

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons  
2nd Edition

# Ravenloft®

Official Game Adventure

## ROOTS OF EVIL



by Eric Haddock and David Wise

TKZ



## Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart

Roll 1d12, then roll 1d6 on the appropriate table.

<p><b>(1) Arak</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1d4 Driders</li> <li>2. 5d10 Drow</li> <li>3. 1d2 Ettercaps</li> <li>4. 2d4 Hell Hounds</li> <li>5. 1d12 Spiders, Huge</li> <li>6. 1d8 Spiders, Giant</li> </ul>	<p><b>(2) Barovia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1d20 Crawling Claws</li> <li>2. 1d4 Jackalweres</li> <li>3. 1d10 Strahd Zombies</li> <li>4. 1d4 Vampires</li> <li>5. 1d3 Will o' Wisps</li> <li>6. 3d4 Worg Wolves</li> </ul>	<p><b>(3) Darkon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1d3 Annis Hags</li> <li>2. 3d4 Dire Wolves</li> <li>3. 1d6 Doom Guards</li> <li>4. 3d12 Doppelgangers</li> <li>5. 3d8 Goblins</li> <li>6. Invisible Stalker</li> </ul>
<p><b>(4) Falkovnia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2d8 Hippogriffs</li> <li>2. 12d4 Jermlaines</li> <li>3. 5d4 Kobolds</li> <li>4. 2d4 Satyrs</li> <li>5. 2d4 Wereboars</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>(5) Hazlan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Berbelang</li> <li>2. 3d4 Broken Ones</li> <li>3. Darkenbeast</li> <li>4. 1d4 Leucrottas</li> <li>5. Meazel</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>(6) Kartakass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scarecrow</li> <li>2. Werewolf</li> <li>3. 4d6 Wererats</li> <li>4. 3d6 Werewolves</li> <li>5. 1d3 Wolfweres</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>
<p><b>(7) Lamordia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2d6 Bats, Skeletal</li> <li>2. Flesh Golem</li> <li>3. 2d8 Gargoyles</li> <li>4. 4d4 Seawolves, Greater</li> <li>5. Zombie Golem</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm (Adam)</li> </ul>	<p><b>(8) Mordent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Banshee</li> <li>2. Ghost</li> <li>3. 1d10 Heucuva</li> <li>4. 2d10 Shadows</li> <li>5. 1d6 Spectres</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>(9) Har'akir</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1d4 Jackalweres</li> <li>2. 2d4 Mummies</li> <li>3. Sandling</li> <li>4. 1d4 Scorpions, Giant</li> <li>5. 1d6 Snakes, Poison</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>
<p><b>(10) Souragne</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2d12 Ghouls</li> <li>2. Ghoul Lord</li> <li>3. 1d3 Shambling Mounds</li> <li>4. 3d8 Zombies</li> <li>5. Zombie Lord</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>(11) Sri Raji</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 1d2 Constrictors, Giant</li> <li>2. 1d4 + 1 Displacer Beasts</li> <li>3. Plants, Carnivorous</li> <li>4. 1d3 Spirit Nagas</li> <li>5. 1d6 Weretigers</li> <li>6. Lord of the Realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>(12) Special</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elemental, Grave</li> <li>2. Mist Horror</li> <li>3. 2d4 Skeletons, Giant</li> <li>4. 1d4 Treants, Undead</li> <li>5. 1d4 Wolfweres, Greater</li> <li>6. DM's Choice</li> </ul>

Black: *Monstrous Compendium*, vol. I and II

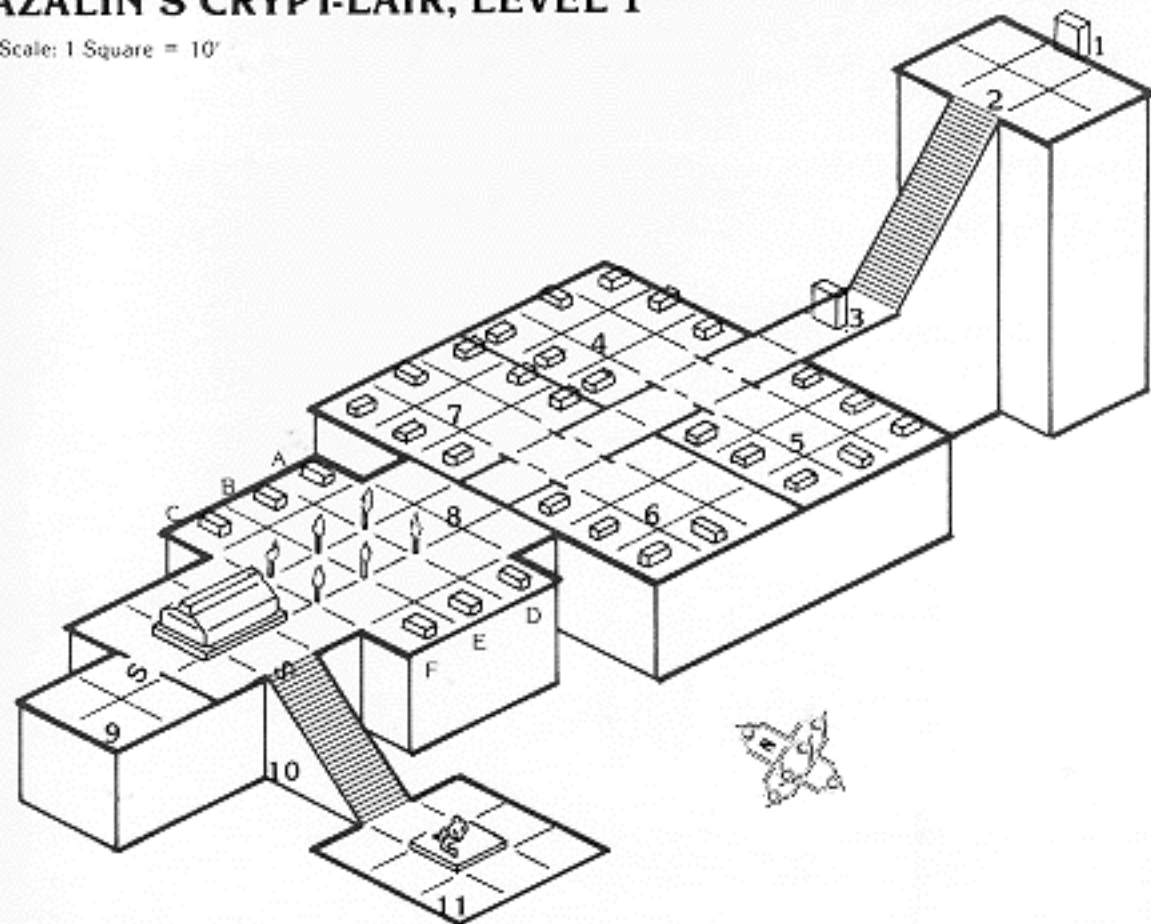
Red: *Monstrous Compendium*, RAVENLOFT® appendix

Green: *Monstrous Compendium*, FORGOTTEN REALMS® appendix, or substitute any undead creature

Blue: see the RAVENLOFT boxed set for details

# AZALIN'S CRYPT-LAIR, LEVEL 1

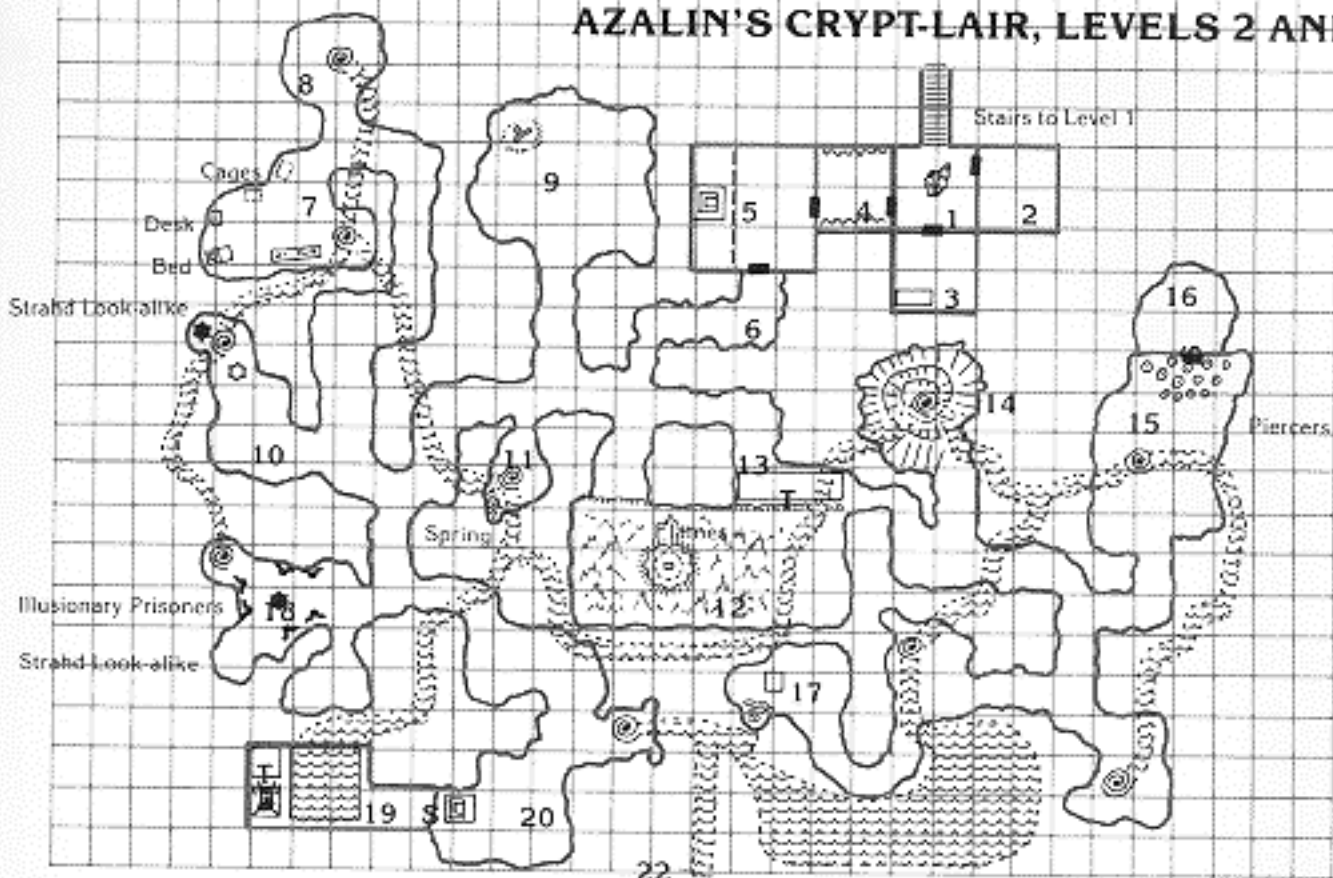
Scale: 1 Square = 10'



KEY

	Forest
	Road
	Wide Path
	Trail
	Altar
	Chair
	Door
	One-way Secret Door
	Secret Door
	Holy Symbol
	Illusionary Wall
	Morkoth Hole
	Statue
	Sub-level Waterway
	Table
	Tapestry
	Throne
	Tomb
	Trap
	Trap Door in Ceiling
	Trap Door in Floor
	Water-filled Area

# AZALIN'S CRYPT-LAIR, LEVELS 2 AND 3

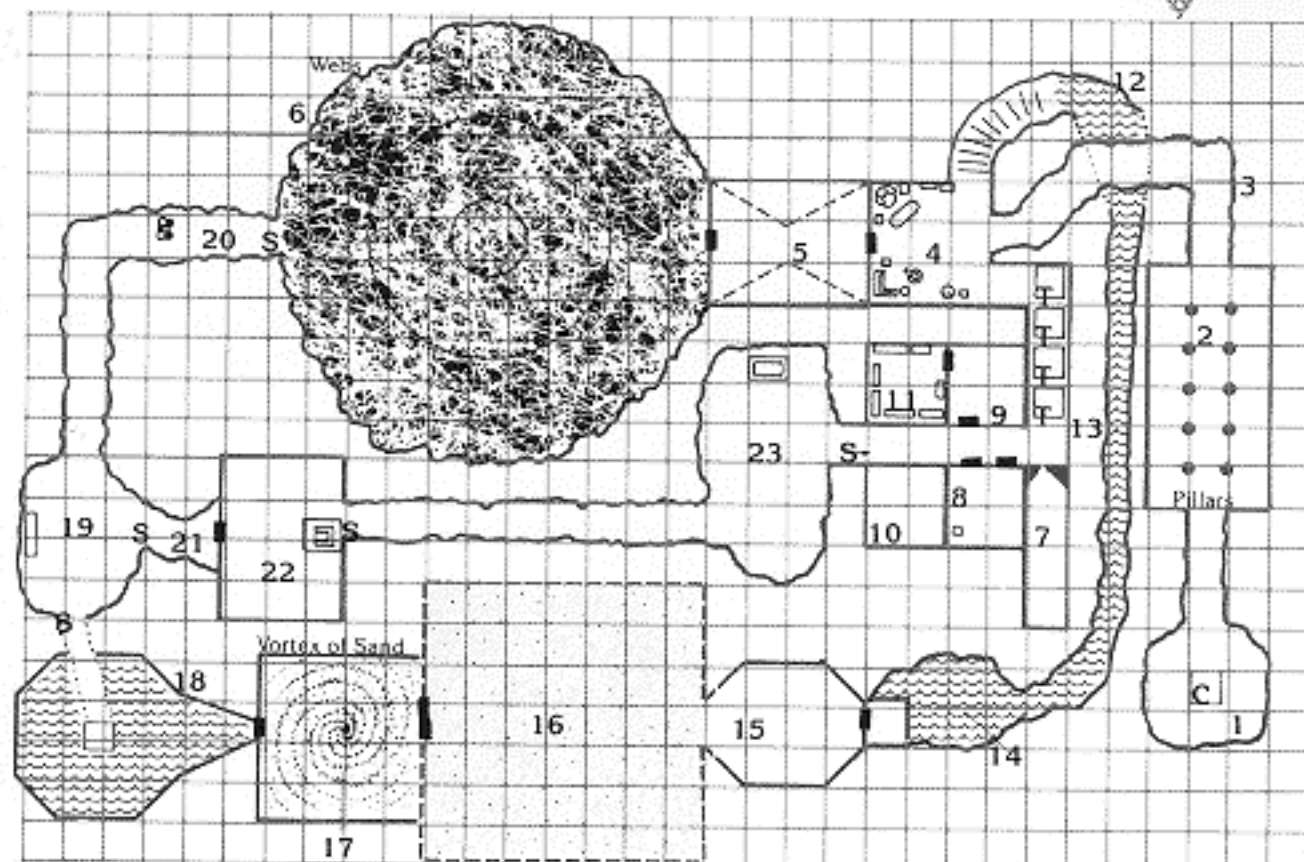


Azalin's Crypt-Lair, Level 2

To Lake Zarovich

21

Scale: 1 square = 10'

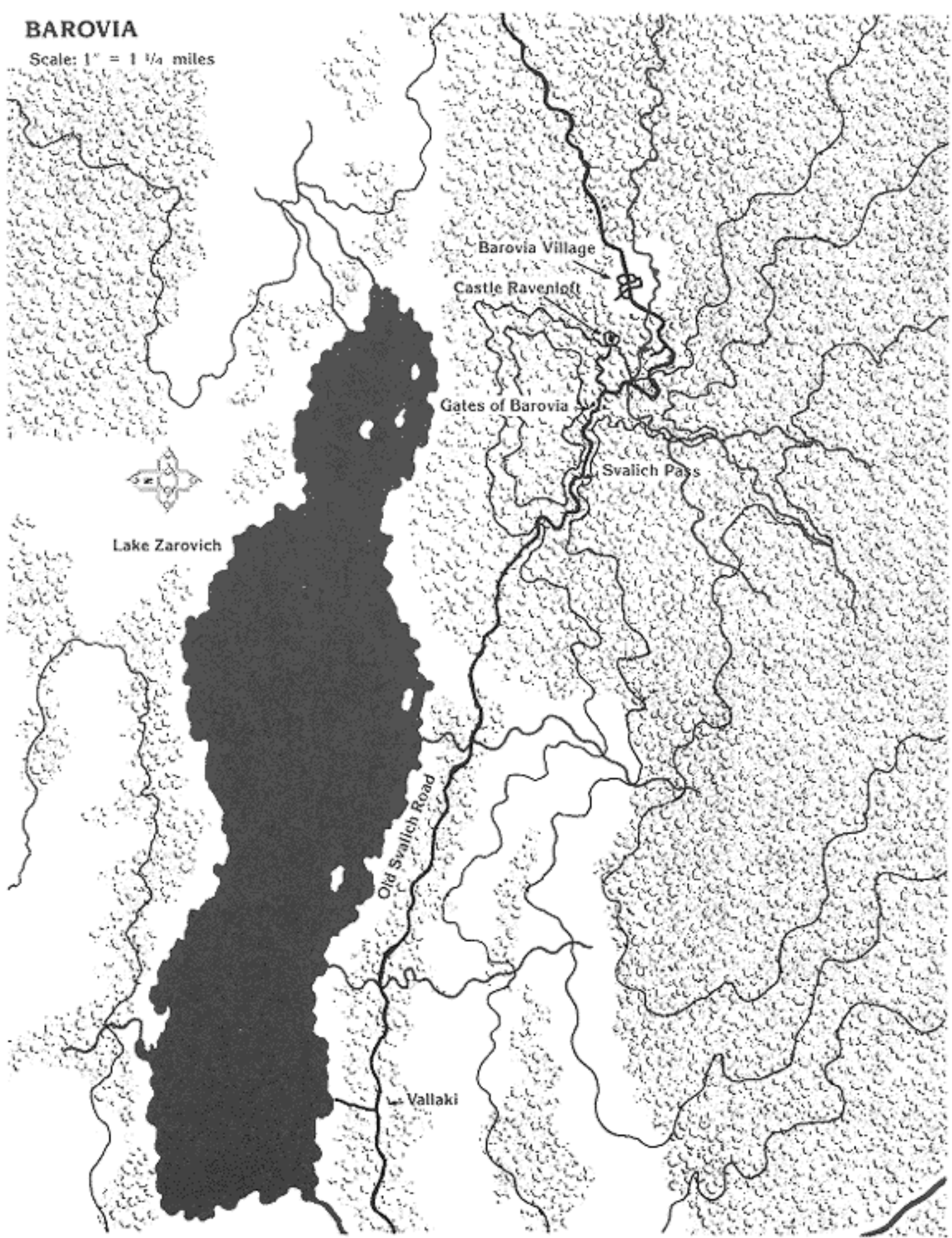


Azalin's Crypt-Lair, Level 3

Scale: 1 square = 10'

# BAROVIA

Scale: 1" = 1 1/4 miles



Lake Zarovich

Barovia Village

Castle Ravenloft

Gates of Barovia

Svalich Pass

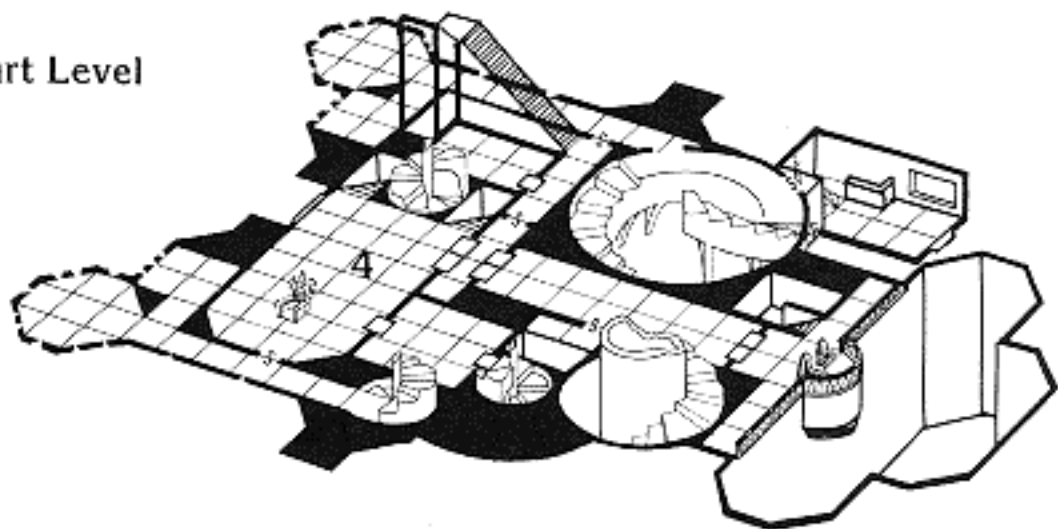
Old Svalich Road

Vallaki

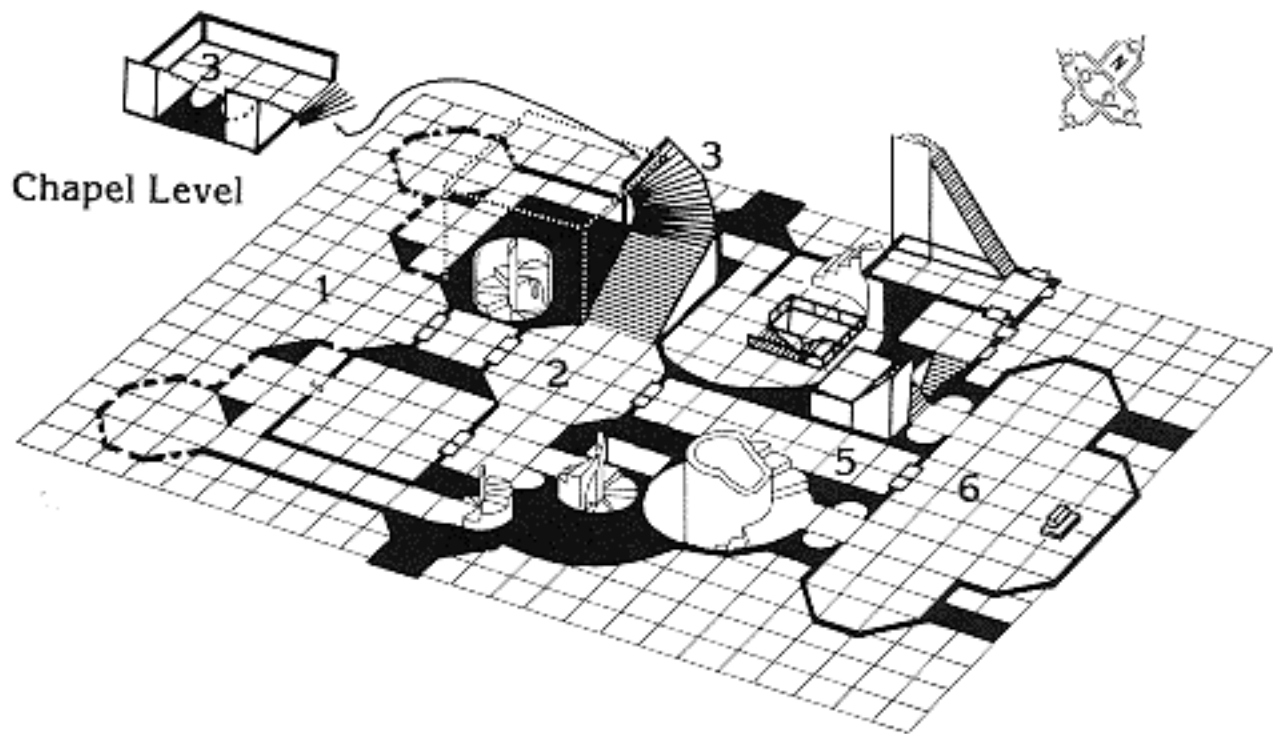
# CASTLE RAVENLOFT

Scale: 1 square = 10'

Court Level

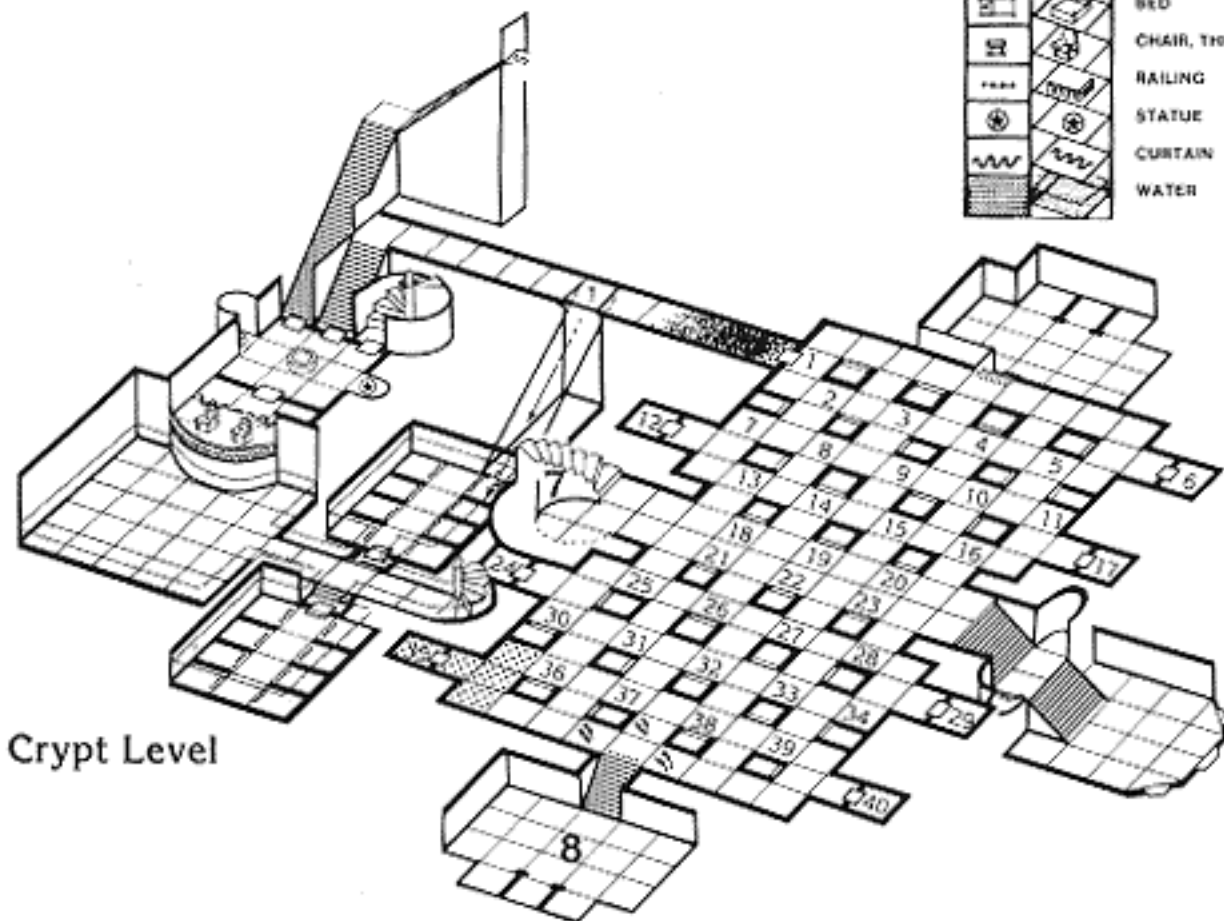
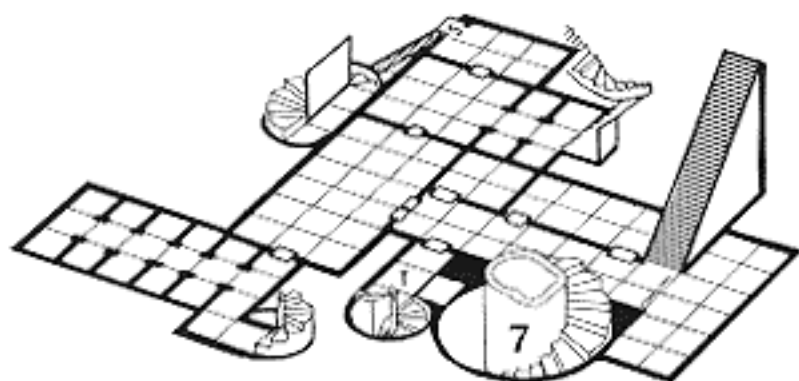


Chapel Level



# CASTLE RAVENLOFT

	DOOR
	DOUBLE DOOR
	SECRET AND STANDARD DOOR
	SECRET DOOR
	ONE WAY SECRET DOOR
	TELEPORT TRAP
	TRAP DOOR IN FLOOR
	TRAP DOOR IN CEILING
	WINDOW
	ARROW SLIT
	BAR, PORTCULLIS
	BRAZIER
	LADDER
	STAIRS
	SPIRAL STAIRS
	BED
	CHAIR, THRONE
	RAILING
	STATUE
	CURTAIN
	WATER



Crypt Level

# VALLAKI

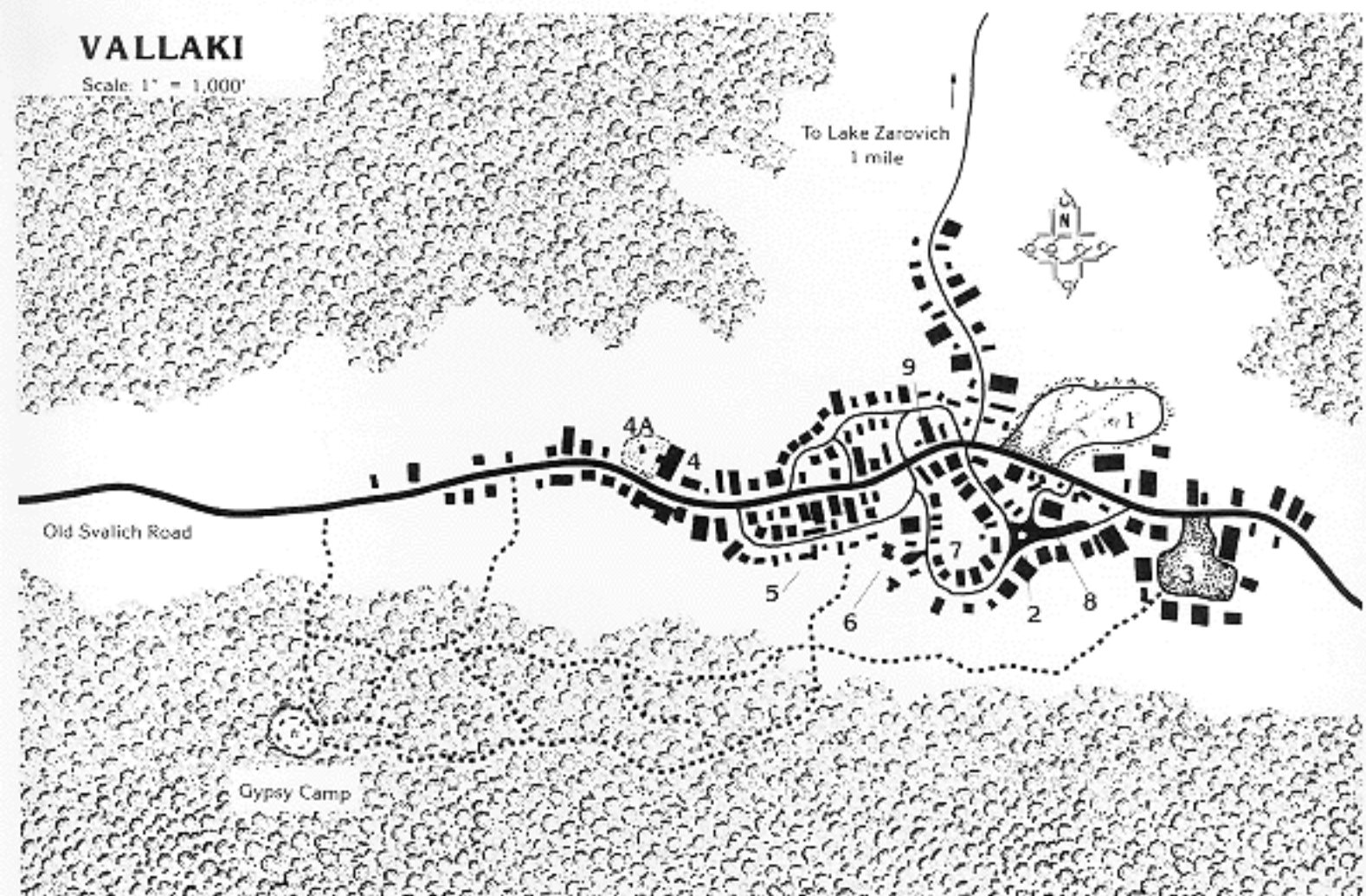
Scale: 1" = 1,000'

To Lake Zarovich  
1 mile



Old Svalich Road

Gypsy Camp





# Roots of Evil

An Official Ravenloft Game Adventure  
For Character Levels 9-12  
By Eric Haddock and David Wise

Compiled by [blacktalonz@hotmail.com](mailto:blacktalonz@hotmail.com)

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# Introduction

Once again the Mists of Ravenloft have parted, but this time it isn't to deliver more hapless victims or evil creatures into the demiplane of dread. No, quite the opposite: Azalin the lich has shattered the boundaries that held him prisoner for centuries and has escaped into the Prime Material Plane! His actions have broken the grip of the land, and *all* the lords of Ravenloft are finding the way back into the multiverse from whence they came. Evil courses through world after world, and the gods are very, very angry!

This adventure is designed for four to six player characters (PCs) of 9th to 12th level. It's assumed that all adventuring parties in Ravenloft are largely of good and neutral alignments; evil parties rarely feel obliged to "do the right thing," and most adventures in the demiplane of dread depend upon at least a bit of heroism in the PCs. Magical weapons in general are important to the party's success, but few player character groups of the appropriate levels lack a virtual arsenal of magic. Also, the encounters in this module are designed to be life-threatening, so the optional "Hovering on Death's Door" rule (see the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide [DMG]*) is recommended. Dungeon Masters (DMs) who don't employ this rule might justify its sudden use by claiming that the very powers of the universe are at work here. After all, the Grand Conjunction doesn't occur every day (or every millennium, for that matter!)

## The Final Adventure

*Roots of Evil* is a sequel to the RAVENLOFTÆ game adventure *From the Shadows*. An optional entry is supplied to allow this module to be played by itself, but both players and the DM™ will enjoy *Roots of Evil* all the more if it's used as the second of a two-part adventure.

In fact, *Roots of Evil* represents the culmination of a six-part series of adventures, loosely connected by the prophecy known as *Hyskosa's Hexad*. Each module deals with one of six couplets written by the Vistani seer Hyskosa. According to the prophet, when all the couplets have been fulfilled, the Grand Conjunction will take place and all the lords of Ravenloft will return to their Prime Material points of origin. The first couplet is realized in *Feast of Goblins* (9298), the second in *Ship of Horror* (9321), the third in *Touch of Death* (9338), and the fourth in *Night of the Walking Dead* (9352). A DM seeking to run a sustained RAVENLOFT game campaign might consider running each of these modules and then continue with *From the Shadows* (9375) and, finally, *Roots of Evil* (9413).

Even if the adventuring party doesn't play through the first four modules, it is still *strongly* advised that *From the Shadows* be played before beginning *Roots of Evil*. These two adventures are more closely related than any of the others, for the first sets the Grand Conjunction in motion while the second gives the player characters a chance to reverse the horrific occurrence. For the most part, this module assumes that *From the Shadows* has been played first, and some adjustments will need to be made by the DM if it hasn't.

## Doing Your Homework

As always, the DM should read this entire adventure before running it. It is also recommended that the DM be familiar with the "Azalin" and "Strahd" entries from the RAVENLOFT boxed set, as well as the "yugoloth" entry at the end of this book.

In this module, the player characters will find that the *story* supersedes the "dungeon crawl" aspects of the adventure (although that element is present, too). They've started a chain of events that must be resolved in order to avert -- literally! -- universal catastrophe. It's not enough to defeat the bad guys in combat; the bad guys in this adventure are too powerful. Thinking things through, using the nonplayer characters (NPCs) against one another, waiting for the right moment to act -- these are the real keys to survival, and the DM is free to explain this to the players before the game starts.

There's a lot of story involved in resolving the problems that arose in *From the Shadows* and a lot of information for the PCs to absorb. Therefore, several encounters in

this module are more information- than action-based. During these encounters, the game takes on a "questions and answers" feel. The encounters are set up to anticipate the PCs' questions and to preserve drama and atmosphere, but it falls upon the DM to capture the PCs' imaginations by making conversations sound as natural as possible. Be prepared to discuss *anything* the characters bring up. Of course, what they can learn from an NPC depends upon that NPC's own knowledge, so it's very important for the DM to know this module before playing it.

There's probably no need to say it, but players are notorious for (and sometimes even proud of) erratic behavior and stunts that short-circuit the most carefully planned adventures. As long as the DM knows the adventure fairly well, it should be possible to redirect events to get the party back on track without forcing their hands. However, if the PCs insist on actions that burn their own bridges, then the Grand Conjunction will fully unfold and the PCs will have to live in a hell of their own making.

### Shadow-planar Influences

The demiplane of Ravenloft imposes many special conditions upon spells and abilities in the AD&DÆ game rules system. Although this adventure doesn't take place in the Shadow Plane, the Grand Conjunction has opened the boundaries of Ravenloft to the Prime Material, so all the rules detailed in the RAVENLOFTÆ and *Forbidden Lore* boxed sets still apply to this module.

### Forbidden Lore

Gypsy prognostication contributes much to the all-important atmosphere of a RAVENLOFT adventure. The DM is always free to simply claim that "Madame Yvonna looks into her crystal ball and sees all" or to take a deck of normal playing cards and role-play a reading for the characters -- the rules book in the RAVENLOFT boxed set provides some handy guidelines for performing such activities.

However, the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set contains some excellent tools for enhancing that effect. In particular, the *tarokka* deck is a perfect accessory for this module, containing artwork that is quite appropriate to a magical atmosphere. "The Waking Dream," one of the five books included in the *Forbidden Lore* box, explains how to lay out the cards and the *spin* the telling so that the DM will read the proper fortune, making the PCs feel as though fate itself has dictated their actions.

The DM may make use of "Nova Arcanum", a book of Strahd's personal magic, in the *Forbidden Lore* box. There are also three other books (dealing with psionics, curses, and secret societies in Ravenloft) that may not be directly useful in *Roots of Evil*, but the DM is free to use any element that enhances the players' experience.

### Stacking the Deck

Before beginning play, the DM may choose to make the following preparations with the *tarokka* (or a normal) deck: 1) Stack the five following cards so that they can be drawn from the top of the deck in the following order: the necromancer (or the eight of hearts), the diviner (or the two of hearts), the paladin (or the two of clubs), the anarchist (or the six of spades), and the traitor (or the nine of spades). 2) Place these cards in a stack **face up** behind the DM screen where the players can't see them -- these will be surreptitiously added to the top of the deck, so the players shouldn't know they are there (see the "Madame Yvonna" encounter section, p. 23). The following cards should be set aside before play so they can be immediately laid out for the players to see in the "Madame Yvonna" encounter section: the marionette (or jack of clubs), the donjon (or ace of hearts), the darklord (or king of hearts), the beast (or king of diamonds), the artifact (or ace of diamonds), the mists (or ace of clubs), the raven (or king of clubs), the hangman (or ace of spades), and the innocent (or king of spades).

### The Holy Symbol of Ravenkind

This ancient platinum medallion is shaped like the sun and has a crystal at its center. In the hands of a good-aligned priest, it adds a +2 bonus to turning undead attempts. When presented against a vampire, it flares with the light of the sun for 1d10 rounds -- this functions only once per week; an *identify* spell reveals this fact.

Strahd von Zarovich is more terrified of the *Holy Symbol* than is any other creature. He cannot approach within 10 feet of it, regardless of the turning PC priest's die roll.

#### The Icon of Ravenloft

This lawful-good holy artifact adds a +4 bonus to any good-aligned priest's attempt to turn undead, if he or she holds it along with a holy symbol. (This effect is cumulative with the bonus afforded by the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*.) The casting of an *identify* spell upon the *Icon* reveals that it heals 3d6+3 points of damage, once per day.

If the PCs have played *From the Shadows*, then they may or may not have taken the *Icon* from the altar in the chapel of Castle Ravenloft when they took the *Holy Symbol*. At no point were they asked to do so, but many quick-thinking groups will have seized the opportunity when it arose. If the PCs did so, then the woman who received the items kept them safe for Azalin, awaiting the day when he would arrive in Prime Material Barovia (the realms of Ravenloft are shadowy replications of actual places). If the PCs never bothered with the *Icon*, then it disappeared into Ravenloft when the demiplane was created. In that case, the *Icon* will have "miraculously" reappeared on the altar of Prime Material Castle Ravenloft when the Grand Conjunction takes place.

The position of the *Icon* affects the scope of the PC's objectives in *Roots of Evil*. If Azalin has both relics, then the characters need to retrieve them both. This is accounted for in the text as much as possible, but the DM will still have to make adjustments to the boxed copy here and there to be sure that the continuity of the adventure doesn't break down.

#### Azalin's Phylactery

In this adventure, Azalin's phylactery has a special feature: Whenever the eyes of the skull point directly in the lich's direction, they flash very subtly and then glow as long as the skull remains pointed at the lich. Distance isn't a barrier, although the phylactery cannot track Azalin across planar boundaries. This makes the phylactery a perfect homing device for characters who know the secret.

#### The Book of Keeping

This tome is described in the general "yugoloth" entry, in the *Outer Planes* appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™. Briefly, the *Book* is used to specifically summon yugoloths, a kind of "lower-planar lawyer". Some *Books of Keeping* summon a particular yugoloth by name. In the case of this module, the *Book* belongs to the major NPC Inajira. He keeps all his negotiated contracts in the *Book*, so it contains all the proof of his success and failure as a negotiator, which is paramount to a yugoloth's social standing and self-worth. Anyone who would attempt to take or keep it from him had better have godlike powers!

Within the confines of this game module, a few significant attributes are ascribed to Inajira's *Book of Keeping*; It is classified as an artifact rather than a magical item, so it cannot be destroyed through any conventional means. More notably, since so important a tome must be given to others to be signed, the *Book* is enchanted such that it can be transported across nonphysical spaces *only* by its owner; anyone else can pick up the book and carry it, but it cannot be teleported, dimensionally shifted, put through planar portals, or moved through any other magical or psionic means.

#### NPC Summary

This is a short list of the major NPCs used in this adventure and their stats and spells. The DM will find role-playing hints within the text, but the NPC summary is included here for quick reference, especially in combat.

### Anebroun

18th-level wizard

Int exceptional (16); AC -3 (*bracers*); MV 12; hp 46; THACO 16; # AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA spells; SD none; SZ M; ML 14; MR nil; AL N; XP 7,500.

Spells (5/5/5/5/5/3/3/2/1): *Burning hands, charm person, detect magic, magic missile (x2); blur, invisibility, levitate, patternweave, web; blink, dispel magic, Evard's black tentacles, polymorph other, thunder staff, wall of fire; cone of cold, hold monster, mind fog, teleport, wall of force; anti-magic shell, claws of the umber hulk, globe of invulnerability; acid storm, power word stun, reverse gravity; Bigby's clenched fist, trap the soul; monster summoning VII.*

Anebroun wears a *ring of human influence* and a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic* (the circlet), and she carries a *wand of paralyzation* up her sleeve. She leans upon a beautifully crafted staff that has no inherent magical abilities, but she often imbues it with the *magic staff* spell.

Anebroun has only recently reached the 18th level of experience. She has used magic to increase her longevity, but old age is catching up with her, driving her to seek lichdom.

### Azalin

Lich, 18th- or 14th-level wizard (see below)

Int genius (18); AC 0; MV 12; HD 11; hp 54; THACO 10; # AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (+1 Strength bonus); SA paralyzing touch, spells; SD immune to *charm, enfeeblement, fear, hold, insanity, polymorph, sleep*, mind-affecting, and death spells, immune to cold-based and electrical damage, regenerates 1 hp/round; SZ M; ML 19; MR 25%; AL LE; XP 9,000.  
Spells (5/5/5/5/5/3/3/2/1): *Charm person, enlarge, magic missile (x2), phantasmal force; darkness 15' radius, invisibility, ray of enfeeblement, scare, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; dispel magic, fireball, hold person, lightning bolt, suggestion; dimension door, ice storm, minor globe of invulnerability, phantasmal killer, stonewall; chaos, domination, passwall, telekinesis, wall of stone; eyebite, flesh to stone, true seeing; forcecage, power word stun, teleport without error; incendiary cloud, prismatic wall; energy drain.*

If the PCs killed Azalin's familiar, Skeever, in *From the Shadows*, then treat Azalin as a 14th-level wizard and subtract the appropriate number of spells (14th level 5/5/5/5/5/3/3/2).

Azalin keeps a *stonewall* spell active at all times. If attacked from behind, a contingent *flesh to stone* spell hits the attacker. Azalin can animate dead (8 HD or lower) in a 2-mile radius simply by willing such to occur. These monsters make their way to him by any such means possible, and they respond to his orders as if he had cast *control undead*.

### Inajira

Arcanaloth yugoloth

Int supra-genius (19); AC -8; MV 12, FI 18 (A); HD 12+24; hp 111; THACO 9; # AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/2d6; SA claw sting; SD +3 or better weapon to hit, spell immunity; SZ M; ML 16; MR 60%; AL NE; XP 49,500.

Spells (4/4/4/4/4/1): *Chill touch, hypnotism, protection from good, shocking grasp; ESP, levitate, mirror image, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; dispel magic, gust of wind, lightning bolt, slow; enervation, improved invisibility, shout, wall of fire; animate dead, dismissal, passwall, transmute rock to mud; globe of invulnerability.*

## Queen Kristiana von Zarovich

15th-level high priestess of Barovia

Int high (14); AC 7 (wearing no armor); MV 12; hp 63; THACO 12; # AT 1; Dmg per weapon; SA spells; SD none; SZ M; ML 16; MR nil; AL LG; XP 5,000.

Spells (6/6/6/6/4/2/1): *Bless, combine, command, cure light wounds, light, protection from evil; aid, augury, draw upon holy might, idea, nap, slow poison; accelerate healing, cure disease, dispel magic, know customs, telepathy, unearthly choir, abjure, cure serious wounds (x3), neutralize poison, tongues; atonement, quest, raise dead (x2); heal (x2); resurrection.*

## Strahd von Zarovich

Vampire, 16th-level necromancer

Int genius (17); AC -1 (with cloak); MV 12, FI 18 (C); HD 11+1; hp 55; THACO 11 (8 with weapon); # AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4 or by weapon (+6 Strength bonus); SA energy drain, charm gaze, spells; SD +2 or greater weapon needed to hit; SZ M; ML 17; MR 15%; AL LE; XP 8,000.

Spells (5/5/5/5/5/3/2/1, plus one bonus necromantic spell per level): *Burning hands, cantrip, magic missile (x3), protection from good; darkness 15' radius, ESP, fog cloud, invisibility, spectral hand, stinking cloud; dispel magic, feign death, fireball (x2), hold person, lightning bolt; dimension door, enervation, ice storm, polymorph other, solid fog, wall of ice; avoidance, magic jar, passwall, summon shadow, stone shape, teleport; anti-magic shell, death spell, flesh to stone, invisible stalker; finger of death, power word stun, spell turning; clone, maze.*

The DM is free to substitute any spell from the "Nova Arcanum" book in the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set. Strahd receives a +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. necromantic spells while all his opponents suffer a -1 penalty vs. necromantic spells cast by him.

Strahd wears a pendant that is an *amulet of proof against detection and location*. He also wears a *cloak of protection +2*, a *ring of fire resistance*, and a *ring of spell turning*. In melee, the necromancer employs his *long sword +1, +2 vs. magic-using creatures and enchanted creatures*.

Strahd keeps a *contingency* spell active at all times. If defeated in combat (reduced to 0 hp) or exposed to paralyzing or destructive light, he is instantly transported to his coffin below Castle Ravenloft. Thus, it is possible to take advantage of him should he be forced into gaseous form. If Strahd is reduced to 25% of his hit point total, the vampire attempts to escape by casting *teleport* or by changing into a bat and flying off.

## Thomurray (and Lynrich)

12-level priests

Int very (11); AC 8 (wearing no armor); MV 12; hp 75; THACO 14; # AT 1; Dmg per weapon; SA spells; SD none; SZ M; ML 13; MR nil; AL LG; XP 3,000.

Spells (6/5/5/3/2/2): *Bless, cure light wounds (x2), detect magic, purify food and drink, sanctuary; aid, aura of comfort, chant, obscurement, trip; create food and water, cure blindness of deafness, dispel magic, magical vestment, remove curse; cure serious wounds, divination, protection from evil, 10' radius; dispel evil, raise dead; blade barrier, heal.*

## Monsters

Most creatures encountered in this module are so specialized that they cannot be run without first consulting the proper appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™. In this light, listing a monster's stats in the text may actually be redundant as well as insufficient. Therefore, rather than list monster stats in this module, the specific appendix from which the creature was taken is listed after the monster's name. MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™ volumes I and II appear as MC I/II, the RAVENLOFTÆ appendix is listed as

MC RL, and so on. DMs are advised to read over the monster entries before beginning play, to keep their compendiums at hand during play, and to turn to the proper pages as encounters occur.

For the DM's benefit, monsters appear in **bold type** throughout the text. Of course, NPCs and special monsters are described in full.

### Wandering Monsters

Under most circumstances, wandering monsters are absolutely out of place in a RAVENLOFT module! Adventures in the demiplane of dread are primarily plot driven. Everything that goes bump in the night should be carefully inserted into the adventure at a point where it is most effective for establishing the sense of foreboding that lies beneath the experience, and the unknown thing lurking in the dark corner should be part of some terrible truth that the player characters (perhaps foolishly) hope to uncover.

*Roots of Evil* is a special exception to this rule. When Azalin's phylactery (and the lich within) is brought through the Mists, the Grand Conjunction is set in motion and denizens of Ravenloft begin to filter into the Prime Material Plane. Small, temporary portals that link the Shadow Plane with the Prime Material occur at random, letting loose the monsters of Ravenloft just a few at a time. Sometimes, even the lord of a domain may find one of these portals.

When one of these portals open, it's called a *minor conjunction*. The Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart is provided at the back of the module to help the DM determine which monsters come forth. Note that once the lord of a domain appears, he or she may not appear again -- reroll for another creature.

The DM will ideally employ this device during slow-moving parts of the adventure, such as when the party is en route to the next featured encounter or when it pauses too long at any point along the trail. The text assigns percentage chances for a minor conjunction, but DMs know best when one is appropriate.

A junction between Ravenloft and the Prime Material can take many forms or no perceptible form at all. The DM is encouraged to take advantage of any nearby objects that could suddenly become a portal, like a pair of trees that grow together overhead or a puddle of water. A minor conjunction is more dramatic if it is preceded by some fluctuation in the surroundings, like a sudden change in temperature or a strong gust of wind -- anything that makes the PCs say, "I've got a bad feeling about this...."

Below are some suggestions for a minor conjunction (choose or roll 1d10).

1. Extremely thick mists suddenly well up, then monsters tumble out of them.
2. Faerie fire ignites on nearby objects, racing along edges, brightening and expanding until an area large enough for monsters to pass through develops.
3. Thunderclouds billow up at an unnatural pace, then lightning strikes uncomfortably close. (Dexterity check to dive free of 5d6 points of damage -- saving throw vs. paralyzation for half damage applies.) When the smoke clears, monsters are standing there.
4. A localized earthquake knocks the PCs to their knees. The ground opens up and monsters crawl out of the hole.
5. A high-pitched squeal rises until the PCs must clamp their hands over their ears (save vs. petrification or be deafened for 1d4 rounds). A 10-foot by 10-foot section of space near the PCs blurs as if it were a photograph taken out of focus, and monsters take shape within before it clears.
6. A nearby tree creaks eerily, as if it is being pulled apart like a wishbone, then cracks open with an explosion of splinters (those within 20 feet save vs. paralyzation to dive free of 2d10 points of damage). Monsters emerge from within.
7. An electrical hum precedes an energy vortex that appears between any two upright objects.
8. A tornado forms, even in a clear sky, and then spits monsters out of its point as soon as it touches down. PCs are subject to 4d8 points of damage from being too close to the tornado.
9. Animals/people stand up on two feet, writhe and scream in pain, and change into

monsters before the PCs' eyes. This may require fear and horror checks.

10. A piece of metal (coin, etc.) that a PC carries grows increasingly hot and melts, then monsters emerge from the pool.

Some other possibilities include monsters popping out of a fire or a grave, through a mirror or a reflection in water, and so forth. **Discretion is strongly advised when employing this device** -- the idea is not to beat the PCs into the ground, but to deprive them of the luxury of putting off the mission until they feel more rested or better prepared to tackle it.

#### Attribute Checks

During various points in this module, PCs may be called upon (or may ask) to perform actions that test the limits of their basic attributes. For example, a PC may wish to make a diving catch for a valuable gem that is slipping over a precipice. Under these circumstances, saving throws have little meaning. Therefore, the character in this example should make a Dexterity check. The player rolls 1d20 and compares the result to the character's Dexterity score. If the number rolled is equal or less than the PC's score, then the action is successful. If the number rolled is higher, then the PC will have missed the grab at best and gone over the cliff with the gem at worst. Modifiers may make the action a bit more difficult to accomplish....

Another use of the ability check is to help players who are thoroughly lost or confused by the adventure. If the PCs hit a dead end and don't know where to turn, the DM can ask the characters to make either an Intelligence or a Wisdom check. Those who succeed their rolls may be given a hint by the DM that will get the party back on track. The clue should be a fairly subtle one. Perhaps the recited rhyme of a non-player character keeps running through a PC's head, or it occurs to a character that the party should reconsider the inscription on the wall of the last room it was in. In any event, this technique should be used sparingly. Let the players work through mysteries themselves if possible. Sometimes a subtle smile on the DM's face is enough to tell them that they're on the right track...or way off base.

#### What Has Gone Before

In *From the Shadows*, the PCs were decapitated and reanimated as heads on a shelf in Azalin's laboratory. In this condition, they were obliged to do the lich's bidding, which was to journey into the past (to the night Ravenloft was first formed) and make an "adjustment" to history. They were to remove the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* from the castle, which they eventually accomplished. (It's possible that they spirited the *Icon of Ravenloft* out of the castle as well.)

Azalin had correctly guessed that removing the *Holy Symbol* from Castle Ravenloft would weaken the planar boundaries that rendered Ravenloft inescapable. With the deed done, he allowed the PCs to regain their bodies and flee his castle. Along the escape route, however, they met the infamous Vistani seer Hyskosa, who told them that they must steal Azalin's phylactery and take it into the Mists. They did so, never suspecting that they had played right into Azalin's hands -- he appeared at the border and allowed his body to be defeated in battle, and his spirit was drawn into the phylactery. Thus the PCs unwittingly carried Azalin out of the demiplane of dread.

Azalin willed his phylactery and the PCs to travel to Prime Material Barovia so that he can exact a long-contemplated revenge upon his old enemy, Strahd, who made a slave of Azalin in Ravenloft until he received his own domain from the land.

But all is not yet safe for the newly freed lords of the Shadow Plane: The fifth couplet of the hexad was skipped in Hyskosa's and Azalin's haste to realize the Grand Conjunction, which brings the action to this adventure.

#### Roots of Evil



As this adventure begins, Strahd has already made his own way back to Prime Material Barovia and into his secret sanctum below Castle Ravenloft. There, he has taken up his crystal ball and ferreted out the mystery of Ravenloft's opened borders. He has scried the PCs, discovered their role in the recent events, and seen that they carry the phylactery of Azalin. Realizing that the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* (an object poisonous to his being) has fallen into Azalin's hands, Strahd has begun hatching plots of his own. The vampire lord needs a mortal to retrieve the *Symbol* for him (he cannot touch it himself) so that he can dispose of it and end any threat to his person. Strahd also knows that returning the *Symbol* and the *Icon of Ravenkind* to the chapel altar will restore the integrity of the dark powers, cause the Grand Conjunction to collapse, and send him back to his shadow-planar prison. That he cannot abide! Strahd will do anything within his power to ensure that the PCs don't return the items to the altar.

Strahd is delighted with the timing of the Grand Conjunction because Prime Material Barovia's current ruler, King Barov, is his near-perfect twin. Furthermore, Queen Kristiana is the current reincarnation of Strahd's beloved Tatyana! If he can only eliminate Barov and covertly step into the king's place...

The last piece of pertinent background information concerns the human Strahd, some 385 years in the past. At that time, he was a battle-weary general, still looking forward to a day when he would rule the land. During his exploits, he was approached by a yugoloth from Gehenna named Inajira, who offered to make him undefeatable in battle in exchange for unknown concessions. Strahd agreed to the pact, but insisted on keeping Inajira's *Book of Keeping* until the contract was fulfilled. Inajira, having small fear of mortals and no idea of how treacherous Strahd could be, consented.

When Strahd became a vampire, he literally disappeared into the Shadow Plane with the *Book* and thus never fulfilled his terms of the contract. Inajira was disgraced and exiled from Gehenna for the loss of his prize possession and his failure to seal the pact. Now that Strahd has suddenly returns to the Prime Material Plane, the yugoloth is anxious to retrieve his *Book* and exact some vengeance!

### The Most Likely Scenario

If the party hasn't played *From the Shadows*, then a dying NPC appears in the Mists and gives Azalin's phylactery to the PCs. Otherwise, the PCs find themselves in Prime Material Barovia with it.

As the Grand Conjunction has taken place, creatures of Ravenloft wander about and often engage the PCs in combat. After one battle, Azalin inhabits one of the fallen undead and flees the scene, leaving behind his phylactery. No sooner does Azalin exit than Strahd appears and unsuccessfully attempts to take the phylactery. Luckily for the PCs, he needs their services, so he avoids killing them.

The PCs are met by the Vistani seer Madame Yvonna. She performs a reading, at which time she identifies the occurrence of the Grand Conjunction, links the prophecy of Hyskosa to it, and discusses the phylactery of Azalin. The PCs are lead to believe she is on their side, but in reality Madame Yvonna is an agent of Strahd, so she tells the PCs that they must retrieve the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon*) in order to destroy the phylactery, and that they must fulfill the fifth couplet of the prophecy. She claims that fulfilling the prophecy now will cause the Grand Conjunction to collapse. In fact, Strahd is using the PCs to capture the holy relics. He knows that realizing the fifth couplet will only reinforce the Grand Conjunction.

Madame Yvonna warns the party that Azalin will come looking for them and his phylactery after he has rested. Finally, she advises them to seek more information at Castle Ravenloft.

After some trouble with suspicious castle guards, the PCs are granted an audience with King Barov and Queen Kristiana, both of whom are on the good side. The queen is a high priestess, and she uses her powers to divine more information for the PCs. Kristiana determines that the *Holy Symbol* and the *Icon* must be brought together with Azalin's phylactery on the chapel altar of Castle Ravenloft in order for the Grand Conjunction to be reversed and the phylactery to be destroyed. This becomes the PCs' primary mission.

Inajira appears and kills Barov, thinking he is Strahd and hoping to enslave his spirit to ransom against the precious *Book of Keeping*. The yugoloth immediately realizes his mistake and kidnaps Kristiana, planning to use her as a bargaining chip. Rescuing Kristiana becomes the secondary objective of the adventure.

Shortly thereafter, the party is approached by Inajira, who tells them about the *Book of Keeping* and Strahd's pact, made 385 years ago. The fiend explains that Strahd has locked the *Book* in a vault that can be opened only with the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*. Until he gets it back, he cannot go home to Gehenna. In short, the fiend promises to return Kristiana safely in exchange for retrieving the *Holy Symbol* (which he can't touch, either) and liberating the *Book of Keeping*.

Then Strahd appears and banishes Inajira with a secret word of power. Strahd then tells the PCs more about the association with Inajira in the distant past. Strahd wishes to dissolve the 385-year-old pact with the fiend. Under the pretense of getting Kristiana back, he tells the PCs of a plan: They must convince Azalin to send them back to the past, to the day that Strahd made his pact with Inajira, and they must prevent the deal being struck. Strahd suggests that Azalin will cooperate if his phylactery is used as ransom, and he instructs the PCs on how to hide the item. This becomes the tertiary objective of the PCs.

As it happens, Azalin is only too happy to comply with the request. He understands that the PCs' actions will fulfill the prophecy and secure the Grand Conjunction. Besides, he *wants* to give the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon*) to the PCs so they'll lead him to Strahd and thus inadvertently help him destroy the vampire lord. Pretending to accept a trade of his services and a grant of amnesty to the PCs in return for his phylactery, Azalin sends the PCs back in time as they have asked.

Back in the past, the PCs complete their tertiary objective, but they also fulfill the prophecy of Hyskosa. When they return to the present, the PCs recover the holy relics, but find that Strahd has taken the phylactery.

The PCs make their way to the hiding place of the *Book of Keeping* and open the vault. Inajira appears with Kristiana and demands to make a trade for the *Book*. Then Strahd appears with the phylactery and a stand-off ensues. Finally, Azalin takes possession of a nearby corpse and the struggle grows more complicated. In the midst of it, Kristiana helps the PCs destroy the *Book* and reminds the PCs of their primary mission. Strahd and Azalin temporarily forget their differences to stop the PCs, but Inajira runs interference for them, claiming that if he can't go home, nobody can.

This allows the PCs to complete their quest.

# Jump Start

This encounter is provided for adventuring parties who have not played *From the Shadows*. The scene is Prime Material Barovia, which has continued to live peacefully for the last 385 years, since the day strange mists swallowed the inhabitants of Castle Ravenloft and then receded into the newly-formed demiplane of dread.

The adventure begins in the woods just outside of Vallaki (see the map). If the PCs haven't played through *From the Shadows*, it's necessary to guide them first into Barovia. Until the phylactery comes through the mists, there is nothing odd about the surroundings.

//It's a pleasant day as you walk through the wooded countryside, soaking up sunshine that filters through the leaves overhead. The forest is clamoring around you as the birds in the trees call to each other and small animals chirp shrilly at your passing. The gentle scraping of armor as you walk is the harshest sound you've heard all day.

Then, without warning, a thick white fog closes in and blots out the sun. The entire forest falls absolutely silent, as if a sudden dread has clasped it by the throat and squeezed. First the trees in the distance are lost to view, and then those within a few feet disappear into the heavy mist. The sudden quiet weighs upon you like a deadly menace just over your shoulder. You hear a soft groan just ahead....//

If the PCs hesitate to respond, the groaning continues. It isn't a ghostly or monstrous moan, but that of someone dying. Rather than say this to the players, however, the DM might make such sounds and let them guess at the cause.

//You don't see her until you almost step on her -- a woman lying face down on the ground, with one arm around a large statue of a golden dragon's head with red glowing eyes. The statue is 4 feet long from snout to base and appears very heavy.

On closer inspection, you note a dark pool of blood mingling with the dirt below the woman and statue. Her padded armor is stained to a patchy, blackish red. The only reason why she hasn't already bled to death is that she's also been badly burned by fire, electricity, or both, and her wounds have thus been cauterized.

At the sound of your approach, the woman summons the strength to lift her head and look your way. Dirt is caked in bloody clots across her face, and her eyes seem to gaze far away. Then she slowly reaches out to you, groaning in pain, and says, "Please...if the cause of justice means anything to you, then you must take and destroy this thing." Her shaking hand gestures toward the statue. "It houses the spirit of the most evil of undead wizards, Azalin...Lord of Darkon."

She closes her eyes and tears run down her cheeks. "We have opened the gates of untold evil and released it upon the universe....I'm sorry...I'm so sorry." Her eyes roll up into her head.

The unknown woman is dead.//

# Continuing the Adventure

This is the pick-up point for those adventuring parties that have played *From the Shadows*. It's suggested that the DM reread the boxed copy on page 60 of *From the Shadows* to be sure that the players are up to speed. Parties that haven't played *From the Shadows* also continue with this scene. They'll find little of value on the woman who gave them the phylactery, other than perhaps a short sword. (The DM is free to place on her body money and items, magical or otherwise, suitable to the individual campaign. She carries treasure types M and Q.)

//The mists are thicker than ever -- you can barely see your hand before your face, much less your companions nearby. On the ground, the draconian eyes of Azalin's phylactery burn with furious intensity and stain the fog an unwholesome red.

In the distance, the quiet gives way to an eerie sound that sends shivers up your spines: ghostly laughter. The volume rises and divides into two voices, then four, then eight, then sixteen, and so on, until the shapeless void around you is filled with maniacal jeering and hysterical screaming. It rises to an ear-splitting pitch, surrounding you on all sides -- and then suddenly stops.

Absolute silence.

Then, slowly, you perceive a quiet shuffling sound. The mists thin slightly, and you find yourself surrounded by walking dead!//

Ten **zombies**, ten **ghouls**, six **wights**, four **ghasts**, and two **wraiths** (MC I/II, all) move to attack. If the party is beginning with this adventure, it would be reasonable to double the number of creatures. The monsters shouldn't attack the party as a unified force, but should enter combat over the course of several rounds, as if they just happened to be walking by and decided to join the battle.

		Round in Which Monsters Arrive				
		1	2	3	4	5
Zombie	6	1		2	1	
Ghoul		4	2	1	1	2
Wight			2	1	2	1
Ghast		3		1		
Wraith				2		

Although the party is not in Ravenloft, the Grand Conjunction has occurred, so **all rules effects on the AD&DÆ game system dictated by the RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set apply in this adventure**. This includes the tougher Turning Undead Table in the boxed set rules book.

More importantly, as long as the PCs have Azalin's phylactery, all undead are turned as a lich. Furthermore, Azalin's spirit s within the phylactery at this point, creating a "sinkhole" of evil in the area, so turning undead attempts are made with a -4 penalty. A 12th-level priest needs to roll a 20 to turn even a lowly skeleton!

The pack of undead is a symptom of the Grand Conjunction. With the gates of Ravenloft swung open, creatures of evil are filtering through to the Prime Material Plane. As a rule of thumb, there is a 50% chance per hour of a random encounter occurring. However, the Dungeon Master can allow the PCs the opportunity to hide from the many monsters that rove the countryside; that way, they'll see that chaos has been unleashed, but they'll still be able to reserve their strength for the main adventure.

After the battle has ended, note where each PC is standing in relation to Azalin's phylactery. As soon as the last of the undead has been defeated or turned away, read the next box.

//The mists have drawn off while you were fighting, leaving you under gloomy skies. The forest no longer cheers you, but now seems foreboding and tainted by evil.

Off in the distance, the sound of screaming reaches your ears. It sounds like a cry of human terror, and the cause isn't hard to guess. Through the trees you can see various creatures wandering aimlessly, as if they were animals escaped from a monstrous zoo, looking for something to eat. They seem to be everywhere, and it's only a matter of time before more of them come upon you.

Something else seizes your attention. The phylactery has opened its mouth and a greenish flame within flares brightly. The dragon's head roars and sprays a gout of emerald flame from its golden jaws!//

The breath weapon fills a 45-foot cube in front of the phylactery, inflicting 4d4+1 points of damage upon those caught within (save for half damage). Those within 5 feet of an edge of the cube may first attempt to save vs. paralysis to dive clear of the flames.

When the flames clear, the nearest PC-killed undead creature suddenly stands (if any of the bodies were within the breath weapon's area of effect, choose one of those). The creature's facial appearance has changed although its garments are the same. If the PCs have played *From the Shadows*, they immediately recognize Azalin, who has just claimed a new body.

At this point, the lich only seeks to escape the PCs, for passing through the clutches of the dark powers and taking possession of a new body has seriously weakened him. (Should Azalin's new body be destroyed before he escapes, the lich simply takes possession of another body.) The only spells that he can cast are listed below, which are spells that have no material components. These are spells carried over from the final battle in *From the Shadows*, and DMs who ran that module may wish to check if Azalin has either used any of those spells in that fight, or if he doesn't have them due to the possible death of his familiar, Skeever. Note that he does have full hit points and retains all innate lich abilities. (See the NPC summary, p. 6, for Azalin's stats and the RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set for more details.)

Azalin's possible spells (3/1/1/2/2/1/3/1): *Charm person, magic missile (x2); ray of enfeeblement; dispel magic; dimension door, phantasmal killer; domination, telekinesis; eyebite; forcecage, power word stun, teleport without error; prismatic wall.*

Azalin can't carry his 200-pound phylactery, so he's forced to immediately flee without it. To aid his escape, he uses his innate lich ability to summon undead -- 25 **skeletons** and 15 **zombies** (MC I/II) come to his call. Note that lich-controlled undead take on a reddish glow in their eyes, which matches that of their master. Any character looks into the eyes of a lich minion must make a fear check during each of the first two rounds of combat -- treat the effect as a gaze attack (see the *DMG*). Also, note that all undead are turned as a lich as long as Azalin's phylactery is present.

Allow the PCs to all but finish off the monsters, then Azalin calls from the safety of the shadows:

//"I'm afraid we're going to have to finish our business together at another time. It seems I've overextended myself for the time being. Ah, well, I'm not as young as I used to be. Then again, masterminding the Grand Conjunction will tire out a poor spellcaster!

"You'd better show proper respect for my phylactery, for if you try to destroy it and fail -- and you *will* -- I'll hunt you down." Azalin pauses for a sinister laugh, but then his voice turns deadly serious. "You've served me well and you'll serve me again, mortals. Alive or dead, you'll be mine to control!"//

If the PCs search for Azalin, they find no sign of him. Allow the PCs a few rounds to tend their wounds, regain their bearings, and discuss a plan of action. If they attempt to destroy Azalin's phylactery, they are completely unsuccessful -- any blow delivered to the dragon's head simply bounces off without leaving so much as a scratch. Magic has no effect upon it either. However, the casting of a *dispel magic* upon the phylactery causes it to shrink over the course of two rounds into a small skull about the size of a child's. If nothing else, this makes the phylactery easier to carry.

## The Tracking Feature

See the "Introduction" for details regarding this special feature of Azalin's phylactery. When a character picks up the skull, that player should be instructed to roll 1d20, but the DM shouldn't say what the roll is for. Most players will assume that they have just made a saving throw, but in fact it is a Wisdom check with a -4 penalty. If the check is successful, tell the character that the eyes of the phylactery flashed for just a moment as it was picked up. If the PC declares that he is examining the phenomenon, tell him that it flashes once or twice more as he manipulates it. At this point it's almost impossible to figure out that the skull acts as a homing device. Azalin is on the move, so repeated experiments make the eyes flash when it is pointed in different directions. Allow the party to discuss the situation for a few rounds and then proceed to the next box.

//A voice from the shadows speaks, saying, "I am the Ancient, I am the Land. My word and will are law here, and you are my subjects."

You whirl about and face the direction from which the voice comes, and a tall man with strong features and prominent cheekbones emerges, seemingly from thin air. His eyes are dark and hypnotic, like deep pools with subtle reflections of red light. His fingers are long and thin, with sharp nails. He's dressed in rich, black clothing, and wears a medallion with a large red stone around his neck.

He continues, "I congratulate you on opening the prison gate that has long held me from my destiny. Your timing could not have been better.

"Bow before Lord Strahd von Zarovich," he orders, "and yield all that I command!"//

Strahd advances on the party and says, "Give me the house of that impudent lich. He was my slave in the past and he will be so again!" Strahd won't bargain at this point, nor will he listen to reason. If the party resists him, Strahd attacks them until they give up the phylactery. (See the NPC summary for Strahd's stats.) He fights the PCs only until he reaches Azalin's phylactery, at which time he attempts to grasp it. However, Azalin has anticipated the possibility that his archenemy would attempt to take possession of the phylactery, so the lich has enchanted it with a powerful ward against vampires. Therefore, when Strahd touches the skull, it burns him with an audible hiss; he drops it with a snarl and flees the scene.

If the PCs simply surrender the phylactery upon demand, it burns him and he lashes out angrily at the PC who gave it to him. This, of course, can incite a full-blown battle. In any case, if and when Strahd flees, he threatens the PCs from the shadows as did Azalin.

//From the darkness, Strahd's voice fills your ears with a hateful tone. "You may be certain, foolish mortals, I'll be better prepared when next we meet," he intones. "You're in my land, and you shall not escape my wrath. If you fail to cooperate, I will surely give you a new definition of pain before I'm finished!"//

# Madame Yvonna

The party is quite probably on its last leg by this time. If the PCs played *From the Shadows*, they faced a tough battle before starting *Roots of Evil*, and this module began with the same intensity that ended the last. But the PCs have set the Grand Conjunction in motion, and they're caught up in an ancient vendetta between two powerful enemies. To survive and set things right, they will need *much* more than battle prowess.

If any of the PCs have died, the DM might allow Queen Kristiana to resurrect them (see the "Castle Ravenloft" section). For the time being, let the players believe that these characters are lost. Suggest they may pick up a new character when the party finds a likely spot to recruit replacements.

On the other hand, some parties are either so powerful or so lucky that they may still have plenty of fight left in them at this point. If such is the case, then the DM should feel free to harass them and sap their strength through additional encounters with any creatures from the Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart.

As the PCs explore, they hit upon a rough path through the forest (see the map of Vallaki). Assuming they follow the path, they come upon the Vistani camp.

//Through the thick forest and twisting mists, you spot a twinkle of firelight. A sturdy wagon rests in a clearing and you recognize the rounded roof and colorful ornaments that mark a Vistani caravan. Five olive-skinned humans tend the campfire and bustle about -- a boy, two young women, and two mature men. They seem oblivious to the dangers all around them.

Suddenly, a zombie bursts through the brush and advances on the camp. Before you can even react, it stops before it reaches the gypsy wagon, then it turns and wanders away as if it had forgotten where it was going. The Vistani don't even spare the undead thing a glance.//

The PCs observe the boy marking a perimeter on the ground around the camp by sprinkling dust from a leather pouch. This is a special dust that provides *invisibility to undead*. For the next several hours, wandering undead pass by the area without attacking. (For mood and effect, the DM might occasionally point out to the PCs that an undead or two approaches the camp, hits the line, and continues on its way.) The dust is a secret Vistani preparation, and they won't tell anyone who isn't a Vistana how to make it. They will, however, sell small quantities: one application costs 500 gp and provides a 10-foot warding circle that lasts 1d8 rounds.

The men work the fire to a healthy blaze, and the women sit by and confer quietly. Allow the PCs to decide upon a course of action at this point. If they remain hidden, one of the females looks up as if some voice spoke to her, notices them, and motions for the PCs to approach.

//“These are the ones,” says the slightly older of the two women, a dark-skinned beauty of about 20 years. “I’m Arabelle,” she calls out to you, “and this is Donella. We’ve been expecting you. We’re here to help.”//

At Arabelle's command, the boy abandons his project and enters the vardo. Arabelle and Donella pull a kettle from the fire and pour steaming water into cups, brewing an herbal tea with curative powers. (They won't sell this to anyone.) They help bind wounds and then administer tea to any PC who wants it, explaining that the tea will “make them feel better.” The tea has the power of a *cure serious wounds* spell. It works once per day.

If the PCs ask questions, the Vistani girls say that Madame Yvonna has foreseen their coming to Barovia, that they are to heal their wounds, and that Madame Yvonna will see them shortly. They also offer to ward any dead PC against rising as undead. If asked why the Vistani are becoming involved, they admit that Madame Yvonna says the PCs are very important people. Otherwise, they make small talk and do what they can to make the PCs comfortable. Any mind-reading spell or psionic power reveals that they're telling all

they know -- Yvonna is secretive even with her own people.

//The Vistani make you as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, tending to your wounds and even preparing a savory stew for a midday meal. As you sop up the last of the spicy gravy in your wooden bowl with a crust of bread, the door on the back of the vardo snicks open an inch or two.

"Madame Yvonna is prepared to see you, now," announces Arabelle. "Enter her vardo with open ears and minds, and learn."//

When the PCs enter Yvonna's vardo, they find it is crowded with curious items of gypsy make. Every inch of space is used to store one thing or another, and there is just enough room for the PCs to stand very close together with their arms at their sides.

Madame Yvonna sits on a bench at the far end, against the front wall of the wagon. She appears to be 50 to 60 years of age and is dressed in black and red with white accents. Her salt-and-pepper hair is drawn back in a braid that is wound up and pinned to her head.

On a red cloth-covered table before Yvonna lie a *crystal ball*, a *tarokka* deck, and a set of *diksha* dice (see the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set -- DMs who don't have that box may simply consider the items to be miscellaneous fortune-telling aids). The Vistani's hand rests on the *crystal ball*. Within the confined quarters, only two characters can stand directly next to the table, the rest must crowd behind and look over each other's shoulders.

The *crystal ball* is used for fortune telling, but Madame Yvonna has been employing it mainly as a means of communication with Strahd since he reentered the Prime Material. The vampire lord has already begun to plot a strategy to thwart Azalin, and Madame Yvonna has agreed to help him.

If any PCs stare intently at the orb, they have a 20% chance to notice a malevolent face within, watching the proceedings. Such PCs may make an Intelligence check with a -4 penalty to identify the face as Strahd's. If they do so successfully, Madame Yvonna tells them that they see a force that may be their friend or enemy, depending upon their future actions.

The *tarokka* deck is spread across the table in an extended cross formation (again, see the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set): a total of nine cards arranged into one vertical and one horizontal row of five cards, the center card being the middle of each row. Each card's position has a number: 1 is the central card, 2 is the card directly below 1, 3 lies directly to the left of 1, 4 lies directly above 1, 5 lies directly to the right of 1, 6 lies below 2, 7 lies to the left of 3, 8 lies above 4, and 9 lies to the right of card 5.

The specific cards, already pulled from the deck (as stated in the "Introduction"), are laid out where the DM can see them as follows: **1** -- the marionette (or jack of clubs); **2** -- the donjon (or ace of hearts); **3** -- the darklord (or king of hearts); **4** -- the beast (or king of diamonds); **5** -- the artifact (or ace of diamonds); **6** -- the mists (or ace of clubs); **7** -- the raven (or king of clubs); **8** -- the hangman (or ace of spades); and **9** -- the innocent (or king of spades).

Madame Yvonna remains silent as you crowd into her vardo, measuring you with severe eyes. She makes the sign of the evil eye at you and then leans forward and gazes into her crystal ball.

"Heed these words," she orders. She leans over the glass ball and begins to read:

"In house of Daegon the sorcerer born,

Through life, unlife, unliving shall scorn.

"The lifeless child of stern mother found

Heralds a time, night of evil unbound.

"Seventh time the son of sons doth rise

To send the knave to an eternity of cries.

"The light of the sky shining over the dead

Shall gutter and fail, turning all to red.

"Inajira will --" Yvonna pauses and frowns. Then she begins again, but slowly, as if she's not sure of what she sees.



"The bodiless journey to time before,  
Where happiness to hate makes land of lore.

"Inajira will his fortunes reverse,  
And all shall live with dreaded curse."

Madame Yvonna leans back from the ball and muses, "What does it mean? What does it mean?" Then she looks up at you.

"My powers tell me that a prophecy has been fulfilled and yet not fulfilled. The evil that crawls the land tells me that something important has certainly occurred, yet the crystal ball denies that this is so.

"These verses which I have read for you are the harbinger of the greatest of all evils; a thing that is called 'the Grand Conjunction.' What do you know of all this?"/>

If the party has played *From the Shadows*, they should recognize the verses as those recited to them by Hyskosa in Azalin's dungeon. Madame Yvonna quizzes the PCs about the prophecy, but unless they've played the adventures that deal with Hyskosa's Hexad, it's likely that they'll only recognize the couplet about the bodiless journeying to a time before. If the group hasn't played any of the adventures, Yvonna sighs at their lack of wisdom and moves on. Whatever the PCs know of the prophecy should be worked into Yvonna's interpretation of the cards in the following reading. When the discussion of Hyskosa's Hexad is finished, read the next text box.

//Yvonna puts aside her crystal ball and intently looks you over. "I've met mightier wizards and warriors than you in my time, yet none have I met who are so intimately bound up in an event of such import as the Grand Conjunction. Hyskosa's Hexad is bound tightly within your fortunes, and that is no small affair either. Evil surrounds you on all sides -- malevolence beyond what your imaginations can grasp -- yet you hold the destiny of all the universe in your hands. You are rare and special creatures indeed!

"I've looked into your pasts and seen great exploits, but I have looked into your futures and seen even greater deeds -- or death and worse. History stands at a crossroads and waits for you to choose its course."/

The following box refers to the cards which the DM should have spread in the extended cross.

//Madame Yvonna gestures at the mystical cards on the table before her. "Here is a turn of the tarokka which defies belief: The entire reading consists of cards from only the High Deck! I have laid the tower, the pyramid, and now the extended cross for you, and each dealing produced the same results. If you can imagine dealing the exact same, high cards from a deck of common playing cards, three times in a row, then you have some idea of the gravity of this occurrence!

"Allow me to interpret the cards for you."/

### Reading the PCs' Fortune

The DM should be as familiar as possible with the following reading before relaying it. Be prepared to discuss the cards while bearing in mind Yvonna's knowledge (and what she is and is not willing to reveal).

**Card 1:** "That which lies at the center is the *focus* of the reading, and that is you. It is the card of the marionette, the manipulated. That you have been placed in this situation, so crucial to the fate of all of us, is no surprise."

**Card 2:** "This card represents the near past. It is the donjon card, and it tells me that you have been trapped by your circumstances. Whether you will escape remains to be seen."

Yvonna guesses that the characters were made prisoners, and though they don't sit behind bars, they may be in prison still. (If the PCs adventured through *From the Shadows*, then this is literally true.)

The donjon card's position of opposition to the beast card (4) suggests that the beast may set them free or forever imprison them.

**Card 3:** "This, the card of the raven, is a sign of hope and goodness, yet it lies in the position of hindrance. I take it to mean that which opposes you may yet be your friend. Judge carefully before you name your allies and foes, for each may be the other."

In this position, the raven card represents both help and hindrance. The characters should look to their adversaries for help they can receive nowhere else. If the PCs bring up Strahd's name, Yvonna suggests that the card could be an image of Strahd and that the vampire lord might prove to be an ally since they share a common enemy in Azalin.

Yvonna then says, "This card also suggests that there is an object of questionable value between the focus and the dark lord -- perhaps something that the dark lord has and you need, or something that you have and the dark lord craves. Do you know what this may be?" Yvonna cites this as an important point and questions the PCs until they reveal that they hold Azalin's phylactery. If they remain secretive or they haven't played *From the Shadows*, she'll "deduce" more and more about it until she identifies the skull.

Yvonna *doesn't* reveal that she already knows about the phylactery and is allowing the PCs to think that her prognostication powers are her sole guide. Yvonna also knows that the raven is a clear symbol of Strahd, but she can't openly advocate his cause since she doesn't want the PCs to know that she serves him.

**Card 4:** "This, the card of the beast, is your near future. It portends a monster of fearsome power -- perhaps one that you may not withstand or else one that you may become."

Yvonna doesn't know the meaning of this card. Its position indicates that the beast may be between the focus and death, suggesting that the beast is a good thing, yet the card itself is a symbol of evil. In fact, the beast card refers to Inajira, the yugoloth that the PCs meet in the "Castle Ravenloft" encounter section, but Yvonna knows nothing of the creature. She can only suggest that the beast is more horrible and powerful than any they have seen.

**Card 5:** "Here is your need and hope, in the card of the artifact. It is a great power to supplement that which you lack. Curiously, its position says that it is found and not found. I think the great magic that can save us all has been discovered, yet not identified."

Yvonna proposes that the magic lies in the hands of the raven or the dark lord. If the PCs played *From the Shadows*, she adds that the straight line from the card of the artifact through the focus and to the cards of the raven and dark lord suggests that the PCs themselves delivered that magic into those hands. Therefore, they've already seen this magic, although they didn't suspect its power at the time. Also, because the card of the artifact lies in opposition to the raven, it suggests that something of purest good must be given over to darkness in order to be of greatest value. Yvonna concludes, "You must seek the magic that is found and not found."

The card refers to the *Holy Symbol* (as well as the *Icon*). These items are indeed necessary to reverse the Grand Conjunction.

**Card 6:** "The card of the mists speaks of an enigma in the distant past. It is a curious card in this position, for it bodes change in events that have already occurred."

Yvonna doesn't yet understand the meaning of this card, but she suspects that it may be related to Hyskosa's Hexad. The card suggests that an event is in flux, subject to change depending upon the actions of the focus. Its position in the distant past of the PCs is perplexing to Yvonna unless the characters link it to events of *From the Shadows*, in which they may conclude that the card refers to their removal of the *Holy Symbol* from Castle Ravenloft. If the PCs make that connection and tell Yvonna about it, she agrees with their interpretation, but remains troubled by the card.

In fact, the card refers to the quest that the PCs will undertake later, during which they change history again.

**Card 7:** "Here is the card of your enemy, the dark lord. It is this one who has pulled your

strings, entrapped you with dire plans.”

Yvonna says, “Your enemy is both dead and not dead, and it wields great magic. It is too powerful for you to conquer, yet its card of opposition -- the innocent -- suggests that you may yet find a means to defeat it. Again, the card of the artifact stands behind the focus, in opposition to the dark lord.

“The object symbolized by the raven -- the phylactery -- which lies between you and the dark lord tells me that the owner of the skull is your enemy. It is him you must defeat.”

Yvonna *doesn't* reveal that her description of the PCs' enemy fits both Azalin and Strahd. Nor does she reveal that the object between the focus and the dark lord, the raven, may represent Strahd rather than the phylactery.

**Card 8:** “This card, the hangman, is the harbinger of your future. It may speak of death, yet death is but a gateway to other fortunes.”

Yvonna continues, “This place in your future that the card of the hangman occupies is unknown, and it is certainly dark. You cannot turn away from it, for it is there no matter which way you choose. Your only hope is to move through and beyond it before the end.”

**Card 9:** “The card of the innocent stands in opposition to the dark lord. You must help this one, but it will aid you too.”

Yvonna pauses and then says, “This is a figure of light and purity. Its ability to oppose the dark lord suggests that it is quite powerful. Innocence and power together point the way to only one person: Queen Kristiana, high priestess in the court of King Barov at Castle Ravenloft. She is surely your ally in this cause.”

### Reading the Enemy's Fortune

When the reading is finished, shuffle the cards on the table back into the deck. Read the following box to the players. Note that Azalin is referred to as “the enemy” in this section in case the name “Azalin” hasn't come up; those who haven't played *From the Shadows* may not know who Azalin is, even though they met him when this adventure began. The DM can substitute Azalin's name wherever the word “enemy” appears if the PCs have discussed him with Madame Yvonna.

//Madame Yvonna gathers up the tarokka deck and says, “Now I will read the fortune of your enemy, to better arm you against his plots. I don't know him, but since you are closely connected to him, you must shuffle the cards and touch them to the phylactery. This will attune them to his lifeforce.”//

The DM should allow the players to shuffle or cut the deck. If the deck is stacked as described in the “Introduction”, take it back and place it, **face up**, on top of the prepared stack. Then pick up this adventure and flip to the next page (as if checking on upcoming events), roll some dice, or perform any action that distracts the players while the deck is stacked.

Deal out the five cards in a basic cross formation where the players can see them. The basic cross is a horizontal and vertical row of three cards each, with the center card representing the middle position of both rows. Card 1 is the central one, while card 2 lies below it, card 3 lies to its left, card 4 lies above it, and card 5 lies to the right.

If the players wonder why Yvonna is using a lesser number of cards, explain that the use of any more would tax the deck because they are reading about a figure isn't present. “Short readings say the least,” Yvonna says, “but they are the most accurate.”

Madame Yvonna does her best to read Strahd's plans into the cards, so her comments are directed mostly at Azalin. However, most of her comments should be worded so that, in hindsight, a PC might realize that she could have been talking about Strahd, too.

**Card 1:** “The focus of this reading is a practitioner of the black arts. This is the suit of the

wizard and the intellectual. Thus, the focus card is that of the necromancer.

"The focus is blurry to me. Perhaps it's because I've not met or seen the subject, but there is something more.... Ahh, 'Azalin' is not his true name. His mortal name he keeps to himself. Very wise, for a name confers power, and the lack of one denies power."

If the PCs recall the name of Firan Zal'honan and mention it to Yvonna, she nods, saying, "Yes, yes. You are quite right, and in that knowledge you are powerful." Yvonna doesn't know what power is conferred by the knowledge of Azalin's true name, only that liches conceal them very carefully.

Yvonna *doesn't* reveal that Strahd, also a necromancer, could also be the focus of the reading. If the PCs ask about Strahd's role, she discounts it and suggests that he hates Azalin more than they do -- perhaps he is their ally.

**Card 2:** "Again the suit of stars (hearts), symbolizing the desire for power or mastery. The enemy has a long history of the pursuit of power at all costs. The two of that suit is the card of the diviner and is usually a sign of good intent, but I don't think that is the meaning indicated in this, the position of the enemy's past. Rather, I think it indicates that the enemy has expended a great deal of energy looking into the past or the future -- or both."

Yvonna suggests that Azalin has spent his past looking into the future so that he might understand and possibly alter its course. The card of opposition, the anarchist, indicates that he succeeded. Therefore, to defeat Azalin, history may have to be changed again.

**Card 3:** "Here is the card of the paladin, representing those who use their might for the cause of justice, and it lies in the position of hindrance to the focus. We can only assume that it is your group."

Yvonna tells the party, "The paladin card is a good sign, for it is a powerful one and it indicates that it is within you to oppose and defeat the enemy. The paladin is a lawful character, though, so your plan must be one carefully laid and devoid of brash violence. Think before you strike. Consider all your enemies as more than evil creatures, for even the worst of them may do some good."

**Card 4:** "This is the card of the anarchist in the future position. It signifies a collapse of order, and is no doubt the enemy's objective." Yvonna tells the PCs that the chaos they have created in causing the Grand Conjunction is only the beginning. If Azalin isn't stopped, then even the tarokka cannot predict the future, for it will no longer have form or meaning.

Yvonna *doesn't* reveal that this is the future for which she and Strahd hope.

**Card 5:** "The card in this position refers to the friends and allies of the focus. This particular card, that of the traitor, indicates that someone or something will betray the paladin, who stands in opposition to it."

Yvonna tells the party to beware their friends and allies, for they may betray them -- even innocently. Again, if Strahd has entered the conversation, she suggests that he may be the ally unlooked for, and that they shouldn't judge him too harshly.

Yvonna doesn't realize it, but the card refers to Inajira. The arcanaloth's card lies in the position of alliance to Azalin because the fiend is an enemy of Strahd and is thus an ally to Azalin, if only superficially.

Yvonna's Advice

Gather up the cards and put them aside, then read the following.

//Madame Yvonna shakes her head thoughtfully and then looks at you searchingly, appearing to size you up.

"You are brave heroes, yes?" she asks, not really expecting an answer. "You must be very brave, very strong, and perhaps very lucky too, if you hope to set things to rights."

You have a powerful enemy, and you have become involved in events that affect this and many worlds across the universe.

"Bringing the phylactery of Azalin out of the mists has set the Grand Conjunction in motion, for the skull was never meant to leave the place where it lay for many years. It may be that the destruction of Azalin's phylactery will set things right. Doing so is no small task, but I believe there is much more in your destiny than destroying a lich.

"You must seek the magic that is lost and found, but also seek the aid of Queen Kristiana at Castle Ravenloft. She knows much of the greatest magicks -- she can even restore life to those whom she favors! If there are mortal powers to destroy the house of Azalin, the queen will know.

"I am finished now. You may go."

Madame Yvonna bows her head and seems to forget that you are there. The door of the vardo opens behind you, and Arabelle motions you out.//

The PCs discover that time has passed more quickly than they realized while they were with Madame Yvonna -- it is already growing dark. Arabelle points out the direction to Vallaki, where the PCs can pick up the Old Svalich Road and go to Castle Ravenloft, but she won't offer any more aid than that. The gypsies won't allow the PCs to stay in the camp with them; the men especially react negatively to any suggestion of continued interaction.

# Vallaki

Vallaki is a short hike from the spot where the PCs encountered the Vistani. Note that the creatures from the Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart, or virtually any creature from the RAVENLOFTÆ appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™, walk about the land. Also, the sun sets within the hour, increasing the number of wandering monsters (the chance of a random encounter occurring rises to 80% per hour). The only fairly safe place is indoors, and that means the PCs need to seek shelter in Vallaki.

The town is a medieval version of a resort community. It is close to Lake Zarovich, which is used as a playground for nobles and merchants. The central artery is the Old Svalich Road, which runs straight through Vallaki. This road crosses the breadth of Barovia, and Vallaki merchants usually are more than happy to cater to travelers. The Grand Conjunction has frightened the locals considerably, but they won't react to strangers in the same manner as residents of the Ravenloft Barovia.

The PCs have entered Prime Material Barovia in autumn, so many of the resort houses are unoccupied. Such houses are furnished, yet devoid of food, firewood, or valuables of any sort. In game terms, there is only a 20% chance that any residence is occupied by 1d6 0-level humans. However, the area is patrolled by the town guard. If the PCs decide to break into an unoccupied house, there's a 60% chance that the guard will discover them either while they're entering, during some point of the night (roll once for each hour), or when they emerge in the morning. PCs who are caught trespassing are arrested by a company of 1d4+2 guards. If this happens at night, the PCs can bribe the guards for 50 gp apiece, but they'll have to vacate the premises and go to the inn (the guards will point the way). Otherwise, they're taken to the village lockup and held until the next day, when the justice of the peace will hear their case. (This is one way to get a night's lodging in a safe place.)

The guards are understandably agitated and frightened by the sudden rise in the monster population. They continue to perform their duties patrolling the streets, but they lay as low as possible, even withdrawing into the shadows at the sight of the PCs and allowing them to pass by, fearing them to be monsters as well. Unless the PCs attempt to break into a building, the guards avoid them.

On the other hand, the town guard won't stand for any sort of trouble or resistance from the PCs. They'll blow whistles at the first sign of trouble, summoning 1d4 more guards each round until all 12 town guards on duty arrive.

Due to the Grand Conjunction and the surge of monsters, the PCs will need to convince everyone to open their doors to them -- the locals will feel certain that they are monsters until persuaded otherwise.

Vallaki guards, 3rd-level fighters (1-6): Int avg (8); AC 5 (chain mail); MV 9; hp 20; THACO 18; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SZ M; ML 12; MR nil; AL LG; XP 35 each.

## Elements of Horror

Three elements of horror are introduced in this section that exist primarily for dramatic effect: the ghost of a little girl, three vampires that shadow the party, and a horrible-looking ghoul at the window.

## The Little Ghost

When the party reaches the Old Svalich Road and the first houses of Vallaki come into view, read the following.

//You arrive in a sleepy town. Although it's not late, there's no sign of life on the streets.

As you walk past a few closed-up businesses and shuttered houses, the dirt trail

you've been following terminates at a paved brick road that serves as the main street for this large village.

It seem the place is deserted, but just as you begin to think you're alone, you spy movement from the corner of your eye. A pale little girl peeks at you from around the corner of a nearby house and then pulls back, out of sight.//

If the PCs move to the house where they saw the girl, they don't find her. The house itself is deserted. As they stand by the house, they hear some creaking overhead, as if someone is on the roof, but any investigation turns up nothing.

The little girl is a first-magnitude ghost (a harmless spirit -- see *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* for more information) who was one of the first victims of the Grand Conjunction. She was murdered quite suddenly and doesn't know what she has become. Since the PCs are largely responsible for the Grand Conjunction -- and thus her death -- she's drawn to them, yet she retains much of her human shyness and now has an instinctive fear of living creatures. She continues to haunt the PCs for the rest of the adventure. If approached, she disappears around corners and even into dead-end alleys, peeking at them from dark corners when they least expect it. She shouldn't appear at every single turn, but often enough to keep the PCs wondering who she is.

Ghost (1st magnitude): Int avg (8); AC nil; MV 12, Fl 18 (A); HD nil; hp nil; THACO nil; # AT 0; Dmg 0; SZ S; ML 2; AL CN; XP nil.

This special ghost doesn't reside in the Ethereal Plane like other incorporeal spirits. The dark powers have snatched her up and hold her hostage in the Shadow Plane (in what's left of Ravenloft), via the Border Ethereal. PCs who can normally see or strike ethereal creatures won't be able to do so with this creature.

The little ghost has two functions in this adventure. The first is simply to make the PCs nervous. The DM should look for opportunities to work her into the action whenever it's dramatically effective to do so. For example, if the PCs are sneaking along a dark hallway, attempting to remain unseen, she is suddenly standing 10 feet behind them, giggling at their game of hide-and-seek. If the party is trying to rest and recover spells and hit points, she rustles in the bushes or around the corner, slipping out of sight after the whole party rouses and catches a glimpse of her. Her presence will be most effective if she seems to be a little lost girl who keeps disappearing whenever the PCs draw near.

The little ghost's second function is to haunt the PCs with the consequences of their actions. She is a symbol of the suffering they have caused by helping to cause the Grand Conjunction. Her recurring appearance should serve as a reminder that they must set things right. As time passes, she rots away, growing increasingly grotesque. If the party ignores her, she begins to cry softly at each appearance, displaying a helplessness and fear that makes her tragic to behold. The players can be instructed to make horror checks if they fail to respond appropriately to her plight.

If the PCs attempt to befriend the ghost, she hesitates as if she wants to respond, but then flees. Offering candy, toys, or other objects that would tempt a living child may eventually bring her close, but her hand will pass through whatever is offered and send her scurrying through the nearest wall with a pitiful wail.

### The Shadow Vampires

When the party reaches any intersection along the road, read the following.

//There's a sign at this intersection that reads "Village of Barovia", with a hand pointing east while another hand points the opposite way, showing the direction to the "Village of Krezk". Atop both signs is a large placard that reads "VALLAKI" in large black letters. White and blue ribbons adorn the pole on which the signs are hung.

As you look around, a scream pierces the night air!//

The scream issues from the side road, around a corner, and out of sight. If the PCs

move to investigate, they come upon a town guard lying on the ground with two female **vampires** (MC I/II) leaning over him. His throat is torn and the monsters are greedily lapping up his blood. One of the vampires looks up at the PCs and hisses angrily, her face smeared with the guard's blood. Unless the PCs are experienced vampire hunters, they might make fear and horror checks upon seeing this ghastly sight.

Those who make successful checks may declare actions and then roll for initiative. The vampires immediately seek to escape, having sated their hunger and not wanting to battle. They run to the nearest wall and use their innate *spider climb* abilities to move out of range. If further pursued, they take bat form and fly away.

After this encounter (even if the PCs don't seek the source of the scream), the vampires shadow the PCs as long as they are in Vallaki. As the characters move down the streets, they should make periodic Wisdom checks. Those who succeed catch glimpses of the vampires leaping from rooftop to rooftop, moving in and out of the shadows behind the buildings, or glaring with red eyes from deep dark places. A successful Intelligence check for those who succeeded with the Wisdom check identifies the shadows as the vampires, but the PC must first announce that he or she wants to know if that is specifically what it is; otherwise, it is too dark to say. Whenever the PCs move to investigate, the monsters disappear into thin air.

These vampires avoid direct encounters with the PCs. The idea of including them is to make the PCs constantly feel as though they may be jumped at any moment. There should be no real rest, no putting things off until tomorrow, no way to simply walk away from the situation -- they're up to their necks in the Grand Conjunction and they should know it.

#### The Ghoul at the Window

If and when the party takes shelter for the night, the DM should randomly determine the time of night when whoever is awake notices a horribly disfigured **ghoul** (MC I/II) staring at them through a window. If the windows are all shuttered, tell the wakeful PCs that they hear something just outside; if they peek through the shutter, they'll come face to face with the monster, who grins at them. This prompts a fear and horror check.

#### Key Locations

As the PCs move through town, they notice a few buildings with light piercing the cracks of tightly bolted shutters. These homes are occupied by the 0-level humans mentioned earlier. The residents won't open their doors to the strangers, but they will tell the PCs where to find the Blue Water Inn. Any attempt at forced entry brings the town guard running.

As mentioned, much of Vallaki's businesses and homes are normal and therefore lack individual descriptions. The DM should be prepared for any random encounters and to manage any interaction with the locals as previously described.

##### 1. Nikolai's Stables

//The size of the pen behind this building indicates that Nikolai's Stables (as the sign on the barn identifies it) does quite a bit of business. However, the fence is broken in several places and there is no sign of livestock or persons on the premises.//

There's plenty of room for the entire party and its horses inside the barn, and the door can be bolted shut with a crossbar.

##### 2. Vallaki Fountain

//You see a fountain dominating the small square of the village. In the center of the fountain is a statue of a man whose dress indicates he was an explorer.



The well of the fountain is littered with silver coins. The water is clear and streams out from holes in the statue's pedestal.//

If the PCs take any of the coins from the fountain, the water bubbles and froths, sending up a mist around the statue, which animates and attacks. This is a minor conjunction -- treat the statue as a **stone golem** (MC I/II).

### 3. Aresek's Wares

//This large stockyard is surrounded by eight warehouses. A sign over the front gate identifies the property as "Aresek's Wares." The pens are empty -- a recent break in the fence appears to have provided escape for any animals that might have been here. The warehouses of Aresek, however, are full of goods from all over Barovia and beyond; a look through the window of any building reveals all manner of goods. It would seem this places thrives on selling unusual objects and items from far regions.//

These buildings are locked tight. A thief must make a successful pick locks roll with a -20% penalty to open the door of any one of them. Attempting to enter these warehouses results in an 80% chance of drawing the guard. Those who successfully break and enter find any item from the equipment section of the *Player's Handbook*. There are no magical items, and the DM may limit the availability of any item.

### 4. Vallaki Church

//This is obviously a church, but the building is in such a state of disrepair that it's impossible to say what god it was dedicated to. The roof has partially caved in, the stained glass windows are mostly broken and boarded up, and weeds clog the entire grounds. It would seem that, despite its location, the chapel has been abandoned for at least half a century.//

The building appears to be abandoned, but if the PCs enter it, an old priest named Lucian sits up on a pew near the altar and greets them. "Welcome, children," he cries with sleep in his voice. "Do you seek the blessings of Andral?"

Andral is a god of "light and life", a lawful good god, but detection spells reveal nothing except lawful alignment in the priest (the rules of the RAVENLOFTÆ campaign realm apply). Lucian indeed appears to be a kindly man, if a bit forgetful, and he invites the PCs to take shelter in the church for the night. Monsters are repelled by the alignment of the building, so the PCs can get a good night's sleep here, but the horrible ghoul can still stare through the windows, potentially disrupting the characters' rest. The little ghost is of neutral alignment and not repelled by the church, so she can appear.

Lucian doesn't maintain the grounds outside of the church since the day it was abandoned by the village 50 years ago. Lucian was a young acolyte at the time, when the senior priestess had a vision of "the coming of an ultimate evil that will destroy the land." The people promptly abandoned the church, rejecting the idea of doom in favor of less threatening faiths. Lucian explains that the priestess died many years ago, stoned by unknown assailants, and the church fell into disrepair. Lucian is the only remaining member now, and the village suffers him to live on the grounds mostly out of a sense of shame for the murder of the priestess.

If the PCs attempt to discuss their situation with Lucian, he tells them as much as he can, but he is a simple man of the cloth and knows little of the Grand Conjunction, even though his own superior predicted it. He agrees that "something quite odd is going on" with all the undead wandering about and that the cemetery in particular has been crawling with monsters, but he shows no sense of vindication that one might expect from someone

whose faith has been proved well founded after 50 years. Lucian recommends that the PCs seek the advice of Queen Kristiana, "for she is a high priestess of great power and knowledge."

Lucian, 4th-level cleric: Int avg (8); AC 10; MV 6; hp 24; THACO 18; # AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA spells; SD none; SZ M; ML 10; MR nil; AL LG; XP 200.

Lucian's spells (3/2): *Bless*, *cure light wounds* (x2); *aura of comfort*, *nap*.

Lucian is happy to cast his spells for the benefit of the party, and he won't ask for payment, but he will be most grateful if the PCs reward him in any way for his hospitality.

#### 4A. The Cemetery

This graveyard contains about 100 graves and a 20-foot by 30-foot crypt. Observers find nothing remarkable about the entire grounds.

The crypt is actually the entrance to Azalin's lair, but the adventurers aren't expected to explore it at this time. Even if they do, they won't detect the lair beyond the wall without the help of the phylactery (see the "Azalin's Crypt-Lair" encounter section, level 1, area 8).

//The cemetery next to the church shows better care than the church itself. It looks like the villagers still use the area to bury their dead, even if they don't employ the services of the church.

Several of the graves appear to have been haphazardly dug up recently -- or, rather, dug *out* of. In fact, as you look over the field of mounds and tombstones, the ground buckles at a nearby grave and a withered hand breaches the surface. Blue and torn from its labors to unearth itself, the hand scratches at the dirt around it until a second hand breaks through and joins in the effort.//

The sheer evil unleashed by the Grand Conjunction (to say nothing of the lich living below) has spontaneously animated numerous bodies in this graveyard. A **Strahd zombie** (RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set) digs its way out of its resting place and will be free of the ground in two rounds. Any who view this spectacle are subject to fear and horror checks. Then the presence of the PCs draws 2d8 more Strahd zombies from their graves. After two rounds of battle, 2d8 *more* Strahd zombies emerge. Continue with this until 100 zombies have joined the battle or until the PCs evacuate the cemetery, at which time they need only defeat the zombies that are already present. If Azalin's phylactery is within 200 feet, then the zombies save as liches, but they don't have the gaze attack afforded to lich-summoned minions.

The little ghost girl can make an appearance here, darting from tombstone to tombstone, laughing gleefully. If the PCs attempt to enter the mausoleum, she screams in terror and dissolves into thin air as she runs away. At the DM's option, horror checks can be made in response to the bone-chilling scream.

#### 5. Residential District

//As you walk down this street, you can see these houses are occupied. They must be the permanent homes of the citizens of Vallaki. Each house is richly decorated and very well constructed and maintained. The people who live in this district must be fairly comfortable.//

The inhabitants of this area have all locked themselves in their homes and refuse entrance to everyone. Along this street, there's a 90% chance of attracting the village guard if the PCs attempt to force their way into any house.

#### 6. Village Hall

//This one-story building is marked "Village Hall." Unlike the rest of the structures in Vallaki, this one is constructed of stone and thick wooden beams that suggest a secure jail within.//

The front half of this 30-foot by 60-foot building contains office space and a large desk where the justice of the peace hears cases. The rear section contains two rows of three 10-foot by 10-foot hail cells with a wide aisle down the middle. The cells are divided by iron bars, and there's a barred window on the outer wall of each. The locks are heavy duty, requiring a pick locks roll with a -30% penalty to open them. (Of course, arrested PC rogues are relieved of their tools.) Each cell holds two prisoners. If the PCs are arrested and brought here for the night, two guards remain on duty in the front area for half the night, and then they are relieved of duty by another pair of guards.

One of the cells actually holds a **Strahd zombie** (RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set) -- a man who died two days ago and reanimated while he was still at the undertaker's. Not understanding what he is, the guards have arrested him for attacking one of the locals and have thrown him in jail. They attempted to bring him before the justice of the peace yesterday, but he merely attacked anyone who came near him, so they have elected to leave him in his cell until he "comes to his senses." Noting his pallor, they have assumed that he has ingested something that has made him sick and subsequently delirious. The doctor has disappeared, so they had no choice but to lock him up until the doctor can be found or until he comes around. They have no idea of the zombie's true nature.

The DM should have some of the PCs locked in an adjoining cell if they are arrested. The zombie throws itself against the bars of its cage all night, attempting to reach the warm-blooded creatures nearby. This causes severe deformity over a period of several hours. If the guards are alerted to the zombie by the PCs before it has bruised itself to the point of being undeniably identified for what it is, the guards scoff at the PCs. When the zombie becomes sufficiently disfigured, the guards ask the PCs to kill it for them (this isn't what they joined the force for!). In return, they promise to speak on the PCs' behalf when the justice of the peace comes in.

In the morning the PCs are arraigned before the justice of the peace, Lars Kjurls, also the burgomeister of Vallaki. His position is an honorary one, for the town is run by a village board. Kjurls's duties are largely ceremonial in nature, but he does act as head of the guard.

Lars Kjurls (6th-level human rogue): Int low (7); AC 8 (Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 28; THACO 18; # AT 1 (dagger); Dmg 1d4; SZ M; ML 6; MR nil; AL LG; XP 270.

If the PCs are brought before Kjurls, he acts in an extremely officious matter (after all, he doesn't get to play this role very often). He asks the guard to state the charges against the PCs, and the guard to state the charges against the PCs, and the guard somewhat clumsily attempts to copy Kjurls's bombastic style. The effect should be that of being hauled into court in a "one-horse town." Kjurls isn't malicious. He questions the PCs about their alleged crimes and about their involvement in all the trouble that's broken out lately.

If the PCs have broken into a house, Kjurls fines them 50 gp apiece, lectures about law and order, and then graciously invites them to visit the Blue Water Inn (this is, after all, a tourist town). Payment for damages may also be assessed at the DM's options. If the PCs helped eliminate the zombie in the jail cell, the guards explain as much to Kjurls and ask him to let the PCs off easy for their help. Kjurls lowers the fine to 25 gp for this service.

Kjurls knows nothing of the Grand Conjunction. If the PCs begin to talk of such serious matters, he suggests that they report to the King, up at Castle Ravenloft. When all business is concluded, he adjourns the hearing and invites the PCs to have a drink with him and the guards at the Blue Water Inn, instantly forgetting all transgressions. Kjurls talks of Vallaki with the enthusiasm of a tourist guide, and he won't enter into serious topics as a rule. The current trouble with the undead is a "passing phase," he is sure, and

Vallaki remains the ideal spot to relax and enjoy life.

## 7. Village Park

//This area with tall trees and a small, brick paved court in the middle of it provides a restful village park -- or it did before the Grand Conjunction claimed the land. Now the trees are packed with bats that squeak and flutter in a tremendous tumult.//

The trees are occupied by 200 **common bats**, 30 **giant bats**, 10 **mobats** (MC I/II, all) and 10 **skeletal bats** (MC RL). If the PCs enter the park or disturb the bats in any way, they flood the air and swarm through the party. Each PC is attacked by 1d20+10 common bats in each of the next three rounds. After that, they fly away. The giant bats attack in the second round, the mobats attack in the third round, and the skeletal bats enter combat in the fourth round. All larger bats and monsters fight until killed.

## 8. Kierkal's Smithy

//Through the cracks of shuttered windows on this soot-covered establishment you can spy a large forge and bellows, as well as an assortment of tools hanging from the ceiling.//

The door to this building has an extra-heavy lock of cast iron on it, requiring a pick locks roll with a -15% penalty to open it. In the off-season, Kierkal closes up shop and works for the smith in the village of Barovia. Now it's the resting place of the vampires that have been shadowing the party. If the PCs break in, the vampires emerge from the shadows and attack.

## 9. Blue Water Inn

This is a very large, two-story building. The sign hanging over the street is a waterfall colored deep blue with white mist billowing at the fall's termination.

The PCs must knock at the door and convince the innkeeper that they mean no harm before the door is opened to them. The DM should treat the PCs with as much suspicion as possible, seeking to twist anything they say into a hostile expression. Eventually, if the adventurers are persistent, the door will open to them. Inside, the innkeeper ignores the PCs and serves dinner to three travelers who are 0-level merchants. They keep to themselves and go to their rooms as soon as they're done eating.

The PCs can get a room that holds four people for 10 sp or a room that holds six for 15 sp. Dinner -- cold beef and a tankard of ale -- costs 5 sp. Use the *PHB* to determine the cost of other drinks, which the bar has in good supply.

If the PCs come here during the day with Kjurls, he "buys" the first round (ordering the innkeeper to serve them for free). There are a half dozen patrons in the bar during the day. They are all 0-level humans who live in the village. They tell horror stories about the events of the last day or so, and they'll offer the PCs up to 10 gp per hero per day to stay and protect the town. Kjurls will up the bid to 15 gp.

# Castle Ravenloft

Strahd has, by this time, devised his plot to kill King Barov and sit upon the throne of Barovia (see the "Introduction"). However, since he and the PCs have already crossed swords, Strahd wants the party to meet the real Barov and be convinced the king isn't Strahd. Then the vampire lord plans to kill Barov and step into his place while the PCs are retrieving the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon* if appropriate). Once the PCs have fetched the item and turned it over to Strahd's lawful good "wife", Queen Kristiana, he will dispose of both the PCs and the holy relics.

The trip to the castle takes most of the day by foot or four to five hours on horseback. There is a 50% chance for a minor conjunction for every hour the characters are on the road, but they receive an equal chance to avoid an encounter by hiding. If they elect to make their way to the castle by off-road path, travel time is doubled, but the chance to avoid an encounter rises to 90%.

Along the way, the party is shadowed by **dire wolves** (MC I/II). These are Strahd's spies, who have been sent to keep an eye on the PCs. They don't attack, however, unless anyone wanders more than 100 feet away from the rest of the group. At that point 1d6 dire wolves move in and attack. If any of the wolves sustains a hit from a PCs, or if any other member of the party comes to the rescue, the wolves make a group morale check (10) every round. When the roll fails, they flee, howling and yelping frantically all the way.

Don't forget the little ghost girl that follows the group. She's looking a bit haggard as the Grand Conjunction gains momentum. Bags appear under her eyes, her hair is mussed, and her dress hangs loosely on her. She won't follow the PCs into Castle Ravenloft, but will instead wait outside for them to emerge.

If the PCs follow the road, read the following:

//The road gains altitude as you head east, and the oak forest gradually gives way to tall dark pines. The road is muddy with black puddles that yield no reflections. Tendrils of mist lace the ground as if they would wrap around your legs and haul you down.//

If the PCs take an off-road route:

//The going is slow through the woods, but they provide cover against the monsters that walk the land. On the other hand, there are occasional mysterious "snaps" and other noises in the shadows surrounding you. What the sources of the noises are, and whether they hear you, is hard to say.//

The clouds come down to meet the PCs as they gain altitude, enveloping them in mist. If the PCs took a forest route, bring them back to the road at Svalich Pass (see the area map). Explain that the terrain is becoming extremely difficult to move through. Tell them that their movement rate has been reduced to 1, then let them come upon the road. Considering the thick cloud cover, the road is almost as good a place to hide as any.

## The Gates of Barovia

//A pair of giant figures stand silently in the fog ahead. They are two guardians of stone, carved in near-perfect detail, with full armor and massive warhammers. The statues flank a black iron gate that bars the road. The guardians seem to scrutinize your group as it approaches, as if they would stop you from entering. The woods around them seem as impenetrable as the metal bars of the gate.//

If the PC approach within 50 feet, the gates open quietly and smoothly for them. After they pass through, the gates slam firmly shut and do not reopen. Before the Grand Conjunction, the gates were imbued with a *permanent detect alignment* spell, among other magicks. As long as any creature approaching them wasn't evil, they opened, no matter which way the people were traveling. Now, Strahd's evil influence is upon the gates. They

allow entrance and exit only to those whom Strahd desires to pass through the gates. It's still possible to cut through the woods to get around the gates -- their operation is merely a manifestation of Strahd's return.

The stone guardians are just statues.

### The Black Carriage

Beyond the gates, the PCs come upon a fork in the road. The left leads to the castle while the right leads to the village of Barovia. If the PCs continue to the village, they find it largely deserted and overrun by undead. The only people left are locked behind doors and mad with fear. The DM should continue to roll for minor conjunctions until the PCs move on.

Also at the fork of the road, the PCs find Strahd's personal carriage. This may alarm some characters, but Strahd is actually attempting to be accommodating.

//A large, rich carriage stands unattended here. Rippling, ink-black stallions bob their heads and paw at the stones beneath their hooves as if they would gallop off with all their speed, but the carriage remains still. The driver is nowhere in sight.//

If the PCs climb into the carriage, the horses take them up to the castle at a thunderous pace. The horses are completely under Strahd's control, so they ignore anyone who tries to take the reins. If a character attempts to leap from the carriage, he or she must save vs. paralysis or suffer 3d6 points of falling damage.

### The Approach to the Castle

The party comes suddenly upon Castle Ravenloft in the mists. Some adjustments may be necessary in the following for gamers who haven't played *From the Shadows* or who haven't otherwise visited Strahd's castle.

//You're moving upward along a steep and winding road, into even heavier clouds. The terrain has turned stony and the ground drops off sharply into the mists on one side of the road. Huge shapes pass into view for brief moments before disappearing behind the swirling fog around you, making it impossible to identify them.

Then, the road swings sharply around a craggy cliff face and something huge and black looms in the heavy fog ahead of you, stretching up out of sight. As the wet, chilly wind blows the mists around you, the clouds briefly thin between you and the dark monstrosity. Then you realize what you see: Castle Ravenloft.

At the end of the road you find twin guardhouses of turreted stone. Bright torches rest in sconces on their walls, illuminating the area. Beyond the guardhouses, a 50-foot-wide chasm separates you from the castle. The drawbridge lies tight against the wall, closed against intruders.

Two guards emerge from each house and stand ready to defend their posts. "Who goes there?" cries one of them.//

If the PCs rode up in Strahd's carriage, they're met by the guards with strong suspicion. This is the first time they've seen the driverless vehicle, and they regard the strange occurrence with alarm. They can't understand what's happened to their land in the last day or so.

The person in charge, Lieutenant Valdar, is a very serious man who questions the PCs at length. If they are secretive, Valdar distrusts them and refuses to even petition for their entrance to the castle. On the other hand, if the PCs are forthcoming and tell him about what they have been through, he grows incredulous and questions them skeptically. If the PCs request to see the king or queen, Valdar interrogates them about their business with them. Any mention of Madame Yvonna is met with a sneer and more suspicion. In short, Valdar apparently doesn't like the look of the PCs and he's not interested in letting them in.

//“Whatever’s been going on,” says Valdar, “you are obviously right in the middle of it. If you’re good folk, then you’ll understand why I must assume you’re exactly the opposite and respect my efforts to protect the castle.

“The captain will be here soon with the change of the guard. If you’ll wait patiently, then he may hear of your plea and allow you into the castle.”//

The PCs are liable to react in one of three ways: patiently, impatiently, or with trickery.

#### Patient Player Characters

If the PCs agree to wait and show no sign of hostility or trickery, then Valdar continues:

//“Wait, worthy travelers. I am convinced of your good will.” Valdar points to a crystal in the pommel of his sword. “This gem tells me if a creature be good or evil when I meet it, but it has failed me during these black days. Therefore, I am forced to test and judge with my eyes. Your pardon, I pray!”

The lieutenant turns to the castle wall and cries out, “Throw open the drawbridge.”

Several voices echo Valdar’s cry before you hear a thunderous clank behind the castle walls. Then the door swings out with a tremendous clamor of heavy chains and bridges the gap between you and the castle.//

#### Impatient Player Characters

An attack from the PCs sends up the alarm from the guard high in the wall of the castle as well as from Valdar and his men. The lieutenant and his guards attempt to hold off the offenders while a dozen archers reach their positions on the battlements in 1d3 rounds. PCs who try to fly across the chasm are intercepted by two **air elementals** (MC I/II). If this happens, the DM should skip to the “Sneaky Player Characters” section, below.

Guards, 5th-level fighters (3): Int avg (8); AC 4 (chain and shield); MV 9; hp 45; THACO 16; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SZ M; ML 12; MR nil; AL LG; XP 300 each.

Lieutenant Valdar, 7th-level fighter: Int very (11); AC 4 (plate and chain); MV 9; hp 62; THACO 14; # AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (two-handed sword); SZ M; ML 13; MR nil; AL LG; XP 675.

Valdar’s sword contains a gem in the pommel that contains the spell *know alignment* (usable three times per day).

Archers, 5th-level fighters (12): Int avg (8); AC 5 (chain); MV 9; hp 45; THACO 13 (with long bow); # AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8 (sheaf arrows); SZ M; ML 11; MR nil; AL LG; XP 300 each.

Five rounds after the archers arrive, a white-robed figure appears at the battlements:

//“Cease fire, all of you! We must not claw out our own throats!” The voice is clear, strong, and sincere. A dark-haired woman in white robes looks down at you and opens her arms in a gesture of peace.//

The figure is Queen Kristiana, who has been told by her gods to expect the party. She calls each character by name and salutes them personally. (For instance, “Haldir, good warrior. Esmerelda, my worthy spellcaster,” etc.)

//“You are the keepers of the house of evil, the wards of the prophecy, are you not?” she asks, not expecting an answer. “The gods told me you would knock loudly upon my door, but I didn’t expect you would do so with your swords.” She raises her voice for

all to hear. "Lower the drawbridge by order of the queen! Bring in the wounded!"

Several voices echo the queen's order before you hear a thunderous clank behind the castle walls. Then the door swings down with a tremendous clamor of heavy chains.//

The archers withdraw and several young clerics rush out to tend the dying and carry the wounded inside the castle where they will be treated, including injured PCs.

### Sneaky Player Characters

If the PCs leave the area and try to traverse the 300-foot-deep chasm by stealth, they find it guarded by two **air elementals** (MC I/II). They were *geased* by an evil wizard to perform 1,001 years of service on the Prime Material Plane, but he momentarily lost control of them and they killed him. The effects of the *geas* remain upon them, however, so they serve Kristiana, recognizing a benevolent master when they see one. They remain within 50 feet of the castle at all times and attack anyone who doesn't cross the chasm via the drawbridge.

Three rounds after battle with the elementals breaks out, read the following.

// "Cimbilis, Arius, withdraw!" cries a clear, strong, female voice from the castle wall. The attacks from the air creatures cease instantly.

"I knew it would require determination to fulfill the prophecy," says a dark-haired woman from above, "but I'm still taken aback by your tenacity, brave adventurers."//

Again, the figure is Queen Kristiana, who has been expecting the party. She calls each PC by name and salutes them personally.

// "Please come up. We have much to discuss. Lower the drawbridge by order of the queen!"

Several voices echo the queen's order before you hear a thunderous clank behind the castle walls. Then the door swings down with a tremendous clamor of heavy chains.//

### Castle Ravenloft

Read the following as the PCs enter the castle grounds.

// Although the skies above are lost in a bleach of fog that reaches down and curls along the damp ground, the courtyard within the outer wall is bright with flowers, and lush ivy clothes the walls of the castle proper. The carriage path circles around a large fountain in the center of the yard, leading to the massive, arched entryway of the inner keep.

Huge double doors, too large for one person to move, are ornately carved and decorated with gold. Open now, they reveal that 20 feet beyond the threshold is another, smaller pair of doors, and they are closed. Above them, four statues of dragons gaze down upon you. Valdar leads you through those doors and under the dragons.//

The areas shown are the only ones that the PCs are expected to see during this adventure (see the map of the castle for all area references in this encounter section). In the event that the party strays into other parts of the castle, the DM will need to generate a generic floor plan and steer the party back to the lower levels. (In the fall of 1993, the adventure module *House of Strahd* will be released, providing complete floor plans of Castle Ravenloft.)

Although Prime Material Barovia has fallen under the shadow of the Grand Conjunction, Castle Ravenloft is now ruled by the lawfully-good King Barov von Zarovich VI and his like-aligned Queen Kristiana. Even though Strahd lurks below in his secret sanctum, evil has yet to foul the castle. If spontaneous descriptions are requested, the DM should describe every part of the keep as rich, elegant, and clean.

The PCs are escorted to the audience hall by Valdar, who leads them across the courtyard (Area 1), through the entry (Area 2), up the grand staircase (Area 3), and into the



audience hall (Area 4). If the players have experienced the adventure in *From the Shadows*, they clearly recognize the main floor of the castle and should identify the brass doors at the east end of the entry hall as those leading to the chapel. Tell the players that the castle appears to have all the freshness and majesty of the castle they visited 350 years ago, but the edifice seems to have aged a bit.

There are many servants, guards, courtiers, and other NPCs going about their business throughout the castle. They are a bit tense about the strange happenings, but they're used to all manner of travelers at the court, and they aren't upset by the PCs.

//You enter a massive entry room and see exquisite frescoes on the domed ceiling, lit by flaring torches in iron sconces on fat marble columns. Ahead of you, down a wide hallway, lie two heavy bronze doors. Another richly appointed room lies to your right.

To the left is a wide set of steps, and Valdar leads you up these to a wide landing where an impressive fresco reaches to the high ceiling. It depicts a mountain being assaulted by forces on horseback. Interestingly, there's a nonhuman standing at the base of the mountain watching the proceedings -- a humanoid with the head of a jackal. Perhaps it's a symbol of war.

From the landing, the steps break into twin staircases climbing opposite walls, back toward the center of the castle. Valdar continues to the top and escorts you into the hall of audiences.//

### The Royal Audience

The hall of audiences (Area 4) is a large, richly decorated, and well-lit room. The PCs are led to a point 30 feet from the royal dais, which is 20 feet by 20 feet by 1 foot in size.

In the throne on the right sits King Barov. He is about 50 years of age and, as mentioned earlier, he looks much like Strahd. Some gray hair at his temples, a few more wrinkles, and a ruddy complexion are the only physical differences between the two men. His expression is benevolent, though sad.

The king wears a lavish royal-blue cape, embroidered with white and light blue edges, over a blue velvet tunic. He also wears a silver medallion with a large blue topaz set into it (worth 1,000 gp) and several silver rings on his hands (worth an additional 800 gp). None of his jewelry is magical. Finally, Barov wears a silver crown with sapphires and gold accents, which matches the scepter he holds.

His demeanor is thoroughly royal. He has risen to the level of the most respected warriors through constant training and the favor of the gods, but now he seldom puts on armor, even for ceremonial purposes. Barov values peace beyond all prize, so he commands his generals to fight his battles while he negotiates with the representatives of his adversaries. This isn't to say that he is cowardly, as anyone of sufficient status to challenge him in combat might learn.

Barov married Kristiana because he wanted to cement a relationship between church and state, but he devoutly loves his wife too. Little does he suspect the historical link between them -- or, rather, the people whom they so closely resemble.

King Barov von Zarovich VI, 15th-level fighter: Int exceptional (15); AC 9; MV 12; hp 86; THACO 6; # AT 2; Dmg per weapon; SZ M; ML 16; MR nil; AL LG; XP 5,000.

In the throne on the left sits Queen Kristiana. She appears to be about 25 to 30 years of age, but she is actually 40. She dresses in pure white robes that billow about her as she moves. The queen is a reincarnation of Strahd's lost love, the raven-haired Tatyana, but she is unaware of the resemblance.

Kristiana is not only the queen, but the high priestess of Ravenloft as well. In a lawful-good society, this works rather well. She's a wise leader who is stronger of will than her husband; while he prefers to simply head the state, she constantly seeks improvement in the standard of life for all her subjects. Her stats are listed in the NPC summary (p. 6).

Standing to the king's right is a wizardress, about 70 years of age, named Anebroun. She has served Barov as his personal magic-user since he was a young prince, and she has been his principal teacher. She gave him a healthy respect for power and the ability to wield it, too. However, she tries to remain in the background of his affairs. Careful not to contradict the will and edicts of the queen, she speaks only when spoken to and saves most of her thoughts for private consultations with her sovereign.

Anebroun has a secret agenda that makes her a major NPC. She's growing old, but her ambition to acquire more magic hasn't faded with age. Therefore, she has quietly been seeking the secrets of becoming a lich. Any discussion of Azalin fascinates her, and the sight of the skull itself is enough to make her turn against King Barov and steal it on the spot. Anebroun's stats are in the NPC summary.

The follower priests of Kristiana, named Lynrich and Thomurray, remain perpetually awe-struck by their queen. They perceive her as the nearest thing to perfection in a mortal, and their only hope is to remain by her side for life. What she thinks, they think. What she says, they hold as literal Truth. Where she goes, they blindly follow. They appear to be about 80 years old. Their stats are listed in the NPC summary.

The remaining people in the room consist of 12 elite guards.

Elite guards, 8th-level fighters (12): Int avg (9); AC 2; MV 6; hp 65; THACO 13; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8; ML 15; MR nil; AL LG; XP 700 each.

//The king and queen sit, right and left respectively as you face them, on thrones atop a dais. An elite guard dressed in shining plate armor stands at each corner of the platform. They hold blue-and-white shields and carry gleaming ceremonial long swords. Eight more like-attired guards are stationed evenly around the room, near the walls.

To the king's left an elderly woman in dark green and burgundy robes leans upon a staff of burnished metal. A shiny circlet rests on her brow, and her long iron-gray hair is braided with small metal trinkets.

To the queen's right stand two old men in plain white robes. Each carries a holy symbol of shining silver on a braided rope that also serves as a belt.

As you approach the dais, the king rises to greet you. Much to your alarm, King Barov appears to be the monster who attacked you when you first arrived here in Barovia -- Strahd von Zarovich!//

Obviously, hostility toward the king or queen is met with immediate and strong reaction from the guard. If such is the PCs' reaction to Barov's appearance, assume that the party stands with a 180-foot-diameter *anti-magic shell*, created for just such an emergency by Anebroun. Then flood the room with an additional 1d4+3 guards per round until the PCs are completely outnumbered.

Meanwhile, the king rises and shouts:

//"Raising your weapons against the king? We are not your enemy! We are each other's only hope!" shouts Barov in rage.

Guards flood into the audience chamber, and cries of "Treason!" and "To the king!" echo throughout the castle. Upon the dais, the robed woman produces a wand and waves it in a casting pattern -- the tip leaves a trail of flame behind it, forming a small sphere of fire hovering in the air before it.

"Cry 'Truce' and I'll not have you executed on the spot!" commands the king.//

If the PCs resist, they are ringed in and attacked by up to 100 castle guards. All the while the king and queen call for a halt to the hostilities. Anebroun keeps her wand ready to paralyze anyone who breaks from the fray and attacks the king.

The DM should impress upon the players the relative hopelessness of winning such a battle. He or she will have to judge if and when the party has crossed the line and destroyed any hope of an alliance with Barov and Kristiana. Such a decision represents a failed mission unless the PCs sue for peace. If the PCs fight their way out of the castle, they will be hunted by both Azalin and Strahd until destroyed.

If the party ceases hostile actions, the king orders them to lay their weapons at their feet, angrily asks the queen if she's sure that "these are the ones," and then returns to his throne. Two dozen guards remain in the room, ready to resume battle if the PCs grow hostile again.

#### Possible Words and Deeds

This part of the encounter section cites various subjects and actions, rather than attempting to direct the adventuring party along a specific line of conversation. The DM should be prepared to select and use this information as needed and to role-play all NPCs.

#### Strahd

The king and queen well know of Strahd -- but he disappeared 385 years ago when the "curse of Barovia" stole almost all of the royal family from the face of the land, as well as the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* (and the *Icon*, too, if the PCs took it in *From the Shadows*). To the current royal family, Strahd is a hero and martyr, for he was the first king of Barovia -- a man who conquered the land and brought civilization to it. Barov is proud of his resemblance to the great leader.

Local legends claim that Strahd was struck down by jealous gods who invoked "the curse of Barovia." Neither Kristiana nor Barov know anything of Strahd's true fate and will be amazed if told he walks the land again. Both will see Strahd's return as a good sign, even if they are told Strahd is evil or a vampire. They see him as a tragic figure, and they are inclined to believe that he embraced evil for the good of Barovia, as their legends of the curse bear out.

#### The Curse of Barovia

Barov speaks in haunting tones, telling the legend. Note that Barov claims that the *Icon of Ravenloft* disappeared, too. If the *Icon* was *not* removed from the castle with the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*, then omit the bold line of text in the following passage.

// "Once, the land in which we live was ruled by evil gods of war and death. Under their reign of endless bloodlust, the people struggled through untold years of chaos and carnage that no mortal could control or halt. Against our will, we waged war on our brethren for the pleasure of the evil ones.

"The came the greatest general of all time! Strahd von Zarovich defied the will of the evil gods by taking the land from their grasp. His armies grew in strength and numbers that confounded the gods, and all people flocked to his banner. The general captured the hearts of the conquered as quickly as he captured their weapons, for his legacy was prosperity and peace. The servants of evil were vanquished and the land became whole.

"The great Strahd cared for all the land as if it were a part of him, as if he were the land itself!"

Then Barov's voice lowers so that the rest of the hall cannot hear it. "Yet he paid a price for the nation he stole from chaos, for it is said that, in the midst of one battle of utmost import, General von Zarovich called upon dark powers to aid him against the evil. Strahd used those powers to achieve good, but he brought a curse upon his own family.

"On the day of his fair brother's wedding, a black fog fell upon this castle, and all of its occupants disappeared from the face of the land! Servant-thieves of the evil gods came to the castle in the midst of the chaos and stole the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*, the very heart of our purity, **and the *Icon of Ravenloft*, the source of our strength to oppose evil.**

"There is a prophecy that says all members of the von Zarovich family will fall prey to evil until the *Holy Symbol* is returned to the chapel altar. But the prophecy promises an end to the curse, and the queen tells me that you are the instruments of the gods' wills."//

## The Prophecy

This subject should *not* be brought up if the PCs did not play *From the Shadows*. Kristiana explains that the prophecy says “the thieves will return to the scene of the crime, making right what they once made wrong.” She doesn’t know exactly what it means, but she has been communing with her gods since the beginning of the Grand Conjunction, and she has been told that the PCs would come -- Kristiana tells them that *they* are those thieves.

If the PCs don’t freely tell the story of how they stole the *Holy Symbol*, the queen will try to get them to talk about it. She will assure them that she bears them no ill will for past transgressions, and she will tell them their presence proves that they mean to set things right. By providing her with as much information as possible, she can better aid them. Since the queen has been communing with her gods, she can “hint” at Azalin’s phylactery and other subjects, not knowing the details, but having a general idea of things.

## The Grand Conjunction

Kristiana’s gods have told her they don’t know what’s occurred, but some unknown pocket of evil has been opened by the PCs. The gods tell her it has something to do with a “living skull”. If the PCs have already revealed Azalin’s phylactery, then she believes this is the object to which the gods refer. If the phylactery hasn’t been discussed, Kristiana questions the PCs and prompts them to tell her about it.

By bringing Azalin through the mists to Barovia, the PCs have created a “planar conjunction of some sort,” unleashing an unspeakable amount of evil on the multiverse. The gods have told the queen that they must consider this act a crime of *divine* magnitude and that the mortals who created such havoc must be “appropriately punished.” The PCs have literally earned the wrath of the gods and must act if they hope to save themselves!

The queen believes that the just gods are reserving judgment and giving the PCs a chance to right what they have made wrong. If they fail to act, death will be the *least* of their worries -- **the queen should drive this point home with all the gravity she can muster.**

## The Holy Symbol and the Icon

Kristiana knows the *Holy Symbol* is in the hands of evil, but she has no idea where it is. If the PCs removed the *Icon* from Castle Ravenloft in *From the Shadows*, then it shares the safe fate as the *Holy Symbol*. Otherwise, the *Icon* has mysteriously reappeared with the coming of the Grand Conjunction. This has caused quite a sensation in the castle, and the queen has been communing with her gods to learn the meaning behind its return.

## Madame Yvonna

The Vistani are considered by the residents of Prime Material Barovia to be nothing more than common gypsies. Kristiana knows Madame Yvonna by reputation and is aware that she has some interesting powers, but Yvonna isn’t known to be allied with any evil power.

## Hyskosa’s Hexad

No one knows of Hyskosa or his prophecy, but if the PCs bring it up, Kristiana offers to consult with her gods about it.

## Azalin

The lich has no history in this time frame since he has never appeared in Prime Material Barovia. Barov and Kristiana question the PCs at length about the events of *From the Shadows*, eventually deducing that Azalin is the engineer of the Grand Conjunction and

the possessor of the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon*, if applicable). If the PCs relate the events of *From the Shadows* to them, then the queen is positive that Azalin holds the *Holy Symbol*.

Anebroun knows enough about liches to theorize that Azalin will remain weak and unable to use magic for three days following the animation of a body.

### The Phylactery

Kristiana identifies the phylactery immediately as an object of intense evil. She declares that she will pray to her gods for information about it.

Anebroun asks to examine the object and confirms that extremely powerful magic has been cast upon it. If the PCs haven't cast *dispel magic* on the phylactery and shrunk it down to a small skull, Anebroun does so now, suggesting that it might render the object vulnerable to destruction (it doesn't).

In order to determine how to destroy it, she claims she needs several weeks to experiment with it. Anebroun urgently asks to keep it for study, and she promises to keep it very safe. She also swears that she can discover a method to destroy it, but Kristiana insists that the PCs must bear the phylactery until fortune dictates its fate.

//“But, Your Highness,” insists Anebroun, “my magic is nearly as powerful as that of the lich, if not more so. Who better to keep it safe or to destroy it?”

“The phylactery is bound up in the fate of these people,” responds the queen, gesturing at you. “Let us not be too hasty in our use of it. We must let the gods guide us before we act. Have patience, old one.”

“I must insist on behalf of the king,” responds Anebroun. “I fear this skull is a token of the curse. Please, let me destroy it!”

“Your concern touches me deeply,” says Barov, “but let us wait until the gods have spoken. Perhaps they’ll agree with you.”//

Anebroun reluctantly bows and withdraws. She realizes she must be subtle and not reveal her intense interest in becoming a lich, but it’s difficult to conceal her desire.

### The Chapel

When the king, the queen, and the PCs have exhausted the subjects above, read the following. Once again, omit the bold copy if the *Icon of Ravenloft* was *not* removed from the altar in the chapel.

//Barov frowns and strokes his chin thoughtfully for a moment before saying, “You have brought us many answers, but you have raised even more questions. This Grand Conjunctions may be the doom of Barovia and other worlds as well, yet my queen tells me that all is not yet lost.”

“Quite so,” chimes in Kristiana. “I remain confident in the powers of goodness and light. Whatever evil you may have caused, the gods are willing to wait before passing judgment upon you, so there must be a way to reverse what has occurred.

“We must learn the location of Azalin, for surely he holds the *Holy Symbol and the Icon*. Let us go down to the chapel immediately, and I shall commune with the gods and ask their guidance.”//

The king and queen rise to their feet and descend from the dais. Anebroun, Lynrich, and Thomurray take up customary positions behind their sovereigns. Four of the honor guards march behind the entourage. Kristiana leads the way.

The group proceeds back down the grand staircase, through the hall of faith (Area 5), and into the chapel (Area 6). Kristiana absently points out various paintings, statues, and other items of interest along the way -- she is proud of her royal home. If the party has played *From the Shadows*, then they recognize the surroundings from their visit 385 years ago.

If the PCs ask, no one knows who is the nonhuman in the fresco on the grand staircase. The royal family has always thought it to be one of the evil gods that Strahd overcame.

//Queen Kristiana leads you into a large sanctuary that stretches across the width of the castle. Before you, the pews are arranged into three blocks, forming two aisles that cross the chapel to the altar area.

Kristiana turns to the right and moves toward the aisle on that side of the room. You notice an alcove in the right wall and a huge circular staircase beyond.

"That stairwell climbs the high tower," remarks the queen as she observes you looking that way. "It is 380 feet tall from the tip of the tower to the royal crypt below."

Beautiful stained-glass windows reach to the ceiling behind the altar and cast myriad light and shadows across the raised table. A blood-red cloth covers that altar, and several silver objects rest on its surface.//

Kristiana's reference to the high tower (Area 7) is a significant clue. The players will later need to remember that the stairs lead to the royal crypt. The queen instructs everyone to be seated in the pews near the altar while she ascends and kneels.

On the altar, there are a pair of large silver candlesticks holding thick white candles, a braided silver sash, a silver incense burner, and a book of prayers. If the *Icon* is present, the PCs certainly notice the gleaming statuette of a raven at the center of the altar.

Assuming the *Icon* is present, read the following. Otherwise, skip to the next dialog.

//Kristiana reverently picks up a silver statue of a raven and holds it for all to see. "Behold, the *Icon of Ravenloft* -- lost for three centuries! -- has reappeared beyond all hope. Even the gods know not where it has been!

"This is the symbol of our strength, and I must believe that its return symbolizes a new hope for the von Zarovich line. If we can reunite the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* with the *Icon* here upon the altar of Castle Ravenloft, then perhaps the great evil that plagued our bloodline will fail and we shall rule happily as we have ruled justly!"/>

Skip to this dialogue if the PCs did *not* take the *Icon* in *From the Shadows*.

//The queen says, "Please remain silent now, and I will call upon the gods and beg for their wisdom." She turns and kneels before the altar and begins to pray.

Beyond the stained-glass windows, the skies remain gloomy, casting no light through the colored glass, but the chapel seems to brighten as if the sun has just come out. Kristiana is the source of the light.

The high priestess whispers to herself for several minutes, pausing occasionally to gesture over the altar. Finally, she bows her head, then stands and faces you.

"Blessed be the gods of light," she proclaims, her face radiant with the bliss of divine communication. "They have spoken and sent hope to us all!"

A cloud of wrath darkens her face. "It does not matter what your intentions were -- you have delivered the house of evil from its rightful prison and brought darkness upon the universe. For this offense you are condemned by the gods! If you take no steps to right what you have done, then death will be the *least* of your concerns!"

Kristiana pauses for breath, then says in a more forgiving tone, "There is but one hope for you. You must atone for your wrongdoing and undertake a quest to recover the hope that has been stolen from us. Return to me the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* and the ***Icon of Ravenloft***. The gods have ordained that the Grand Conjunction will collapse if the greatest good is joined with the greatest evil upon the altar. The greatest good is the *Holy Symbol*. The greatest evil the gods identify as the phylactery of the lich, Azalin."

The queen's eyes flash as she pauses and then asks, "Will you consent to this holy mission?"/>

Given the stakes, it's unlikely that the PCs will refuse such a task. If they ask for

payment for completing the task, the queen reminds them of the payment due if they don't succeed.

If they ask how to find Azalin, Kristiana replies, "The gods know not where to find the being who calls himself Azalin, for that is not his true name. But fear not! The phylactery will be your guide, for the lich and his vessel are as closely connected as your own body and spirit." The queen doesn't know exactly how the phylactery will guide them; she has only been told by the gods that this is the case. The PCs have to figure out how to use the skull as a tracking device (see the "Introduction").

Should the PCs volunteer the name of Firan Zal'honan, Kristiana tells them that the gods have already given them all the information they need to complete their task and that it would be unwise to try the gods' patience with repeated communions. "One does not simply contact the gods and question them at leisure, and your standing with them is tenuous enough!" she says. In short, she bids them to carry out their quest with what knowledge they have. (If the PCs have already brought up the name of Firan Zal'honan, the DM should not read the line about the gods not knowing Azalin's true name.)

During this discussion, Anebroun becomes increasingly anxious. When the PCs agree to seek the *Holy Symbol*, read the following.

//Anebroun cries, "Your Highness, I must protest! If these good people use the lich's phylactery to find its owner, he will surely take it from them when they succeed. To allow such a powerful weapon to be put directly into the enemy's hands poses a risk not only to these brave heroes, but to King Barov and all of Barovia!"

The old wizardess kneels before King Barov and pleads with him. "Please, Your Grace. I am nearly as powerful as the lich. With the cause of good on my side, I am even more powerful than he. I *know* I can destroy the phylactery if I'm given enough time to study it. Let me try --"

But the queen interrupts, "Anebroun, while the lich holds the *Holy Symbol*, he is as deadly as he can be. The heroes will have to find a way to keep the phylactery safe, but it is their guide to that which they seek, and they must have it."

Anebroun starts to argue again, but then looks to the king, who shakes his head. She bows grudgingly and steps back.//

The queen commands the PCs to kneel at the altar and receive "the gods' command." This is, in fact, a *quest* spell, requiring the PCs to recover the *Holy Symbol* (and *Icon*) and return them to Castle Ravenloft. When the PCs kneel before Kristiana:

//The queen lights a stick of incense on the altar and whispers a prayer. She turns to you and speaks with a bluish glow in her eyes. "In the names of all the gods of light and purity, I commit you to return the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind and the Icon of Ravenloft* to this place, or breach and die in the quest of it!"

She brings her hands flat together and then spreads them slowly apart, revealing a brilliant sparkle of light floating between them. It burns more and more brightly until you must close your eyes to it or go blind. When you close your eyes, you see a circular medallion with a white crystal at its center as clearly as if it were right in front of you. It is an image of the *Holy Symbol*, glowing like the sun, and it burns indelibly into your minds and remains there.

Suddenly, you feel an overwhelming desire to see the actual item. Any thought other than that of finding it is almost physically sickening to you.//

The king is visibly relieved that the PCs have accepted the quest. He believes that they may break the four-centuries'-old curse and thus allow him a long, happy life, and he promises them a "kingly reward" for their efforts. He moves to the altar, kneels, and begins to pray for the PCs' success.

Meanwhile, Kristiana, Lynrich, and Thomurray offer their services to heal the party of any wounds it has sustained. Clerics are invited to pray at the altar and wizards are allowed to sit and study their grimoires. If anyone wishes, Kristiana will cast a *nap* spell upon them.

If the party needs time for spell memorization, compute the time needed to regain all spell levels and then roll percentile dice, assigning a 5% chance per turn that Inajira appears before the party has finished its work. During this time, the king, the queen, Lynrich, and Thomurray continue to hold a prayer vigil to bless the quest, but Anebroun retires to her chambers.

Enter Inajira

If the party doesn't choose to memorize any spells or if a percentile roll dictates that Inajira has arrived:

//Outside the castle, a storm erupts with a sudden, brilliant flash of light, answered almost immediately with an ear-splitting crack of thunder. Through the tall stained-glass windows, the sky lights up with repeated flashes of light. Another bolt strikes even closer, and the rumbling of a shattered tower rolls down the outer wall.

Behind the thunder echoing through the keep arises a shrill whine. At first you think your ears are just ringing after those lightning bolts, but then it grows louder. Within seconds, the whine grows so painfully loud that you must clamp your hands over your ears and squeeze your eyes tightly shut.//

Tell the players to make a Constitution check for their characters. Those who fail their rolls fall to their knees in pain and are disoriented for 1d4 rounds. Even those who succeed cannot cast spells or perform any action involving their hands for one round. If they attempt to move, their MV is 3. At the DM's option, a Dexterity check can be required, with a penalty of -4, for each 10 feet of movement (accounting for obstacles that the PC may trip over -- 1d6 damage for falling). After this situation is resolved, read the following.

//Almost as quickly as the piercing drone went up, it turns ragged and lowers until it sounds like the vicious snarl of a mad dog. The volume tapers off, and you realize that it is coming from within the room!

Up at the altar, next to King Barov, stands a beast with the body of a large man and the head of a black-eyed jackal, surrounded in a shimmering glow.

Without warning, the monster seizes the king, lifts him bodily off the ground, and growls, "Over three centuries have I looked for you, but I knew you would return here! Where is the book, Strahd von Zarovich! Where is my book, oath breaker!"

King Barov, too shocked to react, merely looks your way with a glassy expression, his legs swinging helplessly back and forth about a foot off the ground. Kristiana screams.

The monster roars with a voice that shakes the walls, "I'll drag you back to Gehenna and you'll answer my masters there!" it snarls and then the beast sinks its long, pointed teeth into the king's neck. Barov's eyes roll up and his legs go limp as his blue tunic stains purple with blood.//

If necessary, instruct the players to make fear and horror checks. Kristiana, Anebroun, Lynrich, and Thomurray automatically fail their checks at the sight of their king being brutally murdered; they stand in shock. The four elite guards run in a panic, crying, "Murder, murder, the king is dead!"

Have all the players who are able to do so declare their next action and roll for initiative. Inajira flies up into the ceiling with his prey and virtually ignores all attacks made upon him, concentrating on his grip on Barov's throat.

Allow the PCs to take their round of actions. Note that yugoloths are naturally magic resistant (60%), but the DM can choose to make any significantly damaging PC-casted spells automatically fail.

When Inajira's initiative comes up, he releases his grip on Barov's throat and places his hand a few inches from the king's mouth, as if he would catch something that the king spat out. Barov's mouth falls open and a whitish mist pours forth into the fiend's hand.

Roll for the next round of initiative. Inajira's action in this round is to drop Barov's



body and roar again with fury. All characters in the room must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be forced to clamp their hands over their ears again. Those who fail their rolls and haven't yet taken their action for the round are unable to do so. This roar also interrupts and wastes the spells of those who fail their saving throws while in the process of casting.

"Not Strahd!" Inajira cries. "A counterfeit!" Then he looks at Kristiana and says, "But *you're* no counterfeit!" and he descends to her. Tell the PCs that the sound of many running feet approaches from down the Hall of Faith -- the castle guard is coming -- but the chapel doors slam shut before the reinforcements can arrive, and they pound helplessly on the door.

Roll for initiative again. Lynrich attempts to step between their queen and the yugoloth as he approaches her, but Inajira shoves the priest aside and seizes Kristiana. The priest literally flies through the air and smashes into a wall. Inajira continues to ignore all PC attacks.

Roll once more for initiative. When Inajira's action comes up, he looks toward the PCs, bares his teeth, and gates in two other yugoloths -- dergholoths in particular (see below). Inajira then flies through the stained-glass window with Kristiana and out of sight. If any of the PCs have the means and intent to follow them, Inajira invokes his innate *teleport without error* ability and disappears with a sadistic wink and a laugh at the PCs.

Inajira cast a *globe of invulnerability* on himself before entering, so he should be nearly impossible to hurt significantly in this battle, and it is fortunate for the PCs that he isn't interested in them at this point. However, should the PCs manage to deprive him of 50% or more of his hit-point total before he completes the above tasks, he will use one action to immediately gate in the dergholoths and command them to attack the PCs. Then he continues with his other actions.

Inajira's stats are listed in the NPC summary, and detailed information concerning his species is profiled on page . For full information regarding the dergholoth, the DM should consult the *Outer Planes* appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™, but the data below is sufficient for the purposes of this battle. Dergholoths carry no weapons, attacking instead with each of their five stubby, four-clawed hands. If the first two claw attacks hit, the opponent has been grabbed and the fiend receives a +2 bonus to successive attack rolls to that character; a one-half Strength check is required to break free.

Dergholoths (2): Int low; AC -3 (see below); MV 12; HD 8+16; hp 51; THACO 13; # AT 5; Dmg (1d4+8)x5; SA see below; SD +1 or better weapon needed to hit; SZ L; ML 14; MR 40%; AL NE; XP 25,500 each.

Dergholoths may use the following spell-like abilities at will: *alter self*, *cause disease* (reverse of *cure disease*), *charm person*, *darkness*, *15' radius*, *fear*, *improved phantasmal force*, *produce flame*, *sleep* (twice per day), and *teleport without error*.

Enter Strahd

No sooner does Inajira fly off with Kristiana than Strahd emerges from the large stairwell (Are 7). PCs who inquire about where he exactly came from may make an Intelligence check to determine that Strahd came *up* the steps. Instruct the PCs to make fear checks upon seeing him, with -2 penalties if Strahd battled with them at the start of this adventure and -4 penalties if he inflicted damage equal to 50% or more of their hit-point totals. (See the NPC summary for Strahd's stats.)

It will probably surprise the PCs, but Strahd attacks the dergholoths, screaming with rage as he does so. "Inajira! Come back, you coward, you worthless fiend!"

If any of the PCs attacks Strahd, he cries out, "Damn you, help me destroy these things before they call for more of their kind!" and then continues his attacks. Should the PCs persist in their attacks upon Strahd, he changes to bat form and flies out the window. Otherwise, he continues to fight until one of the dergholoths is destroyed and the other is within a hit or two of dying as well.

At that point, Strahd tells the group, "Finish it! I'll go after the queen!" He assumes bat form and flies out the window.

As the PCs finish off the last dergholoth, the castle guards break through the door. Twenty of them burst into the room, stare aghast at the king's body on the floor, and then look accusingly at the PCs and raise their weapons. Instruct the players to declare their next actions and make initiative rolls. If they attack the guards, they have to fight their way out of the castle. They encounter 1d10+10 more guards in the Hall of Faith (Area 5), 1d4+10 more guards in the entry hall (Area 2), and they are fired upon by 12 archers as they cross the courtyard and until they move out of range.

Elite guards, 8th-level fighters: Int avg(9); AC 2; MV 6; hp 65; THACO 13; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 15; MR nil; AL LG; XP 700 each.

Archers, 5th-level fighters: Int avg (8); AC 5 (chain); MV 9; hp 45; THACO 13 (with long bow); # AT 2/1; Dmg 1d8 (shear arrows); SA none; SD none; SZ M; ML 11; MR nil; AL LG; XP 300 each.

If the PCs attempt to reason with the guards, they are ordered to throw down their weapons before they are listened to. Thomurray can confirm their innocence, but he is incoherent until any form of emotion-controlling spell is cast upon him. After all, he has seen his king brutally slaughtered, his beloved queen taken by a monster, and then Strahd (who appears to be the king) appear on the scene. This would be too much for almost anyone. If none of the PCs can supply the spell, Anebroun appears and uses magic to calm him down and get the story out of him.

If Thomurray has recovered and absolved the PCs, read the following text.

//Anebroun kneels beside the lifeless form of King Barov and kisses his limp hand. "The curse of Barovia claims another royal spirit," she says quietly. Then she turns to you. "The *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* cannot help my king now. Why not give me the phylactery and let me destroy it?"

"No!" answers Thomurray. "Why do you ignore the words of the queen, Anebroun? The heroes *must* complete their quest if any good is to come of this travesty." The priest turns to you. "I will come with you, if you like, and help shield the phylactery from the lich with whatever means I possess. For the sake of the queen, will you accept my aid?"//

Thomurray's intentions are pure. If the group considers surrendering the phylactery to Anebroun, remind the PCs that the desire to see and touch the *Holy Symbol* burns in their hearts and minds and that the phylactery seems to be their only means of finding it.

// "All right," says Anebroun. "The queen's will be done! But you walk into great danger holding a still more dangerous prize. Thomurray's assistance will be invaluable to you, and so will mine. I will help you seek the lich and take the *Holy Symbol* from his withered hand! May the gods protect us better than they have the king and queen."//

If the PCs refuse the help of Thomurray, the priest throws himself at their feet and begs them to let him take part in the rescue of his beloved queen. He simply won't take "no" for an answer. Do anything within character to convince the PCs to take him along. In the end, if they absolutely refuse, the DM will have to make adjustments in the text to account for Thomurray's absence; the adventure is playable without him.

Anebroun also insists on accompanying the party. If the PCs reject her company, she argues more logically that they could use a powerful wizard when going to face a lich. Again, in the character of the wizardess the DM should convince the PCs that they take her along for protection. If the PCs are adamant about rejecting her, Anebroun will eventually shake her head and say, "Such headstrong and foolish heroes! If all the glory must be yours, then go! I only hope that Barovia may be salvaged if you fail." With that, she storms out of the room.

Remind the group again how much time they have before Azalin regains his spells.

# Back to Vallaki

Now that the PCs know Azalin's phylactery is the key to finding the lich, they should have little trouble figuring out how the tracking feature works (see the "Introduction"). The lich is no longer on the move, so the eyes glow steadily if the PCs hold it still when the skull points westward, back toward Vallaki.

The incidence of minor conjunctions is on the rise. Once the PCs are outside the gates of Barovia, the chance of a conjunction is 75% per hour.

The little ghost girl has been waiting for the party to emerge from the castle so she can follow them again, and she looks worse than ever. She appears to bleed from the mouth, eyes, and fingernails now, and she's becoming very bony. She isn't as giggly as when they first encountered her; rather, she stares morosely at them now and moans pitifully. The DM may call for horror checks at the first sight of her in this condition.

## Shadows in the Shadows

When the PCs leave Castle Ravenloft, read the following.

//The forest seems darker than ever. Everything you hear sounds unnatural -- and unnaturally loud -- as you move into the trees. The shadows themselves seem to shift and watch you as you slip through the woods. The mists floating through the trees form into faces in the dark recesses, but the faces twist and disappear when you look for them.

The gates of Ravenloft open as you approach. Once past the gates and on the road, you occasionally hear panting coming from the woods, and the snap of a twig now and then.//

Strahd's carriage is gone when the PCs emerge from the castle, but Strahd's **dire wolves** (MC I/II) are shadowing the party again. As stated in the last encounter section, they don't attack the party unless one of the PCs wanders more than 100 feet from the rest of the group, at which time 1d6 dire wolves move in to attack. Of course, the beasts make group morale checks (10) every round as soon as one of them is hit or if other PCs come to the rescue.

If Anebroun has been prohibited from coming along, she *polymorphs* herself into a small bird and follows the PCs. Even if *detect invisibility* or *true seeing* is invoked, affected characters still have only a 5% chance to spot Anebroun; she is actively seeking to remain unseen.

Thomurray mostly prays along the way. He's friendly enough, but a bit stuffy. The priest is used to court life, and he hasn't been on a "mission" since he was a young man. He calls each adventurer "young man" or "young lady" with a slight bow of the head. His favorite subject is, of course, Queen Kristiana. He frets over her fate constantly; in fact, he's almost jealous of Lynrich, who died protecting her.

The DM should play this NPC as ultra-lawful good and a bit eccentric. The gods have defined a mission for the group, through the lips of Thomurray's beloved queen, and he endures sidetracks with strenuous protest. Otherwise, he is as helpful as the PCs could want. The DM should do as much as possible to make the group like Thomurray. When trouble arises, he should be the first into the fray. If a PC gets into trouble, Thomurray should charge to the rescue. The DM might even cheat on some of the priest's dice rolls, to make him look very powerful and even indispensable to the group. If the adventurers come to like and respect this character, it will be all the more shocking when he's killed before their eyes in the next encounter section.

Thomurray and Anebroun know the geography of Barovia very well, so they can identify any location on the area map.

## Svalich Pass

Here the PCs have an encounter with both Inajira and Strahd von Zarovich. Inajira

appears and seeks the PCs' aid in recovering his *Book of Keeping* from a vault in the family crypt at Castle Ravenloft. Then Strahd appears and begs for the PCs' aid. Since both beings' coincide with the PCs' quest to recover the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon*), they'll have little cause to deny either one, and they'll learn some valuable information in the process.

As the PCs approach Svalich Pass, read the following text.

//The skies have been gray and misty since you arrived in Barovia. It seems the sun never shines in this country, but you can't help feeling that you're to blame for the disappearance of light from the skies. Unless you locate the *Holy Symbol* (and the *Icon*), you may never see the sun again.

You reach Svalich Pass, which lies at the top of a dozen switchbacks on the east side of the divide and sweeps down into fog-choked valleys on the west side. At the summit, the road crests over a wide hump surrounded by barren, stony crags that fall off to the north and rise in sheer cliffs toward Mount Ghakis in the south. On a clear day, the view might be long and beautiful, but now the vista is lost in mist-washed shadow.

A storm brews over Mount Ghakis, sending an ominous rumble down the slopes toward you like an avalanche of sound. Your skin begins to prickle and the hair on the back of your neck stands up. The rumbling from the south is growing louder, closer. Eerily, the ground begins to soften and shake below your feet. Through the thick fog, the gigantic boulders above you seem to be shifting. A lamentable groaning begins to whisper, then rises to a shriek. Something evil is about to happen...//

A *major* conjunction is taking place: Around the PCs, boulders split open, releasing ten **heucuva**, eight **mummies**, three **spectres**, and a **groaning spirit** (MC I/II, all).

Furthermore, the conjunction has caused the mountain to *soften* as two planes intersect, so the adventurers' feet sink about 3 inches into the ground. Movement rates are reduced to 3 for two rounds until the gate shuts and the ground firms again. At that time, players must save vs. paralyzation; failure indicates that the ground hardens too suddenly and catches them right where they are.

The monsters close in on the PCs from all directions. Recall that all undead are turned as liches when Azalin's phylactery is present. However, these creatures aren't Azalin's minions, so they don't receive the gaze attack that lich minions employ. After five rounds of fighting have elapsed (three if the PCs are doing well), read the following.

//Overhead, there's a sudden, blinding flash of lightning and an earth-shaking crash of thunder. The very air appears to rip in two, and black smoke billows out of the gray mist above you. The dark cloud rumbles and sparks as if it would rain ebony tears on your head, but then it floats down to the ground nearby and clears away. Standing in its place is the beast that murdered King Barov -- Inajira!

One of the skeletal warriors breaks off from the battle and charges the beast-man, but when it moves to within 10 feet of Inajira, the skeleton falls lifeless. The yugoloth looks at it and snickers, then inhales deeply and howls so loudly that the ground shakes again. When his howls end, all the monsters around you lie quietly on the ground.

Then he looks at you and says, "Pause a moment, brave and sweet adventurers...pause and have speaks with this humble servant of puissant and prosperous masters."//

His voice is alluring and musical; he's trying to *charm* the party. Even if they succeed their saving throws, tell them, "The creature seems to genuinely want to be your friend." To those who fail their rolls, say, "You are able to look behind the words of this creature, and you can tell that he speaks in earnest."

Inajira has come to negotiate with the PCs. He, like both Azalin and Strahd, cannot touch the *Holy Symbol*, so he needs them to do his work for him. His attempt to *charm* is only meant to smooth the way for him.

Thomurray is appalled at the appearance of the monster who killed his king and kidnapped his beloved queen. He immediately attacks Inajira, cursing him vehemently. Inajira uses his *teleport without error* ability and moves behind the party, where he says,

"You must believe me, I come to parlay."

Anebroun (if present) doesn't trust him either. "This is a creature from the most evil of the lower planes of existence," she warns. "Trust him not!"

If the PCs attempt to attack him, too, he continues to dodge and speak courteously until they agree to talk to him. Thomurray must be all but physically restrained.

When peace is restored, read the following.

//The creature puts a hand to his chest and says, "My sincere apologies for our rude acquaintance at our last meeting, but I think you'll find it in your hearts to pity me if you'll only listen to my story. I am not here in Barovia by my own choice, nor have I taken the good queen into my custody with relish -- doubt it not!

"I have been enslaved and ruined by the beast called Strahd von Zarovich, and I am made an exile from my beloved homeland by his cruelty. Surely noble and good people such as yourselves cannot be friends of his! Won't you hear my story?"//

Inajira does what he can within reason to convince the PCs of his good will.

Thomurray (and Anebroun) remains distrustful. When able to, the yugoloth tells his story.

//"I am a creature that negotiates contracts for others who would only come to blows during mediation, so you see I am a bringer of peace. As I must deal with beings on several planes, the contracts I forge are highly magical. Such documents are entered into a tome called a *Book of Keeping*, which makes them legal and binding on all planes of the multiverse.

"Nearly four of your centuries ago, I was called upon to negotiate a pact between one of my masters and the human called Strahd von Zarovich -- I did my duty, but I was betrayed. Strahd von Zarovich took my book under the pretense of signing it, and then he locked it in a vault that I cannot penetrate, promising to return it only when the terms of the contract were honored. Then, when Strahd von Zarovich became lord of Barovia, he disappeared from the face of the multiverse -- and with my book!

"You must understand, this book contains all the words that define my very being. All that I am, all that my peers and the gods perceive me to be, is judged by the contents of my *Book of Keeping*. Without it, I can never go home unless it be to embrace eternal humiliation and persecution.

"Now, finally, the oath breaker has resurfaced, and I mean to take both him and my book back to my home!

"Hence, I turn to you, noble ones. Will you help me? Can we help one another?"//

The DM can answer any PC questions based on the Roots of Evil section in the "Introduction" and the yugoloth entry (p. ). Inajira is proud, so he portrays himself as someone who keeps the peace on the lower planes, rather than a creature who plays both sides against the other. He won't divulge any more weaknesses than he has to -- admitting the importance of the *Book of Keeping* to mere mortals is painful enough.

Call for Wisdom checks and inform those who succeed that the wolves who have been shadowing the party have suddenly left.

If the PCs don't ask what's become of Kristiana, Inajira responds as apologetically as possible.

//"You must not think badly of me for abducting her. I'm quite desperate -- through no fault of my own! I only wish to conduct business with reasonable certainty that both parties will deal in good faith. Without my book, I have no means of guaranteeing that *any* agreement will be honored. But Queen Kristiana is safe with me, rest assured.

"I propose an exchange between us. When you recover my *Book of Keeping*, I will come to you with the queen. What say you?"//

If the PCs ask where to find the *Book of Keeping*, read the following.

//"My book lies somewhere in the crypt below Castle Ravenloft, in a vault with no

name upon it. Within that vault lies a box with a lock that can only be opened by that thing which you call the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*. This object is blinding to me, and when I try to see where it lies, I'm burned by its brightness. To think of it is torture, yet I think of little else!

"To the person who recovers my *Book*, I will be *most grateful!*"//

If the PCs ask Inajira to help them recover the *Holy Symbol*, read the following text.

// "I'm afraid I must return to the queen's side. I've left her with some -- servants -- and it's quite difficult to get good help where I come from. Frankly, she needs my constant protection more than you do, but I can help you in another way...."//

This confession enrages Thomurray, who attacks Inajira again, crying, "Fly to her side, *fiend!* You're unfit to guard her dogs, but if you fail her I will personally send you to your masters, and let them do what they will!"

Inajira, in turn, is insulted. He growls viciously and uses his innate ability to put *fear* into the group. Thomurray automatically fails his save and flees, hiding behind a nearby rock. Have the PCs save vs. spell to avoid the same reaction. To those who succeed, Inajira asks, "Do you want my aid or not?"

With assurances that the PCs will cooperate, he continues.

// "If you seek to strike a blow against a lich, then you must know that knowledge is the key to success. A little knowledge of a little thing can prove to be the downfall of a lich.

"What is it that a lich hides from all the world, a thing more sacrosanct than even its phylactery? Puzzle that out, and you will have a weapon of great power."//

Azalin's secret is his true name, Firan Zal'honan, which the PCs may know if they played *From the Shadows*. Let them figure that Azalin's true name is the key, even if they can't remember exactly what it was. If they get that far, the DM may call for an Intelligence check to recall it.

Enter Strahd

When the PCs and Inajira have concluded their business, read the following.

// Inajira says, "If all goes well, I shall soon be gone! Be strong and resolute, and beware of Strahd von Zarovich. And move quickly! Until that book is in my hands, we are all at his mercy, but once you return it to me --"

"You would destroy them, Inajira," claims a voice off to the left. It is Strahd!

"Kill him," screams Inajira, "or we're lost!"

"No!" counters Strahd, his hand forming a fist. "I am the only one who can save us all! Together we must destroy that fiend from the lower planes!"//

Three Actions are outlined below. All result in Strahd being severely wounded, at which point the next text should be read. In any event, if Anebroun was not invited along, she swoops down from the trees and takes her natural form. In any event, she cries out, "Strahd is our ally, worthy heroes! Destroy the fiend!"

*Action 1:* If the PCs attack the yugoloth, then Strahd, Anebroun, and Thomurray join them. (See the NPC summary for stats.) Inajira concentrates his attack exclusively upon Strahd, ignoring the PCs. He's invoked a *globe of invulnerability* before showing up, so he should be able to withstand a great deal of punishment. The DM should manipulate the battle so that Strahd is hurt very badly, very quickly by the fiend. When the vampire is close to 0 hit points, read the next text.

*Action 2:* If the PCs attack Strahd, Inajira joins them, but Anebroun insists, "Wait! The fiend is our enemy! Don't be fooled by him!" Strahd directs his attacks at Inajira, and so does Anebroun. When Strahd is badly hurt, read the following text.

*Action 3:* If the PCs do nothing, Inajira attacks Strahd, wounding him seriously. Anebroun attacks Inajira, but she's unable to hurt him significantly. When Strahd has taken severe damage:

//Strahd's body doesn't bleed, but it's badly broken by the intense battle. His left arm is snapped in two places, and his clothing is parted by deep cuts that sliced into skin, too. Fear replaces his normal expression of authority as Inajira continues to thrash at him mercilessly. Finally, the vampire lord falls back to the ground and Inajira towers over him. The fiend roars in victory, shaking the ground beneath your feet. He bares his terrible teeth and then gleefully crouches over Strahd, preparing to crush Strahd's throat.

With a last, feeble breath, Strahd blurts out a strange word, "*Arcanalothatum!*" Inajira freezes, then begins to shake violently. The fiend howls in agony and falls to his knees as a shimmering light engulfs him. The illumination brightens to a blinding flash, and then he is gone.//

If the PCs attempt to finish him off, Strahd takes gaseous form. A *gust of wind* spell reduces him to 0 hit points and teleports him back to his coffin under Castle Ravenloft. If this is the case, then the following text must be postponed until just before the PCs reach Vallaki, when Strahd will intercept them and continue the encounter.

If the PCs do not attack Strahd (Anebroun will plead for this), Strahd produces a *potion of healing* and drinks it before continuing.

//"I know we've crossed swords in the past," says Strahd, "but we must put aside our differences, for now our causes are linked."

"Listen to him," says Anebroun. "Remember, he came to our aid at the castle, and we are strong enough to defeat him now if he attempts some treachery. Let us hear what he has to say!"

"I mean you no harm," promises the vampire. "In fact, I want only to help you complete your quest. We must reverse the Grand Conjunction. I must return to the place where I reign unchallenged, and Azalin must be sent back to where he belongs. Indeed, you have released many lords from the land of the mists, and even now they are wreaking terror upon many worlds."//

This is another encounter where the PCs should take the lead in asking questions. The DM should be prepared to take the queries in whatever order they're broached. Likely questions are posed below.

### **Why are you helping us?**

"In the land of the mists, I am lord over all I survey, but here in the...real world, I am vulnerable, as you can see." Strahd gestures at his wounds. "Sooner or later, Inajira will return, and his wrath will be bent upon all of us. We must join forces to defeat him."

*The truth:* Strahd wants the PCs to bring the holy relics to him so he can destroy them. He also wants the PCs to travel to the past and fulfill Hyskosa's Hexad, assuring the integrity of the Grand Conjunction.

### **Why should we help you?**

"Because I'm the only thing that stands between you and the wrath of Azalin. When he's finished his preparations, he'll come for all of us. Here Azalin may be more powerful than I am, so we must join together to defeat him."

### **How did you defeat Inajira?**

"I was forced to use his word of banishment upon him. Unfortunately, it only works once. As I have said, he'll be back."

### **Where is the *Book of Keeping*?**

"It's safely locked in a vault in my family crypt, below Castle Ravenloft. If you retrieve the *Holy Symbol (and the Icon)* from Azalin and bring it to the castle, I'll take you



to the vault. We'll retrieve the book and then force Inajira to return the queen to us. He'll comply -- that book means everything to him."

#### **Why don't you help us assail Azalin?**

"We need his cooperation, and my presence will only inspire the opposite in Azalin."  
This statement is true, but Strahd has plans for other things while the PCs are busy.

#### **What do we need Azalin's cooperation for?**

"To send you back in time to change history, as the lich has already done once, and to set things right again. That's the only solution, the only way to stop the Grand Conjunction."

This is a partial lie; changing history will set things right *for Strahd*. PCs who cast *detect lie* will get mixed signals from this statement and be unable to tell if Strahd is lying or not.

#### **How do we get Azalin to cooperate?**

"Tell him that I've taught you how to hide his phylactery forever -- that ought to get his attention. Then demand the *Holy Symbol (and the Icon)* of him in return for the secret of its location. He'll agree because he thinks that he can take the holy relics back after he has his phylactery. He's right, but he'll depend upon your noble innocence to blind you to that.

"The demand that he send you back in time as well. Tell him you wish to kill me while I'm still human -- he'll like that a lot."

#### **What are we to do in the past?**

"You cannot go back to the eve of my brother's wedding and prevent the *Holy Symbol* from leaving the castle. Azalin will never agree to that. Instead, you must return to the day I struck my pact with Inajira and disrupt our bargain. Hopefully, this will accomplish two objectives: First, if the pact is never made, then Inajira will have no claim upon me. Second, it will fulfill the fifth verse of Hyskosa's Hexad, completing the prophecy out of order and causing the Grand Conjunction to collapse.

"With good luck, when you return to the present, Azalin and I will be back where we belong and you'll remain here, in the 'real' world. Or, perhaps, I'll be long dead, for the fiend's pact helped make me what I am."

#### **How do we prevent the pact from being sealed?**

"You've heard me use Inajira's word of banishment: 'Arcanalothatum.' Although it works only once, I will not have used it yet in the past, so Inajira will be vulnerable to it.

"You must use it in his direct presence -- it isn't enough to shout it within earshot. And this may be difficult, for I posted guard around my tent when I conducted business with the fiend."

#### **What happened in the past?**

"It's a long story, but I will tell you some of it. When I was a human general fighting for the freedom of Barovia, I...I suffered from moments of self-doubt. One night, before a particularly hopeless battle, a conjurer came to me with the *Book of Keeping* and told me that I could achieve easy victory with it. Foolishly, I agreed to use the book. Inajira came, and I agreed to serve his masters if they would grant me the throne of Barovia.

"Later, when I was king, I renounced the pact. Inajira would have come for me, but I escaped to the land of the mists, which is hidden even from the eyes of the gods, so the fiend could never find me.

"Now, I wish to return to my home or be dead and gone, but I do not want my spirit to fall into the hands of that fiend!"

#### **How do we shield the phylactery?**

"You can't, really -- not for long, anyway. But a good bluff is better than nothing,

and you can make the phylactery disappear from his senses with the help of the wizardess." He points at Anebroun. "Her power is nearly equal to that of Azalin. I have a scroll that contains a spell that I cannot cast, but that she can. When she reads the scroll and touches the phylactery, it will be placed into a magical pocket far below the surface of the earth. To Azalin's senses, it will have disappeared.

"However, since he will not abruptly die, he will know that it still exists somewhere, and he will eventually find it. Hopefully, you'll have fulfilled your mission before that happens.

Strahd gives the scroll to Anebroun, who reads it quietly to identify it. "Ahh, excellent spell," she concludes. "I believe it will work."

When the PCs have asked for and received all important information:

//Strahd looks you over with the air of a commander sending his troops to battle. "I'm confident in your ability to accomplish this mission," he says.

"To find me in the past, concentrate upon Inajira and the lands that surround Castle Ravenloft. There is only one point in time when those two things intersect, and that thought will carry you to that point."

Strahd looks around him, at the mist that hides the world from view, and then says, "When you return from the past, I expect you will see the sun again. Azalin and I will either be back in the shadowlands, or altogether gone. Queen Kristiana and King Barov will again sit on their thrones, for none of this will have happened. And you will be free of the curse that's been laid upon your shoulders.

"Good luck! I must return to the castle. I'm weary and the daylight is taxing me."  
The vampire changes into a bat and flies off.//

Using Azalin's phylactery, the PCs will find their way to Vallaki and then to the cemetery. The DM should continue to check for minor conjunctions as they proceed (80% chance per hour).

# Azalin's Crypt-Lair

Azalin's crypt-lair consists of numerous rooms on three levels and should be run as a typical dungeon crawl. Of course, the DM should maintain the feel of impending doom throughout the encounter.

The little ghost girl makes a brief appearance before the party descends into the lair. She peeks at them from behind a nearby tombstone. She definitely won't follow them into the lair. By this time, her skin looks patchy and wrinkled, her eyes dim, and her hair looks dry and brittle.

Even though Azalin arrived in Prime Material Barovia with the PCs, his minions have actually been at work for nearly four centuries. In *From the Shadows*, the woman who met the PCs outside of Castle Ravenloft (on the night they removed the *Holy Symbol* from the premises, 385 years in the past) was one of Azalin's many recruits. Thus, the lair was waiting when Azalin arrived in Prime Material Barovia. Centuries later, when Azalin met the PCs in battle at Nevuchar Springs, he had a small army of minions hidden in the woods, carrying many *furnishings* for his new home. As the PCs took his phylactery into the mists, the minions followed. Then, when Azalin took possession of a body and fled the PCs at the start of this adventure, he went straight to a rendezvous with those minions and led them to the prepared crypt.

## Arrival on the Scene

There's no sign of Lucian (see the "Vallaki" section, Area 4) when the PCs arrive. Most of the graveyard is now unearthed from the bottom up, but a few graves remain intact, and the DM may opt to introduce 1d6+5 **Strahd zombies** (RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set) before the party enters the mausoleum. The eyes of the phylactery burn furiously as the characters approach the building.

All undead in the lair are turned as a lich because they're on Azalin's home turf. Also, all undead have glowing eyes, prompting fear checks at the beginning of each round for all PCs who look at them. It's possible to avoid a check by not looking into the eyes of a minion, but the PC must declare such an intent. Even then there's a 20% chance of catching the minion's eye. Attack rolls from PCs avoiding eye contact are made with -2 penalties.

## Azalin's Condition

When the PCs reach the doors of the crypt, they should be reminded of how much time has passed since Azalin took possession of a new body. In truth, it doesn't matter whether the so-called "three-day deadline" has expired; Azalin will be completely ready for the PCs when they find him. Reminding the adventurers of the deadline puts pressure on them if they're running out of time and puts fear into them if time has already run out.

Normally, a lich would be required to rest three days following the inhabitation, but Azalin has gained significant knowledge even though he was unable to gain any more power in Ravenloft. When Azalin escaped the demiplane of dread, he experienced a mind-boggling power rush that restored him to full potency after a few hours of disorientation. In game terms, he regained his full spell repertoire almost immediately.

The disappearance of the phylactery with Anebroun's scroll will puzzle Azalin, but he knows it must be safe (or he'd be dead). The lich understands the PCs will try to bring his phylactery together with the holy relics on the altar at Castle Ravenloft. He also knows Strahd will try to intercept them. Therefore, Azalin will allow the PCs to "kill" his body, which will place his spirit back into the phylactery (see the "Back to Castle Ravenloft"). When Strahd confronts the PCs, Azalin plans to attempt to take possession of Strahd's body and entrap the vampire lord in his phylactery. Then Azalin will kill the PCs using any means necessary and he will destroy the holy relics, forever locking open the gates of Ravenloft.

## Level 1

There's a 5% chance per hour of a minor conjunction occurring anywhere in the lair, but if the PCs attempt to rest anywhere other than Area 16 on Level 2, assign a 1-in-6 chance per turn for a minor conjunction (wandering monster).

The mausoleum confronting the PCs stands 15 feet high, 30 feet across, and 20 feet deep. Weather and time have taken their toll upon the crypt, wearing hard corners into smooth curves.

### 1. Crypt Door

The door is locked, but the lock is a simple one, earning a rogue character a +20% bonus to the chance of picking it.

### 2. Entry Room & Stairs

This area serves as a shelter for the stairs that lead to the crypt below. The walls of the entry room bear many names, apparently of those who are buried here. There are 18 names in all, and none are familiar to the PCs. At the apex of the archway over the steps is a plaque that bears words you can barely make out: "In Darkness the Light Is Ever Brighter."

The stairway, directly across from the entrance, stretches 30 feet down into darkness. There are unlit torches flanking the archway of the stairway. The area is quite dusty, and there are many sets of footprints on the floor. Most are humanoid, but some are unidentifiable.

The stairs are made of stone. Along the walls are bronze railings, designed to support a coffin, set a foot above the steps. There are also several leather straps and a large harness on the first stair, probably to support caskets as they are lowered down the stairs.

When the PCs shine a light down the steps, Lucian climbs up the steps to attack. He's a **ghast** (MC I/II) now, partially devoured by other undead before he became one himself. If the PCs met him in the "Vallaki" section and don't respond appropriately to the sight, have them roll horror checks with -2 penalties at the horrible sight of their old acquaintance.

### 3. Crypt Inner Door

This double door is made of bronze and is 6 feet high and wide. The lock has two keyholes; one in each door, requiring different keys. The hinges are on the other side of the door. Assess a -30% penalty to lock-picking attempts. Two successful bend bars/lift gates rolls will buckle the door sufficiently to force it open. If one lock is picked, then only one bend bars/lift gates roll is required to open the doors.

### 4. Children's Crypt Room

Seven child-sized stone caskets are here. The name of each child is carved at the foot of the caskets -- none are familiar, except that they appear among the names in the entry room.

If any of the coffins is disturbed, the pitiful cry of an infant rises from the caskets, prompting a horror check with a -2 penalty. The effect is merely an audible illusion placed in the room by Azalin, designed to scare anyone who intrudes upon his lair. The crying ceases when all characters leave the room. There's nothing of value in any of the caskets.

### 5 & 6. Crypt Rooms

There are a few wooden caskets here that have been built with exceptional expense and care, but there's nothing particularly special about anyone buried in these two rooms. At the DM's option, any inhabitant of the caskets may rise as a **Strahd zombie** (RAVENLOFTÆ boxed set) and attack the group.

### 7. Haunted Crypt Room

Upon entering this area which holds seven stone tombs, a tremendous cold washes over the party. Torches burn brighter, yet the heat they provide shrinks away. There's a

smoky odor in the air that carries a hint of incense. When the PCs enter, read the next text.

//A grinding sound from the end of the room draws your attention, where the lid of the stone casket against the north wall rises slowly before your eyes. When it has opened just a crack, a mist pours from the slit and assumes the shape of an elderly man in priestly robes. His form is gray and smoky, but his piercing red eyes seem quite real.//

Instruct the PCs to make a fear check in response to the eyes, then allow those who successfully save to react. If they attack, roll for initiative and proceed with a battle. The creature is a **ghost** (MC I/II). If the PCs wait or try to speak to the ghost, read the following.

//The ghost's mouth opens and silky words float to your ears. Deep syllables echo in the air as he says, "Give order to the prophecy and the door will be open to you." He dissipates and the coffin lid closes.//

If the PCs open the coffin, the ghost reforms and attacks. If they defeat it, they find the dusty skeleton of a human in priest's robes inside the coffin. Also present is a flat stone about 4 inches in diameter, with intricate writing on its surface. It is a *periapt of foul rotting*.

#### 8. Hall of the Prophecy

This area lies behind a solid wall. It isn't a secret door -- there's no hidden latch to open it. The PCs must break through the wall. The phylactery's eyes burn red hot when pointed toward Area 8.

When the wall is broken down, read the following.

//A moldy stench issues into the room from the chamber beyond. Pure evil within radiates outward and presses like cold hands against your throat. Through the thick dust of broken mortar, a cheerless blue-green firelight burns on the other side of the wall, daring you to enter....

Thomurray looks at all of you. "As the queen said, the phylactery has led us to the lich's den. Now we must conceal the cursed item until the lich meets our demands."

Anebroun says, "I'll read the scroll now. To take it any further is to put the phylactery into the lich's hands. Hold it before me."//

If the PCs refuse to let Anebroun have the skull, she stays with the group until a chance arises to ambush the character carrying the item. Then she takes it and *teleports* out of the lair.

If they resist giving up the skull, both Thomurray and Anebroun try to convince the PCs that taking the phylactery into Azalin's lair is as foolish an idea as one can have.

Read the following if and when the PCs hold out the phylactery for Anebroun.

//Anebroun unrolls the scroll and utters complex words that blur in your ears, sounds too difficult to understand. With a spark, the scroll disappears in a puff of white smoke, leaving a perceptible glow on Anebroun's hands. Quickly, she touches the skull and it disappears with another flash.

Then she hands each of you a small topaz. "I've enchanted these with a spell that will bring you to me if you hold them and utter my name. If you fall into jeopardy, use them to escape. However, your mission is clear. Use them only if you have no other hope."

"I'll wait for you in the church above. Take your time and stay alive! Good luck!" With a last look, she turns and leaves.//

The stones are actually worthless glass, holding no magic. Anebroun merely wishes to ensure that the PCs won't make her come with them. If they insist on her joining them, she'll reluctantly agree and then *teleport* out of the lair as soon as the PCs are

occupied.

Area 8 holds six caskets, each of which holds one-sixth of a disk that looks like the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* when put together. Each disk piece is inscribed with a verse from Hyskosa's Hexad, and each casket contains a monster that represents the adventure in which the verse was fulfilled. Azalin has cast *temporal stasis* upon each monster and set the spell to end the moment each coffin lid is raised. The monsters inside were all caught in the midst of an attack when Azalin caught them, so they spring from the coffin ready to fight. The PCs can avoid rolling for surprise if they declare an intent to be prepared, but all monsters are still entitled to their initiative rolls.

The center of the area contains six torches lit with cold flames. Removing the flares from their sconces causes the flames to go out, but they relight if replaced in their holders.

**Coffin A** contains a **greater wolfwere** (MC RL) in the form of a beautiful human female. She immediately thanks the PCs for releasing her, introduces herself as Talasha the bard, and begins to sing a song of *lethargy*. When the party is *slowed* or if it attacks her, she turns into half-wolf form and attacks.

The part of the disk in this casket reads:  
*In the house of Daegon the sorcerer born,  
Through life, unlife, unliving shall scorn.*

**Coffin B** holds a **bowlyn** (MC RL). The disk piece contained in this coffin says:

*The lifeless child of stern mother found  
Heralds a time, night of evil unbound.*

**Coffin C** contains a **greater mummy** (MC RL). Its disk part says:

*Seventh time the son of suns doth rise,  
To send the knave to an eternity of cries.*

**Coffin D** holds a **zombie lord** (MC RL), and its disk piece reads:

*The light of the sky shining over the dead  
Shall gutter and fail, turning all to red.*

**Coffin E** contains a **vampire** (MC I/II) who has been altered by Azalin to look like Strahd. However, it's only a common vampire. The disk segment in that coffin reads:

*The bodiless shall journey to the time before,  
Where happiness to hate creates land and lore.*

**Coffin F** has no monster in it, for this verse of the prophecy has not been fulfilled. The box holds only the disk part, which reads:

*Inajira will make his fortunes reverse,  
Dooming all to live with the dreaded curse.*

At the west end of this chamber is a large tomb (10 feet wide by 15 feet long) carved from the finest quality marble. There are many mystical symbols carved upon the lid of the tomb as well as an inscription that reads "An eternal rest yields everlasting life." Any priest can identify the markings as evil. Lifting the lid requires a combined Strength of 40. It can withstand 125 points of damage from blunt weapons as well. Thomurray helps to open the crypt in whatever way the PCs attempt.

Read the following when the tomb is opened.

//Within the stone crypt lies a coffin made of shiny black wood, with gold handles on its side and withered gray roses lying on the lid. The box is immaculate and shiny; you can clearly see the fine grain of the wood.

Suddenly, a hand reaches *through* the lid and seizes Thomurray by the throat! Then Azalin rises through the lid and ascends into the air, carrying the priest with him and staring at you. Thomurray shudders violently in Azalin's grasp, unable to scream. His skin

begins to dry and tighten over his bones, cracking and then peeling away. His hands, hanging limp, shrink to skeletal claws. His eyes roll back into his head. Then his shoes fall off and hit the stone floor with an audible “thump-thump” that echoes in your ears.

With his other hand, the lich holds out the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*, taunting you with it. He says, “Greetings, slaves! Looking for this? Well, come and get it!”

Azalin drops the husk of Thomurray’s body on the floor and begins to wave his hands.//

Roll for fear and horror checks, then surprise, then initiative. This is actually an illusion of Azalin. As long as the PCs believe he is real, the illusionary Azalin fights and inflicts real damage. It can even summon minions to help defend it. If any of the PCs shout out the name Firan Zal’honan, the illusion is unaffected (it doesn’t know it has a secret name). Should any of the party doubt the illusion’s veracity, the image dissipates with a cackle, saying, “Do come in and get to know the *real* me....”

See the NPC summary for Azalin’s stats. Defeating an illusionary Azalin is worth only 3,000 experience points.

After the illusionary Azalin is defeated or disbelieved, the pieces of the disk must be put into a circular recess in the bottom of the coffin, in order (clockwise A to F), while reciting the verse carved on each as it is put in. Doing so makes the pieces glow. If the PCs seem unable to come up with the solution, allow them to make Wisdom checks for a small clue to send them in the right direction, like a reminder of the ghost’s words in Area 7.

When the puzzle is solved and the key assembled in the coffin recess, the secret door on the south wall slides down, revealing the steps leading down to Level 2. This is an entire section of the wall and does not appear to be a door, even under the closest scrutiny.

The PCs may discover the secret door on the west side of the chamber, leading to Area 9, which opens simply by applying force to the wall. The door pivots on a central rod.

## 9. Trap Room

This chamber contains five wooden and five metal chests. All of them appear quite old and have a thick layer of dust on them. Each chest is set with a trapped lock -- appropriate rolls to find and remove them should be made for each. If any roll is failed, the DM should turn to Table 51: Poison Strength, in the *DMG*. Roll 1d4: On a roll of 1, the class of poison is A-D; on a roll of 2, the class is E-H; on a roll of 3, the class is I-L; and on a roll of 4, the class is M-P. Then roll 1d4 a second time: On a roll of 1, the class is A, E, I, or M, depending upon the first roll of the die; a roll of 2 indicates B, F, J, or N; and so on. If the method is “injected,” a small needle pierces the opener’s finger; if the method is “ingested,” a powder sprays forth and anyone within 5 feet must save; if the method is contact, a sappy liquid leaks onto the opener’s skin.

Each chest contains 1d100 gp, 1d4 gems worth 200 gp apiece, and a message scrawled in the bottom. As the party opens each chest, read the following messages in order (regardless of which chest is actually opened):

1. “This is not the big find.”
2. “Keep looking.”
3. “Wrong again!”
4. “You’re getting closer.”
5. “This isn’t the big one either.”
6. “Keep looking for the big reward.”
7. “This isn’t it.”
8. “Almost got the right one this time.”
9. “Not dead yet? Try again!”
10. “Greedy fool!”

If the 10th chest is opened, the secret door slams shut and becomes *wizard locked*. Azalin has cast a special lich spell on the room, called *Knoslira’s crypt* (see *Van Richten’s Guide to the Lich* for specifics); Over the next five rounds, all light sources in the room -- magical and otherwise -- dim to complete darkness, and a musty smell of death

permeates the air. All characters must make fear and horror checks. Those who fail their rolls become irrational, striking out at any noise in the darkness.

#### 10. Tangled Tunnel

Ten feet down the stairs, a tangled mass of vines completely obscures the tunnel. The vines and roots begin as simple, stone relief carvings against the wall immediately behind the door. At 5 feet down the tunnel, the part-stone, part-plant vines and roots begin to project out from the wall. At 10 feet from the doorway, the all-plant roots and vines have formed an impenetrable mass that blocks what remains of the tunnel.

Running down the center of the steps are runes that radiate a golden hue. They inflict 10 points of damage at the beginning of each round upon anyone on the stairs. The affected individual feels a jolting pain throughout his or her body that has no apparent source upon entering the tunnel. The casting of *dispel magic* negates the effects of the runes for 1d4 rounds.

Vigorous chopping at the vines with an edged weapon clears 5 feet of the tunnel per round (there is 20 feet of blocked passageway), but the chopper must roll a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation each round or be unable to withstand the pain and flee the tunnel. The casting of a *plant door* spell parts the vines.

#### 11. Golem Chamber

//As your feet hit the floor of this dank room, a chill creeps up your legs like icy fingers seeking to pull you down. It's cold down here -- cold as death -- and dim. The walls seem to leach the light from four torches before you that burn with a bluish haze. The torches surround a bone white statue of a woman carved in exquisite detail, clad with silver plate mail. She rests on one knee and stares coldly at your entrance.//

If the statue were standing, it would measure 6 feet high. It's situated on a one-foot-high square pedestal that occupies the center of the area. Evil symbols, all glowing gold, adorn the sides of the pedestal. At each corner of the pedestal is a torch at the top of a 5-foot-high rod. The torches burn silently and without heat, casting a blue-green flame.

The statue is a special **bone golem** (MC RL) wearing plate mail armor (AC -1). If anyone sets foot upon the pedestal, the golem animates and attacks.

There's a door on the east, south, and west walls of this chamber. See Area 1 of the Level 2 map for more details.

#### Level 2

Many of the chambers on this level have a soft spot on the floor that leads 3 feet down to a network of narrow tunnels that are filled with warm, murky water. The soft spots move in a hypnotic patterns that draws the attention of anyone who comes within 5 feet of them. If a victim fails a saving throw vs. spell, he or she moves to the spot and steps onto it.

The spots function much like quicksand, so anyone who steps on one immediately drops into the floor, to the waist, and then continues to sink at the rate of 1 foot per round (three rounds to complete envelopment). Characters who come to the aid of a trapped individual must first roll a saving throw to avoid the hypnotic pattern and then make a Dexterity check with a -2 penalty to avoid slipping and falling into the trap while pulling the victim free.

The tunnels are inhabited by three **morkoths** (MC I/II) who live in Area 21. A PC who falls into a trap is attacked in 1d4 rounds. Those who cannot survive without air have a 50% chance to find an air pocket along the ceiling of the tunnel which can sustain a PC for 1d6 rounds. (See "Holding Your Breath" in the *PHB*.)

#### 1. Entrance Chamber

This space is the same as Area 11 on the map of Level 1. The cut-stone walls are featureless and the entire area is covered in dust. Azalin has cast *vacancy* to make the 20-



foot by 20-foot room appear so.

## 2. Moss Colony

As the door to this chamber is opened, a vile, rotting-vegetable stench fills Area 1 and a brownish slime seeps out of the opening. The more that comes out, the greater the stench. Anyone who touches the ooze with bare skin suffers 1d10 points of damage per round from exposure to a volatile bacteria within the ooze. It's quite sticky and clings to anything that touches it. The DM should check for possible contact with PCs who walk in the ooze and then attempt to remove it from their person. The substance can be wiped or washed off, but its odor lingers like that of a skunk for 1d4 days. Entering the room requires a Constitution check with a -1 penalty to avoid becoming nauseous, which lasts 1d6 turns. Affected characters suffer a -2 penalty to all dice rolls.

The ooze within the chamber is 2 inches deep. Buried under the ooze throughout the room are precious gems and jewelry. Each 10-foot-square section of the room contains 5000 gp worth of such treasure. A torch brought into the room yields a 50% chance to notice the treasure, and a magical light source raises the chance to 75%.

## 3. Trapper Room

From the doorway, a table can be seen against the south wall. On the table are three large books arranged in a neat row. Two empty silver candleholders flank the books.

The table and the items are meant to lure the PCs into the room. There's a special **trapper** (lurker above -- MC I/II) located on the floor, altered slightly by lich magic to make the creature more aggressive. With this particular creature, a person need not walk to the center of the room for the creature to take action, but merely set foot inside the area. The trapper immediately seizes the foot and lower leg of whoever stepped on it and doesn't let go. Then the monster pulls in the rest of its victim until the whole body is within its grasp, and then closes upon him or her. Pulling free of the trapper requires a combined Strength of 30, but the victim must make a Dexterity check with a -2 penalty in the first round to avoid falling into the creature's grasp. On the second round, the penalty rises to -3; it continues to increase 1 per round until the victim is either freed or falls. Meanwhile, the trapper creeps up the victim's leg, strengthening its hold. For each round of tugging against the trapper, the victim suffers 1d10 points of stress damage from the violent yanking needed to pull away. If the victim is pulled in, all other characters who were trying to pull him or her free must make their own Dexterity checks to keep their balance.

As soon as a character is caught by the trapper, hold any further action until the following is read.

//Across the room, on the table, a flame springs to life above each candleholder, as if invisible candles have been magically lit. The central book flips open and the pages turn of their own accord to the middle of the tome. Then, a horribly disfigured spectre rises from the book and leers at you with a twisted smile. It raises its milky white claw toward you and begins to float across the room!//

At the DM's option, fear and horror checks can be called for. If the caught victim fails the roll, he or she panics and falls into the trapper. The ghost is only an illusion, but the crisis at hand prevents the PCs from detecting it as such, even if they declare the intention to do so. The ghost reaches the PCs in two rounds, passes right through them with an icy chill, then floats through Area 1, up the stairs, and dissipates.

The books are worthless volumes. At the DM's option, they may be the grimoires of three mages killed by Azalin in the past. Each contains 2d4 spells of Levels 1 through 3. The silver candlesticks are worth 100 sp each.

## 4. Living Tapestries

There are two tapestries in this area. The one on the north wall depicts a lone tower situated in a desolate environment of snow and ice. The tower is deep black and contrasts sharply against the landscape. The south tapestry depicts a thick swampland.

//The floor-to-ceiling tapestries are covered with dust, yet their colors remain brilliant, so intricate is their weave. The half of the room nearest the tower tapestry feels cold, as if the snows would spill out of the scene and onto the floor, and the half of the room nearest the swamp is warm and smells rank. If you look away and then back, the leaves of the undergrowth even seem to shift as if a humid breeze were blowing through them.//

These are *living tapestries*, a variation of the *living wall* that appears in the *Book of Crypts* (9336). The lich has trapped a wizard, who has since gone insane, in the tower of the north-wall tapestry. In the south-wall tapestry are four **strangleweeds** (plant, carnivorous -- MC I/II).

If any character walks within 5 feet of the swamp tapestry, the strangleweeds attack, attempting to draw the victims into the tapestry with them. Unless the PCs declare an intent to beware of attacks from the tapestries, their surprise rolls receive a penalty of -2. One round later, an ice storm hits the room, pelting the characters with hail stones. A wizard can be seen at a high window in the black tower, looking down at the party with blazing eyes.

Those who are pulled into the tapestry are forever trapped, barring a *wish*. The PCs cannot fight or defeat the monsters, themselves, but must defeat the tapestries instead. Blunt weapons don't damage the cloth, but slashing weapons and spells do. Destroying the tapestries kills trapped PCs.

Living tapestries (2): Int nil (0); AC 8; MV 0; HD 15; hp 120; THACO 14 (plants); # AT 4; Dmg see below; SA spells (wizard); SD none; SZ L; ML 20; MR 20%; AL CE; XP 5,000 each.

The plants attack and inflict damage as detailed in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™. The wizard inflicts damage as a 12th-level invoker; he can use the following spells once per day: *magic missile* (x2); *ice storm*; *wall of ice*; *cone of cold*; *Otiluke's freezing sphere*.

#### 5. Azalin's Challenge

There's another phantasm of Azalin in this area, sitting on a throne against the west wall. A lit torch on each side of the throne lights the entire area. However, the lich has placed a second illusion, this one a blank wall 20 feet across the room from the door between Areas 1 and 4, so PCs who peek through the door before entering simply see a 20-foot by 30-foot room. PCs who detect the illusion and cast *dispel magic* bring down the wall, revealing the false Azalin behind it, but they waste their spell -- the wall dissipates when anyone passes within 5 feet of it.

//Suddenly the west wall glimmers and fades away, revealing a throne flanked by torches -- and Azalin is sitting there!

"I challenge you!" he hisses your way, his dried lips drawn back in a sinister smile. "I challenge you to catch me! If even *one* of you survives -- an amusing idea -- I shall revive you all and *give* you the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* (and the *Icon*)!"

"Now, to use a quaint mortal phrase, *tag -- you're it!*"

With that, he raises his shriveled claw and sends a spray of light streaks at you....//

Azalin looses a volley of *magic missiles*, directing at least one at each PC. This illusion is so real that characters must make a successful saving throw vs. spell with a -4 penalty to detect it. Those who fail are allowed a second save with no penalty after one round if others who succeed announce their discovery, but if they fail that roll, then no one can convince them that they battle a phantasm. Again, this Azalin won't respond to the name Firan Zal'honan.

The false Azalin won't leave Area 5, so it's possible to flee. If PCs flee back to Area 4, the illusion is still there when they return, waiting to resume the battle. (See the NPC summary, p. 6, for Azalin's stats and spells -- an illusory Azalin is worth 3,000 experience

points.)

#### 6. Corridors

Read the following to the PCs when they open the door to Area 6 (or after they run through it if they're fleeing Azalin).

//A cold, musty wind blows from the dark caverns below. The walls of the tunnels, carved out of solid rock, have a slight gleam to them. You see that the surfaces are covered with a thin layer of slime which pulls at your feet as you walk, reluctantly letting go of your boots with a thick sucking noise.//

All the corridors of this level have the above characteristics. The slime is neither harmful nor slick. PCs will have no trouble making their way through the complex because of it, but they'll make a lot of noise as they walk along.

#### 7. Balipur's Home

Balipur is a wizard from Darkon who committed acts evil enough to draw the attention and approbation of Azalin. The lich lord rewarded Balipur by turning him into a *vassalich*, a minor lich. Azalin prepared a potion of transformation for Balipur and then entrapped his spirit in a large ruby (which Azalin keeps). Balipur dresses just like Azalin, which his master allows because it makes the vassalich a decoy, so there's a 75% chance that the PCs will think Balipur is Azalin.

Balipur functions as a 10th-level wizard, but he enjoys the following lich abilities: He is immune to *charm*, *cold*, *death*, *electricity*, *enfeeblement*, *insanity*, *polymorph*, and *sleep* spells. He's turned as a lich. His eyes glow red, like his master, prompting fear checks in those who look upon him (treat as a gaze attack). He also exudes a 5-foot-radius area of *fear* (save vs. spell or flee for 5d4 rounds). Finally, his chilly touch inflicts 1d4 points of damage (save vs. paralysis or be *slowed* for 1d10 rounds). If Balipur is defeated, he returns to his phylactery, just like a real lich. (More information about vassaliches can be found in *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich* [9412].)

Balipur's chamber is not slime covered. It is a small laboratory where the vassalich experiments with the dissection of animals. He regrets his transformation to an undead creature, which has spurred an interest in biology. He's currently trying to create whole animals from the dead parts of others. He's begun by practicing behavior control on small animals so he'll be able to control his later creations -- the spiders in his cages are exceptionally aggressive. Balipur tosses his "failed experiments" into Area 8.

There's an 85% chance that Balipur knows the PCs are approaching his chambers, due to the noise from the slimy corridors. In that case, he casts *invisibility* and *minor globe of invulnerability* on himself and then opens his spider cages before the PCs enter the room. His favorite tactic is to cast *stinking cloud* around himself to keep the fighters at bay (he doesn't breathe, so the gas is no problem for him).

Balipur (vassalich, 10th-level wizard): Int exceptional (16); AC 10 (+3 Dex bonus); MV 12; HD 5; hp 35; THACO 17; # AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA spells, chill touch, gaze; MR nil; AL LE; XP 1,500.

Balipur's spells (4/4/3/2/2): *Burning hands*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*, *wall of fog*; *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *stinking cloud*, *web*; *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*; *Evard's black tentacles*, *minor globe of invulnerability*; *magic jar*, *passwall*.

Balipur's spiders (20): Int animal (1); AC 6; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8; # AT 5; Dmg 1d4; SA poisonous bite (class F); SD none; MR nil; AL nil; SZ T (1" long); ML 20; XP 35 each.

#### 8. Refuse Room

This slime-covered area contains the spare animal parts and biological refuse that Balipur generates during his experiments. The room carries an incredible stench as there are many parts that have rotted and are now serving as homes for various scavenging

worms. PCs entering this room should make a Constitution check with a -2 penalty. Those who fail become nauseous for 2d6 turns, suffering -2 penalties to all attack and damage rolls.

There's a **neo-otyugh** (MC I/II) in this room.

#### 9. Garden of Death

Instead of slime, this chamber has a thick covering of vegetation on the floors, walls, and ceiling. In the northwest corner of the area there's a 4-foot-high mound of vegetation. Embedded in the mound is a long sword with an ornately carved turquoise handle, a golden hilt, and a silver blade.

The sword radiates magic if detected for since it has been enchanted to never rust or wear. Although it's crafted from precious metals, the blade is badly made. Its eight pounds of weight (twice normal) is considerably unbalanced and the sword is slightly bent. Anyone wielding the sword suffers a -2 penalty to hit and damage.

The mound in which the sword rests is a huge pod of spores. Moving the blade ruptures the membrane that holds the spores and sends them into the air with an audible "pop." All characters in the area will feel their nose and mouth being filled with burning dust, and they must successfully save vs. death with a +2 bonus or be killed in 1d4 rounds by the acidic secretions of the spores. A successful saving throw still means 1d20 points of damage and permanent loss of smell and taste unless the damage is healed with a potion.

All who are exposed to the spores will notice a greenish growth spreading over their bodies in 1d4 rounds. The algae-like substance covers a human-sized body during the course of 1d6 hours and then thickens to about 2 inches over the next 24 hours. Affected individuals notice the growth due to a persistent itch that arises with it, at which time the PCs must make a horror check at the sight. This itch inflicts a -2 penalty upon all dice rolls until the growth covers the entire body, at which time the victim can do nothing but scratch. Attempting to wash off the vegetation doubles the rate of its spread. A *cure disease* spell destroys the growth.

There are eight previous victims of the spores lying on the floor in this area, engulfed in vegetation, who rise and attack the PCs. They are moss-covered **wights** (MC I/II).

#### 10. Room of the Common Enemy

The adventurers are greeted by a curious sight in the far north corner of this slime-covered area: Azalin has captured a **ghast** (MC I/II) and polymorphed it into the likeness of Strahd. On the floor, at the feet of the helpless creature, lies a glowing medallion that looks like the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*. Actually, Azalin has used the power of a *control undead* spell to convince the ghast that the medallion is a holy symbol, even though it has no such powers. The undead monster hisses and presses itself against the north wall of the cave, unable to pass the medallion and escape.

Since the party is *quested*, they'll know the symbol isn't the genuine article because holding the disk will give them no relief. If and when any PC enters the area and picks up the holy symbol, read the following.

//When you pick up the silver disk, Strahd's face changes from fear to abject terror. He shakes his head from side to side and presses himself against the wall behind him as if he would force himself through it.//

The player characters can render the ghast completely helpless by presenting the medallion boldly and keeping the monster cornered while they attack it. Should a PC decide to press the symbol against the false Strahd, he screams in pain as putrid-smelling smoke billows from the contact point. The symbol inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round upon the ghast, who is affected as if a *phantasmal force* were cast upon it.

Note the morkoth hole in the corner with the ghast, which may affect a character attacking the ghast. When the creature is vanquished, read the following.

//Strahd blackens and shrivels before you as if the silvery disk were a burning star in your hand, but its glow fades with the vampire. Now it's obvious that the medallion is nothing more than worthless lead. Similarly, the face of Strahd slips from the body, revealing it to be a common undead thing. This is another one of the lich's tricks.

Then you hear a familiar chuckle coming from the corner of the room to the right. Azalin stands there, nodding with approval. "You see?" he asks. "There are some things upon which we agree."//

This is merely another image of the lich. It dissipates with any attempt to touch or strike it.

If the player characters kill the ghastr without using the symbol, or if they simply leave the area without killing it at all, Azalin appears to them and says, "Suspicious mortals! Know ye not an easy kill when you see one? The *Symbol* is power, and you'd better learn to use it if you hope to live!"

If the medallion is taken from the area without using it on the ghastr, its glow fades immediately, revealing it to be plain lead.

#### 11. Spring

In this slime-covered area, a trickle of sparkling water pours from a minute fissure in the wall and forms a pool over a morkoth trap. The pool is absolutely clear and reflects light with astounding brightness. The water is a class I poison (see Table 51 in the *DMG*). It smells fresh and tastes like pure spring water, though it's unnaturally cold. If some of this water is poured on the fire in Area 12, the flames die for a round where the water touched them.

#### 12. Drop Cap

Intense heat flows from this area lit by magical fire that sheds almost no light -- one can feel the heat from more than 10 feet away, but not see the flames until less than 5 feet away. The flames dance across the floor, visible below. A PC crossing over the flames unprotected is subject to 4d10 points of damage per round.

Roughly in the center of the room is a natural stone island, the top of which is 5 feet above the fire. Directly above the island is a large hole that appears to be a chimney. On the island is a large book in a silver cage on a small metal stand. The cage is secured with a silver padlock. The book radiates magic if detected for; it's a list of priests who served the church on the surface. The tome radiates magic since it's enchanted to never degrade, though the paper will burn like any other. The book is about 6 inches thick, but only the first ten pages contain a list of names. The other pages are blank.

If a character crosses to the island and tampers with the padlock in any way, the entire ceiling of Area 12 drops down as a solid block. There's no chance to flee to the corridor without becoming caught under the dropping stone; anyone who attempts to do so suffers lethal crushing damage unless a successful saving throw vs. death is rolled, indicating that the character realized his or her peril and retreated back to the island before the ceiling caught him or her underneath.

A character is relatively safe, for the hole in the ceiling is 10 feet high, allowing more than enough room for an average-size human to stand comfortably. However, there's no way of raising the ceiling, nor is there an exit from the hole. Anyone inside is trapped forever, barring some means to pass through the stone. There are 1d8+2 rounds of air inside the sealed area. Furthermore, a spell of *continual darkness* neutralizes all light sources.

Once a character is trapped inside, read the following.

//It's pitch black and utterly quiet inside this trap, but the air is cooling slightly. From the floor, up and out of reach, the walls have hemmed you in tight. After a few moments, you detect a slight sound above you -- the breath of something very large, and it's getting louder. Something tickles your cheek, like a light filament brushing across it. You feel it again -- and then again!//

Azalin has cast a contingent *audible glamor* spell that trips when the trap falls. The brushing that the character feels is light ash falling with the cooling of the air. Have the trapped character roll fear check each round with a cumulative penalty of -1 (to a maximum of -4) until the roll is failed. The result of a failed roll is shock and claustrophobia, requiring emotion-controlling spells for the character to remain underground. (Psionic *psychic surgery* effects an immediate cure.)

### 13. Sliding Walkway

This walkway is 1 foot above the surface of the fire below. Heat has burned away the slime from the surface of this area. The landing is very uneven, crumbling, and has many loose pebbles on it. If three adventurers stand in any of the squares adjacent to Area 12, the platform gives away and the edge closest to the fire suddenly drops 2 feet, turning the landing into a slide. Characters standing on the pebbly surface must roll successful saving throws vs. paralysis with a -2 penalty or fall off the landing and into the fire, where they suffer 4d10 points of burning damage per round of exposure.

### 14. Infinity Steps

This slime-covered area contains a spiral stairway that goes down farther than the PCs can see. On every third step crouches a stone gargoyle whose eyes seem to follow the adventurers as they walk by. There's a light, cool breeze coming from below.

The stairway is actually an illusion-trap that leads nowhere: the steps descend about 50 feet, where a teleport trap sends a character 25 feet back up the steps. The teleportation is so instantaneous that PCs don't realize they've been transported; to them, the steps just go on forever. The trap works in both directions, so once the PCs have tripped the trap on their way down, they are teleported back to the bottom if they try to return to the top -- making it appear as if there's no top to the steps, either. Curiously, if they call to someone at the top of the steps, he or she can answer them and even come down to meet them. But if that person doesn't trip the teleporter, he or she can climb back to the top, seeming to disappear to the trapped characters when they're once more sent back to the bottom. The only way to exit the trap is to walk up the steps backwards.

The casting of *detect magic* identifies the presence of the teleport traps. However, Azalin has prepared against parties who would do so: If a spellcaster attempts to dispel the teleporters (roll vs. Azalin, an 18th-level wizard), the stairwell becomes a closed tomb, sealing those PCs in a 20-foot stretch of steps, 25 feet below the top.

Two of the gargoyles are **gargoyle golems** (MC RL) that animate only if the PCs seal themselves underground. At that point, read the following. Note whether the PCs are at the bottom or the top of the trap when reading.

//You hear a noise reminiscent of grinding rocks coming from below (above) -- the sound is from around the spiral, out of sight. The noise echoes in the chamber, surrounding you. The grinding is followed by a heavy "clomp, clomp, clomp" -- something big is coming up (down) the stairs.//

The PCs hear one of the golems approaching. The other is right next to them. Call for players to roll d10s. This is a surprise roll, and those who roll above 1, 2, or 3 (after the DM assesses a -4 penalty) notice that the gargoyle closest to them is looking at them. At the DM's option, fear checks can be called for; otherwise, proceed to initiative. If the gargoyles are defeated, the trap reopens and the PCs may escape if they figure out how the teleport system works.

### 15. Piercers

This slime-covered chamber looks like a natural cave. At the other end of the room is a wooden door that looks out of place in its surroundings. Stalagmites and stalactites adorn the chamber, and the air is pleasantly cool.

There's a group of 30 **piercers** (MC I/II) hanging from the ceiling by the door. They wait until they feel the vibrations of the door being tampered with, then all drop together standing in that 30-foot by 10-foot area.

The lock on the door requires a normal chance to pick it, but there's a natural stone wall behind, making the door appear to be a fake. The wall is actually a secret door, leading to Area 16. The wall behind the door pushes inward. There are handles on the opposite side, so it can be opened from the inside.

#### 16. Sanctuary

This slimeless area is dry and quiet. The secret door pushes into the room, so it can be spiked shut, but nothing will disturb the PCs here. The place feels and is safe.

#### 17. Morkoth Summoning

There's a simple wooden box in this slime-covered area, upon which rests a large bell. Azalin and Balipur use the bell to summon the morkoths. In the southwest corner, a hole in the floor is flooded with warm, murky water. It leads to the morkoths' labyrinth.

If a PC rings the bell and the morkoths have not been killed by this point, the creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds. They surface, spy the PCs, and then flee back into the water. The morkoths only want to meet the PCs on their own terms.

#### 18. Illusion

In this slime-covered area, the PCs are greeted by the following illusion, which Azalin hopes will condition the PCs to think of Strahd as their real adversary. Other than prompting horror checks, the scene poses no danger to the group. Read the following when the PCs enter the area.

//It's a grisly scene in this chamber -- several people are manacled to the walls. Claw marks crisscross their bodies and bleed freely, filling the room with the smell of freshly butchered meat. The people heads droop in absolute exhaustion, and one person moans weakly. In one corner, a man dressed in black holds a prisoner by the hair, pulling his head to the side. He is biting the groaning man in the neck.

At your entrance, he turns and looks your way; blood dribbles from his chin and he hisses threateningly -- it's Strahd von Zarovich! Suddenly, as if they sense your presence, the prisoners lift their weary heads and look at you -- they're all grinning clones of your and your comrades.//

The illusion fades when any PC enters the area. The DM should call for horror checks.

#### 19. Going Down

As the map indicates, the morkoth labyrinth opens to a wide pool that covers much of this chamber. There's a narrow ledge around the side of the pool that PC can negotiate, but each character must make a successful Dexterity check to avoid slipping and falling in.

If the morkoths are still alive, from below the water they seize some of the PCs and pull them in. Roll to determine which PC is grabbed. The morkoths fight to the death, first attempting to drown the victims.

The floor of the 10-foot by 10-foot area in the northwest corner is covered with short spikes about an inch tall. They're fairly dull and can be walked on without any trouble. For each person who walks on the spikes, there is a 25% chance that a release button will be stepped on, thus dropping a block of stone from the ceiling. Those who successfully save vs. paralyzation may leap clear of the falling stone. Those who fail suffer 3d8 points of damage from being crushed against the spikes. Even if a character dives clear of the spikes, there's a 10% chance that he or she instinctively leaps onto the trap door and falls 50 feet to the next level below, suffering 5d6 points of damage.

In the southwest corner of the area is an open trap door with a ladder that leads down to Level 3. Characters must step into the ceiling trap area to climb onto it.

When the PCs look through the trap door in Area 19 of Level 2:

//The stale odor of death reaches up from this hole and grips your hearts and lungs, squeezing them like a cold, bony fist around a soft-boiled egg. Here's a place that

only the undead could call home.

Somewhere below, a menacing laugh echoes through the complex, hungrily welcoming you to a place of no return. The lich is down there...somewhere.//

## 20. Azalin

//Azalin is waiting for you in this chamber, sitting on a throne of melded bones. "Come in, come in," he says. "You look a little tired," he comments with a chuckle. "I could fix it so you'd never feel that way again...."//

Since the PCs are supposed to "catch" Azalin, it's assumed that one or more of them will try to touch him at this point. However, this illusion is completely incorporeal, so PCs pass right through it. Therefore, neither the lich's chill touch nor his fiery gaze attack work here. Again, speaking the name Firan Zal'honan has no effect on the illusion.

As soon as a PC attempts to touch Azalin or detects the illusion, read the following.

//Azalin chuckles and says, "So difficult to know the real thing when you see it. Well, tell me if *this* feels real to you." The lich's fist opens and the room explodes with fire!//

The illusion has released a *fireball*. Allow PCs who wish to disbelieve the illusion to make their saving throw. If all members of the party succeed, then the image fades away, saying, "Ah well, perhaps next time."

## 21. Morkoth Lair

This is the central, underwater lair of the morkoths. There is approximately 15,000 gp worth of treasure here, consisting of various jewelry and coins lying among decomposing bodies. Unless the DM wants to roll randomly to determine the presence of magical items, there are none here.

## 22. Back Door

This is a tunnel that leads to Lake Zarovich, a mile away. It's an access that allows the morkoths to come and go as they please.

## Level 3

### 1. Sphere of Living Stone

The ladder leads down into an unusual chamber that seems to be made of protruding rock formations. Read the following when the first character enters the area.

//Every square foot of this chamber is covered with stony projections, including the walls, that point toward the ladder. An eerie groaning sound slowly becomes perceptible. Then you realize that the stone itself cries out to you! The points of rock writhe like fingers protruding from a grave, and the moan of trapped agony fills you with dread.

The waving of the stones muddles your mind, your sense of up and down escapes you, and the room begins to spin!//

Azalin created this room with a few *stone shape* spells, but then he added his own touch. He cast *transmute stone to flesh* on the walls and then enchanted them with a special version of *hypnotic pattern*. The points of stone wave back and forth in a dizzying pattern; being alive, the stones groan in unnatural pain.

The character must make two d20 rolls as he or she descends -- a horror check at the sight of the slithering stone and a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the hypnotic weaving. A PC who fails the latter check loses control and falls or 2d6 points of damage. Landing among the rubbery, groaning stalagmites on the floor can prompt a horror check -- the fleshy stone is disgusting!

PCs who follow may avoid the save vs. spell if they announce that they'll close their



eyes as they climb down the ladder, but they have to make a Dexterity check instead, to avoid misstepping. They must also make a horror check with a -2 penalty as the sound of the moaning stone is particularly disturbing with closed eyes.

## 2. Pillars of Absorption

This hall contains ten pillars that are styled in marble, but veined with silver and gold. Around the pillars are strung shiny ornaments made of precious metals and gems. Closer examination reveals they are miniature swords, shields, armor, and the like. The pillars themselves are smooth and have simple bases and caps.

When a PC passes within 5 feet of the last pair of pillars (at the north end of the room) or when anyone touches any of the pillars, the wires that hold the ornaments animate and attempt to ensnare anyone within 10 feet. Each pillar has eight tendrils and is capable of attacking up to 4 characters at once.

The wires, which appear to be glittery stands of crushed glass and metal, are about one-eighth of an inch in diameter and cannot be cut by nonmagical weapons. They attacks as **choke creepers** (see "plant, carnivorous" -- MC I/II). They have a Strength of 16, so a character of equal or greater Strength may break free by making a successful bend bars/lift gates roll.

Characters who die in the clutches of a strangling pillar are absorbed into the column one round after death. Bodies inside are lost forever, barring a *wish*, having also become part of the structure of the pillar. Equipment is also drawn in, whereupon another bauble in the shape of each piece appears along the wire.

## 3. Rotten Tunnel

This tunnel has a stench that increases dramatically once a character turns the corner; the odor peaks at the point where the passage crosses over Area 12. The tunnel smells of rotten corpses.

Azalin has cast *darkness, 15' radius* every 10 feet, starting at the second square of the tunnel, and has rendered the spells magically permanent. Spellcasters who wish to cancel the effect must first remove the *permanency* spell before the darkness can be dispelled.

It's possible to hold one's breath and follow the left-hand wall until one reaches Area 4, but the character must not pause along the way. Otherwise, the time spent in the dark forces the character to take another breath. Anyone who breathes inside the tunnel must successfully save vs. breath weapon or be affected as if by a *stinking cloud* spell. A *gust of wind* negates the effect for the duration of the spell.

## 6. Azalin's Living Room

This room is a richly decorated chamber, with large portraits on the walls, a thick rug on the floor, and soft chairs paired with end tables. Against the south wall rests a table with sniffers and three leather-wrapped decanters -- one red, one brown, one black. The lamps comfortably illuminate the room and the odor from Area 3 doesn't penetrate here.

Several of the portraits are painted in painstaking detail, and they depict various torture scenes. Any character who looks at one must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or see himself as the subject of the torture, prompting a horror check. Also present are portraits of a woman and child, both ripped to shreds and sewn back together. PCs who explored Castle Avernus in *From the Shadows* recognize the paintings as the same portraits as those they found in Azalin's bedroom in Darkon.

Erasmus, Azalin's spirit butler, is here, too. As explained in *From the Shadows*, the typical-looking butler attends to Azalin's domestic needs. He appears to be solid, but physical objects pass through him; he manipulates objects by concentrating. Erasmus neither helps nor hinders the PCs in any way, other than to tell them to help themselves to a drink.

The three decanters are *beakers of plentiful potions*, each containing three potions. They are, from top to bottom, as follows:

- **Red:** *Potion of healing, elixir of health, potion of fire resistance.*

- **Brown:** *Potion of delusion, potion of healing, poison (class J).*
- **Black:** *Potion of super-heroism, elixir of madness, potion of invisibility.*  
Lying next to the bottles is a *scarab of death*, it appears to be a relatively worthless brooch.

#### 5. Distortion Chamber

The walls, floors, and ceilings of this room are etched with many slanted and crisscrossed lines. At the other end of the chamber is another door, but it's difficult to focus on it because the decor of the room distorts the viewer's senses. The room's dimensions are 40 feet by 30 feet, but it's only possible to determine this with a spell or gem of *true seeing* -- use of either allows a character to walk straight through the chamber. One can also cross by closing one's eyes and simply walking forward to the door at the end of the room.

Once a character steps into this room, he or she must roll 1d6 for every 10 feet of distance traveled. On a roll of 4 to 6, the character moves in the direction desired. But on a roll of 1, the character actually does an about-face and moves 10 feet in the opposite direction. On a roll of 2, the character turns directly to the left and moves 10 feet. On a roll of 3, the character turns to the right and moves 10 feet.

Meanwhile, the lines on the wall begin to spin and tangle, eventually taking the form of a *phantasmal killer* spell. Each character will be so affected in 1d4 rounds.

#### 6. Lair of the White Spider

This vast cavern is filled with thousands of thick white strands. At the center, the area is 40 feet tall from floor to ceiling. The webbing makes it impossible to determine the exact size of the cavern, but the entrance is midway between the cavern floor and ceiling. PCs can descend 20 feet, cross the floor, then climb 20 feet back up to the door on the other side or cross by moving from thread to thread.

//Before you lies a gigantic cavern, filled from top to bottom with thick, white, silky filaments that shine in the light. They choke the room and hide the other side from you. The floor drops away from you inside the door and is lost among the milky tangle.

In the distance, you barely make out a light, erratic clicking noise. As your senses adjust to the cavern, you notice ever-so-slight vibrations of the white strands, and you hear a faint humming with each vibration.//

The threads of the web may be cut normally, but they won't burn except with magical fire, and then only the strands exposed are destroyed. The webbing is extremely thick -- for each 10 feet of space traveled or each round spent in the area, characters must roll successful Dexterity checks to avoid slipping and falling for 1d4 points of damage. When a character falls, he or she drops 5 feet and is covered with the milky solution that runs off the web. A penalty of -1 is added after each fall (to a maximum of -4). A character who falls more than five times is so completely covered with the white fluid that he or she cannot get up without help from another character. Those who help fallen cohorts must add both of their penalties together and then make a successful Dexterity check to help the fallen character. *Gauntlets of swimming and climbing* negate the effects of the room.

At the bottom of the cavern lies a nest of white spiders, a breed of arachnid created by Balipur. They swarm upon any victims who slip to the bottom of the web. PCs who enter into melee must roll attack rolls with a penalty equal to that assessed against their Dexterity, and they must make successful Dexterity checks to keep their balance after they swing.

The mother spider lies in wait at the top and watches for victims to slip to the bottom, where the young will devour them. The sound of pain from the young will bring her running; otherwise, she remains largely disinterested in the PCs unless they attack her. She's adept at using the slickness of the web to great effect, literally sliding along the web; she emits a secretion from the tips of her legs that insures her grip.

Spider mother (1): Int animal (1); AC 3; MV 6, Web 18; HD 5+5; hp 35; THACO 13; # AT 1d6 (claws); Dmg 1d10; SZ L; ML 15; MR nil; AL CE; XP 420.

Spider young (20): Int animal (1); AC 6; MV 6, Web 9; HD 2; hp 10; THACO 19; # AT 1d6 (claws); Dmg 1d6; SZ M; ML 7; MR nil; AL CE; XP 35 each.

There's a door at the opposite end of the spider lair, but it's concealed by webs (see Area 20).

#### 7. Dart Trap

Each of the four northern 10-foot-square floor panels along this hallway is spring-loaded and set to fire a barrage of poisonous darts from the south wall. Each time a volley of darts fires, the mechanism under the floor resets so that a different pressure point fires from the next set of darts. In other words, the DM should roll 1d4 to determine which panel activates the trap. Each time a PC trips the mechanism, the DM should roll again to find which panel triggers the trap. Each volley looses 1d20+10 darts, hitting the forward most PC (1 point of damage per dart). PCs must successfully save vs. poison or die.

#### 8. Double Doors

A sign hangs on the wall between the two doors to Area 8: "One way in, another out: Woe to those who fail the route." An image of the *Holy Symbol* is engraved in the east door, and an image of the *Icon* is engraved on the west door. Both are locked with heavy-duty deadbolts, (-20% penalty to lock-picking rolls). The deadbolts are key-operated from both sides, so both locks must be picked to open both doors.

Azalin has rigged a special teleport trap at each door. The trap allows anybody to pass through a door without tripping it, but if that same person walks through the same door again, the trap goes off, placing the victim in Area 10. If a PC enters through one door and exits through the other, nothing happens.

Inside Area 8, Azalin has created a *programmed illusion* activated by the opening of either door. PCs looking in see the *Holy Symbol* and the *Icon* hanging over a trough of molten metal. The ropes by which the items are suspended are quickly burning through. If a PC makes a rush for the items, the ropes snap when the character nears the trough. A failed Dexterity check indicates the PC suffers 3d10 points of heat damage while trying to grab the items as they fall into the trough. If the check is successful, the PC reaches the items, but his hands pass right through them and the same damage is inflicted.

#### 9. Familiar Crypt

The heavy door to this area creaks open to reveal several old caskets in the room. There are curious designs on the cover of each casket that might be writing of some kind. Closer examination reveals that the inscriptions are in an ancient language. A *read magic* spell or successful read languages roll reveals that the inscriptions bear the names of a beloved parent or mentor of each PC. A *suggestion* spell is triggered when the name is read.

Read the following if a PC reads any of the names and then wants to open the coffin.

//This must certainly be another of Azalin's illusions. How could he find **(insert person's name)** and bring him **(her)** here? You clear your mind and prepare to deny whatever phantom the lich has conjured for you, then you slowly open the coffin.

The body within is cracked and withered as if it had been here a thousand years. You close your eyes and then open them again, but there's no doubt about it: This is no illusion.

For a moment, you are struck dumb, wondering what Azalin has done. Then, to your lasting horror, the body opens its crusted eyes and looks at you!//

Azalin has placed a **ghast** (MC I/II) in each coffin and cast a special lich illusion, called *death sight* (see *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*) on them (save vs. spell applies, but see the following paragraph). Normally, *death sight* causes affected individuals to see everyone around them as an undead creature, but this application, combined with the *suggestion* spell causes the PCs to see a shrunken, decayed body of the persons identified by the plaques.

Because of Azalin's terrible use of this spell, the PCs may not make a saving throw in the first round. Have them make fear and horror checks with a -4 penalty as the ghast opens its eyes and stands up. Allow the players to think that there is no saving throw vs. spell, that they see something real. Even if the saving throw in the second round is successful, the effect will have lasted long enough for the character to be sure of the truth. The DM should tell the PC who successfully saves that he or she was sure of the corpse's identity, but then its facial features collapsed as it moved, and it became impossible to tell who the person was.

To those who fail their saving throws, the sight of the dead loved one prompts a horror check every round until the ghast is defeated. (Don't forget the lich minion's gaze attack.)

#### 10. Sealed Room

PCs who enter and exit Area 8 by the same door are teleported into this room. If they have a light source, read the following. Otherwise, they're simply locked in the dark.

//The walls of this room are made of heavy stone bricks that are a foot high, two feet wide, and who knows how many feet thick. This is the kind of room where prisoners are left to die. There's no door, no window, not even an air vent. You're trapped....//

In fact, the walls are no thicker than any other in the lair (about 1 foot), but Azalin has placed four *contingent walls of force* on them. They're separately tripped by touching each wall, and last 23 rounds. If a PC strikes a wall before anyone touches it, a chunk of stone chips off, but then the *wall of force* goes up and renders the wall impervious.

Should trapped PCs somehow work their way through the west wall and into Area 23 where the real Azalin awaits, and the entire party is not present, the DM and the players of those characters should go to another room and conduct battle with the lich. If those PCs reduce Azalin to 25 hit points or fewer, he surrenders. In this case, Azalin opens the one-way secret door (it opens only from Area 23 and is not detectable from the other side) leading to Areas 8 and 11 and invites the rest of the party to join him and the people who have captured him. Proceed to Area 22, "Audience with Azalin." If Azalin is victorious, the remaining party members must finish the search for him.

#### 11. Storehouse

A sickly green cloud floats in the air of this room; occasional sparks of green light appear in the smoke. The walls hold shelves on which rest hundreds of unlabeled, diversely colored and sized bottles. There's a strong smell of strange chemicals in the air.

Azalin stores his laboratory and spell components in this room. Only he knows the contents of each container, but a character who owns a *Nefradina's identifier* kit could find virtually any spell component among the stores. For each successful identification the character achieves, the DM should open the *PHB* and randomly choose a spell component (precious stones are never present).

The green cloud is harmless; it serves only to scare the PCs out of the area.

#### 12. Underwater Tunnel

An opening in the north wall of Area 4 leads to a set of curving steps that descend 30 feet and then disappear into a water-filled tunnel.

//A brackish stench rises from the water down here. The water is frigid to the touch, and it rises to within a few feet of the ceiling of the tunnel leading away. It's impossible to say how far down the steps go into the water. You may have to swim

through the tunnel to get to the other side -- if there is another side.

Something two steps below the water's surface catches your eye. It appears to be a ring. There's something on the third step, too -- a necklace or chain -- but the water's too dark for you to tell what it is.//

The ring is a *ring of free action* placed here by a pair of **scrag**s (see troll, MC I/II). The scrag's hope to entice the PCs to explore the passage. The chain is a *necklace of strangulation*.

If the PCs enter the water:

//The water is numbingly cold, but it's only 5 feet deep where the steps end. There's a whispering sound ahead of you, far off and out of sight. It sounds a bit like Azalin, but who knows?

Something brushes against your leg and is gone. Other than the whispering you hear and the splashing you make as you move along, it's deadly quiet inside the tunnel. Then, once again, something brushes against your leg.//

There are 2 feet of space above the surface of the water, so oxygen is not an issue here; however, the temperature of the water is. PCs not magically protected from cold in some manner lose 1 point of Dexterity every other round. When a PC's Dex reaches 0, he is chilled to the bone and so numb that he cannot move. The character then begins to lose 1 point of Constitution per round. If that score reaches 0, the character dies.

The brushing that the PCs feel is nothing more than curious fish that the scrag's feed on. The adventurers can occasionally feel objects on the floor of the tunnel. If they actively search, they find 1 to 2 objects in every 10 feet of searched tunnel; consult the table below for results. Otherwise, assign a 40% chance per 10 feet of tunnel for a party member to touch an object with his or her foot, then check against the table. (Roll randomly to determine which member of the party feels the object.)

<b>1d100</b>	<b>Item</b>
01-10:	Disembodied arm
11-20:	Humanoid rib bone
21-30:	Nonmagical dagger, rusted
31-40:	Nonmagical helm
41-50:	Nonmagical sword
51-60:	Rotten boot
61-70:	Rotten internal organ
71-80:	50 gp gem
81-85:	Iridescent <i>ioun stone</i>
86-90:	<i>Staff-mace</i>
91-95:	<i>Sword +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes and shape-changers</i>
96-00:	Magical item of DM's choice

If a minor conjunction occurs here, the DM should have 2d6 **reavers** (MC RL) appear out of a whirlpool, rather than consult the Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart.

### 13. Toll

When the PCs reach this point in the tunnel, read the following.

//The water before you begins to bubble and froth, then a large creature stands up and blocks the passageway. Its skin is a sickly dark green, and is covered with festering sores that bleed black. Its hair hangs like dead seaweed from its bony scalp.

The monster flexes its webbed claws and bears its black, scum-coated teeth. "They pay a toll!" it cries with a ragged voice. "They pay a toll or they pass not!"

Back at the base of the steps, another scrag rises out of the water and cocks its head from side to side, looking at you.//

The scraggs want a body, living or dead, for their supper. They aren't particularly intelligent, so PCs can convince them that they have a body to give as a toll at either end of the tunnel. Other fast-talking scams will work, too. The PC attempting to fool the water trolls need only make a successful Charisma check.

If the PCs attack, the scrag behind them submerges and attacks from below. As soon as any one PC is killed, the scraggs submerge and attempt to escape with the body. DMs should consult underwater combat rules in the *DMG*.

#### 14. Landing

The water warms considerably in this area. PCs who remain in the water regain lost attribute points at the rate of 3 per round. If they leave the water, they regain lost points at the rate of only 1 per round. If any points of Constitution were lost due to exposure to the cold water, the character loses 1 point permanently.

This chamber houses wide stone steps leading to a platform in front of a door. As the PCs climb onto the landing, they begin to feel warmth emanating from the door to Area 15. The door is quite hot. It's made of metal and has no handle, only a lock. The hinges are on this side of the door, so it opens into Area 14.

Rogue characters must roll a successful Dexterity check in addition to their pick locks roll to avoid touching the hot metal. Those who touch the door with unprotected skin suffer 2d4 points of burn damage.

The moment the lock is picked, the door blows open with great force. A surprise roll should be made to determine whether PCs next to the door can leap clear of it. Even if they are not surprised, they must still roll successful Dexterity checks with a -2 penalty to avoid being struck by the door. Those who fail to leap away are hit, suffering 1d6 points of damage.

Scorching air fills the chamber. Those not in the water must successfully save vs. breath weapon to halve 2d10 points of burn damage. PCs in the water suffer 1d10 points if they fail their saves; if they succeed, they manage to duck underwater and avoid all damage.

#### 15. Reflections of Death

This room is lined with special *mirrors of opposition*, tainted with the lich spell *death sight* (see Level 3, Area 9). When each PC moves into this room, six **ghouls** (MC I/II) that look exactly like the PC spring from the walls and attack. They have the same clothes and items as the PC, but the undead creatures lack the intelligence to cast spells or use magical items that must be activated. They will, however, use the weapon carried by the PC.

Like any undead minion of Azalin's, these monsters have a gaze attack, but they also require a horror check as the PC looks upon his or her own likeness as an undead thing. The check should be made at the beginning of the first three rounds of combat, with decreasing penalties: -2 in the first round, -1 in the second, and no penalty in the third. After that, the PC becomes injured to the sight.

The room is very hot. After the first round, THACOs drop by 1 each round to a maximum of -6, reflecting the exhaustion that comes of fighting in the intense heat. These modifiers carry over to the next area. Returning to Area 14 and immersing in the water will return the heat modifier to 0 in a single round, but the character will again have to face six more undead reflections (no horror checks this time).

Magical darkness prevents the reflections from forming if the character casts such a spell upon his or her person and then walks through the room in utter blackness.

#### 16. Desert of Doom

**The DM should not indicate the dimensions of this area in any way.**

//Strangely, a desert lies before you, stretching as far off as the eye can see. Overhead, a huge replica of the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* burns like the sun and mercilessly beats down upon you. The air is dry, scorching your lungs, and the heat is completely relentless on your back. Hot wind blows across the dunes, sweeping up sand

and throwing it in your eyes. The roar of a blacksmith's forge seems to throb in the air.

There's movement everywhere under the sand as unseen creatures burrow below the surface where it is dark.//

The *Holy Symbol* sheds so much heat that characters begin to lose 1 point of Constitution per round after spending three rounds in the room (don't forget the THACO modifiers mentioned above). The sand in the air cuts visibility down to 50 feet and the wind grows louder as the PCs get closer to Area 17. Due to the shifting sands, PC movement is halved. The creatures moving under the sand are harmless, but they ought to make the PCs nervous.

The walls of this room are painted with *Nolzur's marvelous pigments*, making the dunes appear to move endlessly into the distance in all directions, except for the 10-foot space that leads back to Area 15. The ceiling is painted to look like desert sky. Area 17 is hidden behind a series of dunes. Within the north and south walls of the room, Azalin has painted a large dune with sparkling gems scattered over the surface.

The DM should carefully monitor where the PCs walk, for if even one of them steps outside the dimensions of Area 16, the entire group actually enters the painting and becomes lost in the desert. Once caught within the walls, the only way to find the way out is to move toward the "sun." Meanwhile, the DM should solicit actions from the party and tell the PCs to subtract a point from their Constitution scores for each round they fail to find their way out (after the first three rounds). PCs whose scores drop to 3 fall unconscious, and death results when the score reaches 0. At the DM's option, characters wearing metal armor may be assessed 2 points for each round in the sun.

At the center of Area 16 lives a **sandling** (MC I/II). If the PCs move to within 20 feet of the center of the room, the monster rises out of the sand to its full 10-foot stature, looks them over for a moment, and then sinks back into the sand. It attacks only if they move within 10 feet of the center of the room. The DM can tease the PCs by having the sandling make numerous appearances nearby, watching them.

#### 17. Vortex of Sand

In this area, the sand whirls in a counterclockwise motion around a 4-foot hole located in the center, where an eerie green light pulsates. This room is the source of the roaring wind; it comes from hundreds of tons of sand swirling around in a furious rush toward the hole. After it disappears into the pit, the sand is redistributed across Areas 16 and 17 from the bottom up.

The only safe way to the other side from the area is around the perimeter, staying within a foot or two of the wall. Should a PC step farther than 5 feet from a wall, he will find that the vortex pulls him toward the center with a Strength of 15. Those who have a Strength score of 11 or less are pulled in without warning and are buried alive under 10 feet of sand in Area 16. (If the other characters have some means to locate the character and can dig him or her out in a hurry, the DM should randomly determine the buried character's position in Area 16 [see "Holding Your Breath" in the *DMG* for more details]). If the affected character's Strength score is 12 to 15, then successful Strength and Dexterity checks indicate that the character is able to resist the inward pull. Characters who have Strength scores greater than 15 need only roll a successful Strength check (failing that, a successful Dex check will save them).

Objects pulled into the vortex make one complete orbit around the hole before being sucked in. Ten feet from the walls of Area 17, the Strength of the vortex is 20, 15 feet from the walls it's 25, and at the nexus it's 30.

When all the PCs are all within Area 17, read the following.

//The wind is deafening in here, making it nearly impossible to hear a shout right next to you. The sand below your feet keeps giving away and pulling you toward the sandy whirlpool in the middle of this chamber. Behind you, at the edge of the endless desert, the sand beast rises from the floor and studies you, unaffected by the maelstrom around it, then sinks back into the ground. When it's nothing but a two-foot-tall mound of sand, the monster moves at you, picking up speed as it approaches.//

The sandling passes below the PCs' feet at a MV of 12. The wake of the sand buries the PCs up to their knees, but the monster doesn't attack. The characters should make a Dexterity check to avoid falling over as the sand sweeps over their legs. Allow them a +2 bonus if they help each other or use something like a staff or sword to steady themselves. Assess a -2 penalty if they attempt to attack or run away from the approaching monster.

#### 18. Water Reservoir

The door to Area 18 is identical to the one between Areas 14 and 15; a lock and no handle, and the hinges are on this side. This portal, however, is very cool to the touch.

Like the door in Area 14, this one blows open with great force when the lock is picked. If any PCs stand in the way of the door, a surprise roll should be made to determine whether PCs can leap clear of it. Even if not surprised, they must still roll successful Dexterity checks with a -2 penalty to avoid being struck by the door. Those who fail to leap away are hit (suffering 1d6 points of damage) and are thrown 1d10 feet toward the sand vortex. Following the door is a wall of water from Area 18. Those standing within 5 feet of the door must successfully save vs. breath weapon to avoid being forced into the vortex.

The water continues to blast through the door for two rounds. During that time, the water collects in Area 17 and swirls around like the sand. After the reservoir is depleted, the trap door in the center of Area 18 is visible. The door leads to a small crawlway that leads back up to the level of the rest of the lair.

**If the PCs locate the secret door in Area 19 and approach Area 18 from there,** they discover the trap door in the ceiling of a tunnel that curves downward until it can pass below the room. If the door is examined, it's cool to the touch and damp with condensation.

The trap door releases downward with the pulling of a long latch handle, but it requires a combined Strength of 25 to do so. The moment this is accomplished, the door flies open and natural physics takes over, sending tons of water into the tunnel. Characters are buffeted against the tunnel walls and fired like cannonballs into Area 19.

Those PCs who are in the tunnel must make Constitution checks at one-third their scores to avoid having their lungs force-filled with water, which will drown them unless they are aided within 1d3 rounds (assume the PCs know mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or have them roll against the healing proficiency). Those same characters sustain 8d6 points of damage from the force of the water hitting them and from being buffeted along the rough hewn tunnel. Then they are projected across Area 19, striking the wall for an additional 4d6 points of damage. Affected characters may make a saving throw vs. paralysis for half damage, accounting for a "lucky" trip.

A character standing at the entrance to the tunnel in Area 19 must make a successful Dexterity check to duck both the water and tumbling characters as they shoot out of the tunnel. Those who fail suffer 3d8 points of damage (save vs. paralysis for half damage).

#### 19. Cavern of Chimes

This rough-hewn area has a wooden shelf attached to the wall with metal spikes. On the shelf are 12 crystal bells of various sizes and shapes. If the PCs pick any of them up and try to ring them, they hear no sound, but they do feel the vibration of the bell through their fingers. However, Azalin is able to hear the ringing bells from his hiding place in Area 23, which alerts him to the PCs' presence.

If and when a bell is rung, roll 1d6 and consult the chart:

- 1: Bell shatters, cutting the ringer -- causes 1d4 points of damage.
- 2: Bell summons 2d8 **wights** (MC I/II).
- 3: Bell does nothing.
- 4: Bell sends out inaudible sonic blast, causing severe head pain for 1d8 rounds, plus 2d6 points of damage. Spellcasters cannot cast during this time, and THAC0s are reduced by 3.



5: Bell sends out a soothing jingle, curing all within 10 feet of 2d8+2 points of damage. A second ringing shatters the bell (see #1).

6: Bell summons a **ghoul lord** (MC RL).

If the trap door below Area 18 has been released, allowing the water to flood this room, then the bells are all smashed.

There are two secret doors in this area: one on the south wall that leads to a trap door below Area 18, and one in the east wall that leads to Area 21.

#### 20. End of the Web

The webs of the white spider are so dense along this wall that the archway on the west wall qualifies as a secret door. Once discovered, the PCs must inflict 50 points of damage to the webs to cut their way through. Remember to call for Dexterity checks with penalties appropriate to the amount of fluid that the sword-swinging character has picked up on the trip across the room (see Level 3, Area 6).

Once the PCs reach the hallway on the other side of the secret door, read the following.

//The hallway before you is skillfully carved and quite ornate, creating a montage of light and shadows that toy with the eye. There are relief sculptures running the entire length that, when looked at on the whole, make it seem the archway is supported by skeleton, writhing in mournful agony. Ruthless pain marks their faces and each seems to beseech you to walk through the arch.

Down the hallway there's a bony sculpture of a gigantic spider, composed of the bones of many animals and perhaps even people, which gives it an abstract and horrifying look. The monstrosity looks as though the sculptor had no idea what it would be until it was finished.//

The spider sculpture is a **bone golem** (MC RL). It animates when any PC passes within 5 feet.

#### 21. Door to Doom

When the PCs find their way into this short antechamber, read the following.

//You stand before a large, shining, ebony door. Across its surface, a life-sized relief carving of Azalin is delineated in gold. Red jewels that glow with arcane brilliance are set in the eye sockets. Silver replicas of the *Holy Symbol* and *Icon* stand at each side of the lich image.

The door's handle is an outstretched skeletal hand, projecting from the relief carving as if it were Azalin's. The palm is held up as if to hand you something -- the bony fingers curve slightly upward.//

The door is made of a black stone that is ice cold to the touch. Those who have infravision detect incredible cold in the door, yet the eyes are red hot. The *Holy Symbol* and *Icon* glow similarly. The jeweled eyes are magically trapped. Touching any of them results in 6d8 points of electrical damage (save vs. rod for half damage). The entrapments are permanent aspects of the jewels and cannot be dispelled.

The door is opened by grasping the hand, which grasps back with Strength of 16 and resists being turned as if it were wrist-wrestling with the opener. Attempts to open the door always fail on the first try due to the unexpected resistance. A Strength of 18 and a successful bend bars/lift gates roll are required to turn the hand and open the door. The person attempting to turn the handle may roll as often as needed to finally make the roll. While the wrestling match goes on, the mouth of the Azalin carving laughs at and goads the opener, calling him or her "weak" and using other jibes. If the DM knows of a sensitive spot in the opener's ego, the door jabs at it.

#### 22. Audience With Azalin

Read the following when the PCs enter this area. If the PCs did *not* remove the *Icon from Ravenloft* from the castle in *From the Shadows*, then omit the copy in bold print.

//Herein lies a room of dark and terrible beauty. A dozen lamps in golden sconces hang from the ceiling and burn with reddish fire, casting a bloody shade of light over the entire room. The ceiling is depthless black and speckled with stars that sparkle, and a comet slowly paces its way across the canopy of night. The walls are bone white, polished, and have been carved with depictions of horrible executions -- the expressions on the victims' faces are so real that they seem to turn and look toward their impending doom. A lush carpet covers the floor, dyed in designs that baffle the eye and make the viewer dizzy. A rank incense hangs in the air, not rotten like corpses, but heady and sickening like death itself. To inhale it is to breathe doom, to feel the cold touch of the grim reaper on your shoulder.

Within the room beyond, Azalin sits upon a throne of melded bones and motions for you to enter his parlour. "Yes, yes, it's me this time," the lich lord says. "No, no, put up your weapons. You'd be dead already if it were my wish, so don't waste my time with foolish heroism.

"You've come for the *Holy Symbol (and the Icon)*. Of course you're welcome to it **(them)**, so long as you use it **(them)** to destroy Strahd von Zarovich! In this cause we are allies, are we not?"//

If the PCs attack, 20 invisible *quasimancers*, standing along the walls of the room, retaliate. A quasimancer is a **ghast** (MC I/II) that has had a number of spells plugged into its brain by a lich. It can cast them at will. Azalin has plugged a *lightning bolt* and a *cone of cold* into each of these minions. Quasimancers share the qualities of all lich minions. Since Azalin himself is present, turning undead attempts are made with a -4 penalty (a 20 is required for a 12th-level priest). As the quasimancers attack, Azalin bids the PCs to surrender. (See *Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*, Chapter VII, for full details concerning the quasimancer.)

If any PC utters the name Firan Zal'honan, read the following.

//Azalin freezes upon the utterance of that name and seems to become a statue before you. A moment passes, then he breaks the hold and snarls at you.

"You are deadly adversaries, indeed! I would destroy you, but we *need* each other. Make your demands of me quickly, before I change my mind!"//

Presumably, the PCs will attempt to convince Azalin to send them back in time at this point. Azalin will question them at length about the nature of their mission, and he'll pretend to believe whatever the PCs tell him. He'll ask how they hid his phylactery (he's thoroughly perplexed at how they made it disappear), and he'll try to make the return of his phylactery a part of the bargain, of course. In the end, the lich will pretend to trust in the honor of the PCs, even though he expects them to try to take the skull with them to Castle Ravenloft, to put it on the altar with the *Holy Symbol*.

Azalin gives in to the PCs' request to send them back in time. He should act suspicious of them, but admit that they have him in a bit of a fix for as long as the phylactery remains hidden (and they know his true name).

If the PCs demand it, Azalin summons the bodies of all killed PCs and restores everyone to full health. When the PCs are ready to go back in time, read the following.

//"Such magic will require a great deal of my powers, and a little time," Azalin tells you. "I suggest you take advantage of the moment to relearn your spells and otherwise prepare to fight Strahd when you return.

"When I am ready, you must lie upon the floor and concentrate upon the place and time to which you wish to go."//

Azalin's preparation takes about 10 hours, during which time he sits on his throne, mumbling to himself. The PCs are free to move about the room, but they should be quiet.

They may even discover the secret door to Area 29 and find the holy relic(s) -- Azalin doesn't care. If they make too much noise, though, Azalin hisses "Silence!" and returns to his reverie.

Finally, the lich is ready to cast his powerful spell -- read the next text.

//Azalin bids you to lie on the floor and concentrate upon your destination, then he begins to cast his magic. A sensation of sleep comes upon you, then lightness as the room fades away. Somewhere in the back of your mind, you hear Azalin's voice saying, "Think of me as you take possession of another body. To do so is to experience the existence of a lich!"/>

## History Remade

When the PCs awaken, they find themselves in the bodies of foot soldiers wearing very old-fashioned armor. Read the following.

//It's dawn when you regain control of your senses. You rest upon ground stained with the blood of countless battles, torn and muddied by the feet of hundreds of soldiers. As far as the eye can see, the fields are covered with campfires, and soldiers move like swarms of black ants, preparing for another day of bloody combat and death.

Nearby, on a hill, a grand tent is pitched, and sturdy guards stand at attention all around it. Above the canvas, a thick, unnaturally black cloud hangs, occasionally lit by its own sparks of lightning. You've seen that cloud before -- it's Inajira's calling card.//

The action in this scene is fairly straightforward. The PCs are foot soldiers in Strahd's army. They cannot cast any spells, for they lack the components and dexterity needed, and they can't call upon weapon specialization, for their bodies are not practiced in the martial arts.

They'll be flatly refused if they ask to speak with the general, so they must fight their way through the only door. The DM should keep enough guards coming to make it a good fight. He or she can kill most of the PCs, but must allow at least one to penetrate the 50-foot-square tent. (The death of a PC sends him or her back to the present.) When a PC breaches the tent, read the next text.

//Inside the tent, Strahd stands behind a large table with several advisors. The general looks powerful, but he's definitely human. On the other side of the table, standing within a magical circle on the floor stands Inajira. The yugoloth urges, "Sign the *Book of Keeping*, Strahd von Zarovich, and Barovia is yours!"

But your presence distracts Inajira. "Who is this intruder?" he demands. "A spy? Treachery! Treachery! I'll kill you all!" The fiend begins to press against the invisible wall of the warding circle with all his might -- it begins to crackle electrically.

"I know not who he (she) is," claims Strahd. To you he says, "Be gone, soldier!"

With a loud crack, the warding circle shatters, and Inajira is loose!//

Inajira will immediately attack the PCs. Now is the time the PC should cry "Arcanalothatum!", at which time Inajira freezes, shudders violently, and disappears. Strahd shrieks in rage and cries, "Traitor(s)! Death to you, for you have brought death to me!" He leaps forward and kills the remaining PCs. Either way the PCs are all killed in Strahd's tent.

PCs as soldiers: Int variable; AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 3; hp 18; THACO 18; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SZ M.

Guards: Int avg (10); AC 5 (chain mail); MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THACO 16; # AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SZ M; ML 15; AL LG; XP 270.

General Strahd von Zarovich: Int genius (17); AC 0 (plate mail, *cloak*); MV 9; HD 20; hp 115;

THACO 1; # AT 2/1; Dmg 1d10+2; SA +1 to hit (18 Str); SD none; SZ M; ML 18; AL LG; XP 12,000.

When all PCs are "killed," read the next text.

//You arrive back in Azalin's lair and feel as though you haven't been gone a moment. The lich sits on his throne with his head bowed in exhaustion and doesn't move.//

Defeating the lich now is as simple as striking him until he's deprived of all hit points. Azalin seems to tire to fight back, and he only screams in a mixture of agony and fury as the PCs destroy him. Uttering "Firan Zal'honan" totally incapacitates the lich, and he doesn't even scream at their attacks. This sends his spirit back into his phylactery.

If the PCs choose not to kill Azalin, he leads them to the holy relics and shows them a quick way out of his lair -- they need only sit on his throne and say "up," and they'll instantly be sent to the surface. When all the PCs are gone, the lich sends himself back into his phylactery, preparing for the final showdown with Strahd.

### 23. Azalin's Laboratory

The secret door behind Azalin's throne is a simple sliding panel, fairly easy to spot (+2 bonus to searches). The corridor beyond leads to Azalin's laboratory. Several tables are stocked with books, lab instruments, beakers, candles for heating solutions, jars containing either liquids or specimens living and dead, and so on. The books are nonmagical, containing arcane formulae, mathematical calculations, and notes in a cryptic language, impossible to decipher. There are three magical items lying on one lab table; a *vacuous grimoire*, a *bag of devouring*, and a *censer of summoning hostile air elementals*.

At the north end of the lab is a stone altar of sorts. On it rests the *Holy Symbol* and the *Icon* (if appropriate). The items are held in velvet vice grips, and a *protection from good*, 10' radius ward has been cast upon the altar to protect Azalin from the effects of the relics. He's also cast a permanent *obscure object* (the reverse of *locate object*) on the relics to prevent the PCs from detecting their location.

//At last! The object of your quest lies before you. The *Holy Symbol* glows warmly at your approach, and you feel a profound sense of comfort and relief in its presence.

Now an image of the altar at Castle Ravenloft floats before your mind's eye, and you realize that the quest is half over. If you can return to the castle and unite the *Holy Symbol* and the phylactery on the altar, you'll finally be able to rest peacefully, no matter what else happens.//

On the west side of the room is a one-way door that leads to Areas 8 through 11 of Level 3. A crank raises and lowers the entire 10-foot by 10-foot section of wall.

# Back to Castle Ravenloft

When the PCs emerge from Azalin's lair, they'll find they haven't reversed the Grand Conjunction at all. To the contrary, they've opened the gates wide by fulfilling Hyskosa's Hexad. Now the mist is thicker than ever, limiting visibility to 50 feet. Minor conjunctions no longer take place because Ravenloft no longer exists! Instead, monsters wander about in droves. (The DM can use the Minor Conjunction Encounter Chart as a wandering monster chart now, assigning a 95% chance per hour that the PCs have an encounter.) The entire town of Vallaki is now decimated and lifeless (but not *unlifeless*).

The little ghost girl that the PCs picked up on their first tour of Vallaki is still with them, but she's a horribly rotted semblance of what she was when they first met her. Her skin is peeling away from the bone and her hair is falling out. At the DM's option, her appearance can prompt horror checks, from the PCs, especially if they've "adopted" her.

Anebroun isn't in the church if they look for her. She retrieved the skull as soon as history changed. If the PCs are unsure of what to do, have them make Wisdom checks. Remind those who roll successfully of Inajira's words at Svalich Pass: "To the person who recovers my *Book* I will be *most grateful!*" The PCs need to get their hands on the tome, but what to do with it once they get it remains to be seen.

## Approaching the Castle

After fighting their way through the monsters milling about in Vallaki, the PCs might be cheered at the sight of the gates of Barovia swinging wide at their approach, welcoming them back. This, of course, is a sign that Strahd awaits them, which might also make the PCs feel fairly uncomfortable. The drawbridge is down and there's no sign of life in the castle. (The DM can insert a few undead guards and courtiers wandering the castle, for atmosphere or for a battle if the PCs are fresh.)

## Finding the Royal Crypt

When the PCs enter the castle, they should recall Kristiana's words in the chapel: "That stairwell climbs the high tower. It is 380 feet tall from the tip of the tower to the royal crypt below." If they don't, call for Intelligence checks to remind them. Most of the castle isn't detailed in this module, and if the PCs decide to wander, the DM may have to create room descriptions. Given the urgency of the quest, however, the PCs simply don't have time for exploring.

If the PC's don't have the *Icon* now, then it's gone from the chapel altar when they enter that area. If they try to place the *Holy Symbol* on the altar, nothing happens. They'll still need the phylactery to reverse the Grand Conjunction.

When the PCs finally locate the crypt via the circular staircase off the chapel (Area 7 on the map), Strahd is waiting there for them, in the shadows and out of sight. Both Strahd and Azalin are within the crypt (although Azalin is within his phylactery, unbeknownst to Strahd). Therefore, they create a *double* sinkhole of evil: all saving throws are made with a -8 penalty (-4 per dark lord).

Read the next text as the PCs enter the crypt.

//Thick white fog carpets the floor of the crypt, and it twists about your knees as if it hides a secret menace lurking at your feet. It's quiet down here -- deadly quiet -- but then a most unwelcome sound breaks the silence.

"Welcome to the family crypt," says Strahd from the shadows, his voice echoing off the walls. "I must say that I owe you a debt of gratitude for fulfilling Hyskosa's prophecy. Now the Grand Conjunction is secure." He laughs at your naivetÉ; apparently you've played right into his plans.

"As you may have deduced, I did *not* die on the battlefield after the pact with Inajira was aborted, and that victory was *much* sweeter, for it was all *mine!*" Strahd's sudden laugh sends a chill down your spine, but then his sonorous voice continues in the dark.

"I kept the *Book of Keeping*, of course, for you conveniently sent Inajira away without it. Thank you for that as well! Unfortunately, I somewhat foolishly locked it up with the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* -- that much has not changed. Therefore, I have a proposition for you: I'll trade you the phylactery for the *Holy Symbol and the Icon*. Or, if you like, I'll have Anebroun destroy the phylactery for all of us."

Again Strahd laughs. He says gleefully, "And, of course, I'll let you live!"//

Strahd's voice echoes in the crypt, making it impossible to tell where he is. Anebroun steps from the shadows and into the wide corridor that bisects the crypt from west to east, about 30 feet from the PCs. The wizardess shimmers slightly, as she has cast a *globe of invulnerability* upon herself. She holds up the phylactery and says the following:

// "I'm sorry it came to this, but I've *always* served the von Zarovich line, and I can't stop now. Believe me, Strahd doesn't mean any harm to you -- you've set him free!

"Just drop the item(s) on the floor and back away, I'll throw the skull to you or destroy it, whichever you want. There's no way to reverse the Grand Conjunction now. You've sealed it by fulfilling Hyskosa's prophecy. Your only hope now is to find a new cause or a new master, like I did."//

Anebroun is using her *ring of human influence* to cast a *charm and suggestion* spell on the person holding the item(s). If the PCs have them tucked out of sight, she chooses the leader of the group or the person most likely to have them (she's traveled with the party and is exceptionally intelligent, so she has at least a 75% chance to guess who has them). Don't forget the -8 penalty to saving throws.

If the PCs don't object, the mission is a failure. Strahd and Anebroun send their forces (see below) against the PCs and join in the fight, attempting to kill the entire party. More than likely, though, there will be an objection among the PCs if the *suggestion* victim fails the save and starts to comply. If so, roll for initiative. Anebroun raises her staff (imbued with the *magic staff* spell -- casting time of 1) and casts *fireball*, then steps back into the shadows and *teleports* into the stairwell (Area 7), out of sight and ready to trap the PCs if they try to escape.

Strahd leaps out from behind Vault 21. Roll for surprise. He attacks anyone who stands farther than 10 feet from the *Holy Symbol*. If it's used against him, he reacts with terror, immediately takes gaseous form, and flees into Vault 21. From there, he *teleports* to his chamber and says with a sneer, "All right, *heroes*, find the *Book* yourselves, and trust me -- when you do, you'll deal or you'll die!"

If the PCs open Vault 21, they encounter a **groaning spirit** (MC I/II) (see Vault 21, below). Strahd waits patiently while the PCs search for the *Book of Keeping*, which lies in Vault 35.

Note the teleporter traps that surround the entrance to Strahd's chamber (Area 8). If any PC steps on one of these traps, see Vault 14.

## The Search

Each of the vaults requires a combined Strength of 20 to open. They are ornately carved boxes with marble lids.

Strahd has cast an *anti-magic shell* in the alcove next to Vault 35 and rendered it magically permanent (see the map). Hence, the *Book* cannot be located through magical means, and no spell can be cast in any 10-foot square adjoining the center of the spell.

- **Vault 1:** "Spectre Ab-Centee. She walks that path of pain and torment. A gift to all who look upon her still."

If the PCs try to open the vault, they find the area behind it is collapsed.

- **Vault 2:** "Artista DeSlop -- Court Ceiling Painter."

- **Vault 3:** "The Lady Isolde Yunk (Isolde the Incredible) -- Purveyor of Antiques and Imports."

- **Vault 4:** "Prince Aerial Du Plumette (Aerial the Heavy)."

The plaque on this vault is worn away so badly that only a dwarf character can

detect the presence of the writing. If the characters open this vault, the fat **ghost** (MC I/II) of Prince Aerial emerges and attacks.

- **Vault 5:** "Artank Swilovich: Here interred with great mourning, courtesy of the Barovian Wine Distillers Brotherhood."
- **Vault 6:** "The name and epitaph on this crypt have been clawed off as if by some mad, tormented beast. Again, only a dwarf character can make out the words. The stone once read, "Marya Markovia: Great was her beauty, undone by a jealous hand." Inside is a rotted corpse. (Horror check at the DM's option.)"
- **Vault 7:** The stone door of this vault lies on the floor, partially open but obscured by fog. Rags of white linen lie flat on the slab within, and a leather sack lies on the cloth. If a PC disturbs the tomb, a **spectre** (MC I/II) rises and attacks. This creature killed Marya Markovia (Vault 6), and it scratched up her headstone.

The epitaph on the door reads: "Endorovich (Endorovich the Terrible): What the blood of a thousand slaves did not do, the spurn of a single woman accomplished."

- **Vault 8:** "Duchess Dorfniya Dilisnya."
- **Vault 9:** "Pidlwik (Fool of Dorfniya)."
- **Vault 10:** "Sir Leanne Triksky (Sir Lee the Crusher): What sword did not, time's passage did."
- **Vault 11:** "Tasha Petrovna, Healer of Kings, Light unto the West: Servant Companion."
- **Vault 12:** "King Toisky."
- **Vault 13:** "King Intree Katsky (Katsky the Bright, King, Ruler, and Inventor.)"
- **Vault 14:** "Stahbal Indi-Bahk: Advisor to Endorovich from eastern lands. A truer friend no ruler ever had. Here lies his family in honor."

Anyone who trips one of the teleport traps at the entrance to Area 8 is transported into a coffin in this tomb, which is three times larger inside than it is outside. The occupant of the coffin, a **wight** (MC I/II), is transported to the teleport trap site and attacks the party.

The PC teleported into the coffin is assisted in escaping it by the other wights who live in the tomb. His or her screams can be plainly heard, requiring two rounds to locate the vault.

There are 15 coffins (and wights) here.

- **Vault 15:** "KHAZAN: His word was power."
- **Vault 16:** "Elsa Fallona."
- **Vault 17:** "Sir Sedrik Spinwitovich (Admiral Spinwitovich): Confused though he was, he built the greatest naval force ever assembled in a land-locked country."
- **Vault 18:** "Ireena Kolyana: Wife."
- **Vault 19:** "Artimus (Builder of the Keep): Thou standeth amidst the monument to his life."
- **Vault 20:** "Sasha Ivlskova: Wife."

The dust upon this plaque is so thick that it must be vigorously wiped off to be read. This alerts the **vampire** (MC I/II) within to the presence of intruders. The monster takes gaseous form, seeps through cracks in the vault, reforms, and attacks.

- **Vault 21:** "Patrina Velikovna: Bride."

A **groaning spirit** (MC I/II) resides within. If the PCs remain within 5 feet of this vault for more than two rounds, the monster begins to wail for 1d6 rounds.

- **Vault 22:** "Sir Eric Vonderbucks."
- **Vault 23:** The stone on this vault is unmarked and the tomb is empty.
- **Vault 24:** "Ivan De Rose, Champion of Winter Dog Racing. The race may go to the swift, but vengeance is for the loser's relatives."
- **Vault 25:** "Steph Gregorovich, First Counselor to Baron von Zarovich."
- **Vault 26:** "Intree Sik-Valoo: He spurned wealth for the knowledge he could take to heaven."
- **Vault 27:** The vault is unmarked. There are three **huge spiders** (MC I/II) within.

- **Vault 28:** "Ardent Palette, Chef Deluxe."
- **Vault 29:** "Ivan Ivanovich, Beloved of Anna Petrovna."
- **Vault 30:** "Prefect Ciril Romulich (Beloved of King Barov and Queen Raven): High Priest of the Most Holy Order."
- **Vault 31:** "\$\$: We only knew him by his wealth."
- **Vault 32:** "Saint Finderway, Patron of Lost Travelers."

Stepping into this vault teleports one into Area 8, Strahd's vault, where both Strahd and Anebroun wait. Anyone who enters this area is subject to immediate attack. A *silence*, 15' radius spell on the steps leading up to the rest of the crypt from Strahd's vault prevents PCs outside from hearing possible cries for help.

- **Vault 33:** This vault has no name upon it, and it is empty.
- **Vault 34:** "King Dostron."
- **Vault 35:** "This vault contains a metal box with an indentation on its top that perfectly accommodates the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*. The box is anchored into the floor of the vault and cannot be removed.

When the PCs place the *Symbol* in the appropriate spot and open the box, skip to "The Book is Freed" section.

- **Vault 36:** The stone door is clawed and marked so no name is readable, although it's obvious there used to be a name on it. The tomb is empty.
- **Vault 37:** "Gralmore Nimblenobs."
- **Vault 38:** "Americo Standardski (Inventor)."
- **Vault 39:** "Beucephalus the Wonder Horse. May the flowers grow ever greener where he trod."
- **Vault 40:** "Tatsaul Eris: Last of the line."

#### The Book is Freed

The moment the box in Vault 35 is opened and the PCs touch the *Book of Keeping*, read the following text. Remember that the *Book of Keeping* can be picked up and *physically* moved by anyone, but only Inajira can transport it in any other way. Therefore, a psionic character might open a dimensional door and provide escape for the party, but the *Book* will seem to hit a wall as they attempt to pull it through.

//The *Book of Keeping* isn't as impressive looking as you might have thought, judging from the powerful beings who have been fighting over it. The cover is thick with embossed leather, and a strap secures the pages with a curious lock that no common key would fit. Other than that, it appears to be nothing more than an old book.

As you lift the book from its box, you hear the sounds of shuffling feet and whispers in the shadows. The fog along the floor twists and rolls, disturbed by some movement.

Then the shadows take shape: Undead monsters -- dozens of them -- corner you with your prize.

"Now, are you ready to deal?" asks Strahd's voice from the darkness.//

Allow the PCs to react. There are 15 **skeletons**, 10 **zombies**, 10 **wights**, 10 **ghasts**, 6 **hell hounds**, and 6 female **vampires** (MC I/II, all) crowding toward the corner where the PCs stand, hemming them in. Also present are eight **doom guards** (MC RL). The hell hounds move closer, growling menacingly.

If the PCs don't attack, the undead merely stand around them, forming a wall. If the PCs attack, allow the fighting to continue for 1d4 rounds, then read the next text.

//Suddenly, there's a crack of lightning and a crash of thunder that threatens to crumble the walls. A ferocious growl echoes through the crypt, telling you Inajira has arrived -- and there's no doubt what he wants.

The fiend wades through the pack of undead, which parts like grass before a giant, and stops 10 feet before you. Queen Kristiana is firmly in his grasp. She looks a bit



haggard and disoriented, but her expression turns to nothing but defiance when she looks up at the fiend.//

Show the PCs where Inajira and the queen stand, between crypts 30 and 31. If the PCs cry out "Arcanalothatum," Inajira looks at them and jeers, "That only works once, and you used it up 385 years ago." Otherwise, proceed with the following.

// "Congratulations, fair warriors of justice! You've done well," sneers the fiend. "Now, give me my *Book* and I'll let the queen go!"//

Have the PC holding the *Book* save vs. spell (don't forget the -8 penalty!). Inajira is using his innate *charm* ability to get the PC to hand it over without a fight. If the PC fails the check, he or she feels that Inajira is their only chance to come out of the situation alive. The PC will not attack Inajira unless the fiend attacks first, at which time the saving throw is rerolled, per the spell. If the result causes some interesting interaction between the PCs, let it play out. Otherwise, proceed to the next text.

// "No!" cries Strahd's voice. His voice echoes magically, making it sound as though the entire room is filled with his words. "If you give him that book, he'll kill us all." Inajira snarls viciously and peers into the shadows, murmuring balefully, "Strahd, where are you, old friend? We have a score to settle."//

At this point, the PCs notice Anebroun sneaking up behind Inajira and the queen. Allow the PCs to react, then read the next text.

// The old wizardess pulls a large gem from the folds of her robe, holds it aloft, and cries, "Inajira!" Suddenly, the gem blazes with white-hot intensity between her fingers as she holds it out, toward the fiend.

Inajira turns and looks at her, and then he laughs. "Trying to trap my soul in a stone, wizard? That's a problem, for I have no soul to trap -- but you do, *Anebroun!*"

The moment Inajira pronounces her name, Anebroun screams and falls to the floor, dropping the gem. Inajira kneels, picks up the stone, and crushes it in his powerful hand -- a puff of smoke filters through his fingers, all that is left of Anebroun's spirit. Then the yugoloth reaches into a pocket of the robe and produces Azalin's phylactery. "This spirit house is occupied," he remarks.

Kristiana looks at him sharply and then to you with sudden alertness. "Quickly!" she cries. "Touch the *Holy Symbol* to the *Book of Keeping!* It's our only chance!"

Still on his knee, the fiend drops Azalin's phylactery, spins your way, and cries, "No, no, *no, NO!*" The ground and the walls shake with his roar.//

The PCs have one round to do as Kristiana orders. During that time, Inajira lashes out at Kristiana, knocking her to the floor where she lies dazed. Azalin's phylactery lies forgotten on the floor next to Anebroun's body.

A *charmed* person will resist the attempt to touch the *Holy Symbol* to the *Book*. After the first round, Inajira will be upon the PCs, focusing on the character holding his *Book*. The *Holy Symbol* inflicts 4d12 points of damage if pressed against the fiend, and it disrupts any spell or spell-like ability he may be using.

If the PCs succeed in touching the *Holy Symbol* to the *Book of Keeping*, the *Book* bursts into flames, inflicting 2d10 points of damage upon anyone within 5 feet. Inajira bellows with rage and yells, "Now I can *never* go home! Never! *Never!*" He attacks the PCs.

One round later, Strahd join the battle against Inajira, commanding his legions to fall back to the open area in front of the steps and cut off anyone who tries to escape.

After two more rounds of battle, or before the PCs reach the phylactery, read the next text.

// There's a brilliant glow emanating from Azalin's phylactery, lying on the floor by

Anebroun's body. It lights the room as if the sun had just risen in the crypt. Azalin rises from the floor and looks over the confusion with a sadistic laugh. Then he spies Strahd and his laughter turns to venomous hissing.

"Strahd!" he roars. "Face me, blood sucker!"

Strahd spots his nemesis and immediately abandons the present battle to lash out at Azalin. The two lock in an embrace of death, and magic sizzles and sparks around them as they wrestle for control over one another. In the scuffle, Strahd kicks Azalin's phylactery -- and it rolls toward you!//

The phylactery rolls about halfway to the PCs' position. As soon as one of them picks it up, read the next text.

// "Stop them!" screams Azalin in the midst of his struggle with Strahd. "Stop them or we both go back to the shadow prison!"

For the first time, Strahd and Azalin have a common cause. They abandon their struggle and turn on you.

Suddenly, Inajira is upon the two dark lords. "Then escape they shall!" he growls. "If I can't go home, *nobody goes home!*" He looks your way. "Flee, mortal fools, and sunder the Grand Conjunction!"

The three evil super-beings fall into a frenzied and desperate contest. The din they raise is a thousand armies of war wizards engaged in a suicidal, desperate battle. Deflected magic rips through the air, stray lightning pulverizes the walls and ceiling near you, and the shrieks and howls you hear sizzle like acid in your ears.//

Kristiana is wobbly, but she can walk if the PCs go to her rescue and help her up. After 1d6 rounds, she recovers enough to help the PCs fight. The PCs must fight their way through Strahd's forces that block the staircase. Throughout it all, the super-beings' battle will rage in the background, shaking the castle to its foundation, but once the PCs break through Strahd's forces, the way is free to the altar. If the fight is not sufficiently challenging, the DM can post a phalanx of monsters around the altar, offering the PCs one more battle.

The moment the *Holy Symbol* and Azalin's phylactery (and the *Icon*, if possible) are placed there, mist swells up from every corner of the room. The PCs have completed their mission, and now the lords and denizens of Ravenloft are being drawn back where they belong.

If the PCs brought Kristiana along and she is still alive, read the following.

// Suddenly, the battle below falls silent as the mists sweep across the floor of the chapel and swallow the pews. Kristiana clasps her hands together and says, "Gods be praised, the curse is broken and my poor husband may rest!"

Then the queen catches her breath and gasps. Strahd is standing at the top of the steps, leaning against the doorway, reaching out toward Kristiana. His clothing is ripped to shreds and he's in little better condition.

"My lord?" asks Kristiana in a daze.

"Kristiana, my love, run to me!" cries Strahd, his voice velvety and irresistible, yet edged with dire urgency.//

The queen's eyes glaze over, as if she's fallen under a spell. Unless the PCs stop her, she runs toward Strahd, who frantically matches her pace to reach her. However, the fog billows upward and swallows them before they can reach one another. If the PCs prevent the queen from running to Strahd, then the mists swallow him up before he gets halfway across the room.

A pitiful, heartbreaking wail goes up in the fog. Once again, Strahd von Zarovich has come within a fingertip's breadth of achieving his fondest dream, only to feel her slip away.

Conclusion

From here, the DM may take the party anywhere. They may be taken back into Ravenloft with the mists, or the gods may see fit to reward them for their work and keep them in the Prime Material Plane.

If they stay in Prime Material Barovia, they find out that Kristiana immediately sets to work rebuilding the kingdom. The DM might send the PCs on additional quests on her behalf, or let them wander off as they will.

If the PCs go back to Ravenloft, they had better stay clear of Barovia and Darkon. Neither Strahd nor Azalin will forget these people who foiled their dearest plans, and the lords of Ravenloft -- so long as they stay there -- will remember the deed for a long, long time!

# Monstrous Compendium Appendix

Yugoloth, Greater -- Arcanaloth

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Lower planes  
FREQUENCY: Very rare  
ORGANIZATION: Solitary  
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any  
DIET: Carnivore  
INTELLIGENCE: Supra-genius (19-20)  
TREASURE: H  
ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil  
NO. APPEARING: 1-3

ARMOR CLASS: -8  
MOVEMENT: 12, Fl 18(B)  
HIT DICE: 12+24  
THACO: 9  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1d4/1d4/2d6  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Claw sting  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better weapon to hit, spell immunity  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%  
SIZE: M (6')  
MORALE: Champion (15-16)  
XP VALUE: 49,500

The arcanaloths are the record keepers of the yugoloths and the maintainers of contracts. As yugoloths go, they are a civilized breed.

An arcanaloth appears as a robed human with the head of a fanged jackal or war dog. Arcanaloths are usually snarling and have great hatred in their eyes. However, they do not consider themselves to be foul animals, and they keep themselves well groomed and dressed.

As spokesmen for their race, arcanaloths can speak and write all languages.

**Combat:** The physical attack of the powerful arcanaloth consists of a claw/claw/bite routine. Each claw inflicts 1d4 points of damage per hit and causes a powerful stinging sensation on its opponent that causes him to suffer a -1 penalty (cumulative per hit) on his attack rolls. *Bless*, *neutralize poison*, or *slow poison* eliminate these otherwise permanent effects. Arcanaloths possess all abilities of a 12th-level wizard, and they commonly memorize destructive spells. Arcanaloths should have a randomly determined spell book.

All yugoloths are able to perform the following at will: *alter self*, *animate dead*, *cause disease* (reverse of *cure disease*), *charm person*, *improved phantasmal force*, *produce flame*, and *teleport without error*. They also can *gate* in their fellows if necessary. (Due to the quarrelsome nature of the breed, there's a 25% chance that *gated* yugoloths will turn on their summoner. Arcanaloths may attempt to *gate* in 1d6 mezzoloths, 1d2 dergholoths, or 1 arcanaloth. They may attempt this once per day, with a 40% chance of success.)

Arcanaloths can also perform the following functions once per round, one at a time, at will: *advanced illusion* (once per day), *continual darkness*, *control temperature 10' radius*, *fear* (once per day), *fly* (unlimited duration), *heat metal*, *invisibility*, *magic missile*, *shape change* (to any humanoid form), *telekinesis*, and *warp wood*.

Arcanaloths are supra-geniuses and will use spell-like abilities to their best advantage. In general, they avoid hand-to-hand combat. They are immune to mind-affecting spells and will see enchantments for what they are.

**Habitat/Society:** Arcanaloths are record and contract keepers for the yugoloths. They negotiate all bargains with baatezu and tanar'ri, and they play these two sides against each other with practiced ease -- an identifying characteristic of the breed is its complete disregard for loyalty. They will openly discuss one rival's offer with another during the contractual process, hoping to cause a bidding war. One should not use them in any mercenary capacity unless one has considerable power.

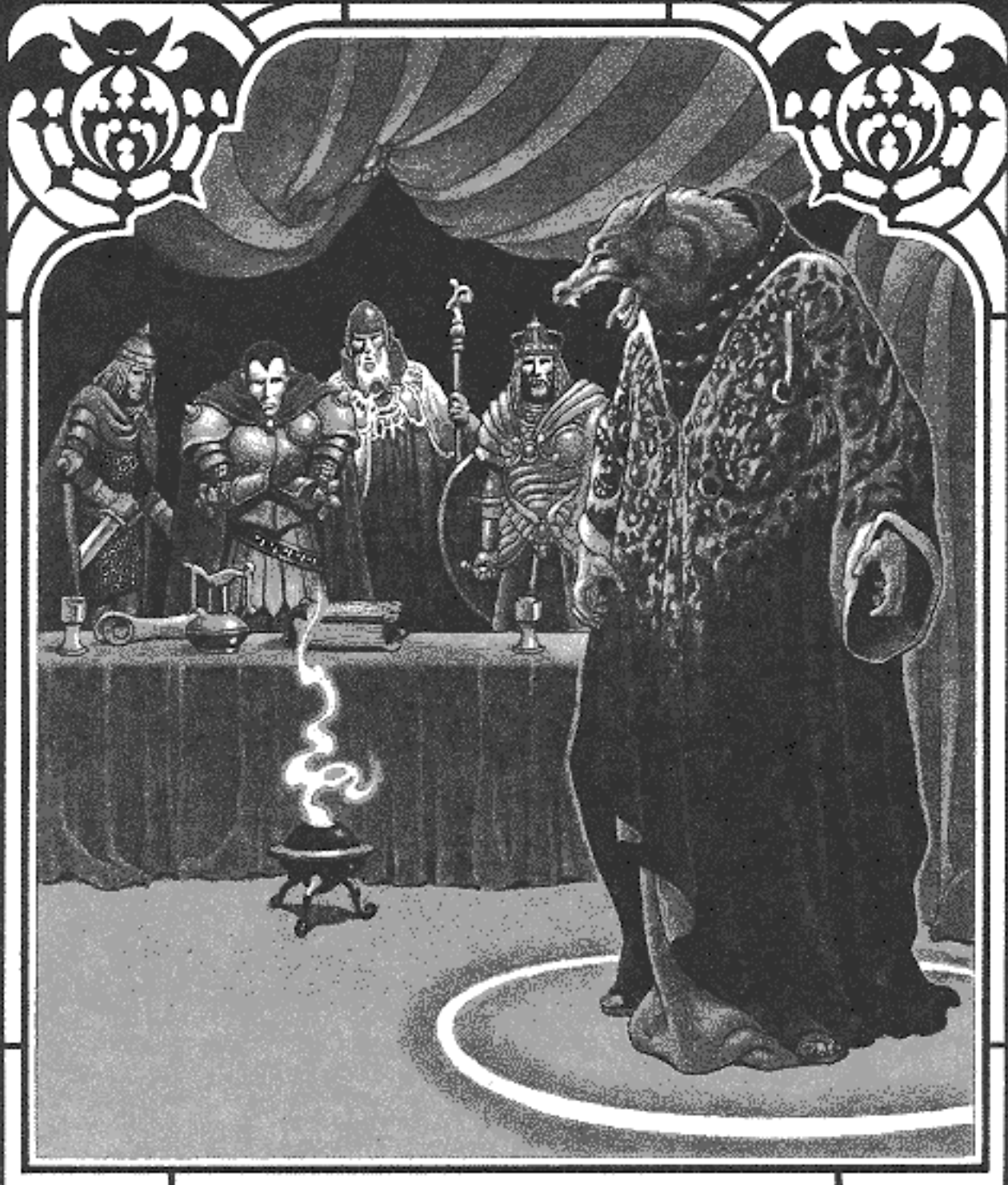
**Ecology:** Arcanaloths, like all yugoloths, play a casual role in the legendary Blood Wars (see the *Outer Planes* appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM™). They are the traders and barterers and master schemers behind the yugoloths' success as mercenaries. Of course, arcanaloths don't perform this task for the glory of their race, but for personal gain only.

The preferred dwelling of the arcanaloth is the plane of Gehenna. They never leave that plane if at all possible, and only do so for very brief periods of time.

**The Book of Keeping:** Yugoloths are servants and mercenaries by nature, so they are prone to summonings and conjurations by spellcasters on the Prime Material Plane. Any time a wizard attempts to summon a lower planar being, he or she is 40% likely to summon a yugoloth. However, a *Book of Keeping* details the processes of summoning and controlling a yugoloth, whether greater or lesser. Some of these tomes even list the personal names of these creatures, and uttering the name will bring that creature.

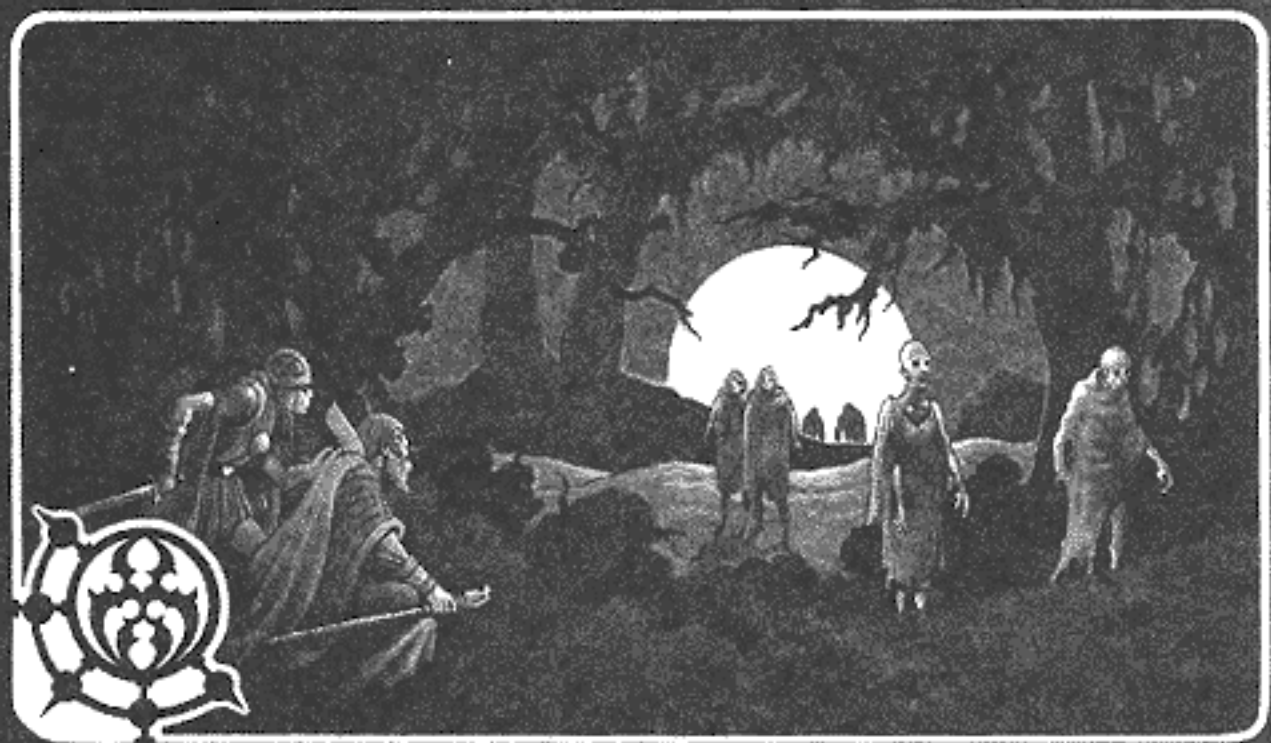
If a yugoloth gains control of a *Book of Keeping*, he claims it for his own and it becomes a record and testament to his negotiating skills, gaining him considerable power among his peers. But woe to a yugoloth who loses his *Book*, for doing so disgraces him, and more woe to the creature who attempts to keep it or hide it from him!





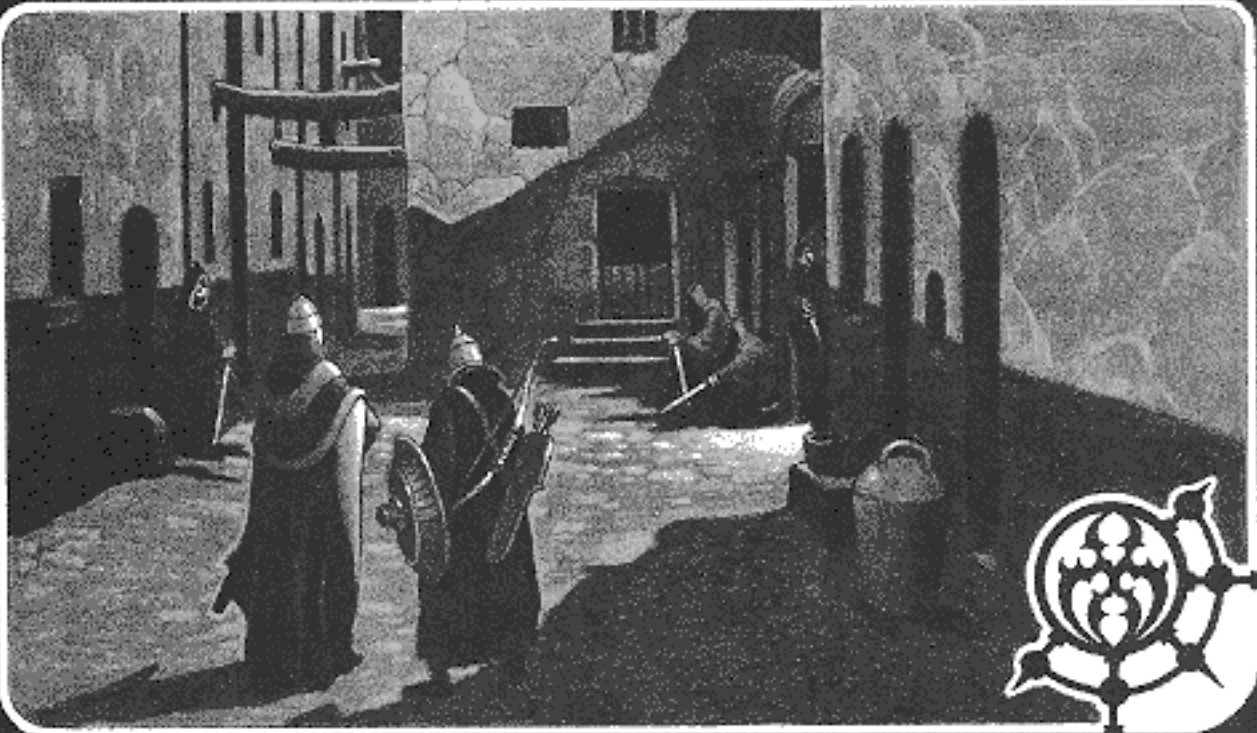




















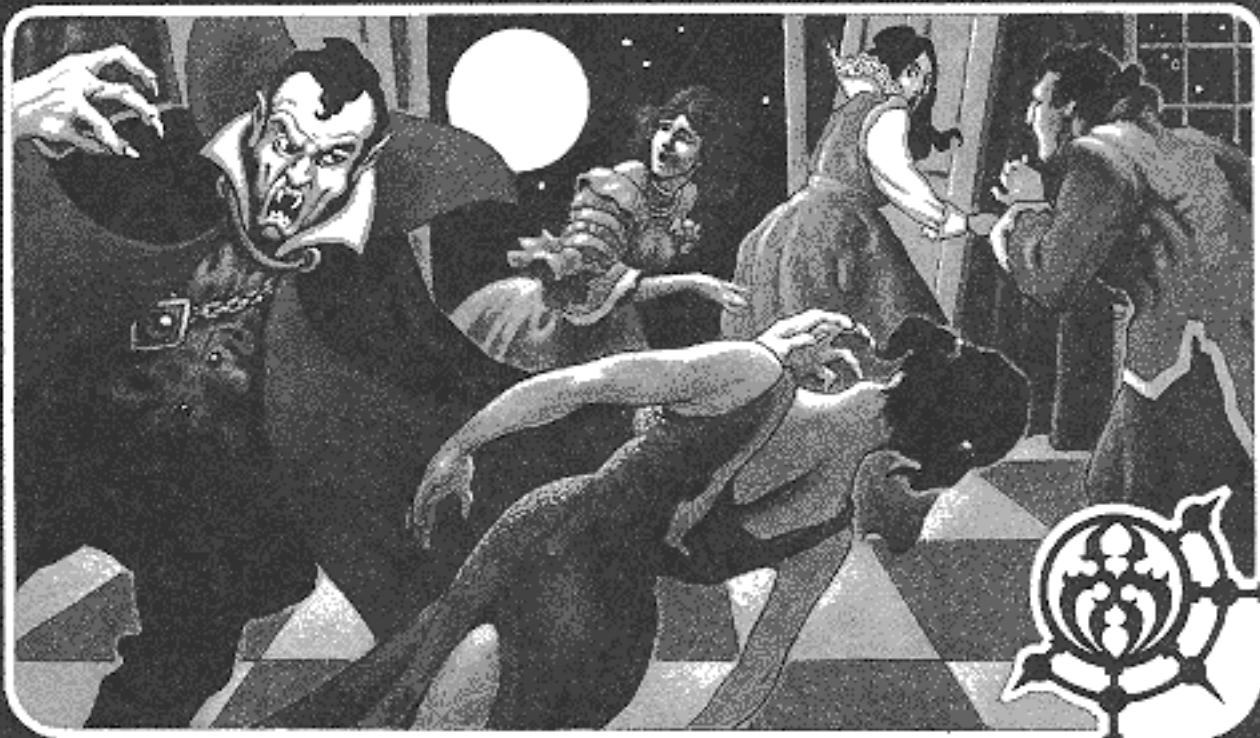
























Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>  
2nd Edition

# Ravenloft<sup>®</sup>

Official Game Adventure

## ROOTS OF EVIL

By Eric Haddock and David Wise

**T**he Grand Conjunction has come to pass! As a result, the lords of Ravenloft have broken through the Mists and escaped into the Prime Material Plane. Bit by bit, monsters of the demiplane of dread are following behind. And in the midst of all, Azalin the Lich and Strahd von Zarovich play a power game—a game with deadly stakes, most notably the player characters' lives. Unless the adventurers act quickly, death will be the *least* of their troubles!

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Until the dark powers recapture the lords of Ravenloft, no place is safe. . . .

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