

DREAD ENCOUNTERS



13 Horrifying Hooks for Ravenloft



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AUTHORS

CHARLES GERARD, TYLER HUDAK, NOAH LLOYD, AND ED POSSING

EDITOR

NOAH LLOYD

LAYOUT

ED POSSING

ART AND CARTOGRAPHY

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AUTHOR BIOS

CHARLES GERARD

Charles Gerard is afraid of the dark, and curiosity is his tragic flaw. Since about the age of seven, he has been trapping and collecting nightmare things that live in the darkness. He places them in labeled jars and carefully pins them to corks. So far, he's collected samples from 37 countries and dozens of haunted houses. Only a smidgen of them have appeared in print so far. His game writing has appeared in publications for Cubicle 7, Golden Goblin Press, and Sentinel Hill Press. He co-hosts the ENnie Award-winning Miskatonic University Podcast as Keeper Chad. He currently lives in New York City with his partner Trish and a cat who often knocks over jars.

TYLER HUDAK

Tyler Hudak first fell in love with Ravenloft when he picked up the original box set in 1990 and has been trying to scare his players ever since. While he primarily plays Lovecraftian RPGs now, he couldn't resist coming back to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and Ravenloft to try and evoke its atmosphere of terror and despair once again.

NOAH LLOYD

Noah is a PhD candidate studying eighteenth-century English literature, and a freelance writer, editor, and game designer. He writes horror one-page scenarios for ReckoningoftheDead.com (mostly for *Call of Cthulhu*), is generally too preoccupied by giant robots, and is currently working on a couple of NDA projects he really wishes he could tell y'all about. You can find him online @noahghola.

ED POSSING

Ed Possing is a writer, game designer, and fitness instructor. He's enjoyed role playing games since the early 80's when he first started playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. Some of his work can be found in the Miskatonic Repository, *The Unspeakable Oath*, and *Hypergraphia*. He also administers the annual Delta Green Shotgun Scenario Contest. He is fascinated with spiders.

INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO *DREAD ENCOUNTERS: 13 HORRIFYING HOOKS FOR RAVENLOFT*. Within, delve into cities of misery and beat a path through forests of misfortune. While Strahd stalks the halls of Castle Ravenloft, other shadows haunt the blighted countryside and towns of Barovia.

None of the following encounters require deep knowledge of the *Curse of Strahd* campaign, though they do reference locations in Ravenloft and some of its iconic characters. We hope you enjoy this collection of scenario hooks, monsters, and weird devices, and that your players will forever remember their encounters with dread...



THE COLOUR OUT OF BAROVIA

by Tyler Hudak

The heroes find that adventurers aren't the only ones who get trapped in the Demiplane of Dread.

Hooks

- The adventurers are traveling through the countryside of Barovia when night starts to fall. As the sun dips below the horizon and the wolves begin to howl, a farmhouse emerges from the distance.
- Rumors spread that the Dobrescu family, who live in a farm outside of the village, have not been seen in days. They may have found a way to escape Barovia.

The Dobrescu family run a farm in the countryside of Barovia. Last winter, a **colour** from the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Radiance was trapped in Ravenloft and took residence in the well behind the Dobrescu farmhouse. It slowly drained the life of the family and their farmhands, driving them insane and turning them into crazed, living **zombies** (except where noted otherwise, the Dobrescus use the stats for zombies found in the *Monster Manual*, page 316).

THE FARM

A dirt road leads to the Dobrescu farm through a cornfield and a grove of apple trees. The stalks are pregnant with corn and the apples are the size of an orc's head. Tasting requires a DC 10 Constitution check, or the adventurer vomits from the horrible, rotten taste of the food. When travelling past the cornfield or the grove, the stalks and trees rustle and sway despite the absence of wind. Glimpses of shadowy beings are seen through the vegetation, but the characters are unable to find what makes them. If travelling at night, an ambient purple glow emanates from the stalks and trees.

THE FAMILY

With the exception of the matriarch, **Mariana** (she/her), the family now roams the grounds outside the farmhouse. In all, there are twice the number of Dobrescu zombies as there are adventurers. **Andrej** (he/him), the father, is able to cast 1d3 level-1 wizard spells. They attack the heroes if they try to leave the farmhouse or siege the house once night falls.

Mariana was the first to go insane, but ironically the last to turn into a zombie. She is currently shackled in the attic of the farmhouse, hiding in a darkened corner. If encountered, she switches between laughing about her family coming home soon to meet the adventurers and screaming with wide, bloodshot eyes that "The color is pain!" If released from the shackles, she attacks the adventurers for one round before jumping out an attic window to her death.

THE FARMHOUSE

The farmhouse is a two-story wooden structure with a small attic and root cellar. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check in the cellar finds a loose panel that contains 15 GP and a potion of healing.

The corruption of the creature takes time to occur, so the adventurers will not be turned into zombies unless they are killed by the creature or eat multiple meals of the food (see stats for the **colour**, Appendix A, page 19). However, to increase their paranoia, the decaying corpse of a dog is found in the kitchen next to a half-eaten apple; shortly after they enter, the dog animates and attacks the adventurers.

DMs should fill the house with things that add to the sense of abandonment and corruption from the creature. Examples include an abandoned knitting project, a bright pumpkin that has partially crumbled into a black rotting mess, or a flower in a cup that purposefully grows away from the sunlight.

THE WELL AND THE CREATURE

The well, 20 feet deep, is located in the back of the house. During the day, anyone looking into the well sees a faint glow, while at night it glows brightly. The creature immediately attacks anyone foolish enough to jump into the well, where it resides.

Disturbed by the arrival of the adventurers, the creature waits until nightfall and then uses the zombies to break into the house and drag them out to the well. If its zombies are failing, it emerges from the well to help in the attack. The creature retreats to the well if it falls below 10 HP.



PHANTASMAGORIA

by Charles Gerard

Barovia is full of strange and wonderful contraptions, but travelers should beware that such items are sometimes infused with dark forces.

THE NIGHTMARE LANTERN OF FRITZ VON WEERG

One of the many artefacts from Fritz von Weerg's workshop (*Curse of Strahd*, page 118) is a sophisticated parlor amusement designed to project dancing images on the walls of a darkened room. The device has a powerful light in its core, surrounded by layers of filigree cut out of thin metal cylinders that whirl and rotate at different speeds using precise clockwork under wind-up power. The effect is spectacular—when operated in a dark room, seemingly animated shadows, imps, demons, and other luminous figures dance and fly and weave across the walls and ceiling. The device entertained many a guest at aristocratic parties across Barovia. But von Weerg was never satisfied with the effect, and never stopped adding layers and reaching for greater levels of amazement among his audience. Eventually, as with many of von Weerg's inventions, the toymaker's obsession and madness tainted his creation. Soon, the lantern gained the ability to summon real shadow demons from the realm of his nightmares, and after several terrifying dinner parties and unthinkable injuries, aristocratic patrons stopped requesting von Weerg's lantern at their occasions. The device was locked away in storage for quite some time, but it somehow disappeared and now turns up in surprising locations, almost as though it has an agenda of its own.

HOOKS

The Nightmare Lantern can turn up anywhere in Barovia as an oddity for sale or as an amusement that a host is eager to show off. It could even make several appearances before the group has a chance to see it at work, leaving the impression that the machine is following the party around the realm.

Strange Traveling Salesman. A well-dressed seller of wares at a crossroads tries to convince the adventurers to purchase what they claim is their own strange invention. They describe its wondrous properties, of course omitting the danger of summoned shade creatures. They pitch the machine as a way to bring welcome relief from the sadness of Barovian life. If the group buys it, the seller explains the complicated way to operate the machine. The seller does not reveal their name and deflects the question if asked.

Child's Play. In an alley or dark corner of a town, three children play with a strange device. It clicks and whirrs, but they don't seem able to make it work. The children ask for help. If questioned, they describe a well-dressed person who gave it to them in exchange for broken toys.

An Unexpected Place. The device appears in a seemingly impossible location, down in a sewer culvert, catacombs, or in a sealed tomb. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals fresh footprints in surrounding dust. They lead up to the device, but not away.

After-Dinner Entertainment. The adventurers find themselves invited to a party somewhere in Barovia. After conversation and

feasting, the host brings out the device and sets it on the table. "I must show you something extraordinary," the gracious host says. They explain how they bought the device from a strange man at a crossroads, or found it themselves in an unusual place.

If the device is turned on, the adventurers see various amazing and grotesque figures spinning and weaving around the walls. After one round, adventurers must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw to avoid their fears taking hold of them. If failed, the device summons 1d4 **shadows** (*Monster Manual*, page 269) that take nightmare forms tailored to the adventurer's experience. The shapes may take the form of deceased loved ones, innocents they failed to save, or monsters that brought them to the brink of death. Other NPCs in the room also add to the number of summoned shadows. Once summoned, breaking the device or turning it off does not dispel the creatures that appear.



WEMARI'S MAGICAL TOME

by Tyler Hudak

A magical store, especially one in Ravenloft, is not something to be taken lightly...

Hooks

The adventurers discover a new store just outside the village they're currently in. Supposedly it contains many magical tomes with wonderful knowledge, but for a price.

THE LIBRARY OF WEMARI SILVERWINDS

Wemari Silverwinds (she/her) was a devious elven merchant who dealt in magical books, but is now a ghost. Long ago, she attempted to trick Strahd by selling him a forged magical tome. He found out, had her murdered, and cursed her soul to forever bargain with the living.

Her store now appears in different places around Barovia—on the outskirts of a village, in the middle of a forest, at the end of a street where it wasn't there before. Wemari stands behind a counter just inside the door, smiles and greets the adventurers. The shelves behind her are empty, but a small room beyond is lined with many books. She promises the adventurers her books will change their lives and give them knowledge and skills to help them in their quest, which she recounts as if she had followed them the entire time. But access to the books comes at a cost: their name.

Wemari states that one hero may sign over their name to her and pick one book to read. If asked what she means, she simply states, "One book for your name. It's as simple as that."

THE BARGAIN

Only one adventurer may agree to the bargain. If one does, Wemari pulls out a large, leatherbound book that contains lines and lines of signatures. She hands the adventurer a quill pen, points to the next available space, and asks them to sign. Once signed, she stands aside and allows that hero, and only that hero, to enter the room behind her. They may only choose one book.

Books

The adventurer may pick a book or roll a d10 to determine one at random. Books vanish after their effects are bestowed. The hero may not skim or browse the books; the first book they look through is the one they choose.

d10

Book

- 1 **Shadows of the Living.** A red velvet book that, upon reading, causes the adventurer's shadow to leap from their body and exit the room. They then gain Advantage on all Stealth checks performed in the daylight. However, their shadow wants to return to them, and slowly takes physical form to do so.
2. **Arcane Secrets.** A black obsidian-covered book. When read, the adventurer permanently learns a random level-5 wizard spell that can be cast once per day, regardless of their class.

- 3 **Transforming into the Strong.** A blue dragon-skinned pamphlet. The reader's skin becomes a dark blue hue and they gain a permanent +2 AC bonus.
- 4 **The Life of YOU.** A silver-threaded papyrus scroll, where "YOU" is the reader's original name. The scroll contains the entire life story of the adventurer. If the end of the scroll is examined, they see writing describing what they are doing and thinking at that moment. The scroll contains three uses to recall something precisely or to gain Advantage on situational awareness rolls (e.g. Perception, Investigation, find traps, etc.).
- 5 **Treasures of the Realms.** A sheaf of loosely bound moldy papers. This contains precise directions to a vast treasure in a realm that is not Ravenloft. Each page disappears as the adventurer follows the directions.
- 6 **Libre Forti (Book of the Strong).** A deerskin-covered manual, from which the reader gains one additional hit point for every character level and permanent resistance to non-magical disease.
- 7 **Tactics of General Whipkneel.** A plain notebook that feels oily to the touch, this book contains highly detailed tactics against a type of creature chosen by the adventurer. They gain an Advantage die when in combat against that type of creature.
- 8 **Codex Botanicus.** A book covered in purple fur, it contains intricate details on the healing properties of plants. After reading, the adventurer may create one salve per day that has healing properties equivalent to a potion of healing.
9. **Fires of the South.** A piece of carved petrified bark that smells burnt. After reading, the adventurer gains permanent resistance to heat damage.
- 10 **Friends of the Forest.** a book whose pages are composed of an impossibly large leaf folded over on itself and inked in a black, tarry substance. The reader gains the ability to talk to squirrels.

COMBAT

If attacked, Wemari cackles as the attack passes through her. She and her store then disappear.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

Immediately after the adventurers leave the store, it disappears. The DM should ask the hero to choose a new name. From this point forward, when the adventurer encounters anyone they have met before—including the others in the party—those people have no recollection of the adventurer and have never heard their name. They become a stranger to friends, family, loved ones, and animal companions. All deeds they have accomplished are forgotten, although any knowledge they have accumulated (such as spells) remain. They have become a figurative ghost of their former selves.

The curse is reversed through a wish spell or favor granted by a God. The adventurer may also track Wemari down who will agree to reverse the curse if they convince five others to sign the book. If the curse ever reverses, the benefit gained from the book also disappears.

IN NAME ONLY

by Charles Gerard

The adventurers discover the overgrown ruins of Hallberg Priory, where a pack of juvenile gargoyles conspire to take an unusual prize from the party.

Hook

This encounter can crop up in any remote location in Barovia. The ruins only need to be set away from busy thoroughfares and can fit in easily as a roadside diversion or a surprising discovery along a wooded shortcut.

Uncounted years have ground the formerly exalted Priory down to a few scattered remnants. Adventurers spy one of these stone structures peeking out of thick vegetation on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, or they find themselves in the center of an overgrown clearing. Low crumbled stone walls outline the remains of an L-shaped building, and a half dozen vine-shrouded free-standing archways and solitary buttresses rise above the floor. The **gargoyles** (*Monster Manual*, page 140) emerge from thickets or jump down off perches and close in on the party.



THE NAME QUEST

Makers of gargoyles in Barovia do not name their creations because of an ancient superstition that this would invite very bad luck. The lack of names makes life for gargoyles very confusing. Thus, according to Barovian gargoyle custom, when each juvenile reaches an

adolescent age they embark on a mission to kill and take their name from fallen prey. While the gargoyles attempt to use nicknames for one another, gargoyle memory being what it is, they often forget. The strange magic of proper names, however, cements a new identity.

If an adventurer begins to ask about the customs of local gargoyles or raises suspicion about their behavior, they may learn part of this local lore on a DC 25 Intelligence (History) check, or at the DM's discretion.

THE PRIORY CLUTCH

The gargoyles of Hallberg Priory have long been abandoned by their makers. Most of the creatures have matured well into adulthood without claiming proper names. As the adventurers step into the ruins, a number of gargoyles equal to the number of adventurers, plus three, emerge from vines, underbrush, and from perches atop pillars and archways.

Carvers made each of the Priory gargoyles unique, though they share a common vaulted style that matches the building's structure. Some have feline faces and limbs, others have canine or bat-like features. Each has a set of chiropteran wings, which vary in size.

One With the Smallest Wings (they/them) jumps down from a perch and cautiously approaches the visitors first. "Hello pleased to meet you what is your name traveler?" they ask, in a strangely run-on introduction. Gargoyles are terrible at small talk.

ROLEPLAYING THE GARGOYLES

Whenever an adventurer offers their name, the rest of the creatures chat quietly among themselves about the quality and characteristics of the name, as though inspecting a piece of fresh produce. Cheerful and persistent questions about the nature, meaning, and origin of the adventurers' names follow. The circle of gargoyles slowly closes in. Two or more argue over who heard a favored name first. This could even escalate to a physical tussle. There is only one named gargoyle, **Xavier From Krezk Originally But Now I Live Near the Lake** (they/them). They proudly introduce themselves to each of the visitors, saying their full name every time. On a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, party members notice the moldy skeleton of an adventurer propped against the base of a pillar, clothed in light chain—the body of a person formerly known as Xavier.

The adventurers soon realize why the creatures are obsessed with their names. Party members do have an opportunity to resolve this confrontation with wits. Reward creative suggestions (e.g. convincing them to take names from gravestones, or selling them another's name) and allow use of skills like Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion for convincing roleplay. The custom of taking the names of slain victims has strong cultural weight, but the creatures are not magically bound to the practice.

A MURDERER IN THE CORN

by Ed Possing

Villagers ask the characters to retrieve a body from a cornfield; they subsequently find themselves stalked by the killer, the spirit of a murderer trapped in the body of a scarecrow.

Hook

The characters are approached by a group of villagers from Krezk. The villagers beg them to retrieve the body of **Kala Luchreck** (she/her), a beloved friend and farmer, struck down in her field outside of Krezk. The villagers are (rightfully) frightened that the killer is still about; they will not enter the field themselves. In exchange for this seemingly simple request the villagers offer a meal, a warm, safe place to sleep for the night, and even a few coins in payment.

The Body

The characters find the woman's body tied to a great oak on the far edge of the field. Blood-soaked and broken, the body hangs limply from the tree with a crossbeam providing support for her arms. The body is easily removed from its bonds without incident, but a possessed **scarecrow** (*Monster Manual*, page 268) watches from the field.

The Mad Scarecrow

The spirit of **Seratz Vadu** (he/him) inhabits the straw body of the cornfield scarecrow. In life, Seratz Vadu was a farmer who worked the fields near the village of Barovia. He was also a serial killer. His fascination with scarecrows led him to skin the bodies of his victims, stuff them with straw, and hang them on posts in his fields. He was eventually stopped by local Barovians and interred in the madhouse in the Abbey of Saint Markovia in Krezk. Here he endured hellish conditions. Ultimately, he was set upon and murdered by another inmate and hung from the bars of his cell in the mocking form of a scarecrow.

The vengeful spirit of Seratz, now propelled by his own malice, occupies the body of a scarecrow and continues his macabre work after death. He will not rest until all in Barovia hang from a scarecrow's cross. Seratz now watches the characters dismantle his most recent project.

It Watches, Waits, Kills

Seratz hangs in the center of the cornfield. He is obvious to anyone looking around, but appears as any normal non-animated scarecrow would. Characters may suspect the hanging scarecrow. If asked about the scarecrow, no one in the group from Krezk particularly remembers Luchreck owning a scarecrow. She preferred to use her hunting dogs to scare off birds and other nuisances. The scarecrow doesn't move unless attacked, in which case it attacks in kind, to the death.

If the characters leave without inspecting the scarecrow it leaves the field, stalking them throughout the day, waiting for them to retire for the evening. This is his preferred moment to strike. Allow the characters DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) checks at opportune moments to realize they are being hunted.

When he finally attacks the heroes, he starts with the characters that removed his earlier work from the tree. Given the chance, he skins any characters killed and stuffs them with straw. Perfect for hanging in the fields.

Treasure

The villagers from Krezk make good on their offer of food, bed, and four silver pieces for each character.



BURIED AT SWAMP

by Noah Lloyd

As the investigators explore the base of Mt. Ghakis, rising smoke draws them to a large swamp surrounded by a narrow copse of trees. Half-sunk in the middle of the swamp is a large ship with strange towers projecting from its deck.

THE SWAMP

The swamp is roughly circular, about one hundred yards across, with only a few sickly trees projecting from its shallow, algae-filled surface. When the adventurers arrive, read or summarize the following:

The trees are thin and close, making navigation difficult. The ground beneath your feet softens noticeably. As the trees thin, you can smell pungent earthen rot and animal excrement. Just beyond, you see a large, isolated swamp, surrounded by trees on all sides. Rising from its center, a strange structure commands the view: perhaps sixty feet long, it rises out of the swamp at a low angle, part of the structure's base lifted from the ground. From the end suspended above the swamp hangs a large wheel, painted red, not unlike the water wheel of a grain mill. From the other end, which is partially sunk, protrude two narrow towers of about human width and thirty feet tall. Smoke billows from one of the towers.

THE VESSEL

With DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks, the adventurers notice the vessel's intact rudder under the stern side, realizing that this is a boat of some kind. The vessel is a stern-wheeled riverboat, *The Carlisle*, that vanished in a cloud bank on the Mississippi River in 1870. Its two "towers" are smokestacks that rise thirty feet into the air. The boat, once used as a passenger ship, has effectively run aground in the swamp, captured by the mists of Ravenloft. Its paddle wheel is still intact and protrudes from the stern section above the swamp. Once painted white, the boat is now covered in black rot, and moss hangs from its railings and exposed, rusted hull. Its name, once painted along the side, has now almost entirely chipped away (if your adventurers can understand English letters at all, that is).



Inside the ship, swamp mud and flood detritus have filled the boat to several feet higher than the water outside, making exterior cabin doors unusable. To gain entry, the adventurers must scale the outside of the vessel. This is relatively easy, with only DC 10 Strength (Athletics) checks, considering the ornate railings that cover the ship's exterior. With a single success they can access a higher exterior door that leads to interior apartments. With two DC 14 Strength (Athletics) checks, adventurers attempting to climb the deck (which slopes at a 45-degree angle) can access a large cargo hold-style opening leading belowdecks.

The adventurers discover clothing from the nineteenth-century American South hidden away in several old, half-rotten carpetbags, along with unrecognizable silver coins. As they progress deeper into the bowels of the ships, they fight through cobwebs to reach the source of the smoke: where the swamp has seeped into the boat, a **nothic** (*Monster Manual*, page 236), named **Cryingson** (he/him), has built a fire to keep warm on cold Barovian nights. Three other nothics wait, hidden in the wings nearby.

Cryingson speaks with a high, whiny voice, and is happy to tell the adventurers a tale of lust, intrigue, betrayal, and damnation... the tale is of *The Carlisle* itself, and of its doomed passengers, and of how they came to Barovia. If anyone attacks Cryingson or attempts to leave, all four nothics, the corrupted forms of *The Carlisle's* remaining crew, attack.

THAT RINGS A BELL

by Ed Possing

The Svalich Woods are home to many mysteries. The party discovers one in the form of a lone bell tower deep within the ancient forest.

Hook

As the characters travel off road through the Svalich Woods, they come across a stone bell tower in a clearing. Read or paraphrase the following:

The ancient trees open up, giving way to a large clearing. In the center of this is a tall bell tower made of ancient stone, tall as the tallest tree. It is capped with a silvery bell resting in a belfry.

TOWER OF PUZZLES

The tower itself is alive, imbued with a cruel sentence from this land of dread. It fades in and out of existence as it desires, offering shelter to hapless travelers. It delights in playing its deadly game with all those who enter.

The tower consists of three floors and the belfry on the fourth. Each floor contains a puzzle trap that must be solved before advancing to the next level. A stairway and trapdoor appear in the room after each trap is bypassed.

Characters attempting to solve each trap may be aided by their knowledge of Barovian sayings. Each trap represents one such saying. Ideally the Dungeon Master seeds the following “clue” phrases to the party at various times earlier in the campaign, prior to encountering the bell tower. Alternatively, the Dungeon Master may allow Intelligence (History) checks to “remember” the phrases.

GROUND FLOOR —THE TEARS OF CLOWNS

Characters discover four eyeless clown statues in this room. On the floor are dozens of glass eyes in a variety of colors (blue, red, and black). Once a clown is touched the door seals and water fills the room, flowing from the eye sockets of the four clowns. The characters have three rounds before water completely fills the room and there is no more air to breathe. The water drains when the red glass eyes are placed into each clown’s eye sockets.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recalls the Barovian saying: *“Only trust a broken clown. You will know him by his swollen red eyes.”*

SECOND FLOOR —DANCING SKELETONS

Here, six pairs of skeleton statues are posed as if dancing. When a skeleton is touched the door seals and poison gas fills the room, rising from the floor. The characters make DC 13 Constitution saving throws each round or take 3d6 poison damage. The gas is released from the room if a character pushes over a skeleton and stands on the floor in its place (on top of a pressure plate).

A DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recalls the Barovian saying: *“When death arrives, do insist upon one more dance.”*

THIRD FLOOR —EXECUTIONER’S SONG

Upon entering this room, the door seals. Inside is the statue of a hooded executioner holding a mighty axe over its head. Below him is a stock ready to accept someone’s neck. Unless someone puts their head into it, blades spring from the walls, striking anyone in the room in two rounds. A DC 16 Dexterity saving throw per round avoids 3d10 slashing damage. Any song sung from the stock disables the blade trap.

A DC 20 Intelligence (History) check recalls the Barovian saying: *“When the headsman has come for you, sing, sing, sing.”*

TREASURE

Ring the bell causes the tower to crumble slowly into the earth. The tower screams as it dissolves into the earth. The bell remains. Made of silver, it is worth 500 gold pieces but weighs nearly half a ton.



AND THE RAINS FELL

by Noah Lloyd

Rain begins to fall. At first, it may seem to the protagonists that they're simply going to get wet. As the rain continues, however, for hours or even days, flash floods, falling trees, and lightning strikes plague the adventurers until they can find a way to make the constant downpour stop.

Hook

"And the Rains Fell" torments the heroes with environmental hazards until they locate the rain's cause at the Luna River Crossroads.

HAZARDS OF THE STORM

In addition to random encounter rolls, you can occasionally (once or twice per day) add a roll on the "Hazards of the Storm" table. Roll 1d6.

HAZARDS OF THE STORM

d6	Hazard
1	Lightning Strike. DC 20 Dexterity save to avoid, 8d6 lightning damage on a fail, half damage on a success, and nearby flammable objects ignite.
2	Deafening thunder crash. DC 17 Constitution save to avoid, 2d8 thunder damage on a fail, half damage on a success.
3	Flash flood. A roaring fills the air, and thousands of gallons of water overwhelm the heroes. DC 20 Strength save to avoid, 6d6 bludgeoning damage on a fail, half damage on a success.
4	Buffeting winds. DC 17 Strength save to avoid 3d6 bludgeoning damage on a fail, half damage on a success.
5	Roll twice more. Ignore this result if rolled again.
6	No hazard occurs.

Because of the torrential rain's oppressive nature, resting outdoors becomes impossible without shelter, making the protagonists more prone to the effects of **exhaustion** (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 291).

LUNA RIVER CROSSROADS

When the characters reach the Luna River Crossroads (see *Curse of Strahd*, page 40), roll for a random encounter like normal. No rolls are necessary for the characters to realize, almost immediately, that within the crossroads itself there is no rain falling.

With DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) checks, the heroes note that a bit of earth near the base of the snapped wooden signpost is uplifted—not freshly dug, but *raised*, as though something within were trying to escape. Further, the ground around the post is muddy, as though freshly wetted from a full pitcher of water.

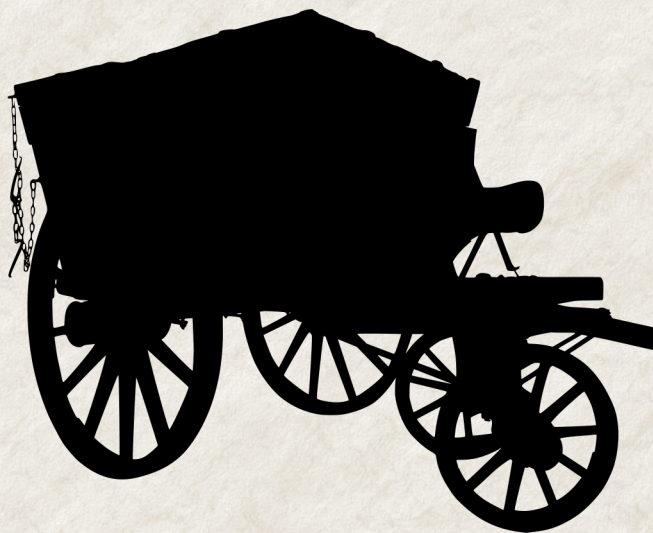
Spreading aside the dirt and mud, they reveal a human skull, its lower jaw missing and parts of the frontal and parietal bones crushed—likely the cause of death. If the characters remove the skull from its resting place or attempt to leave the crossroads, a **water elemental** (*Monster Manual*, page 125) animates from the soaking ground and attacks, the skull floating to the top of a watery,

humanoid body. As it attacks, a dreadful wailing cries from the vicinity of the skull, dropping and then raising in pitch like a wailing funeral horn.

This fight can be made slightly easier if you decide that the utter destruction of the skull will banish the water elemental, but it is just as plausible that, once the characters crush the skull to powder, the water elemental remains to fight on more aggressively than before.

Once the water elemental is defeated, it dissipates into the ground of the crossroads, and the rain ceases... for now.





THE NONESUCH

by Charles Gerard

Just outside of a town where traffic is busy, but the presence of law is thin, a showman calling himself **Baron Monpezat** (he/him) has gathered a small troupe of sideshow performers to titillate passers-by. But the show's main attraction, billed as the Nonesuch, seems troubled and in need of help.

Hook

Adventurers notice a cluster of wagons and tents arranged in a semicircle. A man in a silk top hat approaches, waving a cane wildly and launching into a well-rehearsed barking routine. Members of the troupe quickly bring stools and nearly force the group to sit before a makeshift stage.

Come, road-weary friends, quickly! Wonders to show and terrors to reveal! Sample these astounding attractions! Your shock and amusement are guaranteed! But your safety is not! Wince at the Sultan Swallower of Swords! Shudder at the Empress of Snakes! Puzzle over the Intertwined Twins! Careen over our collection of macabre curios! And for the final Coup D'Etat¹, our Chimeric Curiosity, the Grotesque, the Enigmatical, the Uncanny...Nonesuch!

(On cue, the other performers scream somewhat unimpressively.)

What follows is a series of short performances on a small wooden stage in front of a large crate covered in tattered silks. A rope strung between wagons drapes colorful patched linens that form a makeshift curtain for the stage. There are a few amateurish mishaps (the snake handler loses a snake, the sword swallower gets a blade stuck in his gullet and asks for help from the audience, the skirt worn by conjoined twins reveals two performers contorted to look like one), but the performances are mildly amusing, and the troupe covers mistakes with charm. Between acts, Monpezat builds an implausibly high level of expectation for the final act.

Monpezat passes his top hat around the group, suggesting "contributions" of five silver pieces to help with the upkeep and food for the "starving" troupe.

If some in the group pay, he begins the finale, yanking the silks off the crate, revealing a humanoid creature in a cramped box with wooden bars. The reveal is tragicomic. The **Nonesuch** (they/them, **mongrelfolk**, *Curse of Strahd*, page 234) is a patchwork chimera of skunk, warhog, and seal. Their face is striped but long

and tusked at the jaw, and the bottom half of its body narrows to a single tailfin. One limb is a flipper, and the other a little skunk hand. Monpezat has strapped small deer antlers to the creature's head for extra flair. Those well-traveled in Barovia recognize Nonesuch as belonging to a race many in Barovia call "mongrelfolk" (*Curse of Strahd*, page 234), a derogatory word for magically transformed humanoids that have features of several animals. Use of this word is deeply offensive to members of this race and their allies. The Nonesuch crouches uncomfortably inside the crate as Monpezat spins a yarn about a group of adventurers "just like yourselves" who found the Nonesuch frozen in an ice sheet far to the north, chipped out and thawed the ferocious creature, which then slayed them all in cold blood. Apparently on cue (sometimes after a line is repeated emphatically) Nonesuch makes guttural sounds poorly mimicking roaring or barking while clattering their horns against the bars.

If the adventurers spend any time talking to the troupe afterward, **Zenobia, the Sultan Swallower of Swords** (she/her, uses **bandit captain** stats, *Monster Manual*, page 344) approaches, speaking in a hoarse whisper (partly due to a recent esophageal injury), and asks one of the party members to deliver a letter to *Clovin* at the Abbey of Saint Markovia in Kresk. The note is sloppily sealed in tallow with part of a small paw print.

Letter from the Nonesuch

Clovin, I made a bad mistake. Sorry I escaped from the Abbey. Now I want to go home. The Monza keeps me in a small cage and I'm sore and the people poke at me and I hate the food and I hate the dust and I hate the Monza. Please take me back to the abee. I can be good this time. Your friend Kelly.

If the adventurers read the note, they must decide whether to act on the message or ignore it. There is a 50% chance that one of the other performers notices that the adventurers have the letter. Some are sympathetic to Nonesuch/Kelly, and others know that the creature is a key attraction for the sideshow and helps to keep the troupe fed. Monpezat and the other performers will not fare well in a fight with the adventurers, but openly taking Nonesuch/Kelly by force will create well-connected enemies who will not soon forget the affront.

1. Monpezat gets the French phrase incorrect here, highlighting his pretensions to class.

A TRILOGY OF GRIEF

The following three encounters each dwell on the theme of loss and grief that permeates the demiplane of Ravenloft.

A TRILOGY OF GRIEF #1: THE MOURNING WOMAN

by Tyler Hudak

The adventurers learn that some in Ravenloft cannot be helped.

HOOKS

- Some in Barovia village have heard a wail come from within Svalich Woods and fear it is a banshee.
- While traveling near Svalich Woods, the adventurers hear a mournful cry nearby. Is someone in trouble?

DANYA STORMLIGHT

After traveling through Svalich Woods to investigate the wailing, the adventurers come to a small clearing with a large pond. Read or summarize the following.

Kneeling at the edge of a murky, stagnant pond is a half-elven woman. Dirty and in tattered clothing, she lets out an anguished wail, the same one you heard through the woods. Tears stream down her face as she sobs the name “Barnaby.”

This is **Danya Stormlight** (she/her, **commoner**, *Monster Manual*, page 345). She is in mourning for her human lover, Barnaby, who she is convinced bandits hold captive in a cave through the woods.

In reality, Barnaby is dead. He lies just under the water of the pond, his corpse hidden under pungent algae. He drowned a year ago while attempting to get a flower from the middle of the pond that caught Danya’s eye. In her shock and mourning, and with the help of the corruptive influence of Ravenloft, Danya has convinced herself otherwise.

With a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, Danya tells her story. Through teary eyes, she implores the adventurers to save her beloved and gives them directions to the cave. She promises that her father will reward them, as he is a wealthy merchant in Barovia Village. This is not true, and her parents (Emeric and Isabella) died years ago; their gravestones are in the Barovia church cemetery.

THE CAVE

The cave resides in a rocky outcropping in Svalich Woods, less than a half mile from Danya. Inside are two **dire wolves** (*Monster Manual*, page 321) per adventurer that attack when the cave is entered. Within the cave the adventurers find animal bones from previous wolf kills, but nothing more.

RETURNING

If told of their discovery, Danya refuses to believe that Barnaby was not there and accuses the adventures of deception. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check has the heroes notice a spot in the middle of the pond where the algae grows thicker. Disturbing the pond reveals Barnaby’s decaying body.

Danya refuses to believe the body is Barnaby’s, believing instead it is an illusion cast by the adventurers. She throws herself to the ground and resumes her sorrowful wailing as the algae closes up once again above the body of Barnaby.

The adventurers can do nothing to help Danya, who refuses to leave the pond.



A TRILOGY OF GRIEF #2: A CHILDLESS MOTHER

by Ed Possing

The toymaker of Vallaki hires the party to recover a barrel of stolen doll heads. The characters follow clues that lead to the thief's lair, the bolt hole of an intelligent giant spider, insane with grief.

Hook

Gadof Blinsky (he/him, uses the **commoner** stats in the *Monster Manual*, page 345) takes his job of making children happy very seriously. A portrait on one of his walls shows his partner and twin sons, all three of whom he lost to illness soon after the twins' birth. When he discovers that a barrel of his finest handcrafted doll heads has been stolen in the night, he asks the characters for assistance. Blinsky offers some gold to the party for their help. He also promises the good will of the town burgomaster.

THE NIGHT OF THE CRIME

Blinsky explains that he was up late in the night. He remembers hearing a woman's voice outside his window singing a lullaby. Before seeing who it was, he fell into a deep sleep. When he woke, the doll heads were gone.

OH MOTHER

The thief is a giant spider named **Sherexx** (she/her). **Baba Lysaga** (she/her, *Curse of Strahd*, pages 228-29) granted Sherexx the power of speech and unnatural intelligence in order that she provide intelligent conversation for the hag. But Sherexx fell prey to Baba Lysaga's fury when the monstrous arachnid became disobedient, opting to care for her giant egg sac filled with her soon-to-be-born children. Baba Lysaga set the egg sac aflame, killing the unborn spiders, and cast Sherexx out.

The event shattered Sherexx's sanity. She has wandered the lands of Barovia for weeks, mumbling to herself and looking for her children. She wandered into Vallaki, peeked into the workshop, and saw Blinsky and the doll heads. Convinced herself the heads were her children, she cast *Sleep* on the toymaker, broke into his workshop, and took the barrel. Fleeing to the woods, she found a cave suitable for her and her imagined brood.

ON THE TRAIL

The characters begin by uncovering some clues. Blinsky's workshop is in shambles. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals evidence of a giant spider, bits of webbing and stiff spider hairs.

Inspecting the area outside the workshop, a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the drag marks of a barrel leading to the forest. A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check reveals Sherexx's tracks. The trail leads deeper into the forest and becomes difficult to follow. Another successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check points all the way to Sherexx's cave.

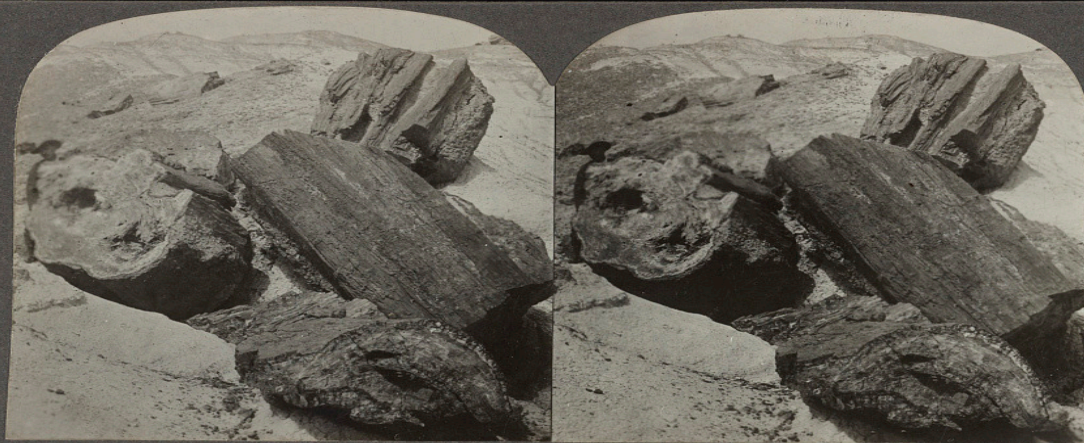
Sherexx sings to herself in the darkness of her cave. If the characters call to her from the outside they can convince her to exit with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Whether she comes out or they go in, they see Sherexx and dozens of doll heads that she has webbed to her body. She will protect her "children" to the death and cannot be convinced to return them.

The heroes will have to kill the spider to retrieve the heads. Alternatively, they may attempt to persuade Blinsky to let Sherexx keep them. The toymaker is sympathetic to the giant spider's plight with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Blinsky understands the spider mother's grief, as he remembers his twin boys.

TREASURE

Blinsky rewards each of the characters with 5 gold pieces for the return of his property.





A TRILOGY OF GRIEF #3: AMONG THE STONE TREES

by Noah Lloyd

Off the Old Svalich Road, frequent deer and game trails weave off into the Svalich Woods. A strange light draws the adventurers down one of these trails, where they discover a copse of petrified trees that holds an ancient and deadly secret.

Hook

You can use “The Deer Trail” hook to entice the adventurers off their trail, or simply place the grove of petrified trees in their path.

THE DEER TRAIL

The adventurers see a ruby-red glint just off the path; if they ignore it, the glow follows them, reappearing at different game trails all along the road. The glow never menaces or attempts to charm them, it merely awaits the over-curious.

Pursuing the glow into the woods, the trees grow ever closer together, and the glow remains just out of reach. The glow grows brighter the farther they get from the road, until...

THE ROOTS OF THE DEAD

You emerge into what could almost be described as a peaceful meadow—save for the cluster of towering, menacing stone trees, each over fifteen feet in diameter and at least forty feet tall, their bare branches nearly touching above you. Their bark twinkles in the light, disconcertingly. The place reeks of magic, and the trees do not look wholesome. As you approach them, you realize that they are stone, all stone, and the glistening of their trunks are mineral deposits—pale, pink granite, and tan sandstone. Stepping amongst them, you can see that in the center is a mound of freshly dug earth.

DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) checks suggest that the mound of earth, roughly circular, has been freshly dug, while DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) checks see through the illusion: the mound was dug out decades ago and is far from fresh earth. Digging into the mound reveals nothing for several feet, but eventually the adventurers reveal a small, child-sized coffin.

The inside is lined with red velvet, but contains no corpse; instead, a silver sceptre with a green emerald awaits them. As soon as someone touches it, the **ghost of Marva Tranz** (they/them) manifests, believing that the adventurer is the reincarnation of their deceased child... and perhaps they are. Marva desires that adventurer remain in the stand of petrified trees forever. Marva can tell their story when they realize the adventurer doesn't remember them:

Marva's Story

My poor precious Partha—for that was your name, then. We lived in these woods, in a small cabin not far from here. The wolves knew not to trouble us, and I fed us on the roots and berries I could scavenge from the forest. It was a quiet life, but I was happy, and when you had grown... you would have seen the world. We had never seen him before. But when he arrived, and fed on you, and left you here, my world shattered, and I attacked him... I was not successful, for he continues ruling here, but these trees remain standing. Symbols of my grief.

Marva attacks if it seems the party is trying to leave the trees. Use the statistics for **ghosts** in the *Monster Manual*, page 147, with the addition of the *Flesh to Stone* spell. Marva will do anything they can not to harm the adventurer who first touched the sceptre... but even ghosts have their limits. As soon as Marva's ghost vanishes, the trees around the adventurers shudder and the earth pitches. Call for DC 17 Dexterity checks as they attempt to dodge the falling spires of stone, taking 1d6 damage whenever they fail until escaping back into the forest itself. Turning back, all that's left of Marva's grove is a pile of stone.

At the DM's discretion, the crumbling towers of trees can reveal a clue to the campaign that the adventurers have missed thus far.

MR. BARABBAS' WAGON

by Charles Gerard, Tyler Hudak, Noah Lloyd, & Ed Possing



The adventurers encounter a mysterious tinker, driving his wagon and donkey through the woods of Barovia, seemingly carefree despite the dangers of the countryside. Later, they find his wagon overturned and aflame, with dark secrets creeping from within.

Hook

You can seed this encounter anytime that it seems your campaign is going to be overwhelmed by bleakness. Mr. Barabbas provides some tension relief in the first part of the encounter, only to ramp up the tension in the second part, with a suitably horrific reveal in the third. We've provided three possible conclusions to the scenario hook, which you can select as you please.

PART 1: TURNER THE DONKEY

The wagon is huge, and it seems impossible that it could be pulled by just one donkey, especially as laden as it seems, with pots and pans tied to the side, musical instruments twanging and bouncing to bumps in the road, and bolts of brilliantly colored cloth protruding from the back, along with torch fixtures, bundles of parchment, and what even might be part of a puppet stage. The whole jumble rocks precipitously every few feet, but the kindly looking wagon driver maintains his easy grip on the

reins of his donkey, whose ears lift up and point in your direction as the two approach.

Josef Barabbas (he/him), a Vistani, drives his large donkey **Turner** (he/him) from the Village of Barovia all the way to the Wizard of Wines, though he has not been to the latter in some time, and doesn't know anything about the Martikovs' current plight (*Curse of Strahd*, page 173 ff.). Turner is mildly telepathic and shares his placid feelings with Good or Lawful-aligned characters, while radiating fear toward Evil or Chaotic characters (characters that represent a mixture of these elements get confused, mixed signals from him.) **Roleplaying tip:** when speaking as Turner, adopt your best Eeyore voice.

Barabbas is happy to sell the characters minor aids—potions of healing, rope, etc.—for good prices, and can fix most broken adventuring items given enough time.

PART 2: OVERTURNED AND AFLAME

After the characters meet Barabbas in part one, they can re-encounter him near any of Barovia's towns. As the heroes near the town or village, the sound of a large, crackling fire draws them toward the city center in options A and B, or away from the village to a nearby hill in option C. There they discover Barabbas's over-sized wagon, which has been knocked onto its side and set aflame. The flames reach at least 20 feet into the air; the bolts of fabric burn brilliantly. Barabbas himself isn't anywhere to be seen. As the characters investigate, select one of the following concluding options:

PART 3, OPTION A: THE BAD PLAN

Upon inspecting the burned-out wagon, the characters discover body parts within its burnt husk. The body parts originate from a variety of sources, human as well as demi-human. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the body parts have been taken from fresh corpses.

After searching the scene, Turner makes an appearance. He brays urgently to the characters from the side of a house. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the donkey is frightened and is trying to get the characters to follow him. If the characters ignore Turner, he continues to follow the party, braying at them and nudging them with his head in hopes that they follow.

Turner leads them to Barabbas. Beaten, the tinker is unconscious and near death, lying prone on the outskirts of the village. Revived, Barabbas tells his story.

THE TINKER'S TALE

Barabbas explains, reluctantly, that he's been robbing graves for someone named **Gorgol Rinksa** (he/she) who claimed that he was making an army to free Barovia from Strahd. Barabbas explains that he didn't entirely believe Gorgol, but his money was good, which was good enough. Their arrangement worked well until last night, when Gorgol rejected the body parts Barabbas had brought and a flesh-stitched creature attacked, chasing the tinker away. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Barabbas isn't being completely honest.

Barabbas, once tended to, is happy to leave the village and never return. Turner, however, continues to try to lead the characters elsewhere in the village, nudging and braying the whole way, pushing the characters to deal with Gorgol.

GORGOL RINKSA

Gorgol Rinksa is a mad **archmage** building an army of **flesh golems** (see the *Monster Manual*, pages 169 and 342, respectively) in an underground chamber of his Barovian house. He has three of these creatures in his chamber now. His misguided and foolhardy plan is to use his army to make himself ruler of Barovia in place of Strahd. During the last exchange between Barabbas and Rinksa, Turner discerned Rinksa's plan. Wanting nothing more to do with the archmage, he tried to leave the village. Rinksa sent one of his flesh golems to catch the donkey and recover the cart, Barabbas running behind. The flesh-golem knocked over the cart and chemicals within spilled and ignited. The golem went berserk at the sight of fire, beat Barabbas, and fled back to Gorgol's house. Turner was able to escape and hide in the shadows.

THE MAD ARCHMAGE'S CHAMBER

When the enraged flesh golem returned, Rinksa tried, vainly, to calm his creation. He failed, and the golem killed him, upsetting the two other flesh golems.

When the characters arrive, they hear sounds of destruction coming from the underground chamber of the house. There, they find the dead archmage and three flesh golems fighting with each other. Upon seeing the characters, the flesh golems stop fighting internally and attack the newcomers.



TREASURE

Rinksa has 320 gold pieces hidden in a chest in his underground chamber.

PART 3, OPTION B: BARABBAS'S REVENGE

Shortly after the adventurers last left Barabbas, he and Turner were attacked by a ragtag group of scoundrels: two **thugs** (*Monster Manual*, page 350), a **bandit captain** (*MM*, page 344), and a **mage** (*MM*, page 347).

Barabbas was beaten, tortured, and then murdered deep within the Barovian countryside. The bandits, wanting to make some quick coin off of his wares, cruelly drove Turner to the village the adventurers find themselves in.



Barabbas, however, returned as a **revenant** (*Monster Manual*, page 259) to seek revenge against them. Driven to their location, he attacked them and set the wagon on fire, but they were able to escape.

Turner ran off in the ensuing chaos and is now in a shed close to the village center. Turner's telepathic ability overwhelms the adventurers with the feeling of terror as they get closer to him. He is covered in bloody whip marks and shows signs of relief if adventurers care for him. Those that tend to him have their mind flooded with confusing images of the initial attack on the wagon, followed by the revenant Barabbas attacking the thugs.

The three remaining of the bunch are hidden in different places in and around the village. Barabbas is hunting them down and will kill each of the three by the next morning. After all are dead, Barabbas goes to Turner in his own attempt to apologize for what happened to the donkey, then crumbles to dust.

Shortly after the adventurers find Turner, a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check hears screams coming from a local house. Here they find the revenant Barabbas, just having killed the first thug. Barabbas will attempt to enlist the help of the heroes in his quest to kill the rest of the group. If attacked, Barabbas fights to the death. If he is killed, he arises in a new body per the revenant table in *Curse of Strahd* (page 130) and begins his quest anew.

PART 3, OPTION C: EVERY GOOD TURN

THE CURSE

Unbeknownst to Barabbas, Turner is a donkeywere. Once a fully human leatherworker from Vallaki, Turner found himself afoul of the Brothers and Sisters of Strahd, who cast a curse on him, turning the young craftsman into a donkeywere. The coven delighted in this creative humiliation, eventually selling him to Barabbas. If the GM wishes, Turner's curse could come from **Baba Lysaga** (she/her) herself instead of the coven in Vallaki.

BACK AT THE WAGON

During a sudden downpour, thick mud filled a dip in the road and mired the wagon's wheels. Turner panicked and froze in place. In desperation, Barabbas struck Turner hard several times with his driving switch. This triggered the donkeywere to change into his hybrid form, while also sending him into a blind berserker rage. Turner kicked Barabbas out cold and sent him headlong into an overgrown ditch. He also knocked over the wagon, which caught fire from oil lanterns hung over the driver's bench.

As the adventurers draw closer, they hear the chilling and mournful sound of braying from within a thickly wooded hill just outside of the village.

Party members may spot Barabbas on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, or DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, if they search near the wagon. Healing revives him, but he is unable to speak for several minutes and all his actions are at Disadvantage. As soon as he regains his wits, he realizes that the wagon is ablaze and frantically tries to salvage his most treasured items from the fire, taking 1d6 damage per round. Barabbas will awaken on his own after a few rounds and make his way toward the engulfed wagon at the most inconvenient moment in the adventurers' encounter with Turner.

After two rounds, Turner charges toward the group in donkeywere form and attacks (Appendix A: "Turner the Donkeywere"). In this state, Turner's telepathy can only send an urgent cry for help—even as he fights, adventurers of all alignments feel Turner's underlying sense of terror and confusion about his uncontrolled actions and the state of his own body. Barabbas at first cowers from Turner if the donkeywere confronts him but will try to stop any attacks against his old friend.

If the party goes up the wooded hill toward Turner's braying, they find the humanoid form of a donkeywere silhouetted in the dark woods, kicking up the forest floor. If attacked, Turner fights back without restraint, using the Reckless trait to gain Advantage. If the party tries to calm Turner, there is a 30% chance he will flee toward the village and lay a path of destruction.

Donkeys have long been used as a symbol of shame and humiliation across the realm of Ravenloft. This likely stems from Strahd's tendency to control and restrict the population of horses under his domain, and his special allowances for the horse-loving Vistani. Donkeys, therefore, serve an important but inferior role as fill-in draft animals to replace them. To this day, the word "donkey" is used as an epithet for someone deemed lazy, stubborn, or foolish. In Vallaki, people convicted of crimes are even paraded around in plaster donkey heads to ridicule them (Curse of Strahd, page 119). Those who cross evil sorcerers may suffer humiliating "asinine" transformations, like that of Otto Belview in Krezk (Curse of Strahd, page 147).



APPENDIX A: MONSTERS AND NPCs

BARON MONPEZAT THE SHOWMAN

Monpezat is a charming showman who dazzles his audience (or marks) with wit and grace. He mesmerizes watchers with flair. Like the best street magicians, he induces even the most skeptical to hope they can be fooled. He vastly prefers tricking people over violence. If confronted aggressively, he first tries to disarm his critics with humor and self-deprecation. If that doesn't work, he becomes a fierce opponent and keeps a lifelong "list" of those marked for revenge.

MONPEZAT, SIDESHOW BARKER

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class: 15

Hit Points: 28 (5d6 + 10)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws: Con +2, Cha +6

Skills: Deception +6, Insight +3, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +4

Senses: passive Perception 11

Languages: Draconic, Common, Deep Speech

Challenge: 2

Charlatan. The Baron has a lifetime of subterfuge and con artistry under his voluminous belt, and has Advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to see through lies.

False Identity. Vanishing from view for the duration of a round, the Baron receives Advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks to enact a disguise.

Spellcasting. The Baron is a 1st-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The Baron has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, chill touch, dancing lights, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, detect magic, fog cloud, silent image*
2nd level (2 slots): *mirror image, suggestion*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

THE COLOUR

Colours are radiant light in physical form, each glowing in deep versions of different colors. The creature expands and contracts as it slowly moves, having the appearance of a floating liquid (although it acts more like a gas). Colours come from the Quasi-Elemental Plane of Radiance.

THE COLOUR

Large aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class: 18 (gaseous form)

Hit Points: 85 (10d8 + 40)

Speed: fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills: Perception +6, Stealth +8

Damage Resistance: thunder

Damage Immunities: bludgeoning, cold, necrotic, piercing, poison, radiant, slashing

Condition Immunities: blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses: blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages: —

Challenge: 5 (1,800 XP)

Pure Colour. The creature is color in physical form and can move through any opening that allows light directly through.

Drain. The Colour absorbs the life out of all living objects around. For everyday a creature is in an area tainted by the Colour, they permanently lose 1 CON point. An additional CON is lost if they consume tainted food. When the creature reaches 0 CON they become a zombie controlled by the Colour with simple commands.

Creature of Light. Made of absorbed light and color, the Colour is vulnerable to the Darkness spell, which deals it 2d8 damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Colour makes two ray attacks.

Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 22 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

SHEREXX

Intelligent giant spider. To snare her prey, Sherexx spins elaborate webs or shoots sticky strands of webbing from her abdomen. She can be found in her cave lair just outside of Vallaki.

SHEREXX

Large beast, neutral

Armor Class: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 68 (8d10) + 24

Speed: 30ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth: +7

Senses: blindsight 10ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Common

Challenge: 4 (1,100 XP)

Spider Climb. Sherexx can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, Sherexx knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with that web.

Web Walker. Sherexx ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Spellcasting. Sherexx is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Sherexx has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *blade ward*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (2 slots): *fog cloud*, *sleep*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sherexx can use her web attack and make two attacks with her bite or sharpened legs.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1D8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and remains paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Sharpened Legs. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained as the leg pins the target to the ground.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

TURNER THE DONKEYWERE

In his hybrid form, Turner's head is smaller than a donkey's but still has a long muzzle and full-length ears. He stands awkwardly on two unguligrade legs that end in hooves. His torso and arms appear human, but he has hooves instead of hands, and his body is covered in thick grey fur.

TURNER THE DONKEYWERE

Medium humanoid (human, cursed shapechanger), neutral good

Armor Class: 10 in humanoid form, 12 (natural armor) in donkey or hybrid form

Hit Points: 120 (16d8+48)

Speed: 30 ft. (40 ft. in donkey or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws: Dex +5, Con +5

Skills: Perception +4, Insight +4

Damage Resistance: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Senses: passive Perception 14

Languages: Common (can't speak in donkey form)

Challenge: 4

Shapechanger. Turner's curse causes him to stay in donkey form until driven to panic, when he enters a hybrid form for 1d6 hours. He reverts to donkey form if killed, rendered unconscious, or calmed by magic or mundane actions such as musical soothing or a creative use of animal handling skills.

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Turner gains Advantage on all unarmed melee Attack rolls during that turn, but Attack rolls against him also have Advantage until the start of his next turn.

Keen hearing. The donkeywere has advantage on any Wisdom checks that rely on hearing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The donkeywere makes three attacks per round, one with each hooved arm and one bite.

Hoof punch (Donkey form only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Bite (Donkey form only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (4d4 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Kick. As a reaction to a melee attack, once per round, the donkeywere can jump up and deliver a kick with both legs at the same time, landing back on their feet. This attack works on targets directly in front or behind, but not to the sides. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (4d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX B: BAROVIA

