werner met the same sad fate as his father. He too was imprisoned and later killed by the lich Azalin of Darkon. Van Richten does not know this, and so one of Azalin's minions—a vassalich—has taken to impersonating Werner Ruscheider.

In his publication *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*, the doctor speculated that Azalin, the wizard king of Darkon, might be one of these foul creatures. The vassalich was offended on behalf of his master by these "slurs," and has decided to destroy the doctor's credibility and forever tarnish the name of Van Richten. If "Werner's" plan is a success, no one will ever again believe a word Van Richten has to say. (Azalin himself plays no part in this scheme, and is not even aware of his minion's activities. The wizard-king of Darkon regards Van Richten with a certain mixture of amusement and respect, even occasionally manipulating the doctor to his own ends.)

As this adventure opens, Van Richten believes he is on a vampire hunt with the son of his old friend. In fact, there are no vampires, and "Werner," the vassalich, hopes to goad Van Richten into unwittingly killing innocent people.

## The Seekers

The adventure is set in a library run by affiliates of a secret society known as the Kargatane.

The Kargatane are followers of the Kargatane vampires who serve Azalin, lich lord of Darkon. The followers drink a single drop of vampire blood that temporarily grants them a longer lifespan. Members of this "second circle" do not realize, however, that the immortal masters they serve are vampires. They believe instead that their extended lifespans are the result of a complex ritual involving a two-tined blade.

In their efforts to achieve the immortality their masters enjoy, the Kargatane have recruited other

mortals who also hope to “sip the red wine of immortality.” The Kargatane refer to these members as the “outer rim” of their society.

The outer rim members encountered in this adventure do not know the society’s true name. They refer to themselves as “the Seekers.”

The Seekers are not necessarily evil; they are simply scholars with a thirst for immortality who believe that there should be no fetters placed on the acquisition of knowledge. Their motto: “Evil words do not necessarily result in evil acts. A strong intellect can overcome the strongest of temptations. Knowledge is a more powerful weapon against evil than ignorance.”

The Seekers operate the Foucault Musical Library. A man named Draycott Foucault, a bard and Kargatane of the second circle, set up this library, apparently as a center for collecting and copying musical scores and bardic manuscripts. Only the Seekers know its secret purpose: to analyze necromantic texts in hopes of finding a formula that grants immortality.

Draycott presents himself as a philanthropist and patron of the arts. He spent much money acquiring the bardic texts that form the library’s public collection. But as soon as the Seekers find what he is looking for, he will abandon the library.

Some time ago, the vassalich secretly visited the library while searching for rare magical texts. He found nothing of interest there; he had already read all the library’s necromantic manuscripts. But he did decide that the library could be useful in his plan to discredit Van Richten. Its connection (albeit at arm’s length) with a vampire-based cult is just the right bait for his trap.

## Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins outside of Karg, when the heroes receive an urgent message from Van Richten:

*My dear companions,  
I have discovered a veritable nest of serpents  
—an entire clan of vampires. My companion, a  
lad named Werner, is confident that we can*

*deal with them on our own, but I feel that this is the misplaced optimism of youth. This matter needs an experienced hand. I am convinced you are the ones for the job. Please come with the utmost urgency to join me in this holy task.  
Yours, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten.*

When the heroes arrive in Karg, Van Richten introduces them to Werner, “my assistant in this matter, youngest son of a dear, departed friend.” (Werner’s description is at the end of this adventure.) Werner is polite to the heroes, but is obviously displeased to see them. “The doctor and I could have handled this without your help,” he mutters.

Van Richten informs the heroes that a clan of vampires is using the Foucault Musical Library as a rendezvous point. He says that Werner followed a known vampire to this city and observed her meeting with suspicious people on many occasions at the library.

Van Richten says that he has already killed three of the vampires. He shows the heroes a trunk that contains three severed heads, holding them up one by one for the heroes to inspect. One is blackened, as if by fire.

This gruesome sight is cause for a horror check—but because the heroes do not yet realize the extent of Van Richten’s descent into unwitting evil, and because he reassures them by saying that these were all vampires, they receive a +3 bonus. Why is he keeping the heads? Van Richten gives vague answers about “scientific research.” In fact, the vassalich magically implanted the idea to keep the heads. Later it plans to call the local militia and present this evidence, fingering Van Richten as a cold-blooded murderer.

Van Richten explains that he killed the three “vampires” by exposure to sunlight, immersion in running water, and by driving a stake through the heart. In reality, however, these were innocent bards. The vassalich used a *wand of illusion* to offer visual “proof” to Van Richten that these were vampires. He then used *suggestion* spells to guide the doctor in killing these innocents, and *forget* spells to wipe the precise details of each killing from Van Richten’s mind.

# GAZING INTO THE ABYSS

The doctor's sleep is troubled by nightmares. He has recurring dreams about blood stains on his hands that will not wash away. He has forgotten his deeds, but his subconscious mind remembers.

## The Library

**U**an Richten explains that thus far he has observed those entering and leaving the library, then followed and later ambushed those who showed obvious signs of vampirism. He encourages the heroes to scout around inside the building. If the heroes do not think of it themselves, Van Richten suggests that they pose as bards. He cautions them not to confront suspected vampires, but instead to observe carefully and report back to him.

The main floor of the library consists of an entryway (Area 1) connected to a large study hall (Area 2) by three archways. The study hall is furnished with nine large tables, each surrounded by stools.

The library is staffed by 12 Seekers. They take turns posing as librarians, but devote most of their time to poring over necromantic manuscripts in the basement study rooms; 1d4 are in each of these rooms at any given time (except during the midnight ritual described in "The Blood Rite" below). If the heroes are stealthy, they might see one of The Seekers using one of the secret doors in Areas 4a-b.

**The Seekers (0-level humans):** Int Avg; AL Varies; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Steady (12); XP Nil.

During the day, 1d4 Seekers serve as librarians. They catalogue and study bardic manuscripts, laboriously copying them by hand. Visitors (mostly bards) are welcome to view or copy the manuscripts, but only under a librarian's supervision. At night, they put away the manuscripts and close and lock the library.

The bardic manuscripts and musical scores are kept on shelves in adjoining rooms (Areas 3a-b).

Supply rooms in the back (Areas 4a-b) hold paper and vellum, ink, quill pens, and other supplies. Secret panels in the supply rooms provide access to staircases leading to the library's basement.

The basement includes two smaller study rooms (Areas 5a-b) where, by the light of oil lamps, librarians study and copy necromantic tomes dealing with reincarnation and extending lifespan. The manuscripts are stored on shelves in a locked central room (Area 6). Optionally, a few may contain powerful necromantic spells, such as *animate dead* or *reincarnation*.

Foucault had the library built on the site of an ancient temple dedicated to the gods of the life-death-rebirth cycle. Only one room of this temple survives; it makes up part of the library basement. This ritual chamber (Area 7) has a rear wall lined with pillars carved in the shape of bones. The floor is black and has been set with a mosaic of white tiles to create a 30-foot-long skull pattern.

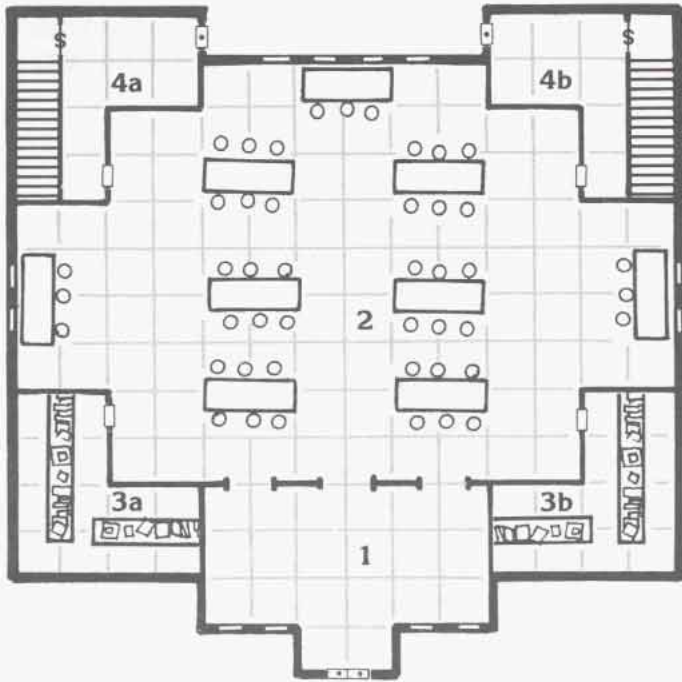
**The bards:** While visiting the library, the heroes may interact with the bards who study there. The heroes can overhear these NPCs talking in hushed, fearful tones about three recent murders. In each case, a bard was killed. One was drowned by having his face pushed into a bucket of water, one was killed with a sword thrust through her heart, and one died in a house fire. In each case, the head was severed from the body after death.

Any bard can point out the blackened shell of the house where the third bard died. A few saw the second body and can describe a wound that is too clean and narrow to have been caused by a wooden stake. The bards swear that none of the three was a vampire. If the heroes ask them for specific evidence, they note that one performed in the mid-day sun in Karg's public square, that another was seen to swim in a rapidly running stream, and that the third preened before concerts in front of a mirror that clearly showed her reflection.

When the heroes report back to Van Richten, he listens carefully, asking questions about the people they observed in the library. He then concludes (no matter what evidence has been presented) that one of the bards the heroes met is



# GAZING INTO THE ABYSS



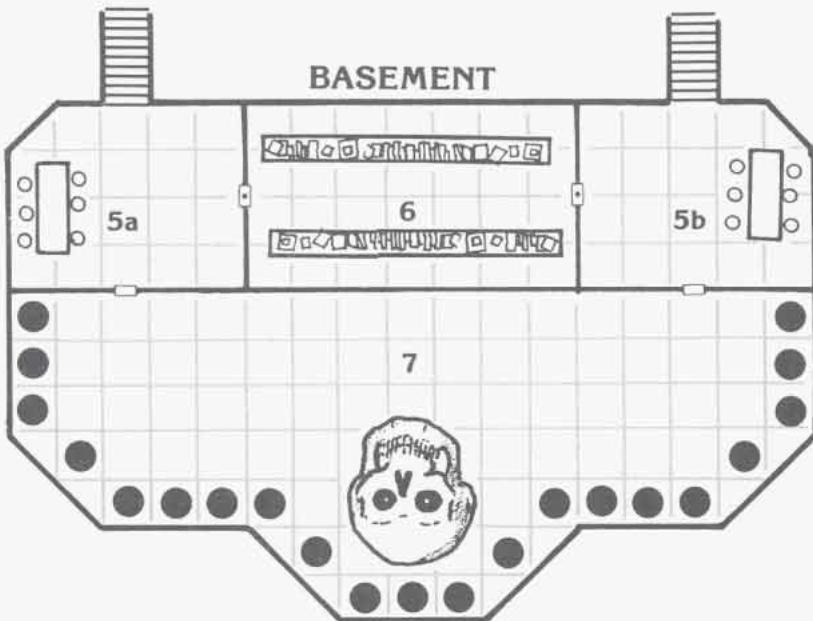
MAIN FLOOR

## Foucault Musical Library

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

### Legend:

	Archway
	Bookshelf
	Door
	Double door
	Locked door
	Pillar
	Stairs
	Table & Stools
	Window



BASEMENT

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Entry Way                      |
| 2. | Study Hall                     |
| 3. | Bardic Manuscript Storage      |
| 4. | Supply Room                    |
| 5. | Study Room                     |
| 6. | Necromantic Manuscript Storage |
| 7. | Ritual Chamber                 |

a vampire. He insists on killing the monster that evening, and gets quite excited and agitated as he begins to lay plans. A short time later, he suddenly changes his mind and calls off the ambush. If asked why, he says, "I think we should wait and make more observations. Werner agrees with me." The vassalich posing as Werner used a *suggestion* spell to call Van Richten off. The heroes' presence worries him.

## The Blood Rite

Van Richten asks the heroes to return to the library the next day. During this visit, Draycott Foucault arrives and speaks with the librarians. The Seekers cluster around him, holding an urgent, whispered conversation. The heroes overhear arrangements for a meeting that evening, "in the basement, at midnight."

Although the library is not specifically mentioned, the meeting will take place in its ritual chamber (Area 7). Here, at the stroke of midnight, all 12 Seekers meet with Draycott to pledge their continuing allegiance. If the heroes can sneak into this area, they can observe the ritual.

The ceremony is brief. Read the players the following:

The room's rear wall is lined with pillars carved in the shape of bones. The floor is black and inset with a mosaic of white tiles that shows a thirty-foot-long skull.

Thirteen humans in white robes stand silently in a semicircle around this mosaic, their backs toward you. One holds a rabbit, which squirms and kicks. At a signal from one of the other white-robed figures, the man holding the rabbit holds it at arm's length and slits its throat neatly with a sharp blade. A woman holds a silver chalice to catch the stream of blood. When the bowl is full, she holds it before her and chants, "To drink is to know." She takes a sip, staining her lips, then passes the chalice to the figure beside her, who repeats the chant before drinking.

As the chalice is passed, one of the figures steps forward, drawing a sword that has a peculiar double point. He uses it to make a small puncture in the wrist of the woman who filled the chalice. The woman smiles, and offers the man her blood. Before drinking it, he repeats the chant: "To drink is to know."

Heroes observing this bloody ritual must make a horror check.

At this point, the heroes likely conclude that the Seekers are vampires. If Van Richten is with them, he cautions them against confronting 13 powerful adversaries at once. Instead, he suggests that the heroes ambush the vampires, one by one, saving the most powerful—Draycott Foucault—for last.

If the heroes insist on attacking immediately, the Seekers prove ridiculously easy to kill. They have minimal hit points, are vulnerable to non-magical weapons, and do not display any special vampiric abilities.

Rather than fighting, Draycott flees, either by using his *spider climb* spell or by taking a *gaseous form* potion.

**Draycott Foucault (5th-level bard):** AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (broadsword); SA Spells; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 650.

PP 10%    DN 40%    CW 50%    RL 65%

Str 13    Dex 15    Con 15  
Int 17    Wis 15    Cha 17

**Draycott's spells:** 1) *charm person*, *chill touch*, *spider climb*; 2) *spectral hand*.

Draycott has dark hair that curls around his face, and a melodious voice. He wears leather armor and carries a broad sword at his hip. The peculiar weapon has a double point, much like a two-tined fork. He wears a large, magical gold earring with the same effect as a +4 *ring of protection*. The earring also conveys a +2 bonus to Draycott's saving throws.

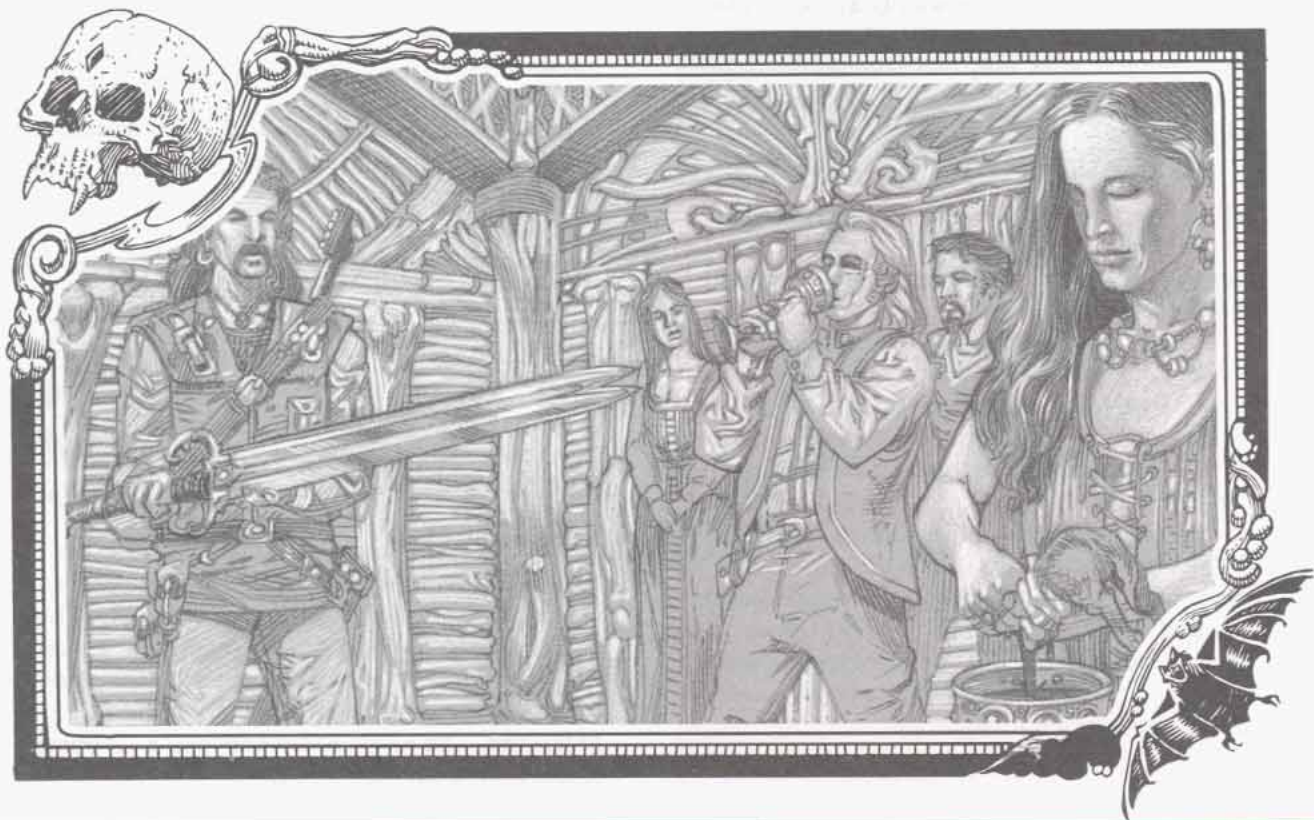
Draycott's most prized possession is a magical mandolin that has a similar effect to a *chime of opening*. For the entire time that it is played, no one except Draycott can cast a spell that requires a verbal component within a 30-foot radius of the instrument. Draycott casts spells normally by singing a spell's verbal component in time to the mandolin music. Optionally, hero spellcasters with the singing proficiency may also cast spells by singing them. To succeed, the character must make a singing proficiency check. Because the hero is not familiar with the mandolin's tune, impose a -3 penalty.

Because his spells duplicate a number of the abilities of vampires, Draycott was a natural tool with which to trick Van Richten. To strengthen this misconception, Werner arranged that certain potions "fell into" Draycott's hands. Draycott keeps these concentrated potions in tiny silver vials on his belt. He has six *potions of gaseous form* and six *potions of polymorph self*.

## Testing For Vampires

A number of tests determine if an NPC is a vampire. These include confronting a suspect with a holy symbol or with blessed accouterments; holding up a mirror to the suspect's face; observing whether the suspect has an aversion to garlic, running water, or sunlight; and observing whether the suspect can enter a home without first being invited in, or can enter a church or trod on hallowed ground. Performed on The Seekers or on Draycott Foucault, these tests are negative.

Even so, the heroes might very well "see" a positive result. The vassalich posing as Werner secretly uses his *wand of illusion* and his spells in an effort to convince the heroes that these are, indeed, vampires. At the same time, he tries to get them to doubt one another. (See the Terror Tip, below.) Ideally, the lich uses the wand only when no one can see him; he stands well behind the heroes, holds the wand by its tip with the



bulk of it concealed up his sleeve, and whispers its command word. Each time Werner uses the wand, each hero has only a 10% chance to notice it; roll separately for each hero present. If caught, Werner explains away the wand as a “wand of truth” that tells him if the person being tested is lying.

Werner pretends to participate enthusiastically in the ambushes, but is actually waiting for Van Richten to finally realize that he is killing innocents—a realization sure to drive the good doctor mad. Werner then suffers an “attack of conscience” and insists that the heroes inform the local militia of Van Richten’s crimes.

If the heroes learn what Werner is up to and tell Van Richten, the doctor defends him at first, refusing to believe the truth. But if Werner is revealed as a vassalich, Van Richten stops at nothing to revenge himself on the monster that tricked him into murdering at least three innocent people.

If attacked, the vassalich defends himself. To taunt Van Richten, he reveals the fate that befell the real Werner Ruscheider. He captured the boy, pumped him full of embalming fluid, then ripped his heart from his body and used it in a foul ritual. This revelation forces Van Richten to make a horror check.

The vassalich can become a recurring villain in any continuing RAVENLOFT campaign. He wishes to please Azalin by bringing Van Richten low, and is sure to think of other tricks and traps to spring on the doctor.

## Werner Ruscheider

Vassalich, Lawful Evil

AC 1; MV 12; HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 or by spell; SA Spells; SD Immune to *mind-affecting*, *cold-based*, and *polymorph*, spells; MR Nil; SZ M; ML champion (16); XP 2,000.

Str 18    Dex 14    Con 17  
Int 13    Wis 14    Cha 12

**Werner’s spells:** 1) *chill touch*, *comprehend languages*, *detect undead*, *hold portal*, *protection from good*, *sleep*; 2) *bind*, *darkness 15’ radius*, *forget*, *misdirection*, *spectral hand*, *summon swarm*; 3) *blink*, *hold undead*, *protection from normal missiles*, *sepia snake sigil*, *suggestion*; 4) *contagion*, *enervation*, *fear*, *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*, *remove curse* (reversed as *curse*); 5) *animate dead*, *avoidance*, *chaos*, *cone of cold*, *dream*, *feeblemind*, *summon shadow*; 6) *death spell*, *repulsion*.

**Note:** Feel free to substitute the new lich-altered spells given in *Van Richten’s Guide to the Lich* for any spells above.

“Werner” appears to be a muscular young man in his early 20s, at the peak of his health and strength. In fact, the vassalich has used a permanent *illusion* spell to assume Werner’s appearance. He studied Werner’s mannerisms and personal history, and used a version of the *permanency* spell from a scroll to make the assumed form last long enough to gain Van Richten’s trust.

“Werner” wears a *ring of mind shielding* to prevent the heroes from catching on to his masquerade. But his guise is not perfect; a *dispel magic* spell reveals him. Should this happen, read the following aloud:

In an instant, the muscular youth is transformed into a desiccated husk. His skin is waxy and his face lifeless. Scraggly wisps of hair cling to a mottled scalp, and the eyes are sunken hollows where bright pinpoints of red glow fiercely. Only the creature’s clothing remains unchanged.

The monster masquerading as Werner Ruscheider was a 12th-level wizard before he was transformed into a vassalich. He specialized in the school of necromancy, and as a vassalich retains all of his spellcasting abilities.

Before his transformation, he was a rather unusual wizard—a husky youth named Vort, with an intelligence only slightly higher than normal.



Always looking for a shortcut that would help him overcome this disability, the young mage sought out Azalin as a mentor.

“Werner” is fanatically loyal to Azalin. He sees his self-appointed mission to corrupt Van Richten as a way to prove himself. However, he is more likely to incur Azalin’s wrath than be subject to gratitude should the lich ever learn of his schemes. Azalin finds Van Richten useful as an occasional pawn, and gains much amusement from his efforts to defeat evil that, in the lich’s eyes, amount to little more than tilting at windmills.

The vassalich’s phylactery is secure under lock and key in the heart of Azalin’s lair. Because the heroes are not powerful enough to enter Azalin’s dangerous inner sanctum, they cannot truly destroy the vassalich. If his current body is “killed,” his spirit flees to his phylactery. If Azalin permits, the vassalich may later return in a new form to wreak his revenge on the heroes and Van Richten.

Should he wish, “Werner” can exude a *fear* aura in a 5’ radius from himself. Those caught in it must save vs. spells or flee in panic for 2d4 rounds. He can also use a chill touch against adversaries. Those touched must save vs. paralyzation or become *slowed* for 1d10 rounds. He can “turn off” these abilities if he desires, and he does so to maintain his disguise.

The vassalich is turned as a lich.

## Helping Van Richten Recover

Naturally, the realization that he has murdered innocent people devastates Van Richten. Inasmuch as he committed these crimes under a false impression, no alignment change is necessary. However, he feels an urgent need to make restitution.

“What separates us from the monsters that we fight?” he asks the heroes rhetorically. “It is this: We take responsibility for our deeds, and we have compassion for those we have wronged. I must take responsibility for my crimes and, if possible, make restitution.”

Van Richten tracks down the names and parentage of the three bards he slew. He makes long

journeys to visit their families, explain his crimes, and expiate them insofar as possible. The heroes do not see him for at least a few adventures.

The good doctor does not seek priests to resurrect the slain bards, because in Ravenloft, trafficking in this kind of magic often leads to disaster. If the heroes offer to find a priest or otherwise secure the victims' resurrection, Van Richten does not protest. However, he will stand by at the resurrection with a stake and holy water, just in case.

The heroes may help Van Richten deal with his grief by listening, counseling him, or other friendly aid. This need not be role-played, but thereafter Van Richten thinks of the heroes as loyal friends.

Keep this same technique in mind in dealing with the aftermath of the other adventures in this book. In some of them Van Richten loses close friends, sees a good student go mad, gets betrayed by a true love, and so on. It is wise to avoid running these dramatic life events in consecutive adventures involving Van Richten, for too many of these shocks deaden the emotional impact each makes.

The heroes should become impressed by Van Richten's iron grip on sanity and his impressive dedication to his cause. He walks the edge of the abyss and gazes into it constantly, and yet he never falls. The heroes should take him as an example in grappling with the terrors of Ravenloft.

## Terror Tip: Divisive Suspicions

Often a DM who has information for a single player asks that player to step out of the gaming room for a private, whispered conference. Use this technique at least once with each player during this adventure.

Tell each player that his or her character suspects that "something isn't quite right" with one of the other heroes (*not* Van Richten or Werner). His or her character has seen that hero performing an action that suggests that he may be turning into a vampire. It should be something subtle—for example, licking bloody fingers, flinching slightly in sunlight, or avoiding a mirror.

In fact, these "actions" are illusions, the result of Werner's *wand of illusions*.

Instruct the player that this information can be shared with the other players—but that this must be done out of earshot of the rest of the group, in similar, one-on-one whispered conferences outside the room.

In each conference, name a different hero as the one who is "acting suspiciously." Eventually, with all of the whispered conversations, the characters will all be watching their backs, suspicious of every move the other heroes make.



*an is in error throughout his strife."*

—Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Faust, Pt. 1.

"Family Feud" is intended for 3-4 heroes of levels 4-6. The heroes have been recruited by Van Richten to assist him in the hunt for a werebeast that has been plaguing northern Valachan. In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 5. Adjust his statistics by deducting 5d6 hit points and 150 percentage points from his thieving abilities.

Van Richten has supplied each hero with three sprigs of wolvesbane, and has lent a silver dagger or silver-coated mace to any hero who doesn't own a magical weapon.

When the adventure begins, the party has spent a few uneventful days visiting farms and gathering tales of mutilated cattle. No one who lives has seen the werebeast, although the tracks near the slain animals leave little doubt as to the nature of the beast that killed them. While heading to an isolated farm, they are waved down by a pair of teenage Vistani, who say their *oma* wishes to provide the heroes with information on the marauding werebeast. Van Richten, though clearly doubting their trustworthiness, suggests the party should go with them.

As the Vistani lead the way through the forest, three large wolves suddenly attack from the shadows. One attacks one of the Vistani, who starts screaming, trying desperately to keep the fangs from his throat. Two other wolves attack random party members or their mounts.

**Wolves (3):** Int Low (5); AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 19, 17, 11; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA Nil; SD Resistant to *charm*; SZ S; ML 10; XP 120.

When rescued by a hero, the attacked Vistani will be crying and gibbering hysterically about how the werewolf is summoning wolves to kill them all. Although his clothes are ripped and torn, he is unhurt.

Keeping close to the heroes (the one still shivering and gibbering), the Vistani leads the party to a cave where a stunningly beautiful Vistana woman sits amid the trappings of her people, reclining in a bed of furs. After hearing of the wolf attack, she shakes her head sadly, saying that the beasts will soon drive all who live in the area away . . . or kill them. "The monster has gotten bolder since I failed to stop it," she says, "but at least now it's injured, and experienced hunters like yourselves should be able to kill it before it recovers completely." While speaking the final words, she fixes her dark eyes on Van Richten.

If asked what she meant when she said the werebeast is injured, she explains how she confronted the monster several nights ago. She had believed that her magical powers would be enough to defeat the creature, but she was in error. She throws back the furs to reveal that her legs are heavily bandaged, and says that all her magic managed to do was injure the creature and allow her to escape with life, if not limbs, intact. She laments that her failed attempt has apparently made her family a target of the creature, and that now they will have to resume the nomadic ways of her people.

Van Richten is moved by the Vistana's apparent bravery, and asks if she has any idea where the beast's lair is. She does, saying that she had attempted to fight it by its lair. She gives the heroes clear directions to a cottage that lies deeper in the woods. As they are about to leave, the Vistana performs a quick ceremony, asking the Powers to watch over them and guide their hands in battle.

## The Truth of the Matter

The heroes are, in fact, being assisted by the very werebeast they are hunting. The wolf attack was staged for their benefit, and the Vistana who was attacked was never in any danger, since she had called the wolves herself, using her special power of *summon animal allies*. The three Vistani are actually a pack of werewolves, and they have directed the heroes toward a weretigress who has been living peacefully in the area with her cubs since before the werewolves arrived.

Recently, the two females squared off, the weretigress wishing to stop the werewolves from attracting the attention of the likes of Van Richten, and the werewolf wanting to eliminate any challenge to dominance in the area. They almost killed each other. Now, using the heroes as dupes, she hopes to definitively end the conflict.

The heroes easily find the cottage in the forest. It is flanked by two vegetable gardens, and two small children tumble in the dirt out front. A woman with short golden hair and her arm in a sling sits in a chair by the door, watching them with a smile. As the heroes watch, it becomes apparent that the children are actually covered with golden fur with black stripes; they are diminutive humanoid tigers.

Van Richten will note this, and express surprise that a weretiger is so far from its normal habitat of Sri Raji, and will wonder how she controlled the attacking wolves. Generally, he will say, werebeasts only control animals of stock similar to their phenotype. "I don't think we should run the risk of asking her questions, however," the doctor concludes. "Even in an injured state, a weretigress can be a formidable opponent."

Ideally, the heroes will realize the details as presented so far don't add up, and will decide to speak with the woman rather than attack outright. Van Richten will caution against it, but will admit that there is a mystery here that deserves further investigation. Once the weretigress becomes aware of the heroes presence, she shoos the children inside the cottage. If attacked, she changes into her hybrid form and defends herself to the death. If the heroes speak with her, she will attempt to explain the truth of the matter, including the true nature of the three Vistani. Van Richten will say that he has rarely heard of a werebeast that lives peaceably among humans, and the weretigress will point out that her pride is not living among the humans.

As they speak, a cry goes up from the woods: "You had your chance to bag a werebeast!" The Vistani appear among the trees, assuming their hybrid forms. The injured mother and one of the young engage the heroes while the third werewolf attacks the weretigress, who also assumes her hybrid form. Before closing the elder werewolf hits the strongest-looking hero with a *magic missile*.

**Weretigress:** Int Avg (14); AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+2; hp 52 (presently 27); THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12; SD +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML 19 (defending cubs); XP 975.

**Werewolves (2):** Int Avg (10); AL CE AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3; hp 32, 28; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420 each.

**Werewolf, mother:** Int Avg (16); AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 39 (presently 16; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD +1 or better to hit; SA Spells (*magic missile* x2); SZ M; ML 12; XP 650.

After three rounds of combat 1d6 wolves arrive, joining the fray in response to the use of the *summon animal allies* power. The last werewolf standing will attempt to flee. Should he or she escape, it will attempt to avenge its slain kin at a later date.

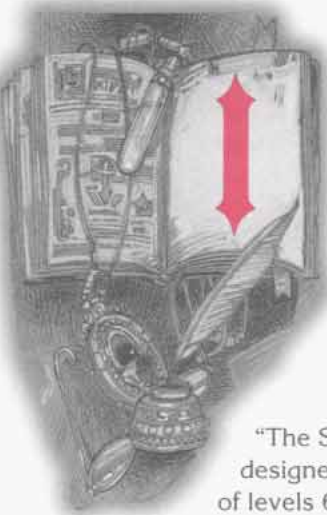
## Aftermath

Should the weretigress be slain by either the werewolves or the heroes, her cubs will come rushing out from the cottage, wailing pitifully, and throw themselves upon her body. They will hiss and growl and bite (inflicting 1d2 points of damage) at anyone who tries to get them away from their mother's body, unless they are coaxed away gently.

The heroes may then choose to slay the pitiful little creatures, leave them to their fate, (both of which will result in a Powers Check, since they are neither evil nor a threat, and are presently the equivalent of 5-6 year-old human children), or assume guardianship of them. The latter could lead to some interesting role-playing situations, as the heroes serve as surrogate parents to the kids who have wholly unique sets of growing pains. Particularly, interaction with Van Richten could be most interesting, since the doctor believes all lycanthropes are inherently evil. This may be a chance for the scholar of the macabre to learn otherwise. In an extended campaign, the weretiger cubs might grow up to be allies of both the heroes and Van Richten, and become Ravenloft's foremost hunters of werewolves in memory of their slain mother.



# THE SURGEON'S BLADE



*doubt not that in due time, when the arts are brought to perfection, some means will be found to give a sound head to a man that has none at all.*

Voltaire  
"Serpents," entry in  
*Philosophical Dictionary*  
(1764)

"The Surgeon's Blade" is designed for three or four heroes of levels 6–8. It pits the heroes against a former companion of Dr.

Van Richten—a madman who hopes to create a superior golem and to install in it the "greatest intellect of all time."

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 6. Adjust his statistics by deducting 4d6 hit points and 120 percentage points from his thieving abilities. He carries only his standard kit—which is left behind when he is abducted.

The adventure is set near the town of Neufurchtenburg, in the domain of Lamordia. The mad scientist's surgery can be placed in any Ravenloft domain where golems are active.

Before play begins, review the rules for psionics in Chapter VII of the *Realm of Terror* sourcebook.

## Background

Ten years ago, Emil Bollenbach overheard Dr. Rudolph Van Richten discussing the different types of golems and how to destroy them. Fascinated, the young medical student volunteered to help track and destroy these evil creatures. For two years he accompanied Van Richten in "golem hunts." Then, in the middle of an expedition, he mysteriously disappeared.

Van Richten assumed that his young protégé had been killed. In fact, Emil had slipped away from the group to pursue his own mad scheme.

Taking inspiration from the old adage, "fight fire with fire," Emil decided that the only thing able to rid Ravenloft of its golems was a "super golem"

with the body of one of the most powerful animals in Ravenloft and the brain of a "giant intellect." This brain would come from none other than his former mentor, Dr. Van Richten.

In the eight years since his disappearance, Emil has built a surgery in an abandoned keep and has begun experimenting in the creation of golems. Madman that he is, he doesn't realize that his experiments are adding more golems to the world; his justification is that one day his "super golem" will destroy the byproducts of these "necessary experiments."

## Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins on an evening when the heroes are staying overnight with Van Richten, either as guests at his home in Mordentshire, or at a comfortable inn while traveling with him—perhaps on a lecture tour.

That night, thugs break into the building. Emil hired them to capture Van Richten and carry him away to a rendezvous point. From there, Emil's golems are to spirit the doctor away to his laboratory in a ruined keep.

Let the heroes thwart the first kidnapping attempt. The intruders (experienced thieves, described below) flee, but over the days that follow, they continue trying to kidnap Van Richten in a variety of locations:

- ❖ On a crowded street, using a purse-snatching as a diversion.
- ❖ In a tavern or inn, where they pose as servants; they grab Van Richten after starting a fire that forces the building's evacuation.
- ❖ In a shop, where they lure Van Richten into a back room to see "a rare magical item that aids in monster-hunting."

The thieves are trained actors who use makeup, padded clothing, and wigs to disguise themselves. The one thing that does give them away is that each, at one point in his or her life, lost a body part. Emil hired them for this job by using his knowledge of golem construction to give each thief a new limb or eye. But because the replacement parts came from dead bodies, they

# THE SURGEON'S BLADE

look peculiar. They function normally, but the skin is yellow and waxy, or the eye is flat and lifeless. Suture marks, hidden by makeup, surround the replacement part.

**7th-level thieves (6):** Int 13; AL Varies; AC 7 (leather armor) plus dexterity adjustments; MV 12; HD 7; hp 33 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Backstab; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ S-M; ML Steady (12); XP 650 each.

The skills of the thieves:

PP 45%	OL 65%	F/RT 25%	MS 55%
HS 45%	DN 35%	CW 70%	RL 20%

**Magee** is a human who lost his eye in a knife fight. He now has one brown eye and one replacement eye of a flat blue. A talented mimic with a habit of whistling, this daredevil would cheerfully take any risk. He has a pair of *slippers of spider climbing* for reaching high windows. Dex: 16, AL N. Adjustments: +5% to OL.

**Pasquale** is a quarter-drow elf whose left leg was terribly burned by a trap he failed to detect. The replacement limb that Emil grafted on is a pale ivory—quite distinctive from Pasquale's dark skin. Pasquale is a thuggish lout who picks his fingernails with a razor-sharp dagger. He is cruel and devious. He carries a +2 *dagger*. Dex: 11, AL CE. Adjustments: -5% to F/RT; -10% to MS.

**Tamara** is a gnome who disguises herself as an innocent human child. Looking up at her victim with wide eyes, she tugs on a sleeve, asking for help in finding her "mommy" while picking the victim's pocket at the same time. She lost three fingers on her right hand in a knife fight; Emil replaced these with digits that are too long for her tiny hand.

Tamara has a *ring of human influence* useful in getting Van Richten to come along quietly (or in getting a hero to leave him temporarily unguarded). She carries a +2 *longtooth dagger*. Dex: 14, AL NE. Adjustments: +5% to OL, MS, HS; +10% to F/RT, DN; -15% to CW.

## Terror Tip: Cover of Darkness

Before the players arrive, set up the lights in the room so that they are all controlled by a single automatic timer (one of the wall-plug types). If necessary, plug all of the lights in the room into one extension cord, then conceal it behind a piece of furniture.

Don't use more than one timer, because they're not accurate enough to all go off at the same time. If you normally use overhead lighting, replace the bulbs with burned-out bulbs as an excuse to use the lamps.

Set the timer so that the lights will go off a short time after play begins. Half an hour is about right—just long enough for players to settle into the game.

Pace the game so that the lights go out at the same time as the first kidnap attempt. To stall until this happens, begin by having Van Richten and heroes settle in around a cozy fire. Van Richten starts to tell a spooky story. When the lights go off, Van Richten's voice is suddenly muffled by a hand over his mouth.

Have a candle and match ready. When one of the player characters relights the room, light the candle. Play the duration of the kidnapping by candlelight.

If the players press for an explanation of why the lights went out, reveal later that one of the thieves has the psionic wild talent control light.

**Amir** is a human who grew up in a harsh desert kingdom. When he was caught stealing, the sultan's guards hacked off his right hand. Emil replaced it with the slender hand of a woman. Amir has brooding eyes and a drooping mustache. He is close-lipped, speaking in a whisper when he speaks at all. He has a *hat of disguise* and is armed with a +2 *dagger of throwing*. Dex: 15, AL LE.

**Allandra** is a beautiful half-elf whose honey-colored hair and melting blue eyes hide a cold heart. She cares only for her own welfare.

# THE SURGEON'S BLADE



She was born with a deformed foot; Emil has replaced it. She has the wild psionic talent control light. If the doctor struggles, Allandra uses her *rope of entanglement* on him. Dex: 13, AL NE. Adjustments: +10% to PP; +5% to HS.

**Jody** is a tiny human woman who disguises herself as a boy. She has close-cropped hair and a wicked glint in her eye. A rival gang hacked off her left ear as a warning; Emil has replaced it with a pointed elven ear. She is armed with a *buckle knife*. Dex: 17, AL N. Adjustments: +5% to PP, MS, HS; +10% to OL.

The thieves share among them four magical potions to aid in their kidnapping attempts. They use a *potion of clairaudience* and a *potion of clairvoyance* to learn the best time to strike, and two *potions of invisibility* to sneak up on Van Richten.

## The Keep

Eventually, the thieves kidnap Van Richten. The heroes can trail them—either through magical means (e.g., scrying) or by tracking—to a boarded-up inn on the outskirts of town. Here, under cover of darkness, the thieves turn Van Richten over to four of Emil's "lab assistants"—flesh golems. These creatures carry him away to Emil's surgery in the ruined keep near Neufurchtenburg.

The heroes can follow the thieves' trail relatively easily (let alone the golems'), but don't allow them to catch up with the kidnapers and rescue Van Richten. Emil's minions should stay one step ahead, successfully conveying Van Richten to the ruined keep. The heroes must then enter the keep to save their mentor.

The keep lies three miles north of Neufurchtenburg. It is completely ruined and open to the sky; little more than the outer walls remain. Next to it are three buildings, all equally decrepit. A wooden barn's rotted timbers have caused its ceiling to

collapse. The layout of a small stone building suggests it was once a chapel. The third building is a windmill—ancient and leaning, but with clean white sails that turn in the wind, producing a steady creaking noise. These buildings are connected, below ground, by brick-lined passageways that join the basements of each building to the keep's dungeon.

The keep has four entries to its lower level: intact stairways in Room F and Room H; a stairway in Room B that has partly collapsed due to the growth of a tree in the adjoining wall (heroes trying to clear it have a 95% chance to collapse the wall and receive 2d6 damage from falling stones); and a ladder leading down from a hole in the floor of Room D. The ladder is hidden behind a stack of old barrels and boxes.

At first glance, the lower level of the keep seems nothing more than a passageway that runs through the octagonal foundation walls of the keep. But secret doors lead to inner passageways connected in a mazelike pattern, and then to the dungeon of the keep—and Emil's surgery.

Although the keep is ruined, Emil has cleared or repaired portions to meet his needs. The portcullises that close off the entryway (Room A) look rusty, but their mechanisms (in Room H) work perfectly. When the heroes arrive the portcullises are raised—but they can drop suddenly to trap intruders in the entryway.

The stable (Room E) has been refurbished with new stalls. Emil keeps his riding horse here.

A canvas tent in Room C contains a cot, food, cooking gear, a lantern, a folding table and chair, and a knapsack with changes of clothing. Just outside is a firepit; the ashes are still warm.

In Room F and Room H, long, heavy chains are attached to wooden posts set in the floor. Emil keeps his experimental animals chained up here. One animal is chained up in each room, to the post closest to the door.

## The Chapel

This stone building was once dedicated to Zababa, a god of war. Its massive bronze doors bear the symbols of the god: a sword crossed with a light-

ning bolt. Each of the pillars in the outer chamber is carved with a scene from an ancient battle. In the inner chamber is a marble dais, on which the statue of the god once stood. Only the feet and shattered ankles remain. A plaque below them bears the words: "All hail Zababa, mighty giant of war."

The basement of the chapel (reached through a sliding panel in the dais that leads to a ladder) was once a place where secret sacrifices were made to the war god. The wall is crusted with layers of dried blood and rusted arrowheads are wedged into cracks in the floor.

## The Windmill

Four large sails, obviously quite new and in good repair, turn steadily in the wind. (If the wind speed becomes important, choose or roll 1d12: 1 is a faint breeze, 12 a full gale.)

Inside the windmill, the millstone stands against one wall. The shaft that would normally connect to the millstone now extends through a hole in the floor. A strange odor (ozone) and ominous crackling noises come from below.

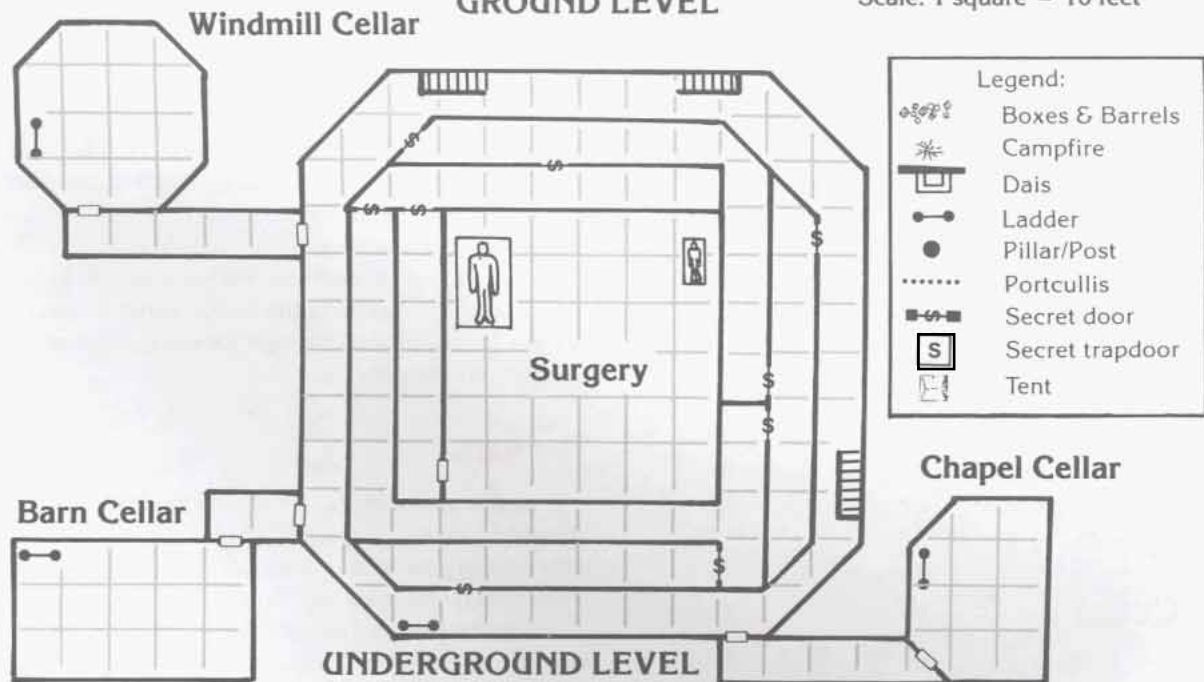
The basement (accessible through a secret trapdoor) is filled with a large metal box, into which the rotating shaft vanishes. This device is a primitive electrical generator. When the time is right, Emil will run thick copper wires to the surgery to deliver a jolt of energy that will awaken the gigantic golem he is creating.

The generator is safe enough—unless a character opens its access panel and reaches inside. Anyone touching the coiled wires inside suffers 1d6 electrical damage for each point of current wind speed.

## The Barn

Rotten wooden walls still stand, but the barn's shingled roof has collapsed. Its floor is covered with a soggy mush that was once several hundred bales of hay. Heroes who dig through the rotted timbers and malodorous slime on the floor find a secret trapdoor in one corner. It leads to the basement of the barn, which is full of rusted farm implements.

# THE SURGEON'S BLADE



## Golem Guardians

The ruined keep is guarded by Emil's minions—a pack of flesh golems that patrol the ruins, attacking any intruders they meet. They make full use of the stairways, secret trap doors and underground passageways, popping down one and up the next to gain surprise on the heroes. They do not enter the surgery, except in pursuit of the heroes.

**Flesh golems (8):** Int Semi (4); AL N; AC 9; MV 8; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8 (fists); SA Nil; SD Partial immunity to fire and cold based spells; MR Nil; SZ L; ML Fearless (20); XP 5,000 each.

The golems have developed strategies to deal with intruders. They use the portcullises to trap the heroes in Room A, then rain down a hail of broken rock from the walls above. They wait until the heroes try to clear the stairway in Room B, then attack as soon as the adjoining wall collapses. Each throws one stone per round. Roll normally to hit; each successful hit does 1d6 damage.

Should the heroes head for Room C, a golem races ahead of them to pose as a sleeper inside the tent. As that golem springs up from the cot, others claw their way into the tent to attack.

The golems make use of the hiding places provided by the boxes and barrels in Room D (possibly hiding inside them). They also hide in the stable—although their presence here spooks Emil's riding horse—and behind piles of rubble in Room G.

## Experimental Animals

In his efforts to learn the surgical techniques necessary to create golems, Emil experimented first on animals. Many of these died as the result of his gruesome tests, but two survived and now live in Rooms F and H.

Emil created them by stitching a variety of monsters together, producing two truly dangerous specimens. Each is kept on a 20' length of chain.

### Winged Bear Crawler

The experimental animal in Room F has a cave bear's body, the wings of a great condor, and the head of a carrion crawler, complete with paralysis-inducing tentacles. Read the players the following when they see it:

You hear chains rattling. Looking toward the sound, you see a creature with the massive body of a bear, the wings of a great bird, and a segmented head with eight writhing tentacles. The creature is chained to a post, but has nearly broken free.

The chain will break in 2d4 rounds. If the heroes immediately attack, it retaliates, fighting as best it can until the chain breaks. If the heroes leave it alone, it resumes its efforts to break free. It then flies up to the top of a wall and begins to hunt, attacking any heroes in sight.

**Winged bear crawler:** Int Semi (4); AL N; AC 6 (3 head); MV 12, Fl 48 C; HD 6+6; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 10; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (paws, plus possible 2d8 hug); SA Paralysis; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ H; ML Avg (8); XP 2,000.

### Snake-Headed Hog

The animal in Room H is a warthog with the head of a spitting snake. It has the warthog's aggressive temperament and the snake's ability to spit poison up to 30 feet. When the heroes discover it, read the following:



You see a strange looking creature. At first glance, it looks like a pig with two tails. One tail is brown like the rest of the creature; the other is green. The creature lies on its side, apparently sleeping. A chain around one ankle is attached to a heavy wooden post.

At the first sound, the snake-headed hog leaps to its feet and attacks, rushing to the full length of its chain and spitting.

**Snake-headed hog:** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SA Spits poison; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ S; ML Avg (8); XP 270.

## Emil Bollenbach

Madman, Lawful Evil

AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife); SA surprise, paralytic poison; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (10); XP 35.

Str 12	Dex 16	Con 11
Int 18	Wis 16	Cha 11

Emil is a handsome young man with unruly auburn hair. His appearance is distorted by a nervous tic at one side of his mouth and the maniacal gleam in his eye. He wears disheveled tunic and pantaloons, covered by a bloodstained apron. Once a promising young medical student, Emil went mad seeing a golem that had the head of one of his companions.

His madness is readily apparent in the adages he quotes at the most inappropriate moments. He might laughingly cackle, "An eye for an eye, a leg for a leg," while performing surgery to replace a missing orb or limb, or might garble a saying, spouting such nonsense as, "A bear in the lab is worth two in the bush."

If cornered, he fights with syringes filled with Type O poison (injected, 2d12 rds, paralytic). He keeps six of them in a leather case in his pocket.

Emil has the psionic wild talent switch person-

ality (and the contact and mindlink prerequisites)—but he does not realize that he has this ability.

## In the Surgery

**N**o matter how long it takes the heroes to reach Emil's surgery in the dungeon of the keep, they arrive exactly as Emil is about to perform the operation to place Van Richten's brain in the body of the giant golem. Emil does not confront the heroes before this, relying on his flesh golem guardians to deal with intruders.

As the heroes open the door to the surgery, read the following to the players:

Behind the door lies a dimly lit room with gray stone walls. Clearly it was once a dungeon. The air smells strongly of iodine and soap. The furniture consists of two tables. A humanoid figure, draped with a dull white cloth, lies on each.

One figure is huge, a hulking gray bear nearly twelve feet tall, to which human ears and eyes have been crudely sutured. The other is smaller, human. The heads of both are shaved bald and stained with red dye.

A man bends over the smaller figure, muttering to himself. His sleeves are rolled up, and over his tunic he wears an apron covered in dark stains. You see the glint of a steel blade in his hand.

The man pauses, then laughs to himself. "A scalpel a day cuts the doctor away," he cackles. As he pulls a lantern closer to the table, his victim's face is revealed. With a shock of horror, you realize that your companion, Dr. Rudolph Van Richten, is about to have his brain laid bare.

Viewing this scene may require a horror check. Van Richten is unconscious but as yet unharmed.

Emil is engrossed in his work, and does not look up. When he realizes the heroes have come in, he gestures impatiently with his scalpel. "You fools! Can't you see that I'm performing an operation of great delicacy? Get out!"

If the heroes ask what he is doing, Emil replies, "I'm creating a super golem—one that will destroy every golem ever created. Think of it! The body of a bear and the brain of a giant intellect! What better match could there be?"

As soon as the heroes threaten Emil, his stress activates his wild psionic talent. He subconsciously uses it to place his mind in the body of the giant golem. His own body slumps in a coma, because the bear's mind is dead.

Emil automatically makes his system shock saving throw and—after one round of confusion—recovers and begins to control the body of the bear, using it to attack the heroes.

The bear has a few "improvements." When the heroes enter the room they do not see these; the sheet covers them. But when it rises from the table, they can see that each of the bear's paws has been fitted with four carrion crawler tentacles, each two feet long. A character struck by a paw must save vs. paralysis or become paralyzed for 2d6 turns.

The creature also has a cave bear's ability to hug its victims on a paw hit of 18 or better. It also continues to fight for 1d4 rounds after reaching 0 to -8 hit points. Upon reaching -9 or fewer hit points it immediately dies.

Because it is a golem, the creature is partially immune to fire and cold-based spells, which merely slow it for 2d6 rounds. Electrical attacks *restore* 1 hp for each point of damage they would normally have done.

Emil has just enough psionic strength points (39) to use this power once, and cannot return his mind to his own body for at least four hours (if sleeping) or 13 hours (awake). If his own body dies during this time, Emil is trapped in the bear body. Once Emil's mind does return to his own body, the bear becomes an inanimate corpse.

**Super (flesh) golem:** Int Non- (0), or Genius (18) with Emil's mind; AL NE; AC 0; MV 8; HD 13+2; hp 65; THAC0 7; #AT 2; Dmg 1d12 (bite); SA Hug for 2d8, paralysis; SD Struck only by magical weapon, merely slowed by fire or cold-based attacks, electrical attacks restore damage; MR Nil; SZ H (12' tall); ML Fearless (19); XP 9,000.





*s the best wine doth  
make the sharpest  
vinegar, so the deepest  
love turneth to the  
deadliest hate.*

John Lyly  
*Euphues: The Anatomy  
of Wit* (1579)

“The Scarlet Kiss” is designed for three to four heroes of levels 7–9. Because the heroes face a vampire, the group should include a priest of good alignment. But there are NPCs in this adventure who can also

fill that slot.

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 7. Adjust his statistics by deducting 3d6 hit points and 90 percentage points from his thieving abilities. In addition to his standard monster-hunting kit, he carries these additional items in a black doctor’s bag: six holy wafers blessed by a priest of good alignment (blessed accouterments); two more vials of holy water; six cloves of garlic; a mallet; and an extra wooden stake.

The adventure takes place in Mordentshire, Van Richten’s home town, but works in any major city in Ravenloft.

Before play begins, create NPC statistics for the Sisters of Mercy, choosing from the priest spells listed.

## Background

A few weeks ago, an order known as the Sisters of Mercy called in Van Richten to investigate a strange illness affecting patients at their local hospice. Instead of improving, the patients under their care steadily worsened. The sisters suspected a supernatural cause, and so they consulted the renowned Dr. Van Richten.

At the hospice, Van Richten met a young sister whose honeyed voice and golden hair brought back poignant memories of his late wife Ingrid. Charmed by the compassion the young

woman displayed for her patients, he fell deeply in love. When she invited him, late one night, to share a glass of red wine with her, he could not refuse.

Blinded by his passion, Van Richten did not realize that this young woman was the evil agent he was seeking — a vampire who must feed daily. She had for some time slaked her thirst with the blood of patients under her care. To hide her feedings, she opened their existing wounds, drained a bowl of blood from them (to drink later, in private), then stitched them up again. All the while, she *charmed* her victims into thinking that these were normal ministrations.

Rather than killing Van Richten when he began to close in on the truth, the vampire decided to win him to her side by turning him into a vampire himself. A single drop of her own blood in a glass of red wine evoked her unique curse. As the adventure begins, Van Richten is losing one point of Strength per day, and is down to Str 3. When his Strength reaches 0, he too will become a creature of the night.

Van Richten has at last realized that the young woman, who introduced herself to him as “Sister Kelsey,” is a vampire. He believes that the only way to avoid becoming one of the Nosferatu is by killing her. Once his heart was filled with love, but now it beats with a merciless hatred.

## Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins several days after Van Richten has been cursed. Three days from now, when the sun rises, he will lose the last of his Strength and die. The day after that, he will rise as a vampire.

The heroes are passing through the town in which the Sisters of Mercy hospice is located. They stumble on the aftermath of a trap that Van Richten set for the vampire—a trap that failed. Read the players the following:

Walking down a narrow street in a poor part of town, you notice a large letter “Q”, painted in a blood-red pigment on the door of a residence.

From just inside this door come muffled thuds and the smash of broken glass. A woman's voice cries out in fear and alarm. "Help! Oh someone stop them, please!"

A moment later, all is silent inside the residence, save for one low groan.

Van Richten's plan was simple. He hired three veteran fighters to dress in nightclothes and get into beds with their weapons hidden under the covers. To insure privacy, he painted a "Q" (for "quarantine") on the door, telling neighbors that the three men were suffering from a contagious flu. Then he sent for one of the sisters to come and tend the "invalids," knowing it was the vampire's shift.

When she arrived, the men immediately attacked. Unfortunately, the vampire proved stronger and craftier than Van Richten expected. In the brief battle that followed she knocked out Van Richten and killed his three companions.

Neighbors warn the heroes not to enter the residence. "It's under quarantine!" they cry. "Don't go in!" If the heroes ignore this advice and enter the residence to see what the disturbance was, read the following aloud to the players:

The door leads to the front parlor of a modest residence. Three beds have been placed in the parlor near the fireplace; all are mussed as if recently occupied.

Three large, burly men, dressed in nightclothes, lie on the floor. Each man stares sightlessly at the ceiling, his head twisted at an unnatural angle. Swords and clubs lie near each body; clearly the men were involved in some sort of fight.

Shards of broken glass litter the floor.

A fourth man—older and smaller than the others, dressed in brown pants and a tweed jacket—lies in front of an open wardrobe. He has a large bruise on his forehead.

A woman in a blue tunic bends over the smaller man. Her hair is covered with a scarf,

and her face veiled. One hand gently touches the man's throat, checking for a pulse, and her head is lowered to listen for the sound of his breathing. The sleeves of her tunic are embroidered with golden snakes.

The three mercenary fighters died when the vampire snapped their necks. The smaller man (Van Richten) was hiding inside the wardrobe; she knocked him unconscious when he tried to leave it during the scuffle. The shards of glass come from two glass vials; spilled holy water has caused a damp stain on the carpet. A wooden mallet and stake lie under one of the beds. (The vampire kicked them out of sight.)

The woman, dressed in the blue tunic of a Sister of Mercy, is the vampire. She was just about to feed on Van Richten. As long as he remains unconscious, she sticks to her story—that she is a healer, summoned to this house, who arrived moments after a brawl took place. (She says she came in the back door.) She gives her name as "Sister Kelsey." If seriously threatened, she escapes by turning gaseous.

Van Richten regains consciousness a short time later. If the heroes are helpful and seem competent, he tells them his story and seeks their help in killing the vampire.

If the heroes ignore the commotion inside the residence, Van Richten eventually tracks them down. He is seeking an experienced party of adventurers to assist him in a vampire hunt.

Van Richten is very weak—he can only provide advice and information. He explains to the heroes what has happened to him (summarize the "Background" section) and begs them to help him kill the evil creature.

Van Richten says the vampire is named Sister Kelsey. He doesn't think he could recognize the vampire if she were unveiled; the room where he sipped wine with her was dimly lit and he remembers only her blonde hair, her melodious voice, and the smooth, unblemished skin of her hands and wrists (which he kissed). If the heroes think to ask what color her eyes are, he remembers that they are green.

# THE SCARLET KISS

Van Richten provides the heroes with advice on how to spot a vampire: cold, pale skin; the absence of a reflection in a mirror; the healing of wounds at an abnormal rate; an aversion to garlic, sunlight, holy symbols, and blessed accouterments; an inability to cross running water; inability to enter a home without being invited in; stigmata (purplish marks) caused by damage from sunlight or holy water.

Unfortunately, Van Richten does not realize that this is a unique vampire. For reasons explained below, she lacks most of the weaknesses he outlines. This will complicate the problem of locating her.

Van Richten also advises the heroes how best to kill a vampire: drive a wooden stake through its heart; burn it with sunlight; attack with holy water or blessed weapons. He gives them directions to the Sisters of Mercy hospice, and tells them that, if they fail to kill the vampire, he will turn into an undead creature himself in three days' time.

## At the Hospice

Now that she realizes that Van Richten is seeking to destroy her, the vampire returns to the hospice, where she plans to remain until the allotted number of days have passed and her "true love" becomes a vampire. At that time, she is certain, he will change his mind and realize the joys of eternal unlife.

The heroes must use detective work to locate the vampire among the other Sisters of Mercy. Because all cover their hair and veil their faces, it is nearly impossible to tell one from another. Of the 16 sisters at the hospice, four have blonde hair (Sisters Jolinda, Patrice, Evangeline, and Bronwyn). Only Evangeline and Bronwyn have green eyes.

The vampire gave Van Richten and the heroes a false name. The real Sister Kelsey is quite fat, and has bright red hair. The woman the heroes are looking for is actually Sister Evangeline. For her description and background, see below.

### Sisters of Mercy Hospice

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



# THE SCARLET KISS

**The sisters:** Each sister is a mid-level (3rd- to 7th-) priestess of Hala, goddess of healing. They have major access to the following spheres: All, Creation, Divination, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, and Summoning. They have minor access to the spheres Animal, Charm, Guardian, Plant, Sun, and Weather.

Typical spells of a Sister of Mercy include 1) *bless, cure light wounds, detect poison, endure cold/heat, light, locate animals or plants* (useful in finding medicinal ingredients), *protection from evil, purify food & drink, remove fear, sanctuary*; 2) *aid, augury, charm person or mammal, good-berry, resist fire/cold, slow poison*; 3) *continual light, create food & water, cure blindness or deafness, cure disease, negative plane protection, protection from fire, remove curse, remove paralysis, speak with dead* (used to perform autopsies); 4) *cure serious wounds, neutralize poison, protection from evil 10' radius, repel insects*.

Typical magical items a sister might carry include: *elixir of health; periapt of health; periapt of wound closure; potion of extra-healing; potion of healing; potion of vitality; staff of curing*. Each sister has a chance of possessing one magical item, expressed as a percentage equal to her level multiplied by 10.

The Sisters of Mercy are all neutral good; the vampire could hide among them because evil alignment is undetectable in Ravenloft. They react with open skepticism—perhaps even hostility—to any suggestion that a member of their order is a vampire, refusing to answer any further questions and insisting that the heroes say a prayer of penance for this blasphemy. Otherwise, they answer questions politely but are reluctant to answer questions “of a personal nature” about their fellow sisters.

Although the hospice treats both male and female patients, only women ordained in the faith are allowed into its residence. All sisters wear their head scarves and veils at all times (even when eating; they raise the spoon below the veil)—although they take these off when going to bed. If the heroes try to pose as sisters visiting from another city, they must obtain habits (or passable facsimiles) and must learn the standard greeting: “Greetings, Sister. May Hala’s left hand

bless you with health”—and reply: “And her right hand bless you with happiness.”

Any hero who forces a Sister of Mercy (with the exception of Evangeline) to remove her veil is inflicted with a minor *curse* by the goddess Hala and must save vs. spells or be struck blind for 1d4 hours.

**1) Sick rooms.** Patients who come to the Sisters of Mercy for healing rest in these rooms between magical treatments. Half the 36 beds hold people suffering from a variety of ailments and injuries.

**2) Temple.** Magical healing treatments take place here, in a bed positioned under a golden statue of Hala—a woman with snakes twined around her arms. The eyes are glittering diamonds.

**3) Treasury.** This room, protected by a solid door and heavy locks, holds the payments made to the temple by grateful patients. The treasure includes 10,000 cp, 8,000 sp, 3,000 gp, and a sack of 5d10 semi-precious stones.

**4) Laundry.** Here the sisters wash their habits and hang them out to dry. They also wash the hospice bedding here.

**5) Kitchen.** The sisters eat in this communal kitchen with its stove and large table.

**6a-h) Cells.** The sisters live two to a room. Each cell holds two simple cots, a mat, wash stand, and wooden stools. Evangeline’s cell is **6c**.

## The Clues

**S**ister Evangeline is a unique vampire, in that she does not display many of the traditional signs of vampirism. Sunlight does not burn her; it simply makes her sleepy. If exposed to full sunlight she must save vs. paralyzation or fall soundly asleep. She can go out of doors during the day, however, because her habit, veil and scarf shield her from the sun.

Garlic does not harm her; she can even ingest it. She does cast a reflection in a mirror, and cannot be held at bay by one.

Because the Sisters of Mercy believe Evangeline is one of them, they have never used a holy symbol of Hala or any of Hala's blessed accouterments against her. Should the heroes force them to do so, these holy items have no effect—unless the sister has first been shown irrefutable proof that Evangeline is a vampire. Until this happens, the sisters fall into the same category as non-worshippers of Hala, who also cannot use this goddess' holy symbols or accouterments. Evangeline can, in fact, touch Hala's holy items without harm and is not held at bay. Holy water blessed by a priestess of Hala, however, damages Evangeline normally, because no faith is required to wield this weapon.

Holy items from other good-aligned faiths (like the wafers provided by Van Richten at the start of this adventure) affect Evangeline normally.

The heroes may have to rely on old-fashioned investigative skills to track Evangeline down. They can eliminate three of the blonde Sisters of Mercy from suspicion by noting the following:

- ❖ Sister Jolinda is a half-elf who takes care to conceal her heritage, lest she be kicked out of the order. (If the heroes specifically ask Van Richten about the vampire's ears, he tells them that they are not pointed.)
- ❖ Sister Patrice rarely speaks, because she has a pronounced stutter that she is ashamed of. (The vampire has no such impediment.)
- ❖ Sister Bronwyn has a past she would like to hide, and is evasive when questioned. She was a member of a bandit group before converting to the faith. Her hands and wrists bear several sword scars. (The vampire's hands and wrists are unscarred.)

Several clues point to Sister Evangeline as the most likely vampire:

- ❖ She always insists on laundering her own habit (because it has been deliberately defiled). Once, when it was torn, she adamantly refused

the loan of a spare habit owned by her cellmate, Sister Nanette.

- ❖ She has yet to volunteer for the coveted task of anointing the statue of the goddess with holy water.
- ❖ She eats sparingly, and often holds a hand to her stomach after meals, as if suffering stomach cramps. But she refuses to let the other sisters treat her for this ailment, saying she prefers to treat herself.
- ❖ Although she has been at the hospice for three years, she has "learned" just one spell—how to calm the mind of a patient. She fakes this by means of her ability to *charm* people; the goddess will not grant her spells. She also uses her *charm* spell to good effect on the other Sisters; all regard her as a true and loyal servant of Hala (albeit a somewhat unskilled one) and do not think to question why she has never learned other healing spells.
- ❖ She is generally quite sleepy during the day, and thus almost always works the night shift.

## Sister Evangeline

### Fledgling Vampire, Neutral Evil

AC 1; MV 12; HD 8+3; hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (blood loss); SA *Charm*; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp/round, immune to poison, gases, *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, half damage from cold or electrical based attacks; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Fanatic (17); XP 10,000.

Str 18/76    Dex 16    Con 18  
Int 16        Wis 16    Cha 14

Evangeline must drink at least 6 hp of blood each day. She chooses as her victim any patient who is alone in a sick room.

Because she lives in a sanctified place, Evangeline has lost a portion of her connection with the Negative Material Plane. She can no longer drain energy levels from her victims. In addition, her saliva is non-toxic. Thus her attacks

# THE SCARLET KISS

do not create other vampires. Instead, she creates new vampires using a curse—one that requires the victim to drink a drop of her blood. The curse inflicts a wasting disease that drains one point of Strength per day (no saving throw) until the victim dies. The victim rises as a vampire the night after he or she is buried.

This curse can only be removed by killing Evangeline; *remove curse* spells are ineffective. A carefully worded *wish* spell might restore the lost Strength, but without guarantee that the curse will not begin anew.

Although she has many unique immunities, Evangeline can be killed by a wooden stake, and is forced to assume gaseous form if totally immersed in running water. She can be turned or damaged by a holy symbol, held at bay by blessed accouterments, and burned by holy water.

During the ambush that opened this adventure, holy water burned bright red stigmata into Evangeline's face. Her veil hides these; when she goes to bed Evangeline conceals the marks from her cellmate by blowing out the candle before removing her veil.

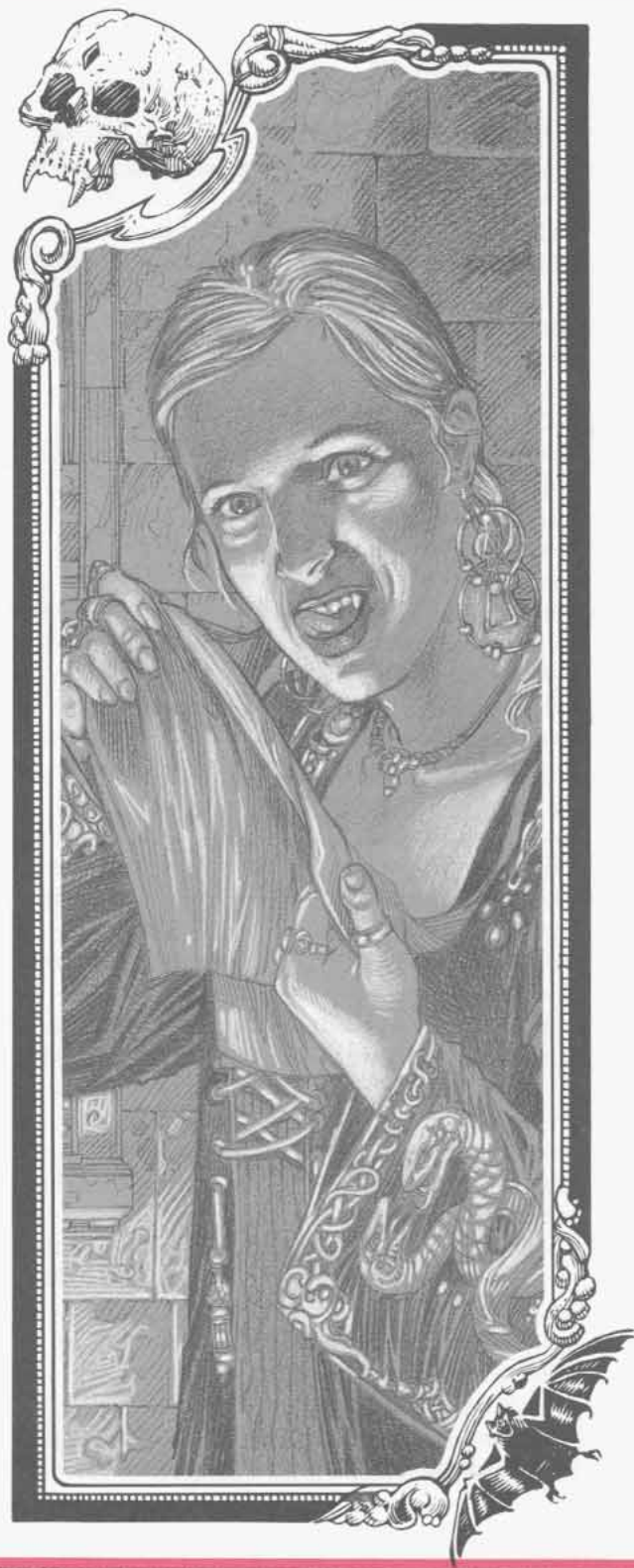
Evangeline's animal form is that of a giant rat, infested with fleas. Any character approaching within five feet is bitten by these fleas and must save vs. poison or suffer a fever that weakens the character by 1d4 points of Strength for 1d4 days. The onset of the fever comes in 1d4 hours. It is non-magical and unconnected with Evangeline's other powers.

## Evangeline's Sanctuary

Unbeknownst to the Sisters of Mercy, their hospice is built on the site of an ancient catacomb. This burial place lies far below street level; the access was sealed decades ago.

Here, "Sister Evangeline" (then known by a different name) was laid to rest 70 years ago. Here she awoke as a vampire.

Normally, a vampire could not enter a sanctified hospice, but Evangeline has overcome this difficulty for two reasons: First, her own sanctuary lies beneath the hospice; second, the



## Terror Tip: Kiss of the Vampire

At some point during the heroes' visit to the hospice, instruct all of the players to close their eyes. (Players likely to peek should be blindfolded.) Then walk slowly around the gaming table, explaining that "something very odd has happened, but you are having trouble remembering what it was." Pause briefly behind each player, whispering in his or her ear, "Do you remember?"

Choose one player, preferably one whose character was alone at some point during the hospice visit or who slept overnight there. Touch the neck of this player twice with the tip of a red felt pen, leaving two "vampire fang punctures." To this player whisper, "You remember, but you must hide these marks from your companions unless you succeed in your saving throw." Then subtract 2d4 hit points (due to blood loss) from that hero's character sheet.

Then return to your seat and instruct the players to open their eyes. Ask each hero to save vs. spells with a -2 penalty.

The only important saving throw is that of the player with the red marks, whose character has been bitten by Evangeline. The saving throw determines whether Evangeline's *charm* was successful.

If the charm worked, the hero believes that the vampire is a friend whose "love bite" was not harmful. Even though the hero still does not know which of the sisters is the vampire, he or she wants to protect this new "friend" from harm and will actively work to throw the others off the scent.

If the save succeeded, the charm failed. The hero remembers being bitten by one of the Sisters of Mercy. The sister did not tell the hero her name, but was a slim blonde woman with green eyes. When she removed her veil to feed, her face showed bright red stigmata.

Summarize the appropriate information in a note, and secretly hand it to the player to read.

priestesses invited her to join the order and thus welcomed her into their "home."

The only access to the catacombs is through a crack in the foundation of the hospice. It is located in Evangeline's cell (she insisted on being assigned to this room) and is hidden by her bed.

When she goes to bed, Evangeline waits for her cellmate to fall asleep. She then assumes gaseous form and slips through the crack into the catacombs below. Should Nanette awaken and notice that her cellmate is missing, Evangeline later explains that she was suffering from insomnia and went out for a walk.

## Into the Catacombs

If the heroes corner Evangeline or revealed her as a vampire in front of the other sisters, she assumes gaseous form and flees to her cell. There she slips through the crack into the catacombs.

If the heroes have the ability to pass magically through the crack, they may immediately pursue Evangeline. Otherwise, if they listen closely, they hear the sound of running water (an underground stream). If the heroes inquire, they learn that an underground stream emerges from a tunnel at the edge of town a mile from the hospice. It is five feet high and two feet wide—big enough for small or medium-sized heroes to squeeze through.

The catacombs are a series of brick-walled passages that have niches on either side in which bodies were laid. All the bodies are remarkably well embalmed, and in a dim light look freshly dead or even asleep. Several, however, have been gnawed by rats; the bodies move from time to time as the rats feed.

When the heroes enter the catacombs, read the following to the players:

The passageway is about five feet wide and has crumbling brick walls that are slick with foul-smelling mildew. The curved ceiling is about eight feet high, also of brick. Here and there, the wall has crumbled or the ceiling is sagging, and loose bricks lie on the floor.

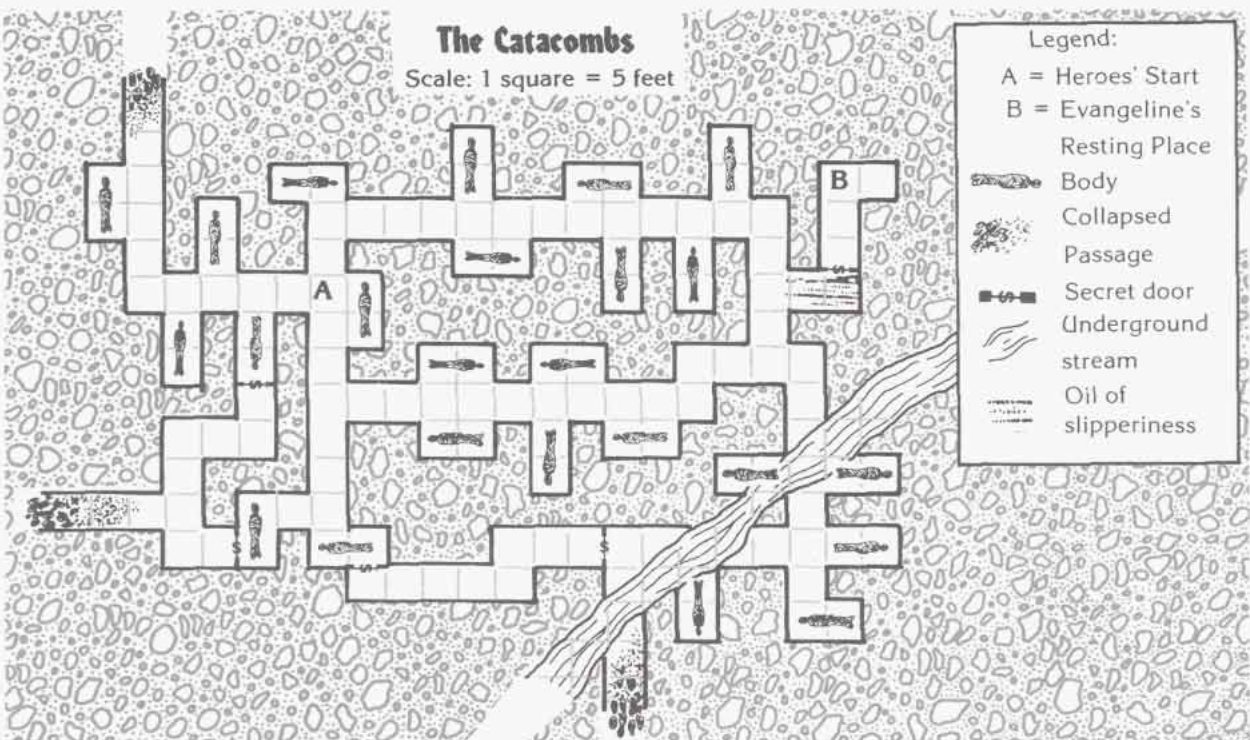
# THE SCARLET KISS

## The Catacombs

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

### Legend:

- A = Heroes' Start
- B = Evangeline's Resting Place
-  Body
-  Collapsed Passage
-  Secret door
-  Underground stream
-  Oil of slipperiness



Somewhere off in the darkness, a low gurgle of water echoes against the ancient walls. Closer at hand, a corpse lies on a niche set into the wall. Its head nods slowly, as if the corpse is awakening from a deep slumber.

The movement is produced by a giant rat, one of many that roam this area. It attacks if cornered in the niche, but flees at the first opportunity.

The rat's fur is still wet from the stream, the only natural entrance to these underground chambers. The stream is five feet wide (Evangeline cannot cross it in gaseous form) but only six inches deep. It flows through a natural fissure about two feet wide, eventually reaching the surface at the edge of town.

If forced to flee through this emergency exit, Evangeline assumes rat form and leaps onto a piece of wood (hidden here for this purpose) and floats away downstream. This is a last-ditch

escape plan, because immersion in running water could kill her.

The heroes might trap Evangeline by blocking the underground stream's exit. Within an hour all the floors is awash in an inch of water; the entire catacombs fills up with water after four more hours.

Evangeline can, at will, summon giant rats to attack the heroes. The rats attack in a swarm, inflicting 3 hp damage per round for every five rats in the swarm. (If less than five rats attack a character, resolve the attacks individually.)

**Giant rats (5d10):** Int Semi- (3); AL NE; AC 7; MV 12, Sw 6; HD 1/2; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA Disease; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ T; ML Unsteady (7); XP 15 each.

The catacombs are also haunted by four shadows. As soon as treasure on any of their host's bodies is touched, the shadows delight in terrifying the heroes by "rising up" out of a dead



body like a black ghost. (The shadows have no desire to protect the grave goods buried with the body, but give this impression to throw the players off track.) The shadows are patient; they wait until they can attack with maximum surprise and terror. While one rises from a corpse, for instance, the other three close in from behind.

**Shadows (4):** Int Low (6); AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Strength drain; SD Immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold* spells, and cold-based attacks; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Special; XP 650 each.

When Evangeline seeks a deep, undisturbed rest, she retreats to her sanctuary, located behind a secret door in the far corner of the catacombs. In this niche she was originally laid to rest. She flees here if pursued by the heroes, slipping through a crack in the secret door in gaseous form.

To ensure her safety, Evangeline has protected this area with traps. She has smeared the floor of the short passage that leads to the secret door with a combination of *oil of slipperiness* and a deadly contact poison (Type M 1d4 min, 20/5). There is a 95% chance that any hero walking along this hallway slips and falls. This fall may bring bare skin (e.g. hands and face) into contact with the poison. The percentage chance of contact equals the hero's Armor Class times 10. heroes of AC 0 or lower have a 5% chance of contacting the poison.

The secret door (which looks like a portion of brick wall that swings inward) is likewise trapped. Anyone opening it tears open a paper sack holding *dust of sneezing and choking*. The dust affects any character within ten feet of the door.

Awakened by the loud coughing and sneezing, Evangeline attempts to escape in the resulting confusion, changing to gaseous form to pass over the slippery hallway.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the heroes fail to trap and kill Evangeline in the catacombs, she flees back through the crack into the hospice above and from there

into the city. But she does not leave town, even though her resting place has been unearthed. She continues to keep a close watch on Van Richten, waiting for him to die and join her in the immortal life of a vampire. She contacts him from a distance, sending him flowers (black roses) and love poetry, or perhaps a bottle of fine red wine.

If the heroes have flushed her from her hiding place in the hospice, Evangeline cannot return there and can no longer pose as one of the Sisters of Mercy. She goes to ground during the day, because she can no longer wear the habit, veil, and scarf to shade herself from the sun.

The heroes' best option at this point is using Van Richten as bait for an ambush. If they approach the Sisters of Mercy for assistance (who by now should be well aware that Evangeline is a vampire), the sisters help the heroes in their battle against the undead creature who profaned their order, providing healing and curative spells.

## Keeping Van Richten Alive

When the adventure began, Van Richten warned the heroes that, if the vampire were not killed within three days, he would die and become a vampire himself. If the heroes are running out of time, extend their deadline as follows.

If the heroes have not already thought of this tactic themselves, one of the Sisters of Mercy decides to try her healing spells on Van Richten. Normal curative spells do not work, but *neutralize poison* and *slow poison* can halt the Strength loss for one day. The effect of these spells is not cumulative, however (no matter how many of these spells are cast during a particular day, the Strength loss is only negated for that one day) and no Strength points are restored. Thus, unless the heroes (or someone else) kills the vampire, Van Richten faces the unpleasant prospect of remaining an invalid at the Sisters of Mercy Hospice indefinitely.



*ne cannot live with the  
Dead:  
Either we die with them  
or we make them live  
again.*

Louis Martin-Chauffier  
*L'Homme et la bete*  
(1947)

“Ancient Dead” is designed for three or four heroes of levels 7–9. Because the heroes face a greater mummy, the group should include a priest of good alignment, preferably with the ability to *cure*

*disease.*

In this adventure, Van Richten is at level 8. Adjust his statistics by deducting 2d6 hit points and 60 percentage points from his thieving abilities. In addition to his standard kit, he carries with him items used to fight mummies: two extra vials of holy water; two jars containing *oil of fiery burning*; and two doses of an *elixir of health*.

The adventure is set in the domain of Har'Akir.

## Background

Har'Akir is ruled by the mummy Anhktepote, an evil pharaoh laid to rest centuries ago. In the years before his death, Anhktepote warred with his country's priests, whom he blamed for his failure to achieve immortality. He killed many and, using his power to control undead, enslaved them.

One who died was Hotep, a priestess of the crocodile-headed Sobek, god of water. Her mummified body was laid to rest in a well-hidden tomb in the unnamed canyon next to Pharaoh's Rest (the better known canyon that contains Anhktepote's tomb).

Like all undead in Har'Akir, Hotep immediately fell under the control of Anhktepote. Sensing her yearning for revenge, he forced her into suspended animation. For centuries she has been unable to act or leave her tomb.

A few months ago, Khasek, a slave who had run away from the village of Muhar, discovered

the secret entrance to Hotep's tomb. Khasek recognized statues in the temple as the ancient god Sobek.

Khasek theorized that Har'Akir is a desert because Sobek turned his face from the land when his worship ended. Khasek believes that blood sacrifices can awaken the god from his current slumber; the grateful Sobek will then turn Har'Akir into a lush paradise. Khasek, of course, will become Sobek's chief priest.

Khasek recruited a small gang of followers by persuading other slaves to run away into the desert to join him. These six cult members steal back into Muhar at night, kidnapping slaves to sacrifice to the god Sobek.

The sacrifices cannot awaken the god's interest in Har'Akir, for the domain is simply too far removed from Sobek's home plane. Even if the cult members could succeed, they would not like the results; the crocodile deity is evil and sends destructive floods and fearsome storms.

The sacrifices serve a purpose, however. Each sacrifice makes the mummy Hotep stronger. Soon this undead priestess will have the power she needs to break free of Anhktepote's control. Should she escape her tomb, the consequences for Har'Akir will be dire indeed. She will use her spells to call down a deluge. The torrential flood will flatten Muhar's mud-brick houses, killing dozens or hundreds of people.

## Starting the Adventure

Some time ago, Van Richten journeyed to Har'Akir in search of information for his book on the ancient dead. When he arrived in this harsh, desert land, much of the population suffered from a deadly wasting sickness. Van Richten concocted a cure, an herbal remedy that saved many lives.

The nobles of Har'Akir remained grateful to Van Richten, and now they have invited him to Muhar to receive their highest honor, the *ankh of the merciful wind*. This magical pendant keeps the wearer's body cool even in extreme heat. It restores damage caused by heat at the rate of 1 hp per turn, and provides a saving throw bonus of

+2 vs. heat-based attacks, at the same time reducing damage sustained by 1 point per die. It also has some properties of a *ring of sustenance*, allowing the wearer to go without water and food for days at a time. It does not, however, allow the wearer to go without adequate sleep.

Van Richten asks the heroes to accompany him to Har'Akir. If this invitation is not enough, entice the heroes to travel there by hinting that the desert domain is home to a number of ancient tombs, filled with as-yet unlooted riches.

## The Oasis of Muhar

**M**uhar is a small desert town, home to 100 natives plus twice that number of foreign slaves. Some people live in mud-brick buildings, others in colorful tents. All cluster around an oasis that provides water for barley and date fields.

The natives of Muhar are small, with brown, weathered skin. They dress in flowing white robes and headcloths. They are wary of strangers, enslaving any who wander through the mists and into their land. These slaves are a variety of races and speak diverse languages. Here they remain, for their only other option is to die of heat and thirst on Har'Akir's endless desert sands.

The natives of Muhar greet Van Richten with obvious delight and usher "the esteemed doctor" and his companions to the home of the noble Thutmose. That evening, Van Richten is presented the *ankh of the merciful wind* at a sumptuous feast that includes roasted meats, a variety of fruits and dates, and cool drinks. Whirling dancers in gauzy costumes carrying flashing swords perform long into the night.

At some point during the festivities, a nervous man whispers in Thutmose's ear. The noble's face purples, and he leaps to his feet. "Two more are missing?" he bellows incredulously. "Find them at once! They can't have gone far. There is nothing but desert and death for them to run to."

Thutmose apologizes to Van Richten for the interruption. He then explains (preferably in response to questions from the heroes) that a number of slaves have run away in recent

months—12 to date, two-thirds of the settlement's slave population.

"A slave named Khasek was the first to run," Thutmose explains. "He didn't die in the desert, but instead disappeared without trace. He must have found shelter and water—and now his example has encouraged others. There are even whispers, in the slaves' quarters, that Khasek may have found a road leading away from Har'Akir. We should have chopped off his thieving hands, rather than enslaving him. We will lose our entire work force if this continues."

Thutmose offers the heroes a reward if they can find the refuge, bring back the slaves, and deliver Khasek's head on a platter. The reward consists of a dozen finely woven carpets worth 1,000 gp each. One is a *carpet of flying*.

The heroes may well refuse to take such an inhumane mission, but Van Richten discourages them from a rude public refusal. Later, in private, he counsels them that if they can locate Khasek's refuge, they can help the rest of Muhar's slaves escape there. Whatever their reason, the heroes should decide to seek Khasek.

## A Trail in the Sand

**T**he logical starting point for the search is the slave quarters of Thutmose's house. (Van Richten suggests this if the players do not think of it.) Here they find signs of a struggle—overturned chairs, a torn curtain, and dark spots on the floor. (Blood dries quickly in the desert heat.)

If the heroes have magical scrying ability, they can observe two slaves, their hands tied behind their backs, being forced along at knife-point through a canyon by two men. The men force the slaves to kneel, then blindfold them. The men pull the slaves to their feet, then push them into a narrow fissure in the canyon wall. The knife-wielders squeeze in after them.

If the heroes cannot scry, they instead must track the "runaway" slaves to the canyon. One captive has made this task easier by deliberately scuffing his feet, leaving a trail (augmented by blood spots) in the sand.

Particularly stealthy heroes may arrive in the canyon in time to see the last of the knife-wielders disappear into the fissure. Otherwise, they stumble across the square formation in the canyon floor (see below) and must find the secret entrance to the tomb.

## The Tomb

**H**otep's tomb is carved into the natural rock of the canyon wall. To hide it from looters, the only entrance was secreted deep in a fissure of rock. But time has eroded the floor of the canyon, partially revealing the roof of Room 6; those with sharp eyes notice a rectangular hump in the canyon floor. (This is how Khasek first discovered the tomb.) It is possible to break through the stone ceiling, but this takes at least one hour—and alerts the cult members inside the tomb.

**1) Secret entrance.** A fissure in the canyon wall leads to a hidden door. Just inside the door is a hidden trapdoor. Anyone who walks across it is dumped into a 20' hole with poison-smearred spikes at the bottom, suffering 2d6 damage. The victim must also save against Type E poison (injected, Death/20). The trap door swings shut after each victim.

The heroes may avoid the trap by skirting along a one-foot-wide ledge on the front and sides of the hallway. Khasek and his followers know about the trap, and how to avoid it. The hallway has an arched, 20'-high ceiling.

**2) Main hall.** This room is dominated by three large statues. In the middle stands a statue of a man with a crocodile's head, wearing a white kilt. This statue, 50' tall, depicts the god Sobek. To either side stand identical statues of a woman in a white tunic, holding a crocodile-headed scepter. These 40' statues show the priestess Hotep. The arched ceiling is 70' high.

The walls are lavishly painted with images of a watery afterlife. Crocodiles frolic in a marshy setting, chasing birds. Humans (priests and priestesses of Sobek) swim beside them. Khasek

has interpreted these images as an image of what Har'Akir will look like, once they propitiate the crocodile-headed god with enough sacrifices.

If the heroes enter quietly, they can surprise one of Khasek's followers here; he is studying the painted walls by the glow of an oil lamp in hushed reverence. If the heroes are noisy, the cult member slips away to Room 7 to warn the others; observant heroes may briefly notice the light of his lamp.

In one corner of this room, a sliding panel in the wall serves as a secret door. If any heroes hide in this room, there is a 20% chance per turn that one of Khasek's followers either enters or exits through the secret door.

**3) Embalming chamber.** This room was once used to prepare Hotep's corpse for burial. Now Khasek's followers use it as a sleeping chamber. It is lit by two oil lanterns, and is furnished with six pallets of straw (beds) and a gilded table and chair. The ceiling is 10' high.

**4) Crocodile crypt.** This darkened room holds four stone sarcophagi. Each contains the mummified body of a crocodile that has been fitted with a golden mask. These mummies are merely corpses; they do not attack. The gold masks (which Khasek's followers have not touched, out of respect for their god) are worth 3,000 gp each.

One mummy (DM's choice) is riddled with yellow mold. The mold is inside the wrappings, and cannot be seen on the surface. As soon as the mummy is disturbed, it collapses on itself, releasing a cloud of deadly spores. Anyone within 10' of the mummy must save vs. poison or die.

The ceiling here is 10' high.




**Yellow mold:** Int Non-; AL Nil; AC 9; MV 0; HD Nil; hp Nil; THAC0 Nil; #AT 1; Dmg Special; SA Poison spores; SD Affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ S; ML Nil; XP Nil.

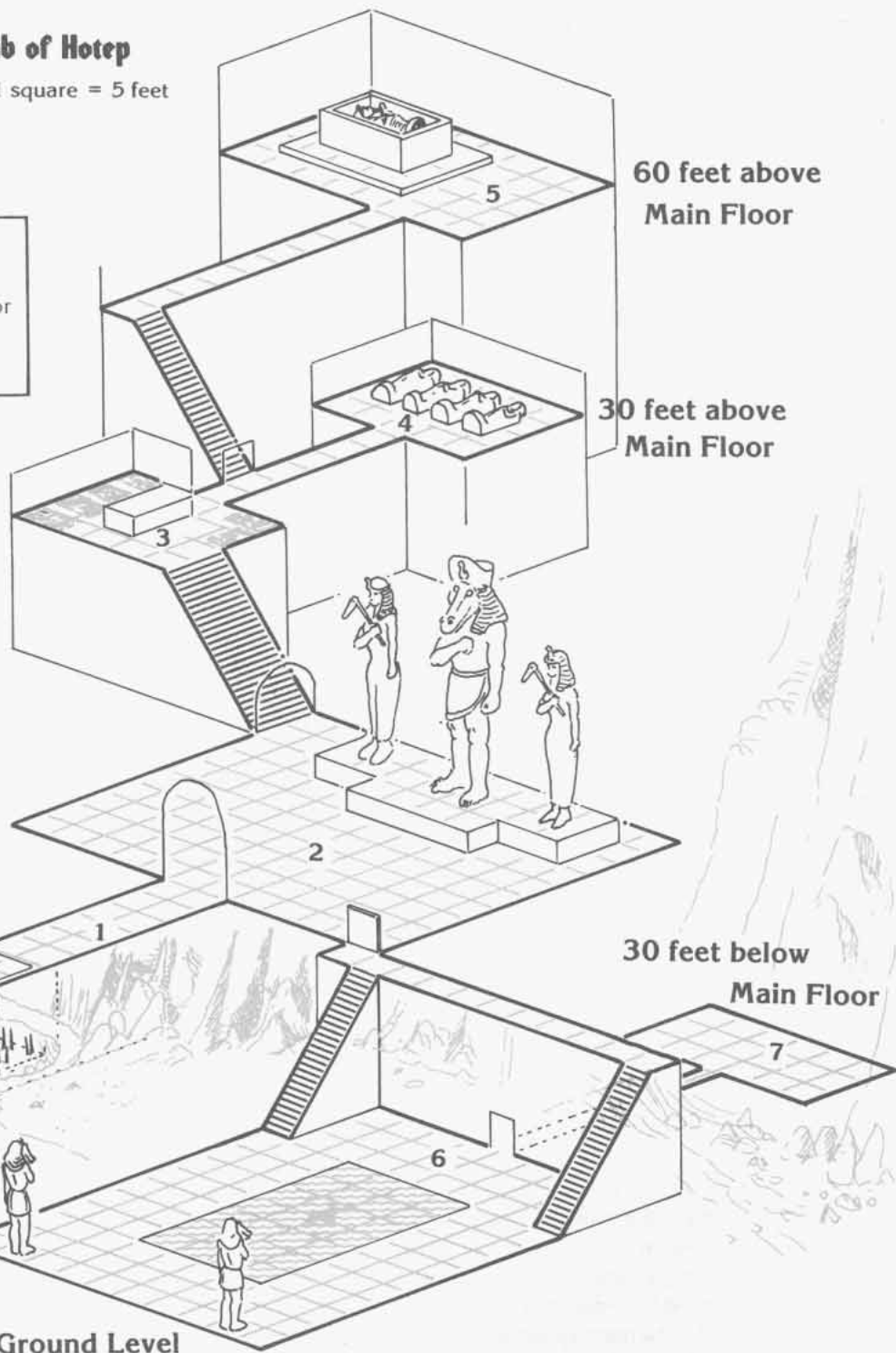
**5) Hotep's crypt.** This room's entrance is a secret, sliding panel that opens onto a flight of stairs. At the end of a narrow corridor is a room

## Tomb of Hotep

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

Legend:

-  Door
-  Secret Door
-  Stairs
-  Water



whose walls have been painted with proverbs and prayers to Sobek in a script that resembles ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. An elaborate stone sarcophagus holds Hotep's mummified body.

Until Khasek found her tomb and began his sacrifices, Hotep survived in a state of suspended animation. Anhktepot used his ability to *control undead* to force her into endless slumber. But with each sacrifice, Sobek restores a little of Hotep's consciousness and free will. Soon she will awaken fully and act.

As the heroes enter the temple, Khasek and his followers are about to sacrifice the final victim whose death will awaken Hotep. If the heroes reach this room before Room 7, the sacrifice occurs just at the moment that the heroes enter this room. Read the following:

When you entered this room, all was silent. But now you hear the slow grinding of stone on stone. The source of the noise is the sarcophagus lid, which is sliding open. With a loud thud, it falls to the floor. A withered hand wrapped in mold-spotted bandages grips the edge of the sarcophagus. Foul-smelling liquid drips from its fingertips onto the dusty floor.

If the heroes do not flee within 1d4 rounds, Hotep sees them and immediately attacks.

**6) Crocodile pool.** Two sets of stairs descend into this large room, which is dominated by a deep, black pool. At the far end of the room stand 25'-high statues of the crocodile-headed god, Sobek. The ceiling is 30' high.

Inside the pool are 12 crocodiles whose tough, leathery hides are studded with gems. heroes can hardly see the crocodiles in the black, murky water, but the gems show up as winking points of light.

Khasek grafted the gems onto the crocodiles' skins as a tribute to Sobek. (He drugged the animals to do this.) There are 3d4 gems per crocodile; each gem is worth 10 to 100 gp. The pool is fed by a natural spring that, through the

Mists, occasionally connects with other Islands of Terror, such as the swamp-bound realm known as Souragne. The crocodiles entered via such a temporary connection, and remain because Khasek feeds them.

If the heroes approach the pool to examine the winking lights, the crocodiles immediately make a surprise attack. Unless there is a great deal of shouting, Khasek and his followers in Room 7 do not hear the commotion; the heavy door leading to Room 7 blocks the noise.

**Crocodiles (12):** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 5; MV 6 Sw 12; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4 (bite) or 1d12 (tail); SA Nil; SD Surprise; MR Nil; SZ L; ML Avg (9); XP 65 each.

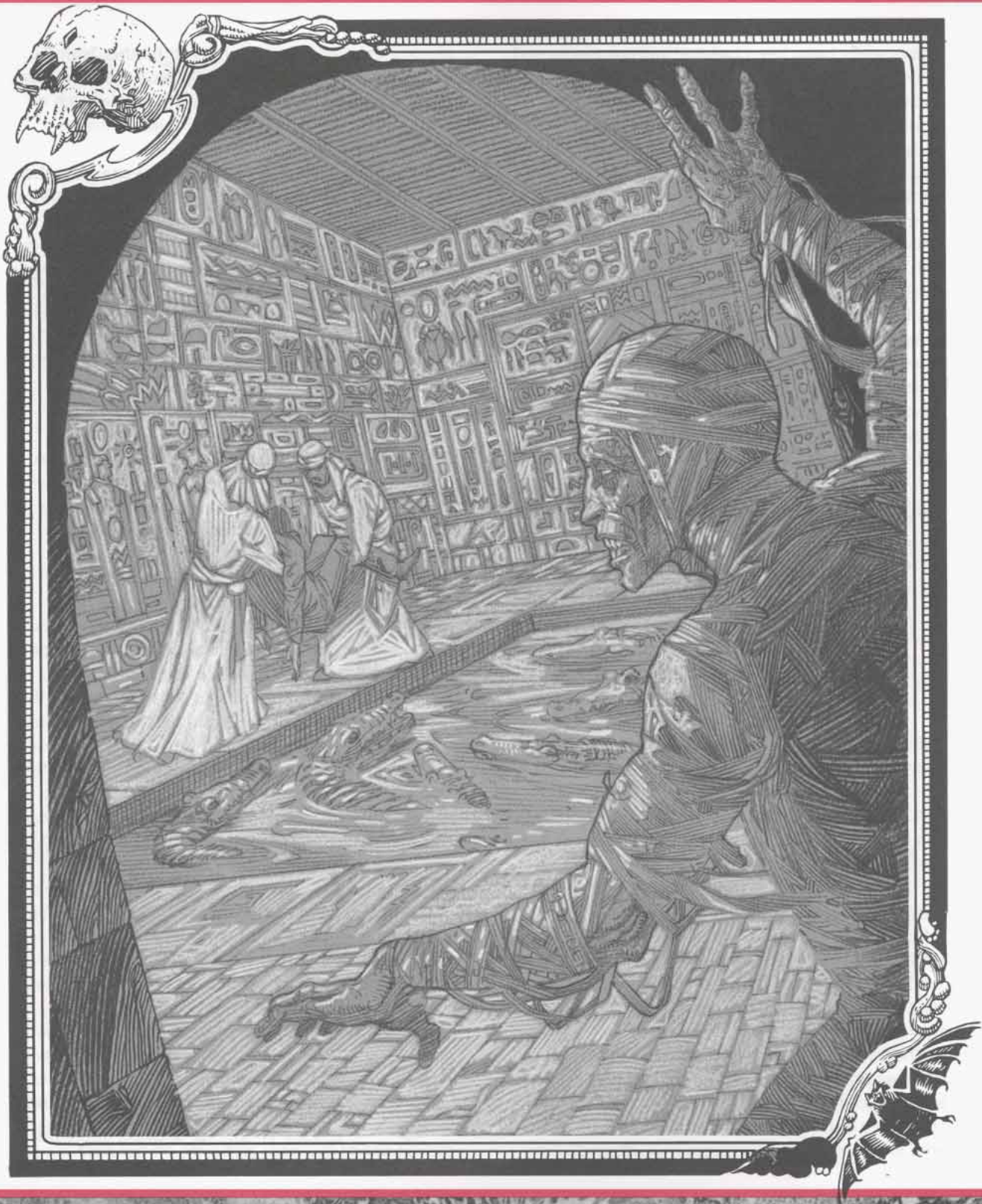
**7) Sacrificial room.** This room is dimly lit by an oil lamp that hangs from the ceiling. There is just enough light to make out the rear wall, which is painted with a mural showing crocodile-headed humans tilling green fields.

Khasek and five followers (or six, if the cult member from Room 2 heard the heroes) have gathered in this room to sacrifice a tightly bound slave. Four more slaves, also bound and gagged, lie on the floor nearby. Before the heroes can react, Khasek and the cultists slit the throat of the first slave and smear his blood on the mural. Then they drag away his body and hurl it into the pool, where crocodiles tear it apart. Heroes viewing this scene must make a horror check. Khasek then directs his followers to sacrifice another captive.

If the heroes attack, the cult members try to drive them back into Room 6, where they can push them into the crocodile-filled pool. Khasek either hides in the shadows and tries to backstab the heroes, or uses a magical item he found in the tomb: a crocodile-headed *rod of terror* that is a +2 weapon and also makes him look like a reptilian monster. The *rod* has three charges left.

If Hotep (Room 5) has not yet awakened, she does so now. She makes her way to this area in 4d4 rounds. She attacks anyone she finds in her tomb (cult members included), taking control of the crocodiles in Room 6 and forcing them to swarm out of the pool and fight on her side.

# ANCIENT DEAD



**Khasek (4th-level thief):** Int Avg (12); AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Backstab; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 175.

PP 20% OL 20% F/RT 35% MS 70%  
HS 75% DN 35% CW 60% RL 0%

**Cult members (6):** Int Avg (12); AL LE; AC 9; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Elite (13); XP 15 each.

## Hotep

### Greater Mummy, Lawful Evil

AC 0; MV 9; HD 10+3; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6; SA *Aura of fear*, disease, spells; SD Immune to all cold and fire-based attacks, +2 or better magical weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; ML Fanatic (18); XP 12,000.

Str 17 Dex 12 Con 13  
Int 18 Wis 20 Cha 10

At first glance, Hotep looks like any other Har'Akir mummy, with sunken, bandage-wrapped flesh. But where most mummies are tinder dry, Hotep's bandages are continually wet and spotted with a growth of dark mold. A stream of slimy water trickles continuously from her open mouth, like drool, and her footsteps leave damp patches on the ground. She smells of damp and mold, and she makes a squelching sound with each footstep.

**Combat:** Because she was once high priestess of the water god Sobek, Hotep has complete immunity to fire—even magical fire. She radiates an *aura of fear* that causes all who see her to make a fear check with a -3 penalty. Those who fail to save suffer double the normal effects.

As an undead creature, she is immune to all mind-affecting attacks.

Anyone Hotep strikes in battle must save vs. poison or become infected with a unique form of

mummy "rot" that kills its victim in 1d6 days. Within 24 hours, the victim's skin begins to melt away, turning semi-liquid and dripping off the body. The character loses 1 point each from Strength and Constitution, and 2 points from Charisma. No normal healing is possible, and the shaking and convulsions that accompany the disease make spellcasting and memorization impossible. Eventually the entire body, bones included, assumes the consistency and odor of putrid, runny pudding, and the victim dies.

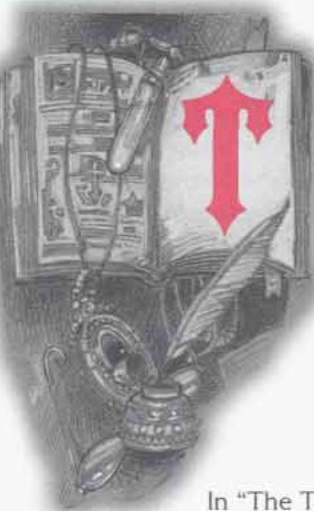
A *regenerate* spell or an *elixir of health* can cure the disease and restore lost hit points, but only a *wish* restores the lost ability scores. *Cure disease* spells and disease-healing potions halt the progress of the illness temporarily. The victim must receive one spell or drink one potion for each day that has passed since the disease was contracted.

**Hotep's spells:** 1) *animal friendship, create water/destroy water, invisibility to animals, locate animals or plants, protection from good, purify food and drink, sanctuary*; 2) *chant, enthrall, hold person, obscurement, speak with animals*; 3) *call lightning, dispel magic, hold animal, plant growth, prayer, water breathing, water walk*; 4) *detect lie, lower water/raise water, protection from lightning, reflecting pool*; 5) *cloud of purification, control winds, magic font, rainbow, transmute rock to mud/transmute mud to rock*; 6) *part water, transmute water to dust/transmute dust to water, weather summoning*; 7) *control weather*.

**Note:** Hotep's spells that affect animals affect only water-dwelling creatures. She casts spells as an 18th-level priest, and thus has memorized several spells more than once.



# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH



*his is a world of compensation, and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.*

Abraham Lincoln  
Letter to H.L. Pierce,  
April 6, 1859

In "The Taskmaster's Leash" the heroes must defeat two fiends who are corrupting the citizens of a once respectable town. Because fiends are powerful monsters, the heroes should be at least level 7.

Van Richten is at level 10. He carries no equipment because he has been thrown into prison, but his standard monster-hunting kit is in a suitcase at his inn. He is ill, and starts with just 20 hit points. A *cure disease* spell restores his missing hit points.

This adventure takes place in the town of Chateaufaux in the domain of Dementlieu, but it works in any other Ravenloft town with a population of at least 2,000. It is especially effective if the heroes have friends in the town. One of the most fearsome nightmares, after all, is that trusted friends turn against you.

Before play begins, prepare NPCs for at least two Black Watch patrols.

## Background

During the Grand Conjunction of 740, by the Barovian calendar, the domains of Ravenloft broke apart and began drifting back to the Prime Material Plane. Before the Grand Conjunction collapsed, sending these lands hurtling back to the Demiplane of Dread, one domain, Dementlieu, touched briefly on the lower plane of Baator. When this happened, a number lower-planar denizens were drawn into Ravenloft.

Chief among them was a foul amnizu, a horrific

little fiend with a bald head, stubby arms and legs, bulging eyes, fang-filled mouth, and black, leathery wings. The other newcomer was a barbazu, a violent and cruel creature with a long tail, clawed hands and feet, pointed ears, and a wire-sharp beard. A number of larvae (mindless, misshapen monsters with worm bodies and humanoid heads) also entered Dementlieu.

Realizing that they were cut off from the lower planes, possibly for all eternity, the two fiends sought to make a new home in Dementlieu. Two months ago they settled in the town of Chateaufaux. First they killed two of the most prominent citizens of the town: Mayor Henri Melano and Domini Tisiphanes, captain of the local militia. By posing as these two men, the fiends could take control of the town. But first they needed to convince the citizens that they were indeed Melano and Tisiphanes. They introduced into Chateaufaux's water supply a powerful hallucinogen harvested from the glands of a hamatula, a lesser baatezu. (The fiends had this with them when they were drawn into Ravenloft.) Anyone who takes a small sip of this tainted water (or wine or beer made from it) falls under a powerful *illusion* spell that disguises the fiends as the mayor and militia captain. Further, this effect hides the "reality wrinkles" that surrounds all fiends in Ravenloft. (This generally causes an area up to one square mile around the fiend to shimmer slightly, as though perceived through a wave of heat.)

After waiting a few days for the hallucinogen to take hold, "Mayor Melano" and "Captain Tisiphanes" began reshaping Chateaufaux to their own warped tastes. They wanted to utterly corrupt the town's citizens by goading them into acts of evil and selfishness.

The barbazu began by recruiting the most unscrupulous of the town's militia to join an elite group known as the Black Watch. These thugs brutally enforced a new series of laws proclaimed by the town's "mayor." Any citizen who breaks these laws receives swift and merciless punishment—a cruel public lashing. Those who inform on lawbreakers receive rich rewards.

In a desperate attempt to protect their own families (or to curry favor with the Black Watch

# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH

and receive generous rewards), the citizens of Chateaufaux have turned on one another, often informing on innocent victims. An atmosphere of mistrust and fear is overlaid with a false front of cheerfulness and willing obedience—at the orders of the fiends, who imprison anyone who lets the façade of normality slip. Prisoners are eventually fed to the larvae.

Only a handful of people in Chateaufaux—those with extremely powerful wills—can see the true forms of the fiends. Should they reveal what they have seen, they face an unpleasant death at the hands of the fiends. And so those who realize that two monsters have taken over Chateaufaux have either gone into hiding or are playing along with the illusion, lest they be imprisoned and killed.

The Darklord who rules Dementilieu, Dominic d'Honaire knows a portion of his land has passed from his control to the fiends, but has been unable to muster a force capable of ousting the fiends; he doesn't want to send in militia forces and alert other citizens in the domain to the difficulties in the city. A month ago, he hit upon the idea of tricking Rudolph Van Richten to deal with the problem for him, and he dispatched a phoney invitation for the doctor to be the guest speaker at a non-existing symposium on mesmeric powers of unnatural creatures.

## Terror Tip: The Fiend Unmasked

Before the players arrive for the game, use makeup (or a mask) to make your face look hideous. Then wrap a dark blanket or sheet around your shoulders like a cape, dim the lights, and take a seat.

When the players arrive, sit still for several moments, then point at the players and ominously whisper, "You will never defeat me. Never! Remember this when at last you look on my face. By then it will be too late."

Then rise and slowly leave the room. Remove the makeup or mask and "cape," then enter the room normally, making no reference to the mysterious stranger the players just met. Later, reveal that this was the "true face" of the amnizu.

## Starting the Adventure

The heroes receive a letter from Van Richten, whom they have not seen in some time. It is dated two weeks previously, and has been crudely censored by having portions of it blacked out. To simulate this, photocopy the boxed text that follows, blot out the underlined words with a black marker, then hand the copy to the players.

The true message can either be revealed magically (by means of a *true seeing* spell, for example), or by mundane means (holding the letter to the light to read the blackened words).

*My dear companions,*

*I am visiting the town of Chateaufaux, and am staying at the Laughing Pig Inn. I hope to look up my old friend Henri Melano, the town's mayor.*

*As soon as I arrived in Chateaufaux, I noticed that there was something odd about the city. The people here are cheerful, and the scenery delightful, but when I glanced out the window of my inn at night, I saw wretched looking people, their legs in shackles, being lashed like animals as they were herded along. When I asked the innkeeper about what I had seen, she said these were lawbreakers who were on their way to be imprisoned in cells at the militia station. Those herding them seemed overly brutal, and the ranks of prisoners included mere children, pregnant women, and elderly men!*

*Wanting to get to the heart of this matter, I have arranged a meeting with Mayor Melano. I shall see him this afternoon.*

*There is nothing short of a mystery here, and I intend to uncover it before I return home. I shall appraise you of my progress.*

*Yours, Rudolph Van Richten.*

If the heroes have a method of scrying and want to check up on Van Richten, they observe the following scene:

Rudolph Van Richten lies on a hard metal cot in a darkened room. He is dressed in shapeless gray clothing, and his legs are in shackles. There is a sickly pallor to his skin and he looks almost too weak to move. He holds a trembling hand to his mouth and coughs, then huddles in a ball and shivers.

## Laws and Lashes

When the heroes reach Chateaufaux, everything at first appears normal. The cheerfulness of the citizens might seem a little forced, but shops are open and people seem to move about freely. The one oddity is that everywhere the heroes look, the walls are plastered with posters. A closer inspection reveals that each of these announces a new law proclaimed by the town's mayor, Henri Melano; his signature is at the bottom of each. The handbills are dated; the heroes can read the three most recent laws.

- ❖ 13 Janvier: In the interests of improving Chateaufaux's balance of trade, all commodities are to be sold at five times their usual value. The Black Watch shall make regular inspections of shopkeeper's premises to ensure that no discounting is taking place. Those who commit economic treason by offering or accepting discounts will be punished with five lashes. Citizens who report discounting will be rewarded with the choice of any item in the store, free of charge.
- ❖ 14 Janvier: Any citizen mocking the appearance or good character of our beloved mayor will receive twenty lashes. Citizens who report to the Black Watch any libelous words spoken by another citizen will receive a reward of 20 gold pieces for their diligence.
- ❖ 15 Janvier (*today*): Any citizen who impedes the duties of the Black Watch or who calls into question a decision on the part of its captain is deemed to be obstructing justice and will be punished with ten lashes. Citizens present during an arrest must obey all orders issued by the Black Watch; those who fail to obey a direct order will receive five lashes.

Over the next two days, additional handbills appear.

- ❖ 18 Janvier: Citizens must carry with them, at all times, proof of purchase of any items carried on their person. Failure to produce a valid receipt results in confiscation of goods—which are presumed to have been stolen—and a punishment of five lashes. Citizens who bring to the attention of the Black Watch those who are carrying stolen goods will be rewarded with half of the confiscated property.
- ❖ 17 Janvier: Any citizen who does not report a crime is subject to the same penalty as the criminal. Citizens who knew of a crime but did not report it can absolve themselves of guilt by providing to the Black Watch the names of any other two citizens who also knew of the crime.

The laws are enforced by the Black Watch, whose patrols stride through the town with impunity, setting their war dogs on any who interfere with their frequent interrogations, inspections, or arrests. If anyone fights back, these brutish thugs hack the fool to death.

Black Watch patrol members wear studded leather armor and carry short swords and whips. A typical patrol includes six militia members and three war dogs. Each militia member has failed at least one Ravenloft powers check. Choose one Stage 1, Stage 2 or Stage 3 failed powers check result from the *Realm of Terror* sourcebook (or one reward and one punishment, from the first edition sourcebook) and use it to customize each militia member.

**Black Watch guard (human 5th-level fighter):** Int Avg (10); AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 5; hp 24 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d2 (whip); SA Stage 1–3 rewards; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 420 each.

**War dog:** Int Semi- (4); AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (8); XP 65 each.

# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH

There are 42 Black Watch troopers and 21 war dogs in the city of Chateaufaux, organized in seven patrols.

While the heroes are in Chateaufaux, they witness an arrest every 1d4 hours. Citizens are arrested without trial on the word of a single informant. The Black Watch immediately carries out the punishment, baring the back of the "law-breaker" and whipping that person in the street. Sometimes this kills the accused, who is usually a 0-level human with 4–6 hit points. A short time after the heroes arrive in town, read the following:

Three surly-looking men in black leather armor stand outside a grocer's shop. Each holds a fierce-looking dog on a stout leash.

From inside the shop come the sounds of a scuffle. "Why are you arresting me?" a man cries. "I sold the apples for full value!"

A moment later, two men in black leather armor emerge from the shop, dragging a portly man with them. Behind them strides a man with a whip. As the first two tear the back of the portly man's shirt open, the three men with dogs use their animals to menace the crowd that has gathered.

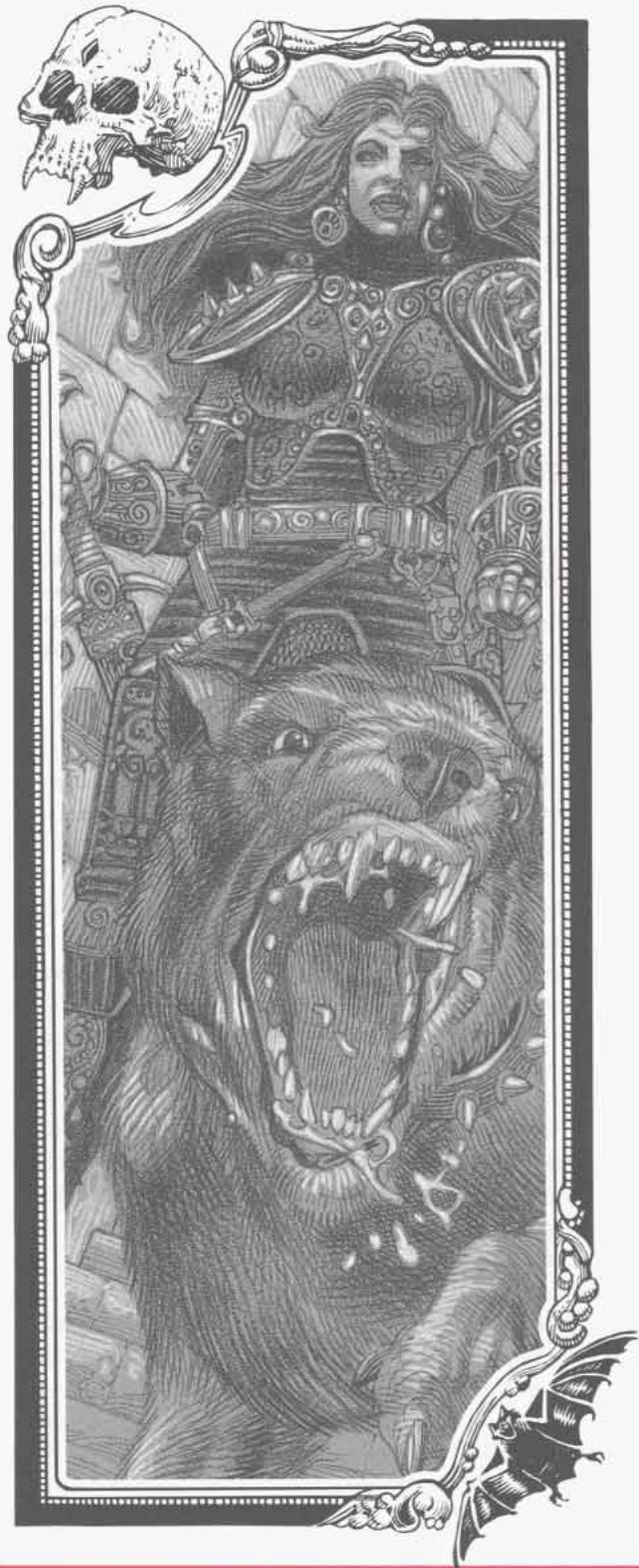
"Grocer Delapont has broken the law!" the man with the whip calls out. "His punishment shall be five lashes."

"Please!" the grocer begs. "The Laval family was too poor to pay full price, and the apples were bruised. Show some mercy."

"Mercy?" The man with the whip sneers. "I'll show you justice instead." He raises the whip to strike the first blow.

If the heroes do nothing, Grocer Delapont receives five lashes. The beating knocks him unconscious; the Black Watch leaves his bloody body in the street and moves on. His sobbing wife runs out of the shop to embrace him.

If the heroes try to stop the whipping, they have a fight on their hands. If they succeed in killing or driving off the Black Watch patrol, they are hunted throughout Chateaufaux. Any Black Watch patrols that spot them immediately attack.



# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH

(Even if all members of the first patrol were killed, informants gave the Black Watch a description of the heroes.) If the heroes prevented the grocer's lashing, his grateful family shelters them.

**Note:** If this adventure takes place in a town where the heroes have friends, they can shelter with those friends. But ultimately, one of these friends turns informant and hands the heroes over to the Black Watch.

The Black Watch hauls captured heroes off to the building that doubles as headquarters and town jail. There the heroes get thrown in a cell.

## The Laughing Pig

When he arrived in Chateaufaux, Van Richten took a room at an inn called the Laughing Pig. If the heroes speak to the innkeeper, Madame Grier, they find her terse and unresponsive. She is clearly terrified of answering their questions.

With a little persuasion, however, she admits that a gentleman named Rudolph Van Richten took a room at her establishment two weeks ago. On the second day of his stay, he left for an afternoon meeting with the mayor, Henri Melano. He returned a short time later, quite upset, babbling about monsters. A few minutes after his return, a Black Watch patrol came to the inn. They searched Van Richten's room, then arrested him on a charge of libeling the mayor. Madame Grier has not seen or heard from the doctor since. She offers the opinion that, if the doctor is still alive, he is probably in the town's jail.

Madame Grier adds that, when the patrol left, one member handed her a letter that had sections blacked out, ordering her to mail it. "The doctor was in correspondence with his friends," the patrol member told her. "They will be worried about him if they don't receive this."

If the heroes think to ask if the Watch missed anything in its search, Madame Grier says that Van Richten checked a suitcase into her strongbox. It contains Van Richten's standard kit of monster-hunting gear, as well as a magical ring that has the same properties as a *helm of teleportation*.

## The First Mask Falls

While in Chateaufaux, the heroes must eat and drink. Thus they will consume liquid tainted with the hamatula-gland hallucinogen. Ingesting this drug is automatic (unless the heroes specifically state that they bring their own water), and need not be role-played.

To determine if it has taken effect, roll a saving throw vs. spells, with a -10 penalty, for each of the heroes. Those who succeed resist the hallucinogen and can see the mayor and the militia captain for the fiends they are. (When the fiends make their appearance, describe their illusory appearance, but pass a note to the heroes who made their saving throws, describing the true appearance of the fiends. Seeing the fiends as they really are is cause for a horror check.)

On the second day of their visit, the heroes encounter a second Black Watch patrol. If the heroes are on the run from the Black Watch, they see it from a safe distance. Otherwise, the patrol passes them in the street. Read the following:

A squad of seven militia members, clad in black leather armor, strides by in the street. Three of the men hold fierce dogs that strain at the end of strong leashes.

The patrol leader is a handsome man in his early 30s. His jet-black hair is pulled back in a ponytail, and he is clean-shaven except for a small goatee.

As the group walks past, one of the men points to a house whose windows have been boarded up. "We arrested the family, and confiscated all the property, just as you ordered, Captain Tisiphanes."

"Good," the dark-haired man replies. "You will be rewarded for your diligence."

Not everyone in Chateaufaux has succumbed to the hamatula-gland hallucinogen. As the patrol passes out of sight, read the following:

# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH

You feel a tug on your sleeve. Beside you stands a grubby street child with uncombed hair and dirty bare feet. The urchin motions you closer, then speaks in a rapid whisper. "I saw you staring and figured you might be wise to the trick, like me. Could you see its claws and teeth? Could you? It's the ugliest thing I ever— No, I guess you didn't see it. Please forget I said anything."

The street urchin immediately turns to flee. If the heroes act quickly, they can catch the child—a girl of eight, named Zazette. If they can gain her trust, Zazette describes the barbazu's true appearance. She has not seen the mayor.

Zazette knows a secret way to enter the town jail, via an abandoned sewer tunnel unknown to the Black Watch. She used this tunnel to escape the jail when she was arrested three days ago. She volunteers this information if she overhears the heroes mention a friend in jail. All she asks in return is a good meal and a new pair of shoes. She will point out the entrance to the tunnel (a storm drain three blocks from the jail), but will refuse to accompany the heroes through it and into the jail. "There's big worms in there," she says. She can describe the worms (the larvae in the jail's basement) but does not know what they are. She also knows the jail's layout.

If the heroes choose, they may immediately follow the barbazu and its patrol, which is headed toward the town jail. If they instead take the time to interact with Zazette, the heroes cross paths with the same patrol later that day.

If the heroes have not yet interfered with the Black Watch, the patrol members order the heroes to halt and produce written receipts for their equipment. The resulting punishment for lack of receipts, confiscation of goods and five lashes, is sure to provoke a fight.

If the heroes are being hunted by the Black Watch, the patrol attacks them on sight.

If she is still with the heroes, Zazette slips away unnoticed during the battle. As before, captured heroes are thrown in a cell in the town jail.

## "Captain Tisiphanes" (barbazu baatezu):

Int Low (6); AL LE; AC 3; MV 15; HD 6+6; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3 or 1 (whip); Dmg 1d2/1d2/1d8 (claw/claw/beard) or *whip of entanglement* (see below); SA Spells, *whip of entanglement*; SD +1 weapons to hit; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML Steady (12); XP 6,000.

The barbazu lost its normal weapon (a saw-toothed glaive) when it entered Ravenloft. It instead carries a magical whip that performs in the same manner as a *rope of entanglement*. It uses this whip to draw its victims close enough so that it can rend them with its claws and stab them (in a motion much like a head butt) with its wire-sharp beard. If both claws hit, the beard automatically hits for maximum full damage. Those struck by the beard have a 25% chance of contracting a disease from its unclean hairs.

For each round in close combat, there is a 10% chance (cumulative) that the barbazu enters battle frenzy. When in frenzy it need not make morale checks, and it gets six attacks with a +2 bonus on each attack roll. Its Armor Class, however, suffers a +3 penalty during frenzy, which lasts until combat ceases.

The barbazu also has the following spell-like powers: *affect normal fires*; *command*; *fear* (by touch); and *produce flame*. In Ravenloft it lacks its normal ability to *gate* in other baatezu.

## Rescuing Van Richten

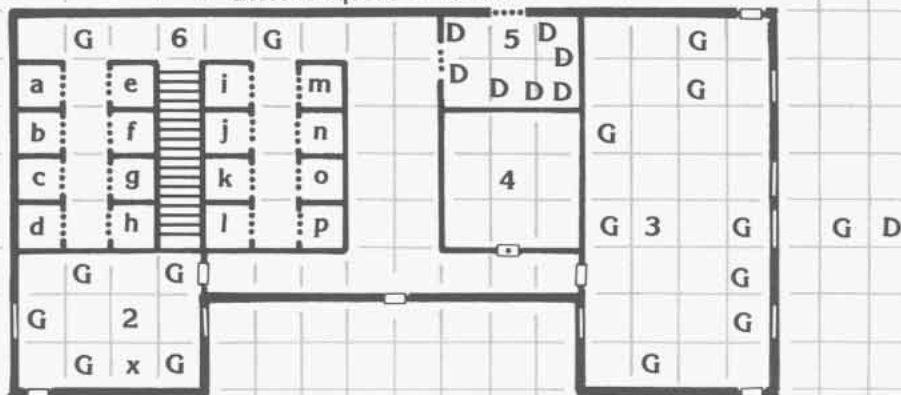
Van Richten is being held in the town jail, which doubles as the headquarters of the Black Watch. The heroes may themselves wind up in a cell there as a result of interactions with the Black Watch. Because all cells are full, this means that the Watch must feed another prisoner to the larvae in the basement.

To rescue Van Richten from jail, the heroes can either fight their way in, sneak in via the tunnel Zazette told them about (she shows them its entrance), climb over the wall, or *teleport* in using the ring from Van Richten's suitcase. They might even bribe their way past the Black Watch jail guards (5d10 gp per guard).

# THE TASKMASTER'S LEASH

## Chateaufaux Jail

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

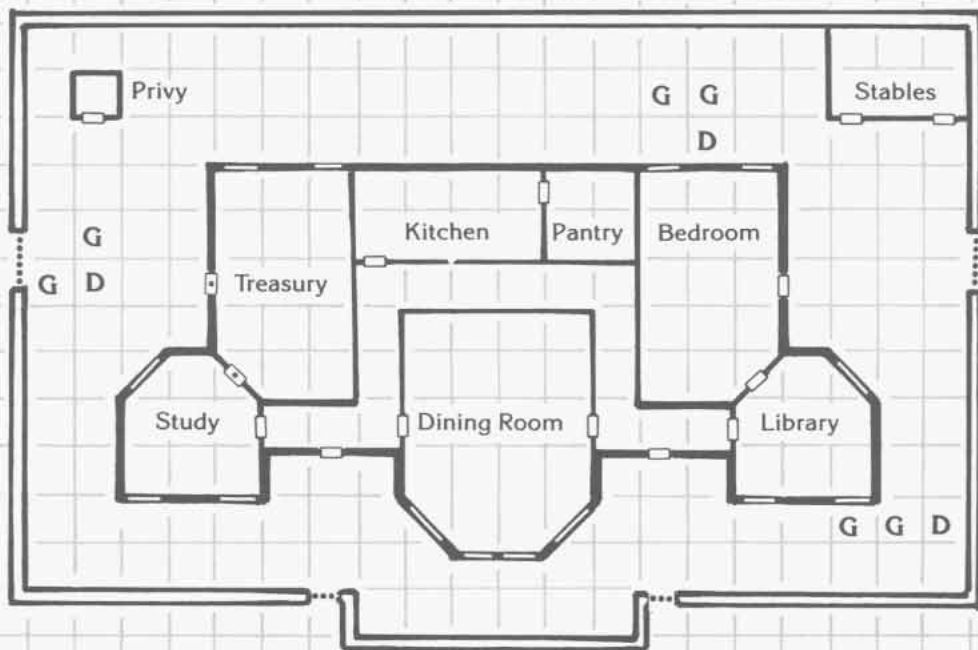


### Legend:

- D Dog
- ...■ Cell/Gate Door
- x Fiend
- G Guard
- 🐛 Larva
- ||| Wall



## MAYOR'S HOUSE



The wall that surrounds the jail is 20' high, and six-inch razor-edged spikes guard its top. These spikes imposes a -30% penalty to all climbing attempts, meaning that unskilled climbers have only a 10% chance to scale the wall without damage. Anyone who slips and falls suffers 1d6 damage for every ten feet fallen.

The area between the wall and the jail itself (Area 1) is patrolled by two Black Watch guards, each with a war dog on a leash. Inside the building, other Black Watch members lounge in the office (Area 2) or barracks (Area 3), or are stationed as jail guards near the cells (Area 6). Keys to the cells are in the office; weapons (short swords and whips) are stored in the armory (Area 4). Seven war dogs in a kennel (Area 5) bark furiously at anyone passing within ten feet of either kennel door. If the barbazu has not already been killed, it is in the office. The basement of the building (Area 7) contains the larvae, to which surplus or troublesome prisoners are fed. If the heroes enter this area, read the following:

This room smells of damp earth and rot. By the look of the dirt floor and stone walls, it is a basement. In one corner, you see what appears to be a mass of limbless corpses.

If the heroes approach these "corpses" the larvae attack. Add the following:

One of the corpses begins to move, and then another, close to a dozen in all. As each unfolds itself from the pile, you see that is a huge worm, perhaps five feet in length. At one end of the body is a human head, its hair patchy and its eyes rolling. The creatures rear up, their broken teeth bared in fearsome, hissing grimaces.

Normally, larvae only attack while under the direction of another lower-planar creature. But these larvae are hungry, and attack anything that comes within range.

Wounds caused by a larva bite continue to bleed until bound, for 1 additional hp per round. Those bitten by a larva must save vs. poison or succumb to a disease that rots skin. The disease appears three weeks later. Once it has set in, the victim loses 4 hp per day unless he or she lies absolutely still. A *cure disease* spell cures this rot.

**Larvae (10):** Int Semi- (3); AL NE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA Wounding, disease; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Unreliable (4); XP 35 each.

Van Richten is in Cell 3k. Each of the other cells holds 1-3 prisoners, all 0-level humans who are innocent of any real crime. All will plead with the heroes to set them free.

Once rescued, Van Richten relates what happened: He went to meet his friend, Henri Melano, only to find a monster posing as the mayor! (Van Richten made his saving throw and did not succumb to the hallucinogen.) He fled the house, only to be captured at his inn by the Black Watch. He is alive only because he lied and convinced Captain Tisiphanes that an herbal concoction lets him see through the fiends' illusion. They are torturing Van Richten to learn the ingredients of this potion. They taunted him by explaining how they murdered his friend. Van Richten now wants revenge for Henri's death, and asks the heroes to destroy both fiends. He can lead them to the mayor's house and knows its layout.

## Confronting the Mayor

The fiend impersonating Mayor Henri Melano lives in a house near the center of town. The residence is protected by a 10-foot-high stone wall and locked wrought-iron gates, and its grounds are constantly guarded by a Black Watch patrol (six troopers and three war dogs). The dogs bark furiously if they see or scent intruders.

The mayor spends much time in his treasury, gloating over items confiscated by the Black Watch in its numerous daily arrests. (If the heroes are arrested, their valuable equipment and magical items are here.) The treasury includes 10,000 sp; 4,000 gp; a small sack of three precious stones and two



gems, one a *gem of seeing*; a collection of 50 silver spoons (value 10 sp each), one a *Murlynd's spoon* that creates elegant and nourishing desserts, rather than gruel; five crystal decanters (value 10 gp each), one a *decanter of endless water*; and 12 pieces of artwork worth from 50 to 500 gp each.

If the heroes disguise themselves as the Black Watch, they have an excellent chance of surprising the fiend. All humans look alike to the amnizu; it even has trouble distinguishing human gender. Or a hero might use Van Richten's ring to teleport in and gain surprise.

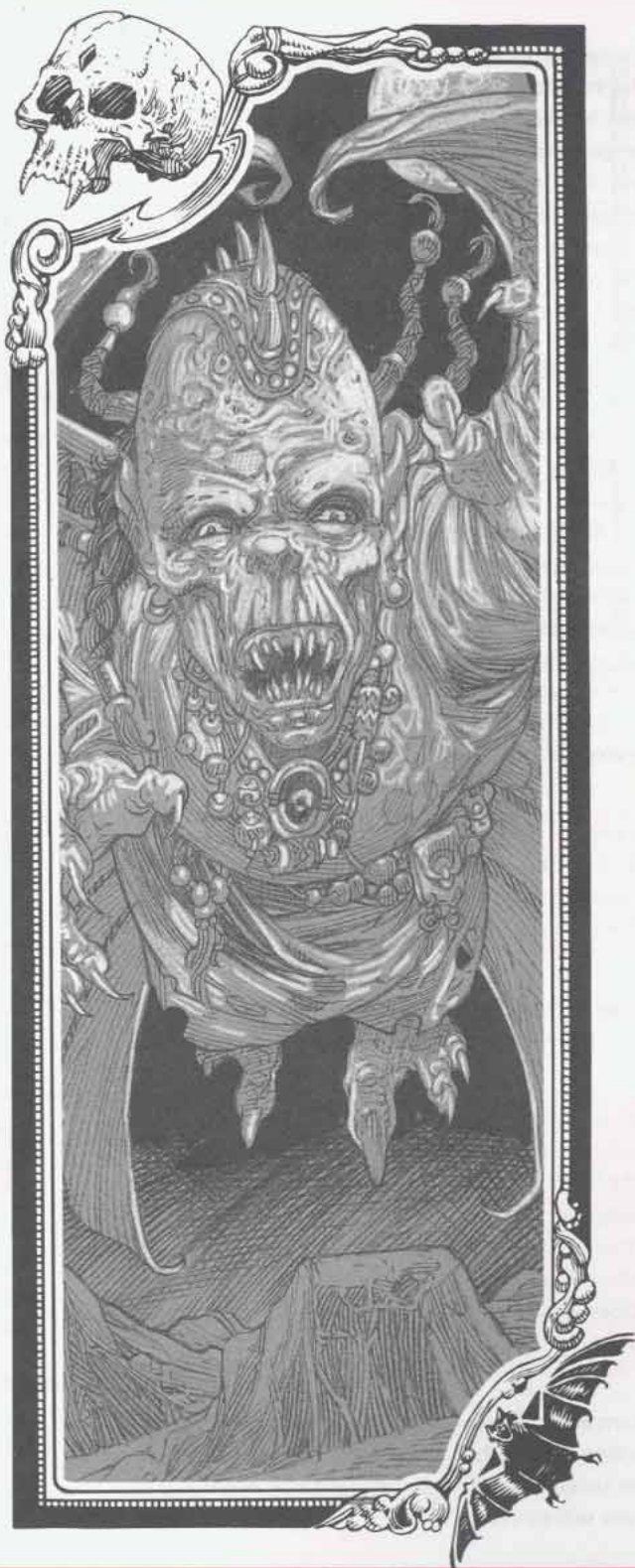
Clearly the heroes' goal is destruction of the fiend. The alternative is to simply walk away from Chateaufaux and let the evil creature inflict some new torture on that town's citizens.

**"Mayor Melano" (amnizu baatezu):** Int exceptional (16); AL LE; AC -1; MV 6, FI 15 (C); HD 9; hp 48; THAC0 11 (1); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (touch); SA Energy channel, *forget*, *fireball*, *imprisonment*; SD +2 weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 11,000.

In combat, the amnizu first shouts for its human guards, and uses its energy touch (which bypasses armor) for 2d4 points of damage. The human guards arrive with their dogs in 1d4 rounds. If need be, the amnizu flies to the ceiling where it reveals its true appearance in an attempt to unnerve and frighten the heroes; a horror check may be required. At this point, inform the players that this is the mysterious person they met at the beginning of the adventure (in the Terror Tip). Failing all else, it casts a *fireball*, not caring if the house burns down.

Any hero touched by the amnizu must save vs. spells or suffer a *forget* spell that wipes out memory of the previous 24 hours. If this happens during battle, the hero is disoriented and suffers a -2 penalty to all attack rolls for 1d3 rounds.

The amnizu can also use its *forget* ability outside battle. If it realizes that a hero has come to the mansion to kill it, the amnizu tries to place a friendly arm around the victim's shoulders. Any victim who fails to save wakes up in a jail cell, unaware of how he or she got there. The next day, the victim is fed to the larvae in the basement.



## Lomar Gojanovic

Darkling, Chaotic Evil

Str 16 Dex 17 Con 12  
Int 12 Wis 13 Cha 7

AC 8 (10); MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d6 (short sword); SA poison (injected, Immediate., death/20, *evil eye*; SD *Foreseeing*; MR nil; SZ M; ML Avg (9); XP 650.

Lomar looks like the typical Vistani: swarthy skin, flashing eyes, and jet black hair. He coats each of his weapons with Type E poison. He wears a powerful *ring of regeneration* that restores 3 hp per round. He also wears a frayed black cloak (*wings of the bat*). If cornered in combat, he uses it to escape, hiding by means of his *ring of invisibility*.

Further, due to his Vistani heritage, Lomar has the power of *foreseeing* which imposes a -2 penalty to opponents surprise roll, and allows him to succeed in all saving throws.

## Tommas Dendarich

Third Magnitude Ghost, Chaotic Neutral

Int high (13); AC -2/4; MV; HD 8; hp 43; THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA Paralysis, phantasms; SD +2 magical weapon to hit (+1 if attacker is ethereal); MR 30%; SZ M; ML special; XP 5,000.

Tommas appears as he did at the moment of his death: a pain-wracked figure with flesh that has been blistered and seared by fire.

Just before he appears, the heroes hear a faint clanking sound—the legacy of the chain that held him as the house burned around him.

His touch on a character's wrist or ankle causes 1d8 points of searing damage and that limb to feel as though weighted down by chains. He may also create phantasms in a hero's mind.

## Werner Ruscheider

Vassalich, Lawful Evil

Str 18 Dex 14 Con 17  
Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 12



AC 1; MV 12; HD 6; hp 30; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 or by spell; SA spells; SD immune to mind-affecting, cold-based, and polymorph, spells; MR nil; SZ M; ML champion (16); XP 2,000.

The monster masquerading as Werner Ruscheider wears a *ring of mind shielding* to prevent the heroes from catching on to his masquerade.

Werner's spells: 1) *chill touch, comprehend languages, detect undead, hold portal, protection from good, sleep* 2) *bind, darkness 15' radius, forget, misdirection, spectral hand, summon swarm* 3) *blink, hold undead, protection from normal missiles, sepia snake sigil, suggestion* 4) *contagion, enervation, fear, polymorph other, polymorph self, curse* (reverse of *remove curse*) 5) *animate dead, avoidance, chaos, cone of cold, dream, feeblemind, summon shadow* 6) *death spell, repulsion*.

## Werewolves

**Werewolf, mother:** Int Avg; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 39 (presently 16; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD +1 or better to hit; SA spells (*magic missile* x2); SZ M; ML 12; XP 650.

**Werewolf Young (2):** Int Avg; AL CE AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3; hp 32, 28; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420 each.

This pack of werebeasts hopes to manipulate the heroes into destroying the weretigress whose territory they've invaded. They claim to be Vistani. The elder beast is a low-level wizard, who casts spells while in human or hybrid form.

# CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT

## Emil Bollenbach

Madman, Lawful Evil

Str 12 Dex 16 Con 11  
Int 18 Wis 16 Cha 11



AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife); SA Surprise, Paralytic poison; SD Nil; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Avg (10); XP 35.

Emil is a handsome young man with unruly auburn hair. His appearance is distorted by a nervous tic at one side of his mouth and a maniacal gleam in his eye.

If cornered, Emil will fight with syringes filled with Type O poison (injected, 2d12/rd, paralytic). He keeps six in a leather case in his pocket.

Emil has the psionic wild talent *switch personality* (and the *contact* and *mindlink* prerequisites).

## Sister Evangeline

Fledgling Vampire, Neutral Evil

Str 18/76 Dex 16 Con 18  
Int 16 Wis 16 Cha 14



AC 1; MV 12; HD 8+3; hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (blood loss); SA Charm; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, regenerates 3 hp/round, immune to poison, gases, sleep, charm, and hold spells, half damage from cold or electrical based attacks; MR Nil; SZ M; ML Fanatic (17); XP 10,000.

Evangeline must drink at least 6 hp of blood each day. She chooses as her victim a patient who is alone in a room at the Sisters of Mercy hospice.

Because she lives in a sanctified place, Evangeline has lost a portion of her connection with the Negative Material Plane. She can no longer drain energy levels from her victims, nor does her bite create other vampires. Instead, she uses a poison derived from her own blood.

## Hotep

Greater Mummy, Lawful Evil

Str 17 Dex 12 Con 13  
Int 18 Wis 20 Cha 10



AC 0; MV 9; HD 10+3; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6; SA Aura of *fear*, disease, spells; SD Immune to all mind-affecting spells, cold and fire based attacks, +2 or better magical weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; ML Fanatic (18); XP 12,000.

At first glance, Hotep looks like any other Har'Akir mummy, but where most mummies are tinder dry, Hotep's bandages are continually wet. A stream of slimy water trickles continuously from her open mouth, like drool.

Hotep's spells: 1) *animal friendship*, *create water/destroy water*, *invisibility to animals*, *locate animals or plants*, *protection from good*, *purify food and drink*, *sanctuary* 2) *chant*, *enthral*, *hold person*, *obscurement*, *speak with animals* 3) *call lightning*, *dispel magic*, *hold animal*, *plant growth*, *prayer*, *water breathing*, *water walk* 4) *detect lie*, *lower water/raise water*, *protection from lightning*, *reflecting pool* 5) *cloud of purification*, *control winds*, *magic font*, *rainbow*, *transmute rock to mud/transmute mud to rock* 6) *part water*, *transmute water to dust/transmute dust to water*, *weather summoning* 7) *control weather*.

## Fiends

**Amnizu baatezu:** Int Exceptional (16); AL LE; AC -1; MV 6, FI 15 (C); HD 9; hp 48; THAC0 11 (1); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (touch); SA Energy channel, *forget*, *fireball*; SD +2 weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ M; ML Elite (14); XP 11,000.

This horrid creature has assumed the visage of the mayor of Chataaufaux, and, together with another baatezu, is holding the city in an iron grip, using terror and hallucinatory poison that has been put in the water supply.

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