

GAME SESSION SEVENTY-NINE: BAD SLEEP - 6

(played Sept 3rd, 2017)

DM note for Bleak House, part 2, the Martira Bay part:

First, I removed Metus's return (I always found quite over the top the idea that HE was back to torment VR as well as Mme Radanovich. Then, considering this, I found quite silly that after being brought back, he was a quiet established clinic curator in Martira Bay!). Nope, doesn't work for me.

So Metus' role in the Martira Bay clinic is replaced by Mudgett, a sinister cerebral vamp pawn of Heinfroth, of course collaborating with Dominia to send patients there. Added two cerebral vamp/ghoul nurses to boost this encounter (one is named Ratched, heh heh ;))

I removed the limbless vistani Thinker (a very silly idea IMHO). So I ended removing level 2 and 3 of the "dark tower" clinic.

And no, the clinic is NOT named the Black Tower :)

Overall, that second part was a lot of fun. I added an street ambush by cerebral vampires to add pressure.

Game starts with player discussion - should we go back to Dominia to finish the job? Are we powerful enough to finish the job?

June 10th, 748, 2h30 am

The battle has just finished and the monstrous tentacled creature has just vanished...

Tora tries his *ghostsight* on the boat and in the area surrounding the boat to spy on eventual lurkers in the ether : nothing. But he sees a phantom caravel about half a mile from the boat! it is sailing parallel to the *Mercy*, at the same speed. Tora watches it for a few minutes. He is the only one able to see it.

DM note: guess who's watching?

Colin is very worried : it is a bad news that the vampire changed the course of the *Mercy* to go back to Dominia. He explains that one has to be attuned to the magical powers of the boat to be able to make it change course, and that he was never attuned to the *Mercy*! He explains that Captain Howe never saw the use of attuning Colin... Colin says he can't change the course of the boat, and that none of the heroes can. They have a problem!

The other heroes want to go back in the cargo to slay the two vampires that went there after being killed and transformed to *gaseous form* (end of last session). Colin tells them they have until next sunset before they reform, so that they do not need to rush to get there and slay the resting vampires now.



They go to sleep at 3h30 am, while some stay awake to guard the boat.

Austizel notices that Van Richten has an agitated sleep. After he did shout in his sleep, Van Richten stays awake, eyes opened in the dark.

In the morning, Tora tries *ghostsight* again but the phantom ship isn't seen.

Van Richten is exhausted.

Macrazbunare climbs to the crow's nest and tries to change to boat's direction, and nothing happens.

Tora uses *ghostsight* in the cargo, where there are many coffins floating in dark waters. He sees people *inside* the coffins! They are in panicked state, as sometimes rats entering the coffins to viciously bite them. These prisoners get water only once per day : a ladleful of water is thrown through an opening near the face. Some do not catch a portion of it and are dying of thirst during the next day. They get gruel by the same opening but most of it falls to the side of their face. Some went crazy from that torment and they are ripping off their hairs on the head. Tora feels a huge wave of anguish and panic. He gets to control his emotions



DM note: successful horror check. You notice I sometimes stretch the ghostsight when I think it is useful to give PCs information.

Tora then *detect undead*, and pinpoints the two coffin where he thinks are the cerebral vampires they fought last night. Tora and Varadan hauls the first coffin upstairs, and open it. It is difficult to open as there are many large nails keeping it closed. It contains the vampire they knew as traitor patient 2g!

Colin says that perhaps there is a way to control 2g and have him change the course of the *Mercy*? The other refuse and the vampire is slain with a stick through his heart. The vampire then turns to dust under the sun, leaving only his clothes. Macrazbunare searches in it, and finds a scroll case. In it, a letter (see next page).

The next coffin is brought up, and the vampire slain in the same manner. He also has a copy of the letter to Lady Kazandra in a scroll case, and a silver whistle. They throw the vampire dust in the wind, destroying the vampires for good.

Thinking they could do a boat, and to make sure they left nothing behind, they carry all coffins on the sun deck and open them. Many carry disgusting stains from dried gruels, blood and nails, urine and feces... Some have disturbing scratch marks in the wood as well.

Meanwhile, Petrak casts *restauration* on another rescued sailor. His name is Lambert.

At the heroes' urging, Colin climb up the mast and tries to change to *Mercy*'s direction... and it works!. "But they told me I couldn't do it!?", mumbles a frustrated and angry Colin.

Dear Lady Kazandra,

It is with a heavy heart that I must report the theft of my caravel, the Mercy. Patients from the asylum have recently escaped with this boat and I have reasons to believe they are headed to Martira Bay. I have enclosed sketches of them in hopes that they will be recovered.

Consider them dangerous. I would pay a nice sum of money for their recovery to Dominia island.

Your obedient servant,

Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth

Benefactor of the Dark Tower Rd Charity Asylum clinic in Martira Bay, and Curator of the Dominia Asylum

DM note : as for the asylum entrance gate, you just need to be a cerebral vampire to control the boat, no "attuning" as the other vampires lied to Colin. Colin had many reasons to hate the other vampires ;)

They put the sail on and tries to get speed.

Around 6pm, they enter a patch of cold fog. "We are getting closer to Lamordia", says Colin.

They stop their sailor's work at 10 pm to go to sleep. Tora, with *ghostsight*, sees the phantom caravel, about a mile from them, but he quickly loses sight of it through the cold fog.

June 11th, 748, morning

Next morning, Van Richten is again exhausted, and Tora casts a *lesser restoration* on him. Petrak tries *Epiphany* on Van Richten. After both spells, he feels better.

Petrak casts *restauration* on another rescued sailor. His name is Gerard.

They set the sails for the day.

At 5pm, after these days spend drifting through thick, swirling mists, the *Mercy* suddenly draws clear of the seemingly interminable fog. In less than a minute, they find themselves adrift upon an azure sea, that shimmers under a warm, friendly sun! A mile and a half in front of them, they see the sprawling city of Martira Bay. Looking behind, curiously, even the faintest traces of fog seem to have burned away...

There are many boats in the Martira Bay harbor, and on the water, but one they can't miss is a large grey war boat coming right at them! It is three times the size of the *Mercy* but much faster. I bears the Darkon pavilion.

While they are reading the name of the war boat (the famous darkonese war boat *Dominance*), they notice an albatross flying away from the *Mercy* ... Colin is fleeing!

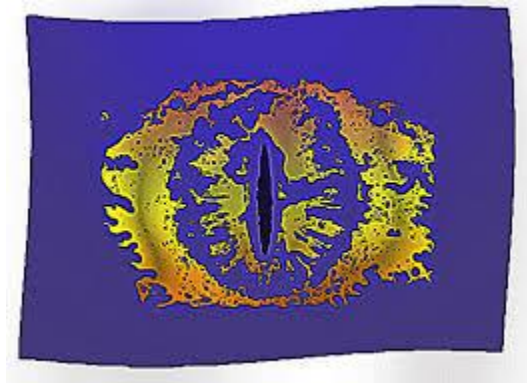
The *Dominance* gets closer and the heroes can see many soldiers on the deck, looking in their direction. One has a megaphone and he yells "lower your sails!". The heroes lower the *Mercy's* sails.

Soon after, the *Dominance* boards the *Mercy*. They see eight ballistas pointed at them, as well as 30 soldiers with crossbows. An elf - the one who had the megaphone - says "Come aboard without any resistance, we have questions to ask you. Get everybody onboard."

The heroes comply, and when all heroes and rescued sailors are onboard, the elf asks "Where is Captain Baykur?"

Varadan says "He is not here. We need to speak to Lady Kazendra."

Then the elf sees Van Richten and he is surprised, "Rudolph! You, here!"



Van Richten smiles and says "Mister Ray, what good winds brings you here, if I may ask?" The elf smiles back, as if an old joke was told that only these two knew the meaning.

The elf tells the other *Dominance* officers "Ok, I know him well. This is surely some kind of misunderstanding, that we will clarify quickly."

One officer with a wooden box tells the heroes "put your weapons in this box", but the elf tells him there is no need for this. The officer shrugs and walks away.

The *Dominance* is getting closer to the harbor, with the *Mercy* in tow.

An officer escorts the heroes, the rescued sailors and Van Richten to Martira Bay's constabulary, where they are put in a cell. "I will make it quick for you to be released", promises the elf.

The heroes remember this is where they once did deliver Virevan the ravaging werewolf (session 46)...

At 7pm, the elf is back. "We have a problem, the boat has been declared stolen by its owner. I'm sure it's a misunderstanding, but your exit from here will need to be cleared by Lady Kazandra herself. I will do a report for her : what do have to say to explain your situation?"

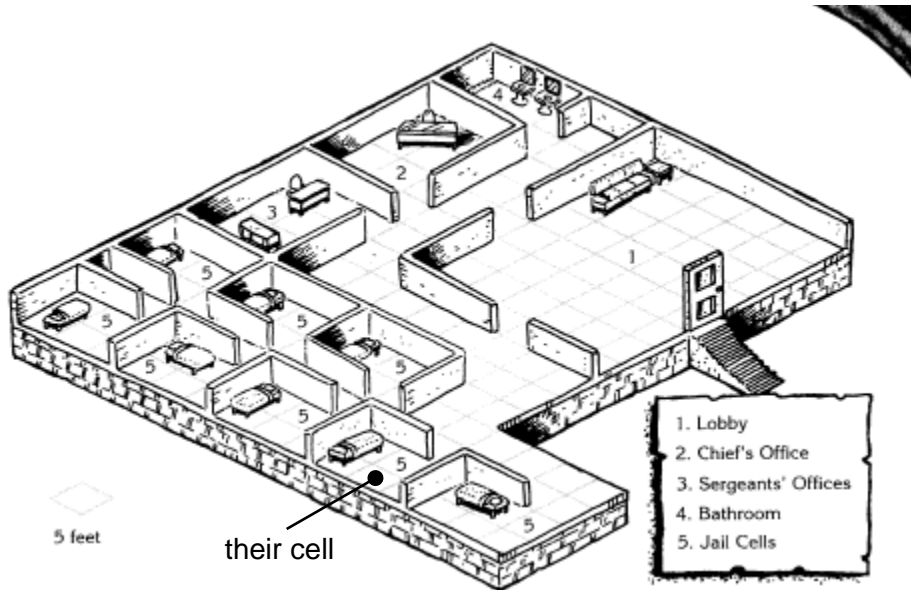
Van Richten explains he was referred to Dominia through the Mordent asylum, by a person of trust. "But the island of Dominia is a nest of dreadful vampires! They did many horrible experiments on me, to drive me crazy!"

Tora adds that they went to Dominia at the request of people close to Van Richten. They took the *Mercy*, and then rescued these sailors while pointing at the six sailors with them. When they arrived in Dominia to visit Van Richten, they were captured too and made prisoners. They had to wear masks. They found Van Richten and escaped. The asylum was making horrible mental experiments at night. There are may be 40 vampires on the island. We can't see them in a mirror. He shows to Alanik Ray the visible feeding marks on the sailor's head.

The sailors explain they were rescued twice, once when there ship was wrecked at sea, then by the heroes who rescued them from becoming vampire food.

Tora adds they did not steal the boat, it was a borrowing to escape the horrible place. "We killed six vampires to get to the boat, and two more attacked us during the trip."

Ray seems uneasy. "The Dominia asylum clinic has a very good reputation in town, with its Martira Bay hospital for the needy. I also note that you did eliminate six persons to get control of the boat, of which notable Captain Baykur, and two more during the trip. I understand you say they were vampires, and there are proofs of biting, but we'll have to check these claims in details. Let me talk to Lady Kazandra." He leaves.



At 8h45 pm, they see Lady Kazandra entering the police station. She walks directly to her office (area #3 on the map).

At 9h15, a drunken man is brought to the police station by officers, claiming he was falsely accused of a crime. Kazandra has him searched, and when they found nothing, had him thrown back to the street.

At 9h30, they see a woman entering the station. They recognize her as the nurse who welcomed the heroes at the Martira Bay asylum clinic! She talks to a policeman and then approaches the cell accompanied with an officer, "yes, it's them!", as she sees the heroes. She moves back to the lobby and she speaks with the officer a few minutes more, and then she leaves. The heroes wonder what did she told them...



June 12th, 748

At 3h30 am, Lady Kazandra announce that "she is going to the port to watch the action there". The heroes sees her leaving with 3 policemen. Exigu takes this opportunity to watch Lady Kazandra with a small mirror... there is no reflection of her!

What makes the heroes uneasy is that Lady Kazandra said that she was leaving a little too loud, as if she wanted the heroes to overhear... What should we do, they ask themselves? Is it an invitation to leave? A trap?

At 4h am, a guard is back, saying that "Lady Kazandra wants all troops with her at the port", and he leaves with 8 policemen.

Exigu checks the lock, and it seems easy to open.

The sailors say that they want to leave too. Their plan is to go back to Port A Lucine by their own means.

Petrak cast a *silence* spell, Exigu unlocks the door, and they walk outside to the street, without meeting anyone!

In the street, they wonder where to go, when Exigu hears a quiet shouting, "Hey, nice boy, come here!" They go in this direction to find Euphémia is waiting for them! (session 48).

"Let's get away from here, follow me", she says, and she leads the group in alleys and dark passages between houses.

At an intersection, a sailor says "OK, I know where we are, we will go to an inn nearby", and they part from the rescued sailors, after they thanked the heroes again from saving them from the vampires.

Euphémia brings the heroes to Chez Rufus Inn. This Inn occupies two floors (bar and rooms) and she leads them to the third floor by a stairway in the back of the inn.

"We were told to get you in the street and bring you here", she says.

"Who did that?", ask the heroes.

"That should answer your question", and she gives Exigu a folded paper :



DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO
AGAINST H'S ASYLUM IN
MARTIRA BAY. YOU HAVE A
WEEK.

REPORT YOURSELF BEFORE
A WEEK HAS PASSED.

LADY K

Euphémia adds that the halflings know the clinic / asylum in town isn't all for goodness. Some of the people brought there are never seen back.

Surely, Lady Kazandra knew it too, and while she can't do anything officially, she "hired" the heroes to do the job for them.

They discuss their plan to attack the Martira Bay asylum clinic this very night!

At one point, they look back at Lady Kazandra's message to see all ink has disappeared from it ...

DM note : at one point of the game, I went on their side of the table as if to reread the message on a folded paper, but while their attention was elsewhere, I used a little trick of hand to substitute a folded blank message instead. When they looked at it, they found it was now blank! :)

At 4am, Euphémia leads them to the asylum clinic. On the way, she again flirts with Exigu.

There, she opens a deck of card, and gives one to Exigu. "This is magical, put this on a wall and it will make a temporary door". Then she walks back to the inn.

DM note: Deck of Doors, Pathfinder. Useable once each card. Makes a "door" for 10 rounds.

Euphémia brings back Macrazbunare's wolf, Exigu's riding dog, and Van Richten, who do not want to be adventuring anymore.

MacRazbunare turns into a bird and circles the building. The asylum clinic is a large 110' x 30' rectangle structure made of stone, without any window. The only opening is the front door.

Exigu climbs on the roof, to find a flat roof with large glass bubbles for lighting the inside during the day, at every 15 feet. The rest of the group joins him on the roof.

They cast *knock* on one of the bubbles, and they are able to remove it. The glass bubble is thick and very heavy. Looking inside, they see some kind of parlor, with an extinguished fireplace and comfortable divans and armchairs. The door is closed.

They all silently climb down. It is all dark, so they open a light. They are in a small room, with a closed door.

On a table, they see a crystal decanter of crimson blood-like liquid!

Then, they hear through the door a ghastly cry of pain from a woman : "Noooo! Not my daughter!"

The heroes open the door to a darkened corridor, and then a low gurgle-like voice says "hey, what is this light?"



Exigu moves toward the voices. Tora suddenly feels panicked and frighten, but he doesn't know where this comes from. He runs away for the front door and gets hit by a disgusting bloody creature wearing a nurse uniform! There is a pool of blood at her feet...

Macrazbunare cast *resistance* on himself. Varadan lights another lantern. Austizel moves and throws a *Magic Missile* (-16) at the ghoulish nurse. Petrak moves too and casts *Spiritual Weapon* (-9) at the dreadful nurse.

Exigu hits the nurse with an arrow, without any effect. Then Petrak has a nightmarish vision, and he flees!

While he was moving, Macrazbunare hit something invisible! He stops and cast Faerie Fire on the thing : it is the green creature known as Dr Green! Varadan moves and attacks Dr Green.

Tora opens the other door while being scratched by the ghoul's bloody claws.

Austizel casts *Scorching Ray* at the nurse. She runs toward Austizel and hits him hard (-13).

In the parlor, panicked Petrak tries to climb up the rope to reach the roof, but fails his climbing try.

Two of Exigu's arrows hit Dr Green. The creature becomes visible, and Exigu is truck with fear at the sight of the horrible tentacled horror.

Then a man appears in their back! Macrazbunare feels an attempt to dominate his mind, but the wizards shrugs off the effect.

Macrazbunare launches a *Magic Missile* -18 on Dr Green. Varadan misses twice on Dr Green.

Tora is now running outside in the street...

Austizel casts *Magic Missile* (-12) on the nurse. She hits him back with a vicious bite (-8).

Then another nurse appear, from where there was a blood pool! She has more blood on her nurse uniform than the first one ... She drops an empty glass bottle (a potion?).

Petrak's *Spiritual Weapon* hits the first nurse, and she falls!

Suddenly, Exigu runs for the door after Tora! Three of the heroes are now struck with fear!

Dr Green hits Varadan (-8). The man moves toward Macrazbunare and attacks with his claws. Is he Dr Mudgett? Macrazbunare casts *Magic Missile* -20 on Dr Green. One of Varadan's attack hit Dr Green.



Tora is no longer in fear, he returns back to the asylum clinic.

Austizel casts a powerful *Lightning bolt* on Dr Green, who clearly missed his save (-37). The horrible mass of Dr Green's body falls to the floor!

The second nurse moves and claws Austizel.

In fear, Petrak tries again to climb the rope...

The vampire Doctor Mudgett tries *Dominate* on Varadan who succeeds his save. Macrazbunare cast *Magic Missile* -15 on the vampire.

Varadan transforms into an hybrid wolf creature! Meanwhile, Tora charges on the second nurse (-9).

While he was running, he saw two lifeless bodies in the lobby, the cause of all the blood on the scene. One woman, wrist tied behind her back, has a large open gap in her neck. A young girl of ten has flesh removed from her torso with horrible bite marks...

Austizel casts *Shackle* on the second nurse!

Petrak is no longer in fear, he casts *Magic Circle against evil*, and direct his *Spiritual Weapon* on the vampire (miss).

The vampire doctor tries *Dominate* on Varadan (miss).

Macrazbunare casts *Haste*, and then Varadan attacks the vampire. Tora hits the nurse in *Shackle*, three times. She yells obscenities at Tora, taunting him about the exquisite taste of the young girl.

Austizel casts *Rheumatism* on the vampire.

Exigu is not in fear anymore, and comes back to the battle scene.

The vampire tries again *Dominate* on Petrak, who succeeds his save.

Macrazbunare casts *Disrupt undead* on the vampire, then Varadan hits him three times, then Petraks finishes the vampire : it turns to *gaseous form*!

Tora kills the nurse.

Exigu comes back and locks the door with a piece of wood.

Austizel cuts the head of the slain woman and the girl, to prevent their rising as ghouls.

They follow the vampire gas form to an office, and the gas leaks through an opening in the floor. Petrak destroys the wooden floor with his mace, to see a 2 feet by two feet well. With the light, they see the well has an 80 foot depth, and then an opening.

They explore the asylum clinic to look for another opening in the ground. In a library, they see another opening in the floor. It leads to an underground room, 5 by 5, with six coffin. Tora tries *detect undead*: nothing.

They go back to the first well. They will lower Exigu in the well with a rope, while Macrazbunare accompanies him, transformed into a viper.

While Exigu is halfway in the well, something attacks the rope and cuts it! There is an invisible wind creature standing on top of the well! It attacks Tora with a powerful blow (-25). Tora invokes *lay on hand* on himself. Austizel cast his last *magic missile* (-16) and Petrak hits the creature (-14). The creature hits Tora again (-24), but Varadan finishes it moments later (-10).

DM note: an invisible stalker guardian

Meanwhile, Exigu climbs down and reaches the bottom of the well : another 2 by 2 corridor, about ten feet long, with an opening. There is a coffin inside! He opens it and slays the doctor vampire. With a rope, they pull back the vampire's body upstairs, then they put him on the roof for the sun to roast him.

They explore the rest of the building. Nothing of interest in the library, and the operation room contains mundane hospital products to treat wounds.

They go back to the 5 coffin room: they are all empty. In the office, they find another interesting letter :

M, for your info ~ this was sent to Mme R

It is with a heavy heart that I must report my failure to you.

Van Richten has escaped with his friends that I wrote about. I have enclosed sketches of them in hopes that they will be recovered.

Your obedient servant,

Daclaud Heinfroth

They watch Mudgett's corpse roast in the morning sun and they leave.

At 6am, they are back at Chez Rufus.

They send a message to Lady Kazandra through Euphémia : "We cleaned the asylum clinic. There are cadavers in the hall. We could not save a woman and her daughter. There was also a green aberration creature, with two ghouls and a vampire. All eliminated".

Euphémia tells the heroes that Van Richten is sleeping, drunken on brandy.

The heroes sleep during the day.

At 6pm, Van Richten is awake. He feels bad about being drunk, "but it's the only way to get rid of this dream".

After being asked by the heroes, he tells about his dreams...

"Always my dream is the same", says a shivering Van Richten. "It begins as I wander through rolling clouds of mists. Shadowy figures move by me. I know they are friends, although I cannot see them clearly enough to make out their features. Knowing they are friends, however, I am also aware that they mean me harm! Because of this, I move away from them and deeper into the mists."

"Before long, a shape rises before me. It is a great house. Drawing nearer, I recognize it as the house I grew up in... the ancestral estate of my family in Rivalis. Behind me, the shadows draw closer and I am forced toward the manor. Only then do I see there is no ground here. The house stands alone in the mists, as if it was crafted from them ..."

"As I approach the house, I see two figures standing in one of the windows. At first I don't recognize them, but then I see it is Ingrid, my wife, and my beloved son, Erasmus. They beckon to me, and I know that I must hurry to save them from some great menace. I reach the door and, finding it locked, pound my fists upon it. At first, there is no response, but after a moment, the portal swings open before me."

"To my horror, I am then confronted by the master of this place. He is a dark and terrible creature with features so twisted with evil as to be nothing short of bestial. As I pull away from this creature, I recognize that I look upon none other than myself!"

"It is then that the dream ends and I awake screaming. Please forgive me, I didn't mean so to disturb the sleep of my friends..."

Varadan: "may be we should all go there at your ancestral house?"

Van Richten: "If you think that could exorcise my dreams, then yes"

Macrazbunare "What is the Madam R from the letters we found at the clinic?"

Van Richten "Unless it is someone I do not know, or who use a pseudonym, the only one I see is Madame Radanavich? But she died 30 years ago. And I did reconcile from her curse with her nephew?"

Follows a short story of his life :

I was born in Rivalis in Darkon in 671. I took medicine at the University of Il Aluk. In 688, the same year I finished my study, the Crimson Death spreads across Darkon; it claims my great aunt Helga, despite my efforts. I am even more driven into my medical studies and focused on herbal remedies.

I married my childhood sweetheart, Ingrid in 691 and our son Erasmus is born in 692.

I was spurred into a life of monster hunting about fifty years ago, when I met the Radanavich tribe in 706. They came to me and asked me to save a young vistani boy who was mortally ill - no mortal powers could save him. When he died, their grief turned to rage and they kidnapped my son Erasmus. They sold him to Baron Metus. Metus turned Erasmus into a vampire groom and I was forced to slay my son. You have no idea how hard that is for a father. But worse was to come: in perverse retaliation, Metus also horribly killed my wife, Ingrid.

I eventually slew Metus, with the knowledge Erasmus gave me in his last hours, starting my career of hunting evil. I wanted to spare other families the pain I had suffered.

And then, chasing the Radanavich during the night, found myself surrounded by shambling dead creatures. For reasons I never understood, an amused Azalin lent me a small army of undead, and with this help I destroyed the Radanavich tribe, all but one member (Arturi Radanavich). Madame Radanavich then cursed me, although I did not realize it until the end of my career. What she said with her dying breath was: "Live you always among monsters, and see everyone you love beneath their claws!", but I knew nothing about curses back then.

Unable to live with the memories in Richten Haus, I moved to Mordentshire never to return. There I ran an herbalist shop, as well as adventuring. I lost many friends during the war against evil.

In 741, I was depressed. I did consult with the famous souragnian diviner, Inarin Alster and I realized I had been laboring under a curse all these years. Then, I met Arturi Radanavich, who was only a young boy in 706. We became friends. I spent a year with Arturi Radanavich studying the Vistani. At the end, I reconciliated with Radanavich. I then returned to Souragne, and Inarin Alster told me the curse had been revoked.

It is only moments after the end of this story that Euphémia brings large plates of food from the inn downstairs. "I did bring your message to the police station this morning. We learned that the clinic is closed until further notice. Officially, there was an outbreak of cholera that explains why the clinic is closed. There are two guards at the front, forbidding people to enter."

At 10pm, they exit through the back stairway, and go for the Martira Bay police station. There, they ask an officer "We come to see Lady Kazandra, we are friends of Van Richten". The officer enters an office.

After a minute he comes out with this message: "Lady Kazandra is too busy to meet you, but she wants me to tell you that she appreciated your work of yesterday. Have a good night", and he leaves them in the lobby.

They exit to the street.

GAME SESSION EIGHTY: BAD SLEEP - 7

(played Sept 17th, 2017)

June 12th, 748, 10h30 pm

In front of the police station, the heroes discuss what they should do next.

There is a drunkard a couple of houses down, in the shadows, who suddenly yells "Come get me in the prison, I do not want to sleep outside!"

The heroes ignore him and continue discussing.

"Come and get me, I am drunk!"

MacRazbunare enters a bar to buy alcohol to silence the man, and meanwhile Tora approaches the drunkard to talk to him ...

But swiftly, the drunkard gets up on his feet and cast a spell! *Solid Fog*! Austizel and Varadan are stuck in it, and it separates the group.

Three cerebral vampires appear from an alley! They wear the asylum clothing. One of them successfully controls Tora, who charges on Petrak (-11).

Macrazbunare, in the bar, hears shouting outside. He casts *Greater Magic Fang*.

Exigu suddenly appears controlled too!

Petrak casts *Magic Circle against evil*, to protect Tora from mind controls.

The evil wizard casts *Scorching Ray* on Petrak (3 rays : X/-19/-19)

Exigu moves and launches one arrow at Macrazbunare (-4).

Austizel exits the fog and casts *Haste* on Tora and Petrak

Varadan exits the fog and transform to hybrid lycanthrope.

The trio of vampires surround Petrak and attacks him : Petrak falls to the ground!

Tora hits a vampire(-8/-17/x).

Macrazbunare sends an healing spell to Petrak through his wolf (+14 hp).

Two more vampires appear in the street (those that controls Exigu). They try their *lullaby* at Macrazbunare, who falls asleep.

Petrak retreats and heal himself (+38).

The evil wizard casts *Magic Missile* (-15) at Petrak.

Exigu attacks Macrazbunare with three arrows (-17), and it awakens the druid.

Austizel casts *Shackle* on a vampire.

The battle continues between Varadan, Tora and the other two vampires.

Macrazbunare cast *Dominate Animal* on Patu (Exigu's riding dog), and makes him move toward Petrak (so that Exigu could enter the circle of protection). The druid's wolf also kills a vampire, who turns to gas.

The wizard casts another *Magic Missile* (-14) on Petrak, an retreats in the alley.

Tora moves toward the alley where the wizard left, but as soon as he exists the circle around Petrak, he gets controlled again : he drops his sword and prepares his bow, menacing Petrak.

Two vampires turn to gas and flee.

They hear the wizard cast a spell, which they identify as *Dimension Door*.

Exigu and Varadan attacks the remaining vampire, who falls to gas. Simultaneously, Tora regain control of himself.

They see two large black albatross fly away from the scene.

They follow the gaseous form through the city, through a shady part near the port (brothels and bars). They follow the gas to the port, where they watch helplessly the gas flowing over water off the coast.

Where is the Mercy? Is it off the coast? Why did Kazandra released the ship?

They go back at Chez Rufus inn. Euphémia complains about Van Richten : "people heard his screams from the inn and complained."

Euphémia returns to her bar.

The heroes do healing and sleep.

June 13th, 748

During the night, they see Austizel has some kind of fever, he is sweating. In the morning, he lost his stamina and dexterity.

Euphémia brings them breakfast, and some news : "It was announced that Mudgett, and the nurses Ratched and Edna are dead from cholera. A delegation from Dominia, led by Dr Black, reclaimed the *Mercy* from port authorities. It left the port around 9h pm yesterday."

"But more importantly, your head has a price on it. We received this message through the usual guild means. It has the same sketches of you as those you found on the boat, with the letters. 50 000 gp, dead or alive, not bad. I should spike your drinks and claim it", and she laughs.

"It has a duration of 15 days, which is normal. The point of contact to get the prize is a postal box at the Red Sails Inn near the port. It is a rough inn. But many people on the street will look for you! And last, I think you should be worried, the Red Vardo Traders are in town."

They decide that now is a good time to leave Martira Bay. Euphémia suggests an enclosed carriage, to get the heroes out of the city.

While they wait, they cast *remove disease* on Austizel, to remove the ghoul fever.

Van Richten is again fatigued physically and mentally. Since magic isn't working, they think the effect on Van Richten is supernatural.

At 3 pm, Euphémia is back. She bought a carriage (250 gp, plus 50 gp to drive the carriage herself, which the heroes agree to pay her).

At 3h30, they are out of town on Martira Highway, in a farm area. Euphémia stops, and let them go. She salutes them and walks back to town.

They pursue their trip and find the road enclosed in an old forest. They stop at 7 pm, and get to sleep. At 10h30, Austizel feels he is observed from magic divination ... It last a minute then stops.

June 14th, 748

At 1 am, Van Richten awakens in screams. He apologizes.

At 4am, a man passes on a horse at full speed, coming from Il Aluk to Martira Bay. A messenger?

They leave at 7 am. Just a mile after they left, they see a corpse on the side of the road. The man's face is swollen and pus-covered, like by a horrible disease. It appears the person had clawed itself from pain; some tufts of his hair are still in one hand.

Petrak buries him and makes small ceremony for the peace of his soul.

They get to a place where on the northern side of the road, there is a swamp known as the Boglands, and the same old forest on the south side of the road, the Forest of Shadows.

Macrazbunare look for Spumae Vitae tainted water, and is able to find some in about an hour search. They have 4 doses each (1 liter total, or 32 ounces).

Back to the road. At 3 pm, the forest suddenly turns to dried dead trees, and everything is gray, dusty like if covered with ashes...



Van Richten tells them they are approaching Il Aluk, the Slain City. Then they approach a destroyed village, made mostly by farms. Everything is dead.

Van Richten : years ago, Azalin turned his attention to his most terrible creation, the Doomsday Device, a soul draining artefact that channeled this energy into Azalin to transform him into a being of pure energy. Azalin wanted to travel away from this world with his new power.

Fortunately, the device annihilated itself during that fateful day the darkonese call the Requiem.

Last year, Azalin announced that he would appear himself in Il Aluk to perform the Darkest Night religious ceremony. On that day, many people travelled from outside for a chance to see their king in the flesh - so to speak, but normal people do not know what we know.

Before that day, Il Aluk was the wealthiest and most powerful city in Darkon, if not the whole world. Its university was famous. That is where I studied medicine.

On December 21st, year 747, on winter solstice, at the stroke of midnight, Azalin sealed himself in the device and activated it.

The ensuing wave of energy expanded in every direction, reaching every borders of Darkon. That moment, every darkonian heard something in his hear : "Necropolis" and moments later, "City of the Dead". I believe those are the last thoughts Azalin had.

Because he has disappeared since. Nobody ever saw him. But worse is that all inhabitants of Il Aluk also died the same day. It is estimated that more than 30 000 persons died that day!

The city is now in ruins. There is a field of death over the city, called the Shroud. All that went into the city died : those that wanted to see what happened, or went to look after friends or relatives, all dead. It seems that after passing this Shroud, you drop dead. The day after, the corpse has disappeared... After a day being dead, you turn to undead. If you look at the city from afar, you see people moving in the city. There are strange lights at night.

And at least one structure has been reconstructed : the Grim Fastness - a prison and the headquarters of the Kargat, Azalin's secret police. Deep within its foundation, the Grim Fastness also contained the Black Vault, where Azalin stored monstrous artefacts.

Today, the only know way to enter the city - and stay alive - is to wear an amaranth bloom on your skin. This flower protects you. Trouble is, this flower is only found in the Shroud...

So Azalin has vanished, and those that went near Castle Avernus (Azalin's castle) say it looks abandoned. But there were few scenes of anarchy, as barons and local police make sure the laws are still obeyed while their leader is away.

And since then, Il Aluk is known as Necropolis. There are things that sometimes exists the city. There are rumors of three Death's Horsemen named Famine, Pestilence, and War. They sometimes exits the city to fool Azalin's return, and to execute plans we do not understand. The heroes remember meeting one of them in Mordent, for a brief but deadly encounter.

A little bit closer, they have a good view point from the top of a hill to the slain city :



Van Richten points them the Grim Fastness building. It is a dark sinister building, that seem wrong to the living eye, like an horror you see in dreams, and simply looking at it is enough to make eyes water in discomfort. Smiling at the heroes' reaction, he says it was like that before the Requiem.

Just before reaching the village of Despondia, they see the trail now turns south to the Vuchar, which is easily crossed with the carriage, to reach the road to Rivalis.

At 9 pm, they reach the Cracked Chalice Inn. It is at the crossroad between the road from Il Aluk to Rivalis, and another road going south to Nartok, and then later Falkovnia.

Quiet meal and sleep. The only disturbing thing is a rumor heard that "another Falkovnian invasion was inevitable, given - He - is not there anymore to defend Darkon."

June 15th, 748

Around noon, they are in front of Rivalis. It is a green city of small hills and half underground halfling houses. The human houses and the inns are usual buildings we see elsewhere. All streets are tree-lined streets bordered by cozy, rounded cottages. They see larger houses in the periphery of the town.

Rivalis's most notable landmark is the gargantuan greenhouse in the middle of the town, called the Crystal Garden, where the public can see rare and exotic plants throughout the year for a few coppers.

At the Crystal Garden, Van Richten asks for the direction to the office of Gayle Tallgallows. She is a botanical expert that works for the garden since 40 years. She is very happy to see Van Richten and they talk like old friends.

He introduce the heroes to her as "good friends".

DM note: knowing the players know about the curse over VR's friends, I always have VR say that, to which the players reply "no, barely an acquaintance" ;)

She look at them for a moment without talking, and then she says "well, maybe you arrive at a good time. The Garden needs people like you now."

She explains that "strange, even monstrous plants have sprouted in the Crystal Garden since, well, the event known as the Requiem. The gardeners scrutinize the flowerbeds everyday, in fear that a true horror could emerge in an overlooked corner. We theorize that these new plants are mutations from the dark energies of the Requiem. We had mandragoras, assassin vines and even a Death Head tree, but we were able to uproot them before it was too late.

"This morning, a gardener found the Sri Raji section, or the main jungle room as public know it, overgrown, out of control. While he was estimating what needed to be done, his dog never came back from the section, after the gardener heard a howl of pain. He called his dog, but it never came back. This section is closed today, of course. Can you take a look at it? But please, do not damage the greenhouse!



GAME SESSION 81: BAD SLEEP - 8

(played January 21, 2018. Martin, Jean-Guy, Jean-François, Yvon, Austizel played by Martin and Exigu by Jean-Guy)

Petrak and Varadan get a new level : +1 cleric and +1 monk.

June 15th, 748 1pm

They speak with the gardener who lost his dog. His name is Witness Ewing. "Today, the greenhouse is closed. So I was making my usual round to uproot the unwanted grass and plants, and my dog let a painful yelp. I called him back, but it did not answer. I think I heard something big, or heavy, moving in the room, so I went away and locked all doors."

They get a plan of the Crystal Garden - see next page.

They look at the main Sri Raji room from outside the greenhouse : this large room host a very dense jungle, with three levels of trees - many bushes at ground level, feeble 10' to 15' trees, and a dense canopy of large trees over it all (25'-30' above ground). Visibility outside the path is expected to be low, about 20' maximum?

They cast protection spells before entering : *Mage Armor* (Austizel on himself), *Longstrider* (Exigu on himself), *Barkskin* (MacRazbunare sur on himself), *Greater Magic Weapon* (Petrak on Exigu's bow), *Greater Magic Fang* (MacRazbunare on Varadan), *Magic Vestment* (Petrak, on Tora's armor).

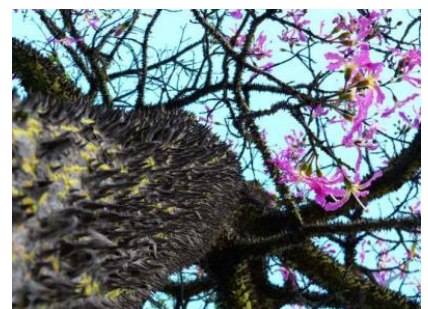
They enter the greenhouse through a backdoor ("authorized personnel only"), and it leads directly to the Sri Raji room. Ewing will wait outside.

When they enter, they feel the ground is moving, after a low rumble from the earth. They go back to Ewing, who tell them it's an illusion of volcano. They ask if something else is illusionary (*DM note: a good question if there is one!*), and Ewing tells them the large snakes and the giant frogs are not real. All the rest is real.

When they reach the main path, they see an exhibit on carnivorous pitcher plants. Then a marsh with large snakes seen in it. Knowing it's an illusion, they stop to disbelieve the image, but only Austizel is able to see through the illusion! It Is high quality!

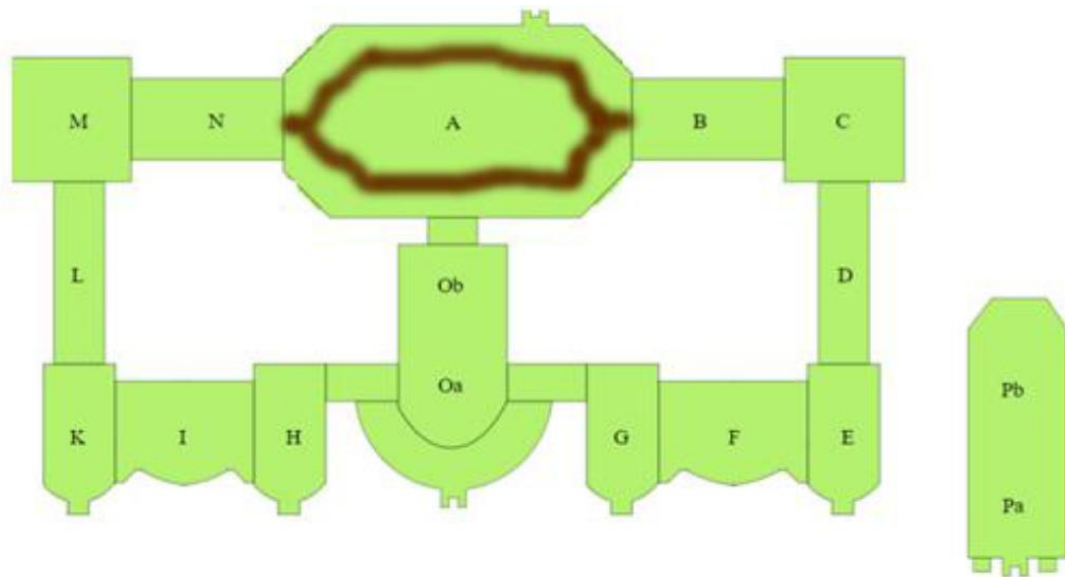


They resume the exploration of the room, and while he was reading about a curious tree with wooden spines all over it, suddenly Exigu is hit twice in the back, by two bolts, like those thrown by a crossbow! (-32 hp!)



Welcome to Rivalis' Crystal Garden!

Here's a map to guide you.



A Sri Raji room (jungle)

B Markovia's jungle

C Darkon - west

D Har'Alkir's sands

E Soutragne' marshes

F Keening's desolation

G Falkovnia

H Dorca's Ivy

I Barovia's Winters

K Invidia's maple

L Mordent's marshes

M Darkon - east

N Forlorn room (mushrooms)

Oa Visitors center

Ob Restrooms

Pa Pb Private, no access

MacRazbunare notices that there is a vegetable line attached to the bolts, like a brownish leatherish liana. He also notice the stakes are growing barbs and roots quickly in Exigu's back! Exigu feels the pain!

MarRazbunare also notices with discomfort that both bolt are very close to Exigu's heart, like if it was their first target ...

Varadan turns to hybrid and moves toward Exigu.

Exigu runs around the tree in front of him to make sure the lianas won't pull him toward the monster.

Macrazbunare cast *Haste* and tells about the lianas (knowledge nature) : the bolts should be removed quickly and a heal check is necessary to remove them.

Petrak moves and heals Exigu (+33).

Austizel moves and cast shield. Tora moves toward the still unseen monster, and he is attacked by two bolts! One of them hits (-17).

Exigu feels drained from the bolts in his back (-5 points Dex et -7 Constitution)!

Varadan moves in the jungle and sees a monstrous tree. It is about 12' high and the higher branches have numerous bolts waiting to be launched. From these branches, four lianas run to the ground toward the area where the rest of the heroes are. It is surrounded by exposed roots, like those of a mangrove tree. He thinks those roots can drag the plant and make it move.

Exigu gets his war razor and cut through a vine (-4) but it is not cut completely. Petrak hits the same vine (-5/-8) and it falls to the ground, cut. His third attack misses on the second vine. MacRazbunare's wolf bites the last vine (-5).

Petrak also notices the barbs on the bolts are growing in size, wooden tendrils expanding in the flesh to replace it, now covering an area in Exigu's back about 3 inches around them.

Macrazbunare cuts the second vine attached to Exigu.

Suddenly, a large frog jumps from the pond and lands menacingly near Austizel! Austizel ignores it, as he thinks this is an illusion. Austizel runs toward Varadan and is able to see the monstrous plant : *Magic Missile* (-13).

Tora cuts the vine to his bolt.

The monstrous plant misses its attacks on Varadan. Varadan hits back with his fists but notices the plant only takes part of the damage (damage reduction 5. -8 (-3) /-10 (-5) / X).

Petrak casts *prayer*.



Macrazbunare tries a healing check on Exigu to remove a bolt but he fails (Exigu takes damage from the attempt (-4)).

Those able to see notices the giant frog turned to a floating sign about legends of large frogs in isolated ponds and marshes...

Austizel cast *Scorching ray* on the plant (-14/-17), but it appears it did much more fire damage! It is vulnerable to fire!

The plant again misses Varadan, who replies with his fists (-7(-2)/-12(-7)/-12(-7)). Exigu moves and throws an arrow at the plant, -10 (-5).

Petrak casts *Produce Flame* (-10) and the monstrous plant withers and dies.

DM note: a Stakewood tree, slightly modified to make it smaller in size. The image used is the Nightwist monster (MMIII). The Stakewood tree is a cool [new monster](#) by JW Mangrum, very effective in a setting where visibility is low (the monster has tremorsense 120' and heatsense 120', while the PCs see nothing from this distance!).

One slight bug is the name Stakewood - it attacks warm blooded creatures only, but it is known for having staked vampires as well, thus their name. Vampires are warm blooded? Or was it vampires that just fed? Hmm...

Soundtrack I used as soon as they entered the Sri Raji room - Rain Sound and Rainforest Animals Sound (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8myYyMgIfFE>). When there was a thunder-like noise in the soundtrack, I told them the earth shook a little, as the volcano was "rumbling" ;).

To make it like a real botanical garden, with exhibits, I used these images for the Sri Raji "exhibits" : <https://www.activewild.com/tropical-rainforest-plants-list/>

MacRazbunare does healing again and removes both stakes in Exigu's back, as well as the wooden matter around it. Then he does the same for Tora's.

In the jungle, Varadan notices a wooden shape that looks like a large dog. They think it is the gardener's dog turned to wood. The thing is rooted in the ground and Varadan uproots it.

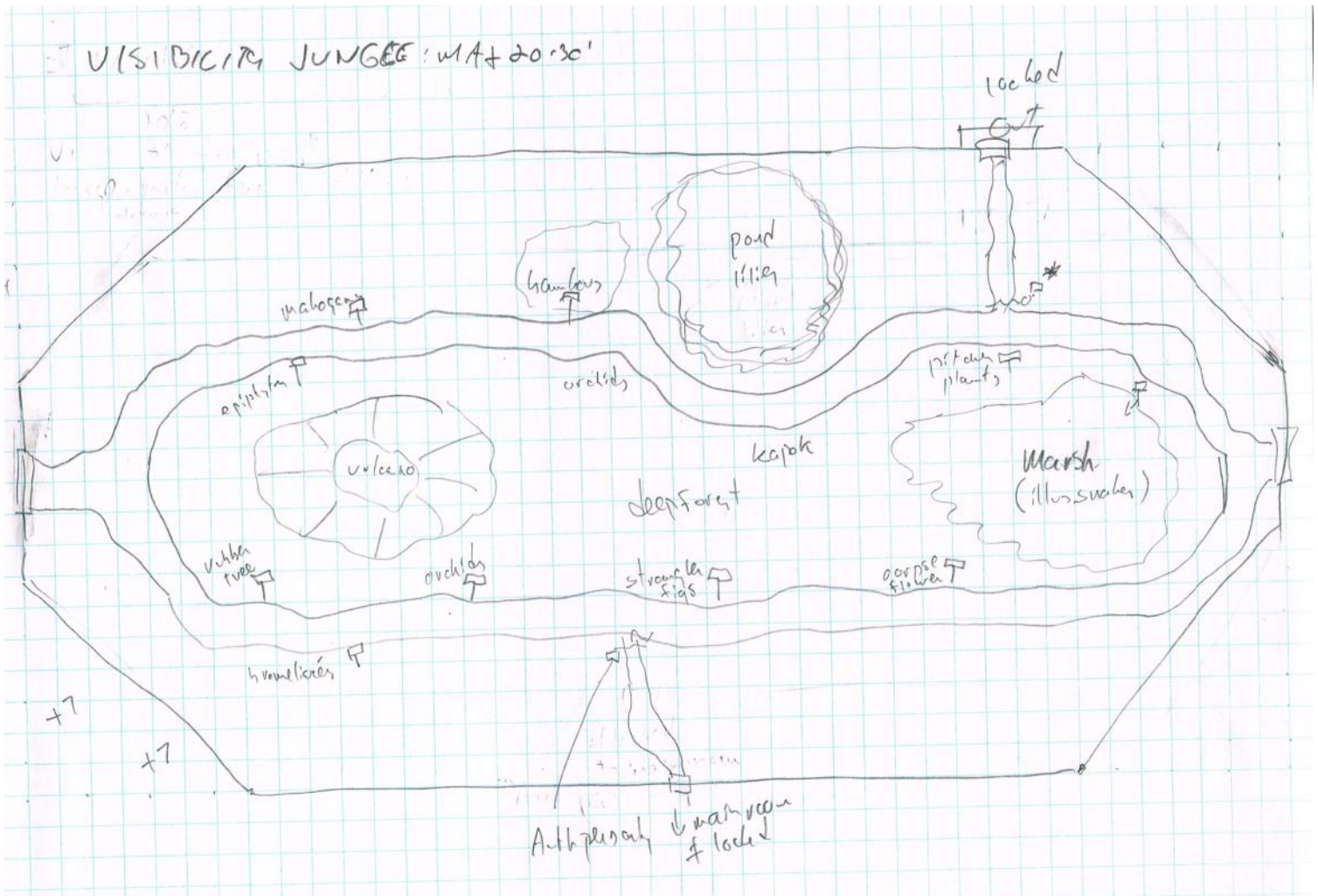
The return outside to tell Ewing of this battle, as well as the fate of his dog.

They visit the rest of the Sri Raji room with Ewing, then a quick visit of the rest of the Crystal Garden.

The Sri Raji room (jungle) is the star showcase of the Garden : it is very humid. A path of wood is the dry walkway and it divides in two. They see the false volcano at the other end of the room, rumbling. They look at the exhibit signs - epiphytes, bromeliads, orchids, giant water lilly, strangler plants, mahogany, etc.

One of the exhibits is about a very large flower, 3' large, but it is incredibly stinky and disgusting ... smelling like rotten flesh! Its name is a corpse flower.





They quickly check the other rooms, with Ewing as a guide.

Markovia's jungle (room B on the map) has many tropical flowers, and tropical birds (real). It has an exhibit about assassin's vine, and how to detect it before it's too late.

Darkon (C) - East is the Jagged coast, with small waves crashing on a "coast" of trees and rocky beach, with many crustaceous waggling around the rocks.

Har'Akir's sands and cactus (D), with strange desert people-type music. Many exhibits on the strange morphology and needs of cactus.



Souragne' marshes (E) - a wooden path over a very wet marsh, pines with moss, and some illusions of large frogs and crocodiles.

In this room , there is a small mandragora kept in a large glass container. Ewing explains that this was found in the Markovia room and they had to uproot it, "for you know this will grow up to be a shambling mound horror".



Keening's desolation (F) - this is a very bleak and desolated place, with moss, lichens being all that can grow there. The setting is mountainous, with gray rocks polished by winds. A howling wind noise is grim.

Falkovnia (G) - old growth forest, all with black bark (A Falkovnian particularity). Signs about Sentries of Death and Treants legends.

Sentries of Death (or Vigilia Dimortia as they are called locally) are trees that suddenly loose all their leafs and bark and die. It is believed that when a Falkovnian soldier dies, one tree in the forest dies of spontaneous combustion and becomes one of these Sentries of Death. They are commonly seen in Falkovnia.



Borca's Ivy (H) - tangle of vines and purple mushrooms, and exhibits explaining that the colour purple is most often associated with poison in Borca.

A false Dead head tree, which is a hideous tree with rotten heads as fruit.

An exhibit on Passionflesh tree (their fruit is the size of an eggplant and it is very addictive) and Caldura roses (a plant which's bloom protect against disease).



Barovia's Winters (I) - mountainous setting with evergreen pines and snow. There are cold winter wind noises, as well as the chilling occasional wolf howl noises in the distance.

Invidia (K) room shows maple trees, with their sap made into a sweet syrup, and a complete exhibit on the various vines vinifera types for making wine.

Mordent's marshes (L) has many marsh flowers, rice, with painting of abandoned manors, sinking in the marsh for decor, frogs noises.

Darkon - east (M) - is windy, mountainous, with very small trees (= badlands). A few real mountain goats spring here and there.

The Forlorn (N) room has a large selection of exotic and very large mushrooms, all under glass cover

DM note : complete list from Gaz p 66

They go back to the office building (Pa on the map) to meet Gayle Tallgallows. She is with Van Richten, talking. She is quite surprised of the Stakewood tree, and thanks the heroes for their help.

She inquires about strange plants they met in their life, and the heroes tell her about their encounter with Azenwrath (Van Richten corrects the story by saying that when they met the monster, technically Azenwrath was a golem, not a plant anymore), Treants in northern Borca, and the infamous Doppelganger plant, which she is keenly interested about. MacRazbunare also shares with her Quovsup roots and Poppies from Hazlan.

Seeing MacRazbunare's interest, she offers to show them their laboratory (Pb on the map), and quarantine zone, which also has very rare plants.

They have rare plants growing in the Shadowrift! One of them is the Heartrose. It is a mystical plants that reflect the health of those to whom they are attuned. They become attuned as seeds; if a seed is planted with a drop of a person's blood, the plant that grows is bonded to that person. Unbonded seeds grow into normal roses. The health of the bonded creature is reflected by the health of the plant: the plant thrives while the creature is well, withers when the creature falls sick, and dies if the creature is killed. The heartrose grows white flowers if its bonded creature is of pure spirit and velvety black roses if the creature is evil. Gayle's attuned flower is white! She said that the heartrose can act in place of the character as a target for spells, for example healing the character where ever he might be.

Hushing like if in a conspiracy, she unveil a dark room to show them a weakly plant, with three crimson flowers. "This, is an amaranth", and Van Richten gasps! "How is that possible?"

Gayle explains that she got this from a fey exchange, and that they can't explain how this is still growing outside the necropolitan shroud. They are still making tests on the plant, and the soil.

"You understand that this plant being here is extremely sensitive, and if this was known, it would make all people working at the Crystal Garden into a very dangerous situation, as many would kill to steal it. Keep this a secret, I beg you"

They quit the Crystal Garden and Van Richten ask to visit the local cemetery. The heroes agrees to accompany him. Van Richten buys six red roses on the way. Arrived there, it is clear that the old doctor needs some private moment away from the heroes. They watch him from afar paying tribute to a monument to his family.



He then moves toward a monument, but seems to look around it. He calls for the heroes to come closer. He explains this is a monument to fallen friends, all the fallen friends from his various adventures.

But one of the angel head is broken, "probably from the lightning", says Van Richten. But they can't find the broken head in the immediate surroundings.

"I will have it repaired", says the old doctor. Then he moves alone toward a third spot in the cemetery.

Meanwhile, the heroes investigate and notice the angel head has been cut off by the use of tools, not lightning. Exigu estimates it was made about a month ago... They do not share that with Van Richten for the moment.

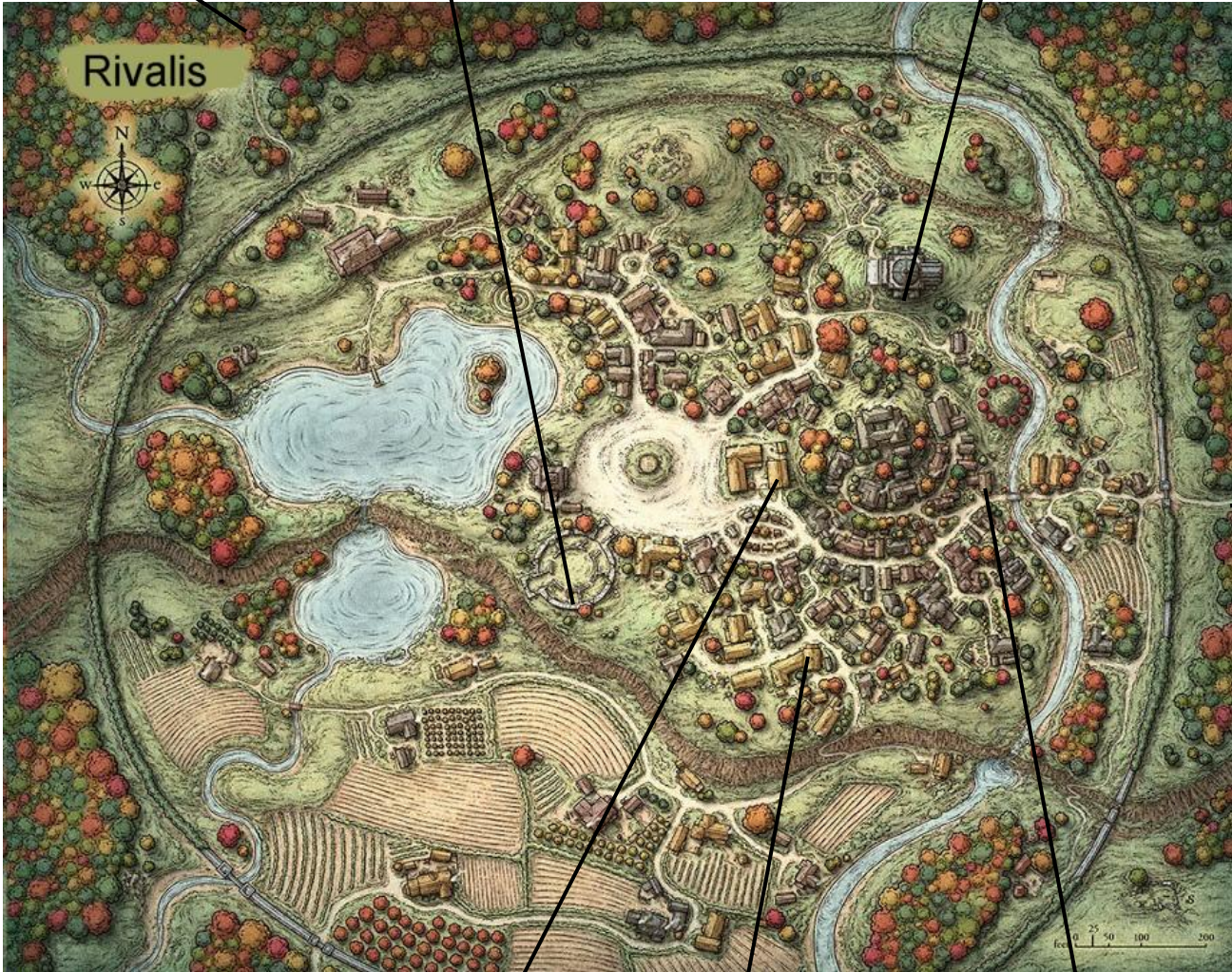


Rivalis

Route to
Lamordia
(and Richten Haus)

Cemetery

Crystal Garden



Route to
Il Aluk
and Nartok

Coachman's Rest Inn
(high)

Old Waypoint Inn
(halfling)

Traveler's End Inn
(poor)

The old doctor goes to a third tomb, where he leaves his flowers. He kneels there for a moment and leaves.

He explains to the heroes that Dr Ottélie Faringer died horribly when the doctor was chasing a demon, named Drigor. But that demon was much more powerful than they expected, and Van Richten was the only one left alive.

"After gruesomely dismembering my friends in front of me, he left, as if he was bored suddenly. Ottélie was dead, as well as Davvyd, a priest, and Samuel, an herbalist apprentice."

With the flowers, they guess that Ottélie was a love interest for Van Richten.

They stop at the local Boritsi Trading Co office to drop their report to Clothilda (report to be added to this journal later).

At 3pm, they leave Rivalis for the Richten Haus. It is about 30 minutes at the north east of Rivalis.

They arrive at a gate house. It is closed. Van Richten shouts and after a moment, the head of a man appear at a window of the gate house, looking surprised. Moments later, they see this man opening the gate. He is half vistani.

He greets Van Richten as "young master! You arrive earlier, where is the rest of the family?"

Van Richten look confused for a moment and replies "father, mother and my sister stayed at the Jagged Coast cottage for longer, I came here alone"

The man says "Ah, and I see you brought friends. Did their parents know they are here? You know last time, it created a problem when they searched the whole town for them!"

Van Richten answers "yes, all is fine", and the man presents himself as Casimir to the heroes.

He apologize for being asleep when they arrived : "we didn't expect you so soon!"

They heroes are somewhat spooked by this strange encounter, and they drag back a reluctant Van Richten to the carriage "let's go back to Rivalis for ice cream, we will come back later".

But the carriage make about 200' on the road back to Rivalis before facing the gate house again ...

They think they are trapped into Van Richten's memory, or something like that.



Casimir holds the gate while they enter the Van Richten estate. Casimir tells them he will put the horse and the carriage in the Carriage House. This carriage house is in serious need of a new coat of paint.

Casimir talks with Van Richten, and from that they understand the family left for Summer and was supposed to be back only at mid August. It is June.

"Which year?" asks the heroes, "I don't know, funny question!", answers Casimir.

They walk to the main house. On the way, they pass a dirt road to the orchard, Karl's house (our gardener) and another road leading to a cemetery and the boat house (on a lake). Near the house, there is a Spring house (a spring with a reservoir of water).

They arrive near the Richten Haus. It is a three stories house, of fine style, but it is in a state of disrepair. Van Richten is a little dismayed by this.

The main foyer is elegant, with sliding doors, The walls are light maple contrasting with dark walnut. The carpet is rich looking but dusty.

In this main foyer, they are greeted by a man in his 40's, elegantly dressed as a butler. His eyes and hairs are grey. He greets Van Richten with respect, but again talks to him as if Van Richten was in his early teen. His name is Josef Bierce.

"Is all the family back?", ask Josef.

Van Richten answers that "No, I came alone. His grandparents and parents are at the family summer cottage near the coast. Grandmother is feeling ill, but otherwise all is well there. Frederick is in great shape."

They talk again and Van Richten say he is surprised of the state of disrepair of the house and the garden around it.

Josef "Yes, I know, we have been lacking recently, we expected you much later in August and did let go a little on our usual tasks. but make sure that starting tomorrow, we will make everything right."

They explore the house, and all seem normal, except perhaps a bit dusty here and there. In a chapel, Petrak feels warm and comfortable. It is an Ezra shrine. They cast *detect magic*, but find nothing.

In the kitchen, they meet Élise Bierce. Smiling, she appears genuinely happy to see Van Richten. She is about 20 years old, modestly beautiful, with blond hairs and grey eyes. But her smile is charming.

"I'm glad you are here with your friends. I will make this soup you like most tonight", she says at Van Richten.



In the kitchen, Varadan smells a faint odor of decay. However, walking in the kitchen, he can't pinpoint where does it come from.

They explore the house again, until super.

They are shown their room, called the Blue Room. In this guest room, all painting and curtains are in blue taints.

The dining room has a large table with rich hardwood panels. Fine porcelains rest in wire racks and are painted with old-style houses and landscapes (it suggests these were not used often for eating).

Josef and Élise serve the plates, and then leave Van Richten and the heroes to their discussion. Van Richten is still acting like a young boy.

After supper, they got upstairs to the cigar room. The cigars are very dry.

They go to sleep early when Van Richten decides he will go to sleep, around 8pm.

At 10 pm, it is very warm in the Blue Room. They open a window, and cool air regulates the heat.

They go check on Van Richten around 10pm, and he sleeps well.

During his watch, MacRazbunare look outside on the balcony. Under the moon light, it is in a sorry state of disrepair : crawling ivy crept inside another room, the paint is cracking and falling in flakes, a broken shutter is hanging on one hinge only.

June 16th, 748 morning

They cast restauration spells on Exigu (ability drained by the Staketree).

They go in Van Richten's room but he is not there.

MacRazbunare look outside at the balcony, and surprise, the state of disrepair is much less important than what he saw during the night. The balcony needs a fresh coat of paint, but the paint hasn't flaked on the floor and the shutter is not hanging.

They explore the rooms. At one point, they find a lift running through all floors. A servant's room look abandoned, and very dusty.

They find Van Richten reading in the dining room. He greets the heroes, and from the way he talks, he is acting his age again (an old man of about 70 years old)!

Shortly after, Élise come in the room and ask the heroes if they are ready to eat. The heroes answers positively and she leaves to go back to the kitchen. Minutes later, she is back with warm plates of breakfast food. A shy little girl is with her.

Gretta is the name of the little girl. She is about 7 years old. It is Élise's young sister. Both Élise and Gretta are Josef's daughters.



The heroes ask Van Richten in which year they are. Van Richten is surprised by the question, think about the matter and answers "I don't know! That's odd. Hey, when you will be as old as me, you'll start forgetting things too", he jokes.

"Who hired the servants?", they ask him.

"My father did", answers Van Richten, without understanding the time illogic of it.

They explore the wine cellar as well as the root cellar.

Then with Van Richten they go to the boat house on the lake of Apple. Then to the cemetery. There, the tombs are mostly those of the family that lived here before grandfather Frederick bought the house, the Dunning family. The tombs are dated between the year 500 and 650.

In the mausoleum, some tombs have been raised and emptied, about a year ago.

They meet Casimir on the road, "Have you seen my dog Thane?", he asks.

They enter Karl's house, a small one room cottage, and all seem normal there. Van Richten is uneasy to invade his servant's privacy. MacRazbunare erase their tracks on the road leading to Karl's house.

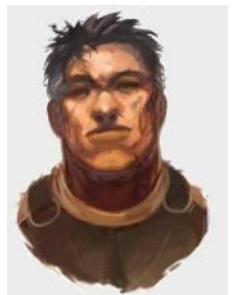
They visit the orchard. It is well maintained and the apple trees are making perfect lines. The wind makes the apple trees move in unison, like dancers.

In the center is a very large apple tree. It is about double in size. It's name is the "Gnarled Lad", explains the old doctor, "its fruits are reserved for the best preserves".

"Why is it so big? I don't know. Perhaps it's a different tree type, or it was there before my grandfather planted the orchard"

They go back to Richtens Haus for lunch. They see Karl Mueller, the gardener, from a distance. He is gathering the broken branches.

DM note: the day they came in was "normal" and today is the first day of the Ground Hog Day cycle ;) from Bleak House. Karl will soon lead Gretta to the island, etc...



GAME SESSION 82: BAD SLEEP - 9

(played Feb 5th, 2018. Martin, Jean-François, Yvon, Austizel played by Martin and Exigu by Jean-François and Varadan by Yvon)

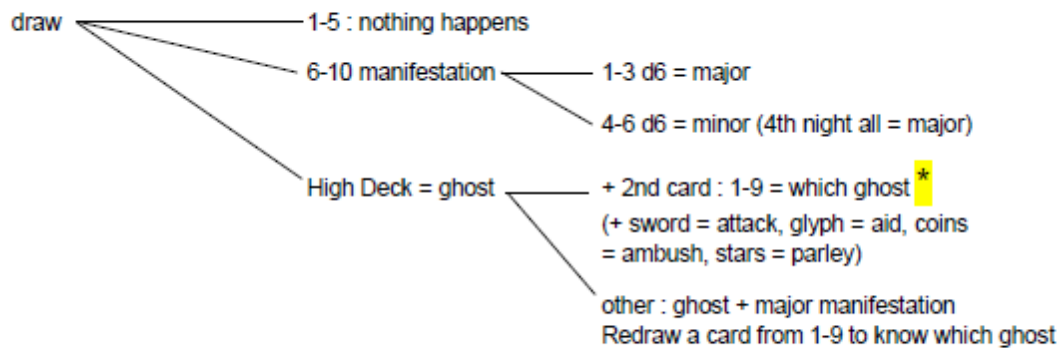
Since we are deep in Bleak House, here's a few of my numerous changes to this adventure.

First, Bleak House is an oubliette, with these special characteristics:

- *sinkhole ov evil rank 3*
- *undead can't be turned (unless a very high roll - on a 18 - 19 - 20 / 20) - of course, intelligent undead may act like if they were turned to ambush / trick.*
- *Magic healing cast during the night is only at 50 % effective*
- *there is no ethereal resonance or ghostsight*

At night, I used this chart to see if there is an encounter in Richten Haus, with a tarokka card draw :

Nuit room event (all manifestation happens only once)



1 Alannthir	2 Davvyd	3 Dr Harmon Rusheider	4 Erasmus VR	5 Geddar
6 Ingrid VR	7 Ottelie Faringer	8 Samuel	9 Claudia DeShanes	

At first, Van Richten will be confused when interacting with the day ghosts, and will easily get deep into his childhood souvenirs as if he regressed to a child.

For the day ghosts "murderous event schedule", I made a four pages scenario to put flesh on the events, adding many details and with five columns, one for each day ghost : the adventure is missing many details and sometimes doesn't make sense (At one point, they all seem to forget that little Gretta is still missing!). I fixed all this, I think, and filled the blanks so I know where everybody is at any time. Also added the room number for quick in game reference.

Hour	Josef	Élyse	Casimir	Karl	Gretta
5h00	<i>End of night transformations -> the sun rises at 5:30, light wind, little clouds</i>				
6h00	<i>All materialize back in their bed</i>				
6h30	<i>Wake up in his room # 34</i>	<i>Wake up in her room # 18, With Gretta</i>	<i>Sleeps in gate house</i>	<i>Wake up in his cottage (H on the map)</i>	<i>Sleeps in Élyse's room # 18</i>
7h00	<i>Breakfast i the kitchen #10</i>	<i>Breakfast in the kitchen</i>	<i>Wakes up. His dog Thane is missing</i>	<i>Breakfast in his cottage</i>	
7h30			<i>Quick breakfast in the gate house</i>		<i>Wakes up, breakfast in the kitchen</i>
8h00	<i>Start work - makes orders, room 34</i>	<i>Start work - cleaning breakfast dinnerware and kitchen</i>	<i>Start to work - checks at the gate. Snooze a little</i>	<i>Start to work - in the garden around the house (remove weeds and leaves from the garden, make a pile to burn)</i>	<i>Play in the house</i>
8h30	<i>His account book is missing. Suspect Casimir</i>	<i>Prepares soup for lunch, marinates a roast in salt for the evening</i>	<i>Stop watching and look for his dog on the estate</i>		<i>Play in kids room #26</i>
9h00		<i>Dusting main floor</i>			
10h00				<i>Pause. Drink alcohol to give him courage for what he has in mind for today</i>	
11h00					
11h30		<i>Prepare lunch</i>			
Noon	<i>Lunch in the kitchen</i>	<i>Lunch in the kitchen</i>		<i>Lunch in the garden</i>	<i>Lunch in the kitchen</i>
1h00 pm	<i>Back to work room 34. More and more angry against Casimir</i>	<i>Back to work - room cleaning</i>		<i>Back to work in the garden - is watching Gretta and the surroundings</i>	<i>Play outside near the roses, with her doll</i>
1h30				<i>Karl goes to see Gretta playing outside and invites her to a picnic on the island. "You and your doll are invited, Dad and your sister Élyse will arrive later with apple pies"</i>	<i>Goes with Karl</i>

<i>Hour</i>	<i>Josef</i>	<i>Élyse</i>	<i>Casimir</i>	<i>Karl</i>	<i>Gretta</i>
1h45	<i>Walk to gate house to speak with Casimir, finds he is not there - enraged</i>			<i>Leaves by boat</i>	<i>With Karl</i>
2h00				<i>Arrived at the island. Karl say he will pick up the others and the pies. "And stay hidden to make papa a surprise" Leaves Gretta on the island.</i>	<i>With Karl</i>
2h15	<i>Back to the mansion, in his office 34. Door locked, he is still enraged.</i>			<i>Back to the quay</i>	<i>Wait on the island, happy</i>
2h20				<i>Back to work in the garden</i>	
3h30		<i>Realizes that Gretta is absent. Sounds alarm bell</i>			
3h45	<i>Say he will also look in the house - but mostly stay in his office, brooding</i>	<i>Is told by Josef to search everywhere in the house</i>	<i>Says that his dog is lost. Josef tells him to go near the orchard and around</i>	<i>Karl offers to see near the lake. Go to the edge and come back.</i>	<i>Wait on the island. Signs to Karl who ignores her. Crying.</i>
4h15	<i>Says he found nothing. Tell everyone to keep looking (unhappy look)</i>	<i>Found nothing</i>	<i>Not back. Looking for Gretta and his dog</i>	<i>Says he found nothing but will continue to look around</i>	<i>Tries to swim to the quay but drowns 4h20 (her body stays in the water until 5:00 am)</i>
4h45	<i>Tell Élyse to prepare dinner soon ("she'll come back, you'll see. Prepare dinner for master Rudolph and his guests"). Decides to confront Casimir for the missing book and Gretta.</i>	<i>Quickly prepares a soup then search in the house</i>		<i>Goes to his cottage, drinks.</i>	<i>x</i>

Hour	Josef	Élyse	Casimir	Karl	Gretta
5h15	<i>Confront Casimir in the orchard. Discussion that quickly becomes a fight then Josef stabs him.</i>	<i>Searches in the house</i>	<i>(5h16 dead - his body will stay where he was killed until 5h00 am)</i>		<i>x</i>
5h45	<i>Back to the manor. Aloof.</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>
6h00	<i>Diner with Élyse. Do not talk, look preoccupied.</i>	<i>Diner with Josef. Talk about Gretta, worries</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Go get his plate from Élyse then dines alone in his cottage.</i>	<i>x</i>
6h30 sunset starts	<i>Sits in the kitchen and thinks</i>	<i>Looks for Gretta around the house</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Look for Gretta around the house. Light torches on pole "so that the little girl finds us from afar", he reassuringly tells Élyse</i>	<i>x</i>
7h00 - it is dark			<i>x</i>	<i>Waiting by the fire, call Gretta's name (and look for Élyse's attention)</i>	<i>x</i>
8h00		<i>Looks for Gretta around the house (2nd and 3rd floor as well as the attic)</i>	<i>x</i>		<i>x</i>
8h30	<i>Looks for Gretta in the house</i> <i>(8h35 dead - Karl put the body in room #21, where it will stay until 5h00 am)</i>		<i>x</i>	<i>Karl returns to the manor by the rear entrance, and walks towards Élyse's room.</i> <i>But he meets Josef, and tells him he loves and wants to marry Élyse. Josef laughs and then angrily say "I forbid you to go near my daughter".</i> <i>Karl strangles Josef.</i>	<i>x</i>
8h40		<i>In her room #18, think about where Gretta might be</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Hide Josef's body in storage space #21. Then plan to go get Elyse to search for Gretta together outside. He plans to go to the orchard and reveal his love to her.</i>	<i>x</i>

<i>Hour</i>	<i>Josef</i>	<i>Élyse</i>	<i>Casimir</i>	<i>Karl</i>	<i>Gretta</i>
9h10	x	(9h12 dead - her body will stay in this room until 5h00 am)	x	<p><i>Karl goes to see Élyse. She is in her night gown and she refuses to go outside with him, finding it weird.</i></p> <p><i>He declares his love to her but she rejects him.</i></p> <p><i>He tries to kiss her but she does not want to, and he ends up choking her.</i></p> <p><i>He flees to his cottage.</i></p>	x
9h15	<i>Start of the estate night transformations p 19, and night ghost manifestations</i>				
9h30	x	x	x	<p><i>Arrival at his cottage. He is horrified at his actions and their consequences.</i></p> <p><i>Swears a lot, drink a lot.</i></p>	x
10h00	x	x	x	<p><i>He hangs himself (the body stays in his cottage until 5:00 am)</i></p>	x
Night	x	x	x	x	x

So far, two days "happened" in the game and this "schedule" is working good - see next pages.

This day schedule isn't fixed in cement, and a little disturbance won't make this schedule crash. The schedule will adapt to minor changes, and the day ghost will behave accordingly to a new situation or different twist.

The murder events will happen in another way, until the players make serious disturbance or make sure the day ghost realize of their nature.

There are not mists walls around the Bleak House pocket domain. For the moment, one exiting it will simply find himself back to the domain.

The mist walls will only appear on day 4.

A big change : I eliminated the possession by Mme R to do a tarokka reading. I found this was already used before in RL and not interesting for my game. There is no item focus as per the adventure.

I also completely changed the end, melting all four scenarios into one which I think is quite cool (you'll see when we come to this part ;)).

The original adventure had the day ghost cancel the night ghost during the final battle, which I think is a bit cheezy. Let's put battle stats on these guys. I found images for all the ghosts (day and creepy ones for the night ghosts), and gave all night ghosts 3.5e stats and special attacks according to their backstory (from various sources including Ryan Naylor's work):

- *Alannthir - half elf druid9th (3rd ghost), with spells and Wail (Su)*
- *Davvyd - priest 11th (2nd ghost), with spells, Crushing despair and Apostate (Su)*
- *Dr Harmon Rusheider - science (common 8) (2nd ghost) Died of a cone of cold. with Draining Touch (Su) (focus on Intelligence - "you are so bland and boring"), Icy Touch (Su) and Aura of Cold (Su)*
- *Erasmus van Richten - son VR (4th ghost), with Bleed (Su) and Energy Drain (Su)*
- *Geddar - dwarf F12 (3rd ghost), with Bleed (Su) and Terrifying Laugh (Su)*
- *Ingrid VR - wife (2nd ghost) Death's Calling (Su) (on Van Richten - "You failed to protect me!"), Phantasmagoria (Su) (to recreate the events when she died) and Horrific Appearance (Su) (when she transforms from beautiful wife to beaten pulp like she was after deadly Metus's attack)*
- *Ottelie Faringer - adventurer (3rd ghost) - not a combat encounter*
- *Samuel - (2nd ghost) with Horrific Appearance (Su) and Shape Flesh (Su)*
- *Claudia DeShanes - (sorcerer 9) (ghost 3rd), with spells, Corrupting Touch (Su) and Telekinesis (Su)*

- *Radovan Radanavich (4th ghost, corporeal), with Bleed (Su), Earth Glide (Su) and Warp the Earth (Su). Command all zombies and ghouls.*
- *Madame Radanavich (5th ghost) with Corrupting Touch (Su), Ranged Touch (Su), Icy Touch (Su), Command undead, Control weather and Call lightning*

Now let me tell you how it went :)

Note on the house image : as it shows, except it has a ground floor, a 2nd and 3rd floor and a large attic.

June 16th, 748 1pm

It starts in the dining room with Van Richten. After lunch, Van Richten says he will sleep a few hours under the sun in one of the hammocks.

The heroes plan to use this time to craft magical items. They discuss again - Who is Mme R? They check the list of female persons they know and none starts with an R, other than Madame Radanavich? Can it be her?

Karl is outside, and seems to be somehow avoiding being close to the heroes, as if he has nothing to do with them.

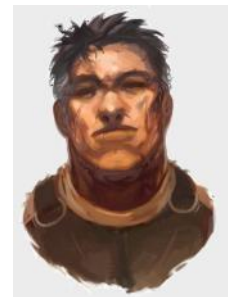
Gretta is near the house, playing with her doll.

1h15 pm, Van Richten sleeps. The heroes try to spot if something changes when he sleeps – check negative, nothing does change ... (DM note: remember, they had this theory that they were inside VR's dreams).

They go to the gate house. The gate is closed. Casimir isn't there.

(DM note: he is looking for his dog)

They open the gate and try to walk away to Rivalis ... to find themselves back facing the gate. They do the same from the woods ... same thing happens. So this phenomenon is still active, even if Van Richten is sleeping, they notice. It is a supernatural effect. They find they disappear 200' away from the gate to reappear 100' in front of the gate, facing it.



They plan the making of scrolls.

(DM note: Meanwhile, as this happens, Karl led Gretta to the island and now he is back at work without anybody noticing)

Back to the house at 1h45 pm. Van Richten is still asleep.

They go in the clinic (room #30), and find high quality stationery and inks. There is enough to make 10 levels of scrolls.

They check the elevator. It is currently on the main floor. It can link the main floor, the 2nd and third floor, as well as the attic, and a lever is pushed to call it.

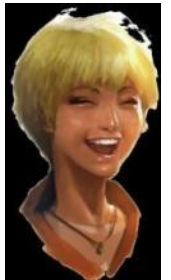
2h00 pm, they check the library of the clinic and the big library room near it (#29). Austizel, Exigu and Macrazbunare take a few hours to peruse the books, while Petrak reads an old Ezra book, *Canticle of the Blinding Light*.

At 2h30, Tora tries his *ghostsight* in the house - nothing.

DM note : won't work in this oubliette.

After, Tora goes in the kitchen and finds Élyse. He chats with her. She comments that her father Josef is very grumpy today.

At Tora's question, she explains that she is working at Richten Haus since the last 5 years when her mother and father were hired by the Van Richten, and this started when she was 17. She still has family in Rivalis and visits them regularly (*DM note - false memory*).



“Where is your mother?”, Tora asks. “Oh she died two years ago”, answers Élyse. “She became sick and we brought her to the Hala Hospice in Rivalis, where she died. Her name was Marlene. Otto and his family were very kind to us, very supportive. They even paid for the funerals. We are happy to work for them.”

2h45 pm. Varadan exits the house and will explore the estate. The gate house is still empty (no sign of Casimir). He visits the gate house in Casimir's absence. He finds two portraits in it - a man that looks like Casimir, but older, and a woman very vistani looking.

In the forest, Varadan finds that the largest animal in the forest is probably a hare or a skunk.

Near the cemetery, he finds a grisly sight: human remains! The cadaver has been partly devoured. But it is very rotten. On the body, he finds a leather bracelet which is of vistani type.

DM note: the zombies eat one of their own if they can't eat anyone else.

From a distance, Varadan sees Casimir coming back from the lake. Then minutes later he hears a bell ringing at the Richten Haus! An alarm?

3h30 pm, at the house, everybody gathers around Élyse who rang the alarm bell in the lawn. She says she has been looking for Greta in the past half hour, and can't find her. It isn't her habit to stay hidden that long and not to answer her calls.

Karl offers to check the house with Élyse. "I'll start with the attic", he says.

Then Josef arrives and learn of the reason the bell was rung. He isn't happy : "But she must not be too far, that alarm wasn't needed, you disturb everybody for nothing". Élyse frowns but say nothing.

Then Casimir arrives to the bell from the orchard's direction. He appears genuinely concerned when he hears of Greta's disappearance. Tora notices a momentary flicker of hate in Josef's face when Casimir came by the bell.

At the heroes's suggestion, Élyse goes in the house to find Greta's yesterday's clothes, for the druid's wolf to scent. The wolf finds a trace leading away from the house and follows it. The traces go to the lake and ends at the wooden quay!

On the lake soft bank, the heroes see many footsteps of a man walking near the lake.

In the row boat, the wolf also sniffs Greta's odor.

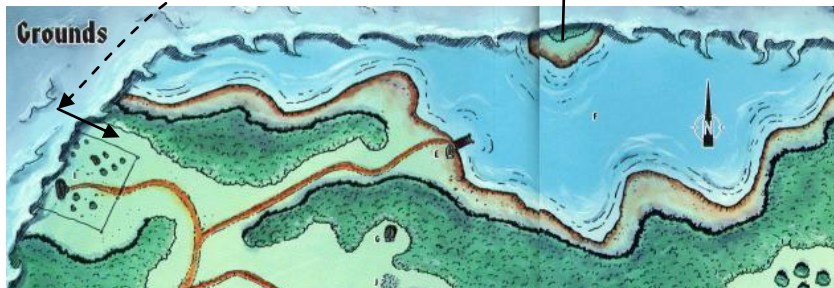
4h15 pm, Tora runs toward the manor and tells Élyse of their findings. She gasps in fear of what could have happened in the water. "She never goes there", she says. On the way, they see Casimir and Tora tells him to come with them at the lake. He follows.

Meanwhile, Exigu, Macrazbunare, Petrak and Austizel take the row boat and go the island. But they soon go back to the quay as they forgot to take the wolf for tracking.

The others check the man's footsteps near the lake: those are Casimir's... Looking at the heroes watching these, Casimir says he came by half an hour ago to check for his lost dog.

The heroes split and watche the lake bank carefully, Casimir and Tora on a side, Varadan and Petrak on the other side - nothing.

The heroes in the row boat arrive at the island at 5hpm. They walk the island looking for Greta but find themselves on the lake bank, close to the cemetery! They understand they moved too far and reached the boundaries of this eerie place... to get moved back to the estate. But the boat is still on the island!



DM - as for the main gate tests, they wandered outside the pocket domain without knowing and reappeared elsewhere near the lake.

Meanwhile, Tora asks Van Richten "did you dream of something in particular while in the hammock?". The old doctor doesn't think so, but he doesn't remember much.

DM note - again that dream theory :)

Macrazbunare asks his wolf to sniff Casimir for Greta's odor - negative. The druid then turns to a bird to fetch back the boat on the island. They go back to the island, avoiding to get too profoundly deep this time. They see traces - like if Greta stayed a long time at the same spot...

Meanwhile, Casimir says he will go tell Josef about the search. He runs back to the house through the forest.

DM note - and that is when he gets killed by Josef! I had to get things moving accordingly to the "plan".

Then Tora sees a doll, floating about a hundred feet from the island ... They go there and see little Greta lying teen feet under the water...

5h40 pm. They retrieve her body. Her lungs are full of water so they know she drowned. Her body doesn't have other marks.

Élyse is crying, and she will carry Greta back to the house to tell the bad news to her father.

Tora to Van Richten "does this situation remind you of something?", but the doctor answers "no". He looks thoughtful.

DM note - you'll see later the twist I used to fix this. Because the original adventure says nothing about this predictable question from the players to VR. All this is an event from VR's past, should he know about this?

6h05 pm. The heroes go to the cemetery, where Varadan wants to show them the human remains he found. Van Richten do not recognize the body. The leather bracelet is definitively vistani-like. Petrak thinks the body was a zombie before it was devoured... They check for traces around it but find nothing in this rocky surrounding.

Tora goes to the manor to bring back Karl and Casimir to show them the body. Josef is in black, and tells him they are not here at the moment. Élyse is taking care of Greta's body for the funerals. Tora offers Josef his condolences.

Tora then goes at Karl's cottage. Karl is there and drinking. Tora tells him he wants to show him something in the cemetery. Karl abruptly answers "This is not a good day. And since you are not a Van Richten, you have no orders to give me. Gow go away." Tora leaves.



He then goes at the gate but Casimir is not there... He comes back to the cemetery alone.

They put the zombie in a vault of the mausoleum and they seal it with a stone lid.

6h45 pm They are back to the manor. Van Richten asks them if they have food with them, because he doesn't think it's a good idea to harass Élyse with such a task on this sad day...

It is getting dark.

DM note - it made me think of ["We better get back \(inside\), coz it will be dark soon and they mostly come out at night. Mostly"](#) ;)

The heroes decide that Austizel will use the time to make scrolls until midnight while the others are resting. Macrazbunare is on watch. Van Richten is reading a book from his library : *Legends of the Fae Creatures, Bedtime stories for children*.

9h15 pm, Van Richten says he will go see Élyse to ask her if she and her father needs anything. He asks Petrak if he can offer them an Ezra ceremony for tomorrow. Petrak agrees.

"But before", he says, "I'll go in the kitchen to see if I can bring us ale and perhaps some nuts or cheeze. Your dried food was horrible", he jokes.

While he is gone, Macrazbunare notices the house is somewhat cracking, and is now darker. He finds his light has an eerie haze, like a trail of cigar smoke? He reminds himself he is standing in the cigar lounge.

He goes in room 30, the clinic, where Austizel is busy working on a scroll. He notices the lively vine wallpaper is now creepy, like if the vines were withering and dying...

Room 32 is the Blue room (a guest room where most of the features are blue). That is where the rest of the heroes sleep. It is very hot in this room and Macrazbunare finds some of the sleeping hero are in sweat...

Macrazbunare and Austizel find the whole too strange and they decide to awaken the others and go check on Van Richten downstairs.

It is then that they hear a shout of horror downstairs, from Van Richten!

They rush to the second floor where they see Van Richten, leaning on a wall. He points in the direction of a linen closet (#21)... where Petrak sees a cadaver! It is Josef!

Sinister marks on his neck show he was strangled!

They rush to Élyse's room to find her sprawled across the bed on her back. Her nightgown is torn, and there is a look of frozen terror on her face as her dead eyes stare at the ceiling. Ugly purple marks are also on her neck...

Both cadavers are warm. Varadan scent the odor of strong alcohol on both. Is it Karl?, they think.

The heroes decide to split and open all doors and look for the murderer who might still be inside the house.

DM note: what a lovely idea in Bleak House at night!



Austizel opens the elevator door - the elevator hasn't moved and is at the main floor level.

Exigu runs inside a bath room (# 24). He sees the bath is half full of hot water. He hears the sound of water dripping (but there is no water system in the house, all hot water is brought by bucket from the kitchen...). He sees nobody in the bath.

Varadan enters Van Richten's master room (#16) and sees this whole scene happening in a split second: he hears the sound of a weeping woman, terrified, pleading for her life. Her cries grow louder and transforms into shrieks of pain. Varadan sees the sheets and blanket twist and trash as if two invisible people are struggling on the bed. Suddenly, there are numerous blood sprays from the bed, and they hit the walls in multiple sinister crimson streaks...



Meanwhile, Exigu sees the hot water overflowing the tub, and spilling into the tile floor! Then he sees blood surging as though someone under the water surface had suddenly been stabbed!

Macrazbunare enters the music room. It is filled with numerous musical instruments. However, the moonlight through the windows transforms the shadows of the pipes instruments into serpentine figures, appearing like menacing the door where Macrazbunare stands. He doesn't enter the room.

Then a translucent beautiful woman appear in front of Varadan! She looks at him with curiosity, then asks "Where is Rudolph?". Varadan notices Van Richten heard the voice and is now coming to the room.



Exigu moves and opens the door to room #25 - a cedar closet for clothes. It is empty.

Varadan moves to a girl's room (#26), from the decoration on the walls and the bed. A large doll house is in a corner. Varadan hears the sound of a child weeping in the direction of a window...

Van Richten appears in front of the ghost woman and mutters in shock "Ingrid?"

When she sees Van Richten, the woman's beautiful face turns to hate and she wails at the top of her lungs "You failed to protect me!"

Her body then shakes endlessly from numerous unseen blows, scratches and bites... She transforms quickly into a bloody woman, now unrecognizable from this beat! Tuft of hairs are pulled from her head, and all fingers on the left hand are pulled off from their sockets...

Van Richten is paralysed in horror!

Tora walks toward Van Richten. Austizel sends a *magic missile* at Ingrid. Macrazbunare does the same.

Ingrid's body still shakes from the unseen blows. Her face is a now beaten pulp but she is still alive and screaming in horror! They see something invisible biting and eating her face! Exigu and Macrazbunare are suddenly stuck from the vision of horror that Ingrid is quickly becoming!

DM note : horrific appearance (Su). The visual description is of course from when Metus retaliated and beat Ingrid to death in this very room.



She hits Van Richten with her bloody arms! His eyes are wide opened in horror and his dazed face drips from her blood. Tora moves Van Richten out of the way.

Petrak hits her with a *spiritual weapon* and she vanishes ...

Van Richten falls to the ground and cries for a long moment. "I imagined this scene in my nightmares for years after this happened, but now to see this, it's horrible..."

9h45 pm. Still in shock, they now plan to go to Karl's cottage as he is the prime suspect of the strangled murders.

They go outside and walk around the house - it is looking much older than during the day, leaning a bit on one side, and in dire need of repair...

Tora decides to enter the house to don his plate armor (he was sleeping when everything started).

They enter the house and Varadan hears a noise behind a door. They see a young ghostly man, with a visible religious symbol of the Morninglord.

"What are you doing here?", he asks.



"We are trying to defend Van Richten", answers Varadan.

"Why would you do that? Don't you know that all the gods have abandoned us! Who are you? My name is Davyyd", he says, and then asks, without waiting for the answer, "where is Van Richten?"

Varadan answers that Van Richten is not available at the moment. But Davyyd sees the bluff and ignores him. He notices more people are outside the house so he passes through the wall and floats to Van Richten outside.

Van Richten is still shaken from the previous encounter and looks at his former friend with fear.

"You should not have come here", Davyyd tells him. "My friend, know that Madame Radanavich's power is growing stronger with each passing day! All the captured spirits won't be able to resist her call for revenge, as I do now... for the moment!" and he vanishes.

Everybody is surprised at hearing the Radanavich name!

But Van Richten suddenly look more resolved, more focused, for the first time since they saw him in Dominia. Grimly, he says "So this is *her*. Let' go on with it and finish this"

They all climb the stairs to the third floor and get in the Blue Room. It is still very hot inside. Tora and Petrak don their armors.

Van Richten realizes that it is in this guest room that his aunt Helga died of fever. Perhaps that is why this room is supernaturally so hot?

They go back outside and walk to Karl's cottage. They smell a very sour odor coming from the orchard, instead of the apple flowers scent during the day. On the way, they see many trees are now twisted and dead, their dead leaves on the ground...

They knock at the cottage's door - no answer.

They enter to see that Karl hanged himself...

DM note : end of the murder streak for today ...

Van Richten suddenly understands something. "We are thrown in the past! This sad day happened when I was 12! Now I see it! We were away at the coast for the summer. One day, my father got a message and left for our Rivalis house, looking grim, without telling us of the reason of his departure. He came back one week later, telling us all servants left the house to go to work for another family in eastern Darkon. Me and my sister were saddened of this, and so we never knew what really happened, and the real reason why we had new servants when we came back to the house in August. I guess our parents wanted to protect us..."

"Now that I know, what a sad story!", he adds.



They go back to the house but suddenly seven fast walking zombies attack them. They are quickly dispatched. Again, these bodies are vistani looking.

Van Richten looks at the cadavers and is struck with surprised! "I recognize some of these! These are from the Corvara tribe! From Madame Radanavich tribe! They accompanied her when she came to my clinic so her son was healed. It is those vistani that were massacred on the night I got my revenge with Azalin's aid..."



They go to the cemetery. All is quiet except that there are about 30 new holes in the ground... like if *things* crept out of the ground...

They decide to sleep at the gate house. Casimir is again absent. There, Van Richten explains that the two portraits seen in the man room are in fact Casmir's mother (vistani) and his father.

"Casimir has always romanticized the impossible love story between his mother and his father, because his mother was vistani. She left her tribe to stay with her father. But the father's family did not want a vistani in the family and they had to go into exile here in Darkon. If you ask Casimir about it, make sure you have a few hours time because you will hear every details of it", Van Richten smiles sadly.

They get into the observation room of the gate house and sleep...

June 17th, 748 6am (day 2)

6h00 am. During his watch, suddenly Tora hears someone snoring in the next room! He takes a look to see Casimir is in his bed! How did he appear there? Tora wakes Casimir.

DM note: the daily schedule starts anew. The players realize it's Ground Hog Day.

"Oh you are there!", Casimir says, "I didn't hear you enter yesterday night".

Tora asks him when did they arrive, and Casimir answers "Why you ask? That was just yesterday!"

He goes downstairs to make coffee for everybody. Tora hears him go outside for a moment to call his dog "Thane! Where are you? Come here, good dog!"

He gets a chair outside in front of the gate to watch it, but he snoozes moments later ...

10h00 am, Casimir says to the heroes that he'll got search his dog on the estate, so if they could open the gate for him if anybody arrives.

2h00 pm. End of the heroes sleep cycle, everybody had 8 hours, including those on watch.

They go to the manor, and pass by Karl's cottage - he is not there.

On the road, no signs of the zombies battle, just a few drops of rotten blood here and there.

In the house, they meet a friendly Élyse! "I made some crêpes for you this morning! Where were you?"

They eat then they go to the orchard, all is lovely and peaceful. They take a second look at the large tree in the middle: just a very large apple tree, twice the height of the others and with a 4 feet wide trunk.

They discuss about Madame R. "Where is she now?" ... "Should we look for a vardo?"

They ask Van Richten if a death, or something tragic happened once in the orchard. Van Richten says no, as far as he knows.

They go back to the house and Austizel and Macrazbunare make scrolls.

At 3h30 pm, they hear the alarm bell ringing. Petrak, Tora answers her call. They hear Élyse saying young Gretta has disappeared. Soon after, Casimir, Karla and Josef arrive.

Again, Tora notices Josef's repressed anger when he sees Casimir.

Karl offers to go to the lake, and Exigu follows him. Karl ignores him. Arrived in view of the quay, he turns back to go to the house.

Tora and Casimir explores around the house. At one point, they meet Varadan. Casimir then chooses to go back to the House to report the search results to Josef.

Meanwhile, Varadan explores the estate in wolf form but doesn't see something new. He then goes to the island by swim. He spots the place where Gretta waited, and sadly sees the doll floating a hundred feet from the island... But he chooses not to retrieve the drowned body.

5h15 pm, all are back to the manor. Élyse is very anxious "it's not like her to stay hidden that long."

Josef to Élyse "She will come back, she is asleep somewhere. Now go in the house to prepare dinner for master Rudolph and his guests". Reluctantly, Élyse go back to the house.

Dinner is served at 6h00 by Élyse. All notice she did a quick lentil soup, and she resumed her search inside the house as soon as she could.

6h30 sunset starts. Élyse goes around the house to search, while Karl is not far from her. He lights seven torches on poles all around the house, "so that the little girl finds the house from afar", he tells Élyse.

7h00 - it is dark. Karl call Gretta's name from the garden.

8h30 pm, Tora sees Karl in the house, and follows him. Karl meets Josef and tells him he want to speak to him... in private, while nodding rudely at Tora waiting nearby. Josef enters with Karl inside Josef's room and Tora hears a door locking. He makes the large detour needed to be on the balcony in front of Josef's room windows. He hears nothing and the curtains are closed. He burst through the window to see Josef dead in a corner of the house! And Karl has left the room!

Meanwhile, Petrak sees Karl walking toward Élyse's room. He follows and suddenly hears Élyse's shout of terror, which finishes into a strangled noise! He runs to this door and it is locked! He smashes it with two blows from his mace, opens the door to see Karl letting fall Élyse's dead body. It is too late, she is dead too!