

GAME SESSION 86: PRIDE AND PREJUDICE IN BORCA – 1

(played February 10th, 2019. Martin, Yvon, Jean-Guy. Austizel played by Yvon, Exigu by Jean-Guy, Macrazbunare by Martin)

DM note – so at the last game here we started another cycle of adventures, after the long chase-after-the-Whispering-Way-evil-cult-to-stop-them (19 sessions), then the Bleak House asylum-entrapment then Richten Haus haunted house (12 sessions), I wanted to go somewhere else so my campaign isn't always the same style.

I always like when the players are in a large city, it's vibrant and full of life and possible dangers. I like to plan and DM these city adventures. I remember fondly the Evil Eye part in Karina and all the other times when they found themselves in that city. Also those fun adventures in Martira Bay. For the current cycle of adventures, I wanted to go back to a large city, and have a campaign with more intrigue than dungeon crawl.

So I planted the seeds of the Gargoyle of the Great Cathedral a long time ago (session 13 in 2005, we are at 86th 13 years real time later!), and decided to prompt the players to investigate this recently. They went to the Cathedral to petition for a raise dead for Kendra Lorrिमor, which the church agreed in exchange by a promise that the heroes would go back to investigate the vanishing women (session 73).

When planning this cycle, as usual when I plan that kind of cycle, I threw all the possible NPCs they could meet in Levkarest + dread possibilities on a sheet of paper, made some interesting links, and decided to weave a dense net of adventures around the women vanishings. So I made a plot involving the Gargoyle (the main adventure), of course, but I added as many red herrings and cool side treks as possible. After that adventure, they will know Levkarest more than Ivana herself.

As usual, I also mapped the city of Levkarest, Misericordia and the Cathedral, from all canon and fan made material, which gave me more adventure ideas.

I thank you all who collaborated on the FoS boards, you will see your ideas here and there, and you know who you are, Really, thank you, I love this message board.

June 28th, 748, 11 am, Johann Severin office

They ask if they can buy healing potions. Nicoletta says she will open the Church reserve for them.

They also ask if they could buy or trade wizard spells. To that, Nicoletta and Johann can't answer positively for sure: there are no magic school in Borca, and brother Dulocq (a well known

priest/wizard) is now in Darkon. Johann know that a few anchorites also have low levels in wizardry, but that low level proficiency surely would not be of any help to the heroes.

“We suspect”, he adds with a certain smile, “that one or two are much more proficient than what they admit, but ... they won’t tell us”.

The priests give the heroes a map of Levkarest, showing all street names and a few well known places. Johann drew on it a circle of 500 meters (1 500 feet) around the Great Cathedral, because it is where they believe most of the vanishings happened.

Nicoletta also gives the players their pass to open all doors in the Church, as well as a master key that opens every lock (but the Praesidius office and the Vaults).



To whom it may concern:

Warden Petrak of Leidenburg and his team have complete and unlimited access to all areas of the Great Levkarest Cathedral (except the Praesidius office).

Please act accordingly to this directive.
Ezra bless us.

This safe-conduct ends July 30th, 748

Nicoletta Ladubay, Torei, anch.

Then Severin puts on the table another paper “here’s the list of vanished persons. I suggest we pass through the list to let you know what we found on them”

List of vanished woman

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|
| 1 Juillet 746 | Nimon Lebeau | 7 Nov 747 | Laetitia Chevalier |
| 2 Sept 746 | Godeleine Bateaux | 8 Dec 747 | Ophélie Crépin |
| 3 Mars 747 | Jeanonime Crevier | 9 10 Jan 748 (2) | Roseline Bechard, Eulalie Chapelle |
| 4 Mai 747 | Radegonde Barbet | 11 12 Mars 748 (2) | Carla Dutertre, Ségolène Lefevre |
| 5 Juillet 747 ? | inconnue | 13 14 15 Avril 748 (3) | Isabelle Courreur, Julia Bouchard, Noémie Gilson |
| 6 Sept 747 | Maité Gallois | 16 17 Mai 748 (2) | Éléonore Roatta, Ariane Trémaux |
| | | 18 19 juin 748 (2) | Rifla Moonclaw, Yelveth Sturetha |

“There are 19 woman vanishing so far, and I repeat, there could be more”, Severin says, “remember that Levkarest is a major trade center, as well as a religious pole, so we could have missed a number of traveling women”.

And he details the known fact about these women: 1 was a fresco painter – her last job was at the Cathedral. Number 2 is an embroiderer who lived very close to the Cathedral. 3 is a house wife, very pious, 4 is a silk dyer apprentice, who just came to the Cathedral to give a gift for an answered prayer, 5 is unknown, from out of town, an Inn owner informed us of her vanishing. 6 was a clay turner who cursed a lot including inside the church. 7 was a housewife, 8 was a perfumer, 9 was a prostitute, 10 a maid servant very pious, 11 another prostitute who just died her hairs black, 12, 13 was a maid servant, 14 a prostitute, 15 a housewife, 16 a well known restaurant owner, 17 a baker, 18 another housewife and 19 was dear to us, as she was an apprentice anchorite from Nova Vaasa. She was living in the Annex until her disappearance 10 days ago.

There are two cases (15 - Noémie Gilson, 16 - Éléonore Roatta) where it is believed that the person has disappeared from her bedroom.

They thank Nicoletta and Severin and they are back inside the church’s nave. In the choir, the tall statue of Ezra dominates everything. They know that this statue shines by day and gleams softly by night.

The heroes decide to start with the last vanishing case, and they go to the Annex (a two floor large building where young anchorites have their room, on the other side of the street from the Cathedral).



At the Annex entrance, they are greeted by a young man whose name is Thierry Levasseur. The heroes tell him that they would like to talk to friends of Yelveth Sturetha, the last woman vanishing. They agree to come back at 4 pm, so Levasseur has time to gather these friends.

They go back to the Defraya manor, where Austizel copy the spell *disguise self* in his spellbook, from MacRazbunare’s spell book.

At four pm, they are back to the Annex, where Levasseur is waiting with three young girls, all wearing anchorites robes. They notice one of them also carry a chain mail and a sword. These are Albercia Jacquemond, Athelina Gaudin, and Helisabeth Riqueti (the one with a chain mail).

The heroes ask the grieving girls about their friends last hours, and if she did meet somebody new in the days before. They say the day she vanished, Yelveth took a walk to the Peace Park It is a place she often went.

They explain that Peace Park is a large park inside the town, near the Cathedral. It has animation (many clowns during the day, and street performers, as well as music). There are many families gathering there during the day and early at night, and it becomes a more adult only place from an hour after dusk until about ten, when most people leave the park. The place is well known for single person as a place to meet other people.

« I was supposed to go with her », adds a grieving Athelina.

So Yelveth went to the park to listen to music, as she loved to do. They do not know if she was meeting someone.

The heroes ask if by any chance that day she had with her a unique object so they could locate her (“no”), or a weapon? « No, she was of the pacific branch of Ezra », answers Helisabeth.

They thank the girls and tell them to contact them if they think of something new.

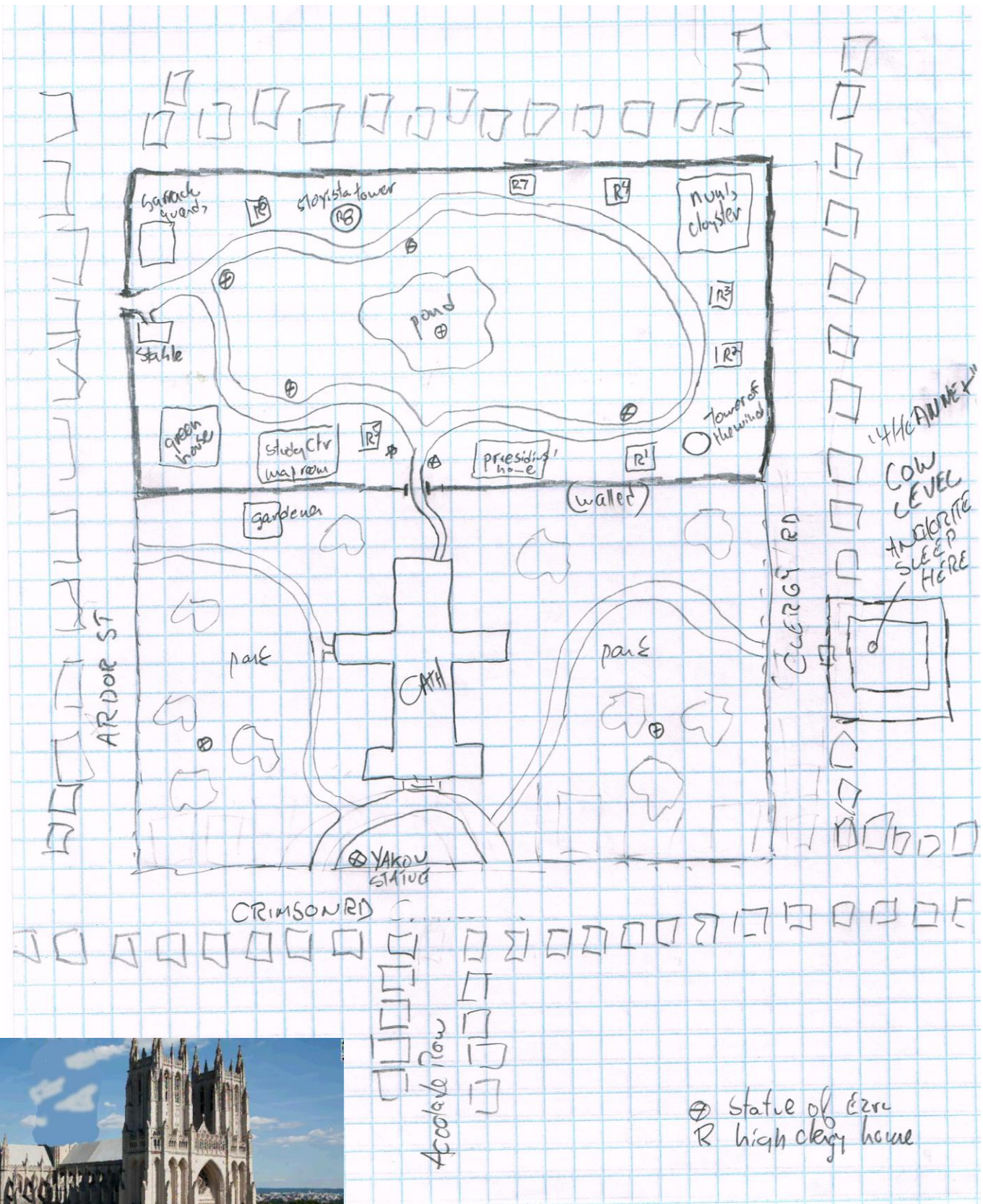
After, they ask Levasseur to see Yelveth’s possessions. He brings a bag with clothing (anchorite robes), books (Dead Travel Fast serie of romance books), perfume and a few knick knacks. There is also paper for writing letters as well as received letters from Nova Vaasa. Varadan smells the perfume to remember it. They keep a robe for the smell “so the dog can track her”, they explain.

They walk back toward the Defraya manor. On the way there, they see a black and gold horse drawn carriage with the Boritsi coats of arms on it. Through a window, they see Nostalia looking at them with a hint of surprise on her face.

They try to discuss with the owners of the Defraya Manor. The elderly couple of former nobles still have a very aristocratic air to them, even if their noble clothes are a little worn out and if they do everything at the inn.

Varadan asks Mr Defraya about the vanishings and of his thoughts about it. “I heard many hypothesis”, he said, “and some imply people of power. I would invite you to make your own enquiry”. It is clear he doesn’t want to talk about it. They do not insist.





During supper, Varadan hears a woman saying that she heard at the butcher shop that the ermordenungs kill every woman that looks like Ivana so she remains the only one with that pure look...

They also hear that the annual event "The Galleries walk the Park" will be hold in a few days. For a night, the galleries take some of their art to the Peace park for an open air gallery.

The heroes discuss the subject of Ivana's ermordenungs. What is their goal in life?

At 7 pm, they go to Peace Park. The park is large and there is a crowd. They hear violin music from an elevated stand, as well as music from a horse carousel. Families are ending their picnic or enjoying coffee or wine. They notice a few ermordenungs in the crowd.

In a quiet place of the park, they see from afar Johann Severin talking to an elegant woman (tall, dark hairs), and they appear to know each other well.

A few minutes before 8 pm, people start surrounding the music stand. The diva Miss Isslisa is presented. She sing a few songs and the head violinist tell the crowd that Miss Isslisa will be in concert at the Boritsi Music Hall in two days, with a prompt to buy tickets as soon as possible, "as they are going out fast".

During the concert, Johann and the woman stayed on the bench, which was close enough to hear the music and the diva's singing.

Then Austizel notice in the crowd Nostalia Romaine and Clothilda Taroyan, with a third woman ermordenung. They are watching the heroes and obviously talking about them...



The heroes walk forward to meet them. Nostalia has a stunning look, in a revealing white dress, while Clothilda is again dressed in green, her usual choice of colour.

The girls present the third woman as Cassandra Gide, without saying more, and she shakes hand with the heroes (with gloves).

Nostalia tells them she was informing Clothilda of the death of Van Richten (the heroes wrote a report to Nostalia from Rivalis). That news surprised them a lot.

Clothilda asks “do you think he could be coming back?”, and Petrak says they do not think so: “no, his spirit told us he didn’t want to be raised from the dead”.

Nostalia ask the heroes if they have their tickets to the Miss Isslisa concert. They say no. Nostalia tells them she will find tickets for them. “At which Inn are you?”, she asks.

“The Defraya Manor”, they reply.

To which the girls’ expression change to disdain. “You should not stay there”, Nostalia says, “the kitchen is notoriously *unclean*. You should go to the Delignan Inn, I could have the doors opening there for you, or at least at the Rosebud Thorn Inn”.

DM note: the Delignan Inn is a noble-only Inn, where a new customer needs to be introduced by a known local noble.

The heroes politely decline and say they will stay at the Defraya Manor.

“Oooh, if you like eating cockroaches”, she sneers.

“We now have to go”, she says, “if you need to see me, come see me at my place”, and she points toward a very nice white manor on Crimson Rd, overlooking the water canal. “It was a pleasure seeing you”. The three girls walk in the manor direction.

The heroes realise with dread that Nostalia’s manor is within the 500 meters circle from the Cathedral...

At 9pm, they look to the bench where Severin was seated. He isn’t there anymore but the woman still is. She talks briefly to another man, but it appears as a brief polite talk.

She walks out of the park and they follow her from a distance (as she has the vanishing women profile) to her home in Teshar St. Her home is outside the 500 meters range. They leave this street.

They walk the streets in the 500 meter circle from the Cathedral. They notice there are many dark alleys between buildings.

At one place, they find Tinfelia’s Tavern, where many prostitutes seem to be hanging. Not far from there, they find a short street called Chipies’ lane. It is filled with brothels. There are many girls in the street, as well a few clients, often wearing a cloak to hide their face. They also notice a few drug dealers.

Tora talks with prostitutes, and after waving their offer “to go inside and have fun”, asks about Carla Dutertre, one of the prostitute on the vanished list. It seems Carla owned money to many people, including the prostitutes they are talking to.



They then enquire about Roseline B  chard. One of the girls says Roseline was perhaps one of most beautiful girl to offer their ware on Chippies Lane – a tall girl, classy, dark hairs, and striking blue eyes. “Roseline wasn’t from Levkarest, and she once told me she was from Karina. She clearly had trouble there and was looking to make enough money to do something else”.

Then one of the prostitutes can’t keep her anger in check and she explodes “but we all know who kills these women, do we? It’s that bastard Ivan, the Black Widow’s cousin!”

Many prostitutes walk away, as if they do not want to get involved in this discussion.

“Everytime he comes around”, she continues angrily, “he beats the women, and once he even killed one. And there is nothing we can say or do about it... The bastard!”

The other girls silently approve. “Kill him and you will get laid every night for a year for free”, says one.

It is very late and they go back to Defraya Manor to sleep.

June 29th, 748, morning

In the morning, before breakfast, Varadan enters the kitchen with the excuse to tell the cook of a special order. Mr Defraya listens to him patiently as Varadan (the werewolf) describes a meat-heavy dish he’d like to have.

Meanwhile, Varadan notices the kitchen is pristine clean. He tells Mr Defraya “I’m relieved, Nostalia Romaine told me the kitchen here was full of cockroaches”.

Mr Defraya slowly sigh but says nothing.

At Varadan’s continued questions, he explains “Listen, our house was once of the elite noble house of Levkarest, but we fell in disgrace about ten years ago. We do not know what we did wrong. Perhaps it is linked to their birthday parties? As you know, both cousins were born the same day, and each year they throw a birthday party on that same day, Ivana in Misericordia, Ivan in Degravo. It is physically impossible to do both. Which party do you choose to go if you get an invitation from both? Perhaps trying alternation, one different place each year, wasn’t a good idea...”

“But we are still alive, and that makes us think life is good.”

Then they hear a rumor that another woman vanished last night! They quickly go to the Cathedral and hear the following: Océane Beaumont is a candle maker. She delivered last night a batch of candles (with Ezra’s shield printed on it) at the Cathedral, with the help of porters. Then she stayed on to pray, may be half an hour more. They understand her husband (Eug  ne Beaumont) is the one that reported the vanishing. He is a meat butcher at a well known meat shop on Crimson Rd. He looks a rude man, with bloody apron. “She wasn’t there this morning when I awoke”. He looks (and smells) like he did spend the night drinking.

Meanwhile, in front of the Grand Cathedral, they notice the statue of Yakov is being cleaned of mildew and accumulated dust.



They walk between his house and the Cathedral, but find nothing. They go at the butcher shop ("the Busy Pig"), where they find the whole team of butchers spent last night drinking for one's anniversary. One adds that Beaumont was sleeping in the tavern at 9pm, when they switched to another place (and with hints that makes them understand the butchers went to Chippies Lane). Beaumont could not be awoken so they left him there. At the tavern, the Greedy Centipede, they learn that the morning crew awoke Beaumont at 7 am.

So Beaumont lied, he wasn't at the house during the night. Why?

To go back to Beaumont's house (it is within the 500 meters range) and they enter it with the butcher. In the room, the bed is still properly made. There are no traces in the kitchen that someone ate there last night. So Océane probably didn't come home at all after her delivery.

They walk again the road between the Beaumont house and the Cathedral, and they enter in every alley in between. In one alley, they find a wax candle in the dirt! It bears the Ezra shield! They look at the traces in the dirt: a women entered the alley, and then trampled on for a moment. The traces do not exit the alley.

Varadan smells the track and can say these are Océane's. Tora tries *ghostsight*; nothing, then they cast *See Ethereal Resonance*; nothing. But they know a simple murder or kidnapping would not leave much traces in the ether, only major events with a lot of negative emotions do.

They go on the roof and find nothing more.

They go back to the church to report this information to Nicoletta. They enquire about the candles. "We sell them here, but they are somewhat expensive, so do not expect to find one of these in every home".

They plan to cast *locate object*. They first walk to make sure the Cathedral (with its lot of branded candles) is outside the reach of the spell, and cast it. They have five directions. They pinpoints all five: two houses, Nostalia's manor, an art gallery on Gallery Row and a fifth one, more south. The spell ends and that last location remain imprecise.

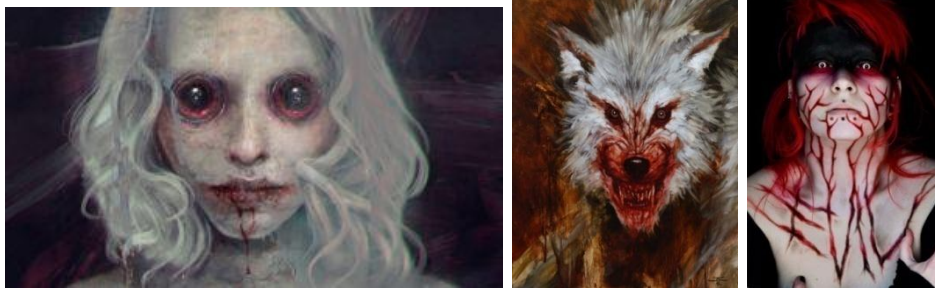
They inspect the first two houses. The first is empty. Exigu opens its lock and enter. In this house, he finds a shrine to Ezra with a wax candle. The second house's chimney is smoking, so it is probably not empty. Exigu stealthily looks at a window and sees another shrine with candle.

They forget Nostalia's manor for the moment, and they go back to the gallery. It is called Spaima. It is different from the others: there is no showcase in the front to show a sample of

what's inside. Tora notices the letters on the name of the Gallery have small rivulets of red, like if they were written in blood...

DM note: the horrible Dezuni's gallery, from the cut material of Gaz 4 ("Dread Possibility: Anything for the Muse"). Let's see how deep the players will enter its mystery...

Exigu opens a lock on a door in the alley. They enter the gallery, to find disturbing debauchery in art: all the canvas have something depicting blood... No wonder they do not have a showcase on the street!



Varadan enters another room, where the same man and the same woman are the subject of a dozen paintings. Who are they?

They decide to cast *detect magic* inside the gallery. They see a spell on the main front door (faint abjuration). "Like the *alarm* spell", they think. But more troubling is that the same magical aura is also on the alley door they opened... They decide to leave quickly!

They leave toward the canal, while Exigu remains in the street to watch. He sees a man and a woman ermordenungs at the windows on the second floor, looking around the house. The woman looks in the direction the heroes fled. Have they seen the heroes? The man opens the front door of the gallery, and walks around the building, like if searching for something. Then he enters back in the gallery while leaving the front door opened.

Noon

The heroes go back to the Grand Cathedral to talk to Nicoletta. They ask about the Spaima gallery. "It is owned by Elgin and Rozalina Dezuni, a very odd couple. Their art is extremely peculiar, always very provocative."

"Are they religious?", Petrak asks. "No, I do not think so, we rarely see them in church", she answers. The heroes wonder what the use is for them of an Ezra candle.

They remember that Garrett Tallgallows is a knowledgeable person in Levkarest and they try looking for him, without success. They go in the slum district, and ask a halfling about Garrett. "Probably asleep, he is never seen before 5 pm", the halfling answers before resuming his route.

They go at the Peace Park and watch the Spaima gallery from there.

At one point, they see Nostalia Romaine walking toward them! Her light black dress makes everyman look at her.

“Gentlemen, it’s a pleasure to see you again. I wanted to see you. Ivana is worrying "as she saw a large monster at her window" last night, and she feels she needs protection. Unfortunately, the Jongleur is away for a month "for family business", as he does once in a while. So Ivana is asking you for protection.”

“A carriage will pick you up tonight at 6 pm in front of the Cathedral. Questions?”



The stunned heroes are speechless at first.

Then Petrak ask her about the Dezuni couple. “they are special, an odd ... couple”, she answers. The heroes feel she is bitter about it. Perhaps the Dezuni have something that isn’t possible for her... She leaves them and walks back toward her manor...

At the end of the day, they inform Nicoletta of their invitation to Misericordia. She is surprised but replies nothing.

At 6 pm sharp, the black and gold carriage bearing the Boritsi coats of arms (the Ezra shield, and a harpy, known symbol of *ferocity under retaliation*) stops in front of the Cathedral. They enter in it, and without a word, the driver brings them across town to the ferry, to the small city of Caina on the other side of the Luna river, then to Misericordia’s entrance.

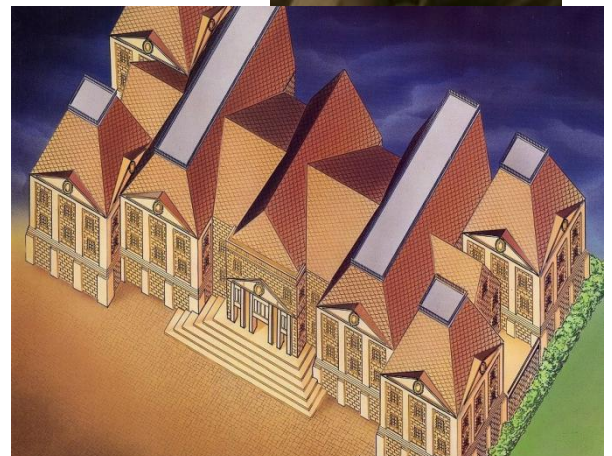


At the entrance gate (with the same Boritsi coat of arms), they meet Lucretio Napoli (ermordenung). He introduces himself as the chief of the guards. He asks the heroes for their names and compares it to a list in a notebook.



“Miss Boritsi is waiting for you. We guard the estate, but normally I do not cover the security *inside* the manor, it is the Jongleur’s task. But he is not here at the moment. If you need, you can whistle for us if you need reinforcements inside, we’ll see what we can do.” He looks uncomfortable with the situation.

The gate opens and the carriage moves toward the front entry. The driver, who hasn’t said a word during the whole trip, opens the door in silence. He then walks to the entrance and rings a bell, three times, while the heroes exit the carriage. He then embarks the carriage and leaves to the carriage house.



The heroes are left to wait alone to the front of the grand manor.

They see a few antique pagan gods statues in the lawn outside (men with head of a dog or a bull).

After a good 3-4 minutes wait, they are surprised to see Ivana herself opens the door. She wears a white dress, sober hair, little jewelry, and a deep red lipstick.

"Come in", she says softly.

She leads the heroes to a comfortable salon, where a table with snacks awaits (choice of cheeses, delicatessen, bread, tomato salad with bread and olives, wine and cider). She sits on a couch and waves the heroes to sit.

She is charming and looks like an innocent rich girl, perhaps a little spoiled.

"I gave the servants their night off", she says. "We are alone."

DM note : the players's face when they understood they were alone with Ivana in her castle!



"But before they leave I asked them to prepare a cold dinner. Please serve yourself."

She takes a plate and tosses in salad and cheese, and pours herself a glass of red wine. The heroes do the same. They find the food to be exquisite.

"Thank you for kindly accepting my invitation. I read your reports, and I knew that I could count on you for this ... unusual request"

"Do not worry, I'm known to be very generous with people who are loyal to me."

"My personal protector, the Jongleur, is traveling for family reasons. And I can't count on Napoli for this task, he and his men have little experience in the supernatural."

"You do. I know it."

"Yesterday and three days ago I was awakened by a noise at my window. On the second floor. Yesterday I looked through the blinds and saw a *monster*. It was dark and I did not see well, but there was a *monster* at my window."

She describes it as black (or was it the darkness?), very tall, humanoid, large yellow eyes. It flies with wings.

"Catch, destroy or defeat this creature! I do not want to feel threatened by it anymore."

“Be my body guards from 6 pm to 6 am. During the day, you do what you want. At 6pm, I'll be here, or in Levkarest for an event, and will let you know where to reach me.”

“Know that after all events, I'm heading back to Misericordia. So will you. I mostly never sleep in Levkarest, it stinks.”

Let me show you around. And she pours herself a glass of wine, and glass in hand, she elegantly shows them the first floor of the Misericordia estate. There are guest rooms, the large ballroom (a place they've already seen) and a multitude of small comfortable salons. Everything smells of money, lots of it.

At one point, they pass through a room where paintings are exhibited. “That painting over there? It was made by a fine young artist, a true prodigy. But sadly he wasn't very good with money. Tsk, such a terrible end, but still one must always pay their debts no matter who they be... don't you agree? Its value has tripled since.”

In a corner, a dressing room and a hairdressing chair. Then a luxurious bathroom. In this room, she shows them a staircase going up. “That is where my bedroom is”, but she doesn't show it to the heroes. “Normally, you won't need to get there.”

DM note: she lied, her bedroom is elsewhere. The first night, she wants to see if she can trust the heroes not to rampage her manor 😊

“When outside for the watch, do not check only this window, or onlookers could understand this is my bedroom.”

“Do you like this wine? It's from an Invidian winery. My cellar is very well stocked, not like the horrible vinegary wines my cousin is drinking at his estate. These would kill anyone.”

At 9pm, she leaves the heroes for the night. “If you need me, I'm up there. Good night”

The heroes position themselves outside, all around Misericordia, for a night watch.

Nothing happens.

June 30th, 748, morning

At 5h30, they see a large carriage coming to the gate, and from it exit six maids. They enter the manor.

At 6am, the heroes take a guest room and they sleep.

8am : Petrak learns his divine spells.

At 8h30, there is a knock at the door. A stern woman is there. “My name is Anne-Claire Valloton, I'm chief stewardess for Misericordia and Ivana's personal assistant.



Here's coffee and croissants for breakfast. I was told to tell you the carriage is at your availability should you need to go back to Levkarest during the day."

Varadan asks if it was possible to get some ham for breakfast.

They do nothing but sleep during the day. Another snack is brought around 2 pm, this time with ham.

At 6, Valloton comes a last time to tell them that dinner is served in the ballroom. They follow her and see that Ivana is already seated. She greets them. Her black dress is irresistible and the lipstick on her full lips is very appealing.

The servants bring them a lamb stew. It is excellent.

"We are going to the concert tonight", Ivana says. She is charming and makes conversation with the heroes. She is especially kind to Varadan, even if Varadan tells her the music they will hear tonight isn't his preferred kind. She tries to convince him of the beauty of the opera music.



At one point, Nostalia enters the room, and salutes the heroes.

Nostalia: Excuse me my Lady but these require your attention.

Ivana: *smiles at party* Please excuse me for a moment

Ivana: *reads through the papers, a frown slowly appearing*

Ivana: This is not acceptable. Such a lack of clarity. I have warned them of my distaste for poor writing.

Nostalia: *takes the papers back* Shall pass on your displeasure?

Ivana: *sighs* No, they have been already warned. I do not require their services further, so their employment with my trading company is to be ... terminated.

Nostalia nods and leaves the room.

DM note: the face of the players was worth a million, as they had been critiqued before by Nostalia for their imprecise reports. Excellent suggestion by DustBunny!

Ivana is smiling again. "My apologies. A minor matter of lacklustre hirelings which had to be dealt with. Now about Van Richten's passing, that was a real surprise. I have to admit I will miss him, he had great conversation and always had the most amazing tales to tell..."

She has finished diner, and she puts back rouge lipstick on her lips.

"The church is again asking me for money, this time for an organ. Ever heard one? I do not like organs, I heard it's very noisy in a church, I prefer violin-based music, or a choir, don't you? I heard it can be terrifyingly loud, why ever think of doing that in a church? Such a lack of god taste..."

But Varadan argues that it can be played softly, and that could be very beautiful. She seems to considering the idea.

It's time to get in the carriage. Ivana, Nostalia and Valloton will get in the carriage, and the heroes will be on horses.

They arrive at the Boritsi Music Hall at 7h30 pm, and the driver is able to split the crowd in front and park the carriage at the front door. The Boritsi coat of arm possibly explains that feat. He opens the door for the ladies and takes the horses's harness.

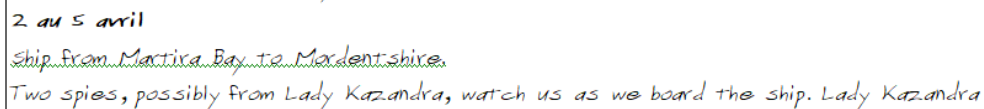
The heroes enter the Music Hall. Ivana is the shining star that everybody wants to talk to. Men and women. They also see some people very nervous of having to talk to her. One man comes to her and stutters. She waves him off.

People enter the concert hall, leaving Ivana alone in the hall with the heroes. At one point, she waves the other heroes off, except Petrak "Could you go and check that everything is alright for my entrance in the concert room?". The heroes enter the concert room and inspect it.

She then turns to Petrak with a stern look. She gives him a piece of paper, that he recognizes as the first report they made for Nostalia.

DM note: I actually gave the paper to Petrak's player

"April 2nd to the 5th. Read me the first line just after this date.", she asks.



2 au 5 avril
Ship from Martira Bay to Mordentshire
Two spies, possibly from Lady Kazandra, watch us as we board the ship. Lady Kazandra

"Ship from Martira Bay to Mordentshire", Petrak reads. He gasps, knowing the werewolf investigation and killing with Yvonne Depardieu is missing.

"You do not mention something that important?", she tells Petrak, cold eyed. "You killed the daughter of Natalia Vorishkova, and left that out of the report..."

She crumples the paper and throws it on the floor. "Do you seriously think that this action in front of 60 persons would not reach our ears? Do not hide anything to me, if you want our collaboration to last. Our relation is based on trust. If I can't trust you, you are worthless to me".

She let that sink to a speechless Petrak, and she takes back her innocent look and says with a smile "Let's go hear this marvelous diva. Don't you think the same?"

She walks in the music room, and stops at the many people wishing to congratulate her on her success, good taste, as well as her dress, her beauty and charm.

She reaches the first room, where Nostalia is standing. Nostalia tells half of the heroes to take a seat front row. Varadan is seated beside Ivana, and Tora on her other side. A few heroes will stay in the back of the music hall to keep an eye on the room.

The concert is unique, and the voice of the diva carries many types of emotions. At one point, many people in the room cry, including Ivana.

During the whole concert, she explains the meaning of the songs to Varadan, often whispering her comments in his ears or touching his arm. She is clearly flirting with Varadan. She totally ignores Tora.

Meanwhile, in the back, Exigu spots a mean looking man that isn't watching the show but watching Ivana and her court. He watches the heroes seated in the front row too.



The concert ends and the man leaves quickly, during the final applause. Exigu follows him outside. He sees the man entering an alley to meet other brutes.

While he is wondering what to do next, he spots Garrett Tallgallows the halfling. He is happy to see Exigu. Exigu asks him about the man in the alley. Garrett takes a look and identifies him as Bradig Lasonde, a thug known to work for Ivan. Garrett asks them what are they doing with Ivana, but it's time to leave and Exigu will talk to him later.

In the music hall, after the concert, Ivana entertains her sycophants and introduces Varadan to everybody, as "her new body guard".

Tora sees some people making knowing glances or winks in the back of Ivana and Varadan.

They all exit the Music Hall. After small talk, Nostalia leaves the group and walk toward her home. The heroes get back to their horses, except Varadan who is invited *inside* the carriage.

10 pm, they leave for Misericordia ...

*DM note : I saw her today at the reception, a glass of wine in her hand
I knew she would meet her connection, at her feet was her footloose man...*

cut scene sent by email after session 86

Meanwhile, in the Great Cathedral, Praesidius office. Late at night. Johann Severin and the Praesidius Levin Postoya are seated, a desk between them

The Praesidius punches the heavy wooden desk with his fist. He shouts: "What are you telling me, Johann? They spent the whole last day in Misericordia? And they are going back there tonight ... after watching a music concert? How do you expect the vanishings investigation to end, if they spend all their time entertaining Ivana Boritsi?"

Seated in front of the desk, Johann is looking at his feet, while the Praesidius keep on talking for a long time on the urgency of the investigation. "They have an obligation toward the Church. Ladubay should have properly indented them, it would have been easier. (...)"

It is followed by a silence.

"My Lord, we do not know what they are doing at Misericordia, but I will ask them to come back in Levkarest for the investigation. I suspect it is linked to the Jongleur who is out of town", Johann says.

"Be careful. Indeed we do not know what she has in plan for them", Levin said. "So do not do anything to make her angry. I do not have to remind you that our founder Yakov's birthday is in two weeks. And this year is the 50th anniversary of his passing, a grand celebration is planned, as you know. We do not know what she thinks of it, And we do not know if *it* will happen this year".

"Well understood, my Lord", answers Severin, "nothing drastic will be done".

"They asked for healing potions?", Postaya continues, "well, give them also a bag of those pills that makes one sleepless for days, or tell them to split their group in two. I don't know, Johann, just find a way!"

Understanding the meeting is over, Johann walks to the door. There he stops and says at the Praesidius "May Ezra protect you, my Lord".

Postoya answers back "May Ezra protect us *all*, Johann".