

GAME SESSION SEVENTY-FIVE : BAD SLEEP - 2

(played Sept 18th, 2016)

DM note: after this special night ;), I gave secret sheets to Petrak (who sometimes behave he is Strahd), Varadan (who's monk and werewolf aspect of his personality are now completely separated) and Exigu (who is very jealous of Varadan)

Varadan

***** keep this info for you, you never confirm or deny anything to the others about it! *****

After the special room, at waking time (8 am) and every four hours after (noon, 4pm, 8pm), you play a dice :

50 % of the time, you are a monk, totally excluding the werewolf from your thoughts (this side of you **do not** exist)

50 % of the time, you only think as a werewolf (cruel, angry, animal) and the non-beast part of you do not exist. You can even "wrarr!" when you are angry :) That said, you know you need the others to escape and you need to cooperate with them. Also, this isn't the place to transform wildly, unless you need it.

Exigu

***** keep this info for you, you never confirm or deny anything to the others about it! *****

After the special room, you are very jealous of Varadan.

Always try to denigrate his ideas, or say he is acting as a show off because he is a lycanthrope, and in the Strahd lineage, etc. or: "Me? Can't do it. Ask Varadan, he is soooo good!"

When he is not present, say bad things about him to convince the others.

You do not collaborate with him unless you have a good reason.

But you do not provoke him into a fight, back off if Varadan react violently ... to start again half an hour later...

Petrak

***** keep this info for you, you never confirm or deny anything to the others about it! *****

After the special room, at waking time (8 am) and every four hours after (noon, 4pm, 8pm), you play a dice :

50 % of the time, act normally.

50 % of the time, you think you are also Strahd, **on top of** being Petrak (you are the same person). You believe you are Strahd the count, the noble ruler of Barovia (as the political chief, not the vampire!) "Listen to me, I am your ruler!", "Bow before me!", etc. If others plays your game, this calms you for about ten minutes, then it starts again...

The players liked and played it well. That was a lot of fun ;)

June 4th, 748

Petrak awakens, awoke the other sleeping heroes and then learn his clerical spells.

They are all looking like if they had a sleepless night, and Tora is holding his left arm with tearful and crazed eyes. They ask him what is going on, and he spites back "can't you see! my arm was amputated last night!" ... but the others see his arm complete ...

They share what happened last night in these horrible dreams ...

Varadan is very hungry, and it makes him angry. He has low patience with the others.

Later, the door opens and an orderly explains today's task : 2b and 2f will cut the grass with 5a (old man, looking fragile, that walks slowly), 1b* (a woman that seems to fear everything) and 7c (paranoid halfling woman). 2a and 2d will tend the vegetable garden, with 4b (dwarf with white beard) and 5d (a man who's always telling stories that are impossible to believe). 2c et 2e will put out the garbage, with 9a, 7b, 4d, 2h*.

*DM note : * marks an orderly (a staff person of the asylum acting as a patient). They know that the first number on the patient mask is the room number, but didn't react to "2h" ;)*

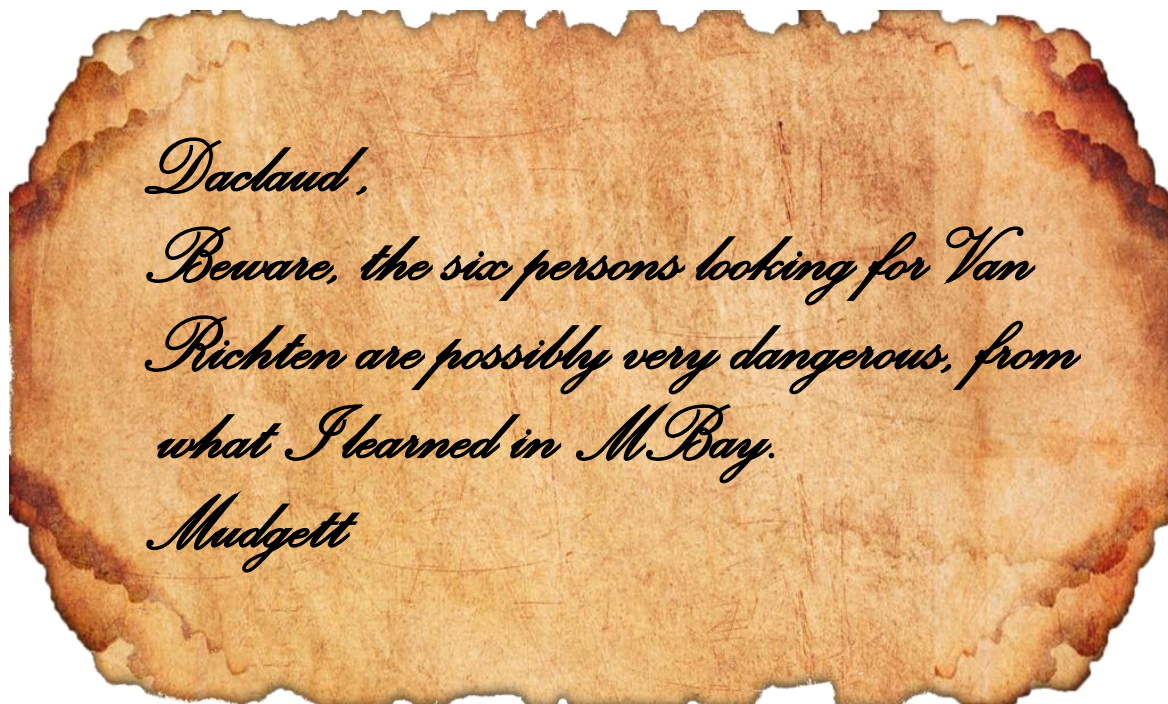
Then they take the patients out to the court. They are again given an apple for breakfast, but Varadan throws it back violently. Some of the orderlies look at him, but they do not react.

Exigu and Tora are shown a cart, filled with garbage. With other patients, their task is to carry the cart to the island border, and throw the garbage in the sea. There are two orderlies with them (their mask are without number, so they nicknamed them the "numberless" (les "pas de numéros")).

The other patients in this group are not talkative (9a - fat man, nearly catatonic at times, has to be pushed by the orderlies, 7b - quiet woman, 4d - short and old man, frequently hallucinates about flies over his head, and 2h - woman, fearful). The content of the cart moves during the trip and they see a cadaver in the pile of garbage! Later, they identify the dead man as a sailor they rescued on the sea...

DM: vampire food.

Exigu sees two crumpled balls of paper. He makes sure the orderlies do not see him when he steal them. At one point in the morning, he is able to read them. One is a short letter to Heinfroth from the asylum director in Martira Bay (Mudgett), the second is the draft of a letter sent by Heinfroth to an unknown "R" person :



Dear R,

In accordance with your instructions, and your ~~very~~ generous monetary offer, I have accepted into my care ~~your enemy~~ the distinguished Dr Rudolph Van Richten. He is indeed a remarkable man, full of wisdom and endless courage. Under normal circumstances, I should have welcomed the ~~pleasure~~ chance to reduce him to utter catatonia.

Of course, such an experiment on this unique character would doubtlessly provide me with a wealth of knowledge invaluable ~~in my case study~~ in my search for a way to eliminate mental illness. Sadly, I shall not have this chance. I take comfort in the knowledge that there are others out there who share many of Van Richten's ~~foolishly~~ heroic qualities, several of whom have been very recently delivered into my hands by the Mercy.

So Van Richten is ready to be sent to you! He is partly broken but will be able to fully realize what you have planned for him. Please advise me as to your further needs in this matter. I look forward to doing business with you again in the future.
Daclaud Heinfroth

Exigu reads the letters and throws them away, so he isn't caught with them. He will later make a quite accurate recount by memory. *DM note : exactly what Exigu's player did, great job :)*

When they arrive at the island border, the sea is in front of them. Exigu climbs inside the cart to throw the garbage down the cliff, to the sea. He steals a shoelace (to make a sling). He isn't seen by the numberless.

On the way back to the asylum, they cross a patrol of two orderlies in the opposite direction.

Meanwhile, Varadan and Austizel are tending the garden. Varadan takes every opportunity to find field mouse and eat them. At one point, he has enough and he climbs the front gate! Orderlies use their whistle and run to the gate, but Varadan is quick enough to get to the other side, transforms into a wolf and run away! His mask moves to the side of his head.

Before he goes, Varadan shouts to Austizel "be careful, they tried to enter my mind!" and he enters the forest ...

DM note: three orderlies tried dominate but failed.

Meanwhile, Macrazbunare and Petrak are cutting the grass just outside the asylum fence. They are with 4b (old dwarf, who never talks but grunt) and 5d (middle aged man, who keeps talking. After an hour, they identified him as a compulsive liar).

At one moment, Macrazbunare casts *detect mistletoe* in the forest (important component for the druid), and it's positive. They find the orderlies are nervous and the use their whistle to call back anyone who wander too far from them.

At noon, they are back as a group (except Varadan) and they discuss what happened in each group in the morning. Austizel warns the other about Varadan's shout about mind control. Exigu tell about the letters he found.

Macrazbunare is under the impression that 1b (the fearful woman) is slowly getting closer to the heroes to try to listen to them... They move elsewhere.

The druid tries his empathic link with his wolf (one mile) : nothing ...

Shortly after lunch started, they hear whistles! They see a woman was also able to escape and she is running for the forest! They see two orderlies running after her...

Later, after 30 minutes, she is brought back, and she look in fear shock. A large wooden chair is brought to the courtyard, and she is strapped to it. The patient is 8b. Large buckets of icy water are brought, and Dr Blue supervise this. She yells a shocked "a green monster!", and swiftly, Dr Blue gives the order that a bucket is

thrown at her. It silences her. They see Dr White and Dr Black share a knowing glance. Every ten minutes, another bucket is thrown at her. She is freezing and shivering.



The heroes watch this from a distance. Suddenly, a man is near Petrak. He says "Awful. There is no hope ..." and he leaves. Petrak recognize Van Richten! His number is 10a.

Exigu examine the masks. They are made of wood, with two leather straps holding them on the face. It is not possible to put a finger in between the strap and the face.

They evaluate the number of orderlies to be at least 20. They notice the security level has increased since Varadan and the woman escaped. There are more orderlies in the court yard. Two of them grease the front metal gate, to prevent others from escaping that way ... They notice that it is the moment for a major change of asylum staff.

Tora tries his *ghostsight* in the courtyard : nothing.

Meanwhile, Varadan go in the boat's direction (still there, two orderlies at the elevator, two more seen on the boat). He stays hidden from them. Then, he follows the island's border all around it. He sees very big wolf, who look at him and snarl aggressively.

He goes near the asylum and sees Petrak and Macrazbunare cutting the grass, with four orderlies and two other patients. He stays in the wood and does wolf sounds. Macrazbunare discretely cast a spell and talk with the wolf. They share news of their whereabouts.

Suddenly, an eye appear out of thin air and watches them! Then an orderly bring Macrazbunare closer and he goes back to the forest's edge. He starts singing a lullaby ... but Varadan is already out of reach.

Petrak casts *detect magic* discretely. Their masks are magical, as well as another patient. However, 1b's mask and the orderlies' are not! Two of the orderlies have a concealed magical item.

DM note: the orderlies knows this, and watch, doing nothing for the moment.

In the courtyard, Austizel stays calm and continues tending the garden. The cold water treatment gets less frequent : from once every 15 minutes, it goes to one every 30 minutes, then just once an hour. The woman passes out between these treatments. Dr Blue is still supervising the treatments, taking notes in his book.

Austizel walks toward Dr White and asks "Are you agreeing with Dr Blue's methods?"

Dr White look at him with disdain, and answers "Yes I do. Do you try this often, to seed discord between people?". Austizel walks away back to the garden.

In the afternoon, Tora and Exigu are sweeping the front alley. Exigu makes a sling with the stolen shoelace.

At 4pm, Macrazbunare has enough and transforms into an eagle, and escapes! The orderlies use their whistle, and bring the other patients inside the walled court yard. He goes to the herb garden, get some mistletoe, and then toward the dump.

At the same time, Varadan is watching the asylum from afar. He suddenly transforms from wolf to a human. He is naked except his mask, confused, wondering why he was a wolf moments ago, without having an explanation for this strange phenomenon... But he shakes this idea and focuses

on his escape plan ... He sees Macrazbunare change to an eagle and fly toward the dump. He walks in the forest, in this direction, but when he arrives to this place, it seems Macrazbunare is already elsewhere...

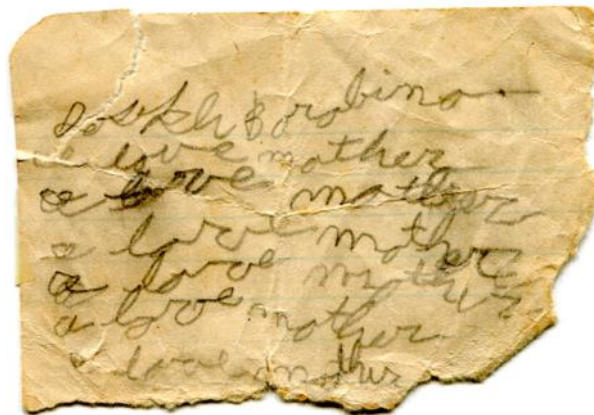
DM note : random personality switch, and he is back to 100 % monk personality. That will make him much more difficult to hide in the forest!

In the courtyard, it is "game" time and Austizel plays badminton with Van Richten. After the game, Austizel tries talking with him. "Do you recognize me? I'm Austizel!". Van Richten looks at him with crazy eyes and replies "Don't you think it would be more believable if you had his accent?", and he walks away from the badminton court...



7a comes toward Exigu and whispers "She told me she could not sleep. And she got in the bed with me. Next morning, I woke up clutching her burial dress...". He has fearful eyes, adds, "it's not me!", and leaves ...

Patient 8a goes near Tora and whispers him "the rebellion is organizing, we will escape...", and gives him a folded piece of paper... but Tora find it is unreadable non sense.



Later, he sees 8a laughing madly ...

Later, 4a tries small talk with Austizel. Suddenly, he gets a conspirator look, and whispers to the elf : "my wife woke me up last night to tell me there was an intruder in our house. It can't be. She was murdered by an intruder 2 years ago."

They are gathered in room group, and brought back to their cells. They notice much more orderlies are strategically placed in the corridors. The four heroes try to rebel, but they are overpowered quickly. Exigu finds his bullets do not do any damage! The orderlies sing a sleeping lullaby that is very difficult to resist, or their mind is dominated into surrender...



They find themselves back in their closed cell, with two new patients, 2g and 2h. Tora tears off the mat on the door. There are no locks on their side.

2g start howling in fear...

DM note: 2g is an orderly in disguise.

2h, a woman, says that this howling is tiring. They ask her questions, but she doesn't answer. "I'm not telling you anything about me. Here they use this knowledge to torture you!"

2g gets quieter. The heroes learn his name is Costine. He is a wine merchant from Invidia, and his family declared him crazy in order to inherit his money.

Tora tries to remove Petrak's mask, but he is unable to do so.

They hear a scream in the distance "Erasmuuuuuuus !!!!!" After a few of these screams, Tora realizes Van Richten is yelling his son's name!

He recalls the sad story of Van Richten's past:

Rudolph van Richten was born in the year 671 in Rivalis, Darkon. He spent most of his early childhood in the family estate of Richten Hous, picking up the typical education of a noble as well as learning herbalism from his grandmother. He eventually attended a boarding school in Nartok, graduating in 688. Medical school at the University of Il Aluk followed, but he preferred herbalism to surgery.

He married his childhood sweetheart Ingrid during this time, and his son - Erasmus - was born shortly before his graduation.

Medical license in hand, Dr. van Richten returned to Rivalis to practice medicine. Many years passed, and van Richten became an established and valued member of the community. In the year 706, members of the Vistani Radanavich clan that were traveling through the area brought a seriously ill boy to Dr. van Richten for treatment. Though the doctor tried numerous remedies and medicines, he was unable to save the child. Enraged at his failure, the Vistani kidnapped Dr. van Richten's son and disappeared into the night. The doctor gave chase immediately upon learning of his son's disappearance, following the Vistani into Ravenloft's enchanted mists.

While evil lurks in all corners of the land, rarely is it as powerful as it is in the gloom of the mists. Van Richten soon found himself followed by shambling horrors - in Darkon, these are the eyes and ears of Azalin himself! For reasons we may be never able to understand, Azalin chose to aid the doctor this night, guiding him to the Radanavich camp, and even granting command over the walking dead that surrounded him.

The undead zombie guardians guided him through the mists and to the Vistani camp. There, supported by the undead creatures that seemed to know his will even though no words were spoken, van Richten confronted the Vistani leader, Madame Radanavich. A woman far too proud for her own good, she was enraged that she had been hunted down. The Vistani callously revealed that the clan had already sold Erasmus to Baron Metus - a sadist whose cruelty was legendary. The Vistani delighted in telling van Richten about the pains the Baron would inflict on his son - both in this life and the next. For it was rumored that Metus worked the dark arts...

Van Richten exploded into a frenzy of violence. Somehow attuned to his rage, the undead guardians that had followed him to the camp also attacked, slaughtering the Vistani. With her dying words, the clan's leader cursed Van Richten : "Live you always among monsters,

and see everyone you love die beneath their claws!". Much later, van Richten would understand vistani's power and find he has been cursed! The whole vistani tribe died.

Snapped out of his rage by her demise, van Richten rode towards where he felt his son would be - and ended up at the estate of Baron Metus. When the anguished father arrived at the estate, he found himself unable to penetrate its walls and rebuffed by the Baron's servants. Unable to figure out another course of action, he camped near the property. When night fell, he was visited by his son - or what remained of him. Baron Metus was, in fact, a vampire - and had turned Erasmus into one of his dark minions. With what little free will he had left, Erasmus told his true father what little he knew of his condition. The Dark Kiss of undeath has been given to him by Metus! Erasmus had no desire to become as monster, and guided a sad Van Richten through the steps of his destruction with the coming dawn.

Demoralized, Van Richten began the journey back home. The mists, however, were not as cooperative as before, and the path took much longer. When he arrived back at his house, he discovered the body of his wife. She had been brutally slaughtered by Baron Metus, who had used his powers to get ahead of van Richten. His sanity driven away, van Richten sworn an oath to destroy Metus and all his kind, then charged back to the vampire's estate. Using the tales he had learned in his childhood and the knowledge the encounter with his unliving son had imparted to him, he was able to end the Baron's existence permanently.

Thus began Rudolph van Richten's career as a vampire hunter and expert on the supernatural, to spare other families the pain he had suffered. He left Richten Hous, never to return, and eventually settled in Mordent.

But even through his many success against the supernatural forces, the walls of his parlor are covered with small portraits of the many friends and companions he lost to the minions of darkness. By the year 736, all of his close battle companions were dead. Van Richten retired soon after.

Finally, in the year 741, Van Richten at last discovered the existence of the vistani curse which has plagued him and cut down so many of his friends. After shunning vistani his entire life, he spent the next year making peace with the last surviving Radanavich, Arturi Radanavich, with the vistani as people, and with the path he had taken during his life.

Shortly after Tora finished his tale, many in the room suddenly gets asleep! Exigu tries to awaken them, but soon falls asleep too ...

Meanwhile in the forest, Macrazbunare flies low, trying to renew contact with his druid animal companion wolf. After a moment, contact is established (through the link, he finds his wolf is fearful of something) and Macrazbunare eventually finds his wolf and Patu, hiding in a rock hole near the eastern edge of the island. He understand the wolf and Patu hid all this time, fearing the large wolves of the island. They are hungry. The druid hears wolf howling elsewhere in the forest. They are in hunt mode.

Varadan in the forest hears the same howling. They are getting nearer. He climbs to a tree. Wolves find him, see him, and sit under the tree... After 20 minutes, four orderlies arrive and they see Virevan in the tree. "Ah, my friends, the apple



harvest will be good tonight" ... They sing a lullaby, and Virevan falls asleep ...

Macrazbunare is back in the forest, hunting a crow for his wolf and Patu. He stays in the northern part of the island, as the howling come from the south. He goes back to his wolf and Patu to feed them.

Later, he goes back to toward the asylum, to see four orderlies carrying a sleeping Virevan. Four dire wolves are with them. Hidden in their back, he casts *call lightning* on the orderlies but he notices the bolt has no effect! Two of the orderlies transform into an albatross and start circle motions. Macrazbunare is helpless and watches Virevan brought back to the asylum ... He gets back to the rock hole and gets to sleep the night, while his wolf watches.



Meanwhile during the night ...

...2a (Varadan) awakens on a seat, in a room well lit, although he cannot pinpoint the source of lighting. It is impossible to exactly say what colors the walls are, for their surface is a constant swirling of colours that reminds him of oil floating on water. Watching these ever changing colors is very soothing, almost hypnotic and Varadan finds it difficult to keep any given thought in his mind for long while looking at them ... After what seems like hours, or days, he gets asleep ...

... 2c (Tora) awakens strapped on a chair, and he wears a strange metallic coning hat strapped to his head. In front of him is another patient, in a similar chair, with a similar conic metallic hat. Both "hat" are linked by a metallic rope. The other patient awakes. Tora recognize 8a, the one who gave him the non sense paper last night! He sees metal sparks exchanged between both hats through the rope! His mind is swirled with 8a's nonsense thoughts ... while 8a laugh madly, looking at Tora. After long minutes of horror, Tora gets asleep ...

DM note: new room, not in the book. That is why he met mad 8a previously that day.

...2e (Exigu) on a low metal table, with thick leather restraints holding him. The walls are silvery and the room is well lit, although he cannot pinpoint the source of lighting. The bitter smells of blood and sweat hangs in the air, despite the tinge of cleaning chemicals clearly intended to mask them... Suddenly Exigu feels the area under his left arm to be very hot, like a stove top, burning him cruelly. He smells his own flesh burning, and passes out. He awakes in this room later, and the smell of blood and burnt flesh is horrible. But he panics when he sees his left arm cut at the elbow, on the floor! He has been amputated in his sleep! He passes out again...



...2d (Austizel) awakens on a black stone, in a room well lit, although he cannot pinpoint the source of lighting. The room's floor and ceiling and walls are also made of the same black stone material. Austizel gets sharp bolt of lightning every times he does something (exploring the room, watching the door, etc.)... After an hour, he gets asleep...

...2f (Petrak) awakens strapped on a metal chair, in a room well lit, although he cannot pinpoint the source of lighting. The room's wall, ceiling and floor are made of black and white tiles, looking very much like a chess board. A large metallic globe hangs from the ceiling. Suddenly, two large metallic needles appear from it and the globe gets



nearer and nearer to Petrak until one of the needle enter his skull by an eye hole! He feels the needle scratching inside his skull, and then sucking a part of his brain! He passes out. When he awakes later, he do not remember any third level spells... He gets asleep...

June 5th, 748

They awaken in their cell, and Varadan is with them!

Varadan tell of his escape, and of the time in the woods. He looks confused about a part where he was in wolf form, but he can't explain how he was able to do that ... He reveals that a magical floating eye once followed him.

Exigu is angry because he was amputated of his left arm.

They wonder if the maks is keeping them asleep. Petrak casts *dispell magic* on Tora's mask. It works and Tora can remove it!

He also cast detect magic, and it isn't magical anymore. All the other patients in room 2 have magical masks, except 2g's mask! They remove his mask, to find an middle aged man. 2h attacks 2g "you are a spy!", but the heroes intervene. They wonder what to do with 2g.

Tora explains 2g that the asylum is not normal, they are here to save a friend and it would be better for you if you keep our secrets... Varadan adds that they will bring 2g back to his family if he cooperates.

2g - you have no plan, what will you do?

Tora - We are many, we will escape. We already succeeded in removing a mask.

2h - I do not trust him...



Then they hear the noise of keys outside. Tora attacks the one opening the door.

Austizel screams at the guards "be careful, 2g has become evil! He is negative for the well-being of my treatment!"

Varadan attacks 2g. Exigu tries to exit the cell with tumble but misses. Suddenly Tora and Petrak surrender!

Austizel "Save me from 2g! Tell Dr White what happened!".

Varadan attacks 2g again. 2g looks at Varadan and tells him "you should surrender, there is no reason not to", and he transforms into a gas! the remaining heroes surrender.

The cell door is locked on the heroes. Twenty minutes after, the orderlies open the cell again, and, like if nothing happened, announce the tasks of the day ...

GAME SESSION SEVENTY-SIX : BAD SLEEP - 3

(played Oct 16th, 2016)

During the night, Macrazbunare sleeps, his wolf watching.

June 5th, 748

At midnight, he weaves mistletoe into the fabric of his patient's tunic.

Elsewhere in the forest, quite far, he hears hunting wolves that have circled a prey, then silence ...

He learns his spells. Then finds a club and a staff in the forest. He casts *hide from animal* and *pass without trace* on him and his wolf. He leaves Patu and goes toward the dump.

He goes down the cliff and sees many garbage thrown from up there : parts of chairs and table are the largest parts. The rest have been washed by the waves. He finds a chipped dagger, and some opened metal preserve metal cans. The only thing remaining of the sailor body thrown yesterday is a calf, with large bites marks.

It is 6h30 am. He goes back up. He hears cries of pain in the distance but ignores them. He look for a root, and uses it to make a belt.

He gets to the herbal garden, while his wolf guards the road. In a metal box, he finds a small rusted tool he can use (scythe). He recognize the shouts of pain as being Austizel's. He is in shock and terrorized.

Macrazbunare hears Austizel scream "I don't know... You can't do that ... Noooo... I can't tell you, as I know nothing Don't lighten this, I know nothing!..." Then he hears scream of pain, with the tell tale odor of burnt flesh in the distance ... Macrazbunare ignores it.

He goes back to Patu a few minutes past 8 am. He watches the elevator from a distance (2 orderlies watching the sea) and the boat (no activity). He tries to remove his mask, without success.

The day is again bleak, with dark clouds hanging over the island.

He puts fairy stools seeds around his hole (feed from magic), and put a line of them between the hole and the elevator (so feys will be compelled to gather them all). Then he gets some Quovosp root from Hazlan and starts smoking it, looking at the sea (will get a vision in four hours).

Meanwhile, the tasks are give to the patients : 2a 2c 2d 2f will wash the manor's floor. 2b and 2e will be in the kitchen with 10a, 1c, and 9b The second group will be with Van Richten!

They note that the asylum staff has masks without numbers. They are posted at strategic places to watch everything. There is an apple distribution to everybody. Varadan throws it away, without any reaction from the staff. There is also a distribution of a warm vegetable or root beverage.

They notice that 8h is still shivering from the cold, even if her outfit is now dry...

Before going inside for their tasks, They see a group of staff accompanying patients. They open the front gate without saying anything or doing anything special.

In the kitchen, Varadan, Tora and the other patients sometimes have moments when they are alone, without orderlies. 1c grunts when the heroes try to talk to him. Van Richten is quietly working at grounding cereals, while 9b is a sad looking person, always cradling a doll (and not working).

Tora tries to remove their mask (1c grunts and hits Tora), while 9b do not react. Both seem well stuck.

Varadan steals a piece of coal (the plan is for Petrak to be able to draw his clerical symbol).

When orderlies are not present in the room, Tora removes his mask and shows his face to Van Richten. "Put it back", the old man replies. Varadan also tries the same thing, transforming into a werewolf, "see, it's me!"



But Tora runs outside, screaming in terror ! 9b do not react and 1c is in a corner, afraid.

Van Richten tells him, "answer quickly to my questions. Why are you here?"

Varadan - the twins told us they thought something was wrong.

VR - why were they worring?

Varadan - they had no news from you while you promised you would write often

Van Richten - name them!

Varadan - Gennifer and Laurie

Van Richten - what is special with Gennifer?

Varadan - she is like me

etc.

After 10 minutes of this quick question / answer period, Van Richten is relieved. "OK, I think this is you. You answered too quickly to be scanning my brain for an answer..."

Varadan tells him about the letter Exigu found in the garbage cart. Van Richten is stunned. Who would do this? Who is this "R"? Van Richten understans he will be put on the boat in two days.

The orderlies bring back Tora to the kitchen. After a moment, they are alone again.

"Be careful", say Van Richten, "I saw a guard turn into gas...". Tora and Varadan say they saw it too.

"How many doctors do you know?", asks Van Richen.

The heroes tell of Dr Red (Rhenner), Blue, Black and White.

"Be careful, there is a Dr Green. He is in charge of security... and I have reason to believe he is invisible!"

"Something strange happening at night?", asks Van Richten

"Yes, strange dreams with torture", Varadan says.

"They are not dreams, they are real. These rooms are located on the third floor", says the herbalist.

"I think I know where your things are", adds Van Richten, "I saw your packsacks!" and he describe the guest room (where they slept the first day).

Meanwhile, the other group of heroes wash the floor on the first floor, loosely watched by orderlies. They discover a library, where they steal paper and ink. Petrak does *detect magic*: nothing. Petrak tries to draw his holy symbol but misses (craft DC 15).

DM note: Petrak's player said it was from a companion 3,5 book. Now I do not recall which one. I didn't give many thoughts about it before allowing it, since their condition is bad, and chances for escape are low ;) I ruled it was a Craft DC 15 to succeed.

At noon, the group in the kitchen brings a vegetable soup. Dr Red, Black and White are presents. Exigu tries to find something to pick locks.

The share knowledge of the morning.

At one point, Dr Black comes and ask for Varadan, "we have questions for you", and they lead him inside the manor.



Varadan is lead to a dormitory (the one where the sailors were, it is empty). There, two orderlies lock the door and ask endlessly the same questions to Varadan "where is your friend in the forest? What will he do? What are his powers?", etc. Varadan do not answer. It last ten minutes.

Meanwhile, Varadan is back to the group. "What did they want?"

Varadan - "they asked me questions about Macrazbunare. I said nothing, don't worry"

The heroes think he was probably thoughts scanned.

After, they resume discussing their plan and escape possibilities.

Petrak say "we can't make a plan since they have ESP. If we have a plan, we execute it quickly"

Varadan - "but we do not know where they put our weapons and our things"

DM note : a sign that something wasn't right (see below) as Varadan was the one who learned that from Van Richten the same morning. But they did not notice...

Petrak - "Yes, we do know, Van Richten told us our personal stock is in the dormitory where we first slept"

Petrak - "Exigu can open that door"

Exigu - "Don't forget that Van Richten told us not to trust anybody"

Varadan - "what spells do we have left?"

Petrak - "cure spells, with silence, produce flame, create food and water, and remove paralysis"

Austizel - "mostly magic missiles"

After ten minutes, Dr White comes and asks for Varadan, "we have more questions for you", and they lead him again inside the manor.

After two or three minutes, Varadan is again back to the group.

DM note : what happened? ;) Dr Black came to get Varadan and had him locked in a room "for questioning". That lasted about ten minutes. Meanwhile, Dr Black (doppelganger) changed to Varadan, and join the group for about ten minutes, scanning and asking questions about the escape plan...

Metagaming : I took Varadan's player away, and told him that something took his form and joined the group. I told him to go back to the group, without using Varadan's knowledge. I told him what to answer to the "what did they want" question, and then, when they were focusing back to the plan, to ask questions like "what do we have", "what spells do we have left in memory", etc.

That worked perfectly, and Varadan's player at one point turning to me, and say, "THIS is sooo evil".

Then Dr White summons "Varadan" away, and the real Varadan is released back to the courtyard. I told Varadan's player to answer has Varadan would, not volunteering information, but reacting to any possible discrepancies between what Varadan just experienced (a ten minutes questioning) and what the other players might say.

Varadan - "they asked me questions about Macrazbunare. I said nothing but I think they were trying to scan my mind for answers. I don't think they got anything from me"

Tora - "OK, you said the same thing the first time when they asked for you"

Varadan - "what do you mean?"

Tora - "you were gone 3 minutes"

Varadan - "no, more than 10 minutes!"

And the heroes realized what just happened...

DM note: and Macrazbunare's player realized that Austizel's "torture" this morning was also probably false ...

Tora does the same thing with Varadan as Van Richten did this morning : many details questions, that Varadan has to answer quickly. He passes this test.

They decide to run for their things and make a plan from there!

They move toward the door, one by one... They enter the kitchen, and Austizel jam the door.

After a short moment, they hear shouts and knocking at this door...

They run inside the asylum, but there are two orderlies in the foyer room. One of them tells the heroes "diner isn't finished. Go back outside for your safety".

But they ignore him and Tora takes the foyer's heavy poker.

Some attack the orderlies present, while others run for the dormitory door. One orderly tells Tora "surrender now, or I'll have you clean the toilets with your tongue".

But all quickly come to confusion! From the foyer, a tendril of flame touches one hero, making him like under a *confusion* spell... Petrak casts searing light at an orderly... Exigu is successful in opening the locked dormitory door without proper thieving tools and sees the heroes's backpack!... Tora is confused and wonder away... Confused Varadan attacks Exigu!... Confused Petrak sends spells in the air... while Austizel casts *magic missile* at an orderly ... Varadan attacks Austizel ... Tora babbles ...

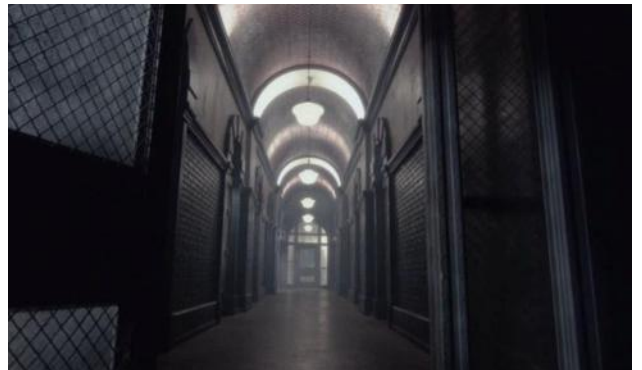
Exigu gets to the nearest backpack and opens it ... to see them filled with rocks ... He is close to snap and laugh madly.

The remaining heroes decide to go up and explore the place, while the others get caught. They think they won't get killed for this, so while they can, why not explore the asylum?

Eventually, only Exigu and Austizel are standing. They get to the second floor and explore corridors. Exigu gets mind controlled and surrender.

Austizel gets to a parlor room, with strange tapestries (a blot of dark ink on a white background). Moments later, shadowy shapes surround him, but he escapes to the third floor, where orderlies reach to him, and Austizel finds himself surrendering ...

Everything blurs and they are back into their cell ...



Meanwhile, around 1h pm, Macrazbunare has his Quovosp root vision. In this dream like condition, he focuses on the island...

Dominia sits on a near-perfect circle of limestone rising hundreds of feet above the Sea of Sorrows. Around the island are many grottos, some completely underwater. Most are empty but some are occupied by sea monsters.

Atop the limestone is a shallow layer of earth. There are many springs of potable water. The thick topsoil is some of the richest in the Core. Dominian soil can sustain any plant that does not require truly extraordinary circumstances The island is dominated by dense forest, with only the occasional clearing or sinkhole.

Despite its small size, Dominia has a diverse and thriving ecosystem. The most notable predators of the island by far are the wolves, which run in small packs led by larger, more intelligent worgs. This arrangement of individual worgs leading packs of wolves is unique to the island, and no satisfactory explanation is apparent. The wolves' preferred prey are wild pigs, rabbits, deer, and rats.

Just north of the island's center sits the Asylum for the Mentally Disturbed. The walls are plaster-covered brick, its top with broken glass to discourage escape. When the domain arrived in the Sea of Sorrows, it added a special hidden sub-basement where Dominiani's pet projects could receive extra attention. Dubbed "Ward Zero," the sub-basement was hardly a rumor among most of the staff, let alone the patients.

There are no secret entry to the asylum.

Many doors are magically locked and they are tuned to open for certain kind of people only.

Macrazbunare check the boat again, to see that there are two orderlies on the elevator and two on the boat. At 5h15 pm, he starts smoking Quovosp root again...

The other heroes are gathered in their cell, and they wake up slowly. Exigu and Austizel finds themselves attached, while the others are sleeping. They kick the sleepers to awaken them. And have them remove the ropes.

They verify that there is nothing invisible in the room with them.

DM note: are they becoming paranoid now ? :)

Varadan check everybody's mask, and finds Petrak's mask can be removed!

DM note : having found what the PC learned about masks, the orderlies sewing suspicion ... ;)

Exigu bites him, to see if he can bleed (yes). Petrak hit him with his fist.

They start questioning him, but Petrak answers arrogantly, saying he is Strahd after all, and that he should not answer these silly questions...

DM note: fun role playing. Everybody was now going a little mad at the situation!

They are not sure if they can freely discuss a plan in front of Petrak ...

They ask Petrak to make a cure spell, but he answers "no, I am Strahd, your ruler, you do not deserve my magic!"

There is the noise of keys in the corridor, and their cell door opens. Five orderlies are there to bring them out for dinner.

They talk with Van Richten, after Varadan has tested his mask to see if it was magically stuck to his face or not (it is). Varadan tells him to beware of Petrak, as he thinks he is Strahd. Van Richten warns him not to say anything in front of Petrak.

Varadan explains the heroes killed one orderly : he transformed into gas, and this gas went to the second floor. Van Richten suggests there are coffins on the second floor?

Van Richten walks away, saying he will be back later... They eventually see him enter the kitchen door ...

Austizel successfully draws Ezra's holy symbol for Petrak.

DM note: successful Craft DC 15.

Suddenly, Petrak is different. "What do you mean? I am not Strahd?" It is an unpleasant souvenir for Petrak and he do not want to talk about it. The heroes notice that Petrak is changing personality but they can't guess the trigger. Is it random?

They notice patient 9c coming closer to their group, as if he was listening. Varadan comes to him and check on his mask (magically stuck). This makes 9c go away ...

They see something new. There is some kind of shock in the orderlies' rank. A news is spreading from group of orderlies to another, and it is always met with some kind of astonishment. It is easy to approach the orderlies and listen to the news. They hear that "Natalia is coming to the island tomorrow" ! and that they are somewhat anxious of this visit, a source of stress for them.

The heroes wonder if that Natalia's second name is Vorishkova! If that is the case, what is her role in Dominia? Why are the orderlies anxious about that visit? Is she related to the "R" of the found draft letter?

DM note : no link. It's just that Natalia Vorishkova is friend with Heinfroth. IMC, she visits the island once in a while to find if there are potential interesting killers among the patients.

Van Richten is back and gives a paper to Varadan and walks away.

Friends!

I have managed to steal a key! It will open your cell door. It is my intention to attempt an escape.

I ask for your help because of our past great friendship and because I am an old man. I am forced to trust you in this deceitful place.

The wolves of the forest would quickly overwhelm me were I by myself. With your help, however, I believe we can reach the docks, seize our master's caravel and set a course for freedom at last from this hell.

I go tonight, half an hour after we are locked in for the night.

Varadan reads it shares its content with the other heroes.

He goes playing ball with Van Richten. At one point, he tells the old man that while he was inside the asylum, they learned that a person named Natalia was going to visit the asylum tomorrow! Van Richten is extremely surprised and shaken...

Van Richten - "That I found a key is probably another jest of Heinfroth... It will not work ..."

Tora - "How were you able to get this key?"

Van Richten - "I noticed one of the orderlies to be less cautious than the other about his key, and I was able to steal it in his pocket ..."

Van Richten - "We are going to get caught, it won't work"

Van Richten - "Do you trust young Colin, the one who was on the boat with you?"

Remembering the young cabin boy on the *Mercy*, they say they do trust him.

Van Richten - "He told me he moved your things at noon, from the first guest room" (where the heroes first slept) "to the second guest room" (where the sailors were, and where Varadan was questioned). This is why their packsacks were filled with rocks ... Another demoralizing jest.

Tora - "Do we take all the other patients with us? We can't let them here. Otherwise, we'll have to come back."

Young Colin has now joined the group. His mask is big on his small face. He shares that the orderlies are cerebral vampires, and that they drain cerebral fluids from their victims. He expose the back of his neck to show sharp claws marks! He says that he wants to escape too and that he could help sail the *Mercy* ...

DM note: Colin is also a cerebral vampire but he is a turn coat, as he was badly treated by the orderlies, Heinfroth and Baykur. he was even bitten. The orderlies' plan was to have Colin get the trust of the PC and learn of their plan. However, Colin will only reveal small bits of the plan, as he wants to escape too ...

Later tonight, Macrazbunare has his second Quovosp root vision. This time, he focuses on Heinfroth...

Dominia originated as part of Gundarak, a land now absorbed into Barovia and Invidia. By all accounts, Gundarak was an uncivilized backwater, ruled by a tyrant whose vampiric nature was a secret to no one. The illiterate and superstitious peasants of Gundarak lived in constant fear of the creatures that walked the night, especially the one that held court in Castle Hunadora and called himself Duke Gundar. Of households that suffered the effects of his infamous tax on daughters, the best they could hope for was that she enter their lord's keep, never to return again.

That such a place should spawn a technological cornucopia like Dominia is remarkable, and has everything to do with the unique personage that sat beside Duke Gundar, a trusted advisor in all matters, right up to the day when he betrayed

the Duke. Daclaud Heinfroth was an anomaly in Gundarak, an island of scientific advancement and enlightenment in a sea of superstition and ignorance. Early in his mortal life, his pursuit of knowledge had taken him to Mordent and Paridon, and he brought that education back to his ancestral home.

The first event for Dominia happened in its parent domain of Gundarak, when Gundar's right hand man betrayed the Duke into the hands of seasoned vampire hunters in Castle Hunadora. Gundar made a trap where he would appear powerless in front of adventurers, and that Dominiani was going to release Gundar to attack and destroy the adventurers. However, Dominiani betrayed his lord and did not release him, making him powerless in front of adventurers. They put a stake in his foul heart, but they had to quickly flee Hunadora's other threats.

Dominiani thus usurped Gundar's role as the realm's dread lord, but was unable to sustain his political control very long. The second seminal event was the Great Upheaval in 740, when the Mists claimed everyone within the walls of Heinfroth's ancestral home and created Dominia for him.

Modeled after Dominiani's estate in Gundarak, the island included an upgraded asylum, expansive grounds and some surrounding territory. When it arrived, it included Dr. Dominiani, two assistants who would eventually become Drs Black and White, and various patients. To help spread the reputation of the asylum, the trio began brewing alchemical copies of patients to escort back to their families as "success stories".

As news of them reached institutions of learning, they began corresponding with various other asylums--some of which were happy to send their most difficult patients to Dominia, for Heinfroth to toy with.

Macrazbunare transforms into an owl and gets close to the asylum. He sees his friends talking to a man looking like Van Richten. He hides and watches ...

And this is a picture taken during Bleak House, with the players showing their patient's mask, and me on the DM's seat :



And without the masks :



Jean-Guy Varadan, monk	Martin Petrak, cleric	Jean-François Macrazbunare, druid	Philippe Austizel, Wiz	Yvon Tora, Paladin	Sylvain Exigu, thief
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GAME SESSION SEVENTY-SEVEN: BAD SLEEP - 4

(played Jan 22nd, 2017, all players present)

2a Varadan (Jean Guy)

2b Macrazbunare (JF) - now escaped

2c Tora (Yvon)

2d Austizel (Philippe)

2e Exigu (Welle)

2f Petrak (Martin)

Sent by email days before the game (to everybody except Macrazbunare).

After their discussion with Van Richten and Colin, the heroes are taken back to their cells for the night. All is quieter than usual, even the usual night screams are softer and more infrequent.

The heroes expect a discreet knock at their door but after about half an hour waiting, they all get to sleep ...

... you find yourself in a featureless room with gleaming metal walls. There is no apparent exit to this place, but many small holes (1/2 inch) cover the brightly polished surfaces. The walls are dented in many places, as if countless others had pounded their fist upon them ... making the reflections that give off as distorted and fractured. The air carries the acrid smell of chlorine.

... you find yourself wondering if the escape plan was real or if it was a dream... or if this is a dream ...

... suddenly, jets of flames are ejected from some of the holes! It lasts just a second, but you get burning damage. You try to move in a place where to avoid these jets of flames, but then you are struck with jets of oil mist from other holes ... Then, a minute later, other jets of flames are ejected, and the oil on your body is in fact water based and you avoid damage... You don't know where to stand in the room, as anywhere you stand, you are in front of a hole ...

... Other jets of flame from other holes barely miss you this time ... Then another set of oil mist cover you. You panic as the oily sheen seems different this time : will it protect you or make you burn ?

I played this by email to make things go quicker. At the start of the game, they played their save against pyro-phobia. Only Exigu missed it.

June 6th, 748

The heroes awake in the cell. Their skin smells scorched but are all in full health. It seems they all made the same dream... Why burn them to heal them afterward?

They test their masks. The one of Petrak is magical again, but not the one of Tora.

2h is in the room with them. She says he didn't have the same fire burn dream.

Meanwhile, Macrazbunare is watching the boat during the night. There are always 1 to 6 crew member seen on the boat's bridge, which is lighted with two torches in the center.

Again, the sun comes up... again behind heavy grey clouds.

The heroes are gathered in their cells to get in the garden for breakfast (sliced apples). Van Richten (10a) comes to them and explain he could not do it yesterday night, as he felt an invisible presence in his cell! But this morning, he tested the key and it is working well. He reports the escape for tonight.

Today's tasks : 2a (Varadan), 2d (Austizel), 7a and 1a will tend the herborist garden. They are told that certain plants are not to be touched. 2d (Austizel) is trying hard to please at this work, but 2a (Varadan) isn't working at all, instead chasing mice in the clearing. 1a is the old man that is often muttering to himself, but while in the asylum garden, the players think he is sometimes moving closer to them to hear their conversation.

Varadan is trying to move slowly toward the edge of the clearing, but the guards intercept him, whistle ready.

At one point, Varadan transforms into a wolf to provoke a reaction. A guard tell him to transform again to humanoid, otherwise there will be consequences. Varadan switches to hybrid form.

Today's task for 2c (Tora), 4a, 9a, 10a (Van Richten) and 2h (the woman in their cell) : they get all the way to the dock and scrap the barnacles of the *Mercy*. They are using long metallic brushes to scrap the mollusks. 4a frequently hallucinates and waves around his head as if to make some unseen insects flee. 9a is a large man, sometimes catatonic and standing prone.

Today's task for 2e (Exigu), 2f (Petrak), 1b and 6b : repair and maintain the road (fill holes and removes large rocks to the side). 6b wear a straight jacket and isn't helping at all.

At one point, those on the *Mercy* see an incoming boat. Captain Baykur looks at the boat with a telescope and look surprised. He gives an order and one of the crew quickly moves to the elevator and comes up the cliff.

When he is sure not to be seen from the asylum workers, Macrazbunare sees that he changes form to that of a large grey albatross and he fly toward the asylum. Macrazbunare has the time to check this crew member with a mirror : his reflection is invisible as an humanoid, but he becomes visible again as an albatross. The two guards at the top of the elevator are not reflected in the mirror either.

About ten minutes after, Macrazbunare hears a horse coming to the elevator at high speed. Dr Black is on the horse, accompanied with a flock of four albatrosses. The large birds transforms to humanoid, and all five people get on the elevator platform. They seem in a hurry. When they arrive at dock level, they take Van Richten and hurries him quickly on the platform. They take him back to the asylum. Why?

About 20 minutes later, a small boat arrive at the docks. Its name is the *Mystic Moon*. This boat is much smaller than the *Mercy*, and much quicker. The crew is small, only 6 persons. One of them is a stunning young woman, who is the only one to get on the docks.

Captain Baykur warmly welcomes her to Dominia, and through this exchange, Tora learns that she is Natalia Vorishkova!



DM note : for an added sense of danger, I added Natalia in the mix ;) IMC, she is a friend of Heinfroth (if not a part time lover) and she visits Dominia once in a while to take a look at the patients, in her quest for perfect serial killers (idea from Rucht's VR "Guide to Serial Killers Outline and notes"). She announced her arrival, but her boat is a couple days early. Heinfroth know of her past story with Van Richten and wants to hide the old adventurer from Vorishkova as he has a contract with somebody else over VR.

Those at the barnacle group feel an enormous hatred between the *Mercy* crew and the *Mystic Moon* crew. The crew do not talk to the other crew, and when on the dock, they stay away from one another.

At one point, Tora salutes cheerfully the *Mystic Moon* crew, but he is not saluted back, and contempt shows in their face. One of the crew murmurs something, and the others laugh.

At noon, the asylum patients are herded to the asylum garden for lunch. They share what happened in their work group during the morning. Van Richten isn't present in the courtyard.

Colin is there. He was working in the kitchen this morning, and hasn't seen Van Richten the whole morning.

Around 12h30, Heinfroth and Natalia exists the main building. They walk in the garden, Heinfroth guiding the visit. Then a low table is set, with chairs around it. Heinfroth and Natalia are seated, and asylum staff brings the asylum patients one by one for an interview, where Natalia is the one talking.

They started with those whose number starts with 1. The heroes think they are next! They are happy to wear masks, as they met her already (when they rescued Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove from werewolves, and when the heroes killed Natalia's lover, Nathan Timothy! - see session 21)

Indeed, it is quickly their turn! An asylum staff comes to 2a (Varadan) and brings him to the table. The interview is short, and then the next heroes is brought to the table.

DM note: to keep the surprise, after each one player - one DM interview, the players were put in another room so those coming for the interview didn't know what to expect.

Some of the heroes notice that Heinfroth is making a "silence" gesture at the heroes! Why?

The questions are strange and creepy ... *What is your name? Where do you come from? Have you ever killed someone? Why? Did you like it? How did you feel before and after the kill? Was it exciting to you? Sexually? Or do you hear voices telling you to kill? Would you like to do it again? Are you blaming some peoples for all the wrongs that happened in your life? Don't you want to kill them? To get control back over your life?*

Varadan's reaction is to appear submitted, and do not answer any of the questions.

Tora sings to the top of lungs, and do not answer any question.

Austizel says he is Dominic, an historian from Forlorn, and happy to be here. No, he never killed anyone.

Exigu says he is named Exigu! When he killed people, it is because they stole something from him and would prefer to doing it again.

DM note : Natalia forgot the name of the demi humans in the group that killed Nathan Timothy. If a human says his real name, she would make the connection.

Petrak yells "No, because I am Strahd! I let my servitors kill for me!"

The interviews resume with those from room 4, and so on. Most of the interviews are very short, and Natalia do not seem to find what she is looking for.

The afternoon is spend quickly at work, without anything important happening.

For 2e (Exigu) and 2f (Petrak)however, the afternoon task is different : with 1b and 6b, they are setting a fine outside dining table in the herborist clearing. It is a large table, but only two persons will be seated. There are torches and flowers. They are not setting the silverware, however... Private dinner tonight for Natalia and Heinfroth?

Macrazbunare and the barnacles group see that around 4 pm, one of the crew say "OK, time passed, she isn't coming back tonight. Let's move the boat", and they maneuver the *Mystic Moon* away from the dock, about 500 feet.

At 5, the patients are again herded back to the garden. Dr Blue and Dr Red are outside, monitoring the patients. Vegetable stew is served at 6.

At 6h15 pm, Natalia and Heinfroth gets on the horse driven carriage. They are accompanied with two other people from the staff, carrying two large covered tureens. The carriage moves toward the gate. Natalia says something at Heinfroth and Heinfroth stops the carriage. He gives an order to one of the staff. He walks to a patient, and brings her in the carriage. It is their friend, 2h! The carriage leaves the asylum garden ... Do they plan to eat her?

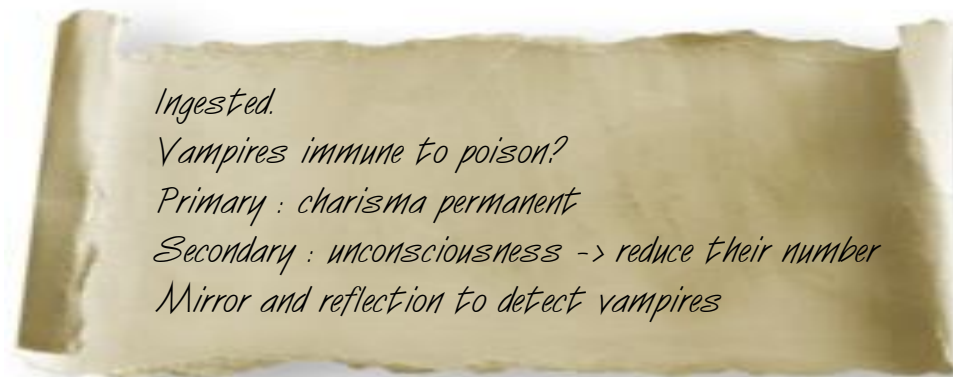
At 6h30, three asylum staff exits the main building, with Van Richten! One of them goes for the gate, as if to spy the carriage's return.

Van Richten takes a bowl of stew and walk toward the heroes. He is stunned to learn that Natalia landed on the island, and of the interviews at noon. He says he spent the whole day alone in his cell, without water or food. He says he heard two interesting things when they hurried him from the docks to his cell. The first, "let's be quick, so she does not see him". Now he understand they were speaking of Natalia. But why?

The second was more intriguing. One of them made a joke and said to another "should we put him in cell 3?", and the other replied "Ah ah ah! Are you mad, the boss will never forgive us if 10a escapes!".

They realize they never saw any patient with a number starting with 3. Why?

Macrazbunare watches this from afar and sends a message through a field mouse. There is also a small bottle attached to the mouse.



Ingested.

Vampires immune to poison?

Primary : charisma permanent

Secondary : unconsciousness -> reduce their number

Mirror and reflection to detect vampires

DM note: honestly, I found this message quite confusing.

The heroes discuss Macrazbunare's message.

Then minutes after they are gathered to their cells for the night ...

The heroes wait in their cell, and every minute seems to last an hour. What will come first this time, escape or the magical sleep?

After 20 minutes, they hear a click noise and their cell door opens!

Van Richten is there, a key in hand, with Colin! The young one makes a "silence!" gesture.

Before they leave the cell, Petrak casts *magic circle against evil* and *invisibility purge*.

They see the door to cell 3 and they decide to take a look. They open the door to a cell that was stripped of all padding. The walls are made of cement. But the odor inside the room is rancid ... They close to the door and move elsewhere ...

DM note: a dread possibility from Dominia's soon to be released article (a conditional gate).

They take the stairs up and get to the kitchen. They look inside the main hall and it is empty. Varadan and Exigu crosses the hall (always very hot) and get to the dormitory where Colin said their equipment were. It is locked. He tries to open it but fails. Second time works.

In this room, their backpack and clothing are piled. Exigu checks quickly, and the backpack do contain their equipment, not rocks. They pick everything and bring it to the kitchen to the other waiting heroes. They get their weapons, but do not take to the time to don their armors.

Tora - we have our things, we attack!

Petrak - Colin knows how to pilot the boat, but I agree we house clean this place first.

The door to the garden is locked. Magically locked.

Exigu hears a conversation in the hall.

Petrak cast *silence* and Tora destroys the door.

At 7h30 pm, they are in the garden, and two asylum staff saw the heroes burst through the door.

The vampires tries dominate but it misses. Varadan changes into hybrid form and attack. Seeing this transformation, Tora is shaken.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, Van Richten and Colin push a table to block the door to the main hall.

Magic missiles spells are hurled and the heroes see Macrazbunare coming from the nearby woods to help them! The heroes strike hard, and the two staff people change to gas and flee!

Varadan runs toward the gate and speak of his plans to throw a rope over it.

But Colin follows and say "let me open it". He moves to the gate and pushes it effortlessly, while murmuring something like a password? But the heroes are not duped.

Petrak exist the asylum walls and suddenly feels a compulsion to sleep! But his *magical circle against evil* drove it off.

DM note: Heinfroth's implanted spell (as mesmerist).

Austizel runs out and tries to remove Colin's mask, but it is firmly stuck. "What are you doing?", asks Colin, angrily.

DM note: during all this, I had fun confusing the players with magical masks that could not be removed (the usual for patients) and masks that could be removed (the usual for staff). But I once had Petrak with a non magical mask, as if he was a traitor, and the reverse now with Colin ;)

Colin is supposed to set alarm and prevent the evasion at the last moment, but he is suffering at the end of the other vampires, who do not consider him a proper member of the tribe. So he hates them (especially Baykur) and would do a lot to escape Dominia, with the help of the heroes.

When he passes the gate, Tora has the compulsion to yell "escape! escape! we are here! escape! escape!", but again, Petrak's magical circle helps him fight this compulsion.

They run a thousand feet from the asylum. All seem quiet for the moment. They decide to stop there a few minutes to don their armors. They verify their equipment : nothing is missing.

Meanwhile, Macrazbunare check Colin's reflection on a mirror : nothing can be seen ...

When they are ready to go again, they hear a woman's scream in the woods, followed by a wolf's call for hunt! It comes from the direction of the herb garden clearing, where Heinfroth and Natalia are dinning! They are probably hunting 2h, they think.

They talk to Colin and he reveals that he wants to leave the island with them, as he was badly treated by the other vampires. And that yes, he could open the gate because it is attuned to the staff and the Mercy crew.

DM note : a lie. It is tuned to cerebral vampires.



They run to the main road, and see two staff on patrol "what are you doing here?", one of them asks. One of them uses his whistle for alarm! Petrak casts *searing light* and Tora hits hard one of the vampire. One of the vampire quickly turns to gas and move toward the asylum!

The other vampire attacks. He has a torch in hand, and suddenly Exigu is truck with fear! (pyrophobia from last night's "dream"). Exigu runs away! Van Richten follows him, to make sure he is safe.

Austizel see green wolf eyes in the woods, watching them and moving for an ambush...

The second vampire attacks with a poisoned dagger! The fight goes on and shortly, this vampire turns to gas also and flee!

Macrazbunare casts *hide from animal* on everybody but Tora and Colin.

They hear other whistle noise in the asylum direction!

7h45 pm. They run for the boat. Macrazbunare gets Patu and his pet wolf at the hidden grotto.

DM note: what? no more plans to destroy the asylum before they go? ;)

They attack the two guards at the elevator, with *scorching ray*. The vampires flee in albatross form toward the asylum.

They get on the elevator platform and pull the lever to lower it.

They see the *Mystic Moon* boat floating 800 feet from the cliff. It is lighted by a torch and the heroes see at least one silhouette moving on it.

At 50 feet above the docks, the elevator stops! They see one of the vampire came back and pushed the lever, entrapping the heroes in the middle of the 100 feet cliff!

Macrazbunare changes to an albatross and gets up there. He casts *magic missile* and the vampire turns to gas. He pushes back the lever to lowering position. The platform resumes its descent...

They finally get at the docks and they run to storm the *Mercy*. A sailor screams "invasion!" and the fight starts. Captain Baykur appears and he starts sing a magical lullaby. Exigu falls asleep!

Tora attacks a vampire. Macrazbunare throws a *magic missile* at Baykur, and has his wolf bites Exigu to wake him up. Varadan attacks another vampire. Austizel casts *shakle* on the captain. Petrak casts *silence* on the Captain, to prevent another lullaby attempt. Baykur is enraged! He tries an ability on Petrak, but it misses. Another vampires tries something at Austizel, unsuccessfully. Varadan hits a vampire, who turn in to gas. Macrazbunare is controlled by a vampire! Tora hits another, who also transforms into gas. It seems that was the one controlling Macrazbunare, as the druid comes to his senses. They destroy Baykur with *produce flame*.

They follow the gases to find 12 coffins. Five of them have a translucent shape in them (the vampires they just fought, resting to reform their bodies). They stake all these vampires and



destroy Baykur with holy water. The captain turns to dust. Seeing this, Colin has a wicked smile. They destroy another vampire with holy water, and decide to destroy the others later with day light.

Then Colin says "enough, we have to move the boat and leave. Follow my orders!", and he shouts orders for the sails, the anchor, etc. The manoeuvre succeeds and the boat moves away from the island!

The *Mercy* pass a hundred feet in front of the *Mystic Moon*, to see all the crew watching them, arms crossed as if meaning to show they won't interfere...

When the boat is 2 000 feet from the island, they see torches light moving near the elevator guard post.

After a mile, they are suddenly able to remove their masks! Those that had strange behaviors are aware of their past strange behaviors, and they feel they are now in control. Also, Exigu and Tora now have full control of their "lost" arms. But remembering all this, Exigu, Varadan, Petrak and Van Richten are shaken, and this effect last for the night ...

They discuss if they should go back and free the other 25 prisoners...

GAME SESSION SEVENTY-EIGHT: BAD SLEEP - 5

(played Feb 5th, 2017)

June 6th, 748, 10h30 pm

Colin explains the boat will magically go to Martira Bay. It is set to travel between Martira Bay and Dominia, and has never seen it otherwise. The caravelle will be traveling 2 mph, and its maximum traveling speed (with full crew) would be 3 mph. Thus it will take them longer to get to Martira Bay, may be 5 or 6 days.

The heroes asks Colin about the *Mystic Moon*: "this one is fast, about 4 mph."

Colin: "Know that when we are not sailing, we need to cut a lot of slack on the sails, otherwise we risk getting a lot of trouble if the winds rise while we are asleep : sails tearing apart, mast breaking, that could make us helpless on the sea. And worst case scenario is we can capsize from a sudden uncontrolled gust of wind!"

There is the question of traveling time to be decided. The heroes can operate only one shift per day, so will it be during the day or during the night? They can't work for more than 16 hours or risk becoming tired.

DM note: sleep sidebar (RL DM Guide p 30)

While working on the boat, the discuss what to do with Colin. They do not trust him. Is another vampire impersonating him, as they saw with Varadan? Will he remove the stakes and release the three vampires in the coffins? One of them go to the coffins each hour, to check if the stakes are still there.

Before they resume their trip, a quick boat exploration. They explore the boat - the Captain's room, the sailors', the kitchen and the cargo holds. They inspect it quickly to see if anybody is hiding in a corner.

They check the food (only one day of supplies) and water (plenty of it).

They find that six persons are attached in a room at the front of the boat. Those were from the rescued sailors from the *Blue Dolphin*, when they came to Dominia! They have a reflection on mirror. They are skinny and completely catatonic. Macrazbunare think their brain is dead, and he can't say as a healer if a *restauration* spell would work.

In the hold, a trap leads to a very low section of the boat, near the hull (lowest floor of the boat). When the open it, it smells strongly like stagnant water, and rot!

They see this level of cargo is completely filled with closed coffins!

There is a brackish dark water making waves around the coffins, and they hear noise from rats.

Without being able to look the whole length of this level, they estimate there are approximately 60 coffins in this hold?



Colin explains those were used to bring troublesome patients, or patients that the family did not want back. Or drunk people, or prostitutes, abducted near the port by the vampires. "When you came to the island, there were about a dozen of these coffins that were filled..."

At 11h pm, they try a *lesser restauration* on one of the sailors: no effect.

They resume their work on the boat and the boat starts gaining speed.

June 7th, 748, midnight

DM note: lack of sleep check after 16 hours awake - all are OK.

At 1h30 pm, the grey clouds dissipates and the heroes can see the moon and the stars ...

They check the horizon for boats every half an hour.

At 4 am, Petrak and Varadan are fatigued from the lack of sleep. They decide to rest and resume their trip tomorrow. They give a lot of slack in the sails, making their speed lower to about 0,5 mph.

During the night, Macrazbunare got damage from a wooden bar hit on the head.

DM note - quick house rule on the hazards of manipulating a ship without experience : 1-12 hp damage on a missed DC5 check.

They choose an order for guards, while the others sleep. Colin propose to add his name to the list of people on guard duty ... They will have two people on guard duty ; one on the boat, the other one on the dormitory level.

They equip Van Richten with a long sword, a crossbow and magical bolts.

On Exigu's turn, he notices in the moon light some silver arrow-like shapes following them in the water : barracudas!

At 4pm, all of them had the required number of hours of sleep.

Exigu and Van Richten are still permanently shaken from thinking at Dominia's torments.

Varadan and Petrak are seasick.

They learn their spells and Petrak cast *Epiphany* at Tora (for his fear of seeing Varadan transforming) : he seems better about it. Petrak also provides magical food and water.

They cast *restauration* on a sailor, who seems to recover from a very long sleep. His name is Florian. He explains they were basically vampire food. One of their companion died.

They get the three last coffins in the sun, and the vampire are destroyed! They throw their dust in the sea.

Exigu notices that Colin do not like being under the sun, and avoids it if he can

They explore the luxurious Captain's room. The bed is replaced by a coffin. They find a log book. It states that the boat is owned by Daclaud Heinfroth. Its log shows it is indeed only sailing between Martira Bay and Dominia, about once every two or three weeks. On each trip, it mentions the number of passengers ("paying" and "box"). On the date when the heroes took the boat to Dominia, it mentions 6 "paying" and 12 "boxes", plus a mention of 12 rescued sailors.

A locker contains clothing, plus a bag of 250 gp and pieces of jewelry worth 1 500 gp.

Another large room was occupied by Rhener on the way to Dominia. There are three books on a table. The first one is clearly from a clandestine print shop : it shows nothing on the cover, and no author is mentioned. It contains discussions on experimentation on human brain, on human behavior, physical and psychological torture. At one point, a hand written note say "Here, Heinfroth is wrong", implying Heinfroth is the author?

Another book is a diary "My life renewed" by "Dr. R." In short, this diary started 4 months ago and explains that Rhener was contacted by a man who wished to know more about Rhener's experiments on the human body. He learned more about the offer, and knowing he had a sickness that would end his life soon, agreed to be turned to a cerebral vampire. The diary do not explain how the transformation went. He is en route to become Heinfroth's assistant on physical pain experiments. The diary tells of his meeting with Baykur, an "uneducated person" he found "crass and offensive".

The last book is "Duties of a self respecting noble" by François de Pénible. The heroes remember meeting this author in person while in Karina. From the back cover, they learn that de Pénible's philosophy is that to know what life is about, you have to experiment suffering.

A chest is empty except a crumpled paper ... (see letter next page)

This room also contains a coffin nailed to the side of the boat (empty).

During this exploration, Van Richten suddenly falls asleep in a corner. Exigu gently wakes him. Van Richten apologize, saying he didn't really sleep last night.

Tora climbs to the crow's nest. Suddenly, while he was looking toward Dominia to check for pursuing boats, and thinking of this place, his vision suddenly changed : like if he was standing in front of the island, about a mile from it! He sees the *Mystic Moon* boat at the docks.

Concentrating on the other side, he "sees" Martira Bay, again like if he was about a mile from the docks. The city is bustling with activity.

They try *detect magic* on the crow's nest : *moderate divination* and *transmutation*.

At 5h30, they set the sails right for travel.

At 8hpm, Exigu climbs in the crow's nest and tries to "see" Dominia : he sees the *Mystic Moon* at the dock, with a few torches for lighting.

They discuss their plan. They want to attack and eliminate Heinfroth's clinic in Martira Bay. Should they talk to the police about Heinfroth and Dominia? Shall we go back to Dominia for attack?

Exigu: no, it is too difficult. I say we remove the clinic in Martira Bay, but forget landing on Dominia.

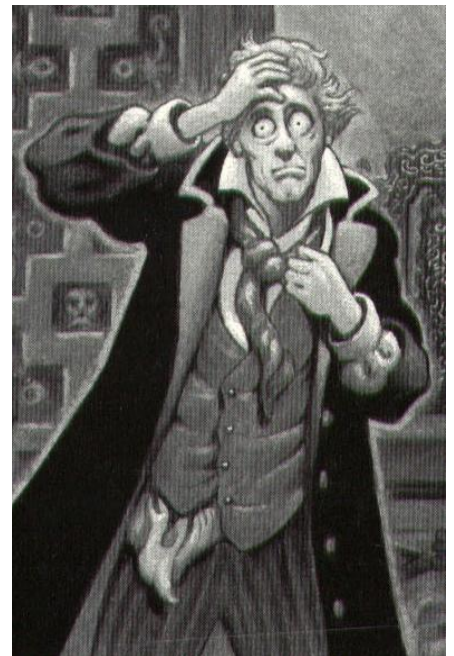
Van Richten explains he is always shaken from his Dominia experience. He says he experimented the same torture rooms during the night, but for him, Heinfroth was *always* present in the room. He now can sleep only when exhaustion takes him to sleep. He is afraid of sleeping for he makes bad dreams. He feels weak physically and in his mind too. His hands shakes constantly and he is often paranoid and untrusting.

Tora tries *lesser restoration* on Van Richten. He passes from exhausted to fatigued, but if his body feels better, his cloudy mind is not better.

At the end of their sailing period, Macrazbunare had damage from a whipping sail.

Petrak casts *magic circle against evil* on Van Richten.

They go to sleep.



Dear Dr. Rehner,

My new friend, I am so glad that you have accepted my offer to join the staff of my humble sanitorium. I'm happy to note that he transformation went well.

I would appreciate it if you could travel to Martira Bay and stay at my clinic in this city, on Dark Tower Rd.

There, my trusted captain Baykur will take you to my island on his next departure from Martira Bay. I regret to be very busy here, otherwise I would have welcomed you myself at the clinic to start discussing your ideas.

Dr Herman Mudgett, head of the clinic, will see to your comfort and needs until Captain Baykur's next arrival in Martira Bay.

With best regards,

Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth

June 8th, 748

In the morning, Exigu finds he isn't shaken anymore, but Van Richten still is.

Varadan is dazed from being seasick and goes back to sleep.

Petrak cast *restauration* on Van Richten. The old man says he feels better.

Tora climbs to the crow's nest to look at Dominia and Martira Bay - nothing special.

At noon, Varadan is feeling much better from seasickness.

They stop sailing at 8 pm. Macrazbunare and Exigu had damage when an horizontal bar hit them when the wind changed direction. Petrak cures them.

In the crow's nest, Exigu do not see the *Mystic Moon*. It has left Dominia.

June 9th, 748

They cast *lesser restauration* and *protection from curse* on Van Richten. The old man says he feels better, but he is still defeatist : "Why are we doing all this? We will soon go back to this horrible island, as prisoners..."

They cast *restauration* on another sailor. His name is Donatien.

Austizel cast *identify* at the crow's nest : *clairvoyance* but only on the two places, and it can change the boat's direction to Martira Bay or Dominia (but Austizel know he wouldn't be able to do it as you need to be somewhat attuned to it).

Discussion : Did Natalia knew that Van Richten was there? Was she supposed to bring back Van Richten? Is there anybody in Martira Bay that awaits Van Richten?

At 11ham, there are black clouds at the horizon ...

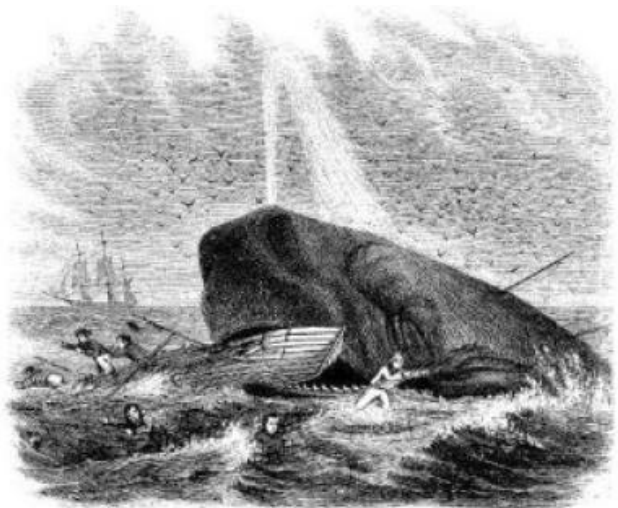
... but at noon, they see these clouds are left far behind the boat.

At 3pm, they see the tell-tale sign of a whale's breath. It is about 2 000 feet from the boat. Macrazbunare identify it as a large sperm whale. He as it can be aggressive if it once has been attacked by man. It could attack for revenge.

It reappears at 500 feet ... then sink back to the water ...

It reappears at 150 feet only. Its white back is full of scars.

The druid prepares to *summon nature's ally* : large squid.



The whale reappears at 1 000 feet, moving away from the boat ... It disappear from view.

End of the day : Macrazbunare fell into a hole while moving a rope...

Petrak to Colin - what are you going o do when you are back in Darkon?

Colin - I will go to see my family to make sure they are safe, then disappear. I don't know.

Petrak - who are the asylum staff?

Colin - I don't know where do they come from. There are about 25 staff at the asylum. I've rarely met them.

Petrak - what do you know about Dr Green?

Colin - Nothing, it might be just a rumor.

Colin adds - I was always mistreated on the Mercy and at Dominia. I was hired as a cabin boy, then they turned me into a vampire. You know their plan was for me to infiltrate your escaping group, then making sure your escape failed? That is why they are probably very surprised that you succeeded your escape! But they probably guessed by now that I'm a turncoat.

They go to sleep, while some of them are on watch.

June 10th, 748

At 2h20 am, Van Richten awakes the other heroes. "I don't see Exigu on the bridge, and I think we are changing course!"

They get up and move to the bridge. There they see two asylum staff member, one at the crow's nest, the other at the wheel. Suddenly, Petrak, Varadan and Colin are affected by a *despair* spell. Macrazbunare throws a *magic missile* at the vampire at the wheel. This vampire concentrates on Austizel, who shakes off the mind control effect. Varadan turns into hybrid form.

Exigu throws three sling bullets at Varadan!

Petrak cast *magic circle against evil*. Van Richten fires a crossbow bolt at the one at the wheel (miss). Colin turns into an albatross and starts flying toward the crow's nest.

Austizel cast *haste* on the heroes. Another *despair* falls on the heroes. Mac fires two *scorching rays* at the one at the wheel, who turns into gas! This gaseous form moves toward the cargo.

Varadan climbs to the crow's nest. The vampire there tries a *lullaby* but Varadan fights its effect. Exigu fires an arrow at Tora!

Colin is now at the crow's nest. He transforms and flanks the vampire there, with Varadan.

Austizel launches a *magic missile* at the vampire.

Then a green monstrosity appears and disappears quickly!
This aberration has many eyes, mouth and tentacles!



At this sight, Exigu, Tora and Petrak panic and run to the farthest side of the boat.

Macrazbunare throws another *magic missile* at the vampire in the crow's nest. It turns to gas!

The green tentacled monster appear in front of Van Richten and it strikes twice! Austizel launches a *magic missile* at it, then Macrazbunare its it with a *scorching ray*. Varadan jumps down and attacks the monster.

Austizel throws a *lightning bolt* at the monster.

Moments later, it vanishes from view! The heroes nearby try to it but it miss.

Van Richten says "That's the thing that was in my cell the other night. I recognize the noise it makes."

Macrazbunare casts *flame blade* and *haste*. Austizel cast *mirror image*. The other heroes pass everywhere on the bridge, hoping to bump on something, without finding this *thing* ... Is it gone?

The *Mercy* is now floating in silence on the water, and he heroes watch in all directions, wondering what will come next ...