

GAME SESSION 112: TEPEST -7

(This Ravenloft game was played Nov 16th, 2025. Everybody is present except JF - Macrazbunare was played by Sylvain)

DM note: remember from last game there was a power check to be made by the PCs (delivering goblins to be eaten by the hags). During the game, I asked them a Spot and Listen DC when they entered town, but these dices were for the power check. All passed!

DM note 2: So I made a few changes to servants of Darkness in its last part.

Original adventure: again a vistani telling them clues, and then Wyan chose this very moment to rush inside the vistani's cave, telling the PCs that Loht kidnapped Lorelei and they are on their way to Keening. There, Tristessa completely forgot Loht's role in her death, and of her baby's death, and gladly exchange with him the sword for the Eye of Vhaeraun.

I found these two things to be a bit non-sensical. So I remodeled the adventure to remove the things I didn't like... and it worked!

August 17th, 748, morning

The heroes discuss about what they should do next: investigate what the fey said when it mentioned the "prince"? Or investigate the vanishing of Dominica?

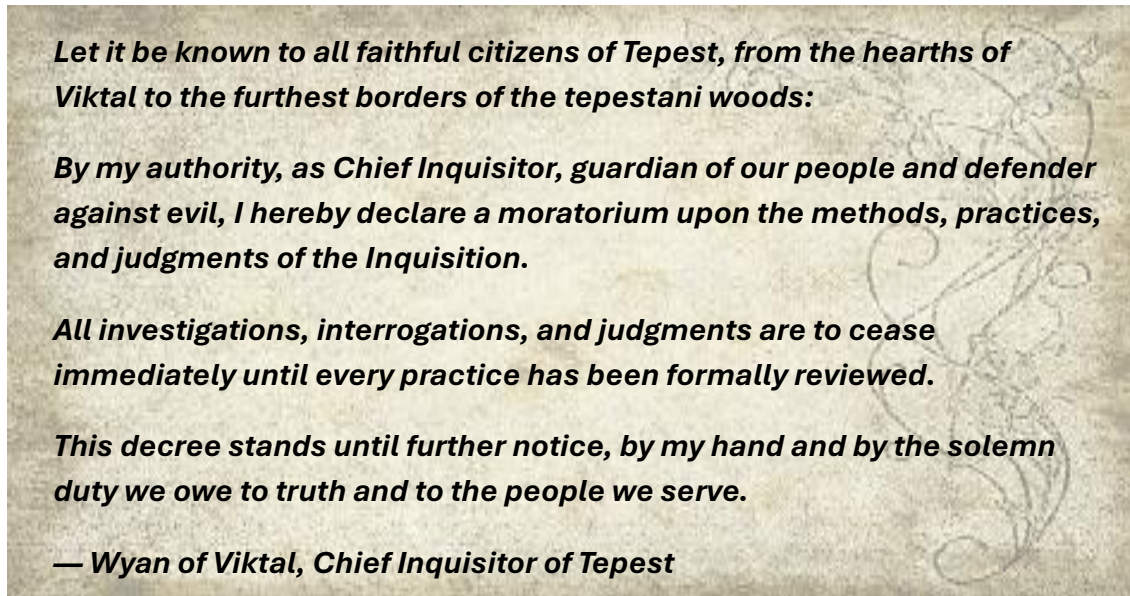
They notice that the bell of the Belenus church hadn't rung this morning. They find it weird, as they know the hourly bell is a traditional church constant reminder to be vigilant about possible evil surrounding them. They wonder if there will be a putsch against Wyan?

The four humans of the group go to the church (as usual, leaving the halfling and the half-elf outside the town walls, as requested by the guards).

The villagers are impressed with the work done by the heroes, and they say it to them in the streets.

The pass near a group of tepestanis discussing Lorelei's fate. The discussions are heated. The more moderate ones argue that Lorelei must be protected as "she's just a manipulated child!", while the radicals say that *all* fey influence must be purged without hesitation.

At the church, they see a sign posted on the door:



The heroes are satisfied that their actions perhaps changed something in this place.

Macrazbunare asks a guard why the church bell is not ringing anymore. “Wyan’s order too. It will ring only at 7 am, noon and 8 pm.”

From the guards, they also learned that Wyan did visit his daughter this morning, posted this message, and then went back to his house.

On guard let slip “the old man seems tired...”

In the street, an old woman walking with a cane come to Tora, and grip Tora’s arm. “We should have listened to your sister, Dominica the storyteller... She said that the Inquisition had good intentions, but that it can make mistakes.”

Seeing Tora’s surprise, she adds that “Some the people think the Inquisition is somehow involved, but they lack the evidence to accuse them openly. I’m sure there is something about the Inquisition and the murder of Dominica. Others believe she was murdered by the Inquisition itself, eager to make an example of her for talking to feys, but I do not think they could go that far...”

After that, they think they need to speak with the captured fey, but they go see Wyan first. He looks depressed. The heroes are very polite and compassionate with the sad inquisitor.

Wyan “if evil can possess my own blood without me seeing it, I wonder if I can know anymore what’s good or what’s bad. We will have to review our methods.”

The heroes: “did you interrogate the fey”

Wyan “not yet. We are making a list of the questions we want to ask her. It is mostly to clarify the depth of the involvement of my daughter with the fey. But if you want to talk to the fey, you can”

Tora, changing subject “About my sister Dominica’s case, was the Inquisition involved in this?”

Wyan “No, it wasn’t involved in her murder, as some do think. We were watching her for many reasons: so she didn’t get into trouble, and she could eventually lead us to feys, or people consorting with feys. Also, we were watching that Mirewyn woman... But for us, you know, this case is now closed.”

Tora “Her journal mentions three sisters. Do you know what these are?”

Wyan “no” (and it seems true)

He then writes a note for the guards explaining that the heroes can talk to the captured fey.

They thank Wyan and go back to the church, and they show Wyan’s written permission. An inquisitor, Gaius Mordrath, will be present to the interrogation. They go the cells underground and Gaius opens the cell. The iron cage is suspended in the cell, 4 feet from the ground. In it, the fey Soarsen is brooding.

Tora at the fey “do you recognize us?”

The fey looks at him but says nothing.

Tora “yesterday, you spoke of a prince. Who is he?”

Soarsen “Free me and I will tell you all”

Tora “We can’t do that. But it can help your cause if you collaborate”

Soarsen “Will they burn me?”

Tora “yes”

Macrazbunare “when we captured you, where were you going?”

Soarsen “in the forest, north of here”



Tora “Your fate is sealed. But if you help us, it could help you. For example, if you tell us that you were under the influence of somebody else”

Soarsen “I do not want to burn. Anything but that. Will you plead my cause?”

Tora “Mmm, you should know that Lorelei’s father is the chief of the Inquisition. He is angry about you”

Soarsen “I do not care to stay a long time in prison”

Tora “your mission was to influence Lorelei?”

Soarsen “yes”

Tora “But you know this made the life of another person into great danger” (Bryonna)

Soarsen “It’s just a human...”, then he asks Gaius “If I help you, you swear that I won’t be burned?”

Gaius “we can’t promise anything, but if you do, that could help you”

Tora “Or we could also do an interrogation with Ermintrude...”

Soarsen (fear in his eyes) “No! Not her!”

Silence.

Soarsen “The master wants something that the silly wrinkled priest has. I don't know what it is, only that the old man keeps it locked away somewhere in his house. I was persuading that pretty Lorelei to find out where it was and turn it over to me ... when you all messed everything up.”

Tora “and who is that master?”

Soarsen stays silent, then “I already spoke too much”

The heroes ask more questions but Soarsen stays silent. They leave.

They go back to Wyan, and tell him what the fey said.

Wyan “why did she want it?”

Petrak “to give it to her master”

Tora “you know this could exonerate your daughter, by the way”

Wyan “I think I know what it wants. Nine months ago, an object was found floating on the waters of the Lake Kronov in a fisherman's net. The two men who recovered it nearly killed each other in their desire to obtain sole possession of it. When I heard this story, it became apparent to me that evil magic was at work. So I sent my men to recover the thing, only to discover that it had a similar effect upon them. I very nearly lost three of my most faithful followers to that evil thing. Pious followers. I dreamed of its name, the *Eye of Vhaeraun*, after praying to know more about it.”

“But”, he continues, “the oddest thing is that the first fisherman said it was the wedding ring he needed to court a girl of the village. The other fisherman says it was a large pearl whose value could buy him the inn of his dreams. One Inquisitor said he saw a *holy avenger* sword, another a *helm of wisdom* to help him better communicate with Belenus, and I do not remember what the third one said.”

They are surprised by the item’s strange power.

They thank Wyan and leave.

Macrazbunare – “by the way, why was Soarsen so afraid of Ermintrude?”

They go back to the church, but this time to meet Luther. They find him writing what appears to be a list of questions (they understand it’s for the fey’s future interrogation).

Tora tells his brother Luther that the fey wanted the *Eye of Vhaeraun* for her master. And that, according to him, Lorelei’s guilt was lessened by this fact.

Luther “We’ll see”. But he agrees to think about asking questions about this “master”.

They exit the church.

The heroes wonder if they should go back to see the Lady of the Lake to ask more questions? But remembering that the “price” for the questions was increasing each time they asked her something, they forget that option for the moment.

They rest until the arrival of Ermintrude (who replied yesterday’s *Sending* that she would be traveling to Viktal). She thanks the heroes for saving Bryonna. Then she has a happy moment with Bryonna and Henrick. She tells her that Loebe sends his regards and will also make the trip to Viktal in a few days.

Later, she asks the heroes to tell her everything that happened – saving Bryonna, and they follow on what happened since then.

She appears momentarily distressed when the heroes tell her that the fey was afraid of her. “Did she say other things about me?”, she asks.

“No”, answered the heroes. But later they would ask themselves what Ermintrude was afraid of?

Tora “who do you think could be that master?”

Ermintrude “Like a leader of the feys around here? I do not see who”.

That evening, they are invited for Bryonna's birthday celebration at Viktal's tavern. Ermintrude and many of Bryonna's friends are there too:

Rowana Thornhill Gwyneth Clearwater Anwen Wildoak Fionna Brightwood Isolde Farbranch



The girls are all dressed in what the heroes think are probably their nicest clothes. The girls are flirting with the heroes, asking them if they have a girlfriend, and asking them to dance.

Henrick and Bryonna cannot thank the heroes enough for what they have done. At one point in the evening, Henrick asks Bryonna again if she wants to marry her, and of course, her answer is a happy yes. Bryonna's friends look at the heroes ...

Later, Petrak notices Bryonna trembling for a moment when she sees the flames of the tavern fireplace. He offers her a *Lesser restoration* spell to make her healthy quicker.

The celebration ends around 10 pm. Ermintrude took a room at this inn, and the heroes are back to their cottage by the river, and Bryonna and Henrick to Bryonna's cottage.

Before they leave, Tora asks Ermintrude if she wants to read Dominica's journal. She accepts.

August 18th, 748, morning

The heroes go to the inn to have breakfast with Ermintrude. She announces to them that Lorelei has escaped her prison!

They rush to the church. They learn that the fey escaped too!

They see Wyan and he tells the heroes “They took her. I can’t even protect my own blood anymore...” He formally asks the players to find Lorelei. It’s a personal request, almost a plea.

They learn that the guards were found asleep this morning (probably a magic effect, a poison detecting spells saw nothing). The guards who were supposed to be watching Lorelei were found snoring, sitting on the floor, his cheek pressed against the walls.

One swears he heard... something before falling asleep: a soft, almost maternal murmur, like a lullaby.

Wyan “let’s go check if the *Eye* is at its place”

They follow him into his mansion, to his office, where he accesses a chest hidden behind a sliding wooden panel. He opens the desk and lifts from it a bag with a fist-size object in it. The heroes see many gold pieces in that chest, as well as a wand.

The heroes and Wyan hesitate: how to see if it has been replaced in the bag, without looking in and suffering its evil?

Petrak suggests *detect magic* – the object in the bag has a strong magical aura, of enchantment. Wyan confirms he detected the same thing earlier.

Wyan adds “I thought of that last night after you left. Lorelei did ask me about the *Eye* in the days before. Vague questions, which I dismissed as curiosity, but now I do understand why she asked” and later adds “and Lorelei didn’t know where it was hidden, by the way”

About the sleeping guards, they think that someone from the outside came in and put them to sleep. Lorelei could not do that of course and the fey was powerless in the cage.

While they are discussing, an inquisitor comes to Wyan: “Sir, a villager living near the north wall heard the sound of wings last night, like large bee wings.”

They leave Wyan. Tora asks Ermintrude if she has read Dominica's journal and what she thought of it.

Ermintrude "After I read it, I stuck at the line of the oracle's poem – *Will you save her soul?* like if there was something to do to save her, but from what?"

Meanwhile, Austizel cast *identify* on the *Book of the Last Theorem* (see session 99, it's a magical book found inside the Pact Stone Pyramid). Austizel learns that the book itself is not magical, but the writing in the book is. Numbers are scary. In ancient times mathematics represented both power and secrets. The key is that The Last Theorem exists as a mathematical concept. If the reader loses focus for even an instant, the numbers swim into new positions throughout the text. *Anyone who studies them for at least an hour may make a Concentration check to attempt to hold them in their proper place and determine how much of their meaning they can discern. After three successful checks, a mental prowess is awarded, but it's risky...*

The heroes make plans for the next day, and a part of it is Petrak will be casting *Sending* to Lorelei.

August 19th, 748, morning

The humans enter the town to go to Wyan's house to talk about the proposed *sending* spell.

In town, they learn that two young woman of the village have vanished! Rowana Thornhill and Gwyneth Clearwater, two of Bryonna's friends at the birthday party.

Going in Wyan's mansion direction, they meet angry Inquisitors "You've softened the old man. And this is what happens! The fey are attacking us. This is no time for mercy." And the heroes understand the Inquisitors think it's the heroes' fault.

Then they get the news that a third one has vanished, Anwen Wildoak, also a friend of Bryonna!

They investigate the house of the disappeared girls. In the mud, near one of the windows: a footprint but very light and small (1 inch long). In another house, they find on the window a very thin red thread, stuck in a creak.

The Inquisition asks the heroes if they have anything to say about this. "Weren't you at the inn with them the night before?" But quickly the heroes are cleared up by witnesses (family) who saw the girl at the house normally the night before.

They run to Bryonna, but she is safely in Henrick's arms. When she learns of the vanishing, she wants to come inside the town to search for her friend.

Back in town, they see that a fourth girl is missing! Fionna Brightwood! They decide to go check on the fifth friend, Isolde Farbranch, but she is safely at home. At her house however, they check the window and find tiny traces of thieves' tools that failed to unlock the window.

10 am Petrak casts *sending* at Anwen "I want to find you. Tell me where you are in 25 words"

Her answer "I don't know. I was asleep until dawn when the fairies took us to a cave of stinking goblins. We're prisoners together."

They go to Luther and ask him where they can find goblins around Viktal. But his answer does not help them: "everywhere around town"

Petrak casts a second *sending*, this time at Lorelei. Her answer "In a goblin hole. I don't know where. Night journey, asleep, shrunk by magic. Four girls from Viktal with me since last night."

They tell Wyen of the *Sending* information's but this doesn't make him better.

In town, people are panicking "Lorelei will come back!", "The fairy will take our children!", "We should have burned her right away!", "Let's seal off the town. No one goes in or out.", "Let's stay in the church all night to pray."

They spend the rest of day searching for goblin traces around the village and the Lake Kronov. Nothing.

At 4h30 pm, they are back in the village. They learn that several residents claim to have had the same dream: *a field of purple flowers rippling in the wind. In the center, a slender female figure with translucent wings, whispering: "My brother is calling for help, don't help him."*

The heroes interpret this as related to Dominica.

DM note: nope, it's Maeve from afar, warning the humans not to help her brother Loht. But they will meet her later.

However, Luther tells the heroes that the patrolling Inquisition found goblin traces, west of the area searched by the heroes. They go there, about 1 200 feet north of

Viktal. Indeed, about a dozen and a half goblin traces, near three large canoe landing traces.

Until darkness comes, they check the coast to the west of this place for possible more clues, Macrazbunare the druid in falcon form – nothing.

They are back in town around 10 pm. They tell a guard to warn Wyan that they are back, and that they will be at their cottage tonight if needs be.

Petrak cast *Scrying* on Lorelei. He sees the five abducted girls, in a star-like manner as the girl's feet are bound together around the same pole. Their hands are tied. One of them (Anwen) has been severely beaten. The area is lit feebly by the trembling light of torch.

At one am, Exigu is on watch duty. The night is quiet. Then... a noise: WZZZRRR-WZZZZRRR, like large wasp wings beating the air!

Macrazbunare watches through the window: a small, twisted, blood-red figure, with a cap soaked in fresh blood – a powrie is at the door, flying!



It appears to be alone. They open the door.

“Hey, you ugly meat sacks! The Prince wants to see you, you slugs! Move your big greasy asses! Follow me!”

He leads the heroes out of Viktal, passing through the bridge. “Hurry up, or I’ll take your eyes to play marbles with!”

He doesn’t stop cursing along the way (*the FoS being a profanity-free website, I can’t put here what the powrie said.*)

He leads the heroes about 500 feet on the Viktal-Kellee trail, then 300’ in the forest. In a clearing, under the sickly moonlight, five more powries wait: all hovering a few feet above the ground, all with the same high-pitched laugh, all their eyes fixed on the PCs with the hunger of a ravenous carnivore.

Beside them stands Saorsen, the fairy who had influenced Lorelei: her posture is broken by fear. She lowers her head at the sight of the heroes. Saorsen murmurs something, but a powrie slaps her, "Shut your mouth, you piece of sh..."

Then a man walks inside the clearing. He stands 6 feet tall, with silver hair flowing to the center of his back, but his delicate bone structure and angular face make him

seem taller. He dresses like a dandy from the Borcan courts of 50 years ago, wearing an embroidered black tunic, tied at the waist with a silver sash, and tight black leggings. A silver clasp secures a long, gray cloak, and a gray tricorn hat completes the outfit. All of his clothes are made of the finest silk.

Every gesture is too graceful to be human. Every expression too controlled.

He has a scornful smile, and a deep penetrating gaze.

The powries freeze before him and cease their laughter.

He strokes the head of the fairy who influenced Lorelei as one would pet a favorite animal that has misbehaved but remains useful.

His shadow, though faint in the moonlight, seems too long, as if it continues to follow him from afar.

"I am Loht, Prince of Shadows." (A pathetic little bow, as if mocking courtesy itself.) Then he looks at the heroes up and down, as if inspecting secondhand furniture.

"You've thwarted my plans... or at least those I entrusted to creatures of rare incompetence."

He casts a venomous glance at Lorelei's fairy, who trembles.

"But you... you seem useful. Powerful. Motivated. A little desperate, even.

He smiles—not to seduce, but like a cat that has found an injured fledgling.

"I'll offer you a deal. Five human female lives in exchange for a service.

I need you to retrieve something. A sword. Not just any sword. My father's sword. The Sword of Shadows. The Sword of Arak. It is in Tristessa's sanctuary.

Who is Tristessa, I hear you think? In life, Tristessa was a shadow fey, a Sith of exquisite beauty and boundless cruelty. Beautiful to the point of damnation, cruel and chaste to be broken by her.

Tristessa was among the first and most fervent followers of a new and vile cult. Driven by ambition and a perverse nature, Tristessa rose quickly within the cult and



eventually became its high priestess, when the elves who had brought this cult had all been killed through a ... convenient... series of assassinations...

The followers of this cult preached decadence and deviance, practices that even the Shadow Court of Arak found repugnant. They advocated cruel and unthinkable pleasures, even for the Shadow Court.

I, Loht, the Prince of Shadows and ruler of the Shadow Court, felt threatened by the growing power of the cult. He launched a campaign to suppress it, but fanatical resistance ensued. Tristessa led the cult in a long and bitter struggle against the Court of Shadows.

Eerily, while the conflict raged, Tristessa found herself pregnant. Since she had allowed no man to touch her, she suspected that her own blasphemous pacts with demons were responsible for her pregnancy. The child was born an abomination, deformed with horrific deformities. Tristessa felt nothing but affection for her deformed baby. Maternal love and compassion blossomed in her cold heart, and she clung blindly to the child.

He takes a falsely tender tone: "An abomination... A horror... but its mother loved it."

His tone turns venomous: "I had them impaled on the slopes of Mount Lament. She... and her little one. I ordered that Tristessa and her blasphemous child to be impaled on the slopes of Mount Lament, so that the rising sun would consume them. Tristessa and her child died in excruciating agony, their flesh boiling in the first rays of dawn.

With the piercing cries of her child echoing in her ears, Tristessa's own cries transformed into a deadly curse. She cried out. Loud. And her cries fashioned a new land of ash and wind. A desert of lamentation. From her wailing arose a scorching sandstorm that swept across the surface of Arak, obliterating all traces of life around the mountain.

Tristessa returned as queen of this new place. She rules this dead wasteland now. But her own death and the loss of her child have driven Tristessa to madness. Her memory of her past and her fate is uncertain, and she seems to live in a fluctuating fugue state. Her most persistent delusion is that her child is still alive, and that she lost him through her own negligence, or that he was abducted.

She searches Keening relentlessly for the slightest trace or rumor of her child. Searches for her child.

Every night.

Endlessly.

Loht shrugs: *“A tragedy. She was so beautiful.”*

Loht smiles: *You'll understand that I can't go myself to ask her. Otherwise, it would already be done* (sideways glance at Lorelei's fey)

A powrie approaches with a small blanket and gives it to Loht. Loht uncovers part of the swaddling clothes—a baby! Like 6-7 months old?

Here's your pass. You'll ... probably ... get safe passage through Keening by giving this child to Tristessa.

She'll be crazy by it, he sneers.

This baby? It comes from the Liara slums. Anyway, it had a short life expectancy. Lucky to make it to three without getting sick. All the slum human children die before three.

So you will trade this baby for my father's sword, the Sword of Arak. This sword is a black blade with a banshee-shaped hilt that screams.

When you return with my sword, leave a wreath of flowers at your door. We will see it and pay you a visit.

Don't wait too long for the safety of the human females, the powries are impatient...

The powries cackle like hyenas.

He stops to speak and observes the heroes with disdain.

Varadan – we can touch this sword?

Loht – yes, of course

Tora – why did you want the *Eye of Vhaeraun*?

Loht – what do you think she would have seen?

Tora and the heroes understand.

Exigu – can you prove your goodfaith and liberate one or two hostages?



Loht - I don't think you've grasped the importance of my request. I'm not asking you for a favor. I'm offering you the survival of Tepest. When you shattered my plan in Viktal, you shattered the balance. The lives I took in return are the first installment. You will repay me all what is owed to me.

After a moment of thought, he adds – When I will know that you have left for Keening, I will liberate one of them. But ... it will *not* be Lorelei. Other questions?

When he sees that the heroes have nothing more to ask, he says, “do not disappoint me” and his body becomes one with the shadows, slinking away of the clearing. Then all of the heroes’ torches are extinguished!

When the heroes relight them, they are alone in the clearing.

Tora – was it a vampire? He looked way too powerful for us to fight him!

Petrak and the others agree.

DM note – good DM job made :)

Austizel – should we not use the *Eye* instead of a real baby?

The others agree. Back to the cottage to sleep. They see that most houses outside the city walls are empty: villagers have regrouped inside.

August 20th, 748, morning

They go back to town, and after informing Wyan of their meeting with Loht, he agrees to part with the *Eye of Vhaeraun*. He gives them the bag containing the item.

Wyan heard the name before. “Didn’t know this Loht is real. I read this in a book: Loht is the lord of the Unseelie Court of the feys (aka the Shadow Court). It attracts evil feys. His sister is Maeve, and she is the lord of the Seelie Court (Court of Light), and supposedly, the good feys follow her.”

“Keening”, he adds, “is a dead zone north of here. It was a verdant land before the arrival of Tristessa. She is a banshee...”

“Please bring her back”, he asks.