

## GAME SESSION NINE: EVIL EYE PART 6 – WOLF HUNTING

*November 10<sup>th</sup>, 747; 9:00 pm. The Vulpwoods, Vistani camp*

After these intriguing stories, the players leave the Vistani camp and return to Karina. As requested by Madame Eva, Raul and Nikko stays with the Vistani so that Raul can help forge an arcane item to use against the dreaded Dukkar.

When going back to Karina, Petrak hears again the sound of violin. It is a piece Raul plays often at night. Again, he is the only one who hears it... They are wary for another ghost attack but Leyla doesn't manifest. They enter Karina safely.

Back at the Golden Fields Inn, they decide to leave a message for Patrick Connor, concerning his offer to help the heroes against Timothy: "when you arrive, come see us, anytime". The players go to their room to discuss their plan to assassinate Timothy. They plan of ambushing him in an alley.

Around midnight, Patrick hasn't arrived and the three heroes sleeping at the Clock's Tick go to their own rooms there.

*November 11<sup>th</sup>, 747*

At one in the morning, someone knocks at the Golden Fields Inn door – it is Patrick. They let him in and explain him the plan, but Patrick has some difficulty to focus and look inebriated. It seems his austere forest life needs some unwinding once in a while. They agree to meet again in the morning.

The next morning, they meet Patrick and Lynnet at the dining room. As usual, Lynnet doesn't say a lot and Patrick leads the conversation. He loves to discuss plans against lycanthropes and it shows.

The plan is to have Exigu go on Timothy's boat again when Timothy is gone, but this time without the *pass without trace* spell – a few days ago, Exigu entered the Virago to explore it and he stole some goods from Timothy. When he comes back, Timothy will see signs of trespassing on his boat and will hunt the thief, most probably in wolf form. The traces will lead him to an alley where the ambush will take place. All the heroes will have gold plated weapons.

Patrick's concern is mainly about security against contracting the lycanthropic curse, and make sure Lynnet is out of arm's way, with a bow.

Patrick also shares more information on Timothy: a while ago, Nathan Timothy was mostly seen in an area north of the Verbrek forests, called Arkandale. It seems that then he rarely visited his son Alfred in Verbrek. Now, most of his time is spent traveling the rivers on the Virago. In fact, he never does travel the forests as he did before ... but he sees his son more often?

*(DM's note: an interpretation that Nathan was the darklord of Arkandale, a domain now dissolved. Nathan's current curse is to have to stay near a body of water)*

The group waits at the nearby tavern, the Musarde's Bliss. A sign on the door say "No gypsies allowed", but Raul isn't with them this time as he stayed with Madame Eva's Vistani.

The heroes make some spying around the Virago. However, since they do not have a tavern room to spy from, like the other day, people working in the area get suspicious after less than one hour.

To spy on the boat, they decide that one of them should walk on Front St once in a while, and check on the boat's activity. Even this kind of spying is dangerous, as Petrak once nearly ran into Timothy coming back from the Black Dog tavern!

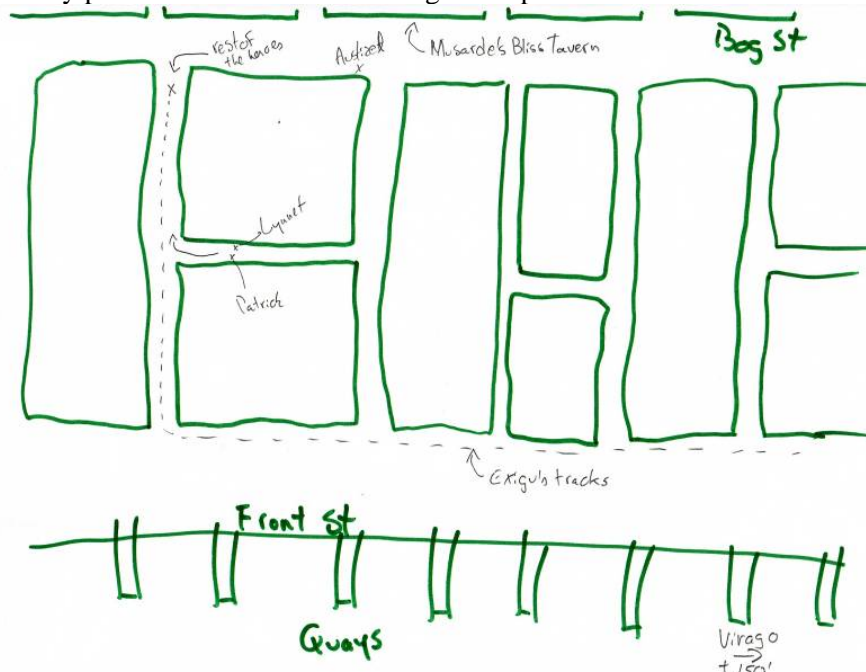
However, when the sun is lower, it is easier to maintain a permanent watch on the Virago. At 8h20 pm, they see Timothy leave the Virago. Before leaving, he locked the trap door leading to the boat's inside areas. It is the first time they see Timothy locking his boat when he leaves. He walks on Front St in direction of the Black Dog tavern, near the warehouse district.

For the ambush, Varadan and Virevan, who could be affected by Timothy's curse, won't take part in the attack.

At 9:00 pm, Exigu goes for the Virago and take great care to keep him self hidden in the shadows. He is particularly careful not to be seen from an eventual watcher located inside any Front St buildings, or hidden on the roof of one of these.

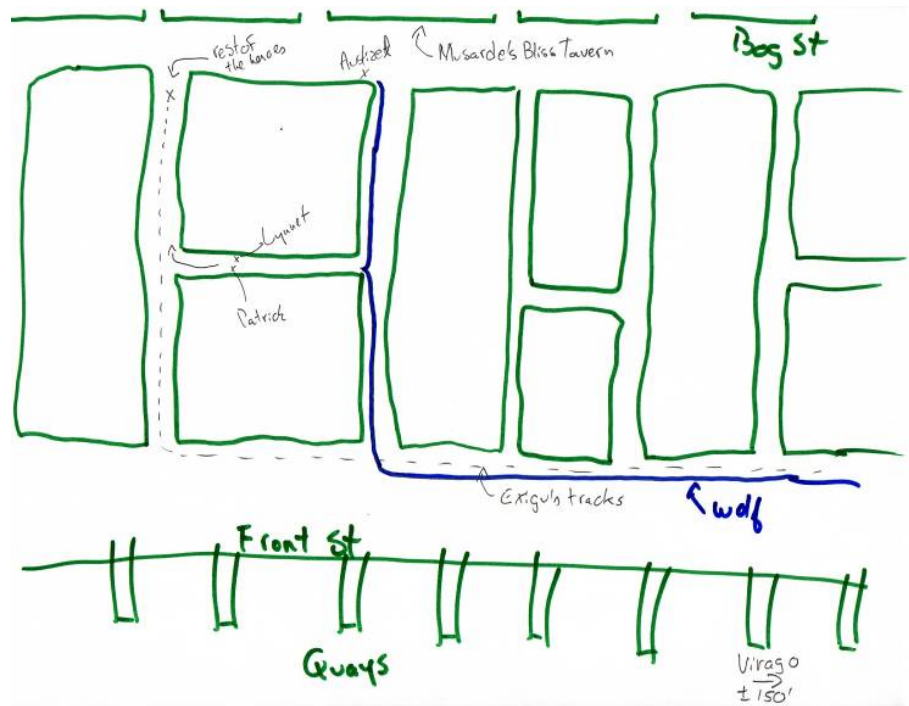
However, when he starts walking on the plank leading from the quay to the Virago, he hears movement inside the boat! But they saw Nathan leaving! Who's there? He also notices that the lock on the trap door is a false one: it is only on the trap door and doesn't lock it to the boat's bridge. Exigu slowly backtrack to an alley between two Front St buildings. It is then that he saw the trap door slightly opened, like if someone was watching him from the boat.

He decided to carry on the ambush plan and walk along Front St toward the others. When he disappears in the alley, the trap door on the Virago opens and a wolf exits the boat. It sniffs the area where Exigu walked and follows his tracks toward the ambush site. Seeing this, they ask Patrick if he wants to kill this werewolf even if it isn't Timothy. They decide to ambush this werewolf and they position themselves according to the plan:



Where the werewolf was expected to follow Exigu's tracks in the alley up the ambush site (the "X" on the map). When the attack would start, Patrick and Lynnet would come in from the back to make sure it doesn't escape.

However, it doesn't work exactly that way: the wolf is suspicious and decides to walk the other alley! (see the blue line on the second map): it stops looking at Patrick and Lynnet who are set for an ambush on the other alley. Moments later it walks toward Bog St. Austizel sends a *message* spell: "He's here!" that makes everybody run toward Austizel on Bog St.



The wolf, seeing all these people coming, flees the ambush site. They try to squeeze it in the alley and block all exits but the wolf is too fast. It *bites* Virevan and leaves. Exigu throws two arrows at it, one gold-platted and one silver platted: only the silver platted arrow made a wound. They also notice that the wolf is a female (*a bride of Nathan, the infamous Natalia Vorishkova!*). The wolf fled in the Black Dog direction.

The heroes flee the area. They meet at the Karina Clock Tower and discuss: the plan missed and Timothy will be aware and suspicious. They call it off for this night and postpone the attack on him later and instead concentrate their energy on locating Matton to get the information needed by the vistani.

Since the Festival is over, they get a second room at the Clock's Tick and regroup there.

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 747

Petrak is awakened by the ghost violin again. They consider the fact that Leyla's curse could be getting stronger with time?

They decide to have breakfast at the Golden Fields Inn, where they see Patrick and his companion, but also the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins. They inquire about the location of Matton

Blanchard's house but the twins do not know. However, Jennifer says they met Matton once and they do not think highly of him.

The heroes decide to inquire about Matton with Keith de Lalune. When an anchorite brings the heroes to Keith, he is already discussing with a young woman. He presents them Jorane Amos, the daughter of the best baker in town. She is quite stern and does not smile when presented to the heroes.

(DM's Note: see the USS 2002 for both of these NPC: "Keith de Lalune" article for more on Keith de Lalune and the relation with him and Jorane Amos).

***From the USS 2002 "Keith de Lalune" article:***

*Keith takes great care of his good reputation among the folk of Karina, and they continue to respect and like him. On the outside, he hasn't changed much: now in his mid-50's, he remains as benevolent, gentle and helpful as before. He takes a lot of his time protecting the poor, the sick and the weak.*

*For the Kargatane's benefit, he now uses his status as man of wisdom and of good advice to inform his new masters about what he learns through private confessions, and what people ask him in private advice.*

***From the USS 2002 "People to meet in the land of mists": Jorane Amos (Invidia) :***

*The youngest daughter of a well known bakery shop owner in Karina, Jorane Amos is now in her late 20's. She is small, thin and average looking. Her hair is black and her gaze is eagle-like. She often wears black clothes and has a stern expression. She almost never smiles. Her parents are concerned that she isn't married yet and often try to present her potential husbands. While helping her parents at the bakery, and learning magic, Jorane has also been a secret member of the Kargatane network of spies for nearly a decade.*

*Her local superiors in that organization often use her brilliant mind when planning operations. She enjoys spying on her future victims, learning all she can about them. She is very successful at setting well-crafted traps for the unwary, always playing on the weaknesses she has observed. She is responsible for the death of many opponents, while always moving the attention away from the Kargatane. She often advises on how to maintain a grip on the network of informants, willing or not. With all those qualities and strength, she is promised a bright future in that secret society.*

*She is now in fact Keith's main **Kargatane** contact.*

Jorane Amos should take a large space in my campaign ...)

Mrs Amos leaves and the heroes enter Keith's office.

They ask him where they can find Matton Blanchard, "who has information important to us". Keith, curious, asks for more precisions and Petrak adds that "Matton knows where we can find a person he once knew." (Wanting to make sure they were trying to locate Gabrielle) Keith said to Petrak "my son, but you surely know that Matton had a very tumultuous love life?" Petrak said yes with a knowing smile (and then Keith knew they were on the darklord's tracks). Keith gives them the location of Matton's house: 66 Canal St.

After, they asked Keith for jails or something similar where they could jail the eventual lycanthrope on the next full moon. Happy to help the heroes, Keith shows them the crypts under the cathedral. Some of them are empty and a strong door locks them. They are relieved of having found a possible solution to the full moon eventual lycanthropy.

They thank Keith and are back in the street. There Exigu shares the impression that Keith knows much more than he cared to explain about Matton's lover. They decide to go back to Keith and tell him everything the vistani told them: Gabrielle's story and the Dukkar, the black boy bringing terror to Invidia's population, the vistani who want to lock the Dukkar in Invidia

*(DM note: I had a hard time not to smile, as they were telling everything about Gabrielle and the Dukkar to a Kargatane informant!).*

Keith gives them some information that puzzles them: Gabrielle had her baby just a month ago! It confirms the possible fiendish nature of the children. Also, Gabrielle's usual resting place is the Hunadora castle (the ancient castle of Lord Gundar, located in ex. Gundarak). However, the Festival surely attracted Gabrielle to Karina, but Keith didn't see her during these festivities.

They thank the anchorite and go back to the streets. While they discuss what they just learned, they see Jorane Amos coming back at the church. They understand that Jorane Amos has a peculiar link with de Lalune, but they have no idea of the nature of this relation...

On the way toward Matton's house, they are attacked by a flock of ravens! The ravens make one pass and peck at the heroes, who have the horrible impression that they are aiming for the eyes ...

*(DM note: I had the players play a mock reflex save when they were hit by the raven. I wasn't really looking to maim the PCs, but it made them uneasy!).*

They see a black shape hiding in an alley! It looks like the Dukkar, but older! Exigu moves to see more but the only thing he sees are a swarm of black rats, scurrying to hide under the refuses... Quickly, all of them are gone ... The flock of raven is decimated by a quick *color spray*.

They get to the 66 Canal St house. A man answers the heroes' knock. They recognize him as one of the persons who accompanied Matton on his hunt. He tells them that Mr Blanchard won't meet anyone today. They persist and ask the man to insist with Matton and offer that "It is about his lover". The man smiles mockingly, say he will ask Matton, and closes the door. Shortly after, he reopens it and says that Matton will meet them. They get upstairs in his master room. Matton is seated in his bed, not looking fine.

He looks happy to meet them again and excuses himself for meeting them in his bedroom. He looks badly hurt from the burning theatre. They make him a cure spell. Not telling anything about the vistani quest, they simply offer to help him searching for his ancient flame. Matton do not tell them where she is, but agrees to the heroes offer. He adds that Scar Tabor told him that she was held prisoner by her own son. They agree to search for her tomorrow at 4h pm.

They ask for more information about lycanthropy, telling Matton that Varadan and Virevan might be infected. He doesn't know much more than what the PC knows. He tells of a plant that is very repulsive to werewolves (*DM's note: a plant from Kartakass, idea from the Book of Shadows fiction*), but he doesn't remember the name of the plant. He will look for it and bring the information tomorrow.

They go back to the Vulpwoods to see the Vistani. They get invitation for a light lunch (root stew with black tea). Madame Eva worked all night with Raul. They tell them of their rendezvous with Matton tomorrow.

At the end of the meal, she presents them with a fist-sized black iron ball, a sphere of binding, to use against the Dukkar (it is still hot to the touch, and remains so). Marcella advises to hurl the binding sphere at the Dukkar's feet. The sphere will binds him to Invidia, eliminating the threat to the world. Austizel will carry this sphere.

To Petrak, Raul offers two pairs of manacles for the possible lycanthrope.

Raul will join the party for the meeting with Matton. Nikko will stay with the Vistani. Raul also tells the heroes that whatever happens, they should not visit the Vistani on the night of the Full Moon and more importantly on the night after. He speaks of a secret ritual that none can see. The camp could be a safe place should they need it, but he advice against searching for the Vistani in the woods...

After the meal, Raul gets a little farther and starts playing his violin.

Petrak ask Madame Eva about Leyla and offers that Leyla is bound to this place by something that forbids her to leave. Madame Eva smiles, and nods at this clever idea. Petrak asks if it is the violin who binds her to the mortal world. Madame Eva only says "the one who can do something isn't ready yet..."

Raul salutes them from afar and says he will be at the Clock's Tick at 3pm tomorrow for their excursion with Matton.

The heroes are back to Karina, where they buy silver platted arrows. They get rest at the Inn. The talk of the town is the strange events of the day: ravens attacking people's eyes, people falling from windows, etc.

*November 13<sup>th</sup>, 747 (three days before the full moon!)*

The next morning, they hear of another Midnight Slasher attack: a Falkovnian soldier was killed. Since it's in the Falkovnian enclave, the heroes are uncomfortable to get there seeing it for themselves. However, half an hour later, they meet the twins coming back from the crime scene.

The message on the wall was:



(Toll due; Bad dreams come true; Some say we're born into the grave)

Gennifer has an uneasy look when she asks the heroes “But didn’t you dream of the Midnight Slasher?” ... *DM note: the last riddle of the Midnight Slasher was borrowed from an Alice in Chains song. I liked the sound of it, and the players really wonder what its meaning was, after Gennifer’s question!*

## GAME SESSION TEN: EVIL EYE PART 7 – HAPTMAYER ESTATE

The heroes spend the day quietly: Petrak makes gold plated sling bullets and Mac Razbunare goes in the wild around to make some *goodberries*.

At 3pm, Raul arrives at the Clock’s Tick. He wears studded leather and a scimitar hangs from his belt. As the players discuss about the Dukkar and their mission, Raul offers more information to help the heroes: a Dukkar for the Vistani is like some kind of *antichrist* in other religions – a male born of a mortal, but having deadly powers that could turn the world a blood bath. He would be the second male Vistani to have this title. The first one was Hyskosa, who predicted catastrophes that revealed to be true: the last of them to happen was in 740 when an area disappeared north of Barovia to become the Shadow Rift. The heroes remember the event in 740: earth shook this day in Zeidenburg and many thought it was the end of the world. Only Vistani women do have the Sight: a man having this power is a Dukkar.

At 4, as planned, Matton arrives. He looks much better then yesterday and seems to recover his wounds quickly. He reveals more on today’s goal: one of the estates along the Noisette river, known as old Haptmeyer residence (or "Cliff House" by most Karina residents, as it overlook a cliff). The house has been unoccupied for the past seven years, ever since the deaths of Lord and Lady Haptmeyer. According to local tales, Lady Haptmeyer found her husband in the arms of a pretty house servant, and during the violent argument that ensued, the noble pair battled on a high balcony, plummeting over the edge to their watery deaths. Since then, the estate has been deserted and is rumoured to be haunted. No relatives claimed it.

The heroes discuss once again the value of the “having an Invidian heart” saying... Passion is a dangerous thing here...

Matton also gives the heroes the name of the plant repulsive to lycanthrope: Nightblight (Gaz 1). This plant is highly repulsive to lycanthrope and wolves, and grows only in Kartakass (south of Barovia and Invidia), where Matton comes from.

After this discussion, they start their excursion toward Cliff House. The trip is uneventful and Matton explains that Haptmeyer is a well known name for wine connoisseur: it used to make one of the best wines in Invidia, vintage after vintage. It’s a shame according to him that these vines are now left abandoned.

They pass in front of the estate casually, not to give clues to possible watchers. The main building is a magnificent two story mansion, but it is in a lamentable state of disrepair. They see many fresh traces going in and out of the estate: men, horses and also a carriage but this track is older. Very old maple trees surround the main entrance, and the floor is covered by colourful dead maple leaves.

They continue for a few hundred feet and turn inside the forest bordering the estate. They spy the place, hidden and notice a second service door on the northern side of the building.



Petrak again hears odd noises: it is the voice of a crying baby. It sounds like Nikko. He is the only one hearing it and when told of that, Raul frowns and looks sad.

They spy the estate until the sun set. It is striking that the nice panorama with the colourful leaves turn sinister and grey when the sun set. A light is seen in a room on the first floor. They see two giant ravens over them. Their wingspan is over 8 feet! The large black birds fly to a maple tree at the entrance of the estate and perch on a tree, like if watching ...

Exigu the Halfling walks to Haptmeyer house and notices two vipers in the leaves... a mostly unnatural concentration.

When at 100' from the estate, crossbow bolts are fired at them from the second floor. Matton is hit, but he casually removes the bolt without a word. The heroes strike back with arrows and soon no more bolts are fired.

They run for the service door but it is locked. A window is barricaded with planks but they are easily removed: the heroes enter the lighted room. It is a kitchen (*room #5 on the Evil Eye map*). Many areas are still dusty but a work station has been cleaned and the heroes see a few provisions left there: a sack of onions, a sack of potato and suspended game: a pheasant and two rabbits.

Two doors come out of it. On one of them, Exigu notices contact poison! The other door leads to a grand dining room (*room # 4*). There, five guards appear. They wear leather and have a menacing sword. They attack and fight to the death. They are especially hateful against Raul. After the battle, they search the bodies for clues: nothing, except a medallion each is wearing. Matton identifies it as a medallion Gabrielle's guards wear.

Except the dining room and the kitchen, the first floor manor is mostly empty, and dusty. All rooms are dusty and have a few boots traces in them. They also see a few old broken pieces of furniture, fallen plaster from the ceilings, cobwebs and maple leaves flown in from broken windows.

In the northern rooms, the stable (*formerly room # 6 and 7*) offers a grisly sight! A pile of fifteen bodies lie there, half eaten and turned to gore by wolves! A large cloud of sick, green flies swarms over the bodies. At this horror sight, Virevan is struck with panic while Austizel's aversion forbids him to enter the room. The others control their horror to a sustainable level and grapple Virevan to make sure he doesn't run outside the building. He is able to control his fears after two minutes.

The heroes wonder what happened here. They wonder for a time if werewolves are involved in this massacre. Matton offers that bodies should be examined closely: werewolves would surely have been in hybrid form for the killing, and the wounds of the bodies would show claws as well as bites. They inspect the bodies but they are fearful of possible undead and walk cautiously in the stable. They notice that the bodies have been torn to pieces by wolves, but not traces of claws are visible. They also have been struck by swords. There are six leather-wearing guards (wearing the medallion) and nine bodies of servants and maids. Matton recognize one of them as Gabrielle's cook. Also, they note that the massacre happened here, they were all gathered here to be slaughtered.

Six black horses are found in another part of the stable, near a shiny black carriage with Gabrielle's insignia on it. The horses look normal and well fed. They find it quite odd that the



wolves ate the corpses but didn't attack the attached horses. They conclude that the wolves had a master controlling them. Also, the stables doors are closed.

On the second floor of the Manor, they find a room that have been cleaned recently. This is a lady's room. It is filled with nice furniture and a large poster bed. The bed sheets and other linens in the room are of the finest quality. Matton look at the pillow and identifies the hairs and scent as Gabrielle's. Under the pillow is a red velvet bag. It contains a rectangular small pack of silk and 6 pieces of exquisite jewellery worth 400 gold pieces each! A fortune!

The silk package reveals another layer of black silk, with strange symbols written in white ink on it. Inside the second layer is a deck of cards. *(DM note: I actually gave the Ravenloft tarokka deck to the person opening the silk wraps)* Raul says it's a tarokka deck, used to see the future. The heroes are uneasy with it, thinking the item could be cursed or magical. Raul agrees that a tarokka deck is something serious and that it should not be played with lightly. However, Virevan is too curious and cuts the deck to look at the cards: to his astonishment, the card is the 6 of swords, and a grisly wolf beast is shown on the cards! *(DM note: the random drawing of this card is genuine. Virevan's player, a suspected lycanthrope, coincidentally cut the deck to a werebeast card! That was greater then fiction.)* Mac Razbunare expresses his concerns with the decks powers and they wrap it in the silk.



A small pile of books is found near the poster bed. Mostly "Dead Travel Fast" romantic novels, but one of them is larger then the others and has a slight magical aura: "The great Von Zarovich blood lines", written by Talena Von Zarovich. The book looks fairly recent. The magical aura is summoning.

*(DM note: an arcane book of my doing. The book is about the Sturm Von Zarovich blood line and details most Von Zarovich relatives in history and the currently living ones. The heroes in it will find that Varadan, a Barovian later, is in fact of Von Zarovich ancestry! This will be used later with Tara Kolyana. Also, the slight conjuration aura of the book makes Talena (Legacy of Blood book) aware that someone of the Von Zarovich blood line is reading it...)*

The rest of the second floor is empty except another room, where they find kids furniture! The Dukkar's room!

Going back on the first floor to explore the cellars, they see that the dead guard's head have been cut! Who has been doing that? None of the group stayed behind alone, so who could it be? They inquire outside to find new boot traces under the window where the players entered. A search of the first floor brings nothing.

They descend the staircases to the cellar and they hear someone weep. The sound is far and muffled as if a door or a wall was between them and the person weeping.

In the cellar, they find only rotting barrels and mould. In a room, two guards attack them, but they are easily dispatched. However, at the end of the battle, Matton runs to the open door, yelling "I'm coming!" and tries to open it, but it is locked. Exigu unlocks the door and Matton runs down

a wooden staircase, but he is stooped in his move by a bottle of wine hitting him hard on the nose!

They hear a woman yelling from fright. Petrak asks “Mademoiselle, can you talk to us?” but only more yelling answers this request.

*(DM note: sound track aLitB CD #76)*

A lady in a white, wine smeared dress is seated on the floor and look at them with fear in her eyes. The floor of the cellar room where she is locked is full of broken wine bottles and wine pools around her.

“You are not mother!” she yells, “who are you!”

Varadan recognize the lady as Celestina, the one he met in Karina during the wedding fight!

Matton wipes the blood stains from his face on his shirt and walks to Gabrielle. He tries to hug her but she look at him with madness in her eyes and slap his face. “I have killed you once, Bakholis, I can kill you again!” The heroes realize she has lost her marbles. Matton recoils, shock and sorrow showing on his face.



Varadan tries his luck and tells her “Do you remember me? We met at the wedding at the Golden Fields Inn?” But she slaps back “At the Zimmermann wedding? But you abandoned me!” She looks blankly at a wall and says “I just wanted a child! Is that so wrong?” Back to Varadan, she tells “You took me to Falkovnia! Why did you do that?”

Noticing Raul, she recoils and sneer, "So the Vistani have sent you kill me! Finally! I always knew they would send an assassin for me... I didn't steal this deck, it was my mother's!"

Petrak again tries to calm her and ask “But who imprisoned you?”. She replies “My ungrateful son, Malocchio!” *(It is the first time the heroes hears the Dukkar's name)* “He was to be my tool of revenge against *you all*” while she waves largely to all the people in the room. “What will you do when he will come? Will you be on his side like the others?” she implores.

Raul suggests exiting the cellar and moving to a less cold place, to help her recover. So they are now going up to her room with her. They try to reinsure her but she is mumbling, looking at her feet “The Mists take you, traitor... May you know ... your child's betrayal ... and realize ... too late ... the depths of its evil! ... A husband ... a child ... a home ... these things can never be for you... for tragedy ... will be the only result.” She sobs quietly.

They are now in her bedroom and she runs for her bed, hugging her pillow like a frightened children would. “My ungrateful son”, she says. She implores the heroes to kill him when he will arrive. *(DM note: stressing the fact he will soon appear!)*

Raul, grim, says she looks pathetic now, one of the most powerful women in the world, now looking frightened as a lost kid in the woods.

Gabrielle asks for her tarokka deck and then starts disposing the cards in a cross pattern on her bed. However, the heroes notice that she seems in pain when placing the cards ... At what price does Gabrielle have the Sight?

They hear the front door of the estate slamming open! They hear footsteps, lots of them ... After a minute; they hear sniffing at Gabrielle's door, where the heroes have retreated with her. Is it wolves?

They hear a baritone-like, loud, strong voice on the first floor: "Mother, I see you have made a mess of things again!" Gabrielle is terrified. The heroes, Matton and Raul take a defensive position in the bedroom. "You remember now who my father is, *mother*?" shouts the voice. Gabrielle cries and tries to block her ears with her hands, as the winged fiend clawed at her painful memory, gloating over his conquest. "My magic removed the illusions on your weak mind! My father is a demon, you whore!"

There are efforts to try to open the bedroom's double door, but the players hold on. They move Gabrielle's heavy poster bed to block one door, to open only one to have a smaller front to defend. Gabrielle retreats to a far corner of the room.

The heroes open the door to find two guards and nine dire wolves. The battle begins. The wolves are growling. The heroes hold their position. Matton tries to control the wolves but it fails so he draws his sword. The guards and the wolves are slowly defeated. However, at one point during the battle, things turn sour: Malocchio himself appears! He looks much older now, like a young adult. He looks very confident.



He cast on the heroes a twenty foot radius miasma of green and grey cloud. They feel the evil in the magic. The spells hit them hard. Malocchio laughs.

Then, Mac Razbunare notices that Gabrielle is now at the other end of the room, standing in front of a window. Fearing she could do something dangerous for her, he runs to her side and asks her what she is doing. However, she turns at him and smile. After a moment, she asks him to go back at the other end of the room and kill her son. Dutifully, Mac Razbunare retreats to the other end of the room and engage the battle with Malocchio's allies.

*(DM note: Evil Eye – suggestion, on Mac Razbunare. Not to make the players aware of her evil eye powers, I rolled the saving throws behind the screens for the players against her evil eye. While insane, she was still dangerous and manipulative: I now had two PCs charmed by Gabrielle (Petrak and Varadan) while they were in the room, and now another had the suggestion to kill Malocchio for her...)*

The battle rages on the other side, with Matton and Raul joining the heroes to defeat the fiend's allies. At one point, Austizel is very close to Malocchio and he hurls the black ball at his feet! The sphere explodes in a quick flash of blinding light, and tendrils of magical energy wrap around his body. Then the cords turn to glowing iron chains, and then dissolve as quickly, leaving nothing behind but sulphurous smoke.

Malocchio appears more surprised than hurt, and say "What have you done!"

On the other end of the room, they hear Gabrielle's yell of terror! They turn to see a black cloaked figure with a large hat and hunting knife on top of Gabrielle, and about to stab her. She probably leapt from the window! "For Mother and Father!" he shrieks.



Gabrielle shouts "My friends, help me!" Even if the moment is dramatic, most heroes smile at the temptress's attempt, but they stop when Matton enraged runs toward his lost love, then Petrak and Varadan leave Malocchio's battle front and run to help Gabrielle! They are now much less fighting the half-fiend Malocchio! (*DM note: the effect of Gabrielle's charm, of course.*)

Petrak hit the Midnight Slasher once in the back. For a moment, the Midnight Slasher turns a hateful face toward Petrak, and he realizes the night killer is in fact a women!

On the other end, the wolves are now all killed and the group face Malocchio. He laughs as most weapons do not seem to affect him, and Mac Razbunare's produce flame has no effect either!

Matton and Petrak hit the Midnight Slasher hard and it is soon clear she won't last long.

Gabrielle is stabbed two times when the Slasher is suddenly paralysed by Gabrielle's power. Petrak sheets his weapon and remove the Midnight Slasher body from Gabrielle, who leaps up and moves menacingly toward her paralysed foe...

A magic missile hits Malocchio and he teleports away... Mac Razbunare, still under Gabrielle's suggestion, still searches the area with his wolf familiar for any trace of his enemy. Exigu stays with him to watch, while the others run back to the other side of the room.

However, the Midnight Slasher suddenly shakes off the effect of Gabrielle's evil eye and Gabrielle foils her murderess plans and gets behind Virevan, holding him near, like a Lover would...

The Midnight Slasher, badly hurt, retreats and starts running for the door. However, Virevan blocks her and say "Stop! I want to know who you are!" She stops for a second in front of the warrior and says "What will it change to you?", and walks around him, without Virevan's opposition. He tells her "I do not approve your ways ..." but lets her go.

Meanwhile, Matton takes Gabrielle back under his arms and they walk away from the group. "You will be safe with me, my love", they hear him say. As he tenderly escorts her away, she simply stares blankly into space, her lips moving soundlessly...

The heroes have nothing else to do here and they go back to the Clock's Tick. They see for a moment the Midnight Slasher running before them but she bolts for the nearby forest and they lose sight of her.

On a wall outside, they see another sad note of the Midnight Slasher:



*(Is he ready for me? I'm a riddle so strong you can't break me)*

The heroes and Raul walk back to Karina and get safely at the Clock's Tick. It is 8:30.

## GAME SESSION ELEVEN: EVIL EYE PART 8 (AND END) – LEYLA'S CURSE ENDING, AND THE TRIP TO LEVKAREST

The discussion at the hotel is about the night's event at the Haptmeyer estate. The heroes now can link Gabrielle to a few more mischiefs, one of them being the sad deaths at the Haptmeyer estate.

After some quick healing and spells, the group spends a quiet night at the Clock's Tick.

*November 14<sup>th</sup>, 747 (two days before the full moon!)*

While preparing spells and other morning tasks, they discuss another plan to assassinate Nathan Timothy.

They go for breakfast at the Golden Field Inn, where they hope to see people they know. They are lucky, as the twins are there, and, at another table, Patrick & Lynnet. They sit with the twins and discuss the event of last night. The twins did continue their search of the town's archive about a "criminal deed they wish to know more about". They do not elaborate more on the subject of their search.

After some other gossips, Laurie asks them "By the way, there is something we wanted to ask you since a few days but always forgot. At the Dog Fights, was there a woman lycanthrope by the name of Natalia Vorishkova?" At this name mention, Laurie has a quick protective move over her sister's arm. These reactions are well hidden under politeness and good manners, but Virevan notices Gennifer's trouble: she got paler at them mention of the lady wolf.

The heroes answer negatively, or that perhaps it was her, the female werewolf on the Virago the other night. The twins explain that she is somewhat related to their family, and that one of their uncle is on an endless quest to find her.

The twins switch back the conversation to the player's action of last night. Hearing that the Midnight Slasher is a woman, Laurie turns to Gennifer and pokes her shoulder: "You owe me a copper", she said, smiling.

The heroes explain more on the hate relations between the Midnight Slasher and Gabrielle. They say that Gabrielle's evil charm was the source of many past mischiefs between lovers in the area. The twins are surprised to hear that, and of their encounter with her. They enquire more on the fate of the Midnight Slasher (she fled) and of Gabrielle (she stayed with Matton).

The heroes then discuss on the link between them and the Midnight Slasher – why was he, err, she, following us? Raul offers that perhaps she was following Matton, as she knew he would bring them to Gabrielle. That seems satisfactory.

Virevan tells the other heroes discretely about Gennifer's reactions at the mention of Natalia Vorishkova. When the twins are back at the table, Petrak offers that the wolf lady on the boat with Nathan was harmed by silver. At first, the twins are defensive, but noticing the heroes only want to help, they relax and share more: Natalia was a lover of their uncle, George Weathermay. She used this love to get near another uncle, Rudolph Van Richten, to destroy him, which she nearly did. Of course, the name is famous to the heroes and they heard of the man's books. Van Richten made himself many enemies while publishing these books, and from other quest he led against evil. He is now living quietly as an herbalist in Mordentshire. The twins grew up listening

to their uncle's stories about fighting evil and that is what led the girls to this peculiar career for well educated and rich girls.

George Weathermay is now looking hard for Natalia to kill her and eliminate this threat. The twins say they will write him to let him know of this possible Natalia sighting.

*(DM note: you noticed I have changed a few things in the Van Richten – Weathermay history, making the twins active before their uncle's disappearance.)*

They part for the day. After, they meet with Patrick and Lynnet, who are investigating on their side, but have nothing new for the moment. They will be in town another week, should the heroes need them.

Virevan enquires about the repercussion of the next full moon on the lycanthrope's activities. Patrick doubts they will do something especially evil, as they are very few now in Karina, possibly a maximum of twelve to fifteen. It would be too dangerous for them to do anything that would give them too much attention. In their opinion, the werewolves make affected minions for a special task, and they are killed or expanded after it.

They go outside to get *goodberries*, and then proceed to Madame Eva's camp. Vincenzo welcomes them, and they are joined by Madame Eva and Marcella. When the heroes explain that they are successful, the Zarovan are grim for this important moment, but nonetheless pleased.

The conversation switches to Leyla's ghost. At Madame Eva's glance, Raul nods. She explains the heroes the following:

Paul's violin of passion is a potent magical item, created by the matriarch of the Kamii tribe. When Raul first began courting Leyla, the Vistana dancer initially treated him with aloof disdain, since he was not a member of her Naiat tribe. Undaunted, Raul went to the matriarch of the Kamii, hoping to learn the secret to Leyla's heart. After gazing at her tarokka, the wise woman told Raul to find a violin and a hairbrush from Leyla's vardo. After Raul's procured these items, the matriarch took the violin and hair from the brush to restring the instrument. The wise woman then told Raul to play the violin every night for a year and a day, thinking only of his love for Leyla. After the appointed time, he found that Leyla had indeed fallen in love with him, exactly as the wise woman had predicted.

“One last time?”, Madame Eva asks Raul. Raul nods again and plays his cursed violin one last time. He is very concentrated on his task and the musical result is very poignant (*DM note: Henry Mancini's gypsy violin theme*). Some of the heroes watch around for Leyla, but she doesn't appear.

Then Raul simply throws his violin to the camp fire.

Marcella tells them that yesterday, in Haptmeyer estate, Raul saw the dangers of letting the past rule the present.

As the violin begins to burn, Marcella announces, “It is finished! Leyla, rest in peace! Your business here is finished. Raul is a great loving father and he will take good care of your son Nikko.”



The player feel lighter, has if a load has been lifted off their shoulders. They try healing spells and they work normally!

Marcella loudly announces two things for the rest of the tribe: First, she states with joy that the present Dukkar is no longer a threat to the Vistani. This is answered by loud cheers from the rest of the tribe. And she proclaims that Leyla's spirit is now resting quietly where she should be. The heroes feel friendship in the vistani's eyes and, for the first time, they really feel welcomed at the camp.

Raul thanks the heroes for their support and adds that through their last week's adventures, he realized many things he could not see before meeting them. Then he takes Petrak apart and offers him to become a *giogoto*: a *giorgio* who is "enlightened, yet not of the blood." Raul tells him that most vistani tribe should be friendly to him, but the reverse is that vistani enemies who can read this sign will treat him as a hated vistani. Petrak accepts without hesitation.

Raul stands face to face with Petrak near the fire. Drawing a keen edged knife, he takes Petrak's left hand and slices it open with a single deft slash of the blade. He then opens his own palm in the same manner and both clasp bleeding hands. Raul wraps a scarf around the joined hands and says loudly, "Hands bound, blood mingles. I cannot repay you for your act, but I will call you my brother". This is accompanied by other vistani cheers. Petrak enters a short dream state, in which he feels joined to Raul, linked by images in his mind of vistani life on the road. He sees Raul sharing similar images, most probably of Petrak's past life.

When at last the two hands separate, they are covered with blood, but the wounds are miraculously healed over. All that remains in Petrak's hand is a wide purple scar! Many vistani come to Petrak and hug him.

Madame Eva then murmurs something to Marcella, who runs toward their vardo. She comes back after a moment, holding strange bottles. "I have a few parting gifts for you. First, do you wish to know who is affected by Nathan Timothy's lupine curse?", Madame Eva asks. They nod and she opens a small crystal bottle, holding it as if it was the most precious thing on this world. Nearly instantly, Virevan and Varadan are repulsed by a strong musc odor. The others smell nothing. This is the answer you seek, she simply said. Raul isn't affected and seems relieved.

MacRazbunare asks if the plant nightbliss is a component of this liquid, and Madame Eva nods once.

Marcella gives Petrak five more bottles: two of them will induce lycanthropy on anyone drinking them. It will be useful for when the spells will be ready, i.e. they won't have to wait for the next full moon. The three others are the reverse: anyone drinking them will have a one time touch power enabling him to suppress the beast in any affected lycanthrope, for a few hours. It doesn't work on natural lycanthrope.

The heroes thank the vistani, say farewell to Raul and leave the camp.

Looking at them leaving for the forest, Marcella asks Madame Eva of the hero's fate. She answers cryptically: "We met them in this time of great suffering. Then we met again, but for them it hasn't happened yet..."

At 2h pm, the heroes are back to Karina, where they find a message by the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins:

THE VIRAGO HAS LEFT KARINA THIS MORNING. UNKNOWN DESTINATION. GWF
---

Not taken aback by this bad news, the rest of the afternoon is spent negotiating with a weapon smith about coating some weapons in silver, some in gold and a few more in cold iron. It will cost them nearly 700 gp but this is taken from Gabrielle's gem pouch. It will take nearly a week, which the players find too long. With a smile, the smith says a 10% extra will bring this to two days. He will subcontract with fellow smiths in town.

After this, they go on Front St: the Virago has really left the port of Karina.

At 6pm, they go have diner at the Golden Field Inn and they dine with the twins. They notice that the infamous Black Dog tavern seems deserted. Many lycanthropes left Karina for the full moon to live freely their beast side in the forest?

During diner, Patrick and Lynnet arrive at the Inn. Petrak and Exigu leave the dining table to talk with them. They ask him the usual known trips of Timothy. Patrick answers that he mostly makes river trips between Karina and Zeidenburg and between Karina and Verbrek. But he was seen elsewhere too, always near a river.

Patrick has something to discuss with the Inn owner. Lynnet takes this opportunity to whisper to the halfling of something they learned today: "the life of twins is menaced. One lycanthrope, a ladywolf by the name of Natalia wants to kill them. We got this information from a human working at the Black Dog. Patrick didn't want me to tell you as he thinks it isn't our business, but I think you should warn them". Exigu thanks her for the tip and asks her if they could investigate the Virago's destination. She can't promise anything but she say she will try.

A moment later, Patrick is back and Petrak offers him to meet the twins, saying they have much in common. But surprisingly he refuses, saying "they are too well known and get too much attention". They leave the Golden Field to get diner elsewhere.

Back at the table, Exigu tells the twins of the menace they heard about them. Laurie quickly suggests her sister to leave Karina for somewhere else. They also have to write quickly to their uncle. The heroes tries to dissuade them from leaving, offering their help should they need it.

Gennifer describes Natalia: average height, short brown hair, black eyes. She should now be around 30 years. We saw her about 10 years ago and she was very beautiful and charming.

After diner, Exigu go outside to spy on the Black Dog Tavern. It is indeed very quiet and he doesn't recognize anyone from the dog fights. Also, none of the few patrons seems to match Natalia's description.

*November 15<sup>th</sup>, 747(only one day before the full moon!)*

At 3am, he decides to check on the Golden Field, and uses his thieves' skills to unlock the front door! Walking silently in the sleeping inn, he finds the twins doors closed and his keen hearing discern two persons inside, breathing normally for sleeping persons. Going back downstairs, he is surprised to find something cold in his back, while he hears "Talking a walk?" in his hears, in a

slightly mocking tone. But the hidden person walks back a few feet and Exigu turns to see Lynnet. He heard nothing! She is using her lack of elven sleep to guard the inn. Exigu leaves the Golden Field for the Clock's Tick.

In the morning, they are surprised to see someone waiting for them at the inn: Tara Kolyana! She asks Petrak for a favour. She absolutely has to be in Levkarest in a few days. She had plans to make the trip with a friend, Marek Crawford, but this one hasn't shown up yet in Karina. She doesn't worry for him as he is often late. However, she was asked by the bastion himself to be in Karina so she can't miss this meeting. After very few hesitations, the heroes accept to escort her through Invidia to get to Borca.

They discuss of the possible ways to make this trip: by road to Zeidenburg, then to Levkarest (but she say "I'd like to avoid Barovia, if possible."). The two other choices are by river (through Verbrek) or by road, through the forest. While tempted by the possibility of meeting Timothy on water, they decide to make the trip by horse via Curriculo and through Invidia. It should be a two day trip, three at the most.

The rest of the day, MacRazbunare examines the book they find in Gabrielle's room, "The Von Zarovich Legacy". It is a handwritten book by a person named "Talena Von Zarovich". Detection spells find a slight aura of conjuration. MacRazbunare notices something else written on it, with invisible ink. Using a simple candle, he reveals a few notes written on the cover! Under "Handwritten by Talena Von Zarovich", it is written "and commented by ME!", and, in a corner, "Is Strahd's dagger targeting her own?". Who wrote these notes? Is it Gabrielle?

After a few precautions, they open the book but find no magical traps or similar harmful embedded magic.

*(DM note: I actually gave them a real 8 pages "book" – see the session 11 appendix. It's in French but you should be able to see what it is about. A few comments in invisible ink are found in red all over the "book", in an Azalin-like manner.*

*The book was hand written by Talena Von Zarovich (LotB) in a few copies, spread all over the Core. The book is about the Sturm Von Zarovich blood line and details most Von Zarovich relatives in history and the currently living ones.*

*The heroes in it will eventually find that Varadan, a Barovian hater since the destruction of his monastery by Barovians, is in fact of Von Zarovich ancestry! His name is Ottar Von Zarovich (see the family tree on page 6 of the appendix), born in 720, the only son of assassinated boyars. The biography comments about him say "Left in an orphan house at the death of his parents. The orphan house doesn't exist anymore." They have not yet made the link with Varadan, born in 720, an orphan raised in a monastery now destroyed.*

*Also, the slight conjuration aura of the book makes Talena aware that someone of the Von Zarovich blood line is reading it... Other adventure hook seeds!)*

MacRazbunare feels a great hatred while reading the book and tells the others "this book gives us the names of those we will soon assassinate."

They notice with surprise of a certain "Andrez Von Zarovich": according to these notes, he would be a "paladin of justice, often seen in Mordent with the WF twins." *(DM note: from LOTB)*

It isn't the full moon, but they take no chance and "jail" Varadan and Virevan, the two afflicted lycanthropes, in secure rooms under the Temple of Ezra. After the angst of the wait, the two finally get some sleep near sunrise.

*November 16<sup>th</sup>, 747 (this night is full moon!)*

In the morning, they go check on the twins at the Golden Field to find they left "very early this morning, paid their note yesterday night, and left this morning with all their things."

They found a note waiting for them at the Click's Tock, in the usual white envelope used by the twins:

DEAR FRIENDS,  
BEING SUDDENLY FEARFUL FOR OUR OWN SAFETY, AS YOU WILL  
UNDERSTAND, WE DID QUIT KARINA THIS MORNING WITHOUT TELLING  
ANYONE. WE WILL QUICKLY BE IN THE TOWN WHERE YOU ARE HEADING  
SOON, FOR A FEW DAYS, THEN BACK HOME.  
ANTICIPATING THE PLEASURE OF MEETING YOU AGAIN,  
GWF

Exigu think they did a mistake and tries to run after them. At the main entry point, they ask about the twins leaving this morning. One guard tells him that they left at sunrise, in a fast carriage with four horses. Exigu can't reach them and he goes back to the Inn.

They spend the day relaxing and at the end of the afternoon, they are back to Ezra's church basement, where they again put Varadan and Virevan in the archive vaults. Keith de Lalune has emptied the temple and sent all anchorites on errands for the night. The temple is empty except Keith, Tara Kolyana, and the heroes.

This night is different from the previous: at 8h00 pm, they hear howling in each of the rooms! Then strong fist tries to destroy the door, but it is a very strong wooden door with iron bars, so the pounding cannot affect it. But still, the heroes outside are amazed of the strength of the blows. After a moment, the pounding stops but not the howling. It seems both werewolves are answering to each other...

*November 17<sup>th</sup>, 747*

At 4 am, the howling stops. Varadan and Virevan find themselves naked, with bloody fists. They do not remember anything of the night, and they are hungry.

Just to be on the safe side, the door to the vaults is opened at 9 am. They examine the door and find many claw marks on the wood.

They speak with Tara also, but she hasn't slept well. She will spend the day organising the supplies and getting horses for the trip, with the help of Keith.

In the morning, Varadan and Virevan sleep, after a meaty breakfast!

Varadan awakes a few times, after the same odd dream. He remembers dreaming it two times, but it might be more often.

*Varadan dreams of the monastery where he was raised. It is the night where it burned after the Barovian attack. But Varadan sees many monks leaving, of which his friends and mentor Bartan et Dalwiniu.*

He wakes up with the hope of seeing them back. This impression lingers for a minute or two before reality strikes him: during the attack, most monks were killed, including Bartan. Varadan took care of Bartan's body and buried it. Dalwiniu was never found, or seen again.

After it, the hope transforms to remorse for not having been able to help the monastery during the attack (Varadan was on an errand to Zeidenburg when it happened).

The rest of the day spends quickly. At night, Varadan makes the same dream, but with something peculiar at the end of it...

*Varadan dreams of the monastery where he was raised. It is the night where it burned after the Barovian attack. But Varadan sees many monks leaving, of which his friends and mentor Bartan et Dalwiniu. Suddenly, in the corner of his eyes, he notices something different. He turns to look and sees a ballerina, all dressed in white, looking at him. Her ballerina costume is smeared with blood stains. As Varadan turns toward her, the dream ends.*

Varadan woke up, shaken, unable to say why. But he feels guilty about not helping his friends.

*November 18<sup>th</sup>, 747*

They are awoken at 6am by Keith de Lalune, who had them prepared a good breakfast and wishes them a safe trip. All heroes, except Exigu, and Tara will be on light horses. Exigu will be on Patu, his riding horse.

They leave early and their first stop is at the Musarde river ferry. In it, Virevan discretely ask Tara about her bad dreams. She tells him she had those morbid dreams since she was a little girl, and that they mostly consist of pale faces staring at her and blood. Varadan ask her if she ever saw a ballerina in white, but she answers negatively.

*(DM note: but guess who was watching this conversation?)*

They arrive at Curriculo around 2 pm. They quickly check the port area but no sign of the Virago there. They ask a tax official, and he said it's been a while since he saw this boat here.

Back on the road. North of Curriculo, the road forks toward the east (to Zeidenburg) and the north (to Borca). They take north.

They cross a dense maple and oak forest. In November, it is quite sinister. They see the Crucible Hills east of the road.

At 4pm, they see an enclosed black carriage, stopped on the side of the road. Their first thought is for the safety of the Weathermay-Foxgrove, but it is bound for Curriculo and has only two horses.

They get nearer, watchful for ambushes, and they see that one door of the carriage has been torn off and is on the ground.

Inside, a pool of blood is found and many splatters are seen on the inside walls, like if something (somebody?) have been pulped in the carriage. No body is found in the carriage or around it. Many claw-like marks are found on the carriage. A quick search shows nothing of value was left in the carriage. The rangers find boot traces around it, but of a very large size. Could it be ogres? They leave the area, bringing with them both horses.

At night fall, they find a clearing near the road and prepare for the night. They do not make a fire, to make sure it isn't seen from far at night, but prepares one in case they would need one quickly.

They go to bed, but Tara reads a little in the last moments of light. There will be two heroes guarding the camp, in a four hour rotation.

*November 19<sup>th</sup>, 747*

At 1h30 am, Tara wakes up screaming! Again, it seems bad dreams are haunting her. She drinks water and refuses to explain more on her bad dreams. "It is something I dream of since I'm a little girl, perhaps 7 or 8 years old. In fact, I have these dreams since my family left Barovia for Hazlan", she said.

MacRazbunare quickly wonder if the family left during the Barovian invasion, but, judging by the apparent age of Tara, it was 12-15 years *before* the invasion of Gundarak.

Before going back to sleep, she tells Varadan discretely "This time I saw *her*! I saw the ballerina! In your dream, was her dress full of blood?" Varadan nods, and realize that he didn't share with her the blood part when he asked her this morning.

So they saw the same *thing* ...

Just after three, more screams! But this time, it is Varadan who wakes up, sweating heavily. He tells his odd nightmare ...

*Varadan is a soldier, and his mission is to attack dangerous road brigands. They are easy to kill and Varadan takes pleasure massacring them. One of his fellow soldiers is MacRazbunare.*

*Eerily, the scene switches to the monastery where Varadan grew up, and all killed brigands turn to monks!*

*They see piles of monk corpses. Soldiers are cutting the heads and putting them on pikes, or are stealing from the monks meagre possessions. Varadan feels bad about what he had done, and of the fact they are stealing from the corpses of his friends.*

*Then suddenly, Strahd is there! He tells Varadan that he is very proud of him and his work and promotes him commander!*

*Then they see a young monk Varadan knew coming to the monastery. It is obvious the young monk doesn't realize what is happening and that it is very dangerous for him to be there. Varadan wants to save the young monk and yell him to flee but he can't! Varadan is like paralyzed. Strahd seems to understand the confliction emotions in Varadan and smiles evilly with his piercing gaze. He sees the soldiers surrounding the young monk and hears his screams!*

MacRazbunare is very surprised to hear Varadan telling his nightmare, as he did dream of the same thing, but for him it was just a simple, odd, dream, that he would have probably forgotten in the morning.

Varadan also shares his repeating dreams of yesterday, with the ballerina appearance.

He also tells that Tara dreamt of the same peculiar figure in her dreams...



The heroes realize something very strange is going on, and ask more about Tara's bad dreams. Shaken too, she tells that her dreams mostly involve "pale faces staring at me", "blood flowing or being splat on a wedding cake" and of "falling". This dream is happening in a very sinister place, cold, low lighted and full of cobwebs...



## GAME SESSION TWELVE: TRIP TO LEVKAREST – CONTINUED, AND ASHINGTON MAJOR

*Thanks to Jennifer, for scrubbing this session text ☺*

After these dreadful dreams, they go back to sleep.

At 4h20 am, Tara wakes up after another nightmare! Tara is shaken and doesn't want to go back to sleep after it. In her dreams, the first time it is so vivid and detailed, Varadan and Virevan were present. It is also the first time that Tara dreams these blood dreams that include people she knows.

Oddly, when Tara tells details about her dream, Varadan and Virevan say they dreamed the same thing!

*Tara is in a white wedding gown. It is so white it is near glowing. She is accompanied by Varadan and Virevan. They are heading to Tara's wedding and Varadan is the witness for the wedding. Virevan is another witness, or possibly a bodyguard: that part is not very clear.*

*They walk through a field that looks like a weird cemetery: many coffins are seen through the eroded ground. Many of these coffins look like if they exploded, and there are bits of corpses everywhere. Some are relatively fresh, others are skeletons turning to dust.*

*They arrive at a small ruined chapel. It is full of cobwebs and the stained glass windows are broken and dusty.*

*Then the groom arrives: it is a dark, black shadow. Its presence is terrifying.*

*As he takes his place near Tara, from the ceiling, a few drops of blood splash on Tara's white wedding gown. Then more, and quickly it is rain-like! Tara wakes up when she is drenched by blood!*

Suddenly, Exigu makes a possible link between Tara's dream and Strahd's curse. From what he heard in taverns whispers, Tatyana is reincarnated a few times per century. However, this is very frustrating for Strahd as this reincarnation of Tatyana always dies soon after Strahd has found her. (DM's note: this player had read "I, Strahd" and other Ravenloft novels a while ago – when they came out. This player has a good memory. When he made the link between Strahd's curse and Tara's dream, I was surprised that he would still remember it and that he would make the connection between Tatyana and Tara this quick. However, it still was cool to see their eyes when they heard of this possibility ...)

Tara is surprised by Exigu's hypothesis, and shared with the group other facts of her past: she was born in Barovia. When she was in her early teens, her family moved to Hazlan, south of Barovia. Much later, when her father was on his deathbed, three years ago, he told her that he and her mother had a vistani prophesising about Tara, when Tara was 16: the vistani told them that Tara would not see her twentieth birthday! (She is now 28). The prophesy said something else, which her father didn't want to tell her, but said that it was the reason why they relocated to Hazlan. He also made her promise that she was to avoid Barovia for the rest of her life.

She adds that her “blood dreams” often left her with the weird lingering impression of having lived all of this before ...

The discussion focuses on finding Strahd in both Tara’s and Varadan’s dreams – why? And why do these repeating dreams suddenly occur? And why are others dragged in those dreams? They have more questions than answers. They worry that Strahd has spotted Tara through magic and his sending minions for her ...

The sun is pointing its comforting rays at the horizon and the heroes sleep (those who still can), or prepare for the next day.

The trip to Levkarest is uneventful this day. At night time however, they have not arrived.

They arrive instead to a small hamlet of seven or eight houses. There are kids in the street, but these run in one of the house, the largest of the hamlet, when they see the traveling heroes. A man exits this house: “Welcome to Ashington, travelers. Is there anything we can do to help you have a good stay?” His name is Peter Vashon. He says that there is no inn in Ashington, but he offers his stable for sleep. He also invites the heroes to share his meal with his family. Oddly, he refuses the money the heroes offer.

In the stable, between themselves, they think it’s odd that Vashon doesn’t ask for money. *(DM note: they are close to refusing his invitation for dinner when Tara get this from the DM’s hat:)* Tara says she has something to detect poison, and gets a dinner fork from her belt pouch. This, she says, will get warm if there is poison in her food. *(DM note: idea from LotB of course)*

Then the son of Vashon comes to get them. He asks “Are you merchants? Are you adventurers?” They follow the kid and enter the house and sit with Vashon’s family at the enlarged table. Virevan answers him truthfully.

The food is simple but tasty, and Tara assures the others by tasting it and tells Vashon’s wife, Eliza that it’s very good. There is one empty place at the table. Austizel asks about the empty place and the mood of the family gets sadder. Vashon answers that his daughter, Miko, won’t be here tonight. She has been captured by bandits three days ago. They are extorting food and clothing in exchange for her life. However, Vashon is worried that they won’t keep their side of the deal and that they will kill her or worse. How much can it be then a killing? “They looked like dirty road bandits”, he says.

Peter asks the heroes for help. He says that the hamlet doesn’t hold enough men to fight these seven or eight bandits. The bandits have made their lair of an abandoned building just north of the hamlet. This abandoned house is the former manor of the Ashington family, an extinguished family of nobles in the area, who gave their name to the hamlet.

It is then that Virevan feels that Vashon isn’t saying all he knows about the Manor. He also notices that his wife, Eliza has vistani traits. She looks for a long time at Petrak’s purple scar in his left hand (the giogoto mark of Raul – see Evil Eye). She turns to her husband and says that they can trust the heroes and tell them the whole story.

“Ashington Manor”, she says, “is shunned by most at the hamlet, as it is a haunted and cursed place. Many times in its history destruction and madness struck at this place.” Allow me to tell you this tale ...

*(Following is from "Dark Tales & Disturbing Legends" book – I've modified it slightly for my campaign – underlined in the text:)*

*"Not far from here stands a house that once was home to the last member of a family long since fallen from nobility to the depths of evil and corruption. Lord Herod Ashington by name, this dark hearted fiend and his equally corrupt fellows would ride the surrounding countryside in search of maidens to terrorize and brutalize for their amusement.*

*"One night, Ashington and his minions came upon a lone Vistani girl who had been separated from her clan, and they captured her and brought her back to Ashington Manor. Ashington was a dabbler in black magic, and he knew counter charms that protected him and his friends from the Vistani girl's evil eye.*

*"What we know of this dark night is from the poor servants who where present at the Manor.*

*"Instead of merely taking her virtue, Ashington and the others decided to take advantage of the Vistani in other ways. Ashington was having a party that night and he promised her freedom if she would tell his guests' fortunes with her tarokka deck. She begged him to not make her use her tarokka deck in a frivolous fashion, tried to make them see that the mysterious forces that give Vistani their foresight do not appreciate being taken lightly. Ashington promised her that she would welcome death if she didn't do what he asked, and the fearful girl acquiesced.*

*"As the Vistani girl turned the cards and interpreted what Fate had in store for her captors, futures containing nothing but death and misery emerged. Ashington's friends grew fearful. The flowing lute music could not soothe this feeling. Furious, Ashington demanded that she use her mummery in a way that would entertain, not terrorize, his guests. He said he would give her one last chance and commanded her to tell his fortune and instructed her to make it a bright one.*

*"The girl again pleaded with Ashington, trying to make him understand that the dire predictions were not her doing but instead a reflection of the forces he was making her toy with. He would hear nothing of it, however, and commanded her to entertain her betters or suffer dearly.*

*"Trembling with fear, the girl started to lay the cards. Every card she revealed was from the Fortuna Magna, the most powerful cards in the tarokka deck, and they were the cards that represented the darkest of fates. As she was about to reveal the final card, Ashington's patience ran out. He never stood for his peers defying his will, so he wasn't going to allow a Vistani wench to do so either. He pounced upon her with a drawn dagger, and drove the blade deep into her chest. As life fled from her body, however, she uttered a curse: "You will never escape the bond of tarokka, Herod Ashington, until the last card is laid, and no one will ever leave alive unless I do. "*

*"Ashington laughed as the girl breathed her last, but his guests began to panic. They believed the power of the Vistani was stronger than the minor magic commanded by Ashington. Already caught up in bloodlust, Ashington turned on the guests and slew them all for siding against him with the Vistani girl. Some of the guests fought back, and Ashington himself was mortally wounded. The servants of the house fled the slaughter, leaving their "betters" to kill one another. When they returned the next day, they found nothing but the dead in the house. Mysteriously, Ashington and the Vistani girl's body*

*were both missing, as was the tarokka deck the girl had used. The magical tomes and items that Ashington had collected over the years were missing as well.*

*"A likely explanation, of course, is that between the flight of the servants and their return, is that the Vistani girl's clan managed to find her, and they took her body with them as they looted the house. The claim that Ashington, too, was missing might be just so much elaboration to make the story seem more sinister. However, there is more to it than just this. A curse rests over the house, a curse that manifests itself every fifteen or so years to claim all who live within its walls.*

*"Years after the deaths and disappearances, a pious cousin of the family tried to convert the manor house into a hospice and center of worship devoted to Hala. These kind hearted souls were the first to be claimed by the curse, as their leader apparently went mad one night and murdered everyone as they slept. Then, a local highwayman tried to mend his wicked ways by starting an honest business that converted the old Ashington Manor into an inn. It operated for a decade before guests and staff were all mysteriously slain in a night of brutality. Finally, a doctor from Dementlieu tried to use the place as an asylum for the insane. One night, the doctor himself was seized by madness and he led the most dangerous of patients in an attack against the rest of the staff. . The building was set ablaze, and no one but a few hopelessly mad people lived to tell the tale. The building is now an abandoned, crumbling and flame-ravaged hulk. Only vermin and the most desperate of outlaws venture near the place.*

*"Yes, the deadly events at Ashington Manor were decades apart, so one could claim that it is merely coincidence and happenstance that so much pointless violence and so many lives have been lost within the same walls. But there is a linking factor. Over the years, clerics of Hala, guests and servers at the inn, and workers at the insane asylum all reported seeing a Vistani girl seated in what was the manor's grand hall, turning cards from a tarokka deck as though she was telling someone's fortune. If approached, she vanished. If simply observed, she vanished before she places the last card of the cross pattern. Obviously, her spirit is still there in the house, attempting to finish Ashington's fortune, as well as giving power to the curse she uttered so long ago.*

*(I removed the "who will claim it and its riches" end of the tale, as I do not want my players to be motivated by anything other than fighting evil ;))*

After this story, Tara is moved by Miko's fate, and says that they should free the girl quickly, if possible this very night. The heroes agree, saying that a small band of bandit should not be too much of a challenge.

They quit for the Manor at 9 pm. They orient themselves fairly well in the dark, with Vashon's directions to get there. Just a few minutes north of the village, they see this arch leading to an alley. This 400 feet alley brings them to the front walled entrance.

Exigu approaches, staying in the shadows. The front entrance old rusted gate is half open. He turns back to the other, waving at them to come. However, when he turns back, he sees the front gate is closed, newly painted and a guard is standing behind it. The guard is watching the heroes coming to the gate.

"Go back to the hamlet", he said sternly, "you have nothing to do here". The heroes insist, but the guards say, to the heroes surprise "Lord Ashington doesn't open his gate at night. Go back."

The group is surprised by this twist and decides to walk back to the road and hold council there. However, to their surprise, a wall of mists seems to surround the Manor, a hundred feet around the surrounding walls...

*(This adventure by Steve Miller is from the "Dark tale and Disturbing Legends" Ravenloft book. From now on, the time period of the heroes varies between all five time frames, as explained in the adventure. The time periods are most always short, and vary randomly. I introduced a few variants to the proposed adventure rules. At the end of a time period, when the tarokka deck card drawn is of the same type, I draw another card. Also, if a battle happens, it cuts short the duration of the period – a battle round counts for one minute.)*  
*(Initial time period – Fortuna Major – year 679: Ashington Manor)*

The heroes realize they are back in time. They wonder what their quest could be, should they save the vistani girl before she utters her curse? *(DM note: this is of course wrong, but it will lead them for a while, until they realize they have to do something else to get out of it.)*

They go around the house, west side, and begin climbing the wall.

*(Time switch – Glyph – year 696: Hala Hospice – the exact moment of the change is unnoticed by the players)*

Exigu fails his climbing check and falls on the ground. But it seems it wasn't heard by anybody inside the Manor. They climb the wall and get in the narrow area between the manor and the wall. They hear horses inside the building. Exigu goes silently back to the front and notices the guard at the front door isn't the same as when they first came to the gate (because of the time switch). They believe there was a switch of the guard.

Exigu puts a bit of a dried dead plant in his pocket (it's November).

*(Time switch – Swords – year 730: Asylum)*

The silence is suddenly filled with screams! They rush inside the house (area 4) to realize there was a time switch again and that they are now during the asylum era... The mad people beg them for help or scream wildly, but the heroes ignore them. Tara seems close to tears looking at the patients.

Exigu checks his pocket, to find the plant has crumbled to dust... They climb the ladder to get upstairs.

*(Time switch – Glyph – year 696: Hala Hospice)*

They feel dizzy for a second. A shrill scream replace the mad screams and cries of the asylum. A women in distress! In a nearby storage room, they see two guards trying to disrobe a priestess of Hala! "We're gonna get you and then bury you in the cellar", one said to her. The other laughed and added "Tomorrow, the boss will kill you all."

The heroes attack them. The battle is short as Tara cast a hold person on one. The other one defends himself to death.

Tara comforts the woman. Her name is Natalisa and she is a Hala worshipper. Surprised by the question, she answers about today's date: November 19th, 696! (The "normal" year is 747).

Meanwhile, they attach the guard and question him when he shakes off the spell. He doesn't want to talk and Virevan slays the helpless, bound man (*DM note: he made his power check*).

*However, Tara is shocked and tells him about his wrong arbitrary justice. Petrak goes in the same direction, adding that this guard was perhaps charmed or could have been rehabilitated.*

*(Time switch – Fortuna Major – year 679: Ashington Manor)*

The dizzy feeling again last for a second and the priestess and the guards bodies disappear. Time switched again...

They continue exploring the Manor. From standing on top of the stairs, they hear a few people talking downstairs. Some of the men talk loudly, as slightly inebriated.

What they hear is a young woman voice: "This card represents me. It says that I am a person who can bring you insight and knowledge - which I of course I will as I tell your fortunes tonight. However, it is reversed. It shows that there may be dark times ahead for me."

A man crudely comments that they plan to "give her some insight and knowledge in bed", while a woman voice tittered that "the drawing on the card looked like Rozaleen, so of course it is her."

They understand they are back in time to the dreaded night where it all began. Wishing to stop the night before Rozaleen utters her curse, they run downstairs and draw their weapons...

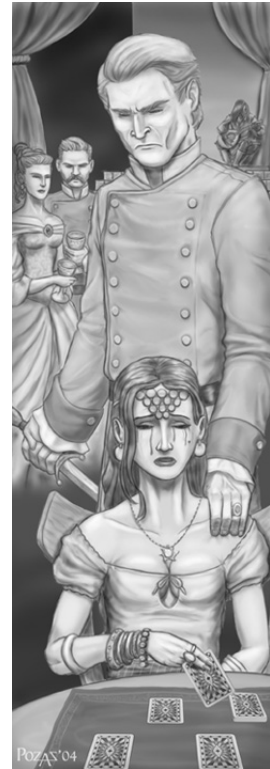
They see a nice salon, richly furnished. A small group of noble persons, three men and three women, are surrounding a small, round table, where a Vistani girl is drawing cards.

Another woman in the corner is playing lute. During the fight, she smiles wildly at the battle scene. Exigu watches her closely during the fight, but she doesn't seem a threat.

The men draw their swords while Ashington screams for his guards to come help him.

Varadan cast a *sleep* spell over the men, and two of them fall asleep. On the third round of battle, Tara succeeds in *holding* Ashington!

However, one of the girls puts a knife at Rozaleen's throat, but she gets paralyzed by the young vistani's *evil eye*. Rozaleen is unsure of what to do and refuses that anyone approaches her. Tara tries to calm her, but the young vistani girl is very suspicious ...



Exigu tells the woman playing the luth not to make any move, but she replies by teasing the Halfling: she tells Exigu that he is not old enough to give her orders. She isn't menacing, just slightly laughing at Exigu. Her name is Maekon.

Meanwhile, Mac Razbunare watches the front door and sees guards running in the front yard. He locks the door from the inside. Varadan checks on another door, to find an arcane library, with lush carpet and magical symbols on the wall...

*(Time switch – Stars – year 747 (now): bandits)*

They are surprised by another time shift. They find themselves surrounding 8 bandits playing dice. All the windows are either broken, or dusty and opaque. The floor is dirty and old traces of smoke are seen on the walls.

They attack the bandits. The bandits are surprised by the heroes sudden appearance, and the battle is quick. Many fall to a *color spray* spell and are bound. With the help of Maekon, they find the merchant's girl, Miko, bound, in a nearby room. She was watched by three female bandits, who fled when they heard the battle in the main room. Miko is relieved to be saved, as the leader of the bandit threatened her to "make her a woman" later this very night.

Maekon explains she arrived after the heroes to the Manor, and was also confused by the time shifts. She isn't very good in battle, she adds. She explains that her bardic nature drove her to the Manor tonight, as she somehow knew *something* was going to happen.

Austizel cast *detect magic* on the bandits, to find a short sword being magical. He let his spell detection linger on Maekon – she has magic on her too (aura of divination and protection).

By saving Miko, they decide they have finished their quest and prepare to leave the Manor to deliver Miko to her father. Exigu stays behind to finish the bound bandits.

However, an apparition suddenly fills the room! They see a ghostly vistani girl turning cards on a round table. As she is going to turn the last card, shock and pain appear in her eyes. And her ghostly shape is lifted from the floor, as if someone was holding her by the neck. Her lips form the words "Curse you" while she appears to look at the person holding her in the air. Then her neck is broken and the vision vanishes ...

The heroes leave the manor but the wall of mists is still there ... Grimly, the heroes go back to the main room of the Manor ...

*(Time switch – Swords – year 730: Asylum)*

Then the scene eerily turns to the asylum era. The room is filled with cages holding patients. Some of the heroes appeared in a cage!

They debate with three doctors. They ask the doctors to release them from the cages but they do not. Even if the players seem incoherent with their talk of being from the future, the doctors are polite.

One vistani girl in cage looks like she believes herself to be a bird.



A second appearance of Rozaleen happens! This time, the players are more careful and watchful of her lip movement. They can see the scene as the following:

*Rozaleen's apparition look fearful while she shuffles the cards, After nodding, she puts the first card on the table: the Dark master. She says "This is you, Lord Ashington. You are a man of great power, the master of all within your grasp. Your friends view you with wonder, your enemies with fear."*



*The second card is the Temptress. "This is your past, milord. Your whole life has been governed by your emotions and desires, and you have paid little heed to the noble code that your family once lived by."*

*The third card is the Beast. "And on this night, this night of important choices and dire consequences, your passion will drive you to a rash decision that could spell doom for us all."*

*The fourth card revealed is the Innocent. "But there is still hope. As lord and master here, you can save us all by making the right choice. There is a defenceless person who is at your mercy this very moment, a person who is important to the future of all who..."*



*Rozaleen started to draw the fifth and final card even as she was interpreting the fourth one, but she let out a sharp gasp and her eyes widened in pain and shock. A moment later, she let out her breath in a strangled cough. A ghostly red stain started to spread on the side of her white shirt. "It was no trick," Rozaleen gasps. She cough, blood spraying from her lips. "None of you will leave this house alive unless I do, and you will never leave until your fortune has been told, Ashington. You have doomed*



*every...", but she is suddenly taken from her chair and held by the neck in the air, standing like a limp doll. Rozaleen's lips move and say the words "Curse you" while appearing to look at the person holding her in the air. As she vainly tries to scratch her tormentor, her eyes roll back as consciousness leave her, but her lips still utter the two words "Curse you ... curse you ... curse you ...", until her neck snaps, and the image fades...*

The doctors refuse to believe what they saw and accuse the heroes of making illusions for an unknown purpose...

*(Time switch – Glyph – year 696: Hala Hospice)*

Then, the heroes find themselves in a hospice, among travelers, poor people and sick looking persons. A few priestess of Hala go to each of these persons, providing food, encouraging words, or water.

It seems the sun just reached the horizon, so they think the time shift moved them *before* the event where the priestess of Hala was going to get abused.

The heroes inquire about one of the Hala priestess, Natalisa, “a friend”. Natalisa is fetched by another priestess, and the players try to make her avoid the warehouse area (as they know she will get later abused by the two guards): Exigu ask her the favour that she would pray for his soul in the chapel (downstairs, away from the warehouse)! ;)

*(Time switch – Coins – year 713: Inn)*

Before it gets farther with Natalisa, the scene switches again.

The main room of the inn is filled with clients. Two minimally dressed waitresses are serving them. One comes to the players and the heroes recognize her as one of the three girls that were with Ashington! Not showing anything of their surprise, they chat with her, but the heroes answer evasively to her questions. She becomes more and more inquisitive about their business here, and the answers are more and more evasive. She suddenly leaves for the kitchen.

A large man, with traits similar to Ashington, comes to see them. He is Jack, the owner. He is annoyed by their questions, especially of the blunt “Tell us where is *she*?”, asked by Maekon. He blushes, murmurs that he doesn’t know what she is talking about, and heads back for the kitchen. Maekon explains the players that she wanted to be sure this man in this manifestation of the house was hiding something. Now she was sure. “Anyway, we’re here temporarily, so ...” she adds. *(DM note: Maekon’s bluntness is also driven by her need for chaos. Having guessed a few things about what is really happening tonight at the Ashington Manor, she wishes to make sure wickedness will be served hot tonight for her).*

The heroes decide to raid the kitchen. Just before, Exigu first listens to the door: they hear Jack saying another person “How did they find out? I thought nobody knew she was here!” The heroes open the door ...

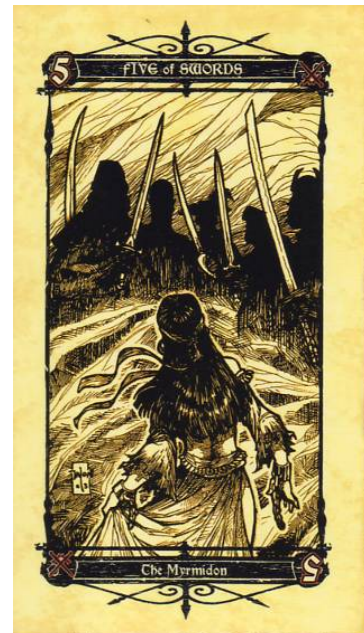
In the kitchen, Jack is there with another man, and the waitress. The men draw their swords. Jack tells them to leave this place, that it is private. The waitress is clearly afraid and Exigu notices her fearful look at a trap door on the floor.

When they enter the kitchen and start fighting, Tara takes a chair in the main room and jumps on it. She explains the other patrons that the fight in the kitchen isn’t their business, and that they should quickly leave the inn before they have trouble. Most of the patrons follow her advice and leave.

This fight is quick and meanwhile the waitress uses the opportunity to flee by a backdoor.

Exigu searches Jack’s body, to find a tarokka card on him! It is the five of swords! The card shows a girl, maybe a vistani girl, wearing shackles... They guess it is probably the fifth card?

Down in the cellar (area 13), Petrak finds an area on the floor where the earth has been moved recently. Using a nearby



shovel, he digs to find a fresh cadaver – a young woman, probably 17...

Meanwhile, Exigu searches the place for the inn's cash, but doesn't find anything of value.

Going back to the main floor, Petrak is witness to a ghostly apparition on the ceiling floor:

*The young vistani girl is standing there, her robe showing a large dark stain on the front. She is holding the four tarokka cards (the Dark master, the Temptress, the Beast and the Innocent). With pleading eyes, she drops to her knees, in a begging manner. Tears fill her eyes and her image disappears...*

## GAME SESSION THIRTEEN: ASHINGTON MANOR – END, AND ARRIVAL IN LEVKAREST

*Thanks to Llana for scrubbing this session!*

While all the heroes are in the kitchen (room #8), except Petrak who's still down in the cellar, another time switch happens...

*(Time switch – Swords – year 730: Asylum)*

They find themselves in the kitchen of the asylum. Two women are cooking. A dirty, large pot of gruel boils slowly. The women are very surprised to see the heroes “appear” in the kitchen, and they look very afraid when they realize they are near the trap to the cellar.

Uncontrollable, one of them goes out to the main asylum room (room # 6). She tells Ildgaard, fear very apparent in her voice, “There are people ... in the cellar!” Ildgaard and his companions attack the heroes. This battle last less then three rounds and Ildgaard / Ashington is the last to fall.

During the battle, one of the doctors succeeded in hitting defenceless Miko, and she falls to the ground, looking dead. His attacker sneers “I got one!”, but it angers the heroes; even Ildgaard seems angry at him. Then, unexpectedly, peace-loving Tara Kolyana takes her quarterstaff and hits the man hard with it, throwing him on the ground. Tara uses his last seconds of consciousness to yell at him, “Next time, take on someone your age!” Afterwards, she cures and revives Miko. When the battle has ended, and after Miko seems safely back from unconsciousness, Tara gets on her knees and pray ...

*(DM note: Miko was at -5 and was easily brought back by Tara's cure. However, this reaction from Tara was an unexpected twist since I gave Tara the vow of non-violence feat (from BoExalted Deeds). It gives her a +4 increase on the DC when casting non-violent spells, such as hold person, and similar non-violent interventions. To get it back, she needs to perform a suitable penance and receive an atonement spell... adventure hook, adventure hook, ...)*

During the battle, one of the women that were in the kitchen also tells Mac Razbunare, “It wasn't me! I wasn't there! Don't hurt me! It's them!” Pressed by MacRazbunare (threatening her with his wolf), she reveals that a dead body is buried under the cellar, and that she has nothing to do with it.

After the battle, the heroes search the doctors' bodies: nothing of value or of interest, except a few keys to the inmates' cells.

They then go back downstairs to search the earth under the cellar. The earth of one area has been moved recently: under it, they find a cadaver. It is recent (less then a few days): a woman richly dressed. She was killed by a stab in the back. On her is a receipt, dated May 730, from Ildgaard, to keep her father six months at the asylum for a paid sum of 5 gp a month, with an extra 2 gp for better food and room.

The woman from the kitchen explains that this rich woman came back to check on her father's health and was horrified by the poor conditions he was left in. She threatened to have the asylum closed, and Ildgaard killed her.

They also search the area where they found a cadaver in the year 713 era (Jack and Queens): a skeleton is found. So there is continuity in this.

MacRazbunare shows the 5<sup>th</sup> of Swords tarokka card to the vistani-looking girl in the cage, the one that seem to think she is a bird. No reaction from her.

*(Time switch – Stars – year 747 (now): bandits)*

From a sudden change of appearance of the place, they are back to their *normal* time, year 747, the bandit era. The earth wasn't disturbed recently in the cellar.

Puzzled, they ask Miko about the 5<sup>th</sup> of Swords card. She doesn't know anything except that it's from a vistani tarokka deck. Maekon on the other hand is very interested in it. The card belongs to a set that she bought in a second-hand shop in Ste Ronge a while ago, she explains. The players look at it and indeed the card belongs to this deck. These cards are very old, possibly a hundred years.

Maekon also offers that it is probably the tarokka deck that brought her to this cursed place on this fateful night.

*(DM note: the players had the Ravenloft tarokka deck in hand when discussing it, and I feign to give a lot of attention to the players looking at it. A few players didn't want to touch it as they feared a tarokka deck might curse the non-vistani using it... I recommend using this tarokka deck when DMing this adventure, it adds to the atmosphere. Also, you'll notice I changed Maekon's explanation about her carrying the deck)*

They check on the mists surrounding the domain: it is still there.

*(Time switch – Coins – year 713: Inn)*

Back at the Manor, they see the sign “Welcome to the Jack and Queen” and realize there was a time switch again. They enter the Inn and sit at a table. The same riffraff-type crowd is there again, served by two women in short dresses.

Varadan sees a young woman, seated alone in a quiet corner. She doesn't fit in the Inn's crowd, and seem to be waiting after something. He also notices grimly that she has a similar look and clothes as the cadaver they found in the Inn era... (see end of session 12). They guess that she is the one to be killed in this “scenario”, and Varadan invite her to join them at the table. Since they look different from the scum in the Inn, and the women with the group look good, she accepts the invitation and joins them, carrying a heavy traveling bag.

*(DM note: those familiar with Ashington Manor will see I adapted a few things in the scenario, like playing each scene independently, i.e the people met will rarely remember them, even if, as now, the time switch brings them twice or more to a specific era. So I ran each encounter independently, like a theatre play, each time the same. However, I also played with “arrival time” in these encounters. For example, they are now a few hours before the Inn-era murder, while the first time they were there, they were a few hours after. I think it was fun to see the players trying to guess when they were and what will happen. Also, by doing it this way I was able to put as much of the great background information in the story, i.e. not only something that happened before, but something that is happening before their eyes. It gave the players more information and more things to guess and understand. I think they liked it a lot).*

The young girl's name is Sofya. She is waiting for her fiancé to join her. After a moment, she explains more of her business here: she is from Karina while her fiancé, Pyotr, is from Levkarest. They often met in Karina, where she is a linen weaver. He is a traveling salesman often visiting Karina. Her parents don't want her to marry Pyotr, or for her to see him ever again. She ran away from the house to be with her lover and traveled from Karina to this Inn with a merchant caravan.

Then Jack comes out of the kitchen and walks to Sofya's table. Ignoring the heroes, he tells her that her room is ready. It is, as she asked him, a room with a heavy door lock. "You are right", he adds, "the place isn't safe for a lady traveling alone." He walks her upstairs, to show her the room. Varadan offers to bring her traveling bag upstairs. The room is ordinary but the lock is good quality. Jack gives Sofya a key and goes back downstairs. Sofya takes a small pouch from her traveling bag and hides it in her dress. Varadan doesn't ask about the pouch, and guesses it is probably full with gems. Thanking Varadan, she goes back with him to the heroes' table.

Before Jack walked upstairs with Sofya and Virevan, Exigu went upstairs to spy on them. When they came back downstairs, he picked her lock and searched in her traveling bag: just clothes and a few papers: love letters. The last letter of the pile is from Pyotr, telling her to leave everything and join her at the Jack and Queen's Inn in Ashington. He promised her his eternal love and to travel East, "where the people are more educated and nicer."

They were going to discuss more with Sofya when a time switch threw them on the ground. The table has disappeared!

*(Time switch – Stars – year 747 (now): bandits)*

The heroes do not think of anything to do during this "our time" era, and they simply wait for the next time switch.

*(Time switch – Fortuna Major – year 679: Ashington Manor)*

Suddenly, they are surrounded by a bunch of cadavers! From the furniture and luscious carpeting, they are back in the Ashington Manor era! But they arrived after a blood frenzy: Ashington's companions are on the ground, killed by sword wounds. They check, but they are in different position and location than when they first left this era after their battle with Ashington and his companions (see session 12).

*(DM note: remember the "theatre play" running of the scenes I did. Whatever a PC does, it won't be remembered when they are back in this era – everything is resettled.)*

The tarokka deck isn't on the table. Rozaleen isn't there; Ashington either.

They search the cellar, to find a place where earth has been dug very recently: with shovels, they quickly find Rozaleen's body. But she has something in her mouth! A tarokka card! The Innocent... It was stuffed there before she was buried.

This card is from Maekon's deck. They check and find this card was missing from it. They clean it and put it with the old deck.

Then they check the second floor, where things are crawling in the shadows. Rats! They scatter away when the heroes bring light to the second floor. The rats were apparently gnawing at

Ashington's body. It seems he suffered from sword wounds, but his face expression shows he saw something terrifying just before dying...

One of the heroes asks Miko to shuffle the deck and turn five cards, in the usual cross pattern. The first card is Dark Master. The second card is the Temptress! The third card is the Beast! The fourth card revealed is the Innocent. Miko draw the fifth and final card and, as the heroes guessed, it is the 5<sup>th</sup> of Swords... the same card reading as Rozaleen's on the night she died!

*(Time switch – Stars – year 747 (now): bandits)*

Another time switch brings them to the present days. Thinking they had drawn the fifth card and that the curse was ended, they go outside the ruins to find the mists are still there...

It is dark outside but they can't guess the hour of the night.

The heroes make the hypothesis that they need to wait for a time switch to the Ashington Manor era, to give Rozaleen the tarokka deck, so she can finish her reading. *(DM note: hee hee hee)*

They wait for the next time switch. Meanwhile, Miko shuffles the deck and draw five cards: the same reading! Another time, the same result! And again! Petrak tries it and get the same five cards. The deck seems to be obstinate in giving the same result...

But the expected time switch doesn't happen, after an hour, then two ... Why has it suddenly stopped?

*(DM note: knowing the PCs have all the tools with them to lift the curse, and not wanting them to linger into more wrong hypotheses, I stopped making time switches. I had them stuck in the current time, but surrounded by mists. Now they had to think a little, rereading the wording of the curse and similar investigations)*

They search the cellar, to find three skeletons (Rozaleen's – without the Innocent card, Sofya, the rich women from the Asylum era).

They ask Miko to draw again five cards, but thinking about Rozaleen's fate: same five cards.

They search the cellar for another skeleton, guessing one is still to be found (the one from the Hala hospice era). After some time, they indeed find another skeleton.

After some time, they find they are not hungry or thirsty, and those that were sleeping in order to gain new spells not refreshed by their sleep. They are frozen in time.

Interpreting the curse, especially the part "No one here leaves before I do", they collect Rozaleen's bones and go outside.

The mist isn't there anymore! They succeeded in lifting the curse!

However, Tara proposes that they also collect the other poor girl's remains for proper burial. Uneasily, they go back in the ruins and follow her suggestion. But when they go out again, the mists didn't come back and the heroes, with Tara, Miko and Maekon can safely walk back to the main road.



When they arrive at Miko's house, they see it quickly awakening to happy shouts. The family's cry of joy to see their daughter safely back awakes the other house of the hamlet. Soon, everybody in the hamlet is in Vashon's house, where Miko's father and mother distribute brandy and ale around. The heroes are treated as such by everybody.

The time is midnight. They spent less than three hours in the Manor.

Petrak notices that Miko's mother sometimes look at Maekon with disgust. He takes her apart and asks her: she tells him that she has a bad feeling about her, and that she already saw her around, a few days before the Asylum closed – but her face was the same, she didn't age at all... It seems Maekon also wisely avoids being close to Miko's mother...

After a while, they leave the party to get some sleep in the barn while the rest of the hamlet celebrates.

Austizel notices that Tara seem to find Petrak to his taste but he keeps this observation for himself.

*November 20<sup>th</sup>, 747*

During the night, Mac Razbunare dreams of rolling mists. In it, Rozaleen appears and thanks him for closing this dreaded loop. She now will be able to rest in peace. She has two additional things she wants to tell him. The first is to ask the heroes to return the tarokka deck to the vistani, preferably the Zarovan. She left her tribe on a whim and realized how stupid and prideful she was in her youth. The second thing is to keep an eye on Maekon: "I don't know how, but she isn't what she seems to be..." With this last thing, she vanishes into the mists...

In the morning, while Tara and Maekon still sleep, MacRazbunare discusses the dream with his friends. The problem with Rozaleen's last request is that the tarokka deck is back in Maekon's possession. Exigu the thief is mandated to retrieve it from Maekon's small traveling bag. But she awakens during his attempt. Quickly, he explains, "I wanted to have my fortune told by Miko's mother and didn't want to awake you just for that." She seems to believe him and goes back to sleep.

*(DM note: with a successful sense motive check, Maekon felt that there was something else in that request. She makes herself a mental note to check the heroes from now on as they seem suspicious)*

In the morning, the only thing planned is to give a proper burial to the bones of the poor girls. It is done simply, with most in the hamlet as witness to it. The autumn leaves make an eerie noise when they dig the earth. In a few weeks, perhaps days, the earth will start to freeze. Maekon insists on writing on the girl's wooden monument that the "loop is closed".

Then they tell Maekon that Rozaleen appeared to MacRazbunare and told them to give the deck to vistani. She doesn't seem to mind leaving them the deck. "Did she say other things?" asked Maekon, but the players didn't tell her of Rozaleen's concern about her.

The heroes make their farewell to Peter Vashon and his family, and leave for Levkarest. Maekon is traveling with them, but she says she will leave on her way when they arrive in Levkarest.

After a moment, they notice a major change in the flora: some kind of bluish lichen growing on most of the trees. The druid MacRazbunare informs his friends that this is the telltale sign that they are now in Borca.

Later, they see a geyser of hot water coming out of the ground with force. Tara explains that these are called “hellspouts” by the locals. Some house owners even use it to get hot water in the kitchen and the tub!

Later, they have to pass a barge river bridge (over the Luna River). The toll is quite expensive for the whole group and the horses (10 gp) but Tara pays after bargaining for half of the asked amount.

Along the way, they see a large Manor on top of a hill. Tara explains that this is Misericordia, the Boritsi family estate. Tara adds that Ivana Boritsi is the heir of the merchant family. The name of the Boritsi Trading Company rings a bell for the heroes. There is a store in Zeidenburg with this name. The Boritsi also own large pieces of lands around Levkarest. But Ivana isn't really managing this company; she leaves that to her trusted friends and family. It seems she isn't interested in day to day management of a trade company, as she is too innocent and good-hearted. On the other hand, her mother, Camille Boritsi, was a tough cookie. She established the BtCo as it is today and built the family's fortune. It is said she poisoned her cheating husband by giving her rival body massage oil. But this oil was magical: when her husband used it with Camille's rival, their flesh melted and they died suffering horribly.

The Borcan army and militia is under the control of Ivana's cousin, Ivan Dilisnya. His reputation of cruelty and bad moods is well known. Ivan is in fact a descendant of Léo Dilisnya. This last name rings a bell again for the Barovians in the group: in the year 351, Leo Dilisnya infiltrated Strahd the First's castle with his assassins at the wedding of Strahd's brother and killed most of the guests.

The surrounding of Levkarest is comprised of large walled domains. Tara again offers that Borcan architects are well known for putting many secret doors and passages in their house, at the request of the owner.

From afar, they can see the tall bell towers of the Cathédrale of Ezra. Petrak points out that this prestigious temple was started in 695, and finished in 746, a year ago. Tara adds that Ezra's religion was founded by Yakov Boritsi (brother of Camille), so not all of this family was bad.

The heroes then arrive in the little town of Caina, a little walled town facing Levkarest, the other side of the Luna River. Another barge (much cheaper than the last) brings them to Levkarest.

The city of Levkarest is large, possibly 8 000 or 9 000 people, plus the surrounding area. The Cathédrale is huge by all standards. The heroes have never seen something this tall: the bell towers are nearly 300 feet!

They get four rooms at the Defraya Manor, hosted by two elderly persons. The rooms are very nice and most have a good view of either the country-side or the Cathédrale. In it, the heroes enquire of the latest rumours, or the talk of the town. They understand Borcans are afraid of an invasion by Falkovnia, their northern neighbour. It would be the third such attempt. There are rumours of troop movement near the border. The first attempt ended when the soldiers were poisoned. Ivan claims he did it himself. It is said the bodies were so poisonous that they had to be

burned where they stood. The second attempt barely crossed the borders: before leaving their Falkovnian bases, the Borcan spies made sure the soldier's food supplies was poisoned...



(by Santiago Iborra)

Near the Cathédrale, Exigu sees a little boy begging the petitioners for money. After a moment, Exigu realizes the boy is in fact a halfling adult posing as a human kid. The halfling notices Exigu's attention and waves to him to get him aside.

His name is Garret Tallgallows. He is friendly toward Exigu. He recommends staying away from Ivan's militia, as they are often mad and dangerous, like rabid dogs, especially to non-humans. Non-humans are usually tolerated in Levkarest, but some humans do not like them at all.

He also looks at the Cathédrale, and says there is something bizarre around it: since a year ago, six women disappeared around it. Oddly, they were all looking similar (good looking- "well, for a human"; long black hair; pale eyes, often blue). He calls it the Curse of the Cathédrale. This, he said, is annoying the humans a lot and they would pay to see this problem solved (*DM note: from the "Gargoyle of the Great Cathédrale" BoSorrrows article by Andrew Cermak*).

Informed by Exigu that non-humans are sometimes not well received here, Austizel hides his pointed elf ears with his hood.



Tara meanwhile enters the Cathédrale with Petrak. They meet Johann Severin (*from V R Arsenal*), a peculiar looking man: he wears a mask on part of his face (it hides hideous scratches) and he has a wooden leg. The priest is however very friendly and is happy to meet the "grand" Tara Kolyana. He adds that tomorrow morning, during the 10h00 Cathédrale service, she would share the ceremony with none other than the Praesidius Levin Postaya, the head of the Ezra church! It is a very high mark of esteem from the clergy.

Later, back in the streets, Tara is excited and can't stop talking about it.

Part of the group goes to the port area, looking for the Virago boat (Nathan Timothy's boat). They talk with elders sailors, seated on a bench, looking at the port. At first, they said they never saw this boat. Prompted with 1 gp, they say no, the Virago hasn't been in the area for a while, but they make it clear that more money would bring more information. MacRazbunare gives them 4 gp more. One of the elders tells them that the Virago left the port yesterday morning. It came from the North, and went South (toward Barovia). Then they get up, and leave, after saying to MacRazbunare "it was nice *never* speaking to you. Have a great day." So the Virago was near recently. Virevan guesses that these old persons were probably paid by Nathan not to say a word about the Virago, and that paying more would make him learn that the heroes asked questions about him.

Back at the Inn, they ask the Defraya about the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins (the last message they got is that they were leaving Karina for Levkarest – see session 11). Mr Defraya told them

that he saw one of them in a rich-looking carriage yesterday. They decide to split the party and have dinner in all three major inns of Levkarest, in order to contact the twins. Those inns are the Defraya manor, the Rosebud's Thorn and the Dark Maiden (a gambling den). Their evening is quiet and none see a trace of the twins. Where are they? At the Dark Maiden, Petrak, Virevan and Tara leaves as a brawl is about to start.

The group gathers at the Defraya and go to sleep early. The night is uneventful.

*November 21<sup>th</sup>, 747*

Early in the morning, Tara and Petrak go to the Cathédrale. The 10h00 am ceremony led by Praesidius Levin Postaya has the Cathédrale filled to capacity. At one point of the ceremony, he invites Tara Kolyana from Hazlan to a shared prayer to Ezra's goodness. After the prayer, Postaya presents Tara as an example for the Ezran clergy, with her hard work in healing the sick and the poor, as well as her vow of non-violence. After praising her, he gives her a magical amulet on behalf of the clergy.

During the ceremony, Petrak hears his neighbour on the church bench say to a friend "hey, look, Ivana Boritsi is here!" Petrak look in the direction shown and sees a young woman, face half hidden by a veil, praying to Ezra. Behind her is a strange-looking character: dressed like a jester, with colourful attire, feathers and glowing beads. Petrak asks him who this man is, and the man answers "it's the *jongleur*, her body guard."



(←the great looking Jennifer Connelly; this picture shows her as I imagine Ivana: young, innocent and good-looking. IMHO, she looks too angry in the official Talon Gaz drawing!)

→ Adapted from *Death Jester* by I. C. Kessler. Original is found [here](#). (I had to remove the obvious death references, as well as the gun :) )



After the ceremony, Tara spends a few more minutes with Postaya and Severin. Petrak goes outside and waits for her on the Cathédrale front steps. Later, she meets Petrak outside, touched by the Ezran clergy recognition. "The amulet helps me to turn undead," she explains. (DM note: the amulet of undead turning Tara has in her Gaz 1 description)

She also waves an envelope. "What are you doing tomorrow night?" she asked. She shows its contents to Petrak:

An invitation to Misericordia's Ball  
November 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 7h00 pm

To: *Mrs Tara Kolyana, and her escort from Zeidenburg*

Auth. by: *Nostalia Romaine*

*(DM note: This invitation is best read with the Carmilla and Agatha fonts. You can get Carmilla [here](#) and Agatha [there](#).)*

Meanwhile, outside, Exigu speaks with Garrett about the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins. Garrett saw them once or twice, but that was long ago. Garrett says he saw Tara being given an invitation to the Ball. He adds that “someone” would pay a lot for the following information: what is the secret of Ivana Boritsi’s youth and beauty? This “someone” would pay generously for this information or a dose of the product she uses.

Unfortunately, explains Tara, Exigu can’t enter Misericordia, as halflings are all thought to be thieves in this *milieu*.

So everybody will be at the Ball, except Exigu who’ll stay at the Inn.

They have to find clothes for those going to the Ball. Johann Severin recommends a tailor that works well and quickly. The heroes go there. For a small fortune, Tara will be able to get a stylish black dress: MacRazbunare, a noble suit with fake short sword for pageantry; a clerical-looking suit for Petrak: a dress and a hat that hides his ears for Austizel; and nice-looking suits for Varadan and Virevan. Tara pays the tailor with gems.

Back at the Inn, they discuss Exigu’s rumour about Ivana’s youth. Petrak confirms that the woman he saw at the Cathédrale was very young looking. Tara said, “But she must be over forty years old by now?”

## GAME SESSION FOURTEEN: LEVKAREST – A BALL IN MISERICORDIA

*Thanks to Jennifer for scrubbing this session!*

*November 21<sup>st</sup>, 747 (continued)*

It is late afternoon and the heroes are in one room, discussing what they could do to prevent eventual problems at the Ball in Misericordia. They devise a way to let Exigu outside, around Misericordia, and a way to get a message to him should it be needed. Around six, Tara informs them that she has a *rendez-vous* downstairs with Lollar Boritsi, an anchorite priest she met this afternoon.

After their discussion, they go downstairs in the Inn's dining room, to find Tara seated in a more private alcove, in company of a young anchorite priest. She makes the presentations, and adds that "Lollar was in the middle of an interesting story, so I'll let him continue."

Lollar speaks with a low voice, and explains something he wants to keep secret. He tells about an old icon made for the Ezran clergy by a well known artist in Borca, a man named Danzig. He tells them that the item is now the property of Ivana, who keeps it in her bedroom. He simply finds it scandalous.

He adds that the item has divination powers, and that its proper place is in the Cathédrale. Lollar says that in fact many anchorites would like to see this Ezra icon in the Cathédrale. The heroes refuse to steal it for him, but they agree to go at Misericordia and only then they will tell him their decision. When asked, Lollar explains that Ivana is in fact his aunt, and that this plan to steal the icon from her is a personal thought. He adds that the heroes would be well thought of should they need a favour from the church ... (*DM note: adv. hook from LotB*).

The heroes then ask him more about the relations between Borca and Barovia. Lollar tells them that while many Borcans have distant cousins in Barovia, they don't really frequent them. Barovians are seen as simple cousins. Their attitude is neutral toward Barovians but they do not expect much. In the Borcan elite, Lollar explains, there is no rivalry or hard feelings between Boritsi and Strahd, but that Dilisnya may look for trouble with any Strahd representatives, similar to the hate Strahd XI has with the Dilisnya family. The Dilisnya are told to avoid making their patronymic name known while they pass through Barovia, for many who did have disappeared... In the recent years, when Strahd XI invaded Gundarak, many were nervous, but now none would say they preferred the ancient regime of Lord Gundar.

Asked for more details by MacRazbunare about this last statement, Lollar explains that Strahd XI did put order in an anarchic, violent and corrupted place. MacRazbunare's eyes narrow but he says nothing.

The diner is then finished and Lollar leaves. It is after the conversation that they realize that Lollar never spoke to Exigu, the halfling. Really, demi humans are not well thought of here...

*November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 747*

In the morning, they go back to the tailor, to get their suits and Tara's robe. He explains them that if they want to wear jewellery, that they should not wear gold, it would be seen as *gauche*. Silver was in fashion.

The rest of the day passes quickly, the heroes are resting at the inn. Time for bath and hair grooming! (*Jennifer's editing note: I always insert some "Aaarghh! My skin is melting!" comments here*)

Late afternoon, the heroes meet downstairs and find Tara very beautiful in her black robe. At 5h30, as planned, a large grey coach, pulled by six horses, arrives at the Defraya Manor. On its doors is the painted symbol of Ezra. Inside it, Toret Johann Severin welcomes them. The coach is large and spacious.

Exigu follows the coach, on his riding dog, Patu.

During the trip to Misericordia, Johann appears as a pious man, aged in the late fifties, who had his years of adventuring when he was younger. He wears a mask to hide a terrible scar.

MacRazbunare asks him many questions about the hierarchy of the clergy in Borca. Johann tells them that the church has five levels of authority, the highest being the Praesidius Levin Postaya. Johann is the accountant of the church, and is in the middle of this hierarchy. They ask subtly about Lollar Boritsi, who is said to be one level under Johann. MacRazbunare then asks how decisions are made in the church, and "if a lower level can make important decisions involving the clergy" (They are obviously asking about Lollar's request of last night). Johann says that important decisions should be approved by the priest's superior, especially if it could put the clergy in trouble.



Then MacRazbunare surprisingly reveals Lollar's plan of stealing the icon to Johann. While Tara rolled her eyes and looked outside, Johann didn't look surprised. "Lollar is a priest of strong moral value", Johann simply says. He also says he will speak to him personally.

However, Johann voiced the wish of many persons in the clergy to recover the icon from Ivana and use its power for the benefit of the church... On a prudent hushed tone, he says that while this is technically considered stealing, some *acts* would get forgotten, especially if they are kept secret.

The conversation changes to Johann's past history. The heroes learn that he lost a leg to a werewolf, while it's a vampire that scarred his face so badly he needs to wear a mask.

They later arrive at Misericordia. Exigu and his dog hide in the trees in front of the walled estate.

They pass the entrance gate quickly, after the driver has shown their invitation. There are many guards on duty, but none are menacing. A tall man, dressed in dark clothing, stands a few yards behind, his eyes watching the activities at the gate. His face a little pale. Later, the coach driver explains that this man is Lucretio Napioli, in charge of the guards at Misericordia.

The wall around the estate is 8' high, and the heroes see broken bottles set in the cement on top, to prevent climbing.



The carriage enters the estate. The Misericordia Manor is impressive and well kept (*image taken from the Black Box*).

In front of it is a well maintained front lawn, with sculptures of pagan gods. The whole scene smells of old money.

To the left of Misericordia, there is a large barn with two floors. The carriages move in this direction after having unloaded its passengers.

After climbing up a few stairs, they enter the entrance hall. It is white and shining, and the floor is in white marble. They leave their cloaks and walk toward the Ballroom. Surprisingly, only two guards are standing on each side of the door. These are the only two guards they have seen so far.



The Grand Ball room is one of the most amazing rooms the heroes have ever seen.

It is two floors high. By contrast to the white entrance hall, this room is extremely luxurious and filled with art and decorative ornaments. There is no space not elaborately decorated.

One side of the ball room has immense windows giving a view of the park behind the Manor.



Five immense and magnificent chandeliers light the room. A small orchestra plays quietly.

There are about fifty guests arrived so far. Johann seems to know most of them and identifies each of these and new arrivals for the heroes.

The most important people arrived so far is the *Conte Sulo Boristi*, Ivana's brother. Sulo is the political leader of the Levkarest area and seems feared and respected by those around him. Many people are around him and seem to ask for his advice on many subjects.

Among other nobility is the *Baroneasa Beatrice Ritter*, from Sturben.

Later, one of the guards announces the arrival of the *Praesidius Levin Postaya*. This highest person in the Borcan Ezra's clergy is accompanied by four guards, with long swords.

Many servants offer white, red or sparkling wine. Other pass around and offer various little bites of exotic and refined food, like Darkon caviar, Souragne crocodile pâté, Barovian smoked trout and such.



Later, a woman enters the Ballroom alone. Johann says that she is Clotilda Taroyan, the *tollere* (or accountant) for the city of Levkarest *and* the Misericordia estate. The woman is very pretty, and pale. She wears elegant long gloves and has a silver cigarette-holder (*the picture is the actress Claire Danes*).



She moves with grace and confidence around the room. She waves at Johann from afar. "I often have to work with her, because of our responsibilities", he explains.

Another well known person arrives: the Captain Victor Momeala (chief of the Levkarest small army).

Then the heroes are surprised to see the arrival of Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove! The *tomboy* of the twins is now very pretty in her red robe. She is very confident in the ballroom, among other nobility and rich people. She is at the arms of a tall man, with noble manners.

Seeing the heroes, Gennifer leads her companion to the heroes. "Gentlemen, it's been a while", says Gennifer with a smirk.



She presents her companion, a "friend", as Bevel Boritsi. Bevel is the eldest child of Anton Boritsi (Ivana's brother, so Ivana is Bevel's aunt). Bevel works at the Boritsi Trading Company.

Bevel quickly loses interest in the heroes and excuses himself. When he leaves to meet other persons, Gennifer tells the heroes that Bevel will open the locks to have access to Lady Ivana later tonight. Then, after checking nobody could hear her, she asks "what do you know of the Deathstone? Have you ever heard of it?" The heroes answer in the negative. "If you learn something about it, let me know!" By the way, I'm at a private inn located in front of the Cathédrale, the Purple Inn. This is why the heroes could not find her and her sister the other night. She leaves the heroes to find Bevel in other company.

*(DM note: the Deathstone is of course from the LotB book. Oddly, the players never asked her where Laurie WF was)*

The conversations around them are mostly superficial and vapid. Some of the guests sometimes go outside, in the backyard park, for fresh air and possibly for private conversation too.

Most of the guests have arrived now and there are about 250 guests in the room. Many people wish to speak with Tara and she gets many requests to bless them with Ezra's power.

Another stunningly beautiful young woman enters the ballroom. Johann tells the heroes that this is Nostalia Romaine, Ivana's best friend. She is dressed in a slim black robe, and wears gloves. Her hair is short, except in the back where a long braid falls down to her knees. (*the picture is the actress Neve Campbell*).



A jewelled dagger is worn on her hips.

She moves with the natural grace and ability of a dancer. Quickly, she moves across the room and shares a few words with all the guests. Virevan realize she looks like someone scanning the room before Ivana's arrival...

Arriving at the heroes' group, Nostalia shares a few words with Tara, complimenting her on the honour she got yesterday at the Cathédrale, and saying some of this honour comes back here tonight by her mere presence.

She then says a few words to her "Zeidenburg escort", and then moves to another group of guests.

Another woman joins Gennifer and Bevel. Varadan hears that she is Hellena Boritsi, Bevel's sister. She doesn't look at ease in her dress. Gennifer and Hellena seem to know each other well. Hellena laughs loudly.

She has a large tattoo on her back, a motif with colourful autumn leaves.

(drawing by April Paise)



Moments later, one of the guards announces the arrival of lady Ivana.

She enters the room and people greet her by clapping their hands together. She is a beautiful young woman with long black hairs and deep blue eyes, with an air of innocence. She wears red lipstick and scarlet red finger polish.

All the men in the ballroom are looking at her entrance and it's easy to understand why few Borcan men would refuse to sample her embrace...

After noticing her stunning beauty, charm and grace, the heroes notice that Ivana is quickly surrounded by a group of persons with similar traits: they are all young and good looking, men and women, and *they are all pale and wearing gloves* ... Some do enhance their pallor with cosmetics.



They escort Ivana to a corner of the Ballroom, where she holds court ...



It is then that the colourful jongleur appears and walks to Ivana, juggling with a double sword as if with a simple stick. It is not specifically menacing, but he juggles with it so quickly that it makes people walk away from him and from Ivana.

It is obvious quickly that to get to speak to Ivana, you have to pass through Nostalia's screening first.

The orchestra resumes playing and soon after the conversations starts again. The heroes ask themselves if the jongleur is part of the *pale people* group.

Later, the orchestra stops and the violin player announce that the audience is blessed tonight to a performance of the great diva Miss Isslisa, an artist benefiting from Ivana's funds.

*(DM note: I then played a song by Klaus Nomi, "der Nussbaum" His castrato-like voice made the bizarre impression I wanted for this scene!)*

Drawing by Alayna Marie Hoffman



During the song, MacRazbunare notices he is getting the attention of a strange lady, all dressed in revealing and seductive silks, concealed by voluminous wraps. MacRazbunare's first idea is that she is a vampire... She looks at him intently, as if magically scanning.

A few moments later, this woman is presented to Ivana. Varadan moves to be nearby and hear the name of the mysterious woman: Talena Von Zarovich! She says she is there to present to Ivana the renewed feeling of friendship between Barovia and Borca, and similar ambassador protocol discussion. Their meeting is somewhat icy...

The heroes realize that Talena is the author of the book they are carrying with them since they found it in Gabrielle Aderre's things (it's currently at the Defraya Inn with the rest of their belongings).

After, the orchestra plays a waltz, and Nostalia dances with the jongleur. Both are very good dancers.

The heroes notice another strange character in the room: this un-delicate character in noble clothes is drinking a lot. He bulges out of his gaudy aristocratic clothing, which is covered with sweat stains. His big, beefy hands have sharp, gnarly nails. His sickly yellowish eyes are looking at the scenery around him and he seems to be happy just to be around. The heroes notice other persons make large circles around him not to speak to him. *(DM note: this is Aerik d'Auberville, from the soon to be published LCotN. Seed for later adventure again...)*

The heroes are then surprised to Nostalia coming to them! She invites Tara to see Ivana, “accompanied by one member of her escort.” Taking her arm, Nostalia leads Tara in Ivana’s direction. Virevan follows. Ivana is pleased to see Tara, “an example for us all”, and congratulates her on her clerical duties well done. Among other things and questions, Ivana says she prays everyday and wishes Tara to pray for her blessing tonight.

Her conversation is fine and witty. She then asks a few questions to Virevan, asking him how he found the last wine festival in Karina? He answers that it was pleasant and that she should try to get there next year (*DM note: did he realize he was talking to a darklord? \*lol\**). Then she speaks about Zeidenburg, mentioning that the Boritsi Trading company had a store there. Virevan nods. She then asks him “Have you heard of the horrible fate of a boyar in Zeidenburg, Van Ztinmin or something like it?” (*DM note: one of the first adventure they did – see start of this campaign*). Virevan confirms “he heard of it” but doesn’t add more. He remarks that she seems well informed and she replies that when they have trade emissaries for the BTCO, she tries to meet them once in a while, to get news of other places... The discussion is over and Nostalia escorts them out of the “safe area”.

Johann noticed that Levin Postaya left. The heroes catch Johann looking sometimes at Ivana with a strange look ...

Another artistic event happens: a painting that Ivana just bought was shown to the guests. Done by the famous Borcan master Vetighetto, the painting “*Ils Sont la Ville du Mort*” is supposedly prophetic in nature. One can see it some familiar places of a Darkon city.

*(DM note: from BoSouls, by Chris D Nichols, “Art in Ravenloft”: “Shortly before his death in 686, Vetighetto painted the famous and prophetic cityscape Ils Sont la Ville du Mort, depicting Il Aluk as the necropolis it will become” in 750 – current time in my campaign is 747.)*

A late arrival person enters the room. Again, the heroes recognize the person: Marcos Vedarrak from Falkovnia (*DM note: from the BoSacrifices, they saw him at the dog fight in the Evil Eye adventure – see session 8*).



After speaking with Nostalia, he is quickly introduced to Ivana. He came to present the homage of Lord Drakov to the elite of Borca. He also says he is confused by the rumours of invasion, and assures Ivana that Falkovnia has no intention whatsoever to invade her land. Ivana has a warmer attitude towards him then towards Talena. The heroes think it’s because Falkovnia is more of an immediate threat.

After his meeting, Vedarrak walks in the ball room and recognizes the heroes. He salutes them and is friendly. “You left before the fire? Me too”, he says to make the heroes feel at ease. He said he was at the dog fight only because a good informant and friend of the Falkovnian forces in Karina, Nathan Timothy, was hosting it. He finds the dog fight event barbaric and says that he has seen so many horrors in Falkovnia that he didn’t need to see this.

He informs them of the event in Karina, the last days he was there: Maloccio took control of the militia and quickly said vistani found in Karina were to be hunted and killed. There were already a few deaths among vistani and vistani-looking persons. The heroes fear for Mme Eva’s tribe but no tribe was destroyed according to Vedarrak. “What happened to his exquisite mother?”, Vedarrak asks. The heroes answers that she left with Matton. He asks the heroes if they heard of

these changes, and of any change it could have for trade. The heroes answer negatively. After a few more minutes, he salutes them and says he has to leave for now.

Virevan tells the other he feels that Vedarrak doesn't care at all about trade (*sense motive*).

All the while, MacRazbunare sees Talena looking at him intensely and thoughtfully.

Meanwhile, Bevel introduced Gennifer to Ivana. But after a few minutes, things quickly turned sour and Hellena took Gennifer away while Bevel was talking to his aunt. A few moments later, Gennifer went back to Ivana and talked to her while Ivana listened. Ivana said one thing and then Bevel took Gennifer away.

Bevel and Gennifer discussed for a short moment, and then headed for the door. Seeing this, the heroes walks toward Gennifer and ask her what is going on. She says "Oh, don't worry, I just had something dull just thrown in my face. I'll see you tomorrow," and she leaves with Bevel.

The heroes let her go without asking for more questions; surely they will see her tomorrow...

Suddenly, the heroes see Talena Von Zarovich walking directly toward them. She stops just in front of MacRazbunare and gives him a large predatory smile.

She asks him "Good evening, Machiavel? Can I speak with you privately for a moment?"

*(DM note: MacRazbunare is a former Gundarakite noble, now living under a disguise and a new name. When Strahd's forces invaded Gundarak, his family was wiped out, making him the only survivor of that ancient lineage. He lives under a new identity since then. His real name is Machiavel Machiavelescu. Talena did put a spell on the book she wrote about Strahd's genealogy: she knew MacRazbunare had read the book. Looking at him, she recognizes the young missing noble)*



They walk to a quieter corner of the ballroom. MacRazbunare / Machiavel is on the defensive. She tells him she recognized him as the last descendant of the Machievelescu. He asks her bluntly (*as this player sometimes is ☺*) "does it mean my head will now have a price on it? Will you search for me and kill me?" She laughs and reassures him "no, Machiavel, this is past history. You know that Strahd XI is a magnanimous leader and your family doesn't have any lingering influence on your former serfs. So as long as you are not a nuisance, he won't do a thing to hurt you." Smiling, she adds "by the way, be careful when you read books from the start to finish. Some leave a trace..."

Judging by Machiavel's face, he doesn't trust her for a second. She adds, still smiling in a predatory way "I have to leave this wonderful *fête* now, my new found friend. By the way, if your hate of the Strahd family is so great, you might want to keep a watchful eye on your monk...", and she leaves him stunned by her last words to him.

*(DM note: those following my campaign journal will remember that Varadan (the monk) is an orphan. However, when LotB was released, I had the idea to cast him inside the Von Zarovich family, as a "lost member". In the book Talena wrote, "The Von Zarovich Legacy", he is Ottar*



*Von Zarovich, where the book explains that he was “left in an orphanage after the death of his parents. The orphanage doesn’t exist anymore”(it was destroyed by Strahd’s mercenaries). But the best part is Varadan’s player didn’t know! But I knew he would play well into this.)*

Meanwhile, someone speaking to Tara asks around “Oh, true, François de Pénible is such a good writer. Have you read his book?” The heroes recognize the name, having met de Pénible in Karina. (DM note: *Spreading his fame for the CotN:D adventure I plan for much later*)

It is now quite late and the heroes and Tara joins Johann Severin. They leave and the trip back is uneventful.

Arrived at the Inn, Exigu joins the other and they discuss the night’s events.

Exigu tells them about his actions this night. While he was walking around the estate to see its size and other possible entrance, he heard a man’s surprise shout, which turned quickly to a painful cry! Exigu climbed the wall and saw in the darkness a woman standing up in front of a man lying down, and obviously in pain. While she was looking at him with contempt, the man twisted in agony for a minute, then stopped to move. She kicked him once, waited a moment and spat on him. She then put her glove back and walked back toward Misericordia...

From the description Exigu made of the woman, the heroes are pretty sure she is Clothilda, the *tollere*.

But Exigu resumes his tale: when the woman left, he listened – nothing but the noise from the Manor. He then climbed down inside the estate wall and investigated the body. The man’s face was blue and his tongue seem inflated to the size of his arm. Exigu noticed the man was wearing an Ezran priest holy symbol! Putting gloves, he searched the man, but found nothing. No obvious places with blood either.

The heroes think this murder has a link with Lollar’s request...

After that, he climbed back to the outside of the walls and watched the estate at the planned checkpoint, until around midnight he saw the Ezran coach carrying his friends leaving.

*(DM note – this was total impro, I didn’t plan this. This player was left out of the game because he played a halfling not invited to the party. So when he told me he was walking around the estate, I had this idea since this player loves this kind of investigation while alone...*

*DM tip: give your players what they like! Also, I gave them more info and hints on ermordenungs with this encounter)*

Then the heroes wish Tara goodnight.

However, the heroes were going to sleep when MacRazbunare attacks Varadan about his past and tells the group what Talena told him. Varadan says he has no idea why she said this, as the Von Zaroviches are responsible for the destruction of his monastery. He counterattacks by asking him why Talena called him “Machiavel”. MacRazbunare first replies he doesn’t know, but the other heroes do not believe him.

He then explains he was raised under another name. “She said they thought they had destroyed all my family.”

Varadan asks “Why your family in particular?”

“It was on the way”, MacRazbunare says, “they had that policy of burning everything on their way. I’m the only one left”.

There followed an angry and suspicious discussion where the group unity was seriously challenged. MacRazbunare accused the monk of hiding his identity, while Varadan wants to know more about MacRazbunare’s family.

Virevan realizes that he didn’t knew MacRazbunare when he was young: the druid arrived in town just a few years ago, “from a farm”.

Later, MacRazbunare gives his real family name: “Machiavelescu”. Virevan remembers this name as an infamous family aligned with Gundar’s policy: very committed to keeping their grip on their land.

MacRazbunare “you have the right to think so. It’s your point of view. My point of view on my family is different: our serfs were well treated...”

After, they look at the book Talena wrote, and find the birth year and background of Varadan quite close to “Ottar Von Zarovich”...

MacRazbunare sneers that “his Von Zarovich passions will eventually awake.”

They go to bed very late... *(DM note: the players entered fully in their role. That discussion was a lot of fun!)*

*November 23<sup>nd</sup>, 747*

In the morning, they wake up late and go to Gennifer’s private Inn, some kind of very upscale place where you have to be introduced by local nobility or fortune, the Delignan Inn. The owner tells them she left early this morning. They feel the owner isn’t telling them everything and pressed him with more questions. They learn the owner’s wife heard Gennifer and Bevel discuss a long time in the main room, before he left. It seems Bevel persuaded her to leave Levkarest for Richemulot, which she did just before the sun rose.

*(DM note: adventure twist from the LotB book, of course.)*

They calculate they can’t run after her and join her, since she left 5 hours before them.

They tell the owner that if he can think of something more, that they are located at the Defraya Manor inn.

They walk to the Cathédrale and discuss in front of it, while Tara enters alone.

The halfling Garrett discusses with Exigu. “Have you found the secret of Ivana’s youth?”, Garrett asks. Exigu answers negatively.

Exigu asks “who are these pale people around Ivana?”. Garrett says he doesn’t know, since he has a bad feeling and is staying away from them.

Meanwhile, Tara is back. She found that an anchorite is missing this morning, a low level priest from a chapel in Caina...

They wonder what to do next: bring back Tara to Hazlan? They would have to stay away from Invidia and Barovia. Running after Nathan Timothy? Who was the big and repulsive noble they saw at the Ball? Is there a link between Virevan's dreams of Strahd and his past? Why the resemblance between Ivana and Ezra's iconic representation?

MacRazbunare and Virevan decide to visit art galleries, where the *pale persons* are said to be often found. In each gallery, they are greeted by friendly, elegant persons, if a little paler than normal. All are wearing elegant gloves... The third one offer them wine, which they accept. From what they can see, those are genuine galleries, if a little snobbish, showing art from all over the known lands.

They enter the Cathédrale and request a discussion with Johann Severin. They ask him many questions. They learn that Ivana was born in the year 689! She was born the exact same day as her cousin Ivan Dilisnya. But Ivana is still looking young while Ivan is showing his age.

The *pale persons* are known as *ermordenung*, according to him. It's a society of artistic people. When they enter this society, people noticeably become paler.

About the disappearances of women around the Cathédrale since the last year, Johann basically confirms what Garrett had said.

That the iconography of Ezra is similar to Ivana's portrait is a coincidence, according to him.

The heroes note that Johann seems troubled by Ivana...

The night is uneventful.

*November 24<sup>th</sup>, 747*

In the morning, they are surprised to get a message brought to them by an exhausted messenger, in a sealed envelope – see next page.

*(DM note: you will of course notice I recycled the letter GWF wrote to LWF in LotB, even a drawing I thought very cool! This is best read with the Carmilla font. You can get it [here](#).)*



*Dear friends,*

*I write you this letter from an inn on the border between Borca and Richemulot, just barely on the Richemulouse side, to inform you that my return home was much different than planned, for I need some time to recover from a most severe bout of poisoning. But please don't worry! I am fine now, but I need to regain my strength.*

*You have seen what happened in Misericordia, at Ivana Boritsi's bal. At first, I used my contact with Bevel Boritsi to speak to Lady Ivana about the Death Stone, a strange and arcane piece of stone with an ancient origin. My uncle, Van Richten, was able to examine it once, a while ago, and foolishly I thought I could set my eyes on it too. Ivana's refusal was swift and her pretty face darkened when I mentioned the stone. The Deathstone, she said, is a relic from an earlier time than the Boritsi oldest known ancestors, and she had no interest of letting "writers of sensationalist monster tales drag my family name in the muck". Despite her friendly tone, I sensed that she was keeping her anger in check and I quickly apologized.*

*Moments later, I found myself back in Bevel's sister company. Bevel took his aunt aside and launched what appeared to be part defence, part plea on my behalf. While he was talking to her, Lady Ivana threw an occasional thoughtful glance in my direction.*

*Bevel sought me later and told me his aunt was adamant that the Deathstone name should not be known outside the family, and that he never should have confirmed to me its existence in Misericordia's wine cellar. Foolishly, over his protestations, I went back to Lady Ivana and explained that I had not intended to cause any strife within her family, and that I won't ever speak of the stone again to anybody. She listened patiently to me, and then asked, in the most impossible to describe cold tone: "You and Bevel have grown quite fond of each other, have you not?"*

*I was going to answer truthfully, but then Bevel excused us, and took me away from Lady Ivana again. He stated nervously that he had seen this expression on his aunt's face before, and that it meant she was angrier than he first thought, and that it would be best if I left Borca with all possible haste! For my part, I had not seen her expression change the slightest. But I know when I'm given good advice, so after I said au revoir to Bevel, I asked Anthony to prepare the coach for an early departure the next morning.*

*The innkeeper served me a fine breakfast for which he didn't charge me, stating that my presence in the inn and my known association with Bevel Boritsi had helped his business to the point where he felt he should give me a parting gift. In retrospect, I should have realized that "gift" was anything but.*

*Within a few hours of leaving Leukarest, I found myself beset with terrible nausea. I cried to the coachman to stop, and I barely managed to eject myself from the carriage before my breakfast came up. Even after there was no more food to regurgitate, my stomach still continued to heave. The coachman was clearly upset by my condition, but his concern turned to obvious fear when another black-clad coachman approached us. The newcomer told me that his mistress wanted to speak with me and he gestured back toward the road we had just travelled.*

*A hundred yards distant, I saw Lady Ivana emerge from a black coach with the Boritsi coat of arms on the door. He led me to her, and when she spoke, I felt my blood run cold, despite my illness.*

*"You would poison my kin against me, so I have seen to it that you have received a far more palatable and immediate poison. Nothing, hear me, nothing happens in Borca without my knowledge, and no one will ever succeed in subterfuge against me." I tried to explain that I was not trying to poison her family against her, but she put a gloved finger to my lips and said, "I care nothing for your excuses. I don't even want to hear pleas for mercy. I just want you to know that Borca is my domain, and when I say something is so it will be so. You will never lay eyes upon the Deathstone. Nor you will ever lay eyes upon Bevel again. You will never set foot upon Borcan soil again. If you do, I will not be so merciful next time." Lady Ivana pulled a tiny vial from a small purse at her waist and offered it to me. "Drink this; it will neutralize the poison in your blood." I did as she instructed, and while I did not feel better, neither did the awful shaking that had been growing upon me worsen.*

*"Heed my warning, Miss Weathermay Foxgrove," Lady Ivana said, turning back to her coach, "and pass it along to your sister as well. Neither of you is welcome in my land."*

*Her manservant took me back to my coach and instructed the driver to deliver me to the Richemulouse inn where I remain still. My weakness persists, and only the blandest food and drink stays in my stomach, but I am getting better with each passing hour.*

*I have come to the conclusion that she actually did show me mercy in letting me leave Borca alive, but I have also learned things that lead me to understand why some nickname Lady Ivana as the Black Widow.*

*Stay away from her is my ill learned advice. More when we meet in person, next time.*

*Your friend,*

*Jennifer WF*

*A drawing of my misadventure I made to pass time. I was really feeling bad.*



# The Von Zarovich Legacy

Handwritten by Talena Von Zarovich

*Et annoté par MJ!*

*Tiens, la dague de Strahd*

*visé ses semblables?*

Pour être lu par ceux ayant le sang noble seulement.

Ce qui suit a été écrit par Strahd.

## **The Tome of Strahd**

**I** am The Ancient, I am The Land. My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past. I was the warrior, I was good and just. I thundered across the land like the wrath of a just god, but the war years and the killing years wore down my soul as the wind wears stone into sand.

"All goodness slipped from my life; I found my youth and strength gone and all I had left was death. My army settled in the valley of Barovia and took power of the people in the name of a just god, but with none of a god's grace or justice.

"I called for my family, long unseated from their ancient thrones, and brought them here to settle in the castle Ravenloft. They came with a younger brother of mine, Sergei. He was handsome and youthful. I hated him for both.

"From the families of the valley, one spirit shone above all others. A rare beauty, who was called "perfection," "joy," and "treasure." Her name was Tatyana and I longed for her to be mine.

"I loved her with all my heart. I loved her for her youth. I loved her for her joy. But she spurned me! "Old One" was my name to her—

"elder" and "brother" also. Her heart went to Sergei. They were betrothed. The date was set.

"With words she called me "brother," but when I looked into her eyes they reflected another name—"death." It was the death of the aged that she saw in me. She loved her youth and enjoyed it. But I had squandered mine.

"The death she saw in me turned her from me. And so I came to hate death, my death. My hate is very strong; I would not be called "death" so soon.

"I made a pact with death, a pact of blood. On the day of the wedding, I killed Sergei, my brother. My pact was sealed with his blood.

"I found Tatyana weeping in the garden east of the Chapel. She fled from me. She would not let me explain, and a great anger swelled within me. She had to understand the pact I made for her. I pursued her. Finally, in despair, she flung herself from the walls of Ravenloft and I watched everything I ever wanted fall from my grasp forever.

"It was a thousand feet through the mists. No trace of her was ever found. Not even I know her final fate.

"Arrows from the castle guards pierced me to my soul, but I did not die. Nor did I live. I became undead, forever. . . ."

*Romance?*

*Est-ce la vraie histoire!*

Ainsi a commencé la noble dynastie des Von Zarovich, et la création de Barovia, le cœur de l'univers.

En public, cette version des faits doit bien sûr être considérée comme romancée et épique; et ne doit pas être propagée sous aucune considération. Plutôt encourager l'histoire des assassins Dilisnya comme meurtriers désignés du faible Sergei.

Talena Von Zarovich



Strahd I

Cet ouvrage ne doit pas être mis dans de mauvaises mains car il contient des informations sensibles au sujet de la dynastie.

Ce court ouvrage cherche à recenser les Von Zarovich toujours en existence, afin d'aider la lignée et la protéger. Il est du devoir des Von Zarovich de s'entraider entre nous, et non de chercher à augmenter notre pouvoir individuel en manoeuvrant comme on le voit souvent dans d'autres familles.

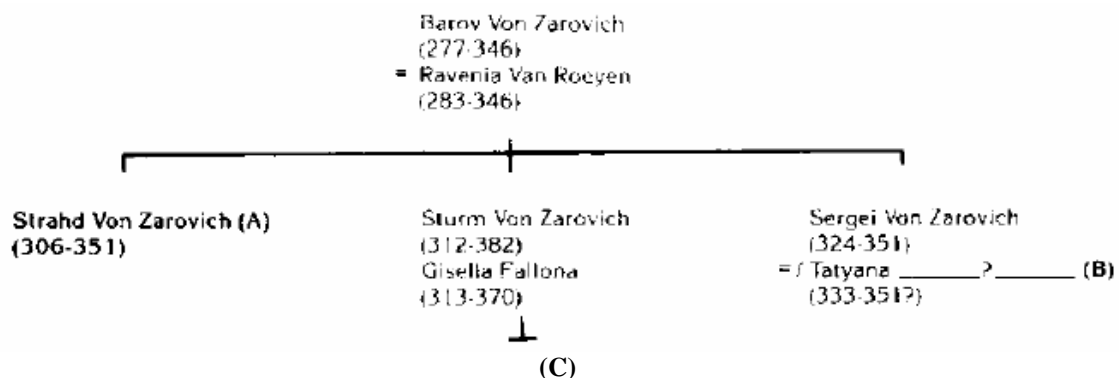
La sagesse du patriarche Strahd doit toujours nous guider et nous rassembler.

Lors de la création de Barovie, en 351, les trois fils de Ravenia et Barov Von Zarovich étaient présents au Château de Ravenloft. Dois-je rappeler que Strahd I a donné son nom au Castle Ravenloft en l'honneur de sa mère?

Quand les assassins du traître Dilisnya (qu'ils s'empoisonnent tous entre eux et pourrissent au soleil) ont attaqué la noce et massacré ses invités, Sergei a été assassiné par les frères, mais Sturm et son épouse, ainsi que Strahd, ont réussi à fuir.

*Traître?*

*Fratricide, oui!*



Notes sur le début de la lignée:

A : Il s'agit de Strahd Von Zarovich I.

Comme le montrent les archives, cette grande lignée est tout à fait linéaire et ses descendants ont toujours eu un seul fils, nommé Strahd. Ces fils prennent la relève quand le père se fait vieux. Nous sommes actuellement au règne de Strahd XIII.

*Bien sur!*

*Vraiment n'importe quoi...*

B. Le nom de famille de Tatyana est inconnu. Selon les écrits, Sergei s'était épris d'une paysanne.

C. La lignée de Sturm s'est poursuivie jusqu'à nos jours. Sauf Strahd, tous les Von Zarovich descendent de Sturm.

Les premières années ont été passées à chasser les Dilisnya et les exterminer. Le traître Léo a eu une fin appropriée et sa faim reste un délice.

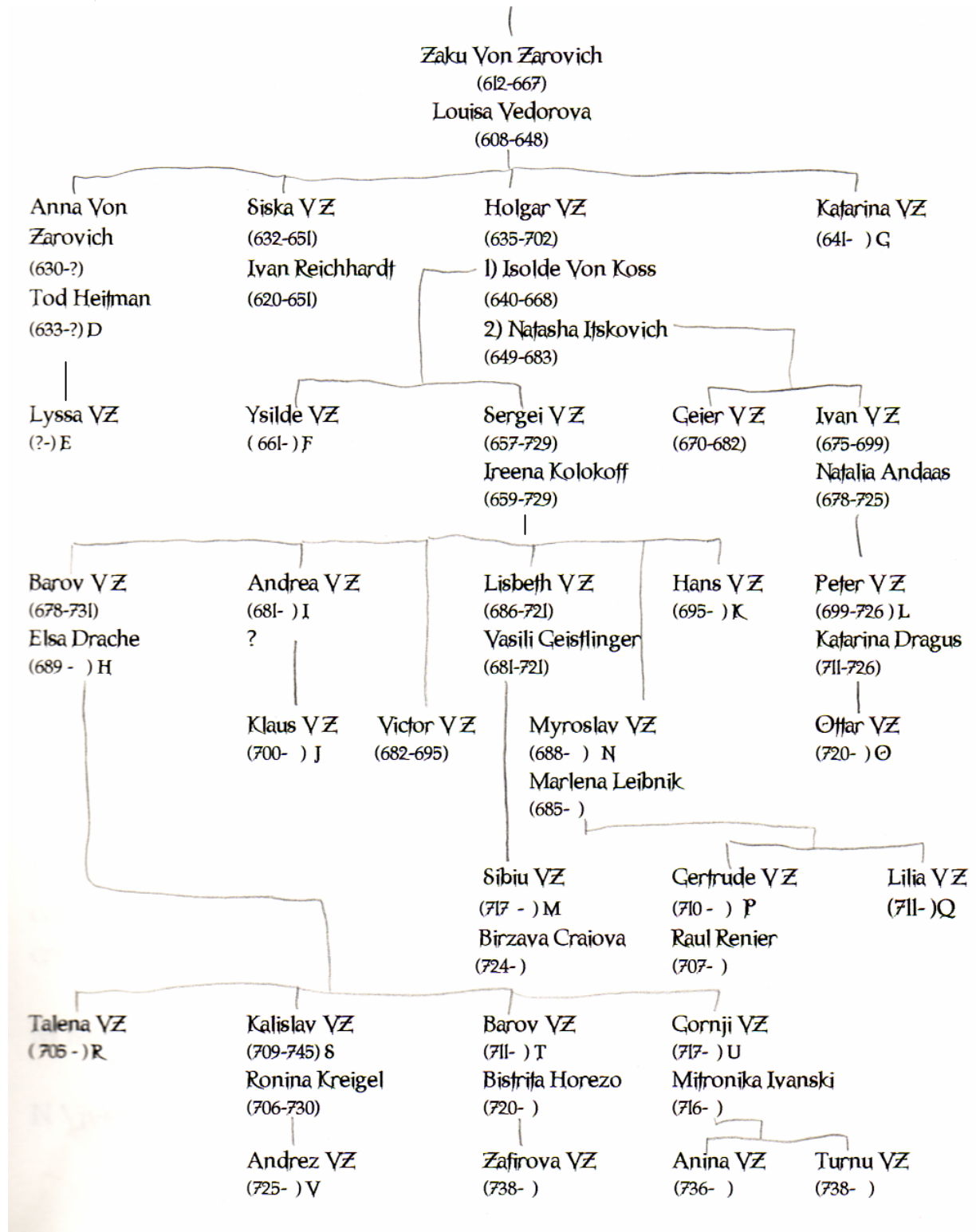
Je ne discuterai pas ici de la lignée située entre le quatrième siècle et le début du septième. Se référer plutôt aux archives du château de Ravenloft.

Notre lignée est tenue mais déterminée. Il n'est pas né celui qui empêchera la lignée du sang Von Zarovich de conquérir et gouverner.

Il est intéressant de voir de nombreux jeunes enfants Von Zarovich.



La lignée récente et active de la grande famille Von Zarovich est la suivante :



Notes biographiques sommaires sur la lignée actuelle:

D Disparus. On ne connaît pas leur date et circonstances de décès.

E Habite Zeidenburg. Date de naissance inconnue.

F Encore en vie, quoique faible. Habite avec sa tante Katarina à Vallaki, chez son neveu Hans

G Encore en vie et en santé, malgré son âge centenaire. Une belle preuve de la longévité des Von Zarovich. N'a pas eu d'enfants. Habite Vallaki chez Hans.

H A été boyar à Immol, puis bourgmestre jusqu'à son décès.

I Andréa a quitté Barovia en 698. Est revenue en 705 avec un fils, Klaus, qui portait officiellement le nom de famille Von Zarovich. Andréa refuse de dire qui est le père. Habite aujourd'hui à Zeidenburg.

J Vivrait à Kartakass, peut-être à Harmonia.

K Boyar à Vallaki. Vit avec sa tante Ysilde et sa grande tante Katarina.

L Boyar à Krezk, jusqu'à leur assassinat une nuit de 726. Réformiste. Les coupables n'ont pas été punis et ont probablement quitté Barovie après leur crime, possiblement pour Forlorn.

M Marchand à Immol. Pas encore d'enfant.

N Vivent à Krezk. Couturiers.

Θ Laissé dans un orphelinat lors de la mort de ses parents. L'orphelinat n'existe plus.

P Disent que Paul porte le nom de famille de « Leconte ». On sait qu'il est en fait un membre de la famille Renier de Richemulot. Habitent Karina (Invidia).

Q Partie à Mordent à l'âge adulte. Artiste. Une rumeur la porterait malade.

R C'est moi.

S Mort après avoir eu un seul enfant. Notaire. Idéalistes.

T Boyar à Vallaki. A une jeune fille, de santé fragile.

U Bûcheron. Vit à Krezk.

V Mouton noir. Idéaliste, comme ses parents. Paladin de la justice. Aventurier autour du continent, mais souvent vu à Mordent avec les jumelles WF. A changé son nom de famille pour Weissriffer