

RAVENLOFT

GAZETTEER

A 5TH EDITION RAVENLOFT ATLAS



DARKON

I: THE JAGGED COAST





THE RAVENLOFT GAZETTEER

HOW TO USE THIS ATLAS

This is a series of Ravenloft Gazetteers updated for 5th edition, following closely to the original source material, and in some cases embellished with new information where ambiguity allows. Each Atlas takes on a new domain of Ravenloft, and is separated into parts. For instance, this Atlas is based around the domain of Darkon, and this is the first part of that Atlas, dealing with the Jagged Coast. Included with every part is a short prologue detailing the nature of the domain and its Darklord. These locations are sometimes bound to the intrinsic nature of the domain, but can usually be ported over to other modules or homebrew campaigns with a little ingenuity.

As time goes on, more areas will be added to the Atlas, and occasional revisions may be made for the sake of continuity. In the fashion of the original Ravenloft Gazetteers, these atlases are a combination of descriptive information, settlements, random encounter charts, boxed text, mechanics, flavour and a variety of other information based on what seems pertinent at any given time. Hack, chop and use as you will. The only person who gets a say in how you use any Ravenloft material is you (and, of course, the ineffable Dark Powers.) Enjoy, and if you like it, the surest way to make sure more get made is to leave a rating (or a review).

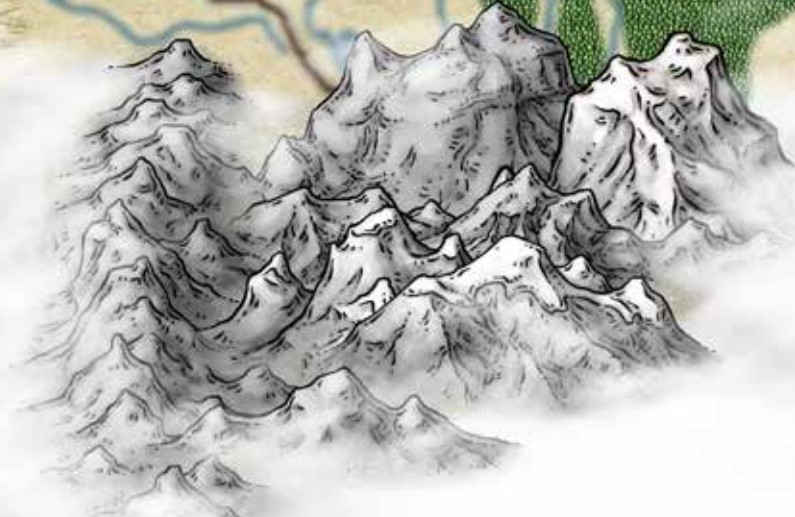


DARKON

We have always been citizens of Darkon

Ave Azalin

long live the king



PROLOGUE:

AB INITIO

I have always been a citizen of Darkon.

We have always been citizens of Darkon.

You have always been a citizen of Darkon.

Ave Azalin.

Hail the King.

WHAT IS DARKON?

Darkon is a demiplane nested in the dark mists of Ravenloft. Like the other domains of Ravenloft, the demiplane is self-contained, and difficult to escape from. This has led many to speculate that the domains of Ravenloft hold some kind of purpose, though this has never been revealed. The first and most important feature of a domain is its Darklord. This malevolent being is a creature of darkness that committed a crime so terrible that the mists snatched them away. Many domains spring forth from the evil of the ensnared Darklord, and thus the entire demiplane is permeated by their particular brand of evil.

In The Darkon's case, the Darklord is cursed to rule a land in which he has no interest, desperate to return to his home. Worse, the insidious magic of the domain leeches away the memories of the trapped, making all but the Darklord believe that no other world exists but this one. Known as the Wizard King Azalin, or Azalin Rex, he has ruled Darkon for countless generations, all the while seeking a probing for a way home.

The presence of its Darklord has caused Darkon to develop some brooding and insidious traits.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Adventurers who have the misfortune to enter Darkon will eventually come face to face with the ancient and evil lich king Azalin Rex, his hordes of loyal fanatics, resistance fighters and strange creatures that stalk the borders of the shadowy realm. All the time, their memories leech away from them, placing them in danger of becoming true Citizens of Darkon and fading into the backdrop of the Domain of Dread. To defeat Azalin and escape his hellish prison, adventurers will need courage, resolve and cunning.

THE DARKLORD

Azalin Rex

The adventurers' sole means of escape is by confronting Azalin and destroying him, thus releasing Darkon from its age old spell and allowing the trapped inhabitants to return to their homes in other realms.

The Past

Darkon is an old Domain of Dread. Rumours of the history of the Lich King differ with each telling, though all agree that Azalin is a powerful magician and draconian ruler. Many times in the past has Azalin attempted to escape his prison, and each time has brought retribution on his lands more terrible than the last. Whispers travel around the lands of such events as the Grand Conjunction and the Requiem, though very few Darkonians can remember any specific details about those times. Across Darkon, ruins and devastation evidence the truth of these rumours, telling tales of dark dreams and prices paid. Each time Azalin failed, he grew more desperate.

Cursed

Despite his mastery of the arcane, Azalin suffers from a blight that prevents him from mastering new magic. This is a source of endless frustration for him, as a creature who sought out undeath as a way to provide himself with time to improve his magical capabilities. It also prevents him from breaking any new ground with magic to help him escape his prison, which undoubtedly explains why each and every one of his past attempts to do so have gone to catastrophically wrong.

Driven

Even with the curse stifling his exploration of the arcane, Azalin is a rare genius. Blessed with a staggering intellect from birth, he is rarely caught unprepared and manages events in Darkon with an iron fist inside a velvet glove. Though rarely seen in Darkon openly, his spies are everywhere, both in the form of his secret police, and in his magical sensors that scry the land for signs of dissent. In particular, Azalin looks for talented spellcasters ensnared by the mists, and works to assimilate them into his company in the hopes of using their abilities for his own gain.



MARKS OF HORROR

Darkon uses several tropes to achieve the desired feel, one which focuses on the nature of life, death and the self.

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? The people of Darkon live in perpetual fear of being branded enemies of the state and dragged to a grisly fate by the secret police, who hide everywhere amongst the general populace. The people of Darkon are often safe from monsters whilst holed up in their cities, but exist in a permanent state of paranoia and stress. The downtrodden civilians of the domain have little personal freedom, and spend their short, bleak lives trying to avoid being implicated in any scandals.

Pulvis et Umbra Sumus. The nature of Darkon steals away the memories of visitors, convincing them that they have always lived in Darkon. This has the potential to fuel many narratives, from a desperate “escape against the clock” arc to a “recover my secret past/my whole life is a lie” arc. The slow nature of the change can make for a particularly acute creeping horror as memories are erased and replaced with frightened compliance to Azalin’s rule.

Memento Mori. Darkon is a land steeped in necromancy, mirroring Azalin’s dark accomplishments in that field. Corpses freely wander the land, restless spirits linger to torment the living, and old stories are retold endlessly over and over. Much like its Lich master, Darkon can never truly die, only be reborn.

ALTERATIONS TO MAGIC

Darkon resides in its own Demiplane, isolated from all others. No spell, not even a Wish spell, allows one to escape. Astral Projection, Teleport and all similar spells cast with the intent of leaving Darkon simply fail, as do all effects that Banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artefacts. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from Darkon is pulled back into Darkon upon leaving that plane.

For the purposes of spells whose effects change across planar boundaries, Darkon is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Darkon, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such a space are subject to the same restrictions as in the rest of Darkon.

Whilst in Darkon, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. Spells that allow contact with beings from other planes often receive false answers. Equally, any rolls that would usually be made on the Wild Magic table are made on the replacement Wild Magic Table found in the Appendices.

THE POWERS THAT BE

Like any other Ravenloft setting, Darkon exists and continues to exist by the whim of the Dark Powers an enigmatic entity/set of entities that control (to one extent or another) the creation and maintenance of the demiplanes of dread. The reasons they might do this are unclear, as are the extent of their powers, but several theories are widely agreed upon.

Ravenloft is a punishment To become Lord of a domain of dread is to commit a terrible evil, and be stolen away for eternal torment

The punishment is self-inflicted A key component of the misery of a domain is the fact that each Darklord is bound by their own cravings and selfish impulses. In Azalin’s case, his need to control the magic of others leads to his inability to learn new spells. His desire to escape leads to being tied up in bureaucracy. His grief over murdering his own son is compounded by walking every day in that son’s bones.

Time is relative. Ravenloft’s punishments are infinite, and character spirited away by the mists might later return to find no time has passed at all. Darklords are defeated, and rise again from the ashes to be challenged by yet more adventurers.

Collateral Damage. The dark powers are not afraid of collateral damage in their enforcement of the domains of dread. Adventurers die in droves. Innocent citizens picked up by the mists fall prey to creatures of the night. It’s impossible to say for sure who or what the Dark Powers are, but they clearly are prepared to accept bodies piling up by the wayside.

TRAVELING THE MISTS

This version of the *Ravenloft Gazetteer* assumes that the borders of each domain are closed, either by the will of the Dark Powers, or the will of the Darklord. In past editions, it has been possible for those who will it to travel between domains. In some cases, suggestions are made to link one domain to another, in case you wish to avail yourself of this possibility.

EARLIER ITERATIONS OF DARKON

The *Ravenloft Gazetteer* for 5th edition is pulled from multiple sources across earlier editions of *Dungeons and Dragons*. In this case, the *Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol II* (2003) and *Sea of Madness* (1996) were particularly helpful references. This product borrows some of the ideas from these earlier sources while presenting an alternative version of Darkon scaled for fifth edition and this product.

THE LICH'S HISTORY

The Legacy of Cain

Hailing from a distant world, the young Azalin was known by a different name and walked under a different sun. He had a brother who was kind and pure of heart, where Azalin was driven and cold. Azalin single mindedly pursued his magic, but pushed beyond his capabilities, and accidentally killed his brother with an errant spell.

Death Becomes Her

When he ascended to King, Azalin took for himself a bride from one of his conquests. The marriage was unhappy, and unbeknownst to Azalin his wife employed witchcraft to prevent their union from conceiving a child, for she knew the cruelty the wizard king must visit on the babe. He slew his wife for her insolence, and worked foul magic to raise a child from what Could Have Been.

The Binding of Irik

The son Azalin wrought from magic took after his long dead uncle, and despite his eldritch origins became a man of honour and wisdom. Caught disobeying his father's rule, he was sentenced to death, as per the draconian laws that Azalin himself had conceived. When Azalin heard of the death of his son, he wept. As he grieved, the Wizard king was subsumed by the mists, and the realm of Dark-on came to be.

AZALIN'S MOTIVATION

Azalin has the following goals.

Escape Darkon

Azalin has always hated his domain, and resents the rulership of it immensely (this may go some way towards explaining his cruelty towards the citizens). If he can train a powerful spellcaster (perhaps by sending them challenges to develop their strength) he might be able to kill their allies and take them under his wing, using them as a proxy through which to develop new magic and escape.

Raise His Son

Azalin has many regrets. Chief amongst them is the death of his son, whom he seeks to restore to life. Unfortunately, part of Azalin's punishment is to walk forever in the bones of his son, and Azalin torments himself over this daily. As a result, he takes great personal umbrage at anyone who damages him, not because he cares about being hurt, but because he sees it as a failure to protect his son's remains.

ROLEPLAYING AZALIN

Azalin is a magical mastermind, whose theoretical knowledge of spell-craft is unparalleled. Even before his curse rendered him unable to learn new magic, he courted powers that defied belief. His long years searching for ways to extend his powers have made him capable of bending his mind to many places at once.

Though Azalin is not cruel by impulse, he occasionally indulges in what he considers small acts of spite (such as having someone burned for treason) when one of his experiments fails. His whims are largely dictated by the success (or not) of his latest project, which puts him in a bad mood more often than most.

In person, Azalin is cold and distant. He has lost touch with his humanity, and sees the whimpering of squirming meatsacks as far below his concern.

(It's no concern of mine if your family has....what did you call it? Food? Hah! You should have thought of that before you became peasants!)

-Yzma, The Emperor's New Groove

In life, Azalin was a king, and a king he remains in death. He speaks, and his subjects jump to follow his commands. Orders are issued by courier, by magic sendings and occasionally by royal writ sealed with his skull-like sigil.

If Azalin has a flaw, he suffers from fatal (if warranted) overconfidence. His powerful magic and his resistance to most conventional forms of death have left him in a strange and dangerous complacency. Though he keeps one of his many eyes on adventurers who enter his domain, he expends no serious effort towards their extermination until they stand in the way of one of his motivations. Though Azalin is highly intelligent, he lacks insight into mortal emotions, and often underestimates their will to persevere against the odds.

If roused to action, Azalin sends his servants to deal with the problem until he has no other choice. A party who manages to aggravate Azalin enough that he deals with them personally can expect to face the cold, calculating wrath of a magician drawn away from his study to deal with a minor inconvenience.¹

¹ It's well known that there's nothing more dangerous on the face of this or any earth than a wizard forced to put his books down and actually use their magic for something constructive



ADVENTURE HOOKS

In the events that begin this adventure, the characters are snatched away by the mists of Ravenloft to meet an unknown fate battling the dark heart of Darkon. Different ways to approach this are detailed below. Use whichever you desire, or invent your own.

A LETTER FROM A STRANGER

You received a letter recently. It's asked you to come and collect your inheritance, at a place called Richtenhaus. It gives rather peculiar directions, heading out into the wild. It's signed by the Bureau of Rivalian Affairs, on behalf of the King.

Adventurers who find themselves drawn to this hook are whisked away by the mists of Ravenloft as they leave down, appearing near the Richtenhaus. (See Chapter Four of this volume.)

CREEPING FOG

You are traveling down a lonely road, tired from the day's exertions. The weather looks like it might be about to take a turn for the worse, and rainclouds are moving in on the horizon. Before long, a deep and uncomfortably wet fog swallows your party whole.

This is the simplest hook. The rain obscures vision and drenches characters not prepared with magic to keep them dry. When the fog and rain passes some hours later, the characters find themselves having wandered into the Martiran Highway.

As the fog recedes, you hear the cry of gulls in the distance. Rocky earth beneath your feet sprouts grey looking weeds, and the sky retains a bleak, thunderous countenance. The crashing of the waves to the west and the shadow of a vast wood to the north suggest you are not where you thought you were.

THE MISTS OF RAVENLOFT

A deadly fog surrounds Darkon and engulfs any creature that tries to leave. In the unlikely event a creature manages to crest the walls of Darkon, they enter the Mists. Even flying creatures are subject to the fog's effects, which are as follows:

A creature that starts its turn in the fog must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion (see appendix A in the Player's Handbook). This exhaustion can't be removed while the creature is in the fog.

No matter how far a creature travels in the fog, or in which direction it goes, it gets turned around so that it eventually finds itself back in Darkon.

The area within the fog is heavily obscured (see "Vision and Light" in chapter 8 of the Player's Handbook).

SUNLIGHT IN DARKON

Darkon is shrouded by the Dark Powers against the light of the sun, moon and stars. Day or night, the light shed by celestial bodies is oddly muted, though it remains bright light for the purposes of establishing vision. Darkonian sunlight is not considered sunlight for the purposes of effects and abilities tied to it.

AXIS MUNDI

Darkon is a large land with several distinct regions, a kingdom vast enough to be difficult to effectively police, but small enough to cause claustrophobia in an immortal lich. From the gloomy Mistlands through to the Mountains of Treachery, Darkon is a grim frontier of scarred plains, jagged coasts and sinister bogs bounded by the mists of ravenloft. In the center of Darkon, the necropolis rises above it all, a testament to the greatest of Azalin's failed experiments, The Requiem.

DARKONIAN NATURALIZATION

The earth of Darkon is infused with an insidious curse that removes the memories of immigrant folks and convinces them they have always belonged in Darkon. The curse is slow to act, but once it takes hold there is only a matter of time before the victim succumbs. When a humanoid creature finishes a long rest in Darkon there is a 10% chance it gains a level of Naturalization as it begins to lose its memories to the curse. With each level of Naturalization gained in this way, a character becomes more and more confused as to their origins. Refer to the table below for how each level of Naturalization affects characters.

Naturalization levels can be removed by two means only.

- Leaving the domain restores all memories and removes all Naturalization
- Removing or altering Azalin's Book of Names (see **Part Eight, Castle Avernus**)

Naturalization Table

Level 1	The character begins to suffer occasional memory loss of their time before they entered the mists.
Level 2	The character forgets the names of places and people known before they entered the mists.
Level 3	The character suffers confused nightmares, and wakes up not knowing who they are for a moment.
Level 4	The character begins to react to things in Darkon as if they had known them all along, but forgotten them for a while.
Level 5	The character no longer feels out of place in Darkon, but instead feels a sense of rightness.
Level 6	The character forgets their life before they entered Darkon. They retain all their friendships, bonds and enmity to creatures in Darkon, but rationalise them otherwise.

DARKONIANS

When Azalin first arrived in Darkon, it possessed some few scattered inhabitants in crude villages. Now, it is scattered with towns and cities, the population bolstered by constant intake from other Domains of Dread and stolen from the prime material plane. All of these acquisitions are naturalized, and become part of the tapestry of the domain. Thus, Darkon is full of humanoids of all races, creeds and denominations.

Darkonians are usually gregarious to a fault, welcoming strangers into Darkon and encouraging them to pay due homage to the Wizard King. Even the untrained eye will detect a trace of fear in this friendly attitude which can be peeled away by a savvy investigator to reveal a deep terror of Azalin and his secret police, the Kargat. Those who express malcontent always vanish from the face of the earth once Azalin gets wind of their mutterings from his informants.





DARKON LOCATIONS

Darkon is a vast Domain, littered with struggling towns and grisly reminders of past horrors. Everything here is clinging to a life they despair of, and the world is painted in bleak shades of grey, green and yellow. Darkon has been divided into zones for ease of referencing, and each delegated its own chapter.

Part 1: Jagged Coast

The Jagged Coast is a hilly, blasted heath battered by cold sea winds and haunted by the looming spectre of Necropolis in the near distance. Once a thriving trading post with other domains of Ravenloft, the closure of the borders has left this area of Darkon struggling for purpose and disturbed by strange foreign objects the naturalized citizens can no longer explain.

Part 2: Forest of Shadows

The Forest of Shadows is a foreboding and evil place, shrouded in rumour and mystery. Here lies the dread encampment of Nartok, the decimated region of Creeana, and the relics of Azalin's failed attempts to domesticate the forest. The region is rumoured to be stalked by the Whistling Fiend, a demon of dark whimsy and terrible destruction.

Part 3: Necropolis

Once the city of Il Aluk, the city of Necropolis is a ruined crater in the earth scattered with the bones of citizens and buildings alike. Only death resides here now, amongst the ash heaps and paupers' graves. No sane man or woman or Darkon would dare set one foot closer to Necropolis than necessary, and even the walking dead step carefully here.

Part 4: Boglands

The Boglands was not always dead. They say that in times long past it was filled with wildlife. Sadly, this is no longer entirely the case. The bog is defiled by polluted magic drifting downriver from Necropolis, and only monstrous beasts live here now. The trees that walk the Boglands are said to carry great wisdom, and greater malice.

Part 5: Mistlands

A quiet and oft-forgotten region of Darkon, the mistlands harbour both a quiet dread that they might be forgotten, and a keen fear that they might be remembered. Somewhere in the mistlands, the Lake of Lost Dreams promises answers to those not wise enough to understand them.

Part 6: Vale of Tears

Harbouring the city Karg, it is possible that the Vale of Tears boasts the highest population of any region in Darkon. The Vale of Tears is watched carefully by Azalin and the Kargat for any signs of dissent. The area is riddled with the living dead, who attack on sight and show no mercy to the living.

Part 7: Mountains of Misery

Home to Darkon's tenacious dwarf population, who live one day at a time in the shadow of an active volcano. The threat of wyrms, eruption and corruption make this a hostile environment indeed.

Part 8: Castle Avernus

The lair of Azalin Rex, warded by powerful enchantments and guarded by legions of the dead. Though the castle can be seen from many places in Darkon, it remains firmly out of reach to anyone who is not invited.

CHAPTER ONE:

LITUS PRATUPTUM

THE JAGGED COAST

*As the sea crashes against the land
So to the years wear away at my memory
Did my hands ever hold my child?
My ears embrace his laughter?
I cannot say.*

THE SEA CALLS TO ME

Historically, the Jagged Coast has always been a populated and civilized area of Darkon. Citizens enjoyed a high quality of life, supported by trading with other domains of Ravenloft. Equally, the populations here are diverse, containing people of all colours, scales, wings and creeds. However, when the mists boiled in to seal the borders, those trapped in Darkon were unable to return to wherever they came from, and succumbed to Darkon's insidious trait of naturalizing visitors. Without the possibility of trading, the villages here have fallen into a dejected slump. Worse, the tainted energies of Necropolis have begun to seep into the area, corrupting the wildlife and triggering an outbreak of a danger thought long gone - the crimson death.

TERRAIN

The Jagged Coast is a windswept coastline dotted with hills and bordered by dangerous cliffs that drop sharply into a treacherous sea. The cliffline is legendarily unstable, with chunks of land regularly falling into the sea, and sinkholes opening further inland to swallow up buildings, landmarks and people with barely a moment's warning.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The Jagged Coast is a dangerous place. Check for a random encounter after every hour that the adventurers spend on the roads or in the wilderness (don't check if they have already had two random encounters outdoors in the past 12 hours):

If the characters are on a road, an encounter occurs on a roll of 18 or higher on a d20.

If the characters are in the wilderness, an encounter occurs on a roll of 15 or higher on a d20.

If an encounter occurs, roll on either the Terrain or Creature encounter tables below. [Feel free to use both at once, if the situation calls for it.]

d8 + d12	Jagged Coast Creature Encounters
2	1 swarm of gulls and 1 gullspeaker
3	1 giant crab
4	Plagued Beggar
5	1d4 crimson horrors
6	Bandits
7	Overseer Pilgrims
8	1d8 kobolds and 1 kobold inventor

THE CRIMSON DEATH

The Crimson Death Epidemic was a lethal plague that struck Darkon in the autumn of 688 BC and killed an estimated 1 out of every 5 Darkonians. The disease is easily contracted, with death occurring in the space of days as the victim bleeds through their skin. The original epidemic was contained only by Azalin's ruthless containment and quarantine methods, enforced by the dead (who were the only servants of Azalin immune to the infection). In recent days, the corruption of Necropolis has bled out into the land, and instances of the Crimson Death are being reported once more on the Jagged Coast. It has been over a century since the last outbreak, and the population of the Jagged Coast is not prepared.

THE CRIMSON DEATH

This disease targets any creature with blood, including creatures that feed on blood and inflected tissue such as vampires or mind flayers. While in the grips of this disease, victims slowly begin to bleed from under the skin, which eventually pours out from gruesome sores. When a humanoid creature is touched by a creature that carries the disease, or when it comes into contact with blood, offal or corpse tissue contaminated by the disease, the creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. The disease can lay dormant in corpse tissue for decades after death.

Symptoms manifest 2d12 hours after infection and include fever and disorientation. The infected creature gains a level of exhaustion, which cannot be restored until the disease is cured. Every 8 hours after the symptoms manifest, the target gains a level of exhaustion.

Once an infected creature reaches 3 levels of exhaustion, they are visibly bleeding from their orifices and from under their skin.



Ankheg

A low chittering sounds underneath your feet. The ground trembles, and a hideous, horse-like insect burrows out of the ground with mantis claws.

This is an **ankheg**, many of which reside in the Jagged Coast due to the high preponderance of underground tunnels and aerated soil.

Bandits

The land around the Jagged Coast is plagued with bandits (LE **thugs**), driven to crime by the steady decline in food, resources and money in the area. An encounter usually consists of 2d6 **bandits**. Most are just looking for cash, and will refrain from killing anyone who hands over their money.

Crimson Horror

The smell of rot fills the air. Stumbling towards you through the wind and drizzle, a corpulent mass of weeping sores lurches unsteadily into your path. "Help...me..." it burbles.

This **zombie** is in the advanced stages of infection, and is delirious with pain. Interacting with it risks contracting the Crimson Death.

Giant Crab

A large crab the scuttles into view. It zig-zags in a hypnotic pattern whilst edging closer.

This **giant crab** is on the lookout for food, or someone to play cards with. It will settle for lunch.

Kobolds

There is a yip-yapping sound ahead of you, as something bizarre trundles into view. A small procession of tiny lizardlike people pull a cage on wheels behind them. They seem very proud of their catch, an angry looking badger.

These **kobolds** are hoping to gain sanctuary in Martira Bay by bringing the humans an offering of a badger. The wilderness is too dangerous and devoid of safe food, and they hope (vainly) for sanctuary. If they get to Martira Bay, they are shot by the guards on sight. The kobolds are not violent unless someone threatens the badger - otherwise, they do a lot of groveling, particularly if the group contains any Darkonians.

Overseer Pilgrims

A chanting fills the air in the distance. A dozen pilgrims all in white are marching towards you, lips raised in song to some unknown deity.

These are 12 **commoners**, making a pilgrimage to the **Necropolis**, believing this to be their holy mission from the Overseer. Their faith is impervious against attempts to convince them of the suicidal nature of their mission.

Plagued Beggars

An old man is lying on the side of the dirt track, and he looks up blearily at you as you approach. His skin is covered with bloody marks, where the skin has rotted away entirely.

The beggar pleads for money or food, and snatches up any offerings greedily. If the party has a visibly holy cleric or paladin dressed in their religious vestments, he throws himself on their mercy for healing, not taking 'no' for an answer.

Swarm of Gulls & Gullspeaker

A strange man stands alone, looking up at the grey skies. Gulls swoop and swarm around him, their shrill cry a strange accompaniment to his quiet contemplation. He turns to look at you, and his eyes are green and fickle as the wintee seas.

This **gullspeaker** is watching the skies for a sign of the Day of Ascension, when all shall return to the Grey Realm and the land will finally be taken by the dead. He has no concern for the characters or their search, but can give directions if he feels so inclined.

TERRAIN ENCOUNTERS

d8	Jagged Coast Terrain Encounters
1	Sinkhole
2	Stream
3	Gorge
4	Withering
5	Shelter
6	Grey Orchard
7	Hidden Trove
8	Scatebrae

Gorge

As you walk, the ground shudders and tears open with a creaking, cracking protest. A huge rift in the earth opens up within your sight, leading down into darkness.

The characters encounter a gorge 2d4 × 100 feet deep. Walking around it safely means giving it a wide berth, thanks to the unstable geology. Their travel pace for the day is slowed by half unless they come up with a plan to cross the gorge quickly.

Grey Orchard

Trees with grey leaves are dotted around the trail. Succulent orange fruits hang temptingly from the branches. Is it possible that even in such a place as this, life finds a way to thrive?

The trees are tainted with the evil of the Necropolis, and eating their fruit has the same effect as consuming a *potion of poison*. In addition, plucking a fruit from a tree has a 10% chance of angering it, causing it to become an **awakened tree** and attempt to grab the perpetrator, with the intent of ripping out their hair/other dangling parts of their anatomy.

Hidden Trove

What's this? A large rock dumped unceremoniously in your path. It is coloured a deep black, as the night sky. An X has been doodled on it in chalk.

This rock is the marker for the ghoulish pirates of the Dominance (currently docked in Martira Bay) who occasionally sally forth onto land to hide their plunder. Buried nearby the rock are a pile of 1d4 trinkets (see Appendix A) and a pouch of 50 gold pieces stamped with the profile of a dark, handsome man in his middle years, with a widow's peak.

Scatebrae

As you walk, suddenly the world becomes utterly silent. No sound of the wind, no distant crashing of the sea on the shore. You can't even hear yourself talk.

This is an area of land under a silence effect, a sinking place in reality caused by the proximity of the Necropolis. The scatebrae continues for up to an hour before it vanishes as quickly as it came



Shelter

The party stumbles upon a cave that is sheltered and easily defended. If the characters camp here, they can finish a long rest without any chance of an encounter while they are resting.

Sinkhole

The earth trembles, and then gives way beneath your feet, threatening to send you tumbling into the darkness.

One random party member steps on and collapses a sinkhole, and must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into a 20-foot-deep pit and taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Climbing out of the pit requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Roll for a random creature encounter.

Stream

Water tuns downstream before you, shimmering and sparkling. Fish dart about in plentiful supply, casting up the occasional bleak look at your approach.

A waterway 2d4 × 5 feet wide cuts across the party's path. The stream is shallow and easily crossed, and the characters can drink and refresh their water supplies. Edible fish inhabit the stream, so that the DC of any foraging attempts for food in this area is reduced to 10.

Withering

Blackened grass and blasted heath stretches out before you in a perfect circle hundreds of feet wide. The bones of woodland creatures are piled at the edges, as if they died crossing the boundary.

This bleak reminder of the Requiem is inimical to mortal life. Creatures that attempt to cross the line feel their life draining away, giving them a chance to draw back. Ending their turn in the area causes them to take 8d10 necrotic damage as their flesh falls away (a la *forbiddance*).

AREAS OF THE JAGGED COAST

The following areas correspond to the markings on the map above:

1A: MARTIRA BAY

See Chapter Two: Martira Bay.

1B: RIVALIS

See Chapter Three: Rivalis

1C: THE GREYWOOD

Silver leaves drift on an ashen breeze. A forest of still, grey trees looms on the horizon. A watchful presence hangs over the forest, a hollow psithurism reminding you that all things must come to an end. Darkness hangs under the canopy, a silent threnody for those who have fallen.

Tainted by the Requiem, the Greywood is a place of quiet mourning. The wood is a hive of **awakened trees** and **greywood treants**, brought to a deep and abiding grief by Azalin's murderous magic and the devastation brought on the land by his carelessness. The trees of the Greywood have decided that humanoids do not deserve the land, and are planning to remove them from it by force, out of grim necessity. As yet, several wandering trees are at large, harvesting humanoids and bringing their unconscious bodies back to the forest, where they are Paralyzed and new trees are born from their flesh. Thankfully, the trees are patient, and have yet to enact any grand scheme to capture large numbers of humanoids for their seedlings. The Greywood is led by the reclusive and stationary treant known as Old Man Willow, who rules the wood with a whisper.

1D: BLEAK HOUSE

See Chapter Four: Bleak House

1E: THE VUCHAR RIVER [SOUTH]

The river carries itself swiftly downstream, and the smell is pungent. Rotting fish float on the surface, and pollution is rife. To drink from such a river would be brave - to immerse oneself in it, suicidal.

The Vuchar River is corrupted when it passes through the Necropolis, killing all the fish and sweeping up detritus from the dead city. Creatures who ingest water or anything else from the tainted river must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or contract Filth Fever (see Dungeon Master's Guide).

1F: BARROWS

The hills become loamy and soft, your feet sinking a little into the mud with every step. Piles of stones begin to appear at intervals, some decorated with humanoid skulls and bones.

This is where a vast number of bodies were buried during the rise of the crimson death. There is a high chance of encountering **crimson horrors** in this area, as well as **zombies**, **ghouls** and **specters**. Darkon is one of the few Ravenloft domains that retains any pretensions towards classic dungeoneering, and this is where those dungeons are likely to be located, as desperate folk raid long forgotten tombs in the hope of finding knowledge or power.

CHAPTER TWO:

MARTIRA BAY

CITY OF BRIBES

*When did humanity become so fixated on gold?
Gold cannot bring back my son
Gold cannot free me from this hell
No, let them squabble
I wash my hands of them*

IA: MARTIRA BAY

Back in the mists of time when Azalin first arrived in Darkon, Martira bay was a humble fishing village. Over time, it attracted people from all over Darkon due to the abundant resources available, and quickly swelled into a town. The town grew rich and prosperous, evolving into something of a city, blessed with all the innovations Darkonians could provide it with. So fierce, in fact, was Mantira Bay's love of progress that it still outstrips the technology available to the rest of Darkon by a considerable degree. Unfortunately, Mantira Bay's luck was not to last. Already plagued by the instability of the coastline, the Jagged Coast was hit badly by the surge of dark magic emanating from the Necropolis, and the land has lost much of its fertility. In addition, the corruption of the land has greatly increased the instances of tectonic disturbance, and the day will come when Martira bay finds itself teetering on the edge of the cliff, and thence tumbling into the sea.

THE COSMOPOLIS CLUB

This thoroughly evil consortium of incredibly wealthy individuals has bought, blackmailed and litigated their way into control of Martira Bay through a wide variety of immoral deeds. From their private clubhouse (Area A17), they use a variety of powers to snuff out their competition and wallow in their vaults of cash. Azalin's apathy has allowed the members of the club to foster delusions of real power, and they are beginning to wonder if they couldn't seize power from the Kargat entirely and pronounce Martira Bay a free city-state.

Cosmopolis Members

Valeria Bantius (LE female human **mage**). Valeria built her fortune on the backs of an army of poorly paid child couriers in the West District. The sudden disappearance of most of her "staff" has left her angry and looking for someone to blame.

Amadeus Fannius (CE male tielfing **bard**) Amadeus is a composer who made his money off a single work "The Curse of Bard" detailing the rise and fall of a man who pushes his wife off a roof whilst possessed by a demonic viola. He's never been able to

replicate this success, but pays inordinate amounts of money to people to stage his newer (and much less entertaining) works of music.

Prudentia Scantius (LE female human **noble**) inherited her money from a long line of Scantius titleholders. A bad investment in a flawed cure for plague has left her nearly bankrupt, and she's desperate to find some way to raise the money for the club's extortionate fees. Death is bad, but expulsion from the club and social ridicule? Unthinkable. Now, if the Crimson Death were to return, it might boost sales.....

Isidorus Vitruvius (LE male elf **noble**) is responsible for the architecture of most of the buildings in Martira Bay. He is old now, and a little unhinged, but can remember the blueprints to almost any building infallibly. He was also responsible for some of the work done to Castle Avernus.

Madame Radanavich (LE female vistani **ghost**) is a dark vistani matron responsible for bringing the evil Baron Metus back to life, and for almost claiming the life of legendary vampire hunter Rudolph van Richten. She lives an un-life of luxury after cursing anyone who got in her way to develop poor investing habits. She remains close with Baron Metus.

Cassius Dyreth (LE male **necromancer**) is the kingpin of the North Quarter, and owns at least half the production lines in Martira Bay. He "employs" orphans to do so, taking them from orphanages or the streets before slaying them and adding them to his undead workforce.

FAITH OF THE OVERSEER

Martira Bay is notable for its local religion - the Faith of the Overseer. A very young faith, the clergy of the Overseer are called Witnesses, and are highly influential in Martira Bay (though they hold no official office.) The cult of the Overseer offers a simple truth - life is unfair. Very much so. But, if you are kind and generous, you will be rewarded in the afterlife. The Overseer does not grant clerical magic, as this is a clumsy tool used to bully or intimidate. Instead, he watches everything you do, and judges you fit or unfit for paradise after death.

As you may have guessed, this entire religion is a fabrication, orchestrated by the vampire Tavelia as a front for the Kargat and a way to lure her way of asserting control over the city. The infectious zealotry behind the cult of the Overseer means that this is one of the few places in Darkon where other faiths have little hold, but the disappearance of Tavelia some time ago has left the cult to bickering and infighting.



BARONESS REDALSKEN

Baroness Redalsken is a formidable woman and a political tour de force. Seizing power from her husband after exposing his corruption, she quickly worked to consolidate her position and has held it with an iron grip ever since. Rapidly approaching old age, she is beginning to look for someone to replace her when she dies...or a way to avoid that fate entirely.

MARTIRA BAY LORE

In addition to the information known to all Darkonians (see “Darkonian Lore” in chapter 2), Martira Bay’s citizens know the following bits of local lore:

- If you need somewhere to stay, the Yawning Eddy is the best tavern in the city, though the prices can be high. There’s seedier places nearer the waterfront...at your own risk. (True.)
- The Cosmopolis Club is an exclusive members only organization which pulls all the strings in Darkon. (Partially true. The club is powerful, but hardly the only group struggling for control.)
- If you want work, stop by the Bard’s Guild. Be careful, though. They have a reputation for... taking no prisoners. (True. The guild is actually the local front for the Thieves’ Guild.)
- The North District is mostly warehouses and manufacturing. It’s a open secret that the warehouses are staffed mainly by orphans. (True.)
- Witness Tavelia was a saint of the Overseer faith, and she will be sorely missed. Her charitable work was beyond compare. (False. Tavelia was secretly a vampire pulling the strings of the faith she invented behind the scenes. She is gone though.)
- The guilds of the town have a stranglehold on Baroness Karimana Reldkasen, and they are stuck in a bitter war for power. (True.)
- The sea seems harsher than usual recently. The king’s flagship *The Dominance* is also quarantined because of sickness. (False. The ship is out of bounds because the entire crew are now ghouls, and don’t want to be discovered.)
- The vampire hunter Rudolph van Richten was seen heading south and out of Darkon, even though the borders are closed. (True.)
- It’s not safe to hang about near trees at the moment. Some of them have taken to kidnapping people. (True, but only Greywood trees.)
- Azalin Rex doesn’t come here often...in fact, he hasn’t in a long time. (True)
- It’s lucky to offer a gift of coin to the sea when you first arrive in town. (False.)
- Some of the houses around here have developed this awful fishy smell. (True. These are the **ghoul** infested houses.)





APPROACHING THE TOWN

When the characters first approach Martira Bay read:

The Martira Highway slopes upwards towards the shore, where jagged cliffs loom over a restless, dark sea. The waves crash on a gloomy beach, above which a seaside town teeters precariously on a cliff edge. As you watch, a small chunk of rock breaks free from the edge and falls into the sea with an ominous splash.

HOUSE OCCUPANTS

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the house's occupant.

d20	Occupant
1-3	None
4-5	Ghouls
6-18	Martiran Citizens
19-20	Martiran Cultists

GHOULS

This house has been trashed by the occupants, transformed by the **cerebral vampires** working at the Black Tower. The **ghouls** are beyond saving, and rave madly about the tower. Up to 1d6 **ghouls** are present at any one time.

MARTIRAN CITIZEN

A house of Martiran Citizens contains 1d4 adults (LE male and female human **commoners**) and 1d4-1 children (CN male and female noncombatants). The citizens are friendly, but keen to find out who the adventurers are and turn them in to the Kargat if they catch any whiff of unpatriotic behaviour.

MARTIRAN CULTISTS

A cult safe house contains 2d4 Martiran adults (LG male and female **cultists**) and one **veteran** (LG male or female) who leads them in prayer or orchestrates sermons. These cultists worship the Overseer, but are blind to the fact that their god is a complex lie designed to keep them compliant and biddable. The cultists are kind, but firm in their resolution that adventurers should not cause undue trouble in Martira Bay.

THE WATERFRONT

Busy at all hours of the day and night with the bustling activity of ne'er do wells, the waterfront is a haven of illicit activity, suspicious disappearances and creeping mists.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (Waterfront)
1	An old man feeding the birds. He seems emaciated.
2	A widow kneeling at the edge of the sea, crying.
3	A member of the Kargat (CE werewolf) posing as a washerwoman
4	A vistani peddler (LE bard) of magic tricks and legerdemain
5	A punch and judy show
6	A shifty looking man leaning against a wall, looking out to sea with a frown.
7	A man hanging out travel flyers to somewhere called Lamordia with a fixed smile. It looks like a spooky place.
8	A pirate (LE thug) leaning against a building drinking from a bottle marked XXX

RUMOURS

d6	Rumours (Waterfront)
1	"The earthquakes have been terrible lately. Just terrible. If it gets any worse, this whole place might fall into the sea."
2	"I heard a sinkhole opened up and swallowed Jeffers' house with his whole family inside. At the bottom, they say something was moving in the dark."
3	"No goods coming in lately. Heard the ships get turned around by the mist. Dark magic, if you ask me."
4	"Around here, people have all sorts of business. Sometimes keep a little for themselves, too, but what the king don't know won't hurt him, eh?"
5	"Fancy [expletive] up in their golden houses. Never did a day's work in their lives, and take a cut of everything I do. Pah."
6	"Did you hear that the Dominance is under quarantine? I wonder who'll dare go and clean up the bodies..."

WEST DISTRICT

This shadowy, winding collection of alleys and ugly shacks is where the poor of Martira Bay huddle away from prying eyes. Unlike other poor districts in similarly sized cities, there are few children here, leaving it sinisterly quiet. Nestled away at the edge of this district is the Black Tower, home of medic and philanthropist Baron Metus.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (West District)
1	An old woman begging for change
2	The corpse of a young man. It is covered in weeping red sores.
3	A handsome male half-elf looking to make a quick coin
4	An old man fixing the roof his shack with rusty tools
5	A street artist chalking pictures of horrors onto the pavement
6	A dirty woman holding a baby. It's coughing and she looks frightened.
7	A man chasing a rat. He has a fork in his hand.
8	Two city guards checking nervously for trouble.

RUMOURS

d6	Rumours (West District)
1	"Baron Metus is a living saint. He gives us medicine and food - if you need help, he's the man to talk to."
2	"All the children around here were taken to be apprenticed in the North District. We never see them anymore. I hope they're ok."
3	"Sometimes I hear wet things moving about and growling in the streets at night."
4	"I wish I could leave this place...but where would I go? Outside to be eaten by the Greywood? No thank you."
5	"The priests at the temple are in some kind of terrible argument. Some kind of schism? It doesn't help us one bit."
6	"I heard there was a baby brought to the temple with weeping sores. It...can't be the... crimson death...can it?"

GUILD QUARTER

The Guild Quarter is perhaps the place budding adventurers might head to put their skills to good use. Artisans, craftsmen and employment agents ply their trades here. Of particular note is the Bard's Guild (described later in this chapter), which hides an ugly secret. The buildings here are organized and orderly.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (Guild Quarter)
1	A man handing out flyers for an employment agency promising low paid, but reliable work in a millinery.
2	A man pulling a horse and cart full of wooden chairs, tables and other assorted furniture.
3	A peddler and cart selling trinkets.
4	A tired looking mother dragging two screaming, spoilt looking children down the street.
5	A tradesman in guild livery informing a sad looking woman that the job is likely to be expensive and time consuming.
6	A tax collector stopping at doors to take the daily tithes.
7	A constable checking carts for contraband.
8	A man selling suspicious looking pastries. He seems unwell, and coughs up blood occasionally.

RUMOURS

d6	Rumours (Guild Quarter)
1	"The Cosmopolis Club just re-upholstered for the third time in as many months. They must be richer than the king!"
2	"I heard the Baroness is ailing. She won't last long...and then who will take over?"
3	"People keep spreading rumours that the Crimson Death is back, but where is the proof? Just scaremongering, I tell you."
4	"This tax is outrageous. What am I even paying for? It's not as if the guard does anything unless you bribe them."
5	"Do you remember that Gentleman Caller who came by a while back? So handsome. So convincing. No, I don't remember what he said. Why does it matter?"
6	"I was hoping to visit Barovia, but apparently the mountain pass is blocked by mist. Typical. Can't catch a break around here."

NORTH QUARTER

The North Quarter has a deserted feel at all hours of the day and night. Home to Martira Bay's manufacturing and a vast number of private warehouses, the buildings here hold many secrets and are often monitored by magic or bribed guards. Of particular note are the rug mills owned by Cassius Dyreth, who claims to apprentice children but instead slays them and animates them as an undead workforce to avoid paying them wages. If the characters break into a random warehouse, you can use the table below to help suggest what they might find.

WAREHOUSE CONTENTS

d8	Warehouse Contents
1	A collection of crates containing a shipment of sinister toys. They are marked with the slogan "Is no fun, is no Blinsky!"
2	Stockpiled grains and other dried/preserved foodstuffs.
3	A freezing cold room filled with human organs and bags of blood organized by type.
4	An empty room with hay on the floor, chains bolted into the walls and hideously long claw marks gouged into the walls.
5	A cache of magical items belonging to a member of the Cosmopolis Club. The area is warded by an <i>alarm</i> spell.
6	Barrels full of contraband, such a Rivalian drugs or fruit from the Greywood.
7	An archive of tedious papers from Martira Bay's past, including leases, contracts and wills of people long dead.
8	The warehouse is empty. There is a suspicious smell of rot in the air.

MERCHANT'S QUARTER

The Merchant's Quarter is a bustling and colourful array of shops, selling most goods at extortionate prices (supply has been low since the borders closed.) Players can find any item from the Player's Handbook here with 1d4 hours of searching and asking around. Items sourced from the Market Quarter usually cost twice as much as they normally would, but can stretch to three or four times their value with particularly ornery shopkeepers.

GOVERNMENT SQUARE

Government Square is built around the palace of the original Baron, who ruled Martira Bay when it was just a fishing village.¹ The palace is four stories tall and is guarded by 6d6 guards at any one time. The top floor is the residence of Mayor Redalsken - she lives alone now her husband is dead and her children away in far off lands. Nearby the palace is the Temple of the Overseer, an ornate and gilded temple ostensibly dedicated to a god of Good, peace and justice.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (Government Square)
1	Witness of the Overseer (LE vampire spawn handing out alms)
2	Grumpy man being turned away from an appointment, as he's an hour late
3	Tired guard taking a nap against a pillar
4	Guards escorting a criminal to the cells in the Temple.
5	Courier with a stack of letters running to a building, scattering them behind him as he runs
6	Mad doomsday prophet on the street corner crying out about the Day of Ascension
7	A woman stepping out of a carriage. Her maid is holding her seven coats and a load of shopping bags.
8	A kargat member (LE bandit) masquerading as a street juggler.

RUMOURS

d6	Rumours (Government Square)
1	"This bureaucracy is ridiculous. Ten months, they want me to wait for an appointment! Ten!"
2	"The temple can give you aid and healing, if you need it, but it isn't the same since Witness Tavelia disappeared."
3	"When will the Baroness do something about the missing children in the West District? Why will no-one listen to me?"
4	"If the Baroness thinks I'm paying this much tax, she's crazier than a Rivalian herbalist."
5	"It's been a long time since the Baroness authorized any new building on the cliff edge. Scared it might cause the whole thing to fall in, I guess."

6 "I hope the Baroness can do something about all this mist. She should petition the King - he'll be able to solve it."

AREAS OF MARTIRA BAY

In addition to the information known to all Darkonians (see "Darkonian Lore" in chapter 2), Martira Bay's citi

1A1 - The Black Tower

A gothic styled, stumpy tower of black stone and burnished gold crouches above ground level like a gargoyle leering out at the ocean. Two double oak doors lie at the top of imposing stone steps, with hideous, devil-faced knockers on each.

The Black Tower is the home of the dread vampire Baron Metus. Slain by the famous vampire hunter Rudolph van Richten, the Baron was returned to (un)-life by the darks arts of Vistani witch Madame Radanavich.

Since then, he has gone to ground in Darkon, styling himself as a fashionable philanthropist, medic and local figure of note.² Though he would never admit it, Metus fears the return of Van Richten, and his efforts go into exploring ways to defend himself from future assaults. One of these methods has been to kidnap and imprison a powerful Vistani psionicist in the hope of perhaps gaining his innate powers by feeding on him. Unfortunately for the Baron, the Vistani lost his mind at the predations of the Baron and is now a dangerous and unpredictable force of nature.

The doors of the tower are solid wood with banded iron fittings (AC17, hp 25), and can be picked with a Dc15 thieves' tools check. In daylight hours, the characters only need knock to be admitted by the nursing staff.

1A1a - The Foyer

The inside of the building is lit by small lamps bracketed to the walls and dangling from the ceiling. Lush red rugs cover the cold stone floors, and some couches have been laid out in the east part of the hall for visitors to perch on.

There are often 1d8 patients and petitioners (**commoners**) waiting here to be seen by the nurses in areas 1a1c. The people are more often than not poor, dirty and/or sick. As the party enters, they are greeted by the Baron's nursing assistants (LE **vampire spawn**), who are dressed in surgical masks and protective leather aprons, and asked to wait in the queue to be seen. Requests to see the Baron are politely, but firmly, denied.

¹ The baron was eventually removed manually by Azalin, when the king discovered the Baron had been embezzling money for his own end. Azalin has a nuanced understanding of slavery and murder, but can't abide political corruption.

² One could quite reasonably argue that this is a very unusual definition of 'going to ground', but for a man of Baron Metus' vanity, it's a fairly large compromise.



1-A-1-b - The Crimson Hall

A rich, blood red rug runs down the entirety of this stone hallway, lamps flickering in their sconces. There are five doors in this corridor, and at the end of it the corridor branches out into an open plan gallery of paintings. A stone staircase at the end of the hall leads upwards.

This hall is guarded by two more charmed **veterans** dressed as mercenaries. They usually stand by the stone staircase to make sure noone gets up there to disturb the Baron whilst he sleeps in the daylight hours.

1-A-1-c - Diagnostic Rooms

This small room is sparsely furnished with clean white cupboards and a small chair to sit on. The cupboards are neatly labeled with the names of herbs and medical tools.

During the day, a **cerebral vampire** can usually be found in each of these rooms tending to patients by providing basic medical aid. At night, these rooms are empty.

1-A-1-d - Meeting Room

A small stone staircase leads down from the main hall into this depression, which contains a large table and chairs.

This is where Baron Metus holds his daily staff meetings, in which he gives instructions for the tasks that need completing, and the information he's looking his staff to squeeze out of the people who arrive that day.

1-A-1-e - Operating Theatre

This squeaky clean stone room has a large wooden table with arm and leg restraints positioned in the middle of the floor. Bloodstains cover the floor, faint from previous attempts to clean them away.

This impromptu operating theatre is usually on standby in case Baron Metus feels like practicing his medical skills.¹

1-A-1-f - Library

As you step into this room, an intense and heavy quiet descends on the area. Bookshelves line the walls here, filled with trivia.

This imposing room is filled with books relating to the Baron's extensive scientific interests. Orni-

¹ Baron Metus is something of a polymath, and picked up surgery whilst on sabbatical in Dominia. He also dabbles in taxi-dermy, the natural sciences and abstract painting when the mood strikes him.

² The Baron may be a vampire, but he's not a barbarian. Food needs refrigerating, and whilst he's not above using his powers to work acts of evil, sometimes you just need to keep a sausage cold.

thology, paleontology, architecture, bibliography... it's all here. A large portion of the shelves is taken up by large biographies of famous artists, and the occasional *catalogue raisonné*. Touching any of the books in the library causes the Baron's magical defences to activate. In 1d4 rounds, an **invisible stalker** manifests in the door and begins to follow the party until a good opportunity presents itself to kill the perpetrator(s).

1-A-1-g - Lounge

This cozy room contains several crimson couches, maroon rugs and a smouldering fireplace. A small table with flowers on the top completes the image.

This room is where the Baron meets guests on the rare occasion he needs to see someone on business. Sometimes member of the Cosmopolis club are met here, and sometimes the Baroness Redalsken. If the character somehow wangle an audience out of the reclusive Baron, he meets them here.

1-A-1-h - Pantry

This room is suffused with an unnatural chill. Mist coils around the floor, and the rest of the furniture consists solely of cupboards and open shelving containing foodstuffs.

This is a pantry for storing food to dole out to paupers and beggars. Obviously, the Baron and his staff don't need to eat conventional food, and so this room is solely for the benefit of his philanthropic efforts. A character proficient in cookery utensils will notice the absence of garlic in any of the preserved foods. The mist and cold are a localized regional lair effect.²

1-A-1-i - Office

You enter a comfortably outfitted office centered around a large wooden desk. Two suits of ornamental armour stand by the entrance, holding swords locked in battle above head height. Portraits of knights in shining armour cover the walls.

This office is where the Baron does the paperwork for the clinic. It's mostly dull numbers and order forms of no interest to anyone but an accountant (and even then, barely). The most interesting feature is the button hidden in the helmet of each of the suits of armour. The first button locks all the doors in the complex. The second releases a colourless gas smelling slightly of sulphur into areas 1a1a through to 1a1c, forcing humanoids who inhale it to succeed on a DC14 constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. The Baron and his

1-A-1-j - Gallery

Portraits of men and women clad in armour are spaced around this hall. Their eyes seem haunted, and follow you around the room. A stone spiral staircase leads up to the next floor.

This is where the Baron displays some of his favourite paintings, all of paladins who fell trying to best him over his long career as a member of the living dead. Characters who take a closer look and succeed on a DC25 Investigation check notice something sticking out of one of the picture frames - a small button that if pressed reveals a small compartment in the wall near the portrait. The compartment contains a tiny teak box, inscribed with the words "with thanks, and admiration."

The box contains:

- A pistol¹ and 3 +1 silver bullets
- A *mirror of the past*
- A leaflet advertising the services of a Dr. Heinfroth, who runs some kind of asylum on a remote island somewhere off the coast. The leaflet is well thumbed.

The stairs lead up to area 1A1k.

¹ See the Dungeon Master's Guide, under Variant Rules: Firearms.

² You would think that being an immortal vampire would give the Baron enough time to take care of such chores, but he really doesn't have the temperament for housework.

1-A-1-k - Gallery

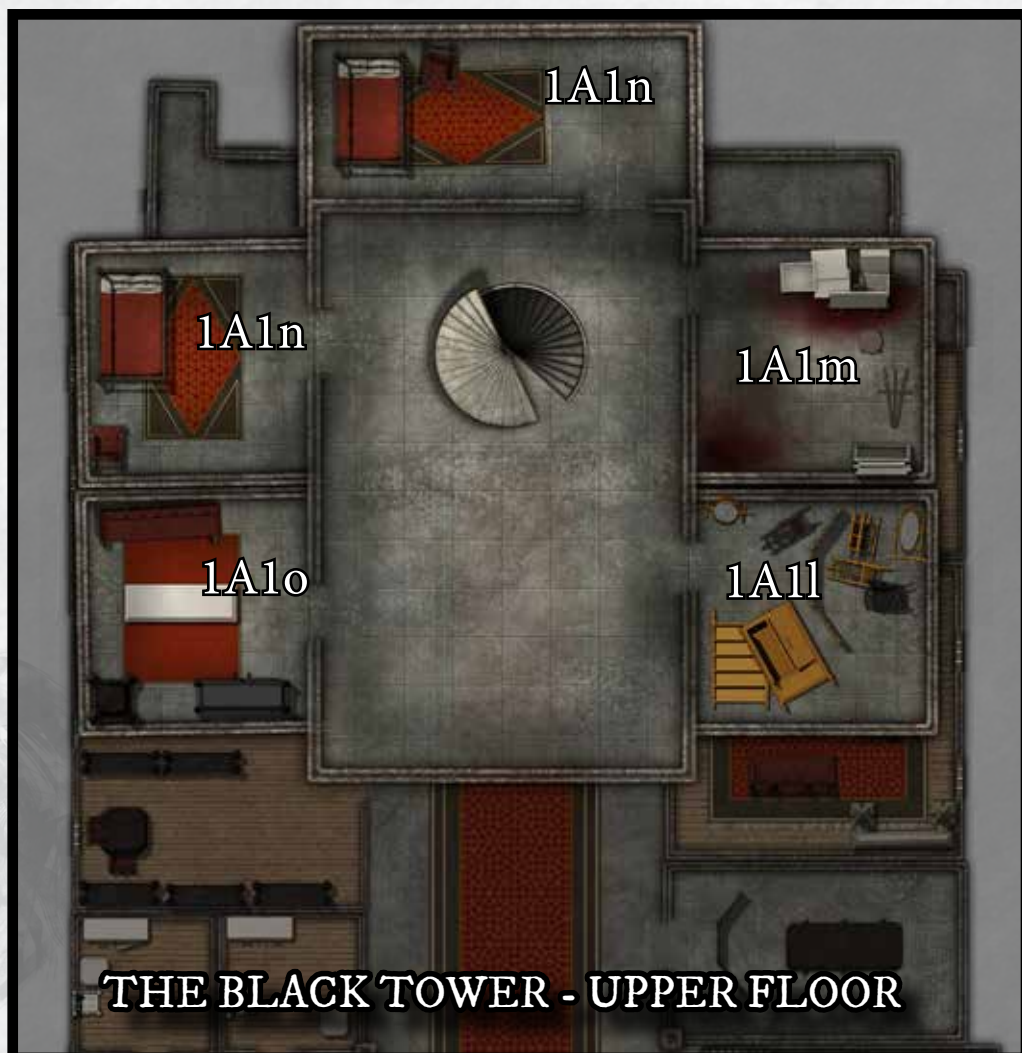
This stone floored landing has 5 doors leading off it, and the staircase continues upwards ever higher. Somewhere high above, the crackle of lightning is barely audible.

This area is out of bounds. Characters found up here by the nurses or the Baron are treated with hostile professionalism, and are forcibly removed if they refuse to leave.

1-A-1-l - The Junk Room

This small storage room is filled to the ceiling with broken furniture, smashed mirrors and other redundant household paraphernalia.

This room is full of old furnishings that the Baron hasn't had the presence of mind to rid himself of.² There's very little of obvious practical use here, aside from the mirror shards, which could help to reveal the Baron and his thralls for what they truly are.



I-A-I-m - The Bloody Chamber

The floor of this room is covered in blood, some of it still sticky. An easel stands with brushes abandoned nearby on the floor. Blank canvasses are stacked against the walls.

This is the Baron's private painting room. Unsurprisingly, the Baron likes to paint in blood, whenever he has fresh food in. As the Baron is only up in the night hours, it is unlikely he will be found here.

I-A-I-n - Guest Bedroom

This room is richly bedecked with crimson finery, including a comfortable bed, a deep pile rug and a curious chair by the bedside.

This is where Baron Metus keeps his charmed guests whilst he bleeds them for art materials, food and his own sadistic enjoyment. Baron Metus has no guests at the moment, but if he captures any characters, this is where he's likely to store them.

I-A-I-o - The Master Bedroom

This rather opulent bedroom is centered around a marble sarcophagus polished to a shine. A crimson couch is placed to one side of the room, and few standing glass cases to the other. The room is filled with an inexplicable sentiment, the air thick with an animal instinct to flee.

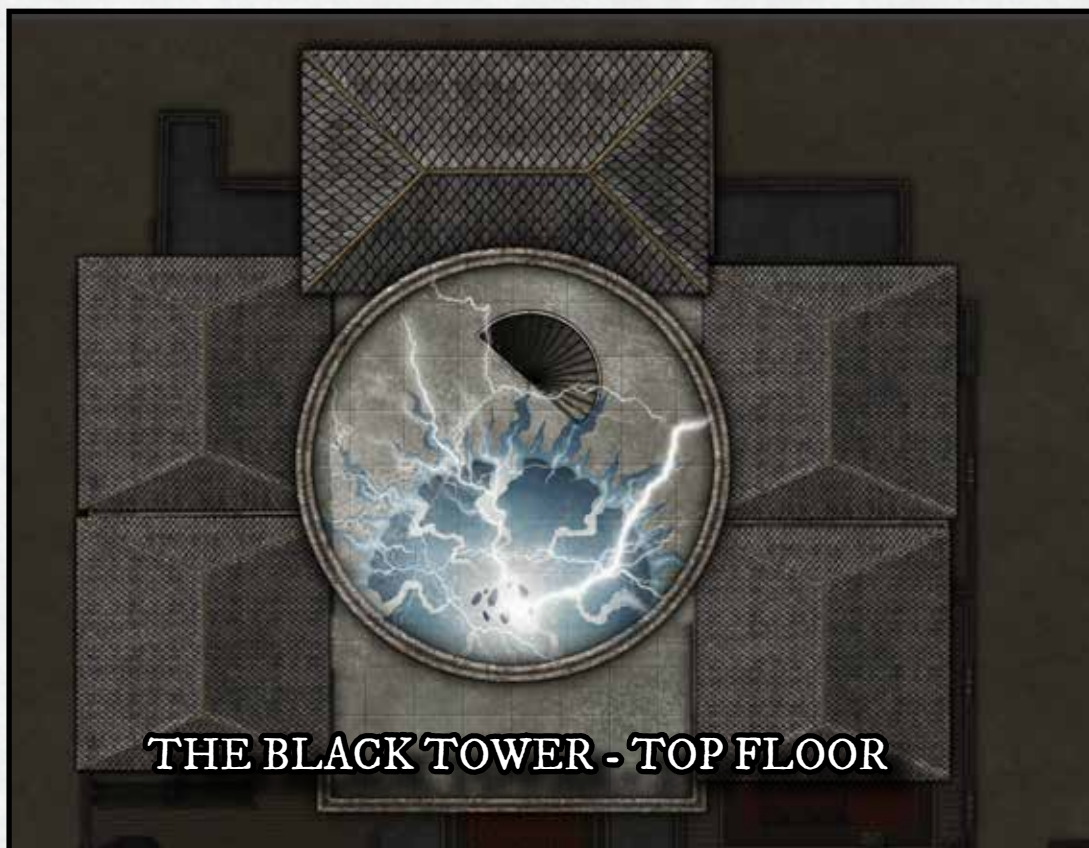
During the day, Baron Metus is asleep in this sarcophagus. When the sun goes down, he rises to

take care of clinic paperwork, go outside to feed or to work on his art. If the characters fall foul of any of his spawn, or the gas triggered from Area 1a1i, the Baron is awakened by his two **cerebral vampire** nursing assistants. If angered or threatened, Baron Metus is a formidable opponent. (See Appendices). He strikes down those who insist on combat, though prefers to leave some of his foes alive, so they can wallow in their defeat. He often takes one dead foe as a **vampire spawn** to add insult to injury. If truly threatened by characters wielding sunlight or holy weapons, the vampire flees rather than risk death.

I-A-I-p - The Thinker's Prison

This circular, domed room crackles with blue sparks, and lightning dances across the walls. Against the south wall, an old man dressed in rags is chained to the wall, clutching his head as if in agony. Around him, a shimmering blue aura flickers in time to his nonsensical gibbering.

This room is where Baron Metus has imprisoned his psionic captive, a Vistani the vampire calls The Thinker. The room is a dangerous place to be at the best of times - the poor Thinker has been tortured by its cerebral vampire nurses and has become a gibbering, psychic wreck. He lashes out at anyone he doesn't recognize, though this isn't malicious as much as it is defensive impulse. A *calm emotions* spell or similar magic can help the Thinker calm down long enough to be led from the room.



1-A-2 - Obis House

This hideous, run down building has holes in the roof and walls. The slogan "Work and you shall be rewarded" is plastered above the main doorway", and the sound of crying babes comes from inside.

An Orphanage run by the cult of the Overseer, this workhouse clads its charges in ugly gray shifts sewn by the orderlies. The children work all day sewing clothes, and eke out a miserable existence on gruel. Wooden plaques with unhelpful motivational slogans are nailed up everywhere. Orphanages like Obis House often sell children to work in places like Dyreth's Mills (1A3) when they run out of places to house them.

1-A-3 - Dyreth Millinery

This hideous, run down building has holes in the roof and walls. The slogan "Work and you shall be rewarded" is plastered above the main doorway", and the sound of crying babes comes from inside.

Stephen Dyreth (LE **necromancer**) runs a millinery in the North District, out of a grim looking row of ash grey warehouses. The secret to his financial success is well known - his warehouses are manned almost entirely by child labour sourced from the children kept at the Obis House orphanage (and others). The Baroness passively supports this venture by arresting parents in Mantira Bay on false charges, imprisoning them and sending their children to the orphanages, from where Dyreth harvests them. Lately, however, his efforts have been stymied by the appearance of a nighttime predator snatching children from their beds. Though only one or two children disappears every week (an acceptable and replaceable loss by Dyreth's standards), the orphans have been driven so hysterical that their work is poor and slow (not acceptable).

1-A-4 - The Dominance [ship]

Out at sea, the silhouette of a ship drifts just off the coast, obscured by the mist. It flies a yellow flag at half-mast...the symbol for quarantine.

The Dominance was once the flagship of Darkon's navy, and now sits rather forlornly in the sea just outside Martira Bay. The ship is under a heavy Quarantine because it is believed to be harbouring Crimson Death victims. In actuality, the crew have contracted a different (but still unfortunate) condition on their travels - they have become **ghouls**. Under the command of Damon Skragg (CE **ghast**), the ghouls have been periodically sneaking into Martira Bay under cover of night and feeding on the children working at the factories belonging to Cassius Dyreth. The quarantine suits Captain Skragg very well indeed, as noone wants to come anywhere near the ship and discover the truth.

1-A-5 - The Bard's Guild

A storefront with a jaunty gold sign is clearly marked as the Bard's Guild in decorative script. Outside, rather shady looking men and women come and go with grim expressions. Despite the signage, there's no sign of music or poetry being performed.

Perhaps the most quietly influential of all Martira Bay's guilds, the Bards Guild is a thinly veiled front for the local Thieves' Guild. In turn, the vast majority of members are also members of the Kargat. Since the disappearance of Witness Tavelia some years back, the local sect has been run by the **were-rat** Adamus Re, who poses as a gnarled (and unconvincing) lyricist. Though physically weaker than many of his subordinates, Admatius is as cunning as he is lice-ridden, and has seen off many contests to his premiership with a knife to the jugular before the challenges were even vocalized.

1-A-6 - The Cosmopolis Club

The Cosmopolis Club is well known across the city for being the 'place to be' if one wants to consort with the rich and fabulous. The monthly membership fee is 100 Darkonese gold pieces, the upfront deposit is 250 gold, and no application is considered without three sponsorships from existing members. This being the case (and much to the delight of the current membership) the club is very exclusive and hard to get into. The advantages of being a member are dubious, but include access to the Cosmopolis library, sauna and private meeting rooms.

1-A-6-a The Cosmopolis Club - Entrance

This swanky and over-decorated entrance hall is bedecked in gaudy finery and an unnecessary number of pot plants. 4 bored looking guards stand near the doors, stifling yawns.

The entrance hall is manned by a **guard**, who keep watch for intruders. The guard is easily swayed by plausible lies (they don't like their employers much). If their life is in danger, they fall back and raise the alarm.



1-A-6-b The Cosmopolis Club - Lounge

A rich rug is overlaid on a stone floor. Uncomfortable but fashionable chairs are spaced out to allow visitors to drape themselves meaningfully about the room.

Visitors with appointments are often asked to wait here by the **guard** in area 1a7a. Under the rug, the stone is marked indelibly with a suspicious bloodstain from dark events in the club's past. Noone admits any knowledge about the stain if asked, and they pass it off as unremarkable.

1-A-6-c The Cosmopolis Club - Back Office

This rather spartan looking room is filled with wooden cabinets. Papers are leaking out from some of the drawers onto the floor.

The door to this room is kept locked, and the keys are with the guard in area 1a7a, or with any ranking member of the club. The incriminating paperwork kept in this office is enough to prove that Dyreth Millinerie buys orphans from Oblis House to run his business, in addition to a whole host of other highly criminal/unethical financial evidence. The papers here could relatively easily be used to blackmail any individual member of the Cosmopolis club, and thus are not as unguarded as they seem. Any papers stolen from the office are invisibly marked with magic by Valeria Bantius, who ruthlessly hounds the perpetrators out of town with her undead minions when she discovers the theft.

1-A-6-d The Waiting Room

A few couches are stacked lazily against the walls in this waiting area. A stone staircase leads upwards in the north eastern corner of the room.

The stairs are guarded by two **veterans**, who are paid handsomely to keep the Cosmopolis club free from interference. The twins (Jack and Jill) are ugly, eight foot tall brawlers who enjoy nothing more than breaking skulls and taking names (in that corner). Unfortunately, they aren't particularly smart, and can be hoodwinked by clever language or trickery.

1-A-6-e The Cosmopolis Club - Spare Room

Wooden furniture is piled up here in a sad looking heap. Broken chairs, cracked bedframes, defunct cupboards...it's something of a household graveyard.

This room is filled with junk as a distraction from its real purpose - hiding the emergency funds of the Cosmopolis club. Hidden in the mattress of the broken bed is a sack containing roughly a thousand Darkonese gold coins.

1-A-6-f The Cosmopolis Club - The Boardroom

Eight chairs are placed around a large table. Dim light from lanterns illuminates an easel covered with scribbled notes.

This room is where the Club meet to discuss their portfolios, agree evil plans and generally roll about metaphorically in their big piles of money. On the easel, the details of the latest plan to dominate Martira Bay is laid out.

1d4	Evil Plan
1	Buy up all the affordable housing and use extortionate rents to keep the populace scrounging for money.
2	Kill the Kargat in Martira Bay by setting a fire in the Bard's Guild
3	Bribe and kill off as many priests of the Overseer as possible to break the faith
4	Kidnap Herbalists from Rivalis and use their knowledge to produce low cost, poor quality merchandise, driving the market into the ground and allowing an anonymous buyout of Rivalian business.



CHAPTER THREE:

RIVALIS

THE ROOT OF EVIL

*Healers, they call themselves
Fools, and charlatans all
Even now, their precious plants seek their doom
and they are too blind to see it*

1B: RIVALIS

Originally a small halfling community hidden away at the edge of Darkon, Rivalis grew in size over several centuries to become a thriving community of herbologists and naturalists. Though some “large folk” have moved into hastily constructed shacks at the edge of the village, most of the buildings are sized for halflings, meaning an adventurer on horseback can more than likely see over the roofs of all the houses right to the other side. At the center of Rivalis lies the crowning jewel of the village, the gargantuan greenhouse known as the Crystal Garden. Designed to allow the herbalists and plant eugenicists of Rivalis a chance to safely practice their craft, it is a veritable cornucopia of strange and wondrous plant life.

THE GENTLEMAN’S GIFT

The herbologists of Rivalis were famous all over Darkon for producing not only medicines, but also rare strains of tobacco, recreational drugs and other mollifying substances to help alleviate the bleak existences of Darkon’s citizens. Sadly, over a year ago, the druids at the Crystal Gardens came under the influence of a stranger, who called upon them with advice, and a small sapling from the Greywood which he planted secretly in the herbarium. No sooner had the Gentleman Caller left than the tree began to take over the ecosystem of the Gardens,

WHY WOULD WE GO THERE?

Rivalis is a small, out of the way community, and it’s likely that adventurers will only come across it if they are looking for it. It is well known all over Darkon for its access to superior medicines, unguents and other herbs, and people across Darkon will periodically recommend it to anyone looking for medicinal help. The growing threat of the Crimson Plague returning might cause the characters to visit Rivalis in the hope of finding a cure. In addition, characters looking to resurrect a dead party member could do worse than heading to the renowned village of healers.



APPROACHING THE TOWN

When the characters first approach Rivalis, read:

The fecund smell of rot and undergrowth hits you like a hammer as a small village of undersized houses emerges seemingly out of nowhere. It is followed by the pungent and clashing aroma of flowers and spices, a jarring cacophony of plants that is almost overwhelming. At the center of the village, a huge crystal building dominates the view, though it seems like the area has been cordoned off.

HOUSE OCCUPANTS

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the house's occupant.

d20	Occupant
1-3	None
4-5	Rivalian Family
6-18	Rivalian Herbalist
19-20	Greenhouse

RIVALIAN FAMILY

A house of Martiran Citizens contains 1d4 adults (NG male and female halfling **commoners**) and 1d4-1 children (CN male and female noncombatants). The citizens are curious about any newcomers, and offer them food and shelter if they agree to look into the events at the Crystal Gardens.

RIVALIAN HERBALIST

This house belongs to one of Rivalis' many herbalists (NG halfling **druids**), who stocks a variety of random plants and herbs. There's a 50% chance that ingesting any given plant results in a character becoming poisoned. Herbalists will happily sell *potions of healing* at three times the normal rate (such things are rare outside of Rivalis).

GREENHOUSE

A Rivalian greenhouse contains a plethora of plants suited to the owners interests. If you need inspiration, roll on the tables below.

1d4	Greenhouse Contents
1	1d4 awakened trees . The greywood trees attack and attempt to kidnap visitors, taking them to area 1b4e.
2	A zombie hidden amongst foliage dressed like a farmer
3	A variety of herbs, along with a <i>heward's handy spice pouch</i> .
4	A cache of 1d6 <i>potions of healing</i> , and a collection of flowers used to distill them.

RIVALIAN HERBS

Rivalis is famous for its herbal decoctions and remedies. You can roll on the table below if you need to generate some random examples at any point. Consuming a herb requires an action, and there is a 50% chance that the consumed herb will take the effect noted in each plant's respective effect column in the table. The effect of a herb is the same as the named spell, cast at its lowest level, and lasts for the normal duration of the spell. A character proficient in Herbalism can guarantee a herb takes effect upon consumption if they administer it themselves. The effects of Rivalian Herbs cannot be removed by *dispel magic* or similar effects, but can be removed by lesser restoration or any other ability which neutralizes poisons.

Rivalian Herbs				
1d6	Name	Type	Colour	Effect
1	Adder's Tongue	Leaf	Orange	Protection from Poison
2	Black Avis	Lily	Black	Calm Emotions
3	Churchsteeple	Root	White	Protection from Evil and Good
4	Dead Man's Tears	Leaf	Green	Disguise Self (as undead)
5	Fendrake Root	Root	Brown	Create Homunculus
*This version of the spell waives the need for a material component, and the cat shaped fungus animates to serve as the homunculus.				
6	Mist Weed	Reed	Grey	Fog Cloud

*Anecdotally, mist weed attracts the mists to swallow you whole. and some people claim to have lost relatives to it



PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (Rivalis)
1	A halfling woman is in her front garden. She's planting black orchids.
2	Two children are running about chasing a goose. The goose seems disgruntled.
3	A member of the Kargat (LE scarecrow) is stitched up ominously in a pumpkin patch
4	A necromancer dressed in purple is dancing with a corpse in a back yard. She seems to like this place a lot.
5	A pickpocket (LE master thief) bumps into the characters carrying a bunch of vegetables which they drop as a distraction
6	An animated tree ambles past carrying a bunch of smaller potted plants
7	A halfling druid stares grimly at a tortoise. It's involved in a race, and the druid has a great deal of money riding on the result.
8	A cow with bleeding sores moos plaintively over a fence

RUMOURS

d6	Rumours (Rivalis)
1	"It's been a bad month for trade. Fewer wagons from the east, more attacks by the dead causing trouble"
2	"Noone has come out of the Crystal Garden for weeks. Should we...tell the king? Send to Martira Bay for help?"
3	"Say, you ain't from Lamordia, are you? Haven't seen anyone from there since the borders closed"
4	"The soil is awful lately. Just look at this carrot! It's half the size it should be."
5	"I heard the brothers at the cheese factory lost all their cows to disease. Nasty stuff, sent them out of business."
6	"I hear someone saw a whistling demon down near the Forest of Shadows. Sounds like nonsense to me. What kind of demon whistles?"
7	"Some of the trees round here have been looking awful grey lately. You reckon something's wrong with them?"
8	"I met a devil at a crossroad. Wanted to trade my soul for a fiddle made of gold, can you believe it? I told him where to shove it."

AREAS OF RIVALIS

The following areas correspond to the markings on the map above:

1-B-1 The Mayor's House

This little hut is sized for a halfling, much like the rest of Rivalis. A gilded sign outside the house is marked "Mayor's House" in a jaunty comic sans. A nasty smell is oozing from inside, and the door lies ajar, held open by a thick tendril of knotted weeds.

Baron Windfoot was eaten by his own pot plant (a gift from the Crystal Gardens), which is slowly digesting him in his bedroom and has expanded to fill the house in his absence. The plant has the statistics of an **assassin vine**¹.

1-B-2 The Coachman's Rest

This creaking inn is the largest building in Rivalis,,which makes it a rather modestly sized building by normal standards. Flowers hang from baskets outside, and an A-Board on the doorstep reads "BIG FOLK WELCOME." The E is falling off.

The Coachman's Rest caters to large people, charging only a single Darkonian silver piece per night for a room. The halfling proprietor, Merry Busybramble, works tirelessly around the clock with his wife to provide visitors with a good service, Unbeknowst to the Busybrambles, some of their rooms have become infested with Greywood, which manifest as **assassin vines**, **awakened bushes**, **awakened trees** and other malevolent hazards. These perils have crept under beds and into wardrobes, making for nasty surprises for any adventurer who lets their guard down.

1-B-3 The Rose Garden

The thick, sickly sweet smell of roses fills the air as you approach the center of town. In the near distance, a huge glass dome filled with plants reaches into the sky. At ground level, banks and banks of black roses are laid out in rows.

This rose garden has been cultivated by the druids of Rivalis for decades, to provide visitors with a pleasant introduction to the Crystal Gardens. In the last few months, the roses have turned slowly black, and their pungent smell has increased tenfold, becoming suffocating and unpleasant. Speaking to any of these flowers, such as through a *Speak with Plants* spell, reveals the plants are chanting "when black roses bloom" over and over like a mantra. What this means precisely is unclear.

¹ The assassin vine was first encountered in the sourcebook *Tomb of Annihilation*, but you can replace it here with an **awakened tree** if you don't have that book.

1-B-4 The Crystal Gardens

A magnificent crystal dome of cut glass and worked wood is the defining structure of Rivalis' skyline. Inside, plants press against the glass in an overgrown mass. Occasionally, the leaves move.

The Crystal Gardens has long been the epicenter of Rivalis' economy, and where the halflings have worked to harvest all kinds of medicines, curatives and abjuratives. In recent days, an aberrant "donation" to the aboretum has corrupted the greenhouse and murdered the inhabitants. If Rivalis is ever to once more work medical miracles, the greenhouse will need to be rid of its leafy menaces. Entering the gardens carries its own risks, as the ecosystem so carefully nurtured by the halflings has begun to run wild.

1-B-4-a The Out Side

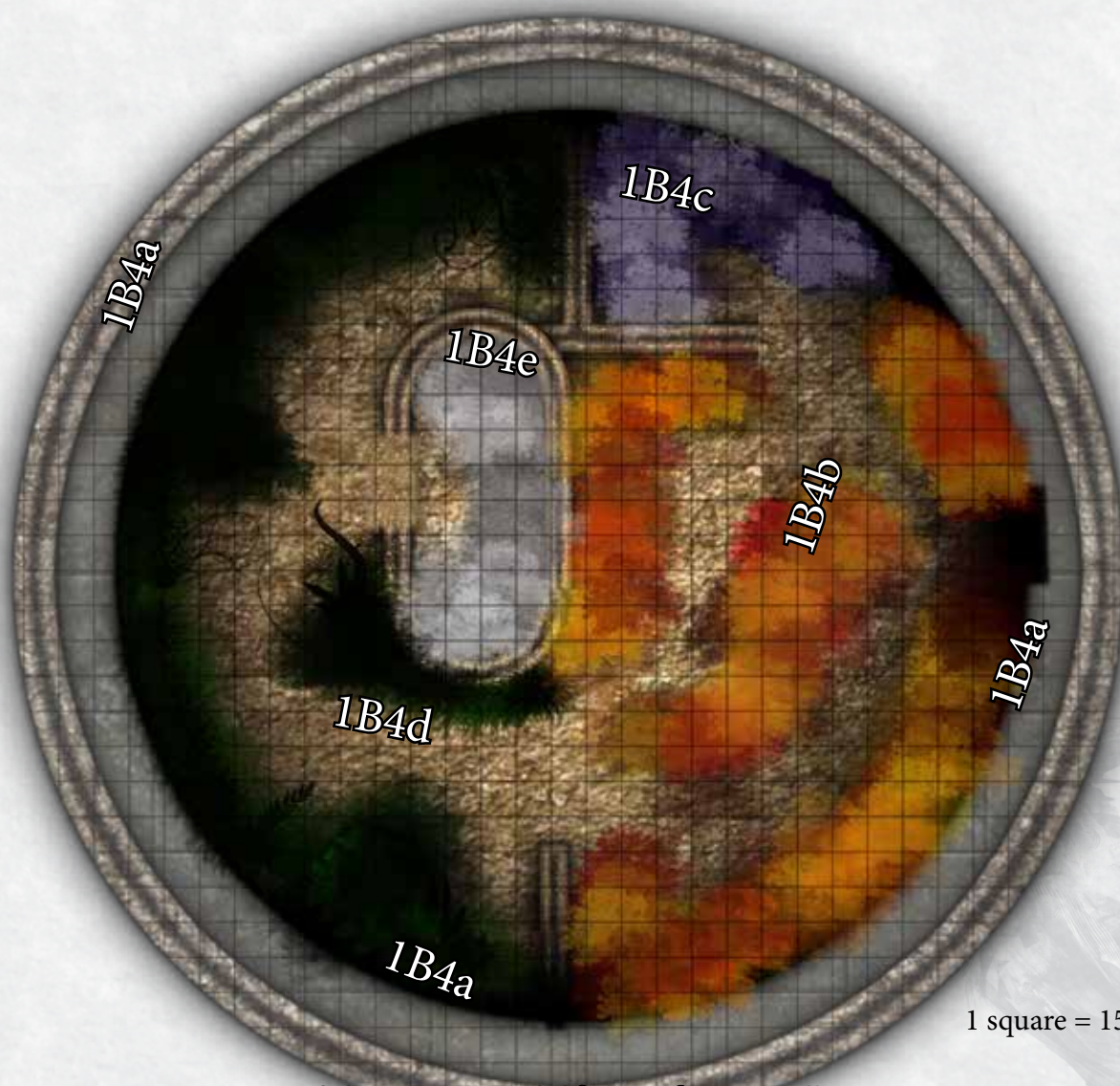
A corridor of worked stone travels in a circle around the outside of the herbarium, reaching up to 4 feet high. Over the wall, plants and leaves hang down into the area here and there, rustling faintly.

The Out Side was originally intended as a semi-quarantine for the druids who worked at the herbarium, and plants from inside were not allowed in the Out Side in case they were dangerous to the ecosystem outside. With the death of the druids, the Out Side has become compromised. There is a high chance that adventurers who travel around the Out Side may stumble into one of the horrors of the corrupted Crystal Gardens.

1-B-4-b Garden of Autumn Twilight

Leaves and bushes painted in autumn hues whisper to each other in a rising hush that obliterates all sound from outside. Sickly yellows and burnished golds carpet the floor of this chamber.

The Autumn Gardens was used to take care of dying plants in the last stages of their lives, kept close to the entrance for ease of disposing of the organic hazardous waste. As the Greywood infection spread, more plants began to die, and the Autumn Gardens became a large section of the herbarium. The garden is filled with **tri-flower fronds**, **needle blights** and **twig blights**.



1 square = 15 feet

1-B-4-c Garden of Winter Nights

This smaller chamber glows with phosphorescent purple leaves and the floor is carpeted in violet fungi. As you approach, the floor begins to sing discordantly.

The **shriekers** and **violet fungi** in this room have grown far outside their beds in the druids' absence. Though the druids were quite close to teaching the fungi to sing in harmony, the overgrowth has resulted in a cacophony of conflicting voices. Any character proficient in musical instruments can tell that the fungi are trying to sing a complex round in 12 parts, and can attempt to conduct them with a DC20 Nature (Performance) check. Succeeding causes the fungi to sing in tune, and in concert, which has no practical effect on anything whatsoever.

1-B-4-d Garden of Spring Dawning

This vast room is humid and sweltering. Plants, huge and small, dominate the room in every direction. The floor is almost entirely overgrown with vines, and a brooding canopy threatens to block out all light from above. The plants muffle the noise from outside, leaving you in a calm and silent wilderness interrupted only by the occasional chitter of insects in the near distance, and the flutter of butterflies overhead. There's a faint smell of honey.

This area of the gardens is filled with **assassin vines**, **mantraps** and **awakened trees**. The plants here are quiet and speculative, preferring to wait and watch unless spurred to action by the treant in area 1b4e.

Laboratory

The glimmer of metal under a vine alerts you to a change in your surroundings. A closer inspection reveals a metal table, and pages of notes, beakers and alchemical tools buried under a thick layer of obstructive plant materials.

A character proficient in herbalism kits, poisoner's kits or alchemy tools instantly recognizes what the halflings were trying to do. Otherwise, a Intelligence (Nature) check DC 20 can figure out the intentions from the remains. The druids were trying to synthesize a poison strong enough to wither the entire laboratory and everything that made contact with the Greywood samples. Successful application of the poison would require it to be applied to the center of an ecosystem or nervous system (in this case, the greywood treant in the Arboretum would suffice). A character can make a DC20 Intelligence check to attempt to synthesize the poison from the remaining materials, applying any relevant proficiency bonus where relevant.

1-B-4-e The Grey Arboretum

This area of the gardens is populated almost entirely by gnarled and twisted silver trees, branches reaching out like claws. The sweet smell of spices and honey is rank in the air. Under the roots of the trees, dessicated halfling corpses have been impaled by stabbing tendrils, expressions frozen in rictus grins. In the center of the orchard, one of the trees is noticeably larger than the others, and the knotted whorls almost remind you of a face etched into the bark.

These trees are greywood **awakened trees** which have murdered the halfling druids which used to tend the Crystal Gardens. They are currently digesting, having drained the druids' corpses of vitality, but respond to any violence in kind. The largest tree is a **greywood treant**, which is filled with malevolence and evil. Interacting with it in any way causes it to lash out. Angering the treant causes all the plants in areas 1b4 to become antagonistic and violent. Applying the poison from area 1b4d to the treant requires 2d4 rounds, and kills the treant in a matter of moments, permanently. Once the treant is dead, the rest of the greywood plants wither away in 1d4 days, and the rest of the arboretum (whilst still dangerous) loses any malevolent singular intent.

If adventurers are kidnapped elsewhere in Rivalis and brought here, they are buried in the earth and have trees planted in their living bodies. The trees secrete a paralytic sap, rendering the victim incapacitated but otherwise able to think, see, breathe and experience the horror of what has befallen them.

1-B-5 The Cheese Factory

This converted barn has a garish painted yellow sign hanging over the door reading "The Cheese Factory". A nasty smell wafts out from within, and a cow moos plaintively from somewhere inside.

The Cheese Brothers have always run a successful dairy farm in Rivalis, until recently their cows started to get sick and die. The sickness has all the hallmarks of the Crimson Death, and the brothers killed each other, considering it the kinder fate than the inevitable contraction of the lethal disease. It's been a few days since they died, and the smell is becoming unbearable. Many cows are already dead too, with some clinging to life. Mostly, the cheese factory is a grisly and macabre display of what the Crimson Death is capable of.

CHAPTER FOUR: BLEAK HOUSE

RICHTENHAUS

*The Vampire Hunter, they call him
Bleating, like lambs before a wolf
I wonder if they know, deep inside
How little they matter to him*

ID: BLEAK HOUSE

The Richten Estate, built by Frederick van Richten over a century before the present, has a peculiar reputation. Birthplace of famous vampire hunter and scholar of the unnatural Rudolph van Richten, it was consumed by the mists for decades before returning to its original location. Once haunted by the spirits of Van Richten's past, the house returned to Darkon after its master came to it and laid the spirits to rest. The spirit of the house, an enigmatic genius loci, requested one thing from Van Richten to assure its acquiescence - that he stay and watch over the restless spirits. Van Richten honored this request for some time, but as his old age began to turn to infirmity, the old man realized he had left one task undone. Slipping away on the back of a Vistani carriage, he slipped into Barovia across the Mountains of Misery. When the house discovered that he had vanished, it was wroth, and old evils have begun to creep out from the estate whispering the same question - "where is the master? where is he?"

MADAME RADANAVICH

The evil Vistani seer and mystic met her death not once, but twice at the hands of Van Richten, her spirit becoming imprisoned in the bowels of his estate. With the house enraged, she has slipped free of its grasp, and now masquerades as a member of the Cosmopolis Club in Martira Bay. The house greatly desires to return the evil ghost to its confinement, but currently is focused entirely on locating Van Richten and considers the Vistani lower priority. With her escape, the halls of Richtenhaus have come to harbour some of her deceased kinsmen, who float about causing such mischief as the house will allow.

MISTY MEMORIES

The Van Richten house, whilst no longer plagued with so many malevolent ghosts, is imbued with a singular dark presence that aligns closely with

the mists. The house is overpopulated with ravens, which perch on the roof of the house and glare at visitors. The house is empty without Van Richten in residence, and wishes to be left alone. It discourages attempts to enter it with the slamming of doors and the groaning of timbers. However, evil creatures such as Vampires or Werewolves cannot enter the house without its permission. The house, being aligned to the interests of Van Richten, is unlikely to grant such privileges unless in exceptional circumstances. This prohibition extends to Azalin, who finds himself unable to probe the house with his divinations since it returned from the mists.

A GENTLEMAN CALLER

The note which prompted Van Richten to depart from his vigil on his last hunt was left by none other than the Gentleman Caller, who stopped by whilst making his way around the Jagged Coast and anonymously deposited the note through the letterbox.¹

RICHTENHAUS FEATURES

Richtenhaus is aware of its surroundings and all creatures within it. It dislikes thieves, but wishes to carry on Van Richten's good work, and will allow characters being chased by terrible evil to rest and resupply here.

Ceilings. Ceilings vary in height but are usually 10 feet tall.

Lighting. None of the rooms in the house are lit when the characters arrive, although most areas contain working oil lamps or fireplaces.

Doors. The doors in Richtenhaus are iron banded wood. A wooden door can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength check. All external doors are locked, and internal one are unlocked unless noted otherwise in that room's description.

Holy Wards. The Richtenhaus refuses to allow Vampires entry to the house. This barrier extends to creatures charmed by a vampire. All affected creatures treat the house and its environs as if it were warded by a *magic circle* effect. The Richtenhaus is also immune to any effect which would scry on its interior.

APPROACHING THE HOUSE

The Richtenhaus sits on the edge of the misty border of Darkon.

A three-story manor rises out of the blasted heath before you, previously obscured by the ever-present mist and an array of carefully tended poplars. The house is dark, and uninviting, but a dirt trail leads from under your feet to the large wooden front doors, decorated with a silver knocker shaped like a raven.

¹ Whilst messages in blood and spooky dreams are all very well and good, a true villain appreciates when it's simpler to just send a note and be done with it.

AREAS OF RICHTENHAUS

The following areas correspond to the markings on the map below:

1-D-1 Courtyard

This grassy courtyard is enclosed on all sides by the grim facade of the house. A statue which must have once stood proudly outside the house lies broken on the cobblestones. Dark glass windows and stony grotesques peer down at you from above.

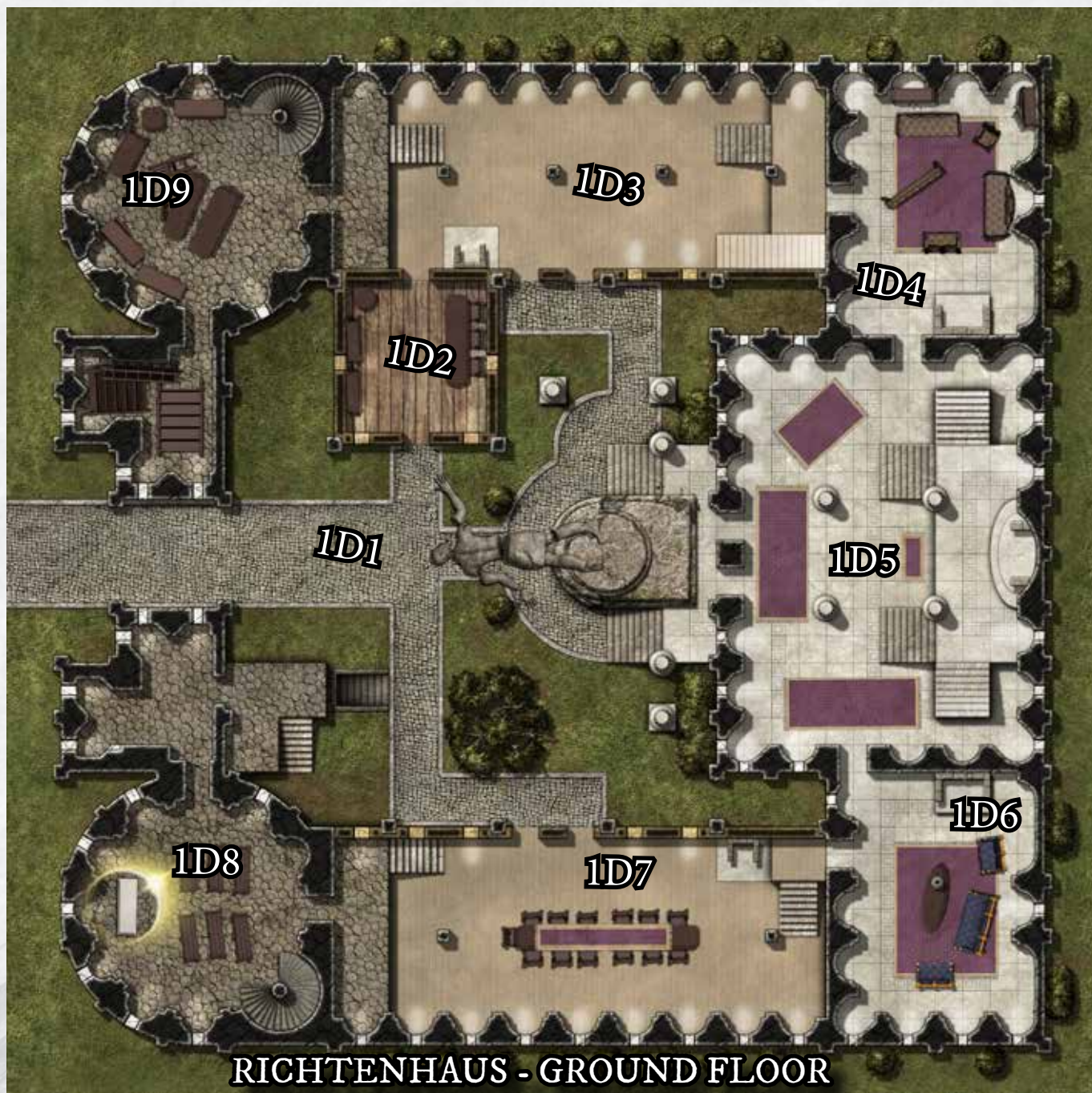
Creatures of darkness, including but not limited to vampires and werewolves, feel incredibly uncomfortable when they enter this courtyard. Doors lead off from this central courtyard in all directions.

1-D-2 Servants' Receiving Room

This wooden floored chamber has the sparsest of decorations, consisting solely of a wooden table, chairs and some shelves housing chipped and worn serving sets.

This little room was where the Richtenhaus servants would wait on the leisure of their masters if they expected to be needed shortly, or wanted to remain out of the way.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of a maid sits here, darning a sock. It smiles, and offers the characters something to eat and drink. It introduces itself as Elise, but vanishes if it leaves the room to fetch food. It sometimes reappears in the same room, but on future appearances, it has marks around its neck as though it was strangled.



1-D-3 Ballroom

This wide wooden hall has a polished floor and many windows covered by thick velvet curtains. Dust covers the floor.

This ballroom never saw much use, as Van Richten isn't a big fan of society events, or dancing.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of a young woman with bright red hair and piercing violet eyes is dancing here alone. This is the ghost of Claudia DeShanes, a young psychic who joined Van Richten on his crusade but soon died at the hands of a vampire. Claudia has the statblock of a ghost, with the following additional ability:

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Claudia's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence, (DC 11). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *mage hand* (the hand is invisible)

3/day each: *tasha's hideous laughter*, *dissonant whispers*, *fear*

1-D-4 Men's Withdrawing Room

This comfortable, yet demur room is filled with brown cushioned couches and chairs over a purple rug. Two freestanding wooden cases lie against the northern wall. One is glass fronted, and contains several long-barreled metal apparatus.

At a glance, the first wooden case contains nothing more interesting than plans of game trails around the estate, which seem both outdated and of little practical use. A closer inspection, and a successful DC15 Intelligence (Investigation) check might reveal a secret compartment, within which Van Richten keeps the following.

- A wooden stake
- 13 silver bullets
- A holy symbol decorated with a sunburst
- Two vials of holy water
- A book of hymns to something called The Morninglord

The second case encloses three hunting rifles once used by Frederick Van Richten, the original owner of the house. The rifles are old, but Van Richten keeps them in good shape.

	Damage	Weight	Features
Hunting Rifle	2d10 piercing	8lb.	Ammunition (range 80/240), reload (5 shots), two-handed

Van Richten doesn't keep the guns loaded, and the only bullets he keeps are hidden in the secret compartment mentioned above.

1-D-5 The Grand Foyer

This spacious marble foyer is laid out with purple rugs of questionable taste at irregular intervals. A bronze chandelier creaks ominously overhead. Stairs lead upwards further into the house, and open doors lead north and south into drawing rooms.

The grand foyer was always thought a little preposterous by Van Richten, who preferred to enter through the Servants' Receiving Room (area 1d2). As a result, the Foyer was rarely used at all.

1-D-6 Ladies' Withdrawing Room

This rather plush drawing room features an array of bright purple couches around an oval coffee table, on which is balances an ivory jar. A small cut glass chandelier refracts colours onto the walls, where landscape paintings of scenic park views have been left to gather dust.

This table was once the life of the house, used by the ladies of the house to talk, drink and read in good company. The ivory jar contains the ashes of Ingrid Van Richten, Rudolph's late wife.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of a tall woman is sat at the table, drinking tea and laughing at something unseen. She is dressed only in a torn nightgown, and deep bleeding gouges are visible on her neck and chest. This is the ghost of Ingrid Van Richten as she was at the moment of her death. She seeks comfort from Van Richten, and becomes angry if noone steps up and claims to be him. If she realises she has been abandoned, she wails in despair and attacks until she is driven away with sobs.

1-D-7 The Dining Hall

This vast dining hall has a lonely feeling to it. Footsteps echo loudly on the wooden floor, the sole occupant of which is a long dining table to seat thirteen. Portraits of long dead men and women line the walls, staring down at you with heavily mustached disapproval.

This table was always too big and imposing for Van Richten. He hated the portraits, as did his wife, so they frequently avoided eating here. Unfortunately for the adventurers, the tables have been replaced by two intelligent **mimic** life partners, who find the peace and quiet of the estate soothing. If they are approached warily, or find themselves outmatched, they negotiate for their lives with information - they can provide any of the information in the prelude to this chapter, having been "guests" of the estate for quite some time.

1-D-8 Chapel

This circular stone room has been equipped with a modest stone altar engraved with a rising sun. Wooden benches act as pews enough for a diminutive congregation. The chapel radiates warmth and comfort, even in a place as bleak as this.

This chapel was installed at the behest of the builder, and though it has undergone some neglect at the hands of Rudolph Van Richten (who remains a man of science more than a man of faith) he was wise enough to keep it clean and unspoiled. As a result, the ancient blessings laid on the foundations are still present.

None of the ghosts resident in the Richtenhaus can enter the chapel, nor affect anything inside it.

1-D-9 Kitchen and Pantry

This cold room contains some large cases for flour, vegetables and other ingredients. On tables lie kitchen implements, including a variety of sharp knives. In one alcove, shelving has collapsed into a messy heap.

This was where the servants prepared food for the Van Richten family.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of an angry cook works in here, peeling an endless sack of potatoes. It rather irritably tells intruders to go away, as it has a lot of food to prepare. Cook has the statblock of a **ghost**, with the following additional ability:

Innate Spellcasting. Cook's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma, (DC 11, +2). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *prestidigitation*

1/day each: *animate objects*

Cook uses her powers to animate the carving knives and sic them on anyone who outstays their welcome.

1-D-10 The Upper Parlour

This spacious parlour opens up onto the upper balcony, and is lavishly decorated with cushioned seats. Paintings of grim moors and isolated churches are displayed on the walls.

This parlour is drafty, and uncomfortable to sit in for any length of time. The door to the balcony is slightly ajar.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of Ottelle Farringer often resides here. She was a scholar who accompanied Van Richten only to be slain by the fiend Drigor. She smiles at newcomers, and asks after Van Richten pleasantly, before fading away.

1-D-11 The South Wing

This narrow, wood floored corridor stretches ahead of you past portraits of grim looking men and women holding complicated metal equipment of unclear function.

This corridor contains paintings of Van Richtens from the distant past, many of whom were scholars and scientists in their own right.

1-D-12 The Master Bedroom

This circular stone room has a staircase leading downwards and upwards. A bed is placed against the south wall, neatly made, along with a freestanding full length mirror and a chest of drawers.

Van Richten moved his bedroom into this room to take advantage of the innate protections conferred on it by the chapel below. Under the bed is a veritable armoury against the unholy, comprising:

- Two silvered shortswords
- One light crossbow and two hand crossbows
- A case of twenty crossbow bolts
- A pouch full of silver dust
- A pouch of diamond dust worth 500gp
- Spell scrolls of *magic circle*, *dispel good and evil*, *raise dead* and *dawn*
- A scroll of *protection against undead*

None of the ghosts resident in the Richtenhaus can enter the Master Bedroom, nor affect anything inside it.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The voice of a woman faintly echoes through the room, begging for her life. This is the voice of Ingrid van Richten begging Baron Metus to spare her in the moments before her death.

1-D-13 The Balcony

A balcony looks out over the Richten estate, and grotesques perched on the ledges leer down to the courtyard below. This close, you can see that the twisted figures are not frowning, but weeping.

The balcony is guarded by thirteen gargoyles that move only in the Richtenhaus' direst need, to protect it from direct threats such as being burned to the ground or other deliberate acts of destruction. Otherwise, they remain locked in their silent vigil.

1-D-14 Linen Cupboard

Sheets are neatly tucked away in drawers in this small wooden room. Wooden racks are set up in one corner along with a broom, and the place has a faintly chemical smell.

This linen cupboard was once the site of a grisly murder, but is otherwise unremarkable.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of Josef, the old housekeeper, appears hanging from the ceiling, with tied sheets as the noose. The ghost reacts to nothing, but hangs limply as if dead. Close inspection of the ghost by a character proficient in medicine reveals that the neck wounds are more consistent with manual strangulation than auto-asphyxiation.

1-D-15 The North Wing

This narrow, wood floored corridor stretches ahead of you past portraits of hideous, winged creatures, etched monstrosities and maniacal lunatics.

These pictures are mostly new, images that Van Richten has commissioned as aids to scrying his enemies. A character proficient in Perception could tell that the most recently moved picture is of a stately, gaunt man in late middle age sitting on a throne and sipping a glass of blood red wine. His eyes seem to follow you around the room.



1-D-17 Gretta's Room

This room is thick with dust and cobwebs. A faded purple rug is laid out beneath dainty white furniture sized for a child and a bed covered with floral patterns.

This room once belonged to Van Richten's sister, Gretta. She was kidnapped by a traitorous member of the household staff, and abandoned in the mists. Van Richten kept her room exactly the way she left it out of grief, always harbouring the slim hope she might return to him one day. Unbeknownst to him, Gretta died a long time ago out there in the mist, and her ghost has been hiding from him in her room for decades.

RICHTENHAUS BLUES: The **ghost** of Gretta crawls out from under the bed, clutching her doll. The doll is a bit lopsided. She doesn't say anything, but watches curiously. She looks thin, and emaciated, as if she perhaps died of hunger.

1-D-18 Boy's Bedroom

This room is decorated in rich greens, with etchings of warriors in bold poses on the walls. The bed in the corner etched with the name "Erazmus" suggests this was the room of a young boy.

This was Van Richten's childhood room, and then the room of his son. It has gone unused since Erazmus' death at the hands of Baron Metus, and Van Richten has been unable to even look at it. There is nothing here but grief and memories.

1-D-19 The Blue Room

Blue. Shades of cerulean, turquoise and lapis lazuli. This room is filled with blue furniture, most notably a majestic four poster bed at the far end. The colours shift and billow like a raging sea in the half-light.

The door to this room is locked and sealed with an *arcane lock* spell. The DC to break into or pick the lock of this room is 25. This room used to be a guest room, until Van Richtens Great-Aunt Helga died here of the Crimson Death when he was young man. His efforts to save her failed, and the room was sealed to prevent further infection. The body was left in the bed where it died, and still faintly resembles a withered 70-year old lady thanks to the preservatives Van Richten used to try and save her. Unfortunately, the body now has the statistics of a **mummy**, and attacks anyone unfortunate enough to disturb it. Any victim who contracts mummy rot from the **mummy** also contracts the Crimson Death.

1-D-20 Van Richten's Laboratory

This bizarre room is filled with tables, shelves and drawers. On a raised dais in the corner, a bathtub is surrounded by pots, vases and bowls. The air smells peculiar in here, a collision of baffling scents that suggests a vague air of experimentation.

This is where Van Richten carries out his medicinal experiments and prepares himself for his crusades.

Cupboards. The cupboards contain a staggering array of herbs and poultices. Assume there is enough material here for a character to cobble together at least one Healer's Kit from the curatives available. In addition, the cupboards contain:

- Several herbalists' kits, one alchemist's kit and one poisoner's kit.
- 1 vial each of *malice*, *oil of taggit*, *torpor* and *truth serum*. Details for all these poisons can be found in the Dungeon Master's Guide.
- Spell scrolls of *detect poison and disease*, *detect magic*, *detect evil and good*, *identify*, *see invisibility*, *augury* and *find traps*.
- A case containing 7 stakes. It seems it is designed to hold 10, but 3 are missing.

Bath. This ornate bathtub is inlaid with gold and ivory. It's an antique, and the focus Van Richten uses for his scrying spells when at home.¹

Books. The shelves contain a variety of books on the undead, lycanthropes and other dark creatures of the night. Copies of Van Richten's Guides to Vampires, Spirits and Werewolves are particularly notable. Characters who reference these books when making Intelligence based skill checks to gather information about such creatures gain advantage on the check.

Journal. Open on a desk at the far side of the room is a journal written in a bold, decisive hand. It details Van Richten's plan to cross the border to Barovia and slay the terrible vampire Strahd von Zarovich. The last page reads.

Dear Reader.

We may never know each other, but I feel that perhaps if you have found your way here we are of singular purpose. I suspect I will never return from my journey. My last, and greatest hunt. If I am successful, the world will be free of a great evil. If I fail...I am old. My life serves no-one wasting away in this place. Everything I own, I bequeath to you, stranger. Use it to light a torch, and hold it high against the darkness. Shield it from the wind, and rain. Shelter it next to your heart.

Be wise. Be kind. Be prepared.

Dr. Rudolph van Richten

¹ It also serves very well for its originally intended use. Can't fight vampires whilst smelling like an ape.

The other journals in this room detail Rudolph's crushing loneliness trapped in the house with no company but bad memories. It also contains his suspicions that the house harbours a greater sentience that wishes to keep him put. A character reading the journals will come to the understanding that Van Richten believes his old enemies dead and buried, and that he is unaware the foul Baron Metus still roams free in Martira Bay.

Wards. This room is locked with an *arcane lock* (DC30 to break open or pick locks). The laboratory itself is protected by a *mordenkainen's private sanctum* effect.

Secret Compartment. Pulling on the copy of *Van Richten's Guide To Vampires* reveals a hidden compartment behind it, in which is concealed a **bag of holding**. Inside the bag at the bottom is a **cloak of invisibility**.

1-D-21 Battlements

Cold winds assault you as you stare out over Darkon from the battlements. Ravens flock overhead in murders, silently winging their way into the mist. The house awaits you below, expectantly.

The battlements are inclement on the best of days, and since the Richtenhaus returned to Darkon have been plagued by **swarms of ravens** which are fond of descending in silent, shuffling hordes to poop on anyone not wearing a hat.



1-D-22 Basement

Long stairs lead down into darkness. Ruined crates and broken barrels litter the floor of this cellar, and there is nary a squeak of rat or mouse to offset the oppressive gloom.

This basement once stored wine for the Van Richten estate from all over Darkon. Empty bottles and casks around the cellar are labeled things like *Von Lengstein Dry* or *Black Tarn Special*. Most of the wine was destroyed or spoiled by floods over the years, and Van Richten drank the rest.¹

In addition, the Van Richtens kept a sizeable armoury of mundane weapons and equipment down here. Characters who venture down to the basement can likely find a mundane (and thoroughly unremarkable) specimen of any piece of martial gear they need down here in the dark.

Floating down here (and very hungry) is a **cloaker** which resents any intrusion into its subterranean realm. It stalks visitors to the Basement, and tries to kidnap any stragglers for a nice meal if it gets the chance.

1-D-23 The Giving Tree

Outside the house, a gnarled black oak rises from the earth, sprouting bright green leaves and delicious looking red fruit.

This tree is a holdover from the old orchard, which had to be salted and burned after it developed homicidal tendencies.² The fruit are delicious, if perhaps a little too sweet.

1 Don't judge him. *You* spend your entire adult life fighting undead horrors and then see if you need a drink.

2 It's funny how that keeps happening.

EVENTS

You can use any of the following special events while the characters explore the house.

An Inspector Calls

A knock at the door echoes through the empty house. It has all the jaunty confidence of someone who is sure the owner isn't home.

This is a member of the Kargat (LE **werewolf**) who has been tasked by Azalin with finding out if Van Richten is indeed gone for good. The werewolf really isn't expecting anyone home, and leaves at the earliest opportunity if they discover the house is inhabited, with the intention of informing Azalin.

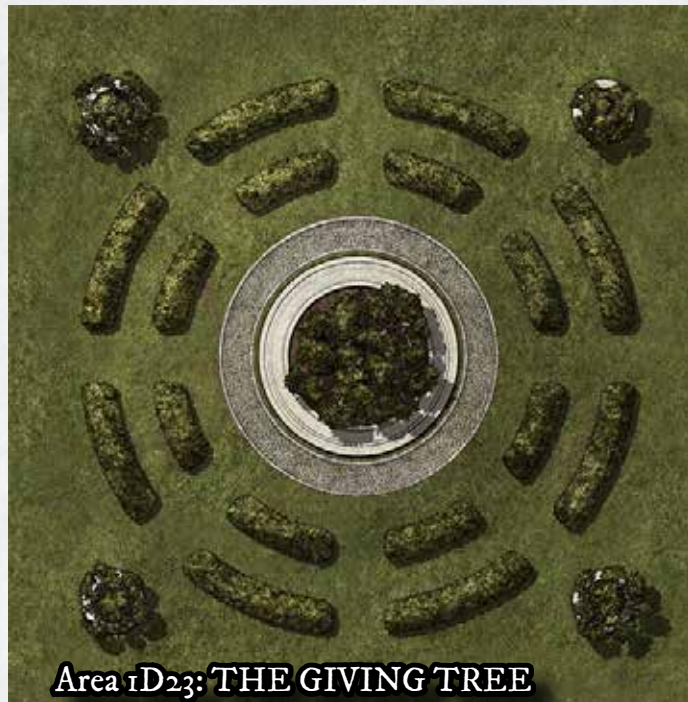
The Taking Tree

A ripping noise from outside jerks you back to the present. It sounds like something being torn from the earth...rather painfully.

Three **awakened trees** from the Greywood are in the process of stealing the Giving Tree and replacing it with a sprout from the Greywood. They fight to the death if characters try to stop them. If the sapling is left to grow, it quickly enlarges into a healthy **greywood treant** over the period of a month, after which it begins to turn the Van Richten estate into the center of another Greywood along the southern border.



RICHTENHAUS - Area 1D22: BASEMENT



Area 1D23: THE GIVING TREE



I: MONSTERS AND NPCs

Ravenloft harbours horrors both old and new, the ever changing mists conspiring to introduce adventurers to new vistas of horror. New monsters that appear in this volume of the Gazetteer are described below.

The monsters and NPCs are presented in alphabetical order.

Creature	CR
Baron Metus	17
Cerebral Vampire	6
Greywood Treant	9
Gullspeaker	4
The Thinker	10
Vistani Ghost	4

CREATURE DESCRIPTIONS

Baron Metus

An ancient vampire of legendary sadism and evil, Baron Metus hold special distinction in Ravenloft lore for being the arch-enemy of vampire hunter Rudolph van Richten. Their history is long and storied, but largely comprises of Metus killing van Richten's wife and turning his son into a vampire spawn, after which Van Richten hunted the vampire down and killed him. Metus was later resurrected by the enigmatic Gentleman Caller (who we will catch up with in a later issue of the Gazetteer) at the behest of the evil Vistani Madame Radanavich. Now, he keeps a low profile in the port city of Martira Bay in Darkon, acting as a local philanthropist and feeding off those he pretends to help.



BARON METUS

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 204

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws DEX +9, WIS +8, CHA +10

Skills Deception +10, History +11, Insight +8, Medicine +13, Perception +8, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances Necrotic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant, Darkonese, Undercommon, Infernal

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Special Equipment. Baron Metus wears an *amulet of protection from turning*, which grants him advantage on saving throws against being turned. In addition, it allows him to succeed instead of failing on up to three turning attempts per day. He carries a small vial of *potion of invulnerability* in his pocket. He wears (and is attuned to) a *ring of free action*, and a *ring of evasion*.

Shapechanger. If the vampire isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Medium cloud of mist, or back into its true form.

While in bat form, the vampire can't speak, its walking speed is 5 feet, and it has a flying speed of 30 feet. Its statistics, other than its size and speed, are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

While in mist form, the vampire can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the vampire fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Misty Escape. When it drops to 0 hit points outside its resting place, the vampire transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed.

While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its vampire form, and it must reach its resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in its resting place, it reverts to its vampire form. It is then paralyzed until it regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in its resting place with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. The vampire regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

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

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Harmed by Running Water. The vampire takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into the vampire's heart while the vampire is incapacitated in its resting place, the vampire is paralyzed until the stake is removed.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vampire takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Baron Metus' innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *levitate (self only)*
1 day each: *shadow of moil*, *dream*, *glibness*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. (Vampire Form Only). The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite. (Bat or Vampire Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the vampire's control.

Charm. The vampire targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the vampire, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the vampire. The charmed target regards the vampire as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the vampire's control, it takes the vampire's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the vampire's bite attack.

Each time the vampire or the vampire's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the vampire is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Bay (1/Day). The vampire magically calls 2d4 **swarms of rats**, provided that the sun isn't up. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of the vampire and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until the vampire dies, or until the vampire dismisses them as a bonus action.

Lair Actions

When fighting inside its lair, Baron Metus can invoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Baron Metus takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

- Until initiative count 20 of the next round, Metus can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there.
- Metus calls forth an image from one of his paintings. The apparition appears next to a hostile creature that Metus can see, makes an attack against that creature, and then disappears. The apparition has the statistics of a **wraith**.
- Metus targets any number of doors and windows that he can see, causing each one to either open or close as he wishes. Closed doors can be magically locked (DC 20 to force open) until Metus chooses to end the effect, or until he uses this lair action again.

Cerebral Vampires

Creations of the mad lord of Dominia, Daclaud Heinfroth, these abominations are rarely found outside of his asylum. A working relationship with Baron Metus has encouraged Heinfroth to send one or two of his vampires to act as orderlies under the guidance of Baron Metus, though the cerebral vampires chafe slightly under his yoke. Their immunities to psychic attacks and ability to walk freely in sunlight make them perfect nurses for taking care of the Baron's psionic prisoner. Cerebral vampires do not breed true, and creatures killed by their bite often rise as ghouls.

CEREBRAL VAMPIRE

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws DEX +6, WIS +3

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities Psychic

Damage Resistances Necrotic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Darkonese

Challenge 6

Regeneration. The vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point. If the vampire takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the vampire's next turn.

Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire has the following flaws:

Forbiddance. The vampire can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

Stake to the Heart. The vampire is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

Alcohol. The vampire can't cross a border doused in at least 1 gallon of strong alcohol until 24 hours have passed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vampire makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Intelligence score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Intelligence to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. Creatures killed by this ability rise as ghouls under the command of the vampire at the next sunset.



DOMINIA

The tide-torn asylum of Dominia, where the cerebral vampires are created, will be covered in a later edition of the Ravenloft Gazetteer. These vampires should be rare, and are usually only found outside Dominia when on the dark business of their true master, Daclaud Heinfroth. In this case, the borders of Darkon being closed has left the cerebral vampires in Baron Metus' care with little to do but cause trouble.

Greywood Treants

Evil plant abominations caused by the corruption of the Requiem, the Greywood treants have a singular purpose - reproduce. To do so, they acquire living humanoids and plant more trees in their flesh. They care little for the inconvenience they cause said humanoids in the doing of this.

GREYWOOD TREANT

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities Fire
Damage Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing
Senses Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 9

False Appearance. While the treant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. The treant deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The treant makes two stabbing branch attacks

Stabbing Branch. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Animate Trees (1/Day). The treant magically animates one or two trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a **greywood treant**, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Stabbing Branch action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the treant. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the treant dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the treant takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

Gullspeaker

Gullspeakers can summon seagulls to do their bidding, and spend a lot of time looking through their eyes. They may or may not be slightly unhinged.

GULLSPEAKER

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 32 (6d8+6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +3, Perception +3
Senses Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Primordial
Challenge 4

Dark Devotion. The gullspeaker has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Innate Spellcasting. The gullspeaker's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. It can innately cast the following spells (spell save DC 11), requiring no material components:

At will: *speak with animals (birds only)*, *animal friendship (birds only)*, *beast bond (birds only)*

Spellcasting. The gullspeaker is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). It regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following druid spells:

Cantrips (at will): *shape water*, *gust*, *frostbite*

1st-3rd level (2 3rd level slots): *sleet storm*, *thunderwave*, *call lightning*, *conjure animals (birds)*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.



The Thinker

The Thinker is a powerful psionic vistani being kept captive by the vampire Baron Metus in the hope that he might be able to gain some of the Thinker's psionic powers.

THINKER

Medium humanoid, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)	22 (+6)

Damage Resistances Psychic

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened

Senses Passive Perception 13

Languages Understands common, but can't speak.

Telepathy 120ft, able to transmit basic emotions

Challenge 10

Insane Screams. Any creature within sight of the Thinker that isn't protected by a *mind blank* spell can hear the Thinker silently screaming. As a bonus action, the Thinker can force all creatures that can hear the screams to make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. Each creature takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Crippled. The Thinker's speed is 0 whilst it is Crippled. The Thinker is also incapable of rational thought whilst it is Crippled. *Greater Restoration* or similar magic can cure this effect, which also removes the Thinker's Insane Scream ability.

Innate Spellcasting. The Thinker's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (DC 19, +11). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

at will: vicious mockery

3/day: dissonant whispers, synaptic static

1/day: psychic scream, weird, feeblemind

ACTIONS

Scream. Ranged Spell Attack: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (4d6) psychic damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Vistani Ghost

The Vistani, a troupe of wanderers who live outside civilization and traveling about in wagons, can be found throughout Ravenloft. More information on the Vistani can be found in the *Curse of Strahd* hardcover adventure. If a Vistani should meet a grisly end, they sometimes return as ghosts to terrorize the living.

VISTANI GHOST

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Resistances Acid, Fire, Lightning, Thunder; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Cold, Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Curse (Recharges after a Long Rest). The ghost targets one creature that it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed. While cursed, the target's appearance changes in a sinister yet purely cosmetic way. For example, the curse can place a scar on the target's face, turn the target's teeth into yellow fangs, or give the target bad breath. The curse lasts until ended with a *greater restoration* spell, a *remove curse* spell, or similar magic.