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Ravenloft

Legacy of Blood™



Great families of the Core

A Ravenloft® Campaign Setting Supplement

Legacy of Blood

Great Families of the Core

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Legacy of Blood

Great Families of the Core

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Introduction



Welcome to a book that has been a long time coming... over a decade, in fact. Back in 1991, the **Ravenloft: Realm of Terror** boxed set featured a number of family trees, one for each of the most powerful noble families of the Core domains. A most intriguing and game-worthy feature of these trees was the inclusion of several blank spots in which birth dates were provided but no other information.

The intent was to allow Dungeon Masters (DMs) to create new villains and heroes related to the central nonplayer characters (NPCs) in the setting, and even to allow particularly bold player characters (PCs) to get close to the darklords in every sense of the word. Individual gamers could make their own decisions of what to do with this information in their own campaigns — with the exception of the characters Laurie and Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove, who, like their uncle George Weathermay, have dedicated their lives to rooting out and destroying the creatures of the night.

Legacy of the Blood returns to the family tree idea in a big way, not by filling the details out completely — although some of that will occur by way of sample NPCs — but instead by giving some definition to what distinguishes the so-called “great families” of the Domains of Dread from one another. There is more than just a surname to being a *real* Von Aubrecker, Drakov, or Renier.

This is a book about skeletons in the closet, family strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities. It delves into traditional goals and attitudes of the various great families, as well as the responsibilities members are expected to fulfill in exchange for the power and prestige their name grants them.

How to Use This Book



Legacy of the Blood is a sourcebook for players and DMs alike. Its purpose is to provide tools to create interesting characters from the upper strata of society in the **Ravenloft** setting. To accomplish this, we provide rules but also general flavor and setting guidelines. DMs can use this book to create allies and enemies for PC heroes, or players can use it to create characters whose lives of power and privilege are at once both blessing and curse. (As always, players should consult with the DM before creating new characters, particularly if drawing

material from supplements. Just because we print it doesn't mean a DM will adopt it for his campaign.)

Chapter Organization

Each chapter in this book describes one or more leading families, starting with a brief bit of “in-world” text, followed by a more factual overview of the family and its recent history. Enough extended family history is also provided here to give a sense of why the family is currently important within the Domains of Dread.

Thereafter, all of the chapters conform to the following format:

Fitting In

This section discusses recommended behavior for characters who wish to fit into the family under discussion (or perhaps into another leading family with close ties to it). Here you'll find unique habits, customs, or traits that set members of a particular family apart from other families, perhaps offering explanations for their importance in the land — or reasons for why they aren't *more* important.

This information is consistent with previous publications. For instance, if an earlier release stated flatly that no males are ever born to a particular family line but must instead be adopted, this circumstance is also discussed here.

Claiming Membership

This section focuses primarily on mechanical issues that should be followed or at least considered during the character creation process. It's not all rules-related, though, some roleplaying-oriented information is also included. Matters such as family blessings and curses, feuds with other families or other branches of the family, known enemies, notoriety, family holdings, alliances, affinities for particular skills or professions, and so on are detailed here as relevant.

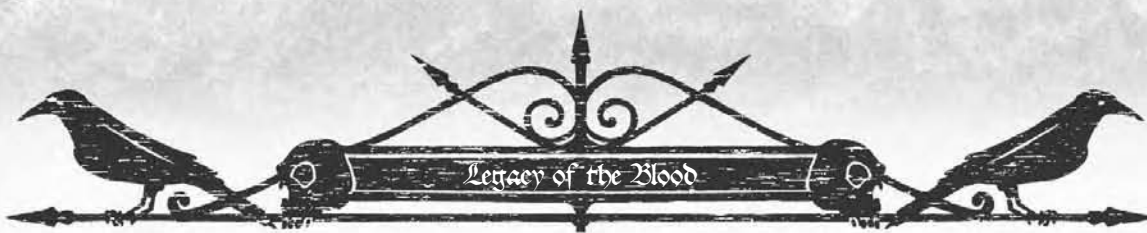
Family Feats

This section describes typical feats that members of the family possess and feats that are exclusive to members of the bloodline. Be sure to consider these feats first when a character of a particular bloodline advances in levels.

Family Prestige Class

Most of the chapters feature a specific prestige class that is either very common among or perhaps even unique to members of the lineage in question.





Family Magic

Some families have unique magic items and/or spells associated with them. Any mystical and arcane items of note are detailed in this section.

Story Hook

This section contains adventure seeds involving the family described in the chapter. (Players reading this book, as with any supplemental gaming resource, should always make sure their DM isn't planning on using the hooks in his campaign before reading this section. If the DM is amenable, they might contain useful ideas for the background for a character that *you* are in the process of creating.)

Sample Characters

A character or two representative of each great family appears in the appendix of this book.

References to Other Texts

Many feats, classes, magic (or scientific) items, skills, and so on referenced in this book can be found in various **Ravenloft** releases. Since it isn't feasible to include full text on each one, where appropriate, notations indicate the **Ravenloft** title in which you can find the relevant listing. The notations are listed as follows:

- * Found elsewhere in this book.
- ^R **Ravenloft Player's Handbook.**
- ^M **Ravenloft Dungeon Master's Guide.**
- ^C **Champions of Darkness.**
- ^H **Heroes of Light.**
- ^{G1} **Ravenloft Gazetteer, Volume I.**
- ^{G2} **Ravenloft Gazetteer, Volume II.**
- ^{G3} **Ravenloft Gazetteer, Volume III.**
- ^{G4} **Ravenloft Gazetteer, Volume IV.**
- ^{G5} **Ravenloft Gazetteer, Volume V.**
- ^V **Van Richten's Arsenal.**

The Aristocrat as Player Character



layer characters can come from all walks of life, so it stands to reason that some may be high-born. Such characters may have a very different mindset than the son or daughter of a tinker who decides to take up arms against the creatures of the night. While the duties and responsibilities that come

with being born into an aristocratic family may vary widely from domain to domain, depending on local culture, there are a few constants across cultural boundaries. In some domains, for example, it may be perfectly acceptable for young nobles to behave in risqué and roguish ways, while in others it may be utterly unacceptable for them to be anything but prim and proper in all things.

The following list includes a number of details that players of high-born characters should keep in mind during character creation, as well as whenever they gain levels. These are not changes to the standard d20 System character creation rules; rather, they are suggestions regarding skills and feats that should aid in creating and developing characters of noble blood. Not every high-born PC needs to (or ought to) follow *every* suggestion, but if a player follows at least a couple of them, the character is sure to have more of that "Ravenloft noble feel."

Bring Honor to the Family Name

While every family has its black sheep — and it is mostly among those black sheep that PCs can be found — few noble characters want to sully the reputation of their family. This principle applies to family members who are born out of wedlock, as well as "legitimate" children; it is not uncommon for nobility in Ravenloft to dally outside of marriage and then to recognize their byblows. In some households, such half-siblings even live side-by-side.

Nobles tend to shy away from skills associated with common thievery, such as Disable Device, Open Lock, and Sleight of Hand (although the latter in particular may be acceptable in domains where young nobles are expected to be rakish).

Knowledge is Power

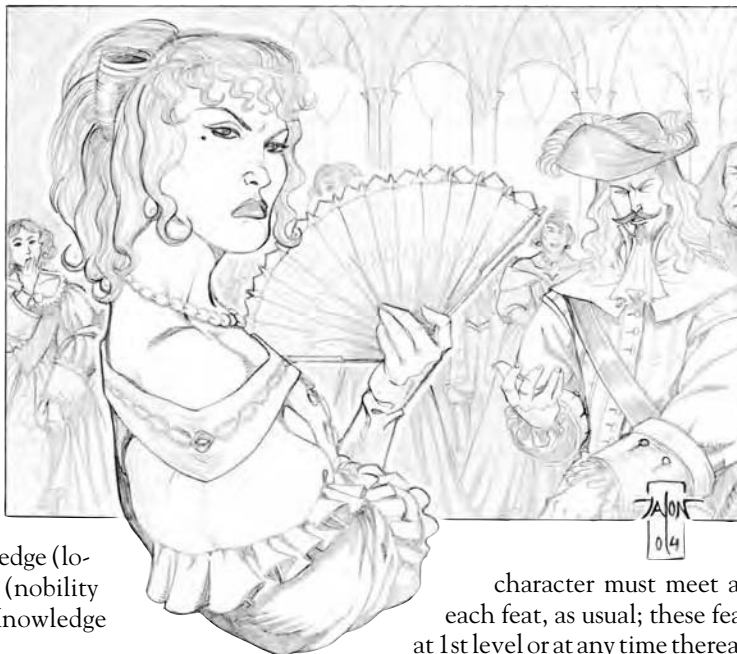
Most of the great families in **Ravenloft** consider this simple statement to be a truism. Knowing friend from enemy or knowing what others might want to keep secret from the rest of the world can give a person just the advantage she needs to stay at the helm of power. Despite what some may claim, noble blood alone is rarely enough to carry a person through life successfully; more often than not, the true advantage of the noble lies with the chance he has to receive a better education than mere peasants or laborers. The noble also finds advantage in the broader, more informed perspective he can gain by traveling the realms and thus





learning about the cultures and creatures that exist there.

Noble characters should have at least one rank in any two of the following skills: Decipher Script, Gather Information, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (religion).



the following feats may also be mandatory for noble characters, as each enhances the character's verbal acuity, perspicacity, and/or glibness: Leadership, Mesmerizing^C, Negotiator, Sharp Wit*, Skill Focus (Diplomacy or Intimidate), or Voice of Wrath^R. The

character must meet all prerequisites for each feat, as usual; these feats may be required at 1st level or at any time thereafter, as agreed upon by the player and DM.

In addition, the DM is justified in making the noble character's player select one or more of the following feats: Investigator, Dabbler^H, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Sharp Ears*, Skill Focus (any Knowledge skill), and University Education^H. The feat may be taken at 1st level, or at any time thereafter, as agreed upon by the player and DM; the character must meet all prerequisites for each feat, as usual.

Say What You Mean – But Don't Necessarily Mean What You Say

Being able to carry on witty repartee and utter clever but ambiguous phrases, whether in trade negotiations or in social settings, is a hallmark of courtiers and the intelligentsia. For the noble who wishes to distance himself from earlier comments or to deliver veiled insults or threats, the ability to “doublespeak” — that is, use words that carry a variety of meanings dependent upon the listener's context or frame of reference — is a very useful talent. Note that if doublespeak is used too often to deliver insults or to humiliate others (such as seeming to offer them a compliment that more educated or careful listeners recognize as an insult), or if the noble comes to be viewed as deceitful because he always equivocates, he may soon find that no one trusts him and that shame is starting to accumulate around the family.

Words Carry Weight

When leaders speak, people listen. As a member of a noble family, the PC automatically carries the mantle of leadership upon his shoulders; he should be able to wield words the way a common warrior might use a mace or a sword. He should be able to turn others' wills his way through negotiation or threats, but he should rarely have to resort to violence. Silver-tongued nobles face a potential weakness in that they often need to be as truthful as possible, or at least able to break agreements (or fail to follow through on threats) in such ways that minimize the public exposure of such lapses. This is out of concern for their family reputation and for their words to be ones that others heed and trust.

The noble character should take at least one rank in Bluff for every two character levels. The DM might also insist that the character acquire the feat(s) Persuasive and/or Skill Focus (Bluff) at some point in his career; the character must meet all prerequisites for each feat, as usual.

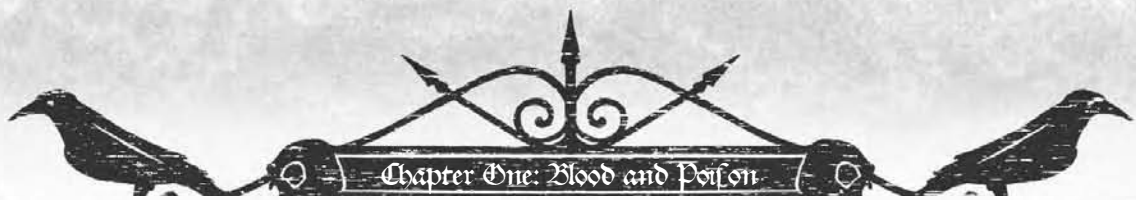
A noble character should have at least one rank in each of Diplomacy and Intimidate. Any of





Chapter One:
Blood and Poison

The Boritsi
Family



Dearest Sister,

I write you this letter from an inn on the border between Borca and Richemulot, just barely on the Richemulouse side, to inform you that my return home will be at least two weeks later than planned, for I need some time to recover from a most severe bout of poisoning. Please don't worry! I am fine now, but I need to regain my strength.

It is with regret, however, that I must inform you that my mission has failed — I was unable to lay eyes upon the “Deathstone” Uncle Rudolph mentioned in his journal. It seems we were at once right and wrong when we decided this was an expedition I was most suited to undertake. That is small consolation, though, for I continue to be wracked by chills and find it difficult to keep down any sustenance other than water and the blandest oatmeal. The only joy I can take in our decision is my belief that, with your constitution, you may well have been murdered outright rather than merely laid up in bed.

Looking back, I think my trouble began the day I sought out the Boritsi Trading Company's offices in Levkarest. I developed an almost instant rapport with Bevel Boritsi, the middle son of Anton Boritsi and nephew to Lady Ivana herself. He is exceedingly handsome and well spoken, and I found myself liking him so much that I felt obliged to be honest with him. I revealed to him that I was only in Borca to meet with his aunt, and that I had only come to the Boritsi Trading Company in the hopes of speaking with someone who could arrange such a meeting. Strangely — at least in the light of the events that have left me bedridden — it seems that Lady Ivana is not terribly close to the rest of her family. Bevel told me of a party Lady Ivana was to hold at week's end and said he would be honored if I would allow him to escort me there. He was such a charming young man that I could hardly refuse.

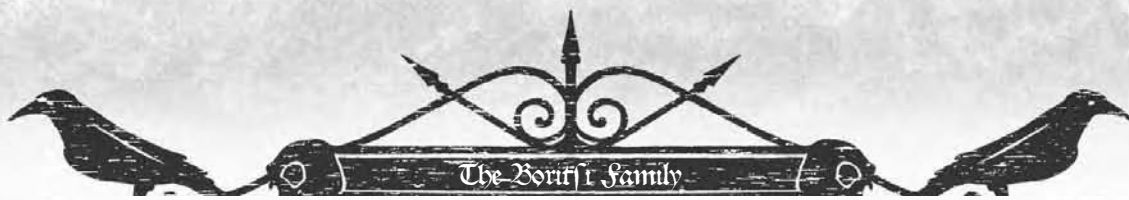
Over the next several days, Bevel introduced me to his siblings and his mother. They all seemed pleasant enough and far more down-to-earth than nobles in most domains. Both Bevel and his sister Hellena worked in the family's freight yards, supervising the loading and unloading of cargoes. I have a hard time picturing many of the young men father keeps insisting we allow to court either of us putting in a hard day's work like Bevel did! On the other hand, I also witnessed first hand that the reputed miserliness of the Boritsi is true.

The dockhands working in Levkarest receive but half of what they earn in Mordent and but a quarter of what they are paid in Martira Bay. I quizzed Bevel and Hellena about this over a sumptuous dinner at a truly elegant inn in the very heart of the city, but they were firm in their belief that their workers were paid a fair wage for their labors. They seemed equally oblivious to the emaciated and ragged appearance of so many of the their citizens, including a number of their dock workers.

I resisted pointing this fact out to either of them, as I did not wish to lose my chance to speak to Lady Ivana. Further, Bevel was being such a delightful host that I didn't want to endanger the chance I had been presented with to enjoy the city I was visiting — it is so rare that we have a chance to savor the places we visit, have you noticed, sister? As Bevel said when I told him of our activities, it was refreshing to spend time with someone who was intelligent and interesting, and yet not a monster-hunter or adventurer. He said that responsibilities of nobles such as we are many and can be heavy, but that we should make sure that we take the time to enjoy our station in life.

By the time the night of the gathering arrived, I had acquired a suitable dress, surprisingly with the help of Hellena! I say “surprising” because if we were to place her and you side-by-side





in your everyday garb, she, dear sister, is so manly in her style of dress that she would make you appear as the most delicate of debutantes. Like you, though, when the occasion calls for it, she "cleans up nicely," as that boor from Kartakass put it last year. Very nicely, in fact — I hardly recognized her.

Similarly, I failed to recognize Lady Ivana when I finally met her at the ball. Our dear Uncle Rudolph has remarked on her beauty, but since he met with her nearly thirty years ago, I assumed the bloom would have faded somewhat. Nothing could have been further from the truth! When Bevel led me through a crowd of young nobles clustered about one of the most beautiful and graceful young women I have seen, I thought he was going to introduce me to a niece or cousin. I failed to hide the surprise on my face when he introduced the woman as Lady Ivana — she didn't look a day over nineteen! At the time, Lady Ivana did not seem to take offense at my obvious surprise, but with a laugh said that she thought I had just paid her a compliment. She then explained to me that her family was blessed with youthful looks that last well into their middle years, even if she was an exceptionally well-preserved Boritsi.

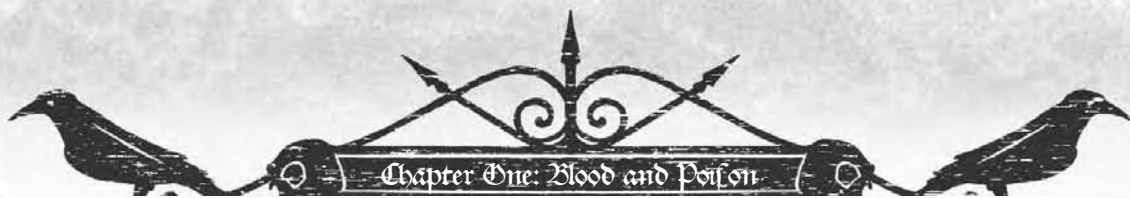
As we talked, I found Lady Ivana to be a fine and witty conversationalist. I found myself almost regretting it when Bevel stepped in and informed his aunt that I had come to Borca on a very specific errand. Thus prodded, I explained to her the fact that you and I have taken it upon us to continue the work started by Rudolph van Richten and that I had come hoping that she would allow me to study what he referred to as the "Deathstone." Her pretty face darkened every so slightly as she informed me that her opinion had not changed since Dr. van Richten had visited her decades earlier. The Deathstone, she revealed, is a relic of an earlier time in the Boritsi family history, and she had no interest in letting "writers of sensationalistic monster tales drag her family's name into the muck." Despite her friendly tone, I sensed that she was keeping her anger in check and I quickly apologized. Moments later, I found myself handed off to Hellenia while Bevel took his aunt aside and launched what appeared to be part defense, part plea on my behalf. As he spoke, Lady Ivana threw the occasional thoughtful glance in my direction.

It was all for naught, however. Bevel sought me out a short time later and said that he aunt was adamant that the Deathstone was not to be spoken of — he said that she was cross with him for even confirming its existence to me. Over his protestations, I went to explain to Lady Ivana that I had not intended to cause any strife within her family, and that all I was interested in was continuing Dr. van Richten's scholarship. Lady Ivana listened patiently, and then asked, "You and Bevel have grown quite fond of each other, have you not?"

I said that I was indeed fond of him, but that I had no notion of what he thought of me. I told her, quite truthfully, that it was hard not to become fond of a man as handsome and well spoken as Bevel. She nodded and then turned to other guests with no further words. Bevel was at my arm seconds later, entreating me to go. He stated nervously that he had seen that expression on his aunt's face before and it meant that she was angrier than he had first believed and that it would be best if I left Borca with all possible haste!

For my part, I had not seen her expression change in the slightest. Further, I could not think what either of us had done to anger her so terribly. However, I know enough to take such advice when it is given, and Bevel and I said our goodbyes outside my inn after his carriage dropped me off. He promised that he would look into the family archives for information about the Deathstone





and write to us about it, and I suggested that perhaps he should come to Mordent in person some time, so I could return the kindness he had shown me. I had the distinct feeling that he liked that idea.

That morning, the carriage I had ordered to take me by road through Richemulot arrived before dawn. The innkeeper served a fine breakfast for which he didn't charge me, stating that my presence in the inn and my known association with Bevel Boritsi had helped his business to the point where he felt he should give me a parting gift. In retrospect, I should have realized that his "gift" was anything but.

Within a few hours of leaving Lebkarest, I found myself beset with terrible nausea. I cried to the coachman to stop, and I barely managed to eject myself from the carriage before my breakfast repeated on me. Even after there was no more food to regurgitate, my stomach still continued to heave. The coachman was clearly upset by my condition, but his concern turned to obvious fear when another black-clad coachman approached us. The newcomer told me that his mistress wished to speak with me and he gestured back down the road I had just traveled. A hundred yards distant, I saw Lady Ivana emerge from a coach with the Boritsi coat of arms on the door. He led me to her, and when she spoke, I felt my blood run cold, despite my illness.

"You would poison my kin against me, so I have seen to it that you have received a far more palatable and immediate poison. Nothing happens in Borca without my knowledge, and no one will ever succeed in subterfuge against me."

I tried to explain that I was not trying to poison her family against her, but she put a gloved finger to my lips and said, "I care nothing for your excuses. I don't even want to hear pleas for mercy. I just want you to know that Borca is my domain, and when I say something is so it will be so. You will never lay eyes upon the Deathstone. Nor will you ever lay eyes upon Bevel again. You will never set foot upon Borcan soil again. If you do, I will not be so merciful next time."

Lady Ivana pulled a tiny vial from a small purse at her waist and offered it to me.

"Drink this. It will neutralize the poison in your blood." I did as she instructed, and while I did not feel better, neither did the awful shaking that had been growing upon me worsen.

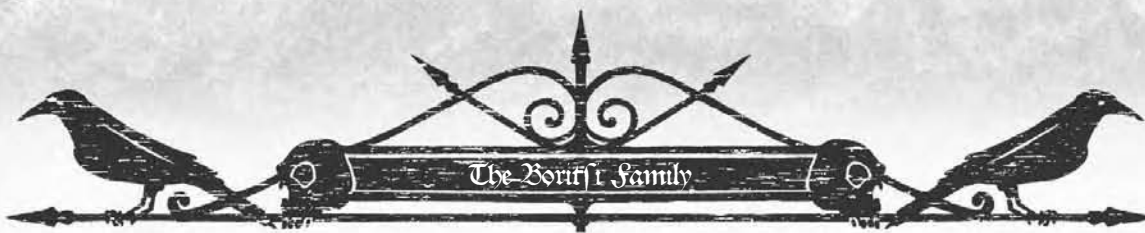
"Heed my warning, Miss Weathermay-Foxgrove," Lady Ivana said, turning back to her coach, "and pass it along to your sister as well. Neither of you is welcome in my land."

Her manservant took me back to my coach and instructed the driver to deliver me to the Richemulouse inn where I remain still. My weakness persists, and only the blandest food and drink stays in my stomach, but I am getting better with each passing day. When I return to the shop, we shall have to discuss most earnestly how we wish to approach Lady Ivana in the future. I have quizzed other guests here at the inn about her when I have been well enough to venture to the common room.

I have come to the conclusion that she actually did show me mercy in letting me leave Borca alive, but I have also learned things that lead me to believe that Lady Ivana is not quite mortal. More when we talk again in person.

Your Loving Sister,
Gennifer





The Boritsis

The Boritsis have the honor of being only one of two noble families that have held power since Borca was founded, the other being the Dilisnyas. In fact, the Boritsis have always held a slightly more prominent position than the Dilisnyas, and their power has grown even more obvious in recent decades. While Ivana Boritsi wields the most obvious power, her younger siblings and their children and grandchildren wait in the wings. Some are still in Borca, while others have moved as far away as Kartakass, Nova Vaasa and Liffe. Regardless of where they live, they are still Boritsi, and they carry with them their family legacies.

According to records kept in the Boritsi family archive at the ancestral estate of Misericordia, the Boritsis were a prominent merchant family who supported Strahd von Zarovich I in his battles against the Tergs. Many of the most prominent members of the family traveled to Barovia to attend the wedding of Strahd's younger brother, Sergei; however, before they could return, a strange mist descended upon the land's borders, and for the next three centuries Borca had no contact with the rest

of the world. (See *Ravenloft Gazetteer Vols. I and IV* for details.)

During the land's three centuries of isolation following the murder of neighboring ruler Strahd von Zarovich I, the Boritsi family was instrumental in keeping peace in the land. They kept the peasantry organized and working, as well as keeping other powerful and affluent families in Borca from panicking and overworking the commoners of their land. Everyone suffered a decrease in lifestyles, but the land held together. Over time, the Boritsis became the de facto rulers of Borca, with virtually everyone else owing them a debt in some fashion or another.

Putting the strength of the community ahead of personal or family wealth and power became a Boritsi trademark during Borca's long isolation. When the Mists lifted from the realm and the land could once again interact with Barovia and the new nations that had formed on its borders, the Boritsis eagerly took to the roadways and rivers with their trade goods. The sudden influx of vast wealth for the Boritsis was more than the ego of patriarch Klaus Boritsi could handle. He started throwing extravagant parties and wooing countless women into his bed. One of his conquests was



Camille Dilisnya, a member of a family with ancient ties to the Boritsis. The two eventually wed and had three children together — Ivana, Sulo and Anton — but Klaus Boritsi continued his philandering. Eventually, *someone* grew tired of feeling betrayed by him; whether it was one of his mistresses or his wife, none can say, but Klaus was poisoned with a horrible concoction that granted him a painful death. Most concur that the culprit was his estranged wife.

With Klaus Boritsi's death, change came to both Borca and the Boritsi family. While the Boritsis had never before been forceful about their ownership of nearly everything within the land's borders, Camille immediately starting making it *very* clear that whatever non-Boritsis owned, they had only with the leave of the Boritsis. The light hand of the Boritsis suddenly became very heavy.

Camille felt that a merchant's life was beneath her and her children. She had always discouraged her daughter from having anything to do with the family's traditional occupation, instead encouraging her to refine her courtly manners and to earn her living solely by growing her wealth out of the labor of serfs toiling on her lands. Ivana took to her mother's tutelage like a fish to water. In fact, her emulation of Camille was perhaps too accurate, for Camille died as mysteriously and painfully as Klaus Boritsi had, and Ivana took control of the family holdings at the tender age of just 20.

In the decades that have followed since Ivana's ascension to the head of the Boritsi family, she has continued to rule Borca with a system very much like that started by her mother, although the tax burden Ivana imposes upon her nobles and merchants is even heavier. Nonetheless, her siblings and their children are carrying on the grand tradition of the Boritsi Trading Company. Sulo Boritsi relocated with his wife and young children to Bergovista in Nova Vaasa shortly before the Great Upheaval. He was quick to take advantage of the discovery of new islands in the Nocturnal Sea, and the Boritsi Trading Company now has permanent offices in Armeikos, along with a ship that plies the length of the coast and visits every nearby island with noteworthy settlements. Further, his wealth grew quickly because he had business interests outside Borca and therefore clear of Ivana's heavy taxes.

Ivana has no children (but see "Eduardo Leoni and the Boritsi Family"), yet Sulo and Anton each have three children who range in age from their

late teens to late twenties. The eldest of Sulo's sons is married with a child of his own, while the others are either recently married or engaged in courtships. All are involved in the Boritsi Trading Company to some degree. (Further, both Sulo and Anton are rumored to have inherited their father's wandering eye. It is possible that each has one or more illegitimate children in addition to their acknowledged progeny.)

While Anton Boritsi died in 739 under mysterious circumstances, his wife and two eldest children Bevel and Hellena continue to operate the family's main warehouses, caravans and river barges from Levkarest. Although the family is still associated with Ivana's eccentric and harsh rulership in Borca — and with her reputation as the "Black Widow" who loves and leaves men dead — the Boritsi name is also increasingly linked with what is emerging as the foremost trading company in the known world.

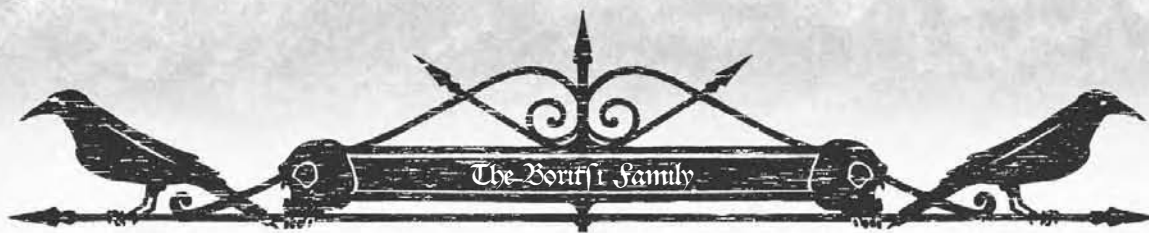
In addition to the dangerous reputations of Ivana and her surviving brother, several among the younger generation of Boritsis have dark streaks as well. While the Boritsi Trading Company is relatively fair in the wages it pays workers, Bevel in particular is known to deal harshly with employees who are found to give less than all to their jobs, and even harsher with those who are caught stealing. It has been said that Vlad Drakov himself could learn a thing or two from Bevel Boritsi when it comes to painful punishments meted out to dishonest employees.

Sulo Boritsi is much less of a disciplinarian with his workers than his otherwise charming nephew Bevel. Nonetheless, more than one would-be competitor has either found his wares tainted by deadly poisons or has himself fallen victim to poison; this is especially true among those who fail to reach some arrangement with the Boritsi Trading Company before entering into private deals with shops and suppliers the Boritsis have previously patronized. Involvement on the part of the Boritsis has never been proven in any of these incidents.

Eduardo Leoni and the Boritsi Family

The one well-known illegitimate Boritsi is also the most controversial person associated with the family, save perhaps for the Lady Ivana herself. Eduardo Leoni, owner of a minor merchant and horse-trading company based in Nova Vaasa's Arbora, claims his father was Abelardo Leoni, one of Ivana Boritsi's many ill-fated lovers. Eduardo claims that





his grandmother snatched him from the Boritsi estate of Misericordia only days after he was born. He maintains that the madwoman believed Ivana to be a monstrous killer who murdered his father and that rescuing him from her daughter's clutches would be the only way to save the infant Eduardo from suffering the same fate. Leoni claims to have become aware of his heritage through diaries uncovered after his grandmother's death. He now wishes to establish a place within the Boritsi family for himself, his wife and his two children.

When news of this claim first reached the Boritsis, an angry Sulo Boritsi ordered his eldest son to investigate. Adventurers were hired and dispatched, but word came back that the documents in Eduardo's possession indeed seemed genuine; they even reported that Leoni bears a passing resemblance to Lady Boritsi herself.

The rest of the family turned to their ageless matriarch for answers. She denied ever having had any children and ordered them to drop the matter. She then instructed Ivan Dilisnya to keep a watch on the border and seize any caravans, traders, or travelers associated with Eduardo Leoni's merchant company that dared cross into her domain. Ivana will hear no more talk of the imposter who claims to be her son. Eduardo, for his part, stands adamantly by his claim even in the face of the angry Boritsi family, and has encouraged his children to attempt to build at the very least cordial relationships with the youngest children of Sulo and Anton.

The Truth of the Matter

Ivana Boritsi's denial of Eduardo Leoni's claim of being her son is legitimate; she has never become pregnant by any of her lovers (for this is another area of expertise in which her mother taught her well). The diaries possessed by Eduardo — those revealing how his grandmother faked his death when he was a baby and spirited him away to Nova Vaasa for safety — are extremely well-made forgeries.

The truth is that Eduardo is the child of Bentino Leoni, Abelardo Leoni's older brother; in fact, Eduardo's actual birth date lies a full 8 years after Abelardo's untimely death. His "passing resemblance" to Lady Boritsi was achieved through a carefully worded *limited wish* cast by his mistress, an accomplished elf wizard from Sithicus. She also helped create the forged diaries, using magical and mundane means mastered during her long life. (Eduardo himself is also well versed in the art of forging documents.)

Why is Eduardo Leoni engaging in such a dangerous fraud? Simple greed, nothing more. While his grandmother and his parents did spend his childhood years filling his head with tales of how evil Ivana Boritsi is and how corrupt her brothers are, he has no interest in them beyond the wealth and influence he hopes to gain by being accepted into the family. What money Eduardo currently has came to him from his deceased wife (whom he "disposed of" shortly after hatching the plot to impersonate a Boritsi), and it is not enough to satisfy either his tastes or those of his elf lover.

Eduardo believes that he will eventually gain some inroads into the Boritsi family, because while he dislikes honest labor, his children are all diligent, hard workers, something both Sulo and Bevel Boritsi seem to appreciate. He is also certain that no one will be able to unmask his lies as his only (possibly) living relatives, his younger sister and brother, have been missing since the Great Upheaval. It may take a few years, but Eduardo is nothing if not patient, especially since his mistress is quite knowledgeable in the art of brewing life-extending potions.

Fitting In

House Boritsi is a proud and ancient merchant family that was counted among the chief supporters of Strahd von Zarovich I when he brought peace to Barovia and the surrounding realms. Members of the Boritsi family are expected to be well-spoken, well-groomed and well-educated. They have an almost inborn desire for the better things in life, and they always strive to make sure that they have the best of everything. However, the Boritsis do not necessarily insist that family members adhere strictly to social convention; for example, Anton Boritsi's teenage daughter Hellena is not shunned by the rest of the family simply because she tends to dress and act more like a barge-pilot than a young noble-woman. They will not, however, tolerate ignorance and boorish behavior.

The Boritsis are also known for their ability to carry grudges, always "evening the score" against those who wrong them. Generally, if someone deals dishonestly with a Boritsi in trade or some other business dealing, the Boritsi slowly but surely destroy the other person's business; if someone wrongs a Boritsi in affairs of the heart, the wronged one takes steps to ensure that the offender never wrongs anyone again; and if someone harms them or theirs, they make that person — and often that person's entire family — regret they ever heard the name Boritsi.





Chapter One: Blood and Poison

Boritsis are also known for not picking fights they can't win. They have risen rapidly as a mercantile power in the Core, managing to keep Borca from disintegrating during its long isolation, because as a group they seem to have a knack for accurately judging opponents and situations before exposing themselves to danger. Of course, just because a Boritsi deems an enemy too powerful or a challenge too complex doesn't mean he ignores it. As with the way they carry grudges, the Boritsis can be very patient in their approaches to challenges. If an enemy or obstacle is too much for them to handle at first, they are willing to spend weeks, months, or even years working toward building themselves up or chipping away at whatever obstacles lie in their way until the day comes when they can claim victory.

All in all, the Boritsis look out for those they consider friends (or at least people useful to their current goals), but they do whatever they can to bring ruin to those who cross or slight them. Members of the family work hard to make themselves loved and admired by those around them, but when doing so proves difficult or impossible, they resort to inspiring fear — which they consider a perfectly acceptable alternative.

Claiming Membership

The typical Boritsi conforms almost perfectly to the ideal of physical beauty as held by the people of Borca: Both males and females have athletic, statuesque figures, with smooth porcelain skin that accentuates their inky black eyes and hair. Their hands and feet are typically small, with long, delicate digits.

Boritsi family Traits

- **+2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma:** The Boritsi are known to possess sharp, analytical minds in addition to remarkable presence and stunningly good looks.
- **Graceful Aging:** The Boritsi have always been blessed with long and healthy lives, maintaining their youthful appearance and vigor well into middle age. The price they pay for this is a sudden and sharp decline in bodily and mental health toward the end of their lives, so that they suffer the indignities of old age in a far briefer and more severe manner than most humans. (Ivana Boritsi may well be the most extreme example of this curious Boritsi trait — although a sexagenarian, she still appears to be a young woman in her late teens or early twenties.)

Members of the Boritsi family age according to the following table, rather than using the "Aging Effects" table in Chapter 6 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Race	Middle Age ¹	Old ²	Venerable ³	Maximum Age
Human	55	68	80	+2d12 years
Half-Elf	93	100	125	+2d20 years
Caliban	45	55	65	+2d8 years

¹ At middle age, -1 to Str, Dex and Con; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.

² At old age, -1 to Str, Dex and Con; +1 to Int, Wis and Cha.

³ At venerable age, -4 to Str, Dex and Con; -2 to Int, Wis and Cha.

- **Favored Class: Aristocrat.** A multiclass Boritsi's aristocrat class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing (see XP for Multiclass Characters, Chapter 3, *Player's Handbook*). Further, this favored class limitation is more stringent than most: A Boritsi must begin at 1st level as an aristocrat, and fully one-quarter of her character levels at any given time must be aristocrat levels; that is, a Boritsi character must take a 2nd level in aristocrat by the time she reaches 8th level, a 3rd aristocrat level by 12th level and so on.

family feats

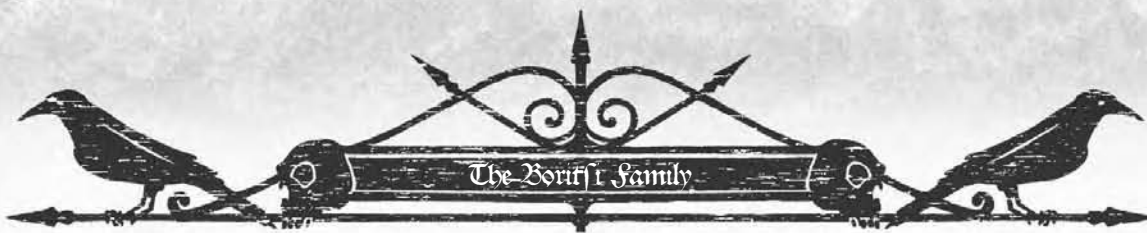


Although they have spread to many domains in the Land of Mists, the Boritsis still carry certain family traits and customs with them. They are sharp in business matters, gifted at making conversation and possessed of naturally outgoing personalities. They have also learned the value of keeping a close eye on both friends and enemies, for one never knows when a reversal in status or fortune may take place.

When creating a Boritsi, the player or DM must select at least one of the character's feats from the following list during character creation: Alertness, Deceitful, Diligent, Haunted^R, Jaded^R, Judge Difficulty*, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Negotiator, Persuasive, Poison Resistance*, Sharp Eyes*, Sharp Wit*, or Skill Focus (Appraise, Bluff, or Diplomacy).

New feats

The feats presented here are particularly suited to Boritsi characters, but under special circumstances the DM may allow other characters to acquire them.



Judge Difficulty [General]

You are particularly talented at sizing up an opponent or a situation to better decide whether discretion truly is the better part of valor.

Prerequisite: Sense Motive 1 rank.

Benefit: To use this feat, you must first observe a creature, location, or situation for a number of consecutive rounds equal to 10 – your Wisdom bonus. The target observed must be within line of sight for the entire time; you may move normally during this time, or take other move actions that do not draw your attention away from your target, since your observation requires only a standard action each round.

Once this time has elapsed, you make a Sense Motive check to discern the relative challenge inherent to whatever you have been observing. If you have been watching a creature, you may determine its HD/character level and the class or prestige class in which it has the most levels. If you have been observing a location or situation, you may determine the approximate DC of the check required to overcome or bypass it. For example, if you have been observing the people around you to discern whether you might get from them the identity of the true master of Dementlieu's criminal underworld, you could find the DC of a Gather Information required to determine that information. If you were at a council meeting to negotiate with Malocchio Aderre so that he would cease his attacks against the Vistani, you would discover the Diplomacy DC necessary to succeed.

The result of your Sense Motive check determines the information you gain.

Sense Motive Result	Benefit or Information Gained
10–15	Learn creature's power relative to your own [†] ; learn whether a check can be made to overcome or bypass current situation
16–20	Learn creature's approximate HD/levels [‡] ; learn approximate DC [‡] of check required to overcome or bypass current situation
21–25	Learn creature's exact HD/levels; learn exact DC of check required to overcome or bypass current situation
26–30	As 21–25 above. If observing a creature with character levels, you also determine the class in which it has the most levels (this might simply identify a creature as having more "monster HD" than character levels).

31+

If observing a situation, you gain a +1 competence bonus on any check made within the next 24 hours to overcome that particular situation.

As 26–30 above. If observing a creature, you also determine all classes in which it has levels, as well as the precise number of levels it has in its highest class. If observing a situation, you gain a +2 competence bonus on any check made within the next 24 hours to overcome that particular situation.

[†] "Lesser," meaning total HD/levels lower than the observer's by 3 or more; "about the same," meaning within 2 HD/levels of the observer; or "greater," meaning total HD/levels higher than the observer's by 3 or more.

[‡] To within 1 or 2 HD/levels, for a creature, or to within 3 DC points for a situation, as determined by the DM.

You may make only one Sense Motive check per creature or challenge in any 24-hour period, unless the circumstances under which the check was first made change in a dramatic fashion (DM's discretion).

Poison Resistance [General]

You have developed a tolerance to a certain type of poison by carefully exposing yourself to small doses over an extended period of time.

Prerequisite: Con 13.

Benefit: Choose one of the four basic types of poison as defined in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (contact, ingested, inhaled, or injury). You gain a +4 bonus to all saving throws made to resist the effects of poisons of that type.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of poison.

Sharp Eyes [General]

You have a knack for noticing tiny details and things that may be out of place.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Search checks and Spot checks.

Sharp Wit [General]

You are an adept debater and conversationalist and a sharp observer of human nature.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff checks made to send hidden messages, a +2 bonus on opposed Diplomacy checks and a +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks made to avoid being bluffed or to discern secret messages.



Family Classes



The majority of Boritsi belong to the aristocrat class, although expert levels are not uncommon; some members of the family are known to have levels in fighter or rogue. In many cases among second and third children of the Boritsis, entering the church and gaining cleric levels is not uncommon. Some exceptional members of the family enter prestige classes such as detective^H, dilettante^H, duelist, or pistoleer^V. Certain Boritsi, mostly those with close ties to the Dilisnya family, may also have levels in court poisoner^{G4}.

Third or fourth children or those who are distant cousins also occasionally gain levels in the courtier prestige class, described below, using their good looks and family ties to make their presence desired at noble parties, while also gathering more power and wealth for themselves. (Many courtiers involved with the Boritsis, however, come to them in the form of suitors.)

Courtier

Many who flourish at court are nothing more than high-class prostitutes, or perhaps lesser nobles simply looking for a wealthy spouse. Others harbor more ambition, and almost always hide ulterior motives behind their brilliant smiles and flattering words. They might be seeking information to help them or their current allies gain advantage over the target of their attentions, or they could have even more sinister thoughts in mind. Courtiers are always on the lookout for loose-tongued fools who might mistake friendship or physical intimacy for a bond of trust, and who then talk too easily about things that should be kept secret.

Members of the courtier prestige class may seem no different from the fetching young baubles who appear on the arm of many powerful nobles, but like a ring or a boot-heel with a secret compartment, they can be very dangerous depending on what they hide within.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a courtier (Crt), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Bluff 7 ranks, Diplomacy 7 ranks, Gather Information 7 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

Feats: Alertness, Judge Difficulty*, Sharp Wit*.

Special: Must have spent at least 6 months among other courtiers at a recognized court of a major noble or ruler.

Class Skills

The courtier's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis).

Skills
Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.



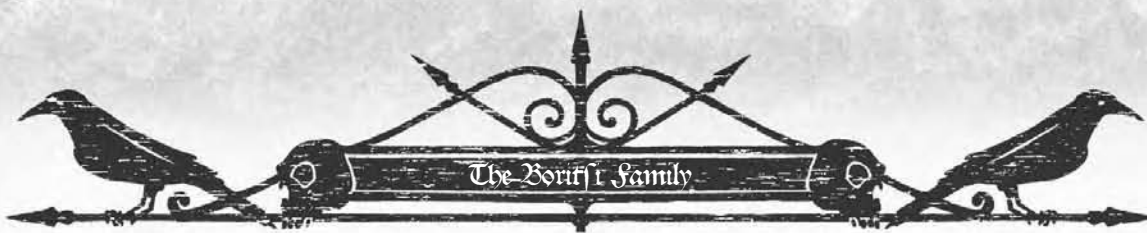


Table 1-1: The Courtier

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Attractive
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Charm person
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Alluring
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Detect poison
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Seductive

Class features

All of the following are class features of the courtier prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The courtier is proficient with all simple weapons and with the rapier, but is not proficient with any kind of armor or shields.

Attractive (Ex): Starting at 1st level, the courtier is highly skilled at making herself an appealing companion by quickly identifying what other people's interests and desires are. After interacting with a member of her own race for a number of rounds equal to 10 – her Wisdom bonus, the courtier gains a +2 competence bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks directed at that target. This bonus is lost if the target learns that the courtier has friendly dealings with individuals or groups opposed to him, or if he ever perceives the courtier to threaten the target or anything or anyone dear to him.

This bonus increases to +3 at 3rd level and to +4 at 5th level.

Charm Person (Sp): At 2nd level, the courtier's personality and physical allure has become so remarkable that she can effectively use *charm person* a number of times per day equal to her Charisma bonus. This functions as the spell cast by a sorcerer of the courtier's class level.

Alluring (Ex): At 3rd level, the courtier grows more capable of attracting others. Her attractive ability, as gained at 1st level, now extends to all humanoids of the same class (in the scientific sense; i.e., all mammalian humanoids); thus, the courtier gains a +2 competence bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks directed at such targets.

Poison Sense (Ex): At 4th level, the courtier has seen and participated in enough of the darker side of courtly life that she has developed a strong aptitude for detecting poisons in food and drink. The courtier must be able to inspect the foodstuff

for at least 1 full round and must make a Spot check (DC = poison's save DC) to notice the poison.

Seductive (Ex): At 5th level, the courtier's attractive ability now extends to all creatures with an Intelligence score of 4 or higher; thus, the courtier gains a +2 competence bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks directed at such targets. If the courtier is using the Bluff skill in combat to feint against a nonhumanoid, she suffers the usual –4 penalty to her check.

Family Magic Items



ew of the magic items in possession of the Boritsi family hold any more significance than the silver serving trays that have been used in formal dinners for the past four generations. While a few *cloaks of charisma* (some in the shape of shirts or dresses) and *rings of protection* may be passed down through the generations, none are considered heirlooms or family hallmarks.

However, both Boritsi and Dilisnya artisans have been know to craft *spoons of poison detection*.

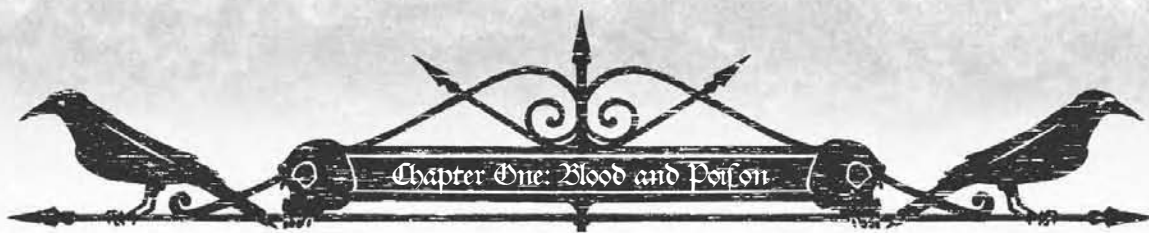
Spoon of Poison Detection: When this utensil is placed into food or drink that has been poisoned, the spoon immediately turns very warm (not hot enough to burn the hand, but nearly so). The spoon cannot identify the type or the nature of the poison, only its presence. It also detects any substance to which the user may have a deadly allergy, but which is harmless to others and therefore would not normally be revealed through the use of *detect poison*.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *detect poison*, *heat metal*; Price 6,000 gp.

Exceptional Magic Items

There are three noteworthy items contained within the shadowed halls of Misericordia — an intelligent magical spoon and two minor artifacts





— although few among the Boritsi know of these items' significance.

Camille's Teaspoon

This item is more properly a signature item of the Dilisnya family, as the poison-loving banker and assassin clan have long believed the old adage, "He who lives by the sword also dies by it." Because the Dilisnya have long considered poison to be their "sword," they have for many generations commissioned magical artisans to create silverware (and other items) enchanted to sense poison in food. As a result, perhaps dozens of *spoons of poison detection* exist in the hands of the Dilisnya family and their relatives. However, the oldest known version, once owned by Ivana Boritsi's mother, is an intelligent item with a unique flaw.

Camille's teaspoon is located with the rest of the family's formal silverware, next to the butler's pantry on the ground floor of Misericordia. It has not been used by any save Ivana herself since the death of her mother, for it features the Dilisnya family crest on the handle and therefore doesn't match any of the rest of the silverware in the house.

Camille's Teaspoon: *Spoon of poison detection*; AL NE; Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 10; speech, telepathy, 120 ft. darkvision and hearing; Ego score 15.

Lesser Powers: *Deathwatch* (continually active), item has 10 ranks in Craft (poison making) (total modifier +13) and Knowledge (nature) (total modifier +13).

Special Purpose: Defeat/slay all enemies of the Dilisnya family.

Dedicated Power: Item can use *poison* (heightened to 4th level) when stirred in food or drink.

Personality/Traits: *Camille's teaspoon* is a surly entity, caring only about the wellbeing of the Dilisnya family fortune. When stirred by a Dilisnya, it can poison the food or drink of anyone it perceives as an enemy to the Dilisnya fortune or an enemy to any particular Dilisnya and has done so on many occasions, with or without the approval of the Dilisnya who used the spoon. While Ivana Boritsi is technically half-Dilisnya, the spoon still recognizes her as a Dilisnya; it is unknown whether it might be as cognizant of others who carry only a small portion of Dilisnya blood.

Even when used by one of Dilisnya blood, the spoon has a unique flaw unknown in other examples of this type of item. If used in food or drink that has been poisoned by someone who has a strong emotional attachment to the imbiber —

whether that emotion is love, hate, jealousy, or some other — the spoon cannot detect the poison. The spoon functions normally if the one with the emotional attachment has hired or tricked another person into poisoning the food or drink, but not if he or she herself administers the poison.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *detect poison*, *heat metal*, *poison*; Price 74,800 gp.

Danzig's Icon of Ezra (Minor Artifact)

This beautifully painted ivory curio was created by Seigfreid Danzig, a Levkarest artist and worshipper of Ezra. It consists of three panels, two smaller ones attached with hinges on the left and right sides of the larger (15-inch-tall) central panel. The left panel shows Ezra as a young girl, bringing joy to her parents in their simple cottage home. The central panel shows scenes of Ezra caring for the sick and wounded, protecting peasants from a viciously fanged vampire while preaching to an adoring crowd. The right panel shows Ezra ascending into the Mists, with vampires, werewolves and demons retreating from the righteous glow of her silver sword. The smaller panels fold over the larger one and can be fastened into this closed position by a silver clasp that resembles Ezra's sword and shield.

Danzig is known to have created at least twenty such "icons," and each was different from the one before. The icon owned by the Boritsi family was purchased by Klaus Boritsi because he found the picture of Ezra as a child to be remarkably similar in appearance to his beautiful eight-year-old daughter Ivana. It was Klaus's last gift to Ivana before his death, and it has stood on the bedside table in Ivana's private chambers ever since. In fact, upstairs maids at the Boritsi manor have said that they occasionally find their mistress praying before the icon when summoned to assist her in dressing in the morning. Those with sharper tongues than wits have been heard to say that Ezra most certainly does not want her attention drawn to Lady Ivana's bedchamber, for ill things occur there — anyone save the lady herself who spends the night there emerges either dead or utterly transformed.

It is unknown whether all of Danzig's icons have mystical powers (see below), or just the one purchased by Klaus Boritsi. Most of Danzig's creations have been destroyed over the years — some in shipwrecks, some in paka raids along the Musarde River and others in fires or other disasters. Eleven

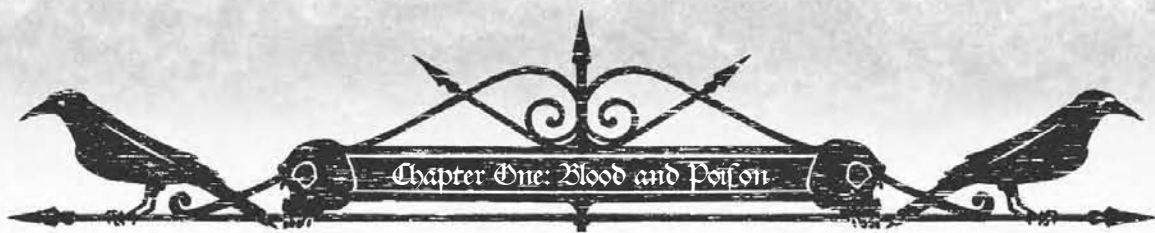


are known to have been destroyed or irrevocably lost, and the whereabouts of the rest are unknown. Any sect of Ezra would pay handsomely for the return of even one of the icons, not because they have any notion of their magical power but because of their great beauty and sanctity. Ezran clerics have approached Ivana Boritsi to inquire about the icon her father purchased from Danzig, but she has denied still having it in her possession. Not even the Bastion of Ezra dares to openly doubt Lady Ivana's word.

The icon had already been in Ivana's possession for ten years when she first became aware of its properties. That fateful night, she prayed before it, hoping Ezra might help her secure the love of the beautiful poet Pieter, who had captured her heart. As she prayed, the painted scenes changed before her eyes. The left panel showed an image of her first meeting with Pieter. The middle panel showed her playing a harp while he stood next to her with a joyous expression on his face. The right panel showed Ivana embracing and kissing Pieter, her mother looking on with a broad smile. The girl was of course elated, for she thought Ezra was showing her that not only would her love for Pieter grow into marriage, but that the obvious dislike her mother showed for him would also be overcome. In time, as the icon showed, Ivana and Pieter's loved blossomed, but only a few months later, Ivana realized that the last scene had not been one of marriage but a revelation about how she would kill Pieter with a poisoned kiss after (from her perspective) he seduced her mother.

In the decades since, the icon has granted Ivana several more visions, some of which have stirred her heart with false hope of love similar to the first one, but mostly ones that warned her about impending danger so she could avoid it. One of the most important visions warned her about an attempt on her life by her cousin Ivan; the attempt might well have been successful if she hadn't been able to turn it back on him. Another significant vision showed her that dust from the mysterious *deathstone* in Misericordia's wine cellar was the ingredient that had been missing from her concoction to transform men and women into her loyal servants, the *ermordenungs*.

The simple truth is that a powerful divinatory entity — whether Ezra or some other — can be accessed through the icon, since Ivana's prayers to it are sometimes answered with visions of past, present and/or future.



Danzig's Icon of Ezra: This artifact grants accurate visions drawn from the past, present and future of one who pray to Ezra in front of it. However, since these images are static representations, they are open to interpretation. For instance, Ivana's initial assumption that the icon had shown her a happy union between herself and Pieter (as opposed to her later understanding after she had killed him with a poisoned kiss) is a perfect example of how the icon's "messages" might be misinterpreted.

When a solitary character (i.e., one who is alone and out of earshot of any other creature) prays to Ezra before the icon seeking any sort of assistance or guidance, the DM should roll 2d10. If the result is 15 or greater, the character must make a DC 15 Will save. If this save is successful, the character receives a vision of three images culled from her past, present and/or future; these images appear upon the icon's panels and are in some meaningful way related to her prayers. Note that the new images are figments visible only to the praying character, and that anyone else entering the room sees only the icon's usual imagery. (Naturally, if the DM wishes to use the icon to provide a hint for the party or to place a covert lead toward their next adventure, a lone PC praying or even merely genuflecting before the icon might automatically receive a vision.)

The icon reveals only situations or facts that relate directly to the praying character. The DM should describe the scenes neutrally, but with enough detail that the player can recognize characters, locations, or events featured in it. The meaning of the images — particularly those that portray the future — should be left entirely up to the interpretation of the one who sees the vision. The icon's revelations always have some connection to the matter or difficulty prayed about, but its visions are always centered on the supplicant.

For example, if a PC's prayer is related to his family in a faraway domain, one of the icon's images may be of him embracing his loved ones in travel-stained clothes, looking several years older. From this, the PC may be reassured that he will make it home some day. However, the second panel might show the PC, as he appears now, standing before an unknown castle; presently, he has no idea what the castle image means. Are his loved ones held captive there? Does the person who lives there have the secret to sending him back to the land he came from? Will he someday become

a lord and invite his family to live in his castle? The image is completely open to interpretation.

Note that a prayer along the lines of "Please reveal where Strahd sleeps during the day" never results in a response if the DM has no plans of sending the party against Strahd. If the vampire lord plays some part in the ongoing storyline, however, the icon may well reveal the information the PC desires — although, at the DM's discretion, it may provide only partial, vague, or cryptic clues regarding darklords and similarly powerful beings.

Danzig's Icon of Ezra radiates magic only when it displays its visions to a supplicant. At any other time, it seems a lovely but nonmagical object.

Strong divination (but only when functioning); CL 17th; Weight 2 lb.

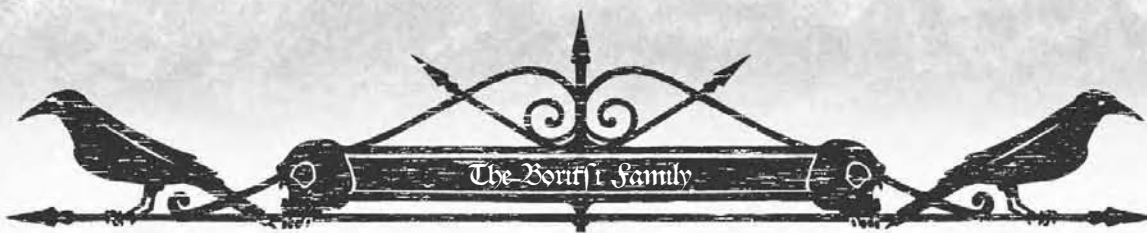
Deathstone (Major Artifact)

In the farthest, darkest corner of what is now Misericordia's vast wine cellar sits a large block of black stone. No records exist of how the stone came to be there, but it resided in that place for many generations. This roughly cubic stone, approximately 3 feet in each dimension, is covered with curious pictographs. Learned men who were allowed to inspect it before Lady Ivana came to power claim these characters bear a distinct resemblance to the script used in the faraway desert realm of Har-Akir. The symbols are different enough that the scholars can't be certain, however, for there is only one (which appears repeatedly on the stone) that seems identical in both forms of writing — the Har-Akiri symbol for "death." The last scholar to seek to examine the stone was Rudolph van Richten, who was turned away by order of Ivana herself while he was researching his *Guide to the Ancient Dead*.

During the Grand Conjunction, cracks formed all over the stone and a dim light seemed to shine from the largest of them. The sounds of anguished howling and angry screams could also be heard in the cellar, coming from the direction of the *Deathstone*. As the cracks in the stone grew larger, the cries grew louder. Lady Ivana was alerted to these alarming developments, but her response was merely to order the servants to lock the wine cellar and not to enter it until she gave them permission.

However, one of the menservants claimed that the voices had been shouting a message and felt it important that Ivana know immediately; he burst into the sitting room where she was comforting her hysterical cousin Ivan Dilisnya, who had fled to her





manor house when the ground started shaking and the stars swirled in the sky. She rebuked the servant, saying that his “matter of importance” would have to wait. When the world returned to normal and Ivan returned to his own estate, however, Ivan killed him so that no one would tell the world of his cowardice. Whatever the servant had heard in the stone’s voices remains a secret.

The *Deathstone* is one of Ivana Boritsi’s most prized possessions and one of her most closely guarded secrets. Ground-up shards from the *Deathstone* are the most important ingredient in the potion that creates her loyal servants, the *ermordenung*. Further, shards chipped of the stone can be fashioned into magical weapons. Over the years, Ivana has given several of these dagger-shards to those *ermordenung* she sends against her worst enemies or against those upon whom she wishes to inflict the greatest pain. Lady Ivana has found over time that any damage to the *Deathstone* caused by the creation of her so-called *Deathstone daggers* is magically repaired once the weapon claims a life. The damage caused in scraping material for *Ermordenung* potions remains on the stone, however, so a number of irregular grooves exist along the *Deathstone*’s top edges.

Deathstone: The *Deathstone* is a minor artifact that effectively turns Misericordia’s wine cellar into a rank 4 sinkhole of evil and the rest of the structure into a rank 3 sinkhole (see “Sinkholes of Evil” in *Ravenloft Dungeon Master’s Guide*). This artifact was created millennia ago on the world that spawned the domains of Sebua and Har-Akir, although in an age that predates either domain. A powerful sorcerer whose civilization was troubled by the undead decided to create a receptacle that would forever keep the dark souls of malefactors imprisoned, so that they could not rise again to plague the living. The stone was created to hold up to 1,999 souls, at which point the sorcerer hoped a descendant would bury it in the middle of a pyramid and start a new *Deathstone*. Unfortunately, his civilization fell and the stone’s purpose was lost as the great city it resided in crumbled to the sand. Explorers discovered it and, recognizing it as a powerful magic item of unknown purpose, brought it back to their homeland, where it eventually fell into the possession of the Boritsi.

Ground-up shards from the *Deathstone* are the most important ingredient in the potion that creates her loyal servants, the *Ermordenung*. Further, sufficiently large shards chipped from the *Deathstone*

can be fashioned into weapons known as *Deathstone daggers*. Each of these weapons is the equivalent of a +1 *unholy dagger* with a minor aura of necromantic magic; however, the dagger crumbles as soon as it successfully hits a living creature. As it crumbles, particles of the *Deathstone* enter the victim’s bloodstream, and the victim must immediately make a DC 20 Fortitude save. If the save fails, the victim suffers 1 temporary negative level. Each round thereafter, he must make another DC 20 Fortitude save or suffer another negative level. This effect ends only once the victim is reduced to level 0 (and dies) or once he receives a *remove curse* spell from a caster of 9th level or higher.

The soul of any person killed by a *Deathstone dagger* (see below) is trapped within the *Deathstone*, although it can still be reclaimed normally through the use of *resurrection* or similarly powerful magic (*raise dead* is not sufficient to draw a soul back from the stone). Anyone slain while in direct contact with the *Deathstone*, though, has his soul drawn into it as if the stone were the gem normally used in a *soul bind* spell.

The *Deathstone* currently houses 1,903 souls, and thus has room for 96 more. Should a 2,000th soul ever be trapped within the *Deathstone*, it shatters and every soul inside is released as a spectre that immediately seeks to slay any living being it encounters.

The stone has a hardness of 10 and 1,999 hit points. It requires at least 6 points of damage to the stone to break off a piece large enough to form a *Deathstone dagger* (thus, including the stone’s hardness, a blow dealing 16 points or more is required).

Story Hook

Seventeen-year-old Lollar Boritsi (male human, Ari1/Clr1 (Ezra), NG) is the youngest son of Anton Boritsi and a recently ordained anchorite of Ezra. His devotion to Ezra borders on fanaticism, and nothing offends him more than a comment upon how his seemingly ageless aunt Ivana resembles Ezra herself (which is not an uncommon observation). Lollar hates his aunt with a passion, particularly for her reputation as a cruel seductress and for the hard-hearted way she rules Borca. He doesn’t believe she is the murderess that the worst of the gossip purports, but he does consider her corrupt and wanton.

Recently, Lollar found out that she does indeed keep the famous Boritsi *Danzig’s Icon of Ezra* (q.v.) in her bedchamber, and he is thoroughly disgusted by that fact. It turns his stomach to consider that his





blessed goddess may witness the acts of perversion that he is convinced must take place behind the closed doors of her private chambers. To that end, he approaches one or more of the PCs, choosing to speak with any anchorites in the group first.

Lollar wants the characters to help him steal *Danzig's icon* from Lady Ivana and transport it to the Grand Cathedral in Levkarest. Ivana is to be holding a large party at Misericordia later that week, and Lollar will be in attendance. If one of the PCs is a female, he suggests that she come as his guest. Then, once the party is in full swing, she can furtively admit the rest of the group to the house, where they are to obtain the icon at all costs. Because it is located in Ivana's bedroom, they will have to move fairly early in the evening, because he has no doubt that his aunt will be entertaining one or more men in the bedchamber later. His disgust is clear, and his eyes gleam with fanatical zeal when he talks about how he wishes to remove the "Holy Goddess" from his aunt's foul presence.

If the characters are wealthy and well connected, they might all be able to attend Lady Ivana's party. In that case, any male PC with a Charisma of 15 or higher has a chance to attract Ivana's attention during the ball (DM's discretion). Similarly, if a female PC with a Charisma of 16 or better is with Lollar, she might draw Ivana's jealous eye. In either case, Ivana singles out the PC for individual attention, initially engaging in simple, vapid party chatter, but eventually drifting into flirtation (if the PC is male), or veiled threats and blandishments to be gone from Borca, perhaps even before the next sunrise (if female). If no PC is present to distract Ivana, Lollar gives the PCs directions to her bedchamber just before they sneak into the house and then engages his aunt in conversation until he thinks the PCs have had enough time to escape with the icon. (Of course, she is cunning and knows of his hatred for her, and may suspect that something is afoot if this becomes necessary.)

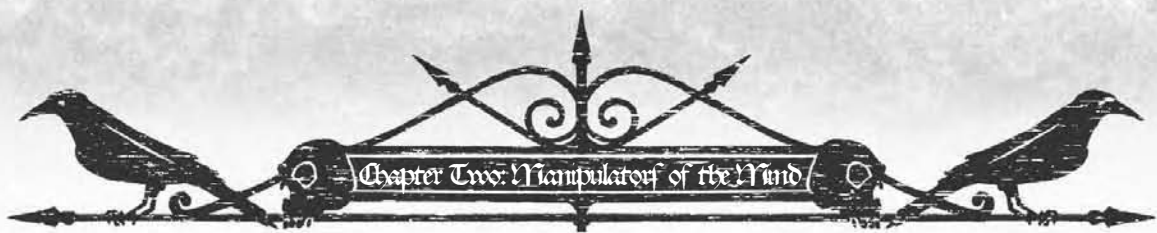
Once they've escaped safely with the icon, Lollar discovers that even the Bastion of Levkarest dares not keep anything stolen from Lady Ivana within the Grand Cathedral: He instructs Lollar to spirit the icon away to Mordent. Lollar again turns to the PCs to ask for their help and protection. By now, however, Ivana has noticed that her prized icon is missing, and the borders to her domain are sealed.

What might the PCs do from here?



Chapter Two:
Manipulators of
the Mind

The d'Honcaire
Family



Dear Cousin James,

Regards from Chateaufaux! I have finished the books you sent in your most recent package. I remain utterly fascinated by the possibilities in these new approaches to the methods of our venerated forefather, Germaine. The work that you and your father have done with mesmerism and exploring the true causes of the illnesses that cripple the minds of men and women is astonishing! Wilhelm Mikki and even the honored Dr. Illhousen of Nova Vaasa seem like simple-minded schoolboys when their theories are placed next to yours.

As much as it saddens me, I understand why you are unable to take me on as a student or assistant at the Mousel Sanitarium. I was not fully aware of the history between the two branches of our family, and I agree that we do not want to reopen old wounds. (Particularly not since Cousin Dominic and my father and brother are once again arguing with one another over whether Paul is bringing shame to the family or not.) If you ask me, the only shame that is brought to the d'Honaire family is the way my father and Uncle Claude bow and scrape to Dominic's every whim. I don't understand why they allow themselves to be manipulated by him the way they do. Every opinion they have and every action they take originates with a suggestion or outright command from Dominic, and they seem not even to realize it!

I know that you think I am exaggerating. I am not, however. I have been watching my family and the political and artistic leaders of Dementieu for my entire life, although it's only in the past year that I've recognized the unnatural influence that Uncle Dominic seems to have over most of them. The way he makes his will known is very subtle, but for the observant with the sort of training that I have had, it is clear that he is the one in charge.

And this brings me back to your writings. Can it be that Uncle Dominic is someone using the methods you present in your book to twist his family and other political leaders to his will? He is known to have studied the methods of Germaine d'Honaire, but not those practiced by any other hypnotist, alienist, or doctor of mental health anywhere in the world.

Until you can present me with a sensible answer to how Uncle Dominic can wield so much power from his position in a land where image is everything, I will continue to pursue my own research into the methods laid out in your book. I think that the secrets to it — or, perhaps even better, a way to counteract it — can be found within your methods.

You will be able to reach me care of Dr. Mikki's asylum, where I continue my studies. I am a bit nervous that Uncle Dominic seems so supportive of my goals even when my parents are so opposed. Of course, I wonder if they truly disagree, or whether it isn't all just another of Dominic's manipulations...

Yes, dear Cousin, I realize that last sentence makes me sound as brain-fevered as some of the patients here at the asylum.

I look forward to reading your next letter, and I wish you and yours good health and happiness,

Love,

Celeste d'Honaire-Loverde





The d'Honaire



he d'Honaire family is one of the few leading families in the Core that hold positions of power, wealth and honor in two realms, with Dr. James Mousel being the foremost member of the Mordent branch and Dominic d'Honaire being the most influential among the Dementlieu branch.

The d'Honaire family has long held a prominent yet unique position in Mordent. For generations, the family had a reputation as skilled healers. Nobility and peasantry with ailments both sought them out before any other doctors or healers. However, the family consistently shied away from seeking political power, despite many opportunities for sons and daughters to marry into Mordentish noble families, instead existing in a social layer of their own, somewhere between those of the nobles and the commoners. They lived like nobles, though, due to financial considerations and fees charged to the wealthy (particularly after the lands of Richemulot and Borca were discovered by Mordentish explorers). They constructed a large mansion on the edge of Mordentshire, which has come to be thought of as the family's ancestral home.

With the ascension of Germaine d'Honaire to the position of leadership in the family toward the latter half of the seventh century, the reputation of the d'Honaire family grew to cover the entire Core. While the family had previously focused on physical ailments, Germaine turned his attention primarily to the troubles of the mind and eventually became recognized as the greatest mesmerist the world has ever known. As the recognition of the d'Honaire family grew, so did Germaine's ambitions. He was not content with the centuries-long position between lords and underlings that the family had held. He encouraged his two eldest children, Bernadette and Claude, to focus mostly on studying the refined arts that personified nobility while forcing only his youngest son Maurice to focus entirely on medicine and mesmerism so that the family traditions would be kept alive. To Germaine's frustration, however, Bernadette took naturally to the healing arts, despite it being something she merely dabbled in, while Maurice lacked the empathy or degree of talent to be even a mediocre physician.

The split in the d'Honaire family occurred when Bernadette fell in love with Hugues Mousel,

a mystic of mixed Richemuleuse and Vistani blood who was equally smitten with Bernadette on their very first meeting. They married, quite against Germaine's will, in 698 BC, ending the mesmerist's dreams of uniting his family with that of the Weathermays through marriage and thus enjoying their noble status. Germaine and Bernadette never spoke with each other again, though she continued to hold great love for her father. The anger he felt toward her also poisoned her brothers against her and her husband. The newlyweds traveled south and settled in a tiny hamlet on the border with Valachan, where Bernadette remained until her father's death in 707.

While in the southern part of Mordent, Bernadette rediscovered a part of her family's heritage that had been lost for centuries; she made contact with witches of Hala who tended to the medical needs of poor farmers on both sides of the border. While Bernadette never had the religious conviction to be admitted into the deeper secrets involved in Hala's worship, she brought a more modern and scientific view to the covens operating in southern Mordent, mostly shedding light upon the way the mind sometimes impacts upon physical problems, and vice versa.

When Bernadette's brothers abandoned Mordent and moved with their families to Dementlieu following Germaine's death, she returned to Mordentshire and took up residence in the d'Honaire mansion and continued her father's mesmerism work. To her relief, her brothers seemed much too occupied with establishing themselves in their new homeland to object. As a result, Bernadette's children followed in her footsteps, with her son François becoming an accomplished alienist and her daughter Madeleine returning to the southern moors and rejoining the Hala witches to serve the locals there as a healer. In 720 BC, Bernadette gave the d'Honaire mansion to her son, and he converted it into the Mousel Sanitarium for Mental Health, bringing together the methods practiced by his grandfather and his mother in order to provide more humane treatment for those suffering from mental disorders.

In the north, Bernadette's brothers, Claude and Maurice, devoted themselves to bringing about their father's dream of elevating the d'Honaire family from the status of privileged servants to masters. When the d'Honaire family arrived, the domain of Dementlieu was recovering from a bloody and violent popular uprising. The d'Honaire family put their

Chapter Two: Manipulator of the Mind



money and support behind the new lord-governor, Marcel Guignol. This, combined with the family's great intelligence and highly polished ways, allowed them to overcome the stigma associated with their Mordentish origins—the Dementlieuse and the Mordentish people share cultural roots in the distant past, but the former generally view the latter as “country bumpkins.”

The d'Honaires' position in Dementlieu was cemented when Claude accepted a position on Marcel Guignol's advisory council, and his brother Maurice established himself as a doctor specializing in curing the (mostly imaginary) ailments of effete but wealthy nobles. Claude quickly became Guignol's most trusted advisor, and the family was closer to being the masters of the halls of power than ever before. It appeared to Claude that it would only be a matter of time before he would replace Marcel Guignol as Lord-Governor. The mansion that Claude built for his and his brother's family to share on the shores of Pernault Bay was a further expression of this desire, for it was both an elaborate example of the finest of Dementlieuse architecture and a place suitable for state functions.

In truth, Claude's and Maurice's families were accepted so readily in Dementlieu because the domain was created for Claude's thoroughly evil

and manipulative young son, Dominic. (See **Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol. III** or **Secrets of the Dread Realms** for details.) As Dominic grew to adulthood, he made all of Dementlieu his plaything, manipulating people and politics from the shadows so he could always remain free of responsibility when things went wrong. He wished to keep himself and his family *next* to the throne rather than *on* it. As such, when it appeared as though his father Claude had eclipsed Guignol in popularity with the people of Dementlieu and that he might replace Guignol as Lord-Governor, Dominic promptly saw to it that Claude fell ill. Dominic, now a young man, was called to replace his father on the advisory council. Bringing this about was the simplest of manipulations, for Dominic had long since made all of his older relatives in Dementlieu, as well as the Lord-Governor himself, into his Obedient, mental slaves.

By 730 BC, Dominic was in control of every important figure in his domain — reputations and careers were made and shattered by Dominic's whim. Virtually all power and authority wielded by others was but an illusion. However, Dominic realized that there were those in his realm that he did not control, and that these people were some of those closest to him. That year, the eldest son of



Maurice d'Honaire, Paul, ran away from home at the age of 15 when his parents and uncles insisted that he study medicine instead of becoming a soldier. He vanished for three years, but eventually resurfaced at the d'Honaire estate with a wife, a Falkovnian refugee named Kara. All the d'Honaire were outraged, and Dominic the most shocked of all.

Worse (at least in Dominic's eyes), before running away, Paul had resisted Dominic's attempts to use his mind-altering powers to force Paul to study medicine, and now that he was back, he still rejected his older cousin's attempts to use his powers to get him to dispose of his embarrassing wife. However, Dominic decided to let this one rebel live, correctly thinking that he could at least partly control Paul through his wife.

Yet Paul's inexplicable resistance to Dominic's will was only the first among the younger generations of the family. In 733 BC, Gerard, the second son of Dominic's half-sister Julienne, paid a visit to the Mordentish relatives. François Mousel's sanitarium was gaining in reputation, and Dr. Rudolf van Richten was becoming increasingly celebrated as a scholar of the monstrous and occult. Gerard, who was about to enter the foremost medical college in Dementlieu, wanted to meet these great men in person. While he never got to meet Dr. van Richten, Gerard was touched by the gentle nature of his great aunt Bernadette and the keen sense of compassion that François had for his patients. The rustic charm of his family's land of origin called to him to move back to Mordent to study under Bernadette and François.

Dominic was livid. Never before had anyone challenged his intentions for them — Gerard was to be the next Germaine d'Honaire, as far as Dominic was concerned, but he would not attain that status among the fools in Mordent. Dominic turned his mental powers upon Gerard only to find that Gerard too seemed to be immune. All attempts by Dominic and Gerard's parents to change his mind about moving south only made the sixteen-year-old's resolve stronger. Eventually, an exasperated Dominic ordered a number of his Obedients to kill Gerard; one rebellious nephew he could accept, but not two. Further, he instructed them to arrange for the assassination of his aunt Bernadette, her husband Hugues and son Francois, so that no more of the Dementlieu d'Honaire would be seduced away to their lands. Francois survived the attempt due to the timely interven-

tion of his son James, but Bernadette and Hugues both died violently just as 733 gave way to 734.

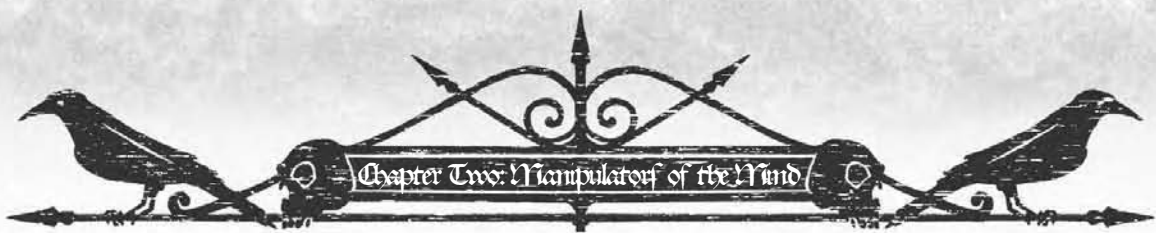
Despite lack of evidence, James remained convinced that the assassins had been sent by Maurice d'Honaire, an act of belated revenge over the way his grandmother had rebelled against Germaine and her encouragement of her grand-nephew to do the same. Dominic naturally did nothing to discourage this perception, but James's father François did. The younger Dr. Mousel nonetheless remained hostile toward all the Dementlieu d'Honaire relatives for the next two decades.

During this time, the Mousel Sanitarium slowly gained a reputation as one of the Core's best places to recover from mental breakdowns and illnesses. François corresponded with many leading doctors and asylum operators while James traveled the Core and spent time studying their methods. By the time François retired in 752 BC, the father-and-son team had developed a unique approach to treating mental illnesses, which they referred to as "the analytical method." James in particular has become a respected figure among alienists and physicians specializing in illnesses of the mind, even if his theories are often ridiculed by those who primarily shape medical thought in the Core — the professors of Dementlieu's universities and schools. James believes that the ridicule from the neighboring medical community can ultimately be traced to Claude and Maurice d'Honaire, and his hatred of the two has only grown stronger since the death of his grandparents two decades ago.

Virtually no contact has existed between the Mordent and Dementlieu branches of the family for several decades. James and Dominic have engaged in the occasional brief exchange of letters — started by Dominic writing a note of sympathy to James after a particularly harsh spew of intellectual venom from a Dementlieuse intellectual. It ended with James accepting Dominic's well-wishes and encouraging him to look to the evil of Claude and Maurice if he really wanted to stop the pointless character assassination engaged in by the intellectuals of his land.

However, within the past year, James has opened more extensive communications with his young niece Celeste d'Honaire-Loverde (see Appendix). The teenage girl has her heart set on entering the medical field and she is particularly enamored of François' and James' theories. Like Gerard d'Honaire twenty years earlier, Celeste had shown up on the doorstep of her Mordentish rela-





tives, and she had hoped to study under those relatives. James recognized that part of her desire was spawned by rebellion against her parents and particularly her uncle Dominic. He gently suggested she return to Dementlieu, but helped arrange for her to study under Dr. Wilhelm Mikki of Chateaufaux, one of the few Dementlieuse doctors willing to take James' medical theories seriously. He also informed Dominic of Celeste's restless nature, hoping that the one man he'd come to view as an *honorable* northern relative could help ease tensions between the girl and her parents.

Unwittingly, though, James has placed Celeste and other younger members of the d'Honaire family living in Dementlieu in danger. Paul and Gerard d'Honaire's inexplicable resistance to Dominic's powers of domination was only the beginning. Since then, Dominic has found that all the youngest generation of the family seem immune to his control, and he is particularly frustrated with those that openly defy his will, such as Celeste.

Over the past ten years, Dominic has been facing an increasing challenge from a crime lord known as the Brain, and as the Brain's power has grown, so has Dominic's suspicion of all blood relatives that are not under his total control. He has always viewed his family as the last line of defense against his enemies. Now, he is starting to fear that the younger members may in fact be undergoing a transformation into foes who can strike at him with impunity. He would rather not have the up-and-coming d'Honaire's murdered — but he will if he comes to the conclusion that they pose too great a threat.

Fortunately for Dominic, some members of his family are planning to remove themselves voluntarily from the perverse power game played by him and his hidden foe. For example, Julienne's family was recently threatened by some of the Brain's agents. When she came to Dominic begging for additional protection, he played up the danger and his inability to do anything about it in the most melodramatic of fashions. He offered to secure her safety in the only way he knew how — to pay for her and her entire family to be relocated to Pont-a-Museau. His terrified niece and her weak-willed husband accepted the promised refuge even more readily when Dominic secured an official promise of protection from Lady Jacqueline Renier herself. Dominic dislikes putting himself in perceived debt to Lady Renier, but he is willing to make this

sacrifice if it denies the Brain access to a potential weapon against him.

Some of the oldest of Dominic's own children are also thinking about moving their young families abroad, both because of the Brain and because of strained relations with their father. Dominic does not attempt to stop them. Celeste is viewed as less of a threat by Dominic at the moment, as she seems to have settled down in Chateaufaux where she is studying medicine; Dominic would have preferred her to be a poet, but he is willing to compromise... for now.

In addition to the two main branches of the d'Honaire family, there is also a "lost branch." In 719 BC, the eighteen-year-old half-sister of Dominic (by Claude d'Honaire's second wife, Babette Batista), Angelique d'Honaire, married a young Lamordian doctor named Bertrand Shroeder. Shroeder had been on his way to visit François Mousel as part of an effort to confirm the validity of mesmerism techniques in treating mental illnesses, but when he laid eyes on Angelique he knew his journey had come to an end.

In an echo of his grandfather's dislike of Hugues Mousel, Claude developed a hatred for Bertrand Shroeder as strong as Bertrand's love for Angelique. He forbade their marriage, yet the star-struck lovers disobeyed him and were secretly married by a priest in Port-a-Lucine. When Claude discovered this, he swore to have Bertrand killed and Angelique imprisoned — and he placed a bounty on their heads large enough to make sure it happened. Dominic came to the pair's rescue at this point, secretly arranging passage for them on a ship bound for Martira Bay. From there, it would be easy for Bertrand and Angelique to reach Ludendorf and Bertrand's home and practice.

The ship, sadly, never reached its destination. The fate of its crew and passengers remains a mystery to this day.

Fitting In

The d'Honaire's are first and foremost intellectuals. Even those among them who are more comfortable on the battlefield than in a university lecture hall or council meeting tend to rely on intelligent strategy and tactics and on psychological manipulation as opposed to brute force. This bent seems to be more nature than nurture, for even those who are unacknowledged members of the family tend to be bookish and manipulative.





There are two main branches of the d'Honaire family, as well as a third "lost" branch and the distinct possibility of unrecognized offspring of Remy d'Honaire from other domains bordering Dementlieu. Fitting PCs (and NPCs for the DM's use) into the d'Honaire family while remaining consistent with official **Ravenloft** material is a simple matter.

The Mordent Branch

In Mordent, Bernadette and Hugues had two children, François and Madeline, each of whom has adult children of his or her own.

As well, James Mousel is married to Marie Chiraq, and they have two children currently in their mid- or late teens. James is described in detail later in the Appendix of this book, but his children are left undefined and would make excellent player character material. They are likely to be involved in the operation of the Mousel Sanitarium, but they could also be studying or adventuring abroad.

Madeline married Raymonde Bioume, and they have one child in his or her mid-twenties. This character is also left completely undefined for player or DM development, but might serve as a way to bring Hala worshippers into a campaign, as Madeline and her husband are both active members in a coven.

The Dementlieu Branch

The Dementlieu branch of the d'Honaire bloodline also has plenty of opportunities into which player characters or characters created by the DM might fit.

Claude d'Honaire has four children by his second wife, the youngest of whom was born in 740 BC, just as the Great Upheaval seized the land. This youngest half-brother of Dominic d'Honaire is now just coming of age. Aside from his gender and his auspicious birthdate, he is left open for development by individual DMs or gaming groups. Of Claude's other children, eldest daughter Angelique d'Honaire eloped with Bertrand Shroeder and has vanished from knowledge. (Her possible offspring are discussed in the sidebar "The Lost d'Honaire.") Claude's youngest daughter Julienne has had three children with Bernard Loverde, including the tragically deceased Gerard and the prodigal daughter Celeste (the latter is detailed in the Appendix); Julienne and Bernard's children were born in Dementlieu and are therefore immune to all hypnosis and mind-affecting

spells and effects while within that domain — meaning they are the object of increasing suspicion from their uncle Dominic. Finally, Claude's eldest child by his second wife is in his or her early thirties and is left for development by DMs and players — he or she may be an adventurer, or perhaps someone who has children who are about to come into their own.

Maurice d'Honaire and his wife Alicia Norbert also have four children. As described above, their eldest son Paul (born in 715 BC) has long been alienated from the rest of family — he married a Falkovnian refugee despite the objections of parents and uncles. Paul resides in Chateaufaux with wife Kara and two children, both of whom are under the age of 10. Maurice and Alicia's second son, Remy, was born in 723 BC; he is a spirited wanderer and incurable ladies' man who invariably "loves them and leaves them." He is the father of several illegitimate children in Dementlieu, Mordent, Richemulot and Lamordia, any one of whom might make a suitable player character. The remaining two children of Maurice and Alicia are in their mid- to late-teens and are left open for development. All these children — except possibly the illegitimate offspring of Remy d'Honaire — were born within the borders of Dementlieu, and are thus immune to all hypnosis and mind-affecting spells and effects in that domain.

There are also the children of Dominic d'Honaire himself. He has four children by his first wife, presently ranging from their mid-twenties to early thirties. Of all his relatives, Dominic is most suspicious of his own children, as they are impervious to his mind-bending powers, and they have all been nearly as rebellious as Paul d'Honaire. Only Dominic II (born in 722 BC) has a close relationship with his father, with the others are estranged to varying degrees. Some still live at the d'Honaire estate, while others have moved away. These direct descendants of the darklord and any spouses or children they may have are left undefined so that they may be used as player characters or NPCs who are among the closest possible blood-relations to a darklord; as well, some of Dominic's oldest children may have a child or children of their own in their mid- or even late teens who may be suitable for development as characters.

Dominic II is unmarried, but shares his bed in the d'Honaire mansion with one mistress while maintaining two others in lavish homes in Port-a-Lucine. He has at least one child by each woman,



The Lost d'Honaire

What happened to Angelique d'Honaire and Bertrand Shroeder? That's ultimately left up to the individual DM to decide, but here are a couple of possibilities:

Dominic's Jealousy: Darklord Dominic d'Honaire was insanely jealous of his brilliant half-sister and the handsome doctor who had won her heart. It was he who filled Claude d'Honaire's mind with a burning hatred for Shroeder, hoping that it would drive the Lamordian south to Mordent. When the couple went ahead and married in secret, Dominic decided they had to die. The darklord's Obedients commanded the ship he arranged passage on, and they murdered the lovers shortly after the ship left port. The evil of this act, however, caused the Mists to engulf the vessel, and the ghost of an anguished Angelique now haunts it. The crew has long since perished (many at her hand), and now the ship drifts aimlessly, Mistbound.

No travelers who have found the ship have survived Angelique's wrath, for few have been able to answer the two questions that consume her to her satisfaction: Why were my love and I murdered? And why am I not with him in the afterlife? Those who *did* answer her questions failed to convince her of either their correctness or their sincerity, or they simply did

not have the skills needed to complete a task she demanded of them — to bring the bodies of her and her love to Dementlieu so that her beloved brother Dominic can give them a proper funeral. (Of course, if PCs take on this task, the ghost of Angelique may come to recognize that Dominic was the one to blame for her demise once she is brought into close proximity with him. The PCs may then be in the odd position of having to defend a darklord against a vengeful spirit — or perhaps the spirit from the darklord.)

Dominic's Compassion: Dominic was acting in a rare, almost unique moment of compassion. In one of their many inscrutable moments, however, the Mists rose from the Sea of Sorrows just as the ship was coming into view of Ludendorf's port. As they parted again, the proud sailing ship smashed into the jagged rocks south of Armeikos, on the island of Liffe. Most of the ship's crew and passengers perished, but miraculously both Angelique and Bertrand (or perhaps just Angelique) survived. It became apparent that travel from the eternally Mistbound island was impossible, so they eventually settled in with the local population.

Bertrand and Angelique have established themselves as the island's foremost doctors, but as visitors to the island have increased in recent years, Angelique has been longing to reestablish contact with her family — and to see if her father is willing to forgive her "betrayal."





and his offspring are also in their mid- to late teens, making perfect potential player characters. Like Dominic II and his siblings, these children were all born in Dementlieu, and are therefore immune to all hypnosis and mind-affecting spells and effects while within that domain.

Finally, Dominic's eldest child by his second wife was born in 734 BC and is in his mid-twenties. He too is left for DMs or players to develop. (Dominic recently had another child by his second wife — a son. This "autumn child" is the darling of all the d'Honaire who live at the family estate.)

Claiming Membership

D'Honaire tend to be slightly shorter than average, with slim, athletic builds when young that tend to swiftly grow plump as they enter their middle years. Hair colors often range from deep auburn to strawberry-blonde, and skin tone is usually pale with smatterings of freckles. The exceptions to this rule are the descendants of Bernadette and Hugues, who tend to have lightly olive skin and dark brown hair. Eye color tends to be pale blue or green, although a fair number of the family are born with mist-gray eyes. These pale eye colors can be startling, particularly when set in the darker-skinned faces of the Mordent branch.

- D'Honaire born within Dementlieu are immune to the effects of the Hypnosis skill, mind-affecting magic, mind-affecting spell-like effects and mind-affecting drugs (other than intoxicants) so long as they are within that domain's borders. They lose this immunity when outside Dementlieu, but it returns as soon as they reenter the domain.

D'Honaire Family Traits

- **-2 Constitution:** The d'Honaire are generally somewhat more frail than other humans and tend to be sickly.

- **Natural Aptitude:** At 1st level (during character creation), the player may choose a specific Knowledge skill. That skill is thereafter considered a class skill for that character, regardless of his or her actual class(es).

- D'Honaire receive a +2 bonus on all Heal and Hypnosis checks.

- D'Honaire born within Dementlieu are immune to the effects of the Hypnosis skill and to all mind-affecting spells or effects, including drugs (but not the intoxicating effects of alcohol) as long as they remain within that domain's borders. They

lose this immunity when outside Dementlieu, but it returns as soon as they reenter the domain.

Family Feats



Although the two branches of the d'Honaire family might deny it, they have a great deal in common. Whether in Mordent or Dementlieu, they tend to be bookish and scholarly. They also

have a natural aptitude for academics, particularly the study of medicine and other healing arts. Admittedly, this latter penchant has been largely ignored in the generations since Germaine d'Honaire, who turned to mesmerism.

A negative trait that runs in the family is a tendency toward sociopathy, which has grown stronger in recent generations — and which is undoubtedly to blame for so many of them not heeding the natural call they feel toward medicine.

Aside from the new feats presented below, d'Honaire family members typically possess one or more of the following feats: Diligent, Iron Will, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Logical Mind^V, Mesmerizing^C, Negotiator, Open Mind^R, Redhead^R, Sharp Wit^{*}, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Healing), Skill Focus (Sense Motive).

New Feats

The following feats are particularly suited to members of the d'Honaire family. DMs may consider allowing others to gain them if they so wish.

Cold-Hearted [General]

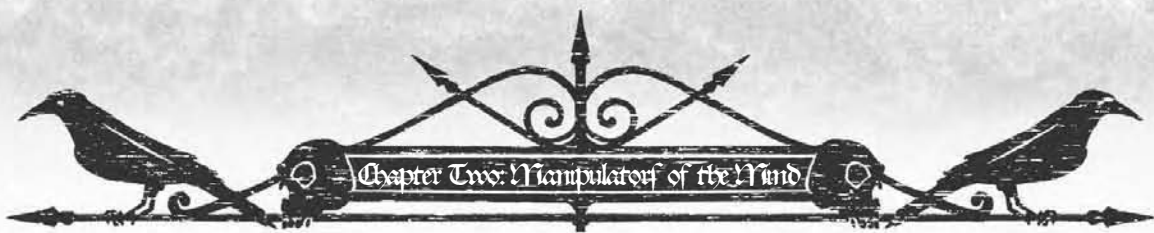
Your sociopathic tendencies that make you dispassionate; as a result, the Dark Powers that so often rise up to touch those who commit crimes of passion are less likely to notice you.

Benefit: Whenever an action you have taken requires a powers check, the chance of failing the check is reduced by 2%, with a modified result of 0% or less being treated as "This act does not warrant a powers check."

Special: You cannot take this feat if you already have the Warm-Hearted feat.

Healing Spirit [General]

Whether by some supernatural means or through the force of your own compassion and human warmth, you are able to speed the recovery of injuries with but a touch of your hand.



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Prerequisite: Ability to cast *cure light wounds*, Warm-Hearted.

Benefit: You do not require a divine focus to cast any *cure* spell.

Soothing Presence [General]

You have an air about you that calms even the most savage spirits.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Handle Animal checks.

Warm-Hearted [General]

Your deep compassion for others manifests itself in the gentle way you approach those you try to help, whether you treat injuries of the body or the mind.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on all Heal checks and Hypnosis checks.

Special: You cannot take this feat if you already have the Cold-Hearted feat.

Willbreaker [General]

You have a gift for forcing your will upon others.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus on all Hypnosis checks and Intimidate checks.

Family Classes



d'Honaires come from a tradition of intellectualism and public service, existing to support the rulers of the domains they live in rather than being the rulers themselves. Many of them have levels in the aristocrat and expert classes, with skill ranks concentrated around Bluff, Diplomacy, Heal, Hypnosis, Knowledge and Perform, as they tend to gravitate toward medical, scholarly, artistic, or political pursuits.

Adventuring d'Honaires lean toward the bard and rogue classes. A rare few become clerics in the service of Hala, finding the dedication to one's community an appealing aspect of the faith. Truly exceptional d'Honaires may pursue prestige class levels in analyst (see below), dilettante^H, lamplighter^{G3}, mesmerist^C and/or propagandist^C.

Analyst

The analyst is intellectual cousin to the alienist and the mesmerist, although analysts generally claim to be grounded more in "real science" than either of the aforementioned professions. The ana-

lyst treats mental illnesses by carefully interviewing the patient to identify possible anomalies in the patient's attitudes and mental states.

The analyst's methods for treating insanity were formulated through correspondence between François Mousel and doctors and administrators at several of the Core's leading asylums and sanitariums. James Mousel, whose reputation as a mesmerist is second only to that of his grandfather, Germaine d'Honaire, brought these methods from theory to practice. Mousel took his father's and grandfather's theories, expanded upon them at the Mousel Sanitarium and established the unique derivative as the primary method of treatment the very week he took over following his father's semi-retirement in 751 BC. François continues to work at the sanitarium, although most of his time is spent writing books and tracts in collaboration with his son, trying to spread the word about the treatment methods they co-developed.

The analyst prestige class expresses the power of Mousel's treatment method in game mechanics. Like any weapon, it is only as good or evil as its wielder, and thus the class reflects both the good and evil that the analytical method can do. It also brings into play mystical qualities that even Mousel himself has not yet discovered, although he is starting to suspect they exist as he deepens and expands his preliminary research.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify for the analyst (An1) prestige class, a character must meet the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 5 ranks, Gather Information 8 ranks, Heal 5 ranks, Hypnosis 8 ranks, Sense Motive 8 ranks.

Feats: Investigator, Negotiator, Soothing Presence*.

Class Skills

The analyst's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hypnosis^R (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.





Class Features

The following are class features of the analyst prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The analyst gains no additional weapon or armor proficiencies.

Bonus Feat: At 1st level, and again at 4th, 7th and 10th levels, the analyst receives a bonus feat from the following list: Diligent, Indomitable^V, Iron Will, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Logical Mind^V, Machiavellian^C, Mesmerizing^C, Open Mind*, Sharp Eyes*, Sharp Wit*, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Hypnosis), Voice of Wrath^R, Wealth^H, Willbreaker*.

The analyst must meet any prerequisites before a feat can be chosen.

Likable (Ex): Starting at 1st level, the analyst's training allows him to project an affable demeanor at all times: He gains a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks and Gather Information checks.

Mindshadows (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, using careful observational and linguistic techniques, the analyst can identify things that frighten or disturb another individual with a successful DC 15 Gather Information check. This requires 1 full minute, during which time the analyst must speak with a subject who can hear him. Then, by speaking with the subject for at least 1 hour each day for one full week, the analyst may cause the subject to make a DC 15 Wisdom check. If the check is successful, the subject gains a permanent +2 bonus or -2 penalty (depending on the analyst's stated intention) to all fear checks against the stated source of fear. The ability can be used only once per source of fear on any given subject. Only another use of this ability or a *wish* or similarly powerful effect can negate this bonus or penalty.

Using this ability to impose a penalty on fear saves is grounds for a powers check (2%, or higher if the DM decides other factors are involved that might attract the attention of the Dark Powers).

Trusted Friend (Ex): At 3rd level, the analyst can forge a bond of trust with a subject. After 1 hour of conversation, the analyst may make a DC 15 Bluff check; if successful, the analyst places the target under an effect similar to that of the spell *charm person*, save that it has no maximum duration. Further, this effect, being an extraordinary ability, is not negated by *dispel magic* or similar effects.

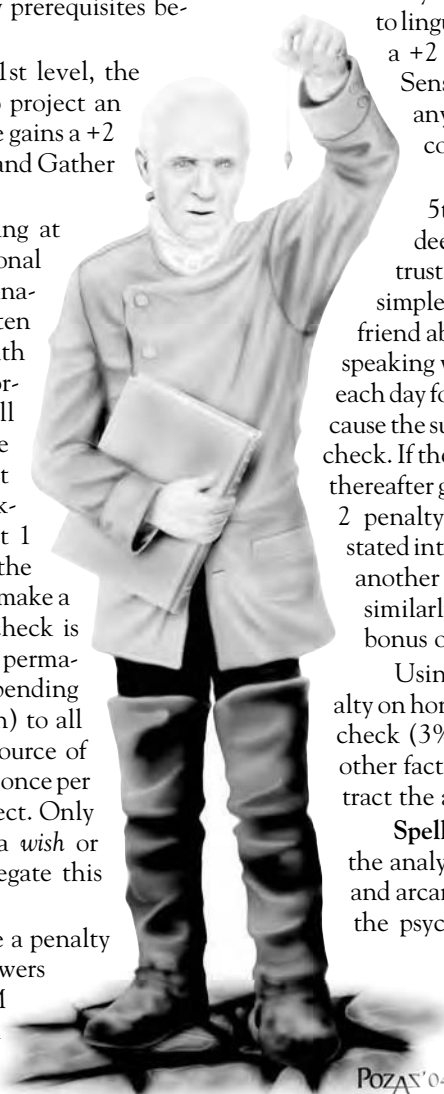
While a subject is under the sway of the trusted friend ability, any powers checks triggered by actions the analyst takes in relation to the subject are increased by 2%.

Insightful (Ex): At 4th level, the analyst's ability to predict behavioral responses to linguistic triggers increases: He gains a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks and Sense Motive checks made against any creature with whom he can converse.

Shadow Terrors (Ex): At 5th level, the analyst may delve deep into the minds of those whose trust he has gained (whether through simple friendship, the use of the trusted friend ability, or some other means). By speaking with a subject for at least 1 hour each day for one full week, the analyst may cause the subject to make a DC 16 Wisdom check. If the check is successful, the subject thereafter gains a permanent +2 bonus or -2 penalty (depending on the analyst's stated intention) to all horror saves. Only another use of this ability or a *wish* or similarly powerful effect can negate this bonus or penalty.

Using this ability to impose a penalty on horror saves is grounds for a powers check (3%, or higher if the DM decides other factors are involved that might attract the attention of the Dark Powers).

Spellcasting: Starting at 5th level, the analyst has studied so many obscure and arcane texts dealing with matters of the psyche and the spirit that he has gained the ability to cast a number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, an analyst must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so an analyst with



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a Charisma of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells. Analyst bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the analyst's Charisma bonus. The analyst's spell list appears below. An analyst casts spells just as a sorcerer does.

Upon reaching 7th level, and again at 9th, an analyst can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least one level lower than the highest-level analyst spell the analyst can cast. An analyst may swap only a single spell at any given level, and must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for that level.

Discern Nature (Ex): At 6th level, using careful observational and linguistic techniques, the analyst can determine a subject's alignment with a successful Gather Information check opposed to the subject's Will save. This requires 1 full minute, during which time the analyst must speak with a subject he can see clearly and who can hear him. The information gained depends on the relative success of the Gather Information check (see below).

If the subject has multiple personalities (due to a failed madness save, for example), the analyst receives information about the alignment of the dominant personality at the time the check is made.

Superior Technique (Ex): At 7th level, the analyst knows the workings of the mind so well that he can attempt to impose his will upon others through subtle manipulation: He gains a +2 bonus on all Hypnosis and Intimidate checks.

Mindbending (Ex): Starting at 8th level, the analyst can easily find weaknesses in a subject's mental integrity. By speaking with a subject for at least 1 hour each day for one full week, the analyst may cause the subject to make a DC 18 Wisdom check. If the check is successful, the subject thereafter gains a permanent +2 bonus or -2 penalty (depending on the analyst's stated intention) to all madness saves. Only another use of this ability or a *wish* or similarly powerful effect can negate this bonus or penalty.

Using this ability to impose a penalty on horror saves is grounds for a powers check (3%, or higher if the DM decides other factors are involved that might attract the attention of the Dark Powers).

Gazing Into the Abyss (Ex): Starting at 9th level, the analyst is able to pick his way through even the deepest and darkest recesses of a subject's mind. If the subject is currently under the influence of mindshadows, shadow terrors and/or mindbending, the analyst may increase the bonus or penalty to the subject's fear, horror, or madness checks, as specified by the analyst.

By speaking with a subject for at least 1 hour each day for one full week, the analyst may cause the subject to make a DC 20 Wisdom check. If the check is successful, the subject thereafter gains a permanent +4 bonus or -4 penalty (depending on the analyst's stated intention) to any one of fear, horror, or madness saves. This bonus or penalty replaces that already in place as a result of the mindshadows, shadow terrors and/or mindbending ability, as applicable. Only another use of this ability or a *wish* or similarly powerful effect can negate this bonus or penalty.

This close intimacy with the minds of others, however, threatens to crack the analyst's own sanity. Whenever the analyst uses this ability, the analyst must make a Will save and possibly suffer ill effects as a result of the treatment, as shown on the table below. (All penalties or effects from failed Will saves made as a result of this ability are cumulative.)

Will Save Result	Effect
6 or less	Make an immediate DC 25 madness save
7-10	Analyst suffers permanent -1 penalty on all madness saves
11-13	Analyst suffers permanent -1 penalty on all horror saves
14-15	Analyst suffers permanent -1 penalty on all fear saves
16 or higher	No effect

Gather Information Result...	Information Gained
Is less than subject's Will save	None
Ties subject's Will save, or wins by less than 5	Subject's ethical alignment axis (i.e., lawful, neutral, or chaotic)
Beats subject's Will save by 5 or more	Subject's exact alignment



Mind Harnessing (Su): At 10th level, the analyst gains the supernatural ability to shatter or restore the sanity of a subject. By speaking with a subject for at least 10 minutes, the analyst may force the subject to make an immediate madness check, with a DC equal to the analyst's Bluff check result; if the result of a failed madness save is a "moderate" madness result or higher (see the "Failure Margin" chart in the in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**), the analyst may instead inflict a madness of his choice of one level of severity less than the actual result. For example, if the analyst's Bluff result is a 29 and the subject's madness save result is only a 13, then the analyst may inflict a major madness effect of his choice.

Alternately, the analyst may use this ability to cure a subject who has failed a previous madness check. Simply by speaking with a subject for at least 10 minutes, the analyst may make a Hypnosis check — if his check result beats the DC of the madness effect affecting the subject, the subject is immediately cured of her madness as if by a *heal* spell.

This ability may be used a number of times per day equal to the analyst's Charisma modifier.

Using this ability to cause madness is grounds for a powers check (5%, or higher if the DM decides

other factors are involved that might attract the attention of the Dark Powers).

Analyst Spell List

Analysts choose their spells from the following list.

1st Level: *Cause fear, charm person, comprehend languages, daze, detect magic, doom, hypnotism, message, remove fear.*

2nd Level: *Calm emotions, daze monster, detect thoughts, eagle's splendor, lesser confusion, lesser geas, rage, scare.*

3rd Level: *Charm monster, crushing despair, lesser restoration, modify memory, suggestion, tongues.*

Table 2-1: Analyst Spells Known

Level	Spells Known		
	1st	2nd	3rd
4th	—	—	—
5th	2	—	—
6th	3	—	—
7th	3	2	—
8th	4	3	—
9th	4	3	2
10th	4	4	3

Table 2-2: The Analyst

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day		
						1st	2nd	3rd
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Bonus feat, likable	—	—	—
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mindshadows	—	—	—
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Trusted friend	—	—	—
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus feat, insightful	—	—	—
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Shadow terrors, spellcasting	1	—	—
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Discern nature	2	—	—
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus feat, superior technique	2	1	—
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Mindbending	3	2	—
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Gazing into the abyss	4	2	1
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Bonus feat, mind harnessing	4	3	2

Family Magic



While the d'Honaire have received many magic items over the decades from grateful and wealthy former patients and colleagues, only the *mesmerist's pendulum* is considered a magical family heirloom. It was last known to be in the possession of Maurice d'Honaire although he hasn't used it in years. In fact, Maurice several years ago gave the pendulum to his rebellious daughter Celeste (before she became rebellious, that is).

Mesmerist's Pendulum

This is a small, teardrop-shaped platinum plumb attached to a delicate three-inch silver chain. It is used to put hypnosis subjects into deep trances by swinging it back and forth in front of them while urging them to relax and let their minds go blank.

Mesmerist's Pendulum: When used by a character with at least 1 rank in Hypnosis^R, the pendulum grants a +4 enhancement bonus on Hypnosis checks. However, unbeknownst to all, the *pendu-*



lum also carries a mild control put in place by its compassionate and fair-minded creator: Whenever it is used, both the hypnotist and the subject must make a DC 10 Will save. If the save is failed by either, that character is treated as if subject to a *charm person* spell cast by the other character. This effect lasts for 12 hours.

This effect can be particularly damaging if the *pendulum* is being used by an evil character who is attempting to use hypnosis to implant suggestions in a victim — while under the influence of the *pendulum's* charm, for instance, she may feel guilty and disburse the entire scheme to her erstwhile victim.

Faint enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *charm person*, *hypnotism*; Price 800 gp.

Story Hooks

Ghost Ship: One or more PCs are children of Angelique d'Honaire and Bertrand Shroeder (or possibly an illegitimate child of Remy d'Honaire who knows of his or her parentage, if the DM wants the “Lost d'Honaire” to remain lost). The characters travel to Dementlieu by sea, carrying a letter of introduction from their mother. En route, they encounter a ghost ship manned by a crew sent to their deaths through the manipulations of Dominic d'Honaire. The phantoms give them a choice between fighting or being placed under a *geas* that will not allow them to travel the sea or any waterways again until they have unmasked and defeated Dominic d'Honaire's evil.

The Coven: A d'Honaire relative or friend living in Mordent receives an urgent summons from a small village in the south of the domain. When the PCs arrive, they learn that Madeline Mousel and members of her Coven have vanished within one of the abandoned manor houses in the area. They had gone there to deal with a ghost that demanded to speak with a member of the family blood before it could rest, but what has become of them only the DM knows....



POZAS'04



Chapter Three:
Spillers of Blood

The Dilisnya
Family



They say that Borca is the domain of the Dilisnya. Truth be told, we are everywhere: anywhere a knife flashes in the shadows, anywhere a victim falls with a poisoned crossbow quarrel in his back. Our bloodline is spread across the realms. We carry the dark flame, we lurk in the night, we watch, we listen... and when the time is right, we strike.

It is said that our bloodline is cursed due to our betrayal of the great Von Zaroviches, that the poison we used to slay Strahd I has crept into our very souls and transformed us into what we are today — cursed and tainted.

I say this curse is no curse at all. Instead, it has set us free and made us more than what we were before. Shorn of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the past, we Dilisnya are now what we were meant to be — stalkers, hunters, lurkers in shadow, death-dealers.

Though since that night some of our bloodline went on to become rulers of Borca and Dorvinia, others balked at the restrictions of nobility and rulership, so they journeyed to other lands where they made their livings as spies, thieves and cutthroats for hire. Today, those who have a secret they want stolen or an enemy they want to disappear seek out the Dilisnya. We are everywhere, but only if you know where to look.

— Zann Dilisnya, prominent Lamordian assassin

The Dilisnya

Even before the massacre at Sergei Von Zarovich's wedding, the Dilisnya had a fell reputation. Intriguers, spies, smugglers and sellers of secrets, the Dilisnya had always worked on the fringes of society, and many thought that their "noble" pedigree was obtained only through illicit means. This rumor may indeed be true, for there is evidence that the household and its titles were bought from those previous, an impoverished family of Barovian nobles, by the members of an upstart criminal family.

In the following years, the Dilisnya were able to earn a small amount of respect, but tales of their darker natures persisted. If you needed things done, especially things of an illegal or immoral nature, then you were advised to contact the Dilisnya.

The Von Zaroviches, ever arrogant and proud, rarely took notice of the "upstart nobles," and never chose to avail themselves of the Dilisnya's services. In time, the Dilisnya grew more and more resentful at being ignored and undervalued, and a deep hatred of the Von Zaroviches grew in their

already black hearts. Family patriarch Leo Dilisnya worked with others who disliked the Von Zaroviches, and together they hatched a plot to overthrow Strahd I and seize power. Invited to the wedding of Sergei Von Zarovich, Leo and his fellow conspirators smuggled in a great number of weapons and prepared to strike.

Leo's plans nearly succeeded. The massacre at Sergei's wedding might have wiped out the entire Von Zarovich family and left Barovia in Dilisnya hands had it not been for Strahd Von Zarovich, whose own horrifying betrayal had transformed him into an undead monster. Claiming to be Sturm Von Zarovich and saying that he had missed the wedding only by a stroke of grim luck, Strahd took the nation in hand and led a crusade of vengeance against the assassins. The nation's anger was indeed terrible — the Dilisnya had supposedly slain the land's greatest hero and liberator, and now the conspirators would pay the fullest price imaginable. The Dilisnya, their allies, their friends and even their associates were slain or driven into hiding. Leo himself suffered the most — some even claim, in dark whispers, that he lives on, trapped somewhere by "Sturm," as a tormented undead thing.

After what has been called by some historians "the Great Reprisal," the Dilisnya were scattered, having fled to the neighboring realms of Borca and Dorvinia. Some fled even farther, settling in distant lands where they once more took up the Dilisnya tradition as spies, thieves and hired assassins. Soon, the Dilisnya had murdered and blackmailed their way to the Borcan throne under the leadership of the infamous Camille Dilisnya. An accomplished schemer and poisoner, Camille took the nobleman Klaus Boritsi as her husband, and together they produced the infamous Ivana Boritsi, who carries the dread legacies of both parents (see Chapter One).

Meanwhile, Ivana's cousin Ivan Dilisnya carried on the family name (since Ivana is, at least in name, a Boritsi). Forced to flee Borca after murdering his sister and her husband and child in a fit of jealous rage, Ivan was briefly darklord of Dorvinia until the merging of the two realms. Now he and Ivana control the enlarged domain in an uneasy power-sharing arrangement, growing more estranged by the day.

The Dilisnya remain scattered across the core realms, however — save in Barovia where they are official enemies of the state and subject to the most





severe penalties if ever caught and revealed. Occasionally, a Dilisnya may venture into Barovia (either by design or by accident), in which case he must act with enormous caution. While Strahd is not omniscient in his realm, he is nevertheless aware of most everything that goes on. Anyone who suspects the presence of a Dilisnya interloper is almost certain to report it to the authorities, motivated both by fear of Strahd and by the desire for the rich rewards that are said to be offered for capturing one of Strahd's ancient enemies.

Outside of Borca, the scions of Dilisnya pursue their ancestral calling. Most do not use the family name publicly, though they are generally aware of their heritage and family traditions. They usually live under assumed identities, playing the part (often quite successfully) of merchants, shopkeepers, laborers, sailors, artisans and even vagrants. Few speak freely of the Dilisnya's other trade (i.e., assassination), but a loose network of informers, thugs and rumor-mongers can almost always direct a potential client to the right potential "hireling." A Dilisnya may go for weeks or months under a false identity before being contacted by a client. In such cases, the cover must be perfect and no au-

thorities must suspect a thing. The means of concealing a Dilisnya's true identity have been developed over centuries and are all but impenetrable. An informal network of Dilisnya agents and allies helps keep family members safe and undetected.

Other members of the family live relatively openly, using the family name or freely admitting to their Dilisnya ancestry. These individuals also tend to engage in the household traditions of stealth, espionage and murder, but their criminal identity remains hidden, while the public persona is one of decadence and dissipation. No one usually suspects an indulgent, effete, pampered fop of being a highly skilled and disciplined criminal, leaving the Dilisnya free to pursue his or her desired occupation.

A Dilisnya player character can be a member of either of these groups — an outwardly normal citizen of her chosen realm, or a dissolute, hedonistic noble, apparently living only for pleasure, who secretly pursues a grim life in the shadows. Such individuals are generally well versed in the history of the family, and they know how to seek out and contact family members in other lands. Adventur-





ing is entirely acceptable for these Dilisnya, for in this fashion they can gain greater riches and also obtain knowledge that might aid them in their secret pursuits.

A few Dilisnya grow up unaware of their heritage and are actually contacted later in life by other members of their family, who invite them to follow in their ancestors' footsteps. Still others find out about distant relationships with the Dilisnya and seek out the family on their own. In such cases, the character must prove his relationship to the Dilisnya or be rejected, possibly even slain, by the real family members.

In Borca, where they share rule with the equally infamous Boritsis, the Dilisnya can both live and practice their trade relatively openly. This is not as good a thing as it sounds, however, since Ivana Boritsi has little love for or loyalty to the Dilisnya side of her family. Troublesome Dilisnya are sometimes invited to grand feasts or parties — from which the family members in question often fail to return. A Dilisnya working openly in Borca should be prepared to acknowledge Ivana's supremacy, or face serious consequences. They should certainly be ready to use their particular skills in service to one or both of the darklords.

Worse still, the growing gulf between the cousins may force Borcan Dilisnya to side with Ivan against Ivana Boritsi, involving them in a potentially disastrous conflict. This is a formula for very exciting and violent roleplaying adventures, and the growing hatred between Ivan and Ivana forges an increasingly difficult dilemma for Borcan Dilisnya characters.

Outside of Borca, Dilisnya are relatively free from the rivalry in their home kingdom. They operate in a large and informal network, with the Dilisnya in one city or province maintaining contact with those in neighboring communities, passing messages and sharing intelligence about contracts and potential clients. Dilisnya player characters are likely to have a number of contacts among their local community and are expected to aid other Dilisnya scions who ask for their help. The Dilisnya who live beyond Borca form a vast, violent and somewhat dysfunctional (yet surprisingly loyal and resourceful) family — one that is well-suited to player characters and their exploits.

Fitting In

When creating a Dilisnya character, it's important to make several decisions. Is she aware of

her connection to the family? If so, is she in contact with other Dilisnya, and has she been taught the house's traditions? What is her public identity — decadent noblewoman, humble shopkeeper, simple weaver, mad beggar? Or does she work openly, accepting employment as a thief or assassin in some warren of lawlessness?

The Dilisnya are present all across the Dread Realms, save in Barovia, where they are hated foes. Most Dilisnya live in Borca, where Ivan Dilisnya rules jointly with the matriarch Ivana Boritsi. Though Ivan sees other Dilisnya as potential allies, he nevertheless keeps a close watch on his family members, while Ivana grows increasingly convinced of a Dilisnya plan to overthrow or supplant her. Elsewhere, the Dilisnya have adapted to local conditions, lending their services to the highest bidder and helping to perpetuate local rivalries and conflicts.

In Invidia, for example, local Dilisnya aid both the land's ruler, Malocchio Aderre, and his foes, the rebels of Castle Hunadora. They have also taken contracts there on behalf of the embattled Vistani, striking back at Malocchio, stealing his gold and slaying his minions, while at the same time dealing with troublesome Vistani on Malocchio's behalf.

In lands such as Richemulot, the Dilisnya are in their element, playing rival nobles against one another, selling and trading information and secrets, acting as willing (and dangerous) pawns in the endless games of politics and intrigue. Elsewhere, in crime-ridden cities such as Port-a-Lucine, the Dilisnya work hand-in-glove with criminal elements, providing information, guidance and even direct assistance to crime guilds and syndicates, smugglers and unscrupulous merchants alike.

Even though most Dilisnya carefully cultivate elaborate and seemingly impenetrable cover identities, no secret in the Dread Realms is ever completely safe, and a new Dilisnya scion is likely to inherit a number of enemies along with his new-found occupation and supportive fellow family members. This is no minor inconvenience — the Dilisnya count among their enemies the most powerful and infamous darklord in the dread realms, Strahd Von Zarovich, ruler of Barovia. Despite relatively calm relations at present between Barovia and Borca, the Von Zaroviches' hatred for the Dilisnya has scarcely lessened with the passing years. After all, Dilisnya assassins foully betrayed the Von Zaroviches' hospitality and deprived the





nation of its greatest hero, Strahd I. In the following days, weeks and months, terror gripped the nation. The Dilisnya and their supporters were brutally dealt with, but many members of the house escaped to foreign lands, beyond the reach of Von Zarovich vengeance.

Any Dilisnya caught in Barovia are quickly arrested and interrogated about their intentions in the realm. These interrogations rarely end well for the suspect. The lucky ones — those with a minimal connection to the hated Dilisnya, or those who can conclusively prove that their presence in Barovia has an innocent explanation — are simply deprived of all their belongings and holdings (if any) and escorted to the nearest frontier, with instructions never to return. Any subsequent visits to Barovia by that character invariably end badly.

Of course, the Von Zarovich vendetta is not limited to Barovia, and Strahd have been known to send agents after especially successful or conspicuous Dilisnya elsewhere. Player characters who draw too much attention to themselves may find themselves forced to deal with Von Zarovich minions — assassins, thugs, or even vampiric followers of Strahd himself.

Other families and groups hold grudges against the Dilisnya as well. There are deadly enemies of the Dilisnya among those who have been their victims or who have been double-crossed by them, those who don't feel that the conditions of certain contracts with them have been met, or those who simply want revenge for some past atrocity or slight.

Claiming Membership

The Dilisnya as a whole are a secretive and cunning group, favoring subtle and manipulative or stealthy and self-sufficient character classes. The aristocrat and expert classes are common among them. While there are some fighters in the family who serve as guards and mercenary warriors, most are rogues, sorcerers and wizards. The family has never been terribly devout, so clerics among them are rare; as might be expected, paladins are ordinarily out of the question (although one of the best-known Dilisnya is a fallen paladin — see the Appendix). Rangers' tracking and wilderness skills are sometimes useful, as are the martial and death-dealing abilities of certain monk orders.

A new Dilisnya character is likely to be of evil or at best neutral alignment; Dilisnya are often chaotic, and rarely if ever lawful. A good alignment

among the Dilisnya is about as rare as paladinhood, which is to say virtually non-existent.

As previously mentioned, freelance adventuring is an entirely acceptable pursuit for Dilisnya family members due to the riches and secrets it can bring to the household. A Dilisnya who is part of a traditional adventuring party can bring considerable advantages in the form of her contacts with other family members and her familiarity with the underworld. On the other hand, a Dilisnya party member might offer considerable challenges, not the least of which is her neutral or evil alignment and unsavory past. In amoral or evil parties, this is scarcely an issue, but it can cause dissent and eventually even collapse in many if not most parties.

Dilisnya Family Traits

Scions of the Dilisnya family are almost always normal humans. (Dilisnya half-elves, half-Vistani, or calibans are always treated as normal characters of their respective races.) However, if a human Dilisnya character knows of his or her family heritage and has been raised under Dilisnya precepts, the usual racial traits for humans are altered slightly, as follows:

- The 4 bonus skill points gained by other humans at 1st level can be spent only on Knowledge (history) and/or Knowledge (local). However, these skills are always class skills for the Dilisnya character, regardless of his or her class(es).

- **Family Bond:** By making a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check, as appropriate, the Dilisnya character can locate other family members at any time and in virtually any locale. For example, a Dilisnya trying to find a lost cousin whose parents moved to Dementlieu many years ago might be required to make a Knowledge (history) check. If the character is trying to find a relative within his current domain, a Knowledge (local) check is more appropriate. The DM may alter the difficulty of the check under certain circumstances, such as when a Dilisnya is being sought in a small, isolated village (DC 20), for example, or even in the remote wilderness (DC 25 or higher).

A successful check indicates that the character has located one or more Dilisnya (or, if it seems more reasonable, one of their allies). The exact nature of this contact is up to the DM, but the individual located is able to provide at least minimal assistance to the character, often in the form of



information, shelter, food, a small amount of cash and so on. Note that this assistance cuts both ways. From time to time, relatives asking for assistance should approach a Dilisnya PC who is known to other family members. (This supplicant might even be a fraud, claiming Dilisnya allegiance in order to obtain assistance.) A Dilisnya who doesn't support family members in need soon gains a bad reputation and may be denied aid when he needs it or even ostracized from the family.

Family Feats

When creating a Dilisnya, the player or DM should select at least one of the character's feats from the following list (or from those new feats listed further below) during character creation: Agile, Alertness, Ancestral Legacy^V, Back to the Wall^R, Blind-Fight, Deceitful, Deft Hands, Haunted^R, Jaded^R, Judge Difficulty*, Nimble Fingers, Nine Lives^V, Persuasive, Poison Resistance*, Secret Society^H, Self-Sufficient, Sharp Eyes*, Stealthy, Unseen^V, or Wealth^H.

The Dilisnya have a number of feats unique to their family members. A character of Dilisnya ancestry can select any of the following feats, as long as he or she meets the feat's requirements. (Naturally, a DM may allow characters other than Dilisnya acquire these feats as well, although she should carefully consider the matter first.)

Case the Joint [General]

You have cultivated the ability to discern a given location's weak points — where to enter, the best routes for stealthy movement, good hiding places and the like.

Prerequisite: Int 13.

Benefit: You must spend at least 1 hour carefully studying a given location within line of sight. The size and nature of a "location" for this purpose is up to the DM, but in general it should encompass nothing larger than a moderately sized manor or encampment, for instance; if the area is larger, you may choose to study an appropriately sized portion thereof. You can do nothing else during this period besides study the target location.

Once the period of study is complete, you may make an Intelligence check; if successful, you receive a competence bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot checks made in that location, as shown on the chart below. For every 4 hours beyond the 1st spent studying a

location, you gain a +1 bonus on the Intelligence check (up to a maximum of +5).

Intelligence Check Result	Competence Bonus
10 or less	+0
11–15	+1
16–20	+2
21–25	+3
26+	+4

This feat may be used only once every 1d4 days for any given location. The benefits of the feat last for a similar period (1d4 days), after which time a new study must be made.

Special: At the DM's discretion, a character may use this feat even when not in line of sight with the studied location, but only if she has access to up-to-date information regarding the location, such as a knowledgeable inhabitant willing to share information, or a set of blueprints and ledgers describing the area and its inhabitants in great detail.

Find Weakness [General]

You are trained to find openings in an enemy's defenses, allowing you to quickly dart in and inflict deadly damage.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: By using a standard action to study an opponent's tactics, you may make an opposed Intelligence check against that foe; both you and your foe also add your BAB to this check. If your check is successful, the critical damage multiplier for any melee weapon you wield is increased by x1 against that opponent for the duration of the combat. Thus, if you are using a longsword, you deal x3 damage, rather than x2, on any successful critical hit against that foe.

If you encounter the same opponent again at a later date, you must make another Find Weakness check to gain the same benefit.

Special: A fighter may select Find Weakness as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Stealthy Blade [General]

Using a combination of silent movement, feints and lethal skill, you can inflict additional damage against unsuspecting foes.

Prerequisite: Sneak attack ability.





Benefit: You deal an additional +1d6 points of damage with a successful sneak attack against a flat-footed opponent. This bonus damage stacks with that from the sneak attack ability.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Disguise 6 ranks, Forgery 6 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks, Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

Feats: Deceitful, Stealthy.

Family Classes



he Dilisnya thrive in darkness and shadow. Rogues and those prestige classes that are associated with them — such as assassins, court poisoners^{G4} and shadowdancers — are common among

Dilisnya family members. In this they are not dissimilar from many other great houses of the dread realms.

However, as a household that favors secrecy, surreptitious theft and the accumulation of illicit information and goods, they are unparalleled. The family's most infamous and successful members often have levels in the deceiver prestige class (sometimes in addition to other classes such as assassin) — making them spies, killers, thieves and confidence men *par excellence*.

Deceiver

Most deceivers live up to their title. In fine Dilisnya tradition, they live as foolish and dissipated nobles, or perhaps ordinary citizens, unthreatening peasants, impoverished beggars and the like. Only those who know or suspect a deceiver's true identity and calling can approach her, asking for a wide range of services.

Some deceivers maintain a circle of confidential allies or contacts who act as liaisons, contacting potential employers and keeping the deceiver's identity safe. In such cases, the deceiver comes and goes like a shadow, with none the wiser.

A deceiver rarely allows herself to be seen in the same guise twice. One day she may appear as a wizened crone and deliver poisoned food to a banquet, then the next she is a raven-haired temptress who passes her most recent lover's secrets on to his enemies. Similarly, a crippled war veteran begging in the streets may transform into a nimble, whirling cloud of death, armed with envenomed daggers and a cruel streak.

Hit Dice: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a deceiver (Dec), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any non-lawful and non-good.

Class Skills

The deceiver's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather





Chapter Three: Spiller of Blood

Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class features

All of the following are class features of the deceiver prestige class.

Deceptive (Ex): At 1st level, the deceiver receives a +1 bonus on all Disguise checks and Forgery checks. At every other level thereafter (3rd, 5th, etc.), this bonus increases by +1.

Poison Use (Ex): At 1st level, deceivers are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to or wielding a poisoned blade.

Sneak Attack: This is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every other level (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th). If a deceiver gets a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels) the bonuses to damage stack.

Trap Sense (Ex): At 2nd level, the deceiver gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks by traps. At 6th level, these bonuses rise to +2 and then to +3 at 10th level. These bonuses stack with trap sense bonuses gained from other classes.

Contacts (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a deceiver has established an extensive network of informants, friends, dependents and hangers-on from whom he can gain information and aid. The deceiver obtains this aid with a combination of camaraderie, threats, extortion and cajolery, all made in the form of a Charisma check. The precise nature of the aid is up to the deceiver, but the DM must determine the DC of the check in each case and the assistance generally applies only to one isolated event or job lasting up to one week at most.

The following are common uses for contacts, along with suggested DCs.

Safe House: If the deceiver needs to lie low or hide out for a time, he can use this ability to find a location that is relatively secure and safe from the authorities. The availability of a safe hiding place depends upon the location, as determined on the following table. A safe house is secure for 1d4 days, after which the authorities start searching in the

area, requiring another Charisma check to find a new safe location.

Current Location	Contacts DC
Wilderness or frontier	25
Thorp	22
Hamlet	20
Village	18
Small town	16
Large town	15
Small city	14
Large city	13
Metropolis	12

Alibi: The deceiver needs someone to tell the authorities that he was someplace else at the time of the crime, that he ran in the opposite direction, that he never had the stolen property and so on. The DC of this check depends upon the severity of the crime, from 10 for petty crimes to 20 or more for grand theft, murder, or other severe crimes. If the deceiver succeeds in obtaining an alibi, the authorities are persuaded to look elsewhere, at least temporarily, although after more investigation they may eventually see through the deception and once more begin pursuing the deceiver.

Assistance: A deceiver may need assistance in the form of hired thugs or toughs, or perhaps skilled observers or assistants. These may be simple dimwitted brawlers, experienced underworld soldiers, competent petty thieves, or notorious fences. These assistants always have commoner, warrior, or expert levels and are never above 5th level. The DC of the check is obtained by multiplying the number of assistants needed by the number obtained on the following table, based upon the assistants' average level and NPC class.

Average NPC Level	Multiplier
1st	1
2nd	2
3rd	4
4th	8
5th	12

NPC Class	Modifier
Commoner	+0
Expert	+1
Warrior	+3



Table 3-1: The Deceiver

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Deceptive, poison use, sneak attack +1d6
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Contacts +1, trap sense +1
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Con artist +1, sneak attack +2d6
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Contacts +2, furtive
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Con artist +2, sneak attack +3d6
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Contacts +3, trap sense +2
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Con artist +3, sneak attack +4d6
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Contacts +4, bonus feat
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Con artist +4, sneak attack +5d6
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Contacts +5, trap sense +3

For example, if the deceiver needs the assistance of a couple of very competent thugs (4th-level warriors) to help him as enforcers for a particular job, he must make a DC $(8 \times 2) + 3 = 19$ Charisma check. If he needs a dozen pairs of strong arms, but no one particularly skilled (i.e., 1st level commoners), to help him unload an illegal cargo at night, he must make a DC $(1 \times 12) = 12$ Charisma check.

At 2nd level, the deceiver gains a +1 bonus on all Charisma checks made to obtain the help of contacts, and this bonus increases by +1 at every other subsequent level (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th).

Con Artist (Ex): The deceiver is trained to observe marks and hide effectively, and to mislead and lie convincingly and evade others' attempts to do likewise to him. Starting at 3rd level, he gains a +1 bonus on all Will saves against mind-affecting spells or effects, and a +1 bonus on all Bluff, Sense Motive and Spot checks that are opposed by another creature's skill check or saving throw.

These bonuses increase by +1 at every other subsequent level (5th, 7th, 9th).

Furtive (Ex): At 4th level, the deceiver receives a +2 bonus on all Hide checks and Move Silently checks. These bonuses stack with those from the Stealthy feat.

Bonus Feat: At 8th level, the deceiver receives a bonus feat from the following list: Agile, Alertness, Back to the Wall^R, Blind-Fight, Case the Joint*, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Darkness Within^C, Deft Hands, Dodge, Find Weakness*, Haunted^R, Improved Initiative, Jaded^R, Judge Difficulty*, Leadership, Machiavellian^C, Nimble Fingers, Persuasive, Poison Resistance*, Quick

Draw, Run, Stealthy Blade*, Sworn Enemy^V, Unseen^V, Weapon Finesse, or Wealth^H.

The deceiver must meet all the usual requirements for the chosen feat.

Family Magic

New Spell

Deadly Feast

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: See text

Duration: 1 hour

Saving Throw: Fort negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell, which has also been used with great success by spellcasters attached to the Boritsi family, is said to have originated with the Dilisnya. It is also rumored to be the spell used in the massacre at Sergei Von Zarovich's wedding feast many years ago.

The spell causes all food and drink in range to become poisoned. The DC of the ingested poison is equal to 15 + the caster's key spellcasting ability modifier; initial damage is 1d6 points from any ability of the caster's choice, while secondary damage is 2d6 points from any ability of the caster's choice. These two abilities need not be the same, but the initial and secondary effects are the same for all who consume the poisoned food (i.e., the



poison's initial damage can't be Strength for some victims and Constitution for others).

Detect poison cannot detect this spell's presence (or rather that of the poison it creates), but a necromantic aura can be discerned using *detect magic*. The spell is effective for 1 hour, after which the effect disappears along with any trace of poison, leaving investigators to puzzle out how the crime was committed.

New Magic Item

Nicolai's Dagger (Minor Artifact)

Many Dilisnya family legends revolve around this grim and terrible object. It is said that in the distant past, the family's patriarch, Nicolai Dilisnya, ruled over a prosperous and successful noble house whose trade caravans spanned the known world. Sadly, while his children, grandchildren and members of the extended family strove to always increase the family's wealth and influence, they always fell short in his eyes. As he grew older, Nicolai grew more and more cynical and bitter — though his household continued to grow more powerful and wealthy, he was never satisfied. If a son brought him a bag of gold, he demanded ten more. When a granddaughter married a wealthy baron, he berated her for not marrying a prince.

For their part, Nicolai's family eventually gave up trying to please their demanding sire and sank into decadence, squandering the family's wealth as quickly as it accumulated. Lavish parties, bloody spectacles, ever-more ostentatious homes and clothing — by the time Nicolai was an old man, his family had grown as infamous for its excesses as it had once been famous for its prosperity.

In time, Nicolai decided that all of his children and grandchildren had failed him utterly. He placed all his hopes on his granddaughter Nadia, who carried his first great-grandchild. In his mind, Nicolai imagined greatness for his great grandson — for, of course, the child would be a boy. He himself would raise the child, teaching him all that he had learned and infusing him with the spirit to lead the Dilisnya family to the glory that was its birthright.

As the day of the child's birth drew near, Nicolai's fantasies grew more and more elaborate, and he secured the services of the finest midwives in the realm. Nicolai himself attended the birth, feeling that now at last his true vision of Dilisnya greatness would be realized.

To his shock, disgust and absolute amazement, however, Nadia gave birth not to a son, but to a healthy young daughter.

Even though Nicolai could have expressed his vision perfectly well through a girl, he saw the simple fact that she was not male as a final, intolerable act of defiance by his children, their children and the greater powers beyond them as well. As the infant lay wailing in her mother's arms, Nicolai drew his dagger and slew both Nadia and her daughter. Then he turned his blind, unreasoning rage upon the midwives, mercilessly cutting them down.

Bloody and wild-eyed, Nicolai burst from Nadia's chambers, pushing aside the other family members who had gathered for the birth. Leaving scarlet footprints, he staggered into the hall and dragged his way up the stairs to the parapets, even as the other horrified observers entered Nadia's chamber and saw the nightmare that the old man had left behind. Overwhelmed with revulsion, they pursued Nicolai and found him just in time to see the family patriarch fling himself from the highest castle wall, his body tumbling down through the misty night air.

Some believe that this is the incident that caused the Dilisnya to become part of the Dread Realms — after that terrible night, it is whispered, the mists never fully lifted. Others claim that this is merely yet another tragic story in the long history of a bloody and cursed family.

Nicolai's body was never recovered. All that searchers found was his bloody dagger, which was taken and kept as a reminder of that dark night's events. Soon after, however, the Dilisnya discovered that the dagger had special powers and aided the household to follow its new direction — that of assassins, spies and workers in night and shadow. Today, *Nicolai's dagger* resides at the family estate in the care of Ivan Dilisnya, and is still used for especially difficult jobs or tasks that are critical to the family's survival.

The dagger is possessed of a malign and blood-thirsty intelligence, and the Dilisnya sometimes suggest in hushed whispers that the weapon actually contains the soul of the departed Nicolai, now fully lost to madness and violence.

Nicolai's Dagger: A +5 keen vicious dagger of wounding (also functions as dagger of venom 3/day; Fort DC 20); AL NE; Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10; empathy, 30 ft. vision and hearing; Ego score 14.

Lesser Powers: Deathwatch (at will).





Phase 2: A unique aspect of *Nicolai's dagger*, and one of which the Dilisnya themselves are not fully aware, is that its abilities and powers increase with the more violence it does. If the dagger is used to slay 10 or more levels or HD of foes in a single day, its statistics become as follows:

Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10; speech (Balok, Falkovnian, Mordentish), 120 ft. vision and hearing; Ego score 17.

Lesser Powers: *Deathwatch* (at will), *darkness* 3/day.

Phase 3: These statistics remain for one full day, after which the dagger returns to normal. If, however, another 15 levels or HD of foes are slain within that time, the dagger's statistics increase again, and remain that way for another full day, as follows:

Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10; speech (Balok, Falkovnian, Luktar, Mordentish), 60 ft. darkvision and hearing; Ego score 20.

Lesser Powers: *Deathwatch* (at will), *darkness* 3/day, item has 10 ranks in Spot (total modifier +13).

Phase 4: Finally, if another 20 or more levels or HD of foes are slain in the next full day, the dagger's statistics increase to the following. The dagger uses its substantial ego to dominate its wielder, effectively possessing him with the spirit of the rage-filled Nicolai Dilisnya and driving him to more and more bloody crimes. Fortunately for the Dilisnya, this event has never actually occurred, although the growing possibility of open conflict with the Boritsi may allow for an opportunity to bring out the dagger's darker side.

The dagger remains in this phase until it fails to slay at least 20 HD/levels of creatures in any 24-hour period, at which time it reverts to its normal ("Phase 1") state.

Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 10; speech (Balok, Falkovnian, Luktar, Mordentish, Patterna), telepathy, read languages, *read magic*, 120 ft. darkvision, blindsense and hearing; Ego score 31.

Lesser Powers: *Deathwatch* (at will), *darkness* 3/day, item has 10 ranks in Spot (total modifier +14).

Greater Powers: *Dismissal* 1/day.

Special Purpose: Slay all.

Dedicated Power: *Waves of exhaustion*.

Strong necromancy; CL 18th; Weight 1 lb.

Story Hooks

There are a number of potential plotlines involving the Dilisnya and their dark stock-in-trade. The following are merely a few suggestions for working the Dilisnya into a **Ravenloft** campaign, or for involving a Dilisnya player character.

A Passage Through Barovia: The adventurers must travel through Barovia — whether they are simply passing through the country or intending to stay for a while — and are unaware that they include a disguised Dilisnya in their midst. They may be pursued by Barovian authorities who are aware of their companion's true identity, or be forced to go along with the Dilisnya's subterfuge rather than risk arrest, imprisonment and possibly torture or death.

Shakedown: A Dilisnya character is offered a lucrative contract to slay a prominent nobleman, and is promised his choice of items from among the victim's considerable possessions. He persuades his companions to join him, only to find that the entire affair is a sham engineered by the would-be victim, who merely wishes to frame a rival. The authorities are waiting, and the Dilisnya and his companions must escape from the trap.

Family Politics: Ivan Dilisnya has had enough — he asks a fellow Dilisnya (the player character) to assassinate a prominent member of the rival Boritsi clan. To this end, he loans the character the infamous weapon called *Nicolai's dagger*. The character is faced with a dilemma: join the struggle between the two houses that might lead to open warfare, or offend and possibly make an enemy of his household's most prominent member.

Worse, if the character accepts the job, then the dagger's more fearsome attributes may begin to show themselves, with the weapon growing in power as the assassin gets closer to his goal, eventually possibly taking control of his actions altogether and driving him to engage in a bloody rampage.



Chapter Four:
Blood of the
Mighty

The Drakov
Family

It was with a palpable sense of dread that I stepped into the audience room, my legs trembling, my insides turning to jelly. I had been summoned — summoned! — to the presence of the mighty Kingsfuhrer, Vlad Drakov, the Bloodied Hawk himself. Now, clad in my finest ceremonial uniform, I strode alone down the crimson carpet that poured from Vlad's high seat like a river of blood.

His Majesty sat there, his very gaze bespeaking his gore-drenched past. His expression was indecipherable, but behind those old eyes there lurked intelligence, strength and savagery. Two guards flanked the throne, staring fixedly ahead, as distant and unmoving as twin paintings. It was as if they were decorations, as much as the crossed swords and tapestries on the walls or the murals of Vlad Drakov's past military triumphs. For all intents, it was clear that the Kingsfuhrer and I were the room's sole occupants.

"Come closer," Drakov commanded in a tone that brooked no disobedience. Though my first instinct was to bolt forward and prostrate myself before him, begging forgiveness for any offenses I had committed, I kept my fear in check and marched forward with the semblance of calm, as if striding beside my comrades in parade. At the foot of the dais I bowed and sank to one knee, my right hand across my heart.

"Great Leader," I intoned, "Lord of Falkovnia and High Commander of the Talons. I am Sir Viktor Helsing. I command the first squadron, second company of the Steel Brigade in your Black Wolf regiment. It was my honor to lead my squadron against the Spawn of the Lizard in the battle of Vladik's Ford last spring."

Drakov seemed pleased at this. "I know well your exploits, Sir Viktor," he intoned, and his voice seemed to fill the room. "You have lived up to all my expectations."

I suppressed a desire to frown in puzzlement at this cryptic comment and instead spoke respectfully.

"Your Majesty is generous," I replied. "I have endeavored always to live in the manner that would serve to increase your glory. It is how my father lived and how I continue to live."

Drakov's countenance transformed as I spoke, breaking into a grim, humorless smile.

"I summoned you because I wish to offer you a valuable gift," he said. "Two gifts, in fact. First, the truth. The man you call father — Baron Albrecht Helsing — is not truly your father."

I swallowed. The words should have shaken me to my very soul, but now they seemed nothing less than the truth. I had always felt estranged from my father, as if we were merely strangers sharing a homestead.

"You know of the tradition of First Night, in which a bride may be asked to surrender her virtue to the ruler of the land or his appointed representatives. Your mother was one such bride — a beautiful young woman who gave herself willingly to her ruler, and who joyfully gave birth to a strong, intelligent son. Your mother and the man you call Father raised this child happily, glad that they nurtured the seed of their beloved lord and master."

I could not conceal my expression of astonishment and disbelief. Drakov smiled with pleasure as he saw the truth dawn in my eyes. Now, the pieces of my puzzle began to fit.

"Now, Sir Viktor..." he continued, his voice swelling with pride, "now you truly understand."

I met his gaze, my fear and apprehension melting away.

"Welcome to House Drakov," the Kingsfuhrer said, then paused and spoke slowly, as if savoring every syllable. "Welcome, my son."



House Drakov

Falkovnia is a military dictatorship, with Kingsfuhrer Vlad its absolute ruler. Vlad Drakov has fathered numerous illegitimate sons and daughters through the practice of First Night privileges. And he is not the only one — his own offspring and their relatives often hold important ranks within Drakov's power structure and produce their own minor relations in this way. Some estimate that as many as one in five Falkovnians can trace some connection to its ruler, though this may be another crude rumor spread by Drakov's enemies.

It should be noted that Vlad Drakov's views of relations between the sexes holds that women are chattel, useful only as broodmares and nursemaids to the next generation of Falkovnian soldiers. Female adventurers are offered full family membership only if they have proven themselves to be exceptional individuals. They must also demonstrate fanatical loyalty to the Falkovnian cause. Even then, female Drakovs must generally fight and fight hard, to maintain their status, for the officially-sanctioned household view is that even

female warriors eventually ought to settle down and perform their "duties."

The large number of Drakov family members sometimes leads to difficulties as well, for from time to time a member may grow weary or disillusioned with Drakov's bloody policies or the nation's oppressive conditions. Such individuals have been known to disavow their connection to House Drakov and usually flee Falkovnia altogether. Vlad himself considers such folk to be traitors, and they are to be slain on sight by any other loyal family member who encounters them. Once they have passed Falkovnia's borders, however, Vlad has little power over them; they are usually left in peace, though they can never again return to their homeland.

One of Vlad Drakov's illegitimate children or other illicit relations need not necessarily claim his birthright directly. More often than not, Vlad himself cements the political power and loyalty of his army and government by offering positions of privilege to his various bastards and relatives. A young Drakov may grow to adulthood believing



that his parents are both exactly what they claim to be, though in some cases (such as Sir Viktor Helsinger, whose description and game statistics can be found in the Appendix) they may feel a certain distance and uncertainty about their real relationships.

In some cases, especially when the young Drakov is an accomplished soldier or military officer, Lord Vlad himself may command the individual to a personal audience. In other cases, the Kingsfuhrer's representatives may contact the individual and interview him to be sure of his loyalties. In extreme cases — when, for example, the young Drakov's mother has fled Falkovnia and is living abroad — Vlad's representatives have been known to go so far as to abduct the offspring and bring him before the Kingsfuhrer. Once a candidate has been confirmed to be a real child, grandchild, or some other close relative of Vlad Drakov, the Kingsfuhrer personally offers him family membership.

Although the offer to join House Drakov is phrased as an invitation, it is of course nothing of the kind. Vlad Drakov is not used to being disobeyed. His methods are intended as a means of cementing his total control of the kingdom and of expanding his army of followers and minions throughout Falkovnia — love and paternal affection have no role in his actions. Anyone who refuses him, whether politely or otherwise, risks his wrath and, most often, a sudden and unpleasant end. Sometimes a valuable Drakov who expresses doubts is invited to remain in Castle Draccipetri, enjoying the benefits of the Kingsfuhrer's hospitality. The implied threat is usually enough to persuade anyone who is unsure, but a few have been known to hold out, even in the face of arrest and imprisonment.

Once accepted into House Drakov, the new scion gains a number of benefits from his relationship to the nation's ruler and is expected to act in all ways to promote the welfare and success of Falkovnia. Some may be employed at or near Castle Draccipetri; if loyalty is not in question, he may be posted to another important location. Others, especially those who have few martial skills, may simply be given a token title or official designation. Some Drakovs already serve in the Falkovnian military; these lucky ones are often given substantial promotions or special privileges.

Once a Drakov has accepted family membership, he is usually allowed to go about his life, albeit

with a new sense of importance. Drakovs who have accepted membership in the household carry a tangible aura of authority and fear within Falkovnia's borders. Commoners are far more likely to cater to the wishes of a Drakov for fear of provoking another powerful family member or even Vlad himself. A member of the Drakov family is considered welcome in any extended family holding throughout the realm, from the grim and forbidding chambers of Castle Draccipetri to the smaller demesnes of lesser-ranking nobles who can claim only tortuous connections to the ruling house.

Still, in general it is best for a Drakov not to abuse these privileges, for most family members don't want to support yet another hanger-on or minor relation, and their hospitality usually covers at most day or two of pleasant company. On occasion, a Drakov in need of aid can seek shelter in a relative's home or castle, healing for wounds, or a place to recuperate, but this should not happen too often, lest other Drakovs start to come up with excuses as to why they cannot help.

Of course, there are drawbacks as well. Falkovnians are almost universally despised throughout the Dread Realms save in Lamordia, the only nation that maintains diplomatic relations with Vlad Drakov. Owing to his many military disasters (and his apparent inability to learn anything from them), the Kingsfuhrer is widely regarded as a power-mad buffoon — and those who promote his cause are not much better. Tales of Vlad's licentiousness and his hordes of illegitimate children are the subject of much ribald humor and farce performed by bards throughout the realms. Anyone so unwise as to admit to being one of Drakov's byblows risks being treated with utter disdain — insulted, refused service, made the butt of jokes and so forth.

This disdain for members of House Drakov is the least of the perils that family members encounter outside Falkovnia. Vlad Drakov and his brutal armies have spilled oceans of blood all across the Dread Realms and have created bitter, undying hatreds along the way, hatreds that endure for generations and that many are only too willing to express violently. A Drakov who travels openly beyond Falkovnia risks attack from any number of those who remember the house patriarch's ruthless violence and blood-soaked tyranny.

Falkovnians are barely tolerated in Dementlieu and Richemulot, nations that have both felt the iron tread of Vlad's soldiers. Even Falkovnians



with legitimate reasons for visiting these realms are watched closely by the official authorities, often harassed and even assaulted by citizens who were raised on tales of Falkovnian brutality.

Lamordia was the first to face Vlad Drakov's imperialistic ambitions and defeated his armies soundly. Yet strangely enough, the Lamordians themselves seem to feel less antipathy toward Falkovnia than some of their neighbors and have even gone so far as to maintain diplomatic relations with the brutal Kingsfuhrer. A Drakov might get a few strange looks in Lamordia, but probably won't face unprovoked violence.

The greatest antipathy toward Falkovnians is undeniably found in Darkon, the closest thing Vlad has to a hereditary national foe. Falkovnians are demonized in Darkon, shunned or harassed, and Falkovnian merchants — who, despite the bad blood between the two nations continue to ply their trade — usually travel there only under very heavy escort.

Fitting In

Once, long ago, Vlad Drakov was famous as one of the most skilled and ruthless mercenary leaders in his world. Since then, his skills and intelligence have not declined, but the Dark Powers have refused to grant him what he desires most: military glory and conquest. As with all darklords, it is Drakov's own weaknesses that have conspired to frustrate him. Though he remains a powerful individual and a brilliant commander, he stubbornly fails to modernize his armed forces — and he has yet to realize that it is the supernatural power of the realms themselves that frustrate his chosen destiny.

Despite this, he continues to pass on his tactical and strategic skills to his offspring and his most trusted officers, as well as techniques to aid followers against their foes. He hopes that one day his armies will at last be victorious, and that all the Dread Realms will bow down before him as absolute ruler and invincible conqueror.

One of Vlad Drakov's favorite hobbies, a practice that is thus pursued by many of his scions, is that of falconry (see the Master Falconer feat and the hawkmaster prestige class later in this chapter). In fact, so central is the practice of falconry to Vlad's household culture that non-Drakovs in Falkovnia are forbidden from keeping birds of prey in any fashion — a crime punishable by imprisonment and heavy fines.

Vlad Drakov and his warriors, the Talons, are infamous for their merciless conduct on the battlefield. Fallen enemies are not spared, and women, children and the elderly are all fair game. Their reputation has grown so that Falkovnian enemies usually surrender rather than face them, and entire communities flee before them. Vlad and his Talons have developed several tactics to further spread their infamy, including setting great fires as they march, leaving columns of smoke to mark their advance and to demoralize any settlements or defenders in their path.

When Vlad's troops ride into battle, they do so while voicing fearsome war chants, known as the Hawk's Cry (see the feat of the same name later in this chapter). Merely hearing this terrifying sound is often enough to cause most enemies to flee in fear. Today, Vlad and his followers teach this war cry to leaders and elite troops, who use it as they ride into battle. Despite the cry's effectiveness, Vlad's campaigns outside Falkovnia have uniformly met with disaster, but the Hawk's Cry remains one of his soldiers' best-known tactics.

Membership in the Drakov family is not hard to claim; in fact, often the family claims its own members. As might be expected, the martial classes are most common among his offspring and household members. Drakovs are most often fighters or rangers, though rogues and even bards are not unheard of among them. Sometimes a Drakov sets off on a non-military path before discovering his true heritage, and may thus have levels in some other class(es).

The nation's distrust of magic means that few follow the path of the spellcaster, whether divine or arcane, although rangers' meager spell ability is considered acceptable. Those who have been accepted into the House of the Hawk are discouraged from the practice of magic, though those who have already proven their arcane abilities are sometimes allowed to continue their studies under the careful auspices of the Minister of the Arcane. Those who join the family and later wish to study magic must obtain special permission from the ministry to do so; most of the relatively few arcane casters in Falkovnia are wizards, for Drakov blood does not usually carry the essence of magic that is required for the practice of sorcery. The national belief that the gods are dead or have forsaken the land has led to a severe shortage of clerics, and Vlad himself has forbidden any household member from taking





priestly vows. (Again, divine magic is tolerated when used by rangers in service to House Drakov.)

From time to time (such as when, for example, an expectant mother escapes from Falkovnia to raise her child away from Vlad and his bloodthirsty followers), a Drakov is born outside of Falkovnia. These expatriates may sometimes be contacted, or in some cases actually abducted by the Kingsfuhrer's representatives and invited, sometimes at sword point, to take their "rightful" place with the family. This leaves open the possibility for virtually any character class to be incorporated into House Drakov, although clerics and especially paladins are still rarely if ever adopted as official household members.

Claiming Membership

Drakov family members have obligations as well as privileges, for Vlad uses them to keep control of Falkovnia. He may sometimes call upon a family member to perform a task for him, which may be as simple as transporting orders or documents to a nearby city. More often it is something like leading troops into battle, dealing with a troublesome enemy, scouting into a neighboring realm in advance of yet another ill-advised military

campaign, or locating and "persuading" another family member to present himself to Vlad Drakov. Drakov scions are well advised to accept such missions unless they have an extremely well warranted reason not to.

Drakov family Traits

Scions of the Drakov family are always normal humans. (Drakov half-castes and calibans are unheard of and would generally be destroyed at birth if they occurred.) However, if a Drakov character has been accepted by the Kingsfuhrer himself as a member of the royal household, he gains the following traits:

- **Family Curse:** The most dangerous aspect of membership in House Drakov is an individual's slow but almost irrevocable slide into depravity and violence. A character can be any alignment when invited to join, but once the invitation is accepted, a change comes over the new Drakov. In battle, an acknowledged Drakov fights ferociously, shouting and raving, while cutting and hewing at foes with wild abandon. He gains the rage ability, as a barbarian, usable once per day (if he already has rage from another source, such as barbarian levels, he may use the ability one additional time per day).





However, if an enemy ever attempts to flee or surrender, the Drakov must make a DC 15 Will save or attack at once, attempting to kill the offender in as quick and bloody a way as possible. After killing a foe in this manner, the Drakov must then make another Will save (DC 12, +1 for every other death caused in this way in the past 24 hours); if this save fails, the Drakov's alignment shifts one step toward chaotic evil. Eventually, most Drakovs are consumed by bloodlust, insisting upon executing prisoners, attacking innocents and engaging in sadistic, violent practices.

- **National Pride:** A Drakov receives a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Intimidate checks involving Falkovnian citizens. When dealing with non-Falkovnians, this bonus becomes a -1 penalty. Within Falkovnia, a Drakov's successful Intimidate checks are usually sufficient to persuade innkeepers and merchants to charge significantly less (or, in some cases, not at all).

Family Feats

When creating a Drakov, the player or DM should select at least one of the character's feats from the list of fighter bonus feats, or else from the following list (or from those new feats listed further below): Alertness, Ancestral Legacy^V, Back to the Wall^R, Brawler^C, Courage^R, Haunted^R, Hollow^C, Jaded^R, Self-Sufficient, Sworn Enemy^V, or Voice of Wrath^R.

The Drakov also have several feats unique to their family members. A character of Drakov ancestry can select any of the following feats, as long as he meets the feat's requirements. (Naturally, a DM may allow characters other than Drakov acquire these feats as well, although she should carefully consider the matter first.)

Hawk's Cry [General]

Merely hearing this awful sound is often enough to cause enemies to flee in terror.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: As a free action, you may emit a terrible shout, causing all opponents within a 30-foot cone to be affected as if by a *scare* spell (Will DC 10 + one-half your character level + your Charisma modifier). This ability cannot be used while you are currently engaged in melee. This is a sonic, mind-affecting extraordinary ability.

Hawk's Cry can be used a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier.

Special: A fighter may select Hawk's Cry as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Inspired Leadership [General]

You can relay competent and compelling instructions to those around you, improving their performance in battle.

Prerequisite: Leadership.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can issue commands to all creatures within line of sight. This can be by voice, or by pre-arranged signals such as hand gestures and so on. For a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 round), your allies receive a morale bonus equal to your Charisma modifier on all attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws.

This feat can be used a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier.

Special: A fighter may select Inspired Leadership as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Master Falconer [General]

You have a natural aptitude or perhaps a trained insight into the nature of raptors and are thus highly skilled at handling them.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: You receive a +4 competence bonus on all Handle Animal checks (and animal empathy checks, if you have that ability) with respect to any true raptor or any magical beast that has raptor traits (such as a giant eagle or a griffon).

Family Classes

Drakovs are almost always fighters, although rangers are not uncommon among them, and many Drakovs have a level or two in rogue. In terms of prestige class, they tend to gravitate toward blackguard, horizon walker and night lord^C; those who have arcane spellcaster levels previous to joining the household may pursue levels in eldritch knight.

In addition, the two new prestige classes presented below, hawkmaster and raptor knight, are common to Drakovs.

Hawkmaster

Falconry is outwardly an innocent enough pursuit — though it almost always ends in the death of some creature, it is no more evil than any other form of hunting. As practiced by Vlad Drakov, however, the practice of falconry has taken on a



darker and more brutal aspect. Long a favorite diversion of Vlad Drakov, the falconry of the Kingsfuhrer has grown more sadistic over the years. He has dispensed with smaller birds such as the traditional falcons, kites and kestrels, preferring larger and more dangerous species such as the zwiefalk (see **Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol. II**) and the bloodhawk (see sidebar), both native to Falkovnia. As well, hunting “lesser” birds, rabbits and other animals grew stale decades ago, and Drakov has since sought new and more challenging diversions.

For many years now, he has trained his raptors to seek human prey, sending them against fleeing slaves or captives, tearing the helpless victims to pieces before Drakov’s dark, approving eyes. Eventually, an elite unit of hawkmasters, trained in techniques to bring out the most violent behavior in their bloodhawk companions, accompanied Vlad and his mercenaries in their various campaigns of terror. When foes fled before him, Vlad commanded his hawkmasters to send their birds out to bring down stragglers, and they have even trained the hawks to fight alongside his men in battle.

Today, hawkmasters continue to serve Vlad Drakov and the nation of Falkovnia, pursuing criminals and fugitives, hunting down wayward villagers and rebels, or simply providing entertainment for the Kingsfuhrer’s amusement.

Hit Dice: d8.

Requirements

To qualify to become a hawkmaster (Hkm), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks.

Feat: Master Falconer*.

Special: Wild empathy ability.

Class Skills

The hawkmaster’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex),



Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the hawkmaster prestige class.

Bloodhawk Companion: At 1st level, the hawkmaster receives a bloodhawk (see sidebar) as his dread companion. If the hawkmaster already has a dread companion from some other source (such as druid or ranger levels), he must release his former companion and take a bloodhawk as his new companion.



Chapter Four: Blood of the Mighty

Table 4-1: The Hawkmaster

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Hawk companion
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Hawk's swiftness
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Hawk's sight
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Evasion
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Hawk's agility

The bloodhawk companion ability functions in all ways as the druid's animal companion ability, save that the bloodhawk is a magical beast and not an animal. If the hawkmaster already has the animal companion ability from previous class levels, then his hawkmaster class levels stack with those previous levels for the purpose of determining the benefits gained by his bloodhawk companion. For example, a 6th-level ranger/4th-level hawkmaster is treated as a 7th-level druid for the purpose of determining his bloodhawk's abilities and benefits. (A ranger's level is halved for the purpose of the animal companion ability.)

If a bloodhawk companion is killed, the hawkmaster gains another, but he must spend 2d4 weeks training the bird before it gains the special abilities of its predecessor.

The Bloodhawk

The hawkmasters of House Drakov are trained to work with bloodhawks, an especially large and vicious breed of hawk native to Falkovnia. Bloodhawks are highly intelligent and trained to attack with great agility and skill. Linked to their chosen hawkmaster, these creatures gain abilities as their master increases in power, eventually becoming almost literal extensions of their trainer's will.

Bloodhawk: CR 1/2; Tiny magical beast; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +4; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 18 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 14; BAB +2; Grap -8; Atk +8 melee (1d4-2, talons); Atk +8 melee (1d4-2, talons) and +3 melee (1d4-2, bite); Space/Reach 2 ft./0 ft.; SQ low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +2, Spot +15. (The bloodhawk receives a +8 racial bonus to Spot, already included here.)

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Hawk's Swiftness (Ex): At 2nd level, the hawkmaster gains a +10 feet bonus to his base speed when wearing light or no armor.

Hawk's Sight (Ex): At 3rd level, the hawkmaster gains low-light vision and a +4 bonus on Spot checks.

Evasion (Ex): At 4th level, the hawkmaster gains evasion. If exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw. The evasion ability can only be used if the hawkmaster is wearing light armor or no armor.

Hawk's Agility (Su): At 5th level, the hawkmaster is so attuned to his companion's abilities that he can draw upon its speed and grace as a free action. Once per day, he may gain a +4 bonus to Dexterity that lasts for 5 minutes.

Raptor Knight

Being engaged in ever more brutal campaigns of conquest, Vlad Drakov's soldiers over time developed new techniques for terror and violence, committing unbelievable atrocities against the inhabitants of those realms that they invaded. Soon, Vlad Drakov recognized their achievements and declared them to be as savage as the raptors he so admired.

Raptor knights are expected to be highly experienced in mounted combat, as well as being completely incapable of showing mercy or compassion. They are among the elite of Falkovnia's military but serve in a wide range of roles, including acting as disciplinarians assigned to "shape up" lax military units, as leaders of purges in which enemies of Falkovnia (real or imagined) are rounded up and massacred, and as commanders of punitive expeditions against such foes as bandits, rebels and the humanoid Spawn of the Lizard.



Currently, there is no major campaign against one of Falkovnia's many hereditary foes, and the knights are growing restless — the raptor knights are as blind to the futility of open warfare in the Dread Realms as Vlad Drakov himself. As a result, they tend to take their frustrations out on the common folk of Falkovnia.

The rank of raptor knight is most often awarded to those relatives who have impressed Vlad Drakov with their martial skill and cruelty.

Hit Dice: d10.

Requirements

To qualify to become a raptor knight (Rpk), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Intimidate 5 ranks, Ride 5 ranks.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hawk bow) [see sidebar], Equestrian^C, Mounted Combat, Rapid Reload, Trample.

Special: Must have killed an Innocent in service to Falkovnia.

Class Skills

The raptor knight's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class features

All of the following are class features of the raptor knight prestige class.

Mounted Archery: At 1st level, the raptor knight gains Mounted Archery as a bonus feat.

Crossbow Charge (Ex): At 2nd level, the raptor knight may fire a crossbow as a free action during a mounted charge. (If he uses a hawk bow, he may discharge both bolts as a free action.) This attack is made with the normal penalty for shooting from a running mount.

This ability allows a raptor knight with a hawk bow (see sidebar) to fire two shots at a foe as he charges, drop the hawk bow (another free action) and still draw a melee weapon (a free action while charging) to make a melee charge attack against the same foe.

Rage (Ex): At 3rd level, the raptor knight gains the rage ability, as the barbarian class ability of the same name. If the knight has the rage ability from some other source (such as barbarian levels or the Drakov bloodline), he may use the ability one additional time per day.

At 5th level, the raptor knight may rage twice per day (or two additional times per day if he has the ability from another source).

Improved Trample (Ex): At 4th level, a mounted raptor knight does not provoke an attack of opportunity when attempting to overrun an opponent. Further, the knight's mount gains a +2 bonus to its Strength check when attempting to knock the target prone and receives a +2 bonus to its hoof attack if it succeeds in knocking the opponent down.

Greater Rage (Ex): At 5th level, the raptor knight gains the greater rage ability, as the barbarian class ability of the same name.



Hawk Bow

This weapon is inextricably associated with Falkovnia's soldiers and particularly his raptor knights. Drakov perfected many audacious and cunning battle tactics before he was transferred to the Dread Realms, and was a highly successful and prosperous mercenary general. Since gaining the throne of Falkovnia, his drive for greater and greater conquests has been frustrated — military brilliance and superior tactics matter little to the Dark Powers, who revel in turning such gifts against their owners.

Vlad's cavalry was trained in highly adaptive tactics, acting as heavy assault troops or mobile skirmishers as needed. Accordingly they were armed with an unusual weapon, a heavy dual-shot crossbow whose two spring-steel laths were forged in the shape of hawk's wings, and whose tiller was carved into the likeness of a feathered hawk's body. The weapon has a double trigger and can thus be cocked and loaded with two quarrels at a time, increasing the number of shots a wielder can make with it at one time (or allowing two shots at separate targets as apart of a full-attack action, as with a repeating crossbow).

Most raptor knights and other mounted warriors who use hawk bows keep them closely tethered to their military saddles, so that they may release them as a free action once fired without losing or damaging the weapons.

Hawk Bow: Any character proficient with simple ranged weapons can use a hawk bow, but in that case it functions identically to a normal heavy crossbow. Each lath must be loaded separately, requiring a full-round action for each.

If a wielder gains proficiency with the hawk bow as an exotic weapon, he can load both laths at once as a full-round action. Moreover, if he wishes, he can make two simultaneous attacks with the weapon as a standard action before reloading; both of these shots must be at the same target, however, and both use the same attack roll.

Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Inc.	Weight	Type
Hawk bow	130 gp	1d8	1d10	19–20/x2	110 ft.	12 lb.	Piercing





Table 4-2: The Raptor Knight

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Mounted Archery
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Crossbow charge
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Rage 1/day
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Improved trample
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Rage 2/day, greater rage

Family Magic



he Drakovs' inherent distrust of magic-use does not extend to enchanted items: Kingsfuhrer Vlad himself possesses many potent magic items, as do his followers. In addition, as noted elsewhere in this chapter, ranger spells are considered acceptable in Falkovnia, and the following new spell is one instance of such magic harnessed to aid in making war.

New Spell

Hawk's flight

Transmutation

Level: Rgr 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Up to 50 projectiles (all of which must be in contact with each other at the time of casting)

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

This spell grants an +1 enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls per three caster levels (maximum +3) for up to as many as 50 arrows, bolt, or bullets. The affected projectiles also have their range increment doubled, so that, for example, arrows fired from a longbow have an increment of 200 feet rather than 100 feet.

The projectiles to be affected must be of the same kind, and they have to be together (in the same quiver or other container). Projectiles lose their transmutation once fired.

New Magic Items

Figurine of Wondrous Power: Bloodstone Hawk

When activated, these items transform into hellish birds willing to fight on behalf of their owners. These items are sometimes used for executions, with several Drakovs combining their *bloodstone hawks* together to rend and tear at an

Half-Fiend Bloodhawk: CR 2; Small outsider (native); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +3 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 14; BAB +3; Grap +1; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2, talons); Atk +9 melee (1d6+2, talons) and +7 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA smite good 1/day, spell-like abilities; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, low-light vision, resistance to acid, cold, electricity and fire 10, SR 13; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +15, Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +5, Spot +16, Survival +8. (The bloodhawk receives a +8 racial bonus to Spot, already included here.)

Feats: Multiattack, Weapon Finesse.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—darkness; 1/day—desecrate. Caster level 3rd.

unfortunate victim, often for the personal amusement of Vlad Drakov.

Bloodstone Hawk: Normally, this item resembles a tiny hawk carved from red-speckled green stone. When it is tossed into the air and a command word uttered, however, it transforms into a Small 3-HD half-fiend bloodhawk under the command of its possessor.





The *bloodstone hawk* can be used up to three times per week for up to 12 hours per use. When the 12 hours have passed or when the command word is spoken, the hawk reverts to statuette form.

Faint enchantment and transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *summon monster III*; Price 11,700 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Hawk Helm

One of these marvelous items accompanied Vlad Drakov and his men in their unwilling sojourn into the mists; since taking the throne of Falkovnia, the Kingsfuhrer has commissioned the creation of several more, often forcing magical artisans to construct the helms at sword point. Today, these helms are worn by elite leaders of Vlad's forces and are occasionally lent to Drakov officers on important military missions.

A *hawk helm* is made of dark metal in the form of a screaming hawk's visage, the visor being shaped as the beak.

Hawk Helm: This helm grants its wearer a +4 bonus on all Search and Spot checks. He also gains a +3 deflection bonus to AC, and once per day the wearer can cast *expeditious retreat* as a spell-like ability. If the wearer is mounted, the *expeditious retreat* ability also affects his mount.

Moderate abjuration and transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, *expeditious retreat*, *true seeing*; Price 24,900 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Story Hooks

Vlad Drakov and his ill-famed household are rich sources of plot and campaign ideas. Though much of the information in this chapter may suggest adventure ideas to DMs, the following are further suggestions that might also be used.

Enemies of the State: Traveling in rural Falkovnia, the characters encounter a band of Drakov soldiers, led by a ruthless raptor knight, who are in the process of burning down a small town and massacring its inhabitants. The characters may be forced to intervene (perhaps the individual whom they must talk to is an inhabitant of the town and is threatened by the Falkovnians), in which case the raptor knight sees them as his personal enemies and pursues them. If the knight himself is killed, Vlad Drakov — incapable of tolerating such an insult to his family's honor — will undoubtedly seek vengeance.

Scion of Drakov: A character who was raised outside of Falkovnia's borders realizes that he is being watched and perhaps even stalked by mysterious strangers. Finally, on one occasion, they actually attempt to kidnap him. The character and his companions must discover the identity of the stalkers. To their horror, they find that the character is actually one of Vlad Drakov's bastard progeny, and that his mother escaped Falkovnia rather than give her child up to the Kingsfuhrer. The characters must deal with the would-be kidnapers (who want to take the PC "home" to meet his real father), throw them off the scent, or flee to another realm to escape them.



Chapter Five:
The Blood of the
Haunted

The Godefroy
Family

As told by Michael Jendalis to his second cousin Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove:

I'm not sure if you ever knew, but I was born at Gryphon Manor. My mother, who was Lilia Godefroy's third cousin twice removed, was informed that she was to inherit the manor, and she and my father went to see it while she still carried me. Father didn't tell me the whole of what happened until he lay on his deathbed a few years ago. Though gruesome, the story has done much to acquaint me with my own most unusual heritage.

It seems that my parents' carriage broke a wheel upon entering the grounds, and since a storm was brewing, they decided to spend the night at the manor and have the wheel repaired in the morning. They had heard the tales about the house and about its last lord, but they were educated folk who did not believe in "old wives' tales." They went into the manor and settled in one of its dusty bedrooms. They shared a simple repast they had purchased at the inn in town, and then Father went to look for some candles.

While rummaging in the kitchen, he noticed a rag busily wiping grime off the cupboards — by itself — and he thought he heard snatches of a mournful song, sung very low. Upon going over to investigate, he saw the faint outline of a young girl, dressed in the garb of a housemaid. Before he could recover his voice, he heard someone coming down the back stairs. Thinking it was his wife, he turned to admonish her for walking about in her condition, but he saw instead an old man dressed in a tailcoat and ruffled shirt that had been fashionable more than 200 years earlier. Evil glinted in the stranger's eyes as he took in the scene before him.

"So, you are having assignations with lads from the village instead of working, are you Janelle?" he asked in a menacing tone. "Is that why your cleaning goes so slowly?"

"N... no sir!" cried the spectral girl in alarm. "I have never seen this man before!"

"A likely story!" the man spat. "I'll teach you to moon after men when you should be working!"

With that, the old man began to beat the poor girl and my father mercilessly with his silver-headed walking stick. Wounds appeared on the girl's ghostly body, and her screams rent the air. The man's blows produced no visible wounds on my father, but he felt a terrible coldness, as though the chill of the grave were setting in with each blow. Father tried to fight back, but his hands closed on nothing. Knowing true terror for the first time in his life, he ran upstairs, leaving the spectral maid to her fate.

Father rushed upstairs to mother's room and found her sound asleep. Exhausted beyond words, he

lay down beside her and was almost asleep himself when new screams reverberated through the room. This time, they came from his wife, who was staring wide-eyed at the spectre of the old man standing over her, cane raised to strike once again.

However, just as he was about to bring the weapon down upon her head, two more ghostly figures appeared — this time a woman and a child, their faces bruised and bloodied and their clothing torn. They clawed viciously at the man, screaming "Murderer!" Though he was obviously not a creature of flesh and blood, he screamed in apparent pain from their attacks, and gashes opened in his ghostly flesh where they clawed at him.

His screams mingled with those of my mother, who was horrorstruck at the scene. On and on, the two ghostly rescuers tore at the old ghost's flesh. My mother, always a sensitive creature, was so frightened that she went into premature labor. The birth, as you know already, dear cousin, was to be her last gift to me. My father delivered me, a three-pound infant barely clinging to life outside the womb, but he could not save his wife. She bled to death before his eyes there in Gryphon Manor. As dawn illuminated the window, he saw her spirit rise from her body, and the ghost of the old man — his tormentors having faded away in the light — said, "Welcome, my dear. You will like it here."

My father fled the house on foot, cradling me in his arms. In the village, he found and hired a wet-nurse for me. Then he arranged for a carriage to take all three of us, plus his wife's body, back to his home. After burying my mother, he threw himself into his work, becoming more distant and less like his old self with each passing day.

My nurse, Katherine Hines, stayed on to become my nanny, and I was as close to her as any other child would be to its mother. She nursed me through countless childhood illnesses, for I was always a sickly child — probably because I had had insufficient time inside the womb. But when I was five years old, she developed consumption and died. At her bedside, I cried out for her to stay, and stay she did — in spirit. No one else could see or hear her, but I could. My father got me a new nanny, but she could never compete with my Nanny Katherine. The new girl thought me possessed by demons because I talked to people who she couldn't perceive, but I was too young to understand. Eventually, my behavior drove her to drink, and she spent the rest of my childhood in a stupor while Nanny Katherine's ghost raised me.

I had many friends as a child and thought myself fortunate to be so popular. People young and old were

always coming to visit me for a chat. As time went by, I realized that they too were ghosts, and that no one could see or hear them except me. Nanny Katherine said it was because I had been born in that awful house that ghosts flocked to me. She claimed that whatever ancient evil resided there had awakened in me a latent sensitivity to the spirit world — probably inherited from my mother, who had been part of the same bloodline that had produced Lord Godefroy. And perhaps she was right.

For the most part, my gift was welcome. Though I never had the chance to make friends among the living, since I was often ill and hadn't the constitution for physical sports, I was never truly alone. Ghosts flocked around me, eager to tell their tales. Sometimes there were so many that I could not handle the strain, and Nanny Katherine had to chase them away while I rested.

My strangeness coupled with my physical weakness made me a target for bullies in my youth. I shall never forget the horrible night when, lured out by the promise of good fellowship, I slipped out of the house to join a group of boys who had invited me on an adventure. But instead of taking me to their secret clubhouse as they had promised, they took me to a graveyard and locked me in. I shall never forget the horror of that night. Ghosts swarmed all around me — young, old, diseased, marked by violence — all of them talking at once, telling me how they had died. My young mind couldn't fathom the pain and horror that often accompanied death, and I screamed and screamed, lashing out against their insubstantial forms, trying to

make them go away. When they found me the next morning, I was curled in a fetal position, mumbling to myself. It took weeks of Nanny Katherine's ministrations to bring me out of the tiny corner of my own mind into which I had retreated. It wasn't the boys' fault, she told me. They had no way of knowing what such an experience would do to me.

As I grew up, I learned to master my connection with the spirit world, and I became as you see me now, an accomplished medium. Oh, as a youth I wanted to be an adventurer like you and Gennifer, don't doubt it, but I hadn't the strength and stamina for such a profession. Better that I accept my own strengths and frailties and do what I do best. I still hear and see spirits all around me, but I can keep them at a distance and summon forward only those with whom I wish to converse. Many have messages they wish me to deliver to loved ones, and those who have not been properly laid to rest often tell me how such can be done.

They are wrong, you know — those who say that only certain people become ghosts upon their deaths. Spirits are everywhere. It's just that those who have been laid to rest properly do not make their presence known to the living. Only discontented souls meander corridors at night, manifesting themselves to mortals. But all of your loved ones who have passed over are still free to visit, and they can hear what you say and see what you do.

There is no such thing as being alone, my dear Laurie, and the next time you feel lonely, thank your lucky stars for the blessing of limited perception.





The Godefroys



ord Wilfred Godefroy slew his only child before she was old enough to marry, so he has no direct descendants. Some claim that his evil nature was not his own, that it was absorbed from Gryphon Manor itself, a structure he inherited and that was said to have evil in its very mortar. Those who have studied his life, however, agree that he was a malicious and vindictive man before he came into contact with the manor, and that indeed, his own cruel nature made him its true lord.

In his mid-sixties, Godefroy married Estelle Weathermay, a girl of sixteen, who bore him one daughter, Lilia. Godefroy, who had hoped for a son to carry on his name, was disappointed in his offspring and laid the blame on his young wife. Eventually he convinced himself that Estelle had been unfaithful, and he beat her to death with his cane in a fit of rage. When Lilia, then a child of 10, tried to intervene, he slew her as well. Godefroy successfully hid his crime from the town, but the spirits of his wife and daughter came back to haunt him every night. After a year of this torment, he committed suicide. Later, when Mordent became part of Ravenloft, Godefroy became its darklord.

Since then, Godefroy has ruled over the shades and spirits in his manor with an iron fist, beating them mercilessly with his cane for any imagined slight. Though he rarely leaves the manor, he has arranged for the mayor of Mordentshire, Daniel Foxgrove, to keep him informed of any threats by the simple expedient of threatening the ghost of his late wife, Alice Weathermay, who is also tied by her bloodline to the manor. Daniel's two children, Laurie and Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove, have not yet investigated the manor.

Fitting In

Because of the Godefroys' proclivity for seeing and becoming ghosts, characters with Godefroy blood are born with an affinity for the spirit world. They walk the thin line between the world of the living and the world of the dead for most of their lives. Godefroys are strangely drawn to haunted places and frequently purchase haunted houses for their homes. Conversely, ghosts are drawn to them. Disembodied spirits cluster around those with Godefroy blood, and most do everything in their power to make their presence known. In many cases, doing so is not difficult, since Godefroys

possess a high degree of sensitivity to spirits and can often see them easily.

Because the Godefroys are so close to the spirit world, most of them tend to look a bit otherworldly, with thin physiques, pale skins and haunted eyes that dart about as though seeing what others do not. They tend to lack stamina, and quite a few are actually rather frail and sickly, yet even they have a sort of ethereal grace about them. Many people are initially attracted to Godefroys because of their unearthly air and delicate beauty, but after a while, acquaintances tend to become uncomfortable around them. Godefroys often seem privy to secrets that no one could know — family secrets, crimes long covered up, locations of lost treasure and other such information that they receive from their ghostly friends, either verbally or as flashes of intuition.

A Godefroy character acts more often on the basis of intuition than cold, hard fact. He trusts what he cannot see as much as, or perhaps even more than what he *can* see. His conversations are often characterized by quick changes of topic or remarks out of nowhere — as though he were holding multiple conversations, only one of which the listener can hear.

Claiming Membership

Lord Godefroy's direct line ended with his daughter Lilia, who produced no offspring before she died. However, his close relatives intermarried with the Foxgroves and the Weathermays in Mordent, so characters from any of these families may claim Godefroy blood. Many such distant relatives of Lord Godefroy live in Mordentshire and elsewhere.

Additionally, some members of these families were prominent adventurers who traveled widely, so they may have offspring, legitimate or otherwise, in other realms as a result of affairs with former companions or even wedded unions. Adopted children, while they do not bear the Godefroy bloodline, may nonetheless have a heightened sensitivity to the spirits due to their close proximity to ethereal occurrences.

Godefroy Family Traits

- **-2 Constitution, +2 Charisma:** The Godefroys tend to be rather frail and sickly, but they possess a certain captivating presence and ethereal loveliness.





- **Spirit Sensibility:** A Godefroy receives a +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks involving spirits or ghosts. However, Godefroys tend to be somewhat unused to normal human interaction, so they suffer a -1 penalty on Sense Motive checks involving other living beings.

- **Spiritual Magnetism:** Any free-ranging ghost (or other incorporeal undead) within a 1-mile radius of a Godefroy must make a DC 15 Will save or be attracted to him. The ghost thereafter stays near the Godefroy character until forced to leave with a successful Intimidate check opposed to the ghost's Will save. Such a ghost does its best to make itself known to the character, and feels compelled to relate its life and death story to the character, whether the latter wants to listen or not. Otherwise, the behavior of such spirits is left to the DM to decide, as dictated by alignment, intelligence and situation.

- **Haunting Curse:** If a Godefroy kills one of his own race (i.e., human, half-elf, half-Vistani, or caliban, as appropriate), the slain victim may make a DC 15 Will save to return as a ghost to haunt his slayer. Such a ghost always possesses the draining touch ability (see Ghost in the *Monster Manual*).

- **Ghostly Afterlife:** A Godefroy automatically becomes a ghost upon death. The details and powers of the ghostly character are left to the player and DM to decide.

Family Feats

When creating a Godefroy character, the player or DM should select at least one of the character's feats from the following list (or from among those new feats listed further below): Cold One^R, Courage^R, Dabbler^H, Eschew Materials, Ethereal Empathy^R, Ethereal Touch^C, Ghostsight^R, Haunted^R, Improved Turning, Investigator, Iron Will, Jaded^R, Kiss of Dawn^H, Knowledgeable^H, Magical Aptitude, Muse^V, Negotiator, Nine Lives^V, Open Mind^R, Persuasive, Second Sight^C, Voice of the Spirits^{G3}, Warding Gesture^V, or Wealth^H.

The Godefroy have a number of unique feats available to them. A character of Godefroy ancestry can select any of the following feats, as long as he meets the feat's requirements. (Naturally, a DM may allow characters other than Godefroy acquire these feats as well, although she should carefully consider the matter first.)

Mist Sight [General]

Concentrating briefly allows you to see what others cannot.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Cha 13, Ghostsight^R.

Benefit: As a full-round action, you can attune yourself to perceive the spiritual world around you. This effectively grants you the blindsense ability out to a number of feet equal 5 x your Wisdom modifier (minimum 5 feet), but only with respect to living creatures that have a soul, or to incorporeal and ethereal creatures of spirit. This ability lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round). While this ability remains in effect, you are effectively blind to constructs and other creatures that have no soul (including characters with the Hollow^C feat).

You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier.

Poltergeist Hands [General]

You can call upon the spirits around you to move things beyond the reach of your hands.

Prerequisites: Cha 15.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Sleight of Hand checks. In addition, as a full-round action, you can use *unseen servant* as a spell-like ability, up to a maximum number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier. Your effective caster level is 1st.

Threatening Presence [General]

You are exceedingly good at intimidating people.

Prerequisites: Cha 13.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks. In addition, as a standard action, you can make an Intimidate check (DC 10 + one-half the target's total HD) against a single sentient creature within 30 feet and in line of sight. If your check succeeds and the creature has fewer Hit Dice than you, it is shaken (-2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks) for 1d4 rounds and must flee from you as quickly as it can. Once it can no longer see or hear you, it can act as it chooses. However, if it comes into sight or hearing range of you again before the duration of the effect expires, it must flee once more. Creatures unable to flee can fight, though they are still shaken.



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If you succeed on the Intimidate check against a creature whose Hit Dice are equal to or greater than your own, it is still shaken for 1d4 rounds but need not flee.

Frightening a creature in this manner is a mind-affecting fear effect. Once a creature successfully saves against your threatening presence, it is immune to that presence for 24 hours.

Family Classes



he Godefroys are attracted to classes that capitalize on their innate intuition, their high Charisma and their affinity for spirits. Few take up military professions because of the family's haunting curse, and those few who do often go mad; likewise, Godefroys almost never become assassins.

The following prestige classes are available to members of the Godefroy bloodline. At the DM's discretion, they may also be made available to other characters who meet the prerequisites.

Accomplished Medium

The accomplished medium has embraced his natural affinity for the spirit world and used it to aid both the living and the dead in finding peace. Many take up this prestige class because of positive experiences with ghosts early in their lives. In general, accomplished mediums make their livings by passing information from spirits to living people. Often they contact deceased loved ones on behalf of grieving relatives to ensure that they rest in peace, but sometimes they do so to ask questions of the dead. Alternatively, ghosts may contact mediums to pass along information that for one reason or another they cannot communicate directly to the living persons involved. For example, a ghost might wish to warn a loved one about an unseen danger, or reveal the location of a family treasure, or detail how to lay her to rest.

Bards are most frequently drawn to this prestige class, since it plays directly to their conversational and persuasive abilities. Clerics and paladins sometimes take up this class because of their natural insight and their constant dealings with life and death. Necromancers do not often take up this path because they gain power from controlling undead, not from simply communicating with them. Rogues and charlatans who pretend to have the ability to speak with the dead occasion-

ally find that they actually have it, and then decide to take up the path of the medium.

Fighters, rangers and other characters who specialize in killing rarely find this path appealing, since they do not usually desire to meet again with those they have slain; in some rare cases, though, a fighting-class Godefroy may take up this prestige class as a means of dealing with the spirits of those he has slain.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become an accomplished medium (Amd), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks, Perform (acting, oratory, or singing) 4 ranks.

Feat: Ethereal Empathy^R, Ghostsight^R.

Special: The candidate must have encountered and interacted with a ghost or some other incorporeal undead creature.

Class Skills

The accomplished medium's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class features

All the following are class features of the accomplished medium prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Accomplished mediums gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Spells per Day: Beginning at 1st level, an accomplished medium gains the ability to cast a small number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, an accomplished medium must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so an accomplished medium with a Charisma of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells. Accomplished medium bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the accomplished medium's Cha modifier. An accomplished medium casts spells just as a sorcerer does.

Upon reaching 6th level, and at every even-numbered level thereafter (8th and 10th), an accomplished medium can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. The new





spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least 2 levels lower than the highest-level accomplished medium spell the character can cast. An accomplished medium may swap only a single spell at any given level, and he must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for that level.

Cantrips: At 1st level, the accomplished medium can use a number of cantrips as spell-like abilities. He may use a number of cantrips each day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier, and may choose freely among the following cantrips any time he uses this ability: *Dancing lights, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, guidance, know direction, light, mage hand, message and open/close*. Where applicable, the save DC is 10 + the accomplished medium's Charisma modifier; effective caster level equals accomplished medium level.

Turn/Rebuke Undead (Su): At 1st level, the accomplished medium gains the supernatural ability to turn or rebuke undead as if he were a cleric of the same level. He may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. If the accomplished medium already has the ability to turn or rebuke undead from some other source (such as cleric levels), these levels stack.

Spirit Counselor (Su): Starting at 2nd level, the accomplished medium gains access to a friendly spirit who can provide him with advice and information. Each use of this ability requires one daily use of the accomplished medium's turn/rebuke undead ability. The spirit counselor's powers depend on the accomplished medium's level; in each

case, the effect occurs as if the accomplished medium had cast the spell noted below (caster level equals accomplished medium's character level).

2nd-level or higher: *locate object*.

4th-level or higher: *augury*.

6th-level or higher: *speak with dead*.

8th-level or higher: *discern lies*.

10th-level or higher: *greater scrying*.

A spirit counselor can provide any effect allowed by the accomplished medium's level, but each still counts as a use of this power. That is, a 10th-level accomplished medium uses up one daily use of turn/rebuke undead whether he calls upon his spirit for *locate object* or *greater scrying*.

Mist Sight: At 3rd level, the accomplished medium gains Mist Sight* as a bonus feat.

Improved Mist Sight (Ex): At 5th level, the accomplished medium's vision range with his Mist Sight* feat doubles to a number of feet equal to 10 x his Charisma modifier.

Extra Turning: At 7th level, the accomplished medium gains Extra Turning as a bonus feat.

Greater Mist Sight (Ex): At 9th level, the accomplished medium's vision range with his Mist Sight* feat increases to a number of feet equal to 15 x his Charisma modifier.

Accomplished Medium Spell List

Accomplished mediums choose their spells from the following list.

1st Level: *Comprehend languages, deathwatch, detect secret doors, detect undead, hide from undead, hypnotism, magic mouth, see ethereal resonance^v,*



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sleep, speak with animals, true strike, unseen servant, ventriloquism.

2nd Level: Corpse whisper^{G2}, darkness, daze monster, detect thoughts, enthrall, find traps, gentle repose, hypnotic pattern, insight^V, misdirection, status, suggestion, tongues, whispering wind.

3rd Level: Arcane sight, blink, clairaudience/clairvoyance, daylight, deeper darkness, deep slumber, diminish undead^V, dispel magic, eyes of the undead^{G2}, gaseous form, glibness, remove curse, scrying.

4th Level: Break enchantment, death ward, detect scrying, dimensional anchor, divination, freedom of movement, legend lore, locate creature, modify memory, speak with plants, zone of silence.

Table 5-1: Accomplished Medium Spells Known
— Spells Known —

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	3	—	—	—
2nd	3	3	—	—
3rd	3	3	3	—
4th	4	4	3	—
5th	4	4	3	3
6th	4	4	4	3
7th	4	4	4	4
8th	5	5	4	4
9th	5	5	5	4
10th	5	5	5	5

Table 5-2: The Accomplished Medium

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	— Spells per Day —			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Cantrips, turn/rebuke undead	1	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Spirit counselor (<i>locate object</i>)	1	1	—	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Mist Sight	1	1	1	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Spirit counselor (<i>augury</i>)	2	2	1	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Improved mist sight	2	2	1	1
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Spirit counselor (<i>speak with dead</i>)	2	2	2	1
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Extra Turning	2	2	2	2
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Spirit counselor (<i>discern lies</i>)	3	3	2	2
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Greater mist sight	3	3	3	2
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Spirit counselor (<i>greater scrying</i>)	3	3	3	3

Divine Exorcist

The divine exorcist can force spirits to do her will. Most divine exorcists specialize in freeing others from ghosts who possess them, their loved ones, or their property, but members of this prestige class can free people of any form of control by other creatures, corporeal or otherwise. Thus, a divine exorcist can negate a vampire's domination, a wizard's charm, or a bard's fascination as well as a ghost's possession.

Virtually all divine exorcists have had careers as clerics or paladins, though some may also have training in arcane spellcasting or in the talents of rogues. Some divine exorcists are attached to churches or other formal religious organizations, but a few are solo practitioners.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To qualify to become a divine exorcist (Dve), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any good.

Skills: Intimidate 5 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks.

Feats: Ethereal Empathy^R, Extra Turning, Threatening Presence*.

Spells: Ability to cast 3rd-level divine spells.

Special: Ability to turn undead.

Class Skills

The divine exorcist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis) and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.





Class Features

All the following are class features of the divine exorcist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Divine exorcists gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Spellcasting: At every even-numbered divine exorcist level, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class had granted her access to 3rd-level divine spells. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved ability to turn undead and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that she adds the level of divine exorcist to the level of her previous divine

spellcasting class, then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.

If the character has more than one divine spellcasting class that grants her access to 3rd-level divine spells, she must decide to which class she adds each level of divine exorcist for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

See Possession (Su): At 1st level, as a full-round action, the divine exorcist may observe any creature or object within line of sight and determine whether the target is currently possessed by another entity. A possessing entity that has a higher Charisma score than the divine exorcist can make a Will save (DC 10 + divine exorcist level + divine exorcist's Cha modifier) to remain unseen; if the save succeeds, the divine exorcist's see possession power cannot reveal that entity for 24 hours. (If the divine exorcist has 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive, add +2 to the save DC.) Otherwise, the divine exorcist sees the possessor's outline superimposed over the subject.

Once the divine exorcist sees an entity possessing a subject, he continues to see that entity for as long as he keeps the subject in line of sight, or until the entity leaves the subject. After leaving the subject, the entity may or may not be visible, depending on its nature and abilities. If the possessed subject leaves the divine exorcist's line of sight, the divine exorcist also loses sight of the possessing entity and must use this power again to see the possessing entity the next time he views the formerly possessed subject.

Smite Possessor (Su): At 1st level, a divine exorcist can strike a supernatural blow against an entity possessing a creature or object, provided that he has used his see possessor power to reveal the possessing entity. To do so, he makes a melee touch attack against the possessed subject. If the attack hits, the divine exorcist makes an Intimidate check as a free action; this is opposed by the possessing entity's Will save.

If the Intimidate check succeeds by 4 or less, the possessing entity takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage. If it succeeds by 5 or more, the entity takes 1d4+1 points of Charisma damage and is immediately driven from the subject. For the next 2d6 rounds, the entity must move away from the divine exorcist at its fastest available speed. If it cannot move, it cowers instead. In any case, the entity cannot attempt to possess the same subject again for 24 hours.





If the divine exorcist uses this power in a sinkhole of evil, the possessing entity gains the sinkhole's numerical value as a bonus to its Will save to resist the smite.

This ability deals only half the usual amount of Charisma damage to darklords capable of possessing others, and it cannot drive them out. The DM may also designate other creatures that cannot be driven out. This ability is a supernatural assault that pits the divine exorcist's will against the possessor's will. It is effective against creatures of any type or kind, even those normally immune to fear effects.

The divine exorcist can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. Starting at 5th level, the divine exorcist can use this power a number of times per day equal to 4 + his Charisma modifier.

Shielded Soul (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, the divine exorcist develops an inner strength that helps him resist assaults on his mind or being. He adds his divine exorcist level to any saving throw he makes to resist any charm, compulsion, negative energy effect, or effect from the school of necromancy.

See Control (Su): At 3rd level, as a full-round action, the divine exorcist may observe any creature or object within line of sight and determine whether the target is currently under a charm or compulsion effect. If the subject is under such an effect, the divine exorcist sees a luminous trail (the "path of control") that leads off in the direction of the controller. If the controlling entity is also within the divine exorcist's line of sight, she sees the path connect to both the controller and the victim. No one except the divine exorcist can see this path.

A controller that has a higher Charisma score than the divine exorcist can make a Will save (DC 10 + divine exorcist level + divine exorcist's Cha modifier) to keep its path of control unseen; if the save succeeds, the divine exorcist's see possession power cannot reveal that path of control for 24 hours. (If the divine exorcist has 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive, add +2 to the save DC.) Otherwise, the divine exorcist sees the possessor's outline superimposed over the subject.

Once the divine exorcist notes a path of control or a controller, he continues to see the trail connecting the two as long as he keeps the subject (or the controller) in line of sight, or until the control ends. If the divine exorcist does not keep

the subject or the controller in line of sight, he also loses sight of the path connecting the two and must use this power again to see the path of control the next time he views the formerly possessed subject.

Smite Controller (Su): At 3rd level, a divine exorcist can strike a supernatural blow against an entity using a charm or compulsion effect on another creature, provided that he has used his see control power to reveal the controlling entity. To do so, he makes a melee touch attack against either the controlled subject or the controller. On a successful hit, the divine exorcist makes an Intimidate check as a free action; this is opposed by the controller's Will save.

If the Intimidate check succeeds by 4 or less, the controller suffers wracking pains that impose a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, level checks and saving throws for 1 minute. If the Intimidate check succeeds by 5 or more, the controller suffers wracking pains as above, and the charm or compulsion effect ends immediately, even if it cannot normally be dispelled. If the divine exorcist smites the same entity several times, the penalties from the resulting pain stack (as penalties generally do).

If the divine exorcist uses this power in a sinkhole of evil, the controller gains the sinkhole's numerical value as a bonus to its Will save to resist the smite.

The divine exorcist can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. Starting at 7th level, the divine exorcist can use this power a number of times per day equal to 4 + his Charisma modifier.

Bonus Feat: At 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th levels, the divine exorcist gains one bonus feat from the following list: Courage^R, Death's Favor^C, Ethereal Touch^C, Ghostsight^R, Greater Spell Focus (abjuration), Greater Spell Penetration, Greater Supernatural Resilience^{G3}, Hexbreaker^V, Improved Turning, Indomitable^V, Kiss of Dawn^H, Mist Sight^{*}, Open Mind^R, Persuasive, Spirit of Light^V, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Spell Focus (abjuration), Spell Penetration, Supernatural Resilience^{G3}, Voice of the Spirits^{G3}, or Warding Gesture^V.

The divine exorcist must meet all the usual prerequisites for these feats.

Break Control (Ex): Starting at 6th level, the divine exorcist can break loose from enchantment effects placed on her and from attempts to possess her. If the divine exorcist is affected by an enchantment spell or effect, or is possessed, and fails her





saving throw, she can attempt the save again 1 round later at the same DC. If that attempt fails, the divine exorcist can try again after 1 hour, and if that save fails, she can try again each day thereafter.

Dispel Evil (Sp): Starting at 9th level, the divine exorcist can use *dispel evil*, as the spell, a number of times per day equal to his Charisma bonus (caster level equals divine exorcist level).

Table 5-3: The Divine Exorcist

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Class Spellcasting
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	See possession, smite possessor	
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Shielded soul	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	See control, smite controller	
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Smite possessor +1/day	
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Bonus feat, break control	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Smite dominator +1/day	
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	<i>Dispel evil</i>	
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class

Family Magic

New Spells

The Godefroys who take up spellcasting classes have created a few spells that deal with the spirit world. These spells are available to members of the family and, at the DM's discretion, to other spellcasting characters.

Dirge

Necromancy

Level: Brd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: You

Duration: Concentration, maximum 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None (see text)

Spell Resistance: No (see text)

After you cast *dirge*, all mind-affecting abilities from your bardic music (*fascinate*, inspire courage, inspire competence, *suggestion*, inspire greatness, inspire heroics and *mass suggestion*) become necromantic effects. While this effect lasts, these bardic music abilities affect undead

creatures, even though undead normally are immune to mind-affecting spells and abilities; however, they have no effect on creatures of other types.

Concentrating to maintain this spell requires a standard action each round, but you can use a bardic music ability each round as part of that standard action.

You must use this spell on yourself. The spell allows no saving throw and spell resistance isn't applicable, but these parameters refer only to the spell's effect on you. The undead creatures subjected to your bardic music are still entitled to saving throws against your subsequent music used, and their spell resistance (if any) also applies normally.

Eternal Rest

Necromancy

Level:Clr 6

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Ray (see text)

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes



This spell creates a ray of golden light that destroys one undead creature's material body (if it has one), causing it to crumble to dust, which is then wafted away in a swirling breeze. This spell affects incorporeal undead without the usual incorporeal miss chance, and such a creature merely winks out of existence if it fails its save.

If the target makes a successful save, it still takes 6d6 points of damage. If the creature has a special quality that allows it to return after destruction (such as a vampire's fast healing power or a ghost's rejuvenation power), the creature gains a bonus equal to its Charisma modifier on its saving throw. If such a creature fails its saving throw against this spell, it must make a successful Will save at the same DC (also with its Charisma modifier as a bonus) to return. If the creature's method of return normally requires a saving throw (as a ghost's rejuvenation power does), the creature must first make that saving throw, then make the Will saving throw against this spell.

You can improve your chance of success by presenting at least one object or substance that the target hates, fears, or otherwise finds repulsive or painful (such as a mirror and bud of garlic for a vampire). For each such object or substance, you gain a +1 bonus on your caster level check to overcome the target's spell resistance (if any), and the spell's saving throw DC increases by +1. A particular creature's history might suggest additional objects or substances that would make the spell more effective.

This spell can also be cast when an undead creature has been physically destroyed and its remains are not present. In this case, the spell must be aimed at the spot where the creature was destroyed, and it must be used within 1 minute of the undead creature's destruction. No attack roll is required for this use of the spell.

This spell can destroy an undead darklord's physical form, but it cannot prevent the darklord from returning.

New Magic Items

The Godefroys have developed a number of magic items that deal with safeguarding the soul or mimicking the powers of ghosts.

Cloak of Ghostwalking: This lightweight garment is usually made from pale silk. A character wearing it feels light on her feet and gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Jump and Move Silently checks. She also takes half normal damage from falls.





Three times per day, the wearer can use the cloak to walk through a solid object no thicker than her space; for example, a human wearer has a space of 5 feet and so could walk through a wall 5 feet thick.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *blink*, Price 15,000 gp; Weight 1/4 lb.

Ghost Trap: This item resembles a pear-shaped crystal flask with a silver stopper. When the wielder uncorks the flask, he can target any incorporeal creature or manifested ghost within 30 feet and attempt to force the creature into the flask. The attempt succeeds unless the target creature succeeds on a DC 22 Will save. Once the flask has successfully trapped a creature, it permanently seals itself and cannot be used again. If the target makes a successful saving throw, the flask does not function again for 24 hours.

A creature trapped in the flask remains trapped more or less permanently, but it can attempt a new saving throw once per year to escape confinement. If the save succeeds, the flask shatters. The flask can also be broken open, which releases the creature. The flask is a Diminutive object with a hardness of 5 and 25 hit points.

The flask cannot trap a darklord. If it is used in a sinkhole of evil, the target creature adds the sinkhole's numeric value as a profane bonus to its saving throw.

Strong conjuration; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *trap the soul*, Price 48,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Gloves of Ghost-Fingers: These pale silken gloves make the wearer's hands seem almost translucent. When the wearer has them on, her unarmed strikes, weapon attacks, natural weapon attacks, spells and other magical attacks have only a 20% miss chance when aimed at incorporeal creatures, rather than the usual 50%.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *true strike*, Price 8,000 gp; Weight 1/4 lb.

Amulet of Life Protection

These items come in two levels of power, lesser and greater. Whatever its strength, an *amulet of life protection* typically consists of a gold or platinum locket. Opening it reveals a piece of jet in one half of the locket and a caduceus or ankh on the other side. The amulet is a Fine object with a hardness of 8 and 20 hit points.

Lesser Amulet of Life Protection: When a character wearing this item dies, her soul and body are immediately placed inside the amulet (even if some other effect would otherwise trap or destroy body and/or

soul), where they remain until the amulet is destroyed or the soul and body are released by some other means. A spell such as *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or *true resurrection* cast on the amulet restores the body and soul held inside as a normal casting of the spell. An *eternal rest* spell cast on the amulet destroys the body and lays the soul permanently to rest if the creature inside fails its saving throw. Destroying the amulet causes the body to reform on the spot and sets the soul loose to whatever fate awaited it at the original time of death. In any case, releasing the soul and body from the amulet destroys the amulet.

While the soul and body are held in the amulet, a *speak with dead* spell cast on the amulet allows the caster to converse with the creature inside. A character with the Ghostsight[®] feat, the see possession* class feature, or the *true seeing* spell in effect can see the outline of the creature inside the amulet superimposed over it.

The smite controller class feature (from the divine exorcist* prestige class) can force the soul stored in the amulet to depart if the creature inside fails its check to resist the attempt by 5 or more, but the attempt does not deal any Charisma damage to the creature. If the smite attempt drives the occupant out, the body is destroyed and the soul is laid permanently to rest.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *plane shift*, Price 22,500 gp; Weight 1/4 lb.

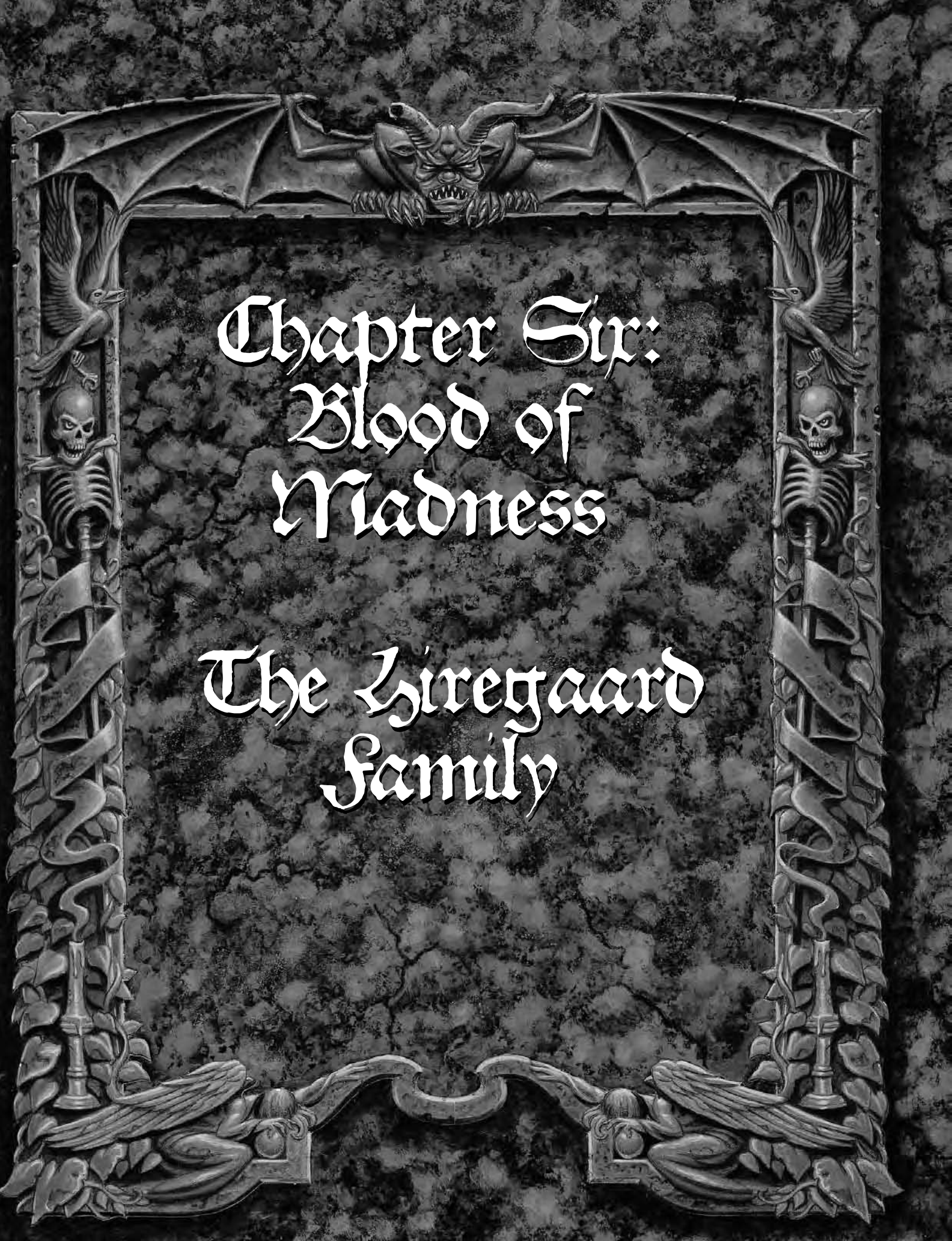
Greater Amulet of Life Protection: This item functions as a *lesser amulet of life protection*, except that the wearer returns to life 2d4–1 days after death, just as if he had received a *resurrection* spell. A creature held within the amulet gets a +4 bonus on any save or check it makes to resist being driven out and/or permanently laid to rest.

Strong necromancy; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *plane shift*, *resurrection*, Price 68,000 gp; Weight 1/4 lb.

Story Hook

A distant cousin of the Weathermay-Foxgrove twins needs an introduction to them and a guide to an estate she has inherited that is reported to be haunted. The twins direct her to a Godefroy PC, whom they say is likely to be able to divine the true nature of the place for her. The estate once belonged to a Godefroy — not Wilfred, but it is indeed haunted by Wilfred's cousin Herman and Herman's son Mento. The ghosts are not willing to leave, so the powers of an exorcist may also be required. Or perhaps an accommodation can be negotiated.





Chapter Six:
Blood of
Madness

The Hiregaard
Family



Dearest Grandfather,

Although Castle Faerhaven is but a swift ride away, I feel I do not have the time to leave my post here in Kantora, so letters will have to suffice. I have only been the city's chief constable for two weeks, but the corruption I have witnessed in this city already challenges the imagination. Much has changed since you controlled law and order here.

I know you hate it when we speak ill of Prince Othmar or other nobles — that you believe they would not be allowed by the Lawgiver to retain their positions of privilege and power if they were indeed as debauched as detractors would portray them. On my first night in Kantora, however, Othmar's third son Vilmar invited me to a feast at his estate; I was so sickened by the behavior I witnessed there that I was forced to leave. Among the "entertainments" was the spectacle of an unarmed horse thief forced to battle for his life in a pit against two ravenous and wounded plains cats. I can't even put down upon paper what one of the guests did to a dancing girl while Vilmar cheered him on.

If not for the fact that I have known Vilmar's whereabouts the last time the fiend Malken was engaging in his murderous "amusements" across town, I should think I had found the person who must have adopted the mantle.

Yes, grandfather, I say "adopted the mantle" because am convinced that the Malken currently taunting law enforcers and menacing prostitutes and courtesans is not the same Malken that you had to contend with in your youth — or even the same Malken that my father attempted to capture. The vague descriptions I have collected of him so far make him far too young to have been the same villain as years past. Like the mantle of guardianship, truth and justice that has been passed from Hiregaard fathers to sons, so do I believe that something similar has happened in Malken's circle. (I cannot say family, as I find it inconceivable that such a monster could have a family.)

I think you can tell from this letter that Malken and his underworld forces rank high on my list of things to eliminate from life here in Kantora. The vile excesses of the ruling class are also something to be curbed, but I am forced to admit that perhaps realism needs to encroach upon my ideals. At least for the present.

I believe this city has grown far worse than what you remember, grandfather, and I think it's important that we Hiregaards once again exert the sort of authority in this place that you once did, both in the effort to eliminate Malken and for the good of the entire city. I intend to write to a number of my brothers, nephews, nieces and cousins in the hopes that they will join me as constables in Kantora. The citizens need justice, and I do not believe that Prince Othmar is willing or able to provide it. It is up to us to take action, openly or covertly.

I hope you will give me your support, if not publicly then at least in your heart.

Your Loving Grandson,

Stepan





The Hiregaards



he Hiregaard family has ruled northern Nova Vaasa for all of the land's recorded history. The most ancient of epic tales credited to Vaasi bards chronicle how the Hiregaards came to the defense of settlers menaced by savage cultists who worshipped an evil cat goddess. They built Castle Faerhaven to provide protection for the common man and as an eternal symbol of the family's devotion to defending the weak and the blameless. The current leader of the family, Sir Tristen Hiregaard, has always seemed strangely embarrassed by this story, mostly because he claims there is no evidence that it is true. For many Vaasi, however, it is an illustration that the Hiregaards have been their protectors since the land was settled.

Several generations of Hiregaards presently live in Castle Faerhaven with Sir Tristen. He has ruled his lands from within its austere walls for roughly ninety years, having come to power at a young age after the tragic deaths of his mother and father. Nature — or some other power — has blessed the Hiregaard bloodline with robust health and exceedingly smooth features, so that Sir Tristen seems barely above 60 years in age. His three grown sons Yorgi, Sasha and Myar live with their families in the castle as well. Those of Tristen's grandsons and granddaughters who have come of age and started families of their own have mostly moved to Liara, Kantora, or to one of several outlying manor houses to better keep their lands and business managed in the tradition befitting their family heritage.

Out of the five Vaasi noble houses, the Hiregaards are the strongest — perhaps not militarily, but certainly politically and economically. They are the unquestioned masters of the lands between the Dnar, Borchava and Little Borchava Rivers, as well as the town of Liara. Though Prince Othmar suspended the traditional system of rotating rulership among the five noble families in favor of his own permanent despotic regime, the Hiregaards have gained a large degree of influence in Othmar's capitol of Kantora. The long service that family patriarch Tristen Hiregaard gave to Kantora as its chief law enforcement officer is carried on through the current service of his eldest grandson Stepan.

Annual tax collections within the Hiregaard demesne are never marred by peasant uprisings or

merchant protests, such as are common in the domain's southern regions; the Hiregaards are never brutal with those under their rule, but are well-loved for remaining true to their traditional course of honoring and protecting the weak. The Hiregaards do not permit laziness or corruption among their peasants and retainers, and everyone is expected to work hard and pay their fair share of taxes to Nova Vaasa's overlord, Prince Othmar. While those who attempt to evade taxes or labor are punished firmly, those who are truly frail or ill are given much lighter tasks and are well-treated by their hereditary lords.

Yet the Hiregaards are not retiring or effete. They may not work the fields or the Koshka quarries that supply food and a tax base for their lands, but young members of the family are expected to help manage the farms and quarries firsthand, and to serve in the militias that protect the people from beasts and bandits.

The Hiregaard family works to improve the state of affairs both inside and outside Nova Vaasa. Decades ago Sir Tristen shipped food and supplies to Tepest when crops failed there one season. Every year, Tristen or one of his sons can be found at the court of Prince Othmar, arguing that the tax burden on Vaasi peasants and merchants should be reduced so that they can spend less time working and more time enjoying their families, as the nobles do. At best, however, the Hiregaards manage only to prevent overall tax increases or to make the increase smaller.

Younger Hiregaards are commonly found alongside merchants and peasants in the halls and taverns that spread out along Nova Vaasa's roads and around the land's cities. While many peasants and business owners tremble when they see the sons and daughters of other noble houses approaching, they welcome the Hiregaards. A Hiregaard never *expects* to eat or dine for free; he never expects games of chance to be rigged in his favor; nor does he ever force his romantic or sexual attentions upon someone who doesn't want them. The generosity shown by the Hiregaards to respectable peasants and merchants, as well as the general good cheer that they bring to an establishment, means that a Hiregaard is often happily *given* food and drink for free where other Vaasi ruling families would take it forcefully.

On the other hand, the Hiregaards are quick to punish those who are found to deceive or swindle them. Dishonest merchants, crooked gamblers, or



peasants and laborers who shirk their duties or attempt to evade taxes imposed by Othmar or the Hiregaards themselves are punished to the fullest extent allowable under Vaasi law. The kindness the family shows to the lower classes should never be mistaken for naiveté, permissiveness, or a shirking of the divinely ordained arrangement of Masters and Servants established by the Lawgiver. The Hiregaards merely believe that every person, no matter their station in life, deserves to be treated with respect until he or she proves otherwise through base actions.

Despite their honorable and generous natures, the Hiregaards have many enemies. Aside from the political rivalries that are to be expected among the noble houses, a decades-long animosity exists between the family and the criminal mastermind known as Malken. From Tristen Hiregaard's earliest days as Kantora's chief constable, Malken has been a thorn in the family's side. He first appeared as a simple yet astonishingly brutal murderer who delighted in leaving taunting messages and daring Sir Tristen to catch him, through today he stands at the head of a far-reaching underworld empire that has crooked gambling dens, slaving operations, protection rackets and prostitution rings

within its authority. The interests of the Hiregaard family remain favorite targets for Malken's activities.

None know when or how the rivalry between Sir Tristen and Malken began. It has continued for so long now that Hiregaards and other noble houses alike wonder if the hatred isn't perhaps an ancient feud spanning generations. The theory is that the mysterious Malken of today may be a child or grandchild of the original Malken, since it is unlikely that Malken could have the same long life and health as the honorable Hiregaards.

A theory whispered among Hiregaard retainers and discussed with glee among the competing noble families is that there is a hidden relationship between Malken and Sir Tristen. It is held that Malken — the original, unless he indeed has been replaced by a child or grandchild — is actually the unacknowledged bastard child of Tristen's father, Romir Hiregaard. Romir and Tristen's mother both died under mysterious circumstances, and those who hold to the rumor of Malken being Tristen's half-brother believe the parents were Malken's fist victims. Most Hiregaards themselves would dismiss this rumor angrily should they hear it, although Stepan Hiregaard, in his recently gained capacity





as Chief Constable of Kantora, has been quietly investigating the rumor.

Still, those who believe that Malken is an unacknowledged member of the Hiregaard family are generally ridiculed for these beliefs; respect for law and order is a matter of nature among the Hiregaards, not nurture. However, those who scoff might not do so if they were aware of the dark secret that the Hiregaards struggle to keep hidden; alongside all the honor and lawfulness that seems ingrained in the family, there is also a deep-seated streak of madness that afflicts many members too.

At one time or another, nearly every adult member of the family has suffered some form of mental breakdown and has spent time either in one of Nova Vaasa's sanitariums or isolated within one of the family's homes while they recovered. Even Sir Tristen himself is rumored to suffer from bouts of madness, during which he locks himself in a tower room in Castle Faerhaven. Madness has plagued the family since its earliest, most antiquated and legendary ancestors, but it has grown more pronounced in recent generations. Eventually, it may grow so severe and obvious that it will damage the family's sterling reputation.

Of course, unbeknownst to everyone but Sir Tristen himself, Malken is not an unacknowledged member of the Hiregaard family but rather Sir Tristen's madness made manifest through a hereditary curse. (For details, see Tristen Hiregaard's entry in *Secrets of the Dread Realms*.)

Fitting In

Hiregaards are known for their tall statures, strikingly handsome features and great virility and zest for life. Most members of the family have dark brown or raven-black hair, and they do not start to go gray until late in life. They retain their youthful good looks far longer than most humans, giving rise to speculation that they may have elf-blood somewhere in their distant history.

It is often said that young Hiregaards must restrain themselves when attending functions hosted by other Vaasi nobles, lest their presence overshadow that of their hosts. Add these factors to the great libido and lustiness that seems to run in Hiregaard blood, and you have a family that is firmly at the forefront of Nova Vaasa's carousers. Tales of Sasha Hiregaard's exploits are legend, and his name is featured in bawdy ballads as far away as Kartakass and western Darkon. The prowess of Hiregaards as fighters, horsemen and anything else

that involves physical activity is also widely recognized. Male or female, being a Hiregaard means having a love for physical pleasure and a great capacity for pursuing it.

However, the devotion that the Hiregaard family shows to honor, truth, justice and fairness is even greater than their love of physical pursuits. All family members have a strong sense of duty and a natural impulse to help those in need and protect those who are threatened. For most, this has prompted them to remain close to home in order to protect the peasantry and merchants of their ancestral lands from the ever-increasing demands of Prince Othmar's taxing authority.

Yet some members of the current generation have set their sights on righting wrongs in more distant lands. Kiev Hiregaard, son of Sasha, has traveled to Falkovnia to help the Freemen undermine the brutal regime of Vlad Drakov and his Talons. Meanwhile, the youngest daughter of Myar, Narana, has already set herself upon a path of heroic adventure at the tender age of seventeen. When she heard about the increasing instances of piracy in the Sea of Sorrows and the Nocturnal Sea, she convinced her grandfather and a group of merchants to provide her with funding to secure a ship and a seasoned crew. She will soon be setting sail from Egertus, with a number of more distant Hiregaard relations along to help and fabled explorer and merchant mariner Captain Onid Rhelarian in command.

For all their admirable traits, however, all Hiregaards live under the threat of losing their minds. It is not a widely known fact, but many members of the family are subject to bouts of insanity, some raving so violently that they must be committed to asylums for their own protection and treatment. Some believe the Hiregaard family has been living under a curse since they defeated the cultists that once held sway in the land the Hiregaards now claim as their own.

Player characters with Hiregaard blood can either be acknowledged grandchildren of Tristen Hiregaard, or they might be illegitimate children of some other adult member of the family. Hiregaard honor demands that any child of whom they are aware be treated decently, if not necessarily considered an heir to the Hiregaard holdings, so many of the family's retainers are half-brothers and half-sisters of those they serve.

Fitting new characters who can trace their family lineage to the Hiregaards without contra-





dicting established source material is an easy thing to do in a **Ravenloft** campaign. Further, any person with a legitimate claim to being a member of the family is likely to be welcomed with open arms. There may be suspicion of the character at first, but once his origins can be confirmed, he is likely given as important a position within the Hiregaard power structure as is practical and appropriate. Distant cousins and remote relatives by marriage are not afforded as much leave as direct offspring of fully recognized Hiregaards.

Claiming Membership

A Hiregaard is expected to embody all of the noblest qualities — and any Hiregaard who consistently fails to live up to these ideals is firmly disavowed. If the scion is criminal and thus becomes too much of a blight upon the family name, he is likely to be hunted down by his kin and jailed or even executed. It is rare for members of the family to take such drastic action, however, occurring only when the offender commits truly dastardly deeds such as rape and murder. Even distant cousins seem to possess enough of the traditional Hiregaard devotion to law, order and justice that few ever bring significant disgrace to their family

(or if they do, they are intelligent enough to hide their misdeeds).

Hiregaards are always human, for their madness often brings with it xenophobia.

Hiregaard Family Traits

- A Hiregaard receives a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. Hiregaards are pleasant and affable.

- **Longevity:** The Hiregaards have always been blessed with long lives. They age as half-elves rather than humans (see the “Aging Effects” table in Chapter 6 of the *Player’s Handbook*).

- All Hiregaards suffer a –1 penalty on madness saves.

- **Blood Curse:** A hereditary curse plagues all Hiregaards. If this curse indeed dates back to ancient times, it has become more acute in recent generations following a curse placed upon Romir Hiregaard by his wife with her dying breath. It is also highly likely that the Dark Powers themselves have taken to shaping and altering the curse upon this noble lineage for their own inexplicable reasons.

The blood curse takes affect whenever a Hiregaard character fails a powers check. The





Chapter Six: Blood of Madness

character begins a descent down the *Path of Madness*, and should roll on the following tables at each stage of corruption. All the effects below are considered to be moderate to major madness effects, as defined in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**. Recovering from each of them requires at least one month, plus a number of weeks equal to the numerical percent chance of the powers check failed. (Thus, a Hiregaard who fails a 9% powers check needs one month + 9 weeks to recuperate.) During this time, the Hiregaard must be in calm surroundings and receive treatment from skilled doctors and alienists. Any interruption of the treatment requires it to be started all over again.

Hiregaard *Path of Madness* – Stage One

d8 Result	Effect
1	Hatred of male halflings and human male children
2	Hatred of female halflings and human female children
3	Hatred of male elves (and half-elves)
4	Hatred of female elves (and half-elves)
5	Hatred of male Vistani
6	Hatred of female Vistani
7	Hatred of dwarves
8	Hatred of humans of opposite gender

Stage One Hatred: The Hiregaard suffers a –1 penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks involving the hated folk, but gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against them.

Hiregaard *Path of Madness* – Stage Two

d8 Result	Effect
1	Hatred of halflings and human children
2	Hatred of elves (and half-elves)
3	Hatred of Vistani
4	Hatred of humans
5	Hatred of gnomes
6	Amnesia
7	Mild monophobia
8	Roll on Moderate Madness Effect table (Ravenloft Player's Handbook)

Stage Two Hatred: The Hiregaard suffers a –1 penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Informa-

tion and Sense Motive checks involving the hated folk, but gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against them. If appropriate, these modifiers stack with those from Stage One hatred.

Amnesia: The Hiregaard falls unconscious for a time (anywhere from a few rounds to several hours, at the DM's discretion). When he awakens, he has forgotten everything that has occurred since just before he gained his most recent level: He effectively loses one level. This lost level can be regained only if the Hiregaard somehow redeems himself for the act that caused the powers check (see "Redemption" in the **Ravenloft Player's Handbook**.)

Mild Monophobia: The Hiregaard cannot stand to be alone for more than a number of minutes equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 minute). If he is alone for longer than this, he becomes very nervous and distracted, increasingly eager to find some company. He suffers a –1 penalty to all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws until he is once again together with at least one other person.

Hiregaard *Path of Madness* – Stage Three

d8 Result	Effect
1	Hatred of all non-humans
2	Moderate monophobia
3–4	Paranoia
5–6	Unyielding fury
7–8	Roll on Moderate Madness Effect table (Ravenloft Player's Handbook)

Stage Three Hatred: The Hiregaard suffers a –1 penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks involving the hated folk, but gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against them. If appropriate, these modifiers stack with those from Stage One and Stage Two hatred.

Moderate Monophobia: The Hiregaard cannot stand to be alone for more than a number of rounds equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 minute). If he is alone for longer than this, he becomes very nervous and distracted, increasingly eager to find some company. He suffers a –2 penalty to all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws until he is once again together with at least one other person. (If the character already suffers from mild monophobia, the penalties from the two defects stack.)

Paranoia: The Hiregaard becomes nervous and jumpy; he feels as if every shadow hides an enemy





and every door conceals a new threat. A lack of confidence starts to plague his every action. He suffers a -2 penalty on all Charisma-based skill checks, but gains a $+1$ bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Unyielding Fury: When insulted, threatened, or attacked, the Hiregaard must make a DC 15 Will save to avoid exploding in a wild, violent, uncontrolled fury for $1d8+2$ rounds. In some circumstances, the DM may apply a bonus or penalty to this save whenever she feels one is called for. If the save fails, the Hiregaard attacks the offending character(s) and any who try to interfere. During this episode, the Hiregaard gains a $+2$ bonus to damage rolls, but suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and AC.

Hiregaard Path of Madness — Stage Four

d8 Result	Effect
1	Intense hatred of all non-humans
2	Blind rage
3	Homicidal mania
4	Insomnia
5	Severe monophobia
6–8	Roll on Major Madness Effect table (Ravenloft Player's Handbook)

Intense Hatred: The Hiregaard suffers a -2 penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks involving the hated folk, but gains a $+2$ bonus on attack and damage rolls against them. If appropriate, these modifiers stack with those from all previous hatred results.

Blind Rage: When insulted, threatened, or attacked, the Hiregaard must make a DC 20 Will save to avoid exploding in a wild, violent, uncontrolled fury for $2d6+1$ rounds. In some circumstances, the DM may apply a bonus or penalty to this save whenever she feels one is called for. If the save fails, the Hiregaard attacks the offending character(s) and any who try to interfere. During this episode, the Hiregaard gains a $+3$ bonus to damage rolls, but suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -4 penalty to AC.

Homicidal Mania: The Hiregaard develops a hatred and disgust for a particular type of non-human humanoid (for example, elves or Vistani), as chosen by the player and DM; the race in question should be one for which the character already has a hatred. The character must kill at

least one individual of the hated race every month of game time — either in combat or through outright murder — or he starts falling apart: Every day beyond one month that goes by without killing one of the hated beings, the character suffers 1 point of both Constitution and Wisdom damage. The urge to kill grows stronger with each passing day until, once his Wisdom attribute drops to 8, he suffers a blackout; at this point, the DM takes control of the character. When (or if) the Hiregaard once again becomes aware of himself, he is standing over the slain body of a member of the hated race, his Constitution and Wisdom attributes restored to full.

Insomnia: The Hiregaard finds it impossible to sleep, for every time he closes his eyes his mind starts to race and strange sounds and images fill his thoughts. He must make a DC 15 Will save simply to fall asleep. (Such a save can be made only once every hour.) Once he falls asleep, he must make an additional Will save every hour (DC 15, $+1$ per previous consecutive save); if the save fails, he wakes up and cannot get back to sleep for at least 2 hours. A character who cannot sleep for at least 4 hours per night or who gets less than 8 hours of sleep for three consecutive nights is fatigued; a character who gets less than 4 hours of sleep for three consecutive nights is exhausted. This disorder is a virtual death sentence for spellcasters, who cannot prepare spells without at least 8 hours of sleep.

Alchemical sleep aids can be used to overcome this affliction, but if they are used, the character is groggy for the first 2 hours upon awakening. Spellcasters (both arcane and divine) suffer a 10% chance of spell failure when casting and all characters suffer a -2 penalty on all skill checks and attack rolls during this 2-hour period.

Severe Monophobia: The Hiregaard cannot stand to be alone, needing at least two others with him at all times. When he is with only one other person, he grows nervous and distracted and starts urging his companion to find others with him. He suffers a -1 penalty to all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws until he is once again together with a larger group. If ever completely alone, he suffers a -2 penalty to all skill checks, attack rolls and saving throws and a -4 penalty to all fear and horror checks. (If the character already suffers from mild and/or moderate monophobia, the penalties from these defects stack.)



Hiregaard *Path of Madness* – Stage Five

A Hiregaard who fails a fifth powers check must roll on the Major Madness Effects table (see *Ravenloft Player's Handbook*) with a –4 penalty.

Hiregaard *Path of Madness* – Stage Six

A Hiregaard who fails the sixth and final powers check becomes a maddened darklord in his own right, although this may apply in much the same way that Tristen Hiregaard is a darklord only through the separation of his alternate identity, Malken. The details of this change are left to the player and the DM to determine.

Family Feats



The Hiregaard family is the exemplar of Vaasi nobility — honorable and devoted to the defense of their families, peasants and lands. They are skilled in both martial and verbal battles, and many of them are also as comfortable on horseback as they are on foot. They are also unique in that they are equally comfortable in the halls of power as on the smallest farmstead.

There are no feats *required* when creating a new member of the Hiregaard family, but any feat from the fighter bonus feat list or the following list is strongly recommended: Animal Affinity, Back to the Wall^R, Blessed^H, Courage^R, Equestrian^C, Great Fortitude, Investigator, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Nine Lives^V, Persuasive, Sharp Wit*, Shield Proficiency, Skill Focus (Handle Animal or Ride), Smitten^V, Track, Wealth^H.

New feat

The following feat is ideal for a Hiregaard character, especially a fighter or paladin.

Defender of the Weak [General]

You may tap into hidden reserves of strength when defending the weak and downtrodden.

Prerequisite: Non-evil alignment.

Benefit: If you witness an opponent actively threaten or attack a weaker being, you are inspired; for this purpose, a “weaker being” is any character having commoner levels or any other character who is at least 3 levels lower than you. For the next 24 hours, you gain a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls

against the threatening opponent and a +1 morale bonus on all saving throws against his spells or special attacks. You also gain a +1 morale bonus on any fear or horror saves that would prevent or interfere with your ability to defend the weaker being from the threatening opponent.

Special: You cannot gain any benefit from this feat if the weaker being is also a favored enemy or a member of a race or group you hate (such as from a failed Hiregaard dark powers check or some other background choice or trait).

For the purpose of dark powers checks, you treat weaker beings as Innocents. (That is, merely lying to such a character causes you to make a 1% dark powers check.) This does not apply if the weaker being is also a member of a hated race.

Family Classes



Almost every Hiregaard is, at heart, a warrior and adventurer. Unlike the majority of the Core's nobility, the Hiregaards don't hide behind their hired troops — they are often found leading them. For this reason, nearly all those with Hiregaard blood (as opposed to those who marry into the noble house) start in one of the adventuring classes. They are most typically fighters, paladins, or rangers, although those with more cerebral bent may be rogues or wizards. Hiregaards who prefer a quieter (although not necessarily safer) life at court soon take levels in the aristocrat class, however, seeking to focus instead on diplomacy and other pursuits.

Those Hiregaards who enter into prestige classes tend to toward such classes as the avenger^V, blessed defender^H, detective^H, duelist, eldritch knight, knight errant^H and monster hunter^R, as well as the new class — the people's champion — shown below.

People's Champion

Although the Hiregaards are staunch supporters of the Church of the Lawgiver, few actually enter the church's service as clerics, and even fewer have risen far within its ranks. Invariably, they are bothered by the inability of mortals to live up to the standards of the divine, and these disenchanting priests tend to return with renewed determination and focus to the ideals that have served their family as a moral compass for generations. As such, they become ideal candidates for the people's champion prestige class. Other Hiregaards have been known to subscribe to the belief that embodies this pres-





tige class as well, for they too have seen petty abuse of power from those they believe should know better, but it is disenchanting priests of the Lawgiver who are most often drawn to it.

In every land, there are nobles who misuse their positions of privilege. In lands like Nova Vaasa where some nobles feel threatened by an emerging merchant class, the abuse can be particularly severe. Here, the people's champion rises to the defense of commoners who suffer under the excesses of abusive nobles and their hirelings. The champion has no desire to overthrow the existing social order, but is instead motivated by a desire to see that justice is done within its confines.

Characters belonging to this class can be found in Darkon and Falkovnia, but they are most common in Nova Vaasa and Hazlan. They are invariably former clergy or church warriors who turned their backs on the organized churches of Ezra or the Lawgiver. This was due to what they perceived as corruption, abuse of authority for personal gain of the clergy and exploitation of the masses of faithful in favor of the rich and powerful.

Some members of this class remain within the church hierarchy, where they work to root out corrupt church leaders and their toadies, but others take to the streets to defend commoners against nobles who lack nobility. Interestingly, although these champions have invariably turned away from the structure of their faith to a greater or lesser degree, they remain strongly devoted to the belief in their deity. In turn, the god or goddess clearly favors the character's efforts, as they continue to answer his prayers for spells and to grant him other supernatural abilities.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

To qualify for the people's champion (Pch) class, a character must meet the following criteria.

Alignment: Non-chaotic and non-evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Diplomacy 5 ranks, Gather Information 3 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 3 ranks, Sense Motive 3 ranks.

Feats: Defender of the Weak*.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 1st-level divine spells.

Other: Must be of noble rank.

Class Skills

The people's champion's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (religion), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the people's champion prestige class.





Table 6-1: The People's Champion

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Eye for detail	—
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Righteous anger	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Bonus feat	—
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Aura of confidence	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Unyielding devotion	—

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The people's champion is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armor and shields.

Spellcasting: At 2nd and again at 4th level, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class had granted him access to 1st-level divine spells. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved ability to turn undead and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that he adds the level of people's champion to the level of his previous divine spellcasting class, then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.

If the character has more than one divine spellcasting class that grants him access to divine spells, he must decide to which class he adds each level of people's champion for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

Eye for Detail (Ex): At 1st level, the people's champion gains a +2 competence bonus on all Gather Information, Sense Motive and Spot checks.

Righteous Anger (Ex): At 2nd level, the people's champion uses his rage and indignation to add extra fuel to his crusade when things get particularly difficult. Once per day, as a free action, he can call upon a cold fury that grants him a bonus to attack and damage rolls equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum +1). The benefit lasts for a number of rounds equal to his people's champion level.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd level, the people's champion gains a bonus feat from the following list: Alertness, Back to the Wall^R, Blind-Fight, Combat

Casting, Combat Expertise, Courage^R, Dead Man Walking^R, Death's Favor^C, Dodge, Endurance, Ethereal Empathy^R, Haunted^R, Hexbreaker^V, Indomitable^V, Investigator, Iron Will, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Negotiator, Open Mind^R, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Self-Sufficient, Sharp Eyes*, Spirit of Light^V, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Voice of Wrath^R, Weapon Focus.

The people's champion must meet all the usual prerequisites for these feats.

Aura of Confidence (Su): At 4th, a people's champion has such a strong belief in the righteousness of his struggle that he inspires others by his example. He gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against fear effects, and each ally within 20 feet of him gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and on saving throws against fear effects.

This ability functions while the people's champion is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Unyielding Devotion (Ex): At 5th level, the people's champion is so firm in his crusade that his mind is nearly unassailable by those who would bend it. He gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting spells and effects. (This bonus does apply to horror saves, but not to fear or madness saves.)

Family Magic



he Hiregaard family has in their possession many masterwork and magical weapons and suits of armor, but few of these have any particular historical significance other than having belonged to a noted member of the family. However, one of the family's enchanted heirlooms is of particular note: The *cat's paw*.



The Cat's Paw (Minor Artifact)

The *cat's paw* is the remarkably well-preserved paw of a large black hunting cat, perhaps a panther or a plains cat. It is typically kept in a soft leather pouch that is decorated with symbols and pictographs of unknown meaning and purpose. According to well-known legends, Persarval Hiregaard seized the *cat's paw* from a worshipper of the legendary cat cult, although for years Tristen Hiregaard himself believed the item and its leather container to be just a myth. Then, his son Yorgi found it within a secret compartment in his wardrobe, where it apparently had lain hidden for centuries.

Yorgi carried the *cat's paw* with him on many of his youthful adventures, enjoying its many magical advantages. Eventually, though, he was set upon by a band of paka, a shapeshifting race of feline humanoids (see **Denizens of Dread** and **Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol. IV** for details) intent on seizing the pouch with the *cat's paw* — over Yorgi's dead body. Further attempts upon Yorgi's life, all which could be traced back to his possession of the *cat's paw*, convinced him to stop carrying the item and to leave it in his father's treasury, deep within the central keep of Castle Faerhaven.

Over the years since, Hiregaards have occasionally carried the *cat's paw* on important missions, always returning it to the treasury within days. Shortly after its use, however, a band of paka invariably appears in the castle and attempts to steal it. It is unknown why the paka are so eager to get their hands on the *cat's paw*.

After the last attempt, some five years ago, Tristen Hiregaard attempted to take a paka prisoner to explain the significance of the artifact to the cat people, as he would consider surrendering it to them if it was important enough. The prisoner refused to tell Sir Tristen anything, but he was ultimately released so that he could bring the offer to his leaders. Sir Tristen refused to hand over the *cat's paw* without answers to his questions. Attempts to discern the origin of the item — and even to read the inscriptions upon leather pouch — have always met with failure.

The truth is that although the *cat's paw* was indeed claimed by Persarval Hiregaard during the conflict with the cat cultists, it had fallen into their possession only after the paka had very recently lost it. It is but one part of a larger artifact that, when assembled, gives its possessor untold powers. The exact function of all eight pieces has been lost to





the paka, but they believe that once they have them all, they will be able to destroy all humans everywhere and turn the Land of Mists into a paradise for their kind.

Cat's Paw: The *cat's paw* grants its possessor a +2 bonus to Dexterity (since this bonus has no type, it stacks with all other bonuses to Dexterity). It also grants low-light vision and a +2 bonus on all Search and Spot checks, as well as a +4 competence bonus to any Handle Animal checks involving felines. Three times per day, it allows the user to cast *cat's grace* (caster level 12th). Finally, no feline animal or magical beast will attack the possessor of the *cat's paw* unless attacked first and unable to flee.

The *cat's paw* may have other powers in the hands of paka or other feline humanoids, but this is left up to the DM.

Strong transmutation; CL 15th; Weight 1/2 lb.

Story Hooks

Several years ago, Sasha Hiregaard's daughter Illyana married a charming young merchant who had relocated from Darkon to Kantora. Sadly, Illyana started to show signs of distressed nerves several months ago. She has recently been confined to the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed on the outskirts of Egertus, but the doctors there found that she is sane. Tristen Hiregaard has never fully

trusted Illyana's husband, and he asks the PCs — as trusted members or retainers of the Hiregaard family — to investigate the husband's activities.

As they start their investigation, the characters receive word that Malken has struck at the Clinic of the Mentally Distressed, apparently in an attempt to kill Illyana Hiregaard, but has managed only to slay an orderly. In a throwback to his earlier days, however, the violent criminal wrote a threatening message in his victim's blood.

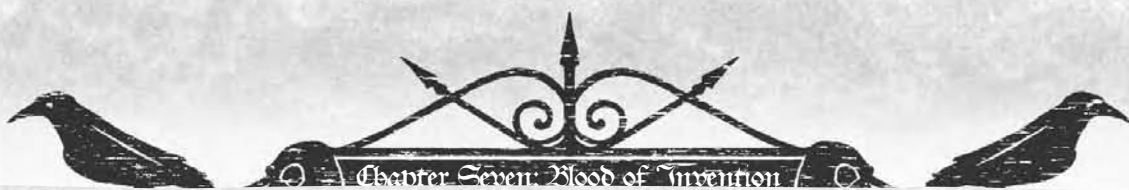
Whichever path the characters decide to take in their investigation, they find no evidence of wrongdoing on the husband's part, nor do they find any sign of Malken being involved, despite the message. Instead, they find evidence that Illyana has a lover (having the initial "M.") who was scheming with her to kill the husband so he could get the business.

If they confront Illyana with this information, it becomes apparent that she is hopelessly insane; she believes herself to be Malken, and, in fact, this personality emerges and she attacks the PCs. If the characters go to Tristen Hiregaard with their findings, he peremptorily and coldly tells them to keep it to themselves. Whatever steps they take after this, they find themselves targeted by Malken's organization and perhaps even Malken himself. Their demand is that the PCs reveal Illyana's secret to Ivan Hiregaard, the Chief Constable of Kantora.



Chapter Seven:
The Blood of
Invention

The Njordenheim
Family



Excerpt from the diary of Artisa Juvenoth:

The dreams have come again. It seems that the more I bury myself in my research, the more often they come. Sometimes I feel as if the truth is just beyond my grasp, that if I reached out for it, the dreams would stop. My hand rises as though of its own accord, as if to seize a truth I cannot see, but a feeling of such dread fills me that I cannot continue. I know then that the truth is too terrible to grasp, and that to know it would be to go utterly mad.

I try to take consolation in the mundane matters of life — my home, my family and my work. Though I can remember nothing of my childhood, my studies at the university gave me comfort as a young woman, and they brought me love as well. Jervais and I were fellow students working under Professor Geoblatt, and our research into the nature of aging brought us into constant contact. A quiet romance blossomed, and when we had completed our studies, we married. Our five children have filled our home with the joy of discovery, and the eldest is now preparing for university studies himself. I should be the happiest of women, but the dreams rob me of the contentment that should be mine.

In one dream, I see the face of a woman smiling at me with the warmth that a mother reserves for her child. And indeed, I must be a child, because she holds up a child's dress to my body as if to test its size. The color and style please her, but I care not — I urge her to play with me instead. And she does, until it is time to sleep and she puts me to bed with a kiss. But sleep does not come easily. I lie awake in the darkness, listening to her voice raised in strife with that of a man. "Never!" she cries. "I will never accept that monster — that abomination. The next time he touches her, I shall kill him with my bare hands!"

"Now, darling," says the man, "you know he loves her. He would never hurt her — or you."

"That creature cannot love!" wails the woman. "He is not human!"

In another dream, I wake in the darkness, not knowing where or even who I am. In the dim light of a lamp, I see above me a face — or more accurately, a parody of a face, for surely no living visage of such incredible ugliness could exist. From its craggy features, I judge it to belong to a man, but its gray skin and livid scars make it seem more monster than human. Its light-colored, watery eyes bulge from their sockets as though not firmly attached there, and its skin stretches so taut across its cheekbones and jawline that it barely masks the muscles and bones beneath. Its black hair falls in greasy, lanky locks well past its shoulders, and its thin, black lips part to reveal dirty, stained teeth. "Come," it says in a whisper that grates like a shovel in the dirt of a grave.

A scream tears from my throat. "No!" says the creature placing a hand over my mouth. "It is only I. Please. You must be quiet." I struggle against the restraining hand for a moment, and then I look again into those watery eyes. Instead of cruel intent, I see gentleness there, like the regard of a boy for a beloved pet or a younger sibling. There is something almost endearing about that face, somewhere beyond the ugliness. This creature, for all its gruesome appearance, truly is a man. The fear retreats, and I almost smile against his hand.

Just then, I see the glint of moonlight on the edge of a blade raised behind the man's head, and I struggle again to speak, raising my hand to point behind him. "No! I won't let you harm her, you monster!" shouts a woman's voice, and the man lurches and staggers as if from a blow, releasing my scream into the night. "I would never harm her," he protests, turning to face his attacker. The woman rushes at him with her weapon, and his face contorts in rage as he retaliates against her attacks.

Yet another dream finds me fleeing for my life from some danger I cannot understand. The moon shines down, illuminating the stones beneath my feet with a ghostly white light. A hard barrier hits my legs, and I tumble over it, grabbing onto the first object my hand finds. A man leans over the barrier — a railing, it seems — and grabs my wrist. Just when it seems that I shall be saved, a third is followed by a cry of anguish, and he lets go of my hand. I fall. And fall. And then I awaken.

I know, of course, that these dreams are nothing more than my subconscious trying to tell me who I really am, to give me the identity I never had.

But I am happy with the life I have made — I need no other. So why? Why does my past come to find me now?





The Mordenheims

Baron Mordenheim's wife Elise was barren, so he never had children of his own. Since the baron had always embraced science above divinity, he became determined to create a "son" for himself.

He felt no compunction about dabbling in the realm of creation, which rightly belongs to the gods, since he believed in no gods — except possibly Science itself. Victor Mordenheim's natural brilliance and prodigious scientific knowledge gave him the tools he needed to pursue his plan. Gathering body parts from corpses by night, he patched together a human form and tried to imbue it with life. Perversely, the gods whose existence he had always denied saw fit to grant him this terrible "gift," and they gave his creation the spark of life. Naming the creature Adam, Mordenheim introduced it to his wife. But she greeted his creation with repulsion, though Adam seemed to harbor a strong affection for her.

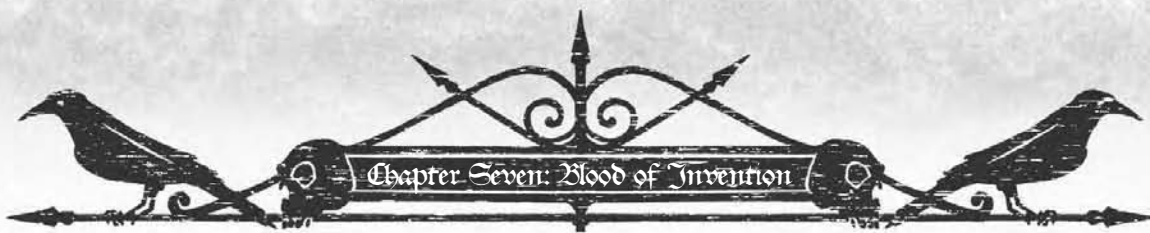
Eventually, the Mordenheims adopted a young girl they found wandering the streets, naming her Eva. Elise showered the girl with affection even as

her hatred for Adam grew. The Mordenheims fell to arguing about what to do with Adam, who showed affection for both Eva and Elise, and the tension in the household became almost palpable.

Eventually, Adam decided that life with the warring Mordenheims was not good for Eva and resolved to take her away with him. But the attempt ended in tragedy when Elise, awakened by Eva's scream, attacked Adam in a frenzy of fear and hate. Eva fled out onto the balcony and tumbled over the balustrade. When Adam tried to save her, Elise attacked him again, forcing him to relinquish his grasp. As the girl fell to the ground, Adam turned to face his attacker, his rage overwhelming the love he felt for Elise.

Moments later, the baron arrived to find Adam standing over his wife's mangled body. Adam sprang into the night, never to return, and he soon became darklord of Lamordia. Eva's body was never found, but she has never been seen by the Mordenheims again.

Miraculously, Elise was not quite dead, despite her terrible wounds. Since that night, the baron has labored for years to keep her alive and to restore



her to health and vigor using the means he employed to create Adam. Yet all his work has been to no avail, and Elise continues to hover at the very brink of death.

Fitting In

Even if Baron Mordenheim wished to remarry (which he never has), he cannot do so while life remains in Elise — and the Dark Powers have ensured that she remains just barely alive to increase the Baron's frustration and torment. Thus, most characters with Mordenheim blood are the baron's nieces, nephews, or cousins many times removed. Little is known of the baron's extended family, so almost any relation other than direct descent is possible.

Alternatively, if the DM wishes, a character might claim Mordenheim blood through the lost child Eva. Though Eva was an adopted child, the time she spent with the Mordenheims during her formative years imbued her with a love of science and rational thought second only to that of the adoptive father whose favor she so desperately wanted to win. Eva herself might surface under another name (in fact, see Artisa Juvenoth in the Appendix). Alternatively, one of her elder children could become a player character with Mordenheim blood (although her family's genealogy might need to be altered slightly by the DM, for otherwise, given the timeline of Victor Mordenheim's story, her oldest child could not possibly be more than perhaps 12 or 13).

The bloodline of Baron Mordenheim is laden with potential for both good and ill. Born with a hunger for knowledge and a predilection for scientific study, the Mordenheims prefer cold, hard facts to emotional appeals. All of them are incredibly intelligent and prone to developing their minds to the fullest extent. Most are scientists of one sort or another, and nearly all consider religion to be little more than a sop for those of lesser intellect.

Many Mordenheims are unmarried, preferring to devote themselves to study above family. Several have found places in prestigious schools and universities, and a few have made discoveries or invented techniques that actually improve the length and quality of life for those who use them. Unfortunately, the Mordenheims are also obsessive to a fault, highly opinionated and often quite antisocial.

Any Mordenheim character should be motivated primarily by a love of knowledge — and,

particularly, scientific knowledge. A certain arrogance and possibly a complete rejection of divine and/or arcane magic in favor of facts and logic might also be characteristic of the bloodline. The baron's rejection of the gods has caused the gods to reject not only him, but his entire bloodline as well. Thus, no deity will accept a Mordenheim as a cleric.

Claiming Membership

A PC may actually bear the Mordenheim name if her descent came through the male line from one of the baron's siblings or other blood relatives. Descent through the female line merely requires tracing her ancestry back to Victor Mordenheim's parents, grandparents, or more distant kin. Since the Mordenheims tend to be rather conventional about marriage and notions of romance, as well as somewhat emotionally distant, affairs of the heart resulting in illegitimate births are highly uncommon, though not impossible. Thus, the family line should be readily traceable, even though little is known of it.

The Mordenheim curse — abandonment by the gods — also fell on the child Eva, and all of her descendents can also be considered to bear the blood. Claiming membership through Eva is more difficult, since Eva's whereabouts have been unknown since the night of Adam's flight.

Mordenheim Family Traits

- **+2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma:** The Mordenheims are known to possess sharp, analytical minds, but others often find them cold and unfeeling, supercilious and even a bit dull.
- All Mordenheims are fascinated with knowledge, but most specialize in one area (or perhaps a small handful of disciplines). Each Mordenheim character should choose one area of Knowledge (excluding religion), in which she gains a +2 bonus on all checks.
- **Curse of Godlessness:** Mordenheims, due to the curse brought upon them by Baron Victor Mordenheim, cannot take levels in any class that grants divine spells.

Family Feats



he Mordenheims tend to focus on knowledge above all else, and the feats they take tend to reflect the family's predilection for science, knowledge and invention.



When creating a Mordenheim character, the player or DM should select at least one of the character's feats from the following list (or from among those new feats listed further below): Dabbler^H, Diligent, Eidetic Memory^H, Investigator, Iron Will, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Logical Mind^V, Mechanical Aptitude^C, Negotiator, Skill Focus (for any skill with Intelligence or Wisdom as its key ability), University Education^H, or Wealth^H.

In addition, the following new feats are available (only) to members of the Mordenheim bloodline.

Create Device [General]

Your scientific knowledge and creativity allow you to invent devices that mimic the effects of certain magic items.

Prerequisites: Int 15.

Benefit: Choose an item creation feat for which your character level equals or exceeds the required caster level. You can create nonmagical equivalents of the magic items that the selected feat would normally allow you to create. For the purpose of creating these items, you are considered to be a spellcaster of the appropriate type with a caster level equal to your character level; you may ignore the spells normally required to create the items, but you cannot create an item that would produce spell effects beyond the capacity of your effective caster level. (Thus, a 5th-level character could produce the scientific equivalent of a *wand of fireball*, a 3rd-level spell, but not a *wand of dimension door* (a 4th-level spell).

The cost of creation and the time required for each device are the same as for the equivalent magic item. The devices so created duplicate the effects of the items they mimic. All other aspects of the item (including color, shape, method of function and design) are under your control, at the DM's discretion.

Items created with this feat always require the use of a power supply (see Family Magic later in this chapter) to function. This requirement does not change the cost to create a charged item; the power supply is an additional cost.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new item creation feat.

Godless [General]

You are more resistant than normal to divine magic.

Prerequisite: No patron deity.

Benefit: You gain spell resistance equal to 5 + your character level against divine spells of any kind. If a divine spell penetrates your spell resistance, you gain a +2 bonus on any saving throws allowed against it. You may *not* voluntarily suppress your spell resistance to receive the benefit of any divine spell. In addition, you cannot be *raised*, *resurrected*, or otherwise restored to life via any divine magic once you die.

Greater Skill focus [General]

Choose a skill to which you have already applied the Skill Focus feat. You are now even more adept with that skill than you were before.

Prerequisites: Skill Focus with selected skill.

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus on all checks made with the selected skill. This bonus stacks with all other bonuses to this skill, including the one from Skill Focus.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new skill to which you have already applied the Skill Focus feat.

Laborious Training [General]

Your selfless dedication to study and the long hours you have spent training for your craft have given you an increased capacity for learning.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Knowledge (any one) 5 ranks.

Benefit: Your maximum rank in any Intelligence-based skill equals 5 + your character level.

Normal: A character's maximum rank in any skill equals 3 + character level.

Superior Alchemy [General]

Through your studies of alchemy, you have developed an in-depth understanding of alchemical processes.

Prerequisites: Int 15, Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]).

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on all Craft (alchemy) checks. Furthermore, you can use the Craft (alchemy) skill to make any of the following items (see the Family Magic section, later in this chapter, for actual descriptions of these items).

Superior Alchemy Item	Craft (Alchemy) DC
Oil of Agony	20b
Oil of Animation	25
Oil of Preservation	25

Family Classes

The Mordenheims devote themselves with an almost fanatical zeal to the pursuit of knowledge, especially in the sciences. Many are attracted to medicine; others pursue more general scientific paths or mix their scientific knowledge with arcane magic. The majority of Mordenheims belong to the expert class, although aristocrat levels are not uncommon; some members of the family are known to have levels in rogue or wizard. Fighters are uncommon, but not unheard of, but no Mordenheim, due to the family curse, can take levels in cleric or any other class that grants divine spells.

Some exceptional members of the family enter prestige classes such as alchemical philosopher^V, dilettante^H, loremaster, metaphysician^H, or scholar^H. The following new prestige classes are also available to members of the Mordenheim bloodline. (At the DM's discretion, they may also be made available to other characters who meet the prerequisites.)

Learned Physician

Though medicine is his stock-in-trade, the learned physician has used his medical training as a springboard into other fields of natural science. In fact, his skill with healing is only one manifestation of a thirst for knowledge in general, and he never stops learning. Much more than a simple country doctor, the learned physician has garnered knowledge that allows him to understand the vectors of infection and the factors that affect the progress of illnesses. Not only has he learned classic medical techniques, he has acquired skills in healing far beyond what his fellow physicians — and even some clerics — are able to perform.

In addition, the learned physician's keen eye and logical mind allow him to piece together how events must have occurred when presented with a set of mysterious circumstances. Many learned physicians go on to make scientific contributions in medicine or even in other fields based on their passion for finding out how and why the natural world works as it does.

Monks make excellent learned physicians, as do experts who have gathered sufficient medical training. Clerics and other divine spellcasters sometimes choose this path, but arcane spellcasters also favor it because of its emphasis on logic and on the piecing together of factual information and sensory observation. Paladins have also been known to choose this path on occasion, but fighters, rangers and rogues rarely do.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a learned physician (Lph), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (any) 5 ranks, Healing 8 ranks, Profession (herbalist) 5 ranks.

Feat: Investigator, University Education^H.

Special: The candidate must be a graduate of a recognized university.

Class Skills

The learned physician's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), plus any five additional skills chosen by the learned physician when he first enters the class.

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class features

All the following are class features of the learned physician prestige class.





Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Learned physicians gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Spellcasting: At every even-numbered learned physician level, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class he had before taking the level in learned physician. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved ability to turn undead, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that he adds the level of learned physician to the level of his previous spellcasting class, then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.

If the character has more than one spellcasting class, he must decide to which class he adds each level of learned physician for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

If the character had no spellcasting ability before taking levels in this prestige class, he may instead choose one spell-like ability from the table below at each even-numbered learned physician level. He may choose any spell-like ability with a "task rating" less than or equal to his learned physician level + his Wisdom modifier. Each of these abilities is usable once per day. If the learned physician chooses the same ability multiple times, he gains one additional use per day each time he chooses it.

Saving throw DCs, where applicable, are 10 + spell level + the learned physician's Wisdom modifier.

Task Rating	Ability Gained
1 or less	<i>Cure minor wounds</i>
2	<i>Detect poison</i>
3	<i>Cure light wounds</i>
4	<i>Deathwatch</i>
5	<i>Delay poison</i>
6	<i>Remove paralysis</i>
7	<i>Cure moderate wounds</i>
8	<i>Neutralize poison</i>
9	<i>Cure critical wounds</i>
10	<i>Heal</i>

Scientific Knowledge (Ex): Learned physicians gather knowledge about all sorts of topics. At

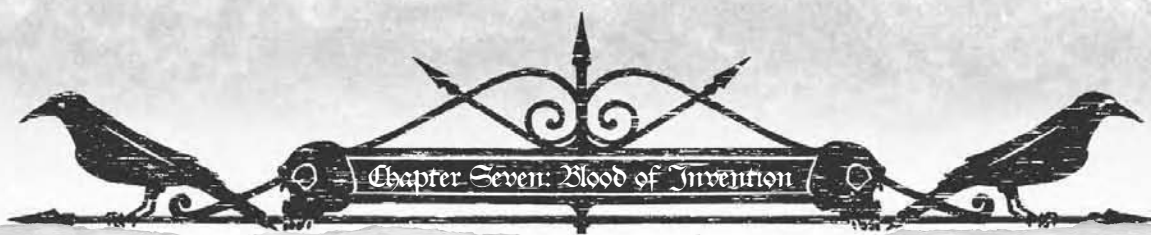
1st level, the learned physician knows information regarding various esoteric topics, just as a bard does. He adds his learned physician level and his Intelligence modifier to a 1d20 roll and compares the result with the scientific knowledge DC for the information. This ability otherwise works like the bardic knowledge ability.

A learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check to connect a *power source* to an item made with the Create Device* feat. He can also make a scientific knowledge check to learn how to use any spell trigger or spell completion item created with the Create Device feat as though he were a spellcaster of the appropriate type with a caster level equal to his character level. The DC for such a check is 15 + the device's effective caster level.

Speedy Observation (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, the learned physician becomes a keen observer who can notice apparently unrelated details and quickly form a valid conclusion. The character gains a +2 bonus on all Search checks and Heal checks. In addition, the learned physician can make a Search check over a space or volume of goods roughly 10 feet by 10 feet by 5 feet as a full-round action.

Healing Touch (Su): At 5th level, a learned physician can heal wounds (his own or those of others) by touch. Each day, he can heal a total number of hit points of damage equal to his learned physician level x his Charisma modifier (minimum 1). The learned physician may choose to divide his healing among multiple recipients, and he doesn't have to use it all at once. Using healing touch is a standard action. Starting at 9th level, the learned physician's healing touch can cure a number of points of damage per day equal to his learned physician level x his Charisma modifier (minimum 1) x his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). In addition, the learned physician can now use *remove blindness/deafness* or *remove disease* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum once per day). The use of either effect counts as one daily use of this ability.

Bedside Manner (Ex): Beginning at 9th level, the learned physician develops a knack for putting people at ease and reading their body language. He gains a +2 bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks.



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Table 7-1: The Learned Physician

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Scientific knowledge
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	+1 level of previous spellcasting class (or spell-like ability)
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Speedy observation
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	+1 level of previous spellcasting class (or spell-like ability)
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Healing touch
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	+1 level of previous spellcasting class (or spell-like ability)
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Bedside manner
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	+1 level of previous spellcasting class (or spell-like ability)
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Healing touch
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	+1 level of previous spellcasting class (or spell-like ability)

Scientist

The scientist has made the pursuit of scientific knowledge her life's work. A respected scholar, she has pursued research of her own design in the hope of discovering fundamental scientific principles and putting them to use for the betterment of all persons — or even for her own selfish ends, since science by itself is neither moral or immoral. In general, scientists do not pursue magic as such, even if they themselves are or have been spellcasters. In their minds, any effect that appears “magical” in fact has a scientific explanation that simply has not yet been discovered.

Most scientists began their careers as experts specializing in some branch of science. Many were originally assistants to other scientists or scholars, performing experiments under the supervision of their mentors. Rogues and monks may be attracted to the path of science, as are bards and certain other arcane spellcasters. Divine spellcasters rarely adopt this prestige class, since the tenets of science tend to conflict with their tenets and beliefs.

Scientists are most often attached to universities, where they can easily access books and equipment as well as the knowledge of their peers. Some, however, choose to equip their own laboratories and conduct their research alone. Most often, such solo scientists are pursuing research that their peers believe to be irresponsible, immoral, or foolhardy.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a scientist (Sci), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Knowledge (construction and engineering, or nature) 8 ranks.

Feats: Create Device*, Skill Focus (Knowledge [any one except religion]), University Education^H.

Special: The candidate must be a graduate of a recognized university.

Class Skills

The scientist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Speak Language, Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class features

All the following are features of the scientist prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Scientists gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Science: In her studies, a scientist gains all sorts of knowledge and learns many new techniques, but she eventually decides to focus on one field of study. At 1st level, the scientist chooses one science from the following list: biology, chemistry,



physics, or psychology. Once made, this choice cannot be changed.

Upon choosing her scientific discipline, the scientist automatically acquires a small toolkit and *power source* of her choice (see Family Magic elsewhere in this chapter); these enable her to perform several technological “tricks.” These effects work as the spells of the same name, except that each is an extraordinary ability that requires a standard action to use, and the scientist must make a scientific knowledge check (DC 10 + effective spell level of trick) to power the trick (assuming she has a *power source* at hand). These effects are not subject to dispelling (unless otherwise noted), antimagic, or spell resistance.

The scientist can use an “at will” effect anytime as a standard action. She can use a number of “limited” effects per day equal to her scientist level plus her Intelligence modifier, and any use of such an effect counts against that total. (In either case, she must make a scientific knowledge checks, as noted above.) Those tricks usable at will never draw charges from the scientist’s *power source*, even though a scientific knowledge check is still required to power the trick (as described above); limited tricks require 1 charge per use.

For example, a 1st-level biologist with an Intelligence score of 15 can use her limited effects 3 times per day. Thus, on a given day, she could choose to use *cure light wounds*, *endure elements* and *inflict light wounds* once each, *cure light wounds* three times, or any other combination of effects that doesn’t exceed three uses in a day.

Saving throw DCs, where applicable, are equal to 10 + spell level + the scientist’s Int modifier. Caster level, where applicable, is equal to the scientist’s class level.

Biology: At will—*cure minor wounds*, *inflict minor wounds*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*¹, *virtue*; limited—*cure light wounds*, *endure elements*, *inflict light wounds*.

Chemistry: At will—*acid splash*, *detect poison*, *flare*, *light*, *purify food and drink*; limited—*burning hands*, *grease*, *obscuring mist*¹.

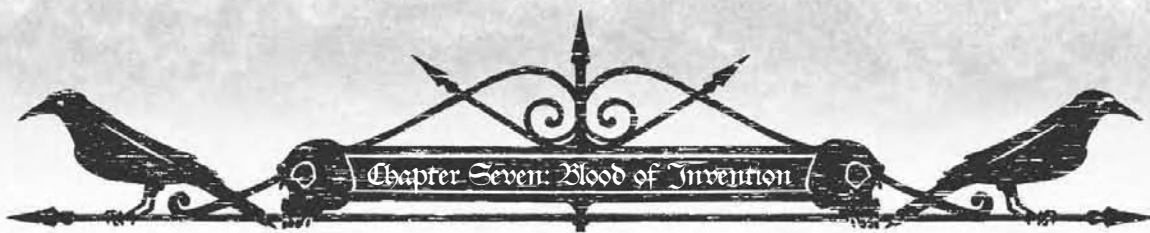
Physics: At will—*ghost sound*, *know direction*, *mage hand*², *open/close*², *ray of frost*; limited—*feather fall*, *jump*, *shocking grasp*.

Psychology: At will—*daze*, *guidance*, *lullaby*, *message*, *virtue*; limited—*charm person*¹, *lesser confusion*¹, *remove fear*.

¹ Although these effects cannot be dispelled using *dispel magic*, other magical effects that remove the conditions imposed by these tricks negate them just as though they were 1st-level spells cast by a spellcaster of the character’s scientist level. For example, a *heal* spell negates *touch of fatigue* or *lesser confusion*, a *gust of wind* clears away *obscuring mist* and *break enchantment* negates *charm person*.

² The scientist actually employs some physical apparatus to achieve these effects, such as a system of hooks, strings and pulleys, or perhaps even a device producing a tiny electromagnetic field, for *mage hand*.

Scientific Knowledge (Ex): Scientists gather knowledge about all sorts of topics. At 1st level, the



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scientist knows information regarding various esoteric topics, just as a bard does. She adds her scientist level and her Intelligence modifier to a 1d20 roll and compares the result with the scientific knowledge DC for the information. This ability otherwise works like the bardic knowledge ability.

A scientist can make a scientific knowledge check to connect a *power source* to an item made with the Create Device* feat, or to tap a *power source* for one of her technological tricks or applied science abilities (as noted in those abilities). She can also make a scientific knowledge check to learn how to use any spell trigger or spell completion item created with the Create Device feat as though she were a spellcaster of the appropriate type with a caster level equal to her character level. The DC for such a check is 15 + the device's effective caster level.

Mind Over Metaphysics (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, the scientist's trained mind allows her to resist magical effects, regardless of their form. When the scientist makes a saving throw against any spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability, she gains a bonus on the roll equal to her Intelligence modifier or half her scientist level, whichever is lower. For example a 2nd-level scientist with an Intelligence score of 15 gains a +1 bonus, while a 10th-level scientist with an Intelligence score of 17 gains a +3 bonus on saving throws against magical effects.

Applied Science: At 3rd level and every two levels thereafter (at 5th, 7th and 9th level), the scientist learns an advanced trick related to her chosen science or to a different one. She may select her advanced trick from the chart below. These advanced tricks work as the spells of the same name, except that each is an extraordinary ability that requires a standard action to use, and the scientist must make a scientific knowledge check (DC 10 + effective spell level of trick) to power the trick (assuming she has a suitably charged *power source* at hand). Each use of an advanced trick draws 1 charge from the scientist's *power source*.

If the character selects an advanced trick from among those available to the scientific discipline she chose at 1st level, she may choose any advanced trick with a complexity rating less than or equal to one-half her scientist level + her Intelligence modifier. These tricks work just like the tricks she learned at 1st level, except that each is useable a number of times per day equal to 1 + her Intelligence modifier. If she chooses the same advanced trick again at a later level, she gains 3 additional daily uses of that trick. The scientist's

effective caster level for these tricks equals her scientist level. Saving throw DCs, where applicable, are equal to 10 + scientist level + Int modifier.

Alternatively, the scientist can choose an advanced trick from a science other than her specialty, but in that case she may select any trick whose complexity rating is less than or equal to one-half her scientist level. Furthermore, she can use each such trick only once per day, and choosing the same advanced trick more than once adds only 1 extra use per day. Her effective caster level for these tricks equals one-half her scientist level.

Some tricks are given as sets that include multiple spell effects. When a trick indicates more than one effect, the scientist can use any of these effects, but each use counts as one daily use. For example a 3rd-level biologist with an Intelligence score of 16 (+3 modifier) can use her tricks 6 times a day. If she chooses the first set of tricks on the biology list (*bull's strength*, *bear's endurance* and *enlarge person*) she can use each effect twice, any single effect 6 times, one effect once and another 5 times, or any other combination that adds up to 6 uses in a day.

Applied Biology

Complexity Rating	Advanced Trick(s)
1	<i>Bull's strength</i> , <i>bear's endurance</i> , <i>enlarge person</i>
2	<i>Cure moderate wounds</i> , <i>delay poison</i> , <i>inflict moderate wounds</i>
3	<i>Entangle</i> , <i>snare</i>
4	<i>Blindness/deafness</i> , <i>contagion</i> , <i>remove blindness/deafness</i> , <i>remove disease</i>
5	<i>Command plants</i> , <i>giant vermin</i>
6	<i>Animate plants</i> , <i>spike growth</i>
7	<i>Blight</i> , <i>waves of fatigue</i>
8	<i>Harm</i> , <i>heal</i> , <i>regenerate</i>
9	<i>Finger of death</i> , <i>waves of exhaustion</i>
10	<i>Energy drain</i> , <i>horrid wilting</i>

Applied Chemistry

Complexity Rating	Advanced Trick(s)
1	<i>Pyrotechnics</i> , <i>web</i>
2	<i>Acid arrow</i> , <i>glitterdust</i>
3	<i>Rusting grasp</i> , <i>slow</i>
4	<i>Flame arrow</i> , <i>haste</i>
5	<i>Repel vermin</i> , <i>stinking cloud</i>
6	<i>Neutralize poison</i> , <i>poison</i>
7	<i>Fire shield</i> , <i>solid fog</i>
8	<i>Cloudkill</i> , <i>stoneskin</i>
9	<i>Acid fog</i> , <i>fire seeds</i>
10	<i>Incendiary cloud</i> , <i>iron body</i>



Applied Physics

Complexity Rating	Advanced Trick(s)
1	<i>Shatter, sound burst</i>
2	<i>Darkness, daylight</i>
3	<i>Rusting grasp, slow</i>
4	<i>Chill metal, heat metal, resist energy</i>
5	<i>Call lightning, gust of wind</i>
6	<i>Lightning bolt, searing light</i>
7	<i>Wall of fire, wall of ice</i>
8	<i>Cone of cold, shout</i>
9	<i>Freezing sphere, repulsion</i>
10	<i>Delayed blast fireball, prismatic spray</i>

Applied Psychology

Complexity Rating	Advanced Trick(s)
1	<i>Daze monster, hideous laughter</i>
2	<i>Rage, suggestion</i>
3	<i>Crushing despair, lesser geas</i>
4	<i>Greater command, hold monster</i>
5	<i>Break enchantment¹</i>
6	<i>Dominate person</i>
7	<i>Insanity, mass hold person</i>
8	<i>Mass charm monster, power word stun</i>
9	<i>Mass hold monster</i>
10	<i>Dominate monster</i>

¹ Works only against mind-affecting spells or effects.

Discovery: At 4th level and again at 8th level, the scientist discovers some bit of knowledge that gives her a new ability, chosen from among those on the chart below. She may choose any discovery with a perplexity rating less than or equal to her scientist level + her Intelligence modifier. A scientist cannot make the same discovery twice.

Perplexity Rating	Benefit
1 Instant mastery	Gain 4 ranks of a skill in which the scientist has no ranks
2 Robust health	+1 hit point per scientist level ¹
3 Inner strength	+2 bonus on Will saves
4 Increased stamina	+2 bonus on Fortitude saves
5 Adroit avoidance	+2 bonus on Reflex saves
6 Tactical offense	+1 bonus on attack rolls
7 Tactical defense	+1 dodge bonus to AC
8 Expanded knowledge	Gain a bonus feat (must meet prerequisites)
9 Flash of insight	+2 bonus to any mental ability score ²
10 Secret of youth	Reduce the scientist's physical age by one-half the "middle-age" value for her race ³

¹ Applies retroactively and continues in effect as the character gains more scientist levels. For example, a scientist who

chooses this discovery at 4th level gains +4 hit points, then gains an additional extra hit point with each new scientist level gained (to a maximum of +10 hit points at 10th level).

² Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma.

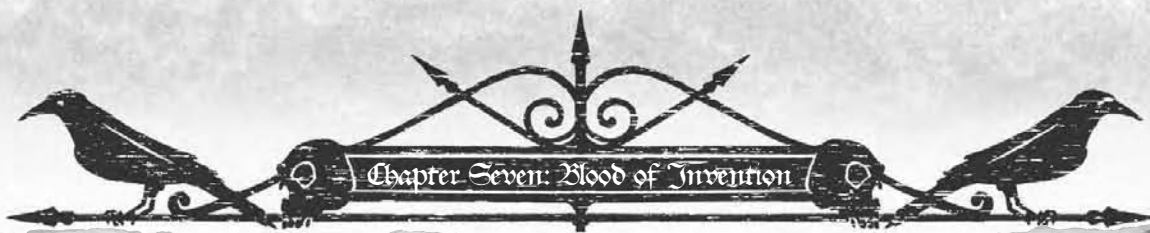
³ For example, a human (middle age 35 years) effectively becomes 17 years younger physically. If this reduction in age reduces the scientist's age category, remove all ability penalties (but not bonuses) that were applied when the scientist reached her current age category. For example, if a venerable scientist regresses to the old age category, she gains +3 to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution.

Metaphysical Resistance (Ex): The scientist's highly trained and disciplined mind shields her from most kinds of magical attacks. This ability works like spell resistance, except that it applies to spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities alike. (However, spells and spell-like abilities with Spell Resistance entries of "No" are still not subject to metaphysical resistance.) The scientist's metaphysical resistance score equals her scientist level + her Intelligence score (not her Int *bonus*). If the attacker's caster level check overcomes the scientist's metaphysical resistance, the scientist still gets a saving throw (if one is allowed), and her bonus for her mind over metaphysics ability applies.

If an attack does not have a caster level, use the attacker's Hit Dice instead. For example, a 6th-level scientist with an Intelligence score of 16 is affected by a medusa's gaze attack. The scientist has a metaphysical resistance score of 6 + 16 = 22, so she ignores that particular use of that gaze attack unless the medusa makes a level check with a DC of 22. Since the gaze attack has no caster level, the medusa uses its Hit Dice for the check, giving it a +6 bonus.

Extended Resistance (Ex): This ability works just like the metaphysical resistance ability, except the effect covers a 10-foot radius centered on the scientist, and the extended resistance score equals one-half the scientist's metaphysical resistance score. Each day, the scientist can use this ability for a maximum of 10 rounds + her Intelligence modifier. The scientist can activate this ability as a free action on her turn, and it need not be used during consecutive rounds.

For example, a 10th-level scientist with an Intelligence score of 18 has a metaphysical resistance score of 28 and an extended resistance score of 14. She can use her metaphysical refusal ability for a maximum of 14 rounds each day (which need not be consecutive).



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Table 7-2: The Scientist

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Science, scientific knowledge
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mind over metaphysics
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Applied science 1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Discovery
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Applied science 2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Metaphysical resistance
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Applied science 3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Discovery
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Applied science 4
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Extended resistance

Every ally of the scientist who is within the radius gains the benefit of the extended resistance power. The extended resistance radius does not block any effect's area or line of effect, but simply makes allies within the radius resistant.

If an attack can affect multiple subjects within the radius, the attacker makes a separate caster level check for each subject. For example, if a *fireball* is aimed so that it affects four characters, all of whom are within the extended resistance radius of the scientist in the previous example, the *fireball* caster must make a DC 14 caster level check against each subject to determine whether the *fireball* affects that individual. Thus, it's possible for some subjects to be affected and others not.

This ability does not stack with the scientist's own metaphysical resistance ability or with any creature's spell resistance — use only the highest resistance score that might apply to a given attack.

Family "Magic"



he Mordenheims depend more on technology and science than magic, and they tend to create their items as technological devices using the Create Device* feat rather than as magic items.

As technological items, they produce no magical auras.

Aerosol Bomb: This device looks like a metal potion bottle fitted with a ceramic stud instead of a stopper. It contains a liquid under pressure, and can be used as either a hand device or a splash weapon. When using it as a hand device, the wielder can aim the bomb at any target within

reach and empty its contents onto that target with a successful melee touch attack. As a splash weapon, the bomb douses its target with its contents and also splashes the material on everything within 5 feet of the target, just as any other splash weapon.

The bomb's effects depend on its contents, as detailed below. Because the contents are under pressure, any material projected from the bomb is slightly more potent than usual. An *aerosol bomb* holds one vial of liquid. Once the bomb has been filled, its contents can't be changed.

Acid: An acid spray deals 2d6 points of acid damage. As a splash weapon, the bomb deals 2d6 points of acid damage with a direct hit and 1d4 points with a splash.

Alchemist's Fire: An alchemist's fire spray deals 2d6 points of fire damage, and the target takes an extra 1d6 points of fire damage on the following round unless it put out the flames, as noted in the alchemist's fire description in the *Player's Handbook*. A direct hit from a thrown alchemist's fire bomb has the same effect as the spray, and a splash deals 1d3 points of fire damage.

Holy Water: A holy water *aerosol bomb* harms undead and evil outsiders in the same way an acid bomb harms normal creatures. Normally, holy water does not affect incorporeal creatures unless the attacker is adjacent to the target (see the holy water description in the *Player's Handbook*); however, the bomb is effective even as a thrown weapon, although the attack still has a 50% miss chance for the target's incorporeality.

Oil of Agony: (This substance in its typical form is described later in this section.) When used





as a spray, *oil of agony* forces any living creature it contacts to make a DC 16 Fortitude save. On a failed save, a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice is blinded and nauseated for 1d6 rounds, and a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice is merely blinded for 1d6 rounds. A direct hit from an *oil of agony* bomb has the same effect as the spray. A splash blinds a living creature that failed its save for 1d3 rounds, regardless of Hit Dice.

CL 3rd; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (metalworking) 6 ranks or scientific knowledge +6 or higher; Price 150 gp + the price of the contents; Weight 1/10 lb.

Ectoplasmic Netcaster: This device looks like a bullseye lantern, except that it has a cluster of electrodes where the lens should be. Once every 1d4+1 rounds, a character wielding the lantern can cause it to generate a ray of ectoplasmic force (treat as a force effect) that can have dramatic effects on anything it strikes. The user must make a ranged touch attack to hit a target. The effect depends on the target struck, as follows.

Living Creature: The creature takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage and must make a DC 16 Will save. If it fails its save, motes of energy flash around it for 2d4 rounds, creating a *faerie fire* effect. If the creature has a Strength score of 16 or less, it also is slowed, as the *slow* spell, while the effect lasts. If the creature has a 17 Strength or higher, it merely takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, AC and Reflex saves while the effect lasts.

Object, Corporeal Undead Creature, or Construct: The target takes 2d6 points of damage, and the attack ignores the target's hardness or damage reduction (if any). This attack affects even golems.

Incorporeal Undead Creature: The creature takes 2d6 points of damage and must make a DC 16 Will save. If the a creature fails its save, motes of energy flash around it for 2d4 rounds, creating a *faerie fire* effect and entangling the creature in a net of ectoplasmic force that affects it as a *web* spell.

The lantern functions safely up to 3 times per day. If it is used more often, the wielder must make a Wisdom check (DC 15 + the number of previous checks in the last 24 hours). A scientist or learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check in place of the Wisdom check. If the check fails by 4 or less, the device shorts out and does not function for the rest of the day, but is otherwise unharmed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the device explodes, dealing 5d6 points of damage (as

a force effect) to everything within a 30-foot radius (no saving throw).

CL 9th; Create Device (Rod), Craft (gemcutting) 12 ranks or scientific knowledge +12 or higher; Price 30,000 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Hand Stunner: This device resembles a dagger with two thin blades. It has the same statistics as a dagger, except as follows. As a standard action, the user can make a normal melee attack with the stunner. If the attack hits a living creature that is susceptible to critical hits, the target takes a number of points of nonlethal damage equal to 1d2 + the wielder's Dexterity modifier. In addition, the target must make a DC 14 Will save. On a failed save, a creature is stunned for 1d2 rounds if it has 4 or fewer Hit Dice or dazed for 1d2 rounds if it has 5 or more Hit Dice.

CL 8th; Create Device (Magic Arms and Armor), Craft (weaponsmithing) 11 ranks or scientific knowledge +11 or higher; Price 7,200 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Lantern of Fascination: This bullseye lantern operates as a normal lantern of its type. The front of the lantern, however, has a series of lenses that create kaleidoscopic effects when they are powered and set in motion. The user can manipulate the lenses so they cast a cone of sparkling light or a ray of scintillating light.

Cone: Any creature in this 30-foot cone must make a DC 16 Will save or become fascinated. The user must take a move action each round to maintain the effect. This is a mind-affecting compulsion.

Ray: The user must make a successful ranged touch attack to strike any target within 60 feet. Any creature so struck becomes fascinated if it fails a DC 16 Will save. The subject remains fascinated as long as the user keeps the beam trained on it by using a move action each round. This is a mind-affecting compulsion. After at least 1 round of fascination from the lantern's ray function, however, the user can attempt a *suggestion* on the fascinated creature (Will DC 16 negates). If successful, the suggestion remains in effect for 5 hours or until the suggested action is completed, whether or not the subject remains in the beam. This is a language-dependent, mind-affecting compulsion.

A *lantern of fascination* can produce its fascinate and *suggestion* effects for a maximum of 10 rounds each day, after which it cannot be used again for 8 hours.



Chapter Seven: Blood of Invention

CL 5th; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (glassblowing) 8 ranks or scientific knowledge +8 or higher; Price 27,000 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Oil of Agony: This caustic substance comes in vials that can be thrown as splash weapons. A direct hit forces any living creature struck to make a DC 14 Fortitude save. On a failed save, a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice is blinded and nauseated for 1d4 rounds, and a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice is merely blinded for 1d4 rounds. A splash blinds a creature that failed its save for 1 round, regardless of Hit Dice.

CL 3rd; Superior Alchemy*; Price 675 gp; Weight 1/10 lb.

Oil of Animation: This greasy fluid imbues an inanimate object with motive power for 12 rounds. At the user's option, this period of animation can be delayed for up to a month. A delayed animation can take place at a time the user designates, or in response to some trigger condition the user determines when first using the oil. If the object becomes animate when the user is not present to control it, it follows whatever simple instructions the user specified at the time the oil was applied.

Trigger conditions can be as general or as detailed as desired, although only visual and audible triggers (or actions that are visible or audible) can be used. Audible triggers can be keyed to general types of noises or to a specific noise or spoken word. Visible triggers activate in response to the situation as it appears; thus, disguises and illusions can fool them. Normal darkness does not defeat a visual trigger, but magical *darkness* or *invisibility* does. Silent movement or magical *silence* defeats audible triggers. The animated object cannot distinguish alignment, level, Hit Dice, or class except by external garb.

The range limit of a trigger is 180 feet. Regardless of range, the object can respond only to visible or audible triggers and actions within line of sight or hearing distance. Instructions given to the object must be simple, such as, "attack all creatures entering an area"; "attack only certain creatures"; "sound an alarm gong"; or the like.

A single vial covers one Small or Medium object, two Tiny objects, four Diminutive, or eight Fine. Larger objects require more vials — two vials for a Large object, four for a Huge one, eight for





Gargantuan and at least sixteen for a Colossal object. The object must be completely covered to get any benefit.

A dead body treated with the oil becomes an appropriately sized zombie under the control of the character who applied it. Other objects become animated as though affected by an *animate objects* spell. A single creature can control one zombie or object animated by means of the oil per point of Charisma it possesses. If this limit is exceeded, the oil does not affect new corpses and objects.

Using this substance to animate dead bodies requires a powers check (2%).

CL 5th; Superior Alchemy*; Price 4,800 gp; Weight 1/10 lb.

Oil of Preservation: When rubbed into dead organic matter, this viscous fluid preserves it against rot and decay. The oil stains the dead flesh a repulsive greenish-purple color, making it look as though it were covered with graveyard mold, but the item remains sound and intact underneath as long as the coating lasts. Food treated with the oil becomes foul-tasting but retains its nutritive value. An object treated with the oil is preserved from natural decay for 100 years, provided it's otherwise left undisturbed. If it is carried around or used after treatment, the oil's effects wear off in a week.

A single vial covers one Small or Medium creature or object, or else two Tiny, four Diminutive, or eight Fine. Larger subjects require more vials — two for Large, four for Huge, eight for Gargantuan and at least sixteen for Colossal. The creature or object must be completely covered to get any benefit.

If subjected to a magical attack, an object treated with the oil gains a +3 resistance bonus on any saving throw it makes as an object. An unattended nonmagical object is not normally entitled to saving throws, but it gets one (with no bonus) if treated with the oil. A creature wearing an object treated with the oil gains no benefits.

An unliving creature, such as a golem or corporeal undead creature, gains +3 hit points and a +3 resistance bonus on Fortitude and Reflex saves if treated with the oil. The oil lasts a maximum of 1 day when applied to a creature.

CL 1st; Superior Alchemy*; Price 225 gp; Weight 1/10 lb.

Power Source: These items can provide power to items produced with the Create Device* feat, or power for the use of the scientist's various tricks. A

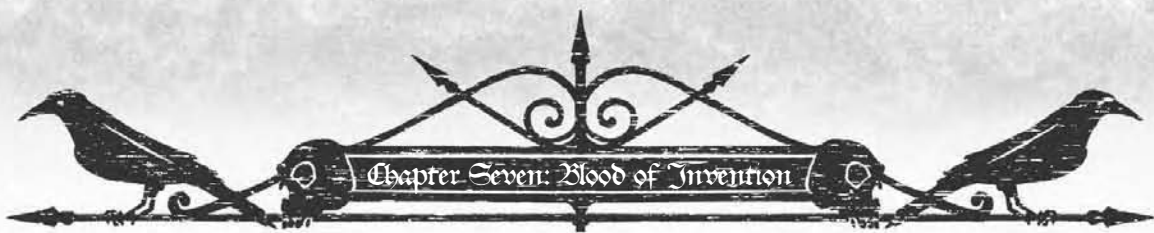
power source usually resembles some kind of leather or metal container with any manner of studs, wires, tubes and electrodes sticking out of it, plus several mysterious openings or slots. It may hum quietly, give off a whiff of ozone, leak strange fluids, or any combination of these effects.

To power a device, the *power source* must first be connected to the device. Doing so requires a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15 + the device's caster level). A scientist or learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check instead; a scientist gets a +2 bonus on the check if the *power source* is associated with her chosen science (see the individual *power source* descriptions below). Once attached, a *power source* supplies power to the device until detached again (a standard action, no check required) or until it runs out of charges, at which point it must be detached so that a new one can be connected.

Connecting a *power source* requires 1 minute per point of the required check DC. If the check result exceeds the DC by 5 points or more, the effort takes only half that time. If the check fails by 4 or less, the character tinkers with the device for the allotted time and achieves nothing, but can try again. If the check fails by 5 or more, the *power source* overloads and explodes, dealing 1d6 points of damage to everything within a 15-foot radius. The type of damage depends on the *power source*, as shown below. A Reflex save (DC 13, +1 per charge) halves the damage. Thus, a *power source* holding 4 charges deals 1d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 17 half).

No matter how many *power sources* are available, a charged device burns out after it has been used a number of times equal to the number of charges a similar magic item would have held. For example, a *wand of fireballs* made with the Create Device (Wands)* feat functions only 50 times before burning out, no matter how many batteries are available.

A scientist can also attempt to tap a *power source* to use one of her tricks or advanced tricks. Doing so is part of the standard action required to perform the trick, and requires a successful scientific knowledge check (DC 10 + the effective spell level of the trick). For example, a psychologist's *daze monster* ability requires a DC 12 check to function. If the check fails by 4 or less, the character tinkers with *power source* for a standard action but achieves nothing. If the check fails by 5 or



more, the *power source* overloads and explodes, as noted above.

Unless noted otherwise, a *power source* cannot be recharged once it has been drained.

Battery (Chemistry): This type of *power source* usually resembles a bundle of 8 to 12 leather-covered glass cylinders, each about 18 inches long and as wide as two human fingers. The cylinders sit upright on a leather base, and leather straps keep the bundle together. A leather or wooden handle allows a character to carry the assembly like a bucket. The cylinders have glass and copper tops connected by electrodes and wires, and a central electrode rises from the heart of the bundle.

A battery usually contains 10 charges upon creation, but 1d4 additional charges may be coaxed from it by spending 1 minute and making a successful DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check. A scientist or learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check instead. The DM should roll the number of extra charges in secret. Once those run out, the character can once again attempt to coax 1d4 charges, but the DC for each subsequent attempt to coax out charges increases by 5. If such a check fails by 4 or less, the character tinkers with battery for 1 minute without result but can try again starting 1d4 rounds later. If a check fails by 5 or more, the battery overloads and explodes.

Damage from an exploding battery is acid and slashing.

CL 4th; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (alchemy) 7 ranks or scientific knowledge +7 or higher; Price 3,000 gp; Weight 8 lb.

Static Collector (Physics): A static collector usually resembles a metal sphere about the size of a grapefruit, with dozens of short electrodes sticking out of its surface and several long copper chains dangling from it. It also has two short loops for attaching it to a belt or fitting it with a shoulder strap.

A static collector holds 1 charge. However, once discharged, it recharges itself in 1d4 rounds, provided that the user moves around or places it somewhere that's charged with static, such as a room with dry air, or just about anywhere during a thunderstorm. A static collector cannot recharge itself underwater or in a still, clammy area, such as a fog bank.

Damage from an exploding static collector is electricity and piercing.

CL 5th; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (metalworking) 8 ranks or scientific knowledge +8 or higher; Price 6,500 gp; Weight 3 lb.

Hand Generator (Physics): A hand generator is similar to a static collector, except that the user supplies the energy himself by turning a crank. A hand generator usually resembles a metal baton about 1 foot long and 2 inches thick. It has a metal crank with a wooden handle on one end and a crystal dome surrounded by electrodes at the other. Like a static collector, it can be hooked on a belt or slung from a strap.

When cranked for 1 full round, the device produces 1 charge per round for the next 2d4 rounds (rolled secretly by the DM), storing any unused charges for up to 1 full minute. Any charges remaining unused at the end of that time are lost. The dome glows and gives a general clue as to how much power is left in the device; when the duration expires, the light winks out. When lit, the dome sheds as much light as a candle, though the user can easily cover it and block the light.

It is possible to over-crank the device so that it produces 2 charges per round for 2d4 rounds. Cranking in this way requires 2 full rounds, and the charges are stored for 2 minutes before dissipating. The user must also make a Wisdom check (DC 15 + the total charges produced by this instance of over-cranking). A scientist or learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check instead of a Wisdom check. If the check fails by 4 or less, the character cranks for 2 rounds and the device shorts out, producing no power, but is otherwise unharmed. If the check fails by 5 or more, the device explodes.

An exploding hand generator deals electricity, slashing and sonic damage.

CL 8th; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (metalworking) 11 ranks or scientific knowledge +11 or higher; Price 10,000 gp; Weight 5 lb.

Biocharger (Biology): This device taps into biological and physiological energy. It consists of a collar or skullcap studded with electrodes and sprouting wires, like some bizarre wig or stole. When worn by a living creature with Intelligence and Charisma scores of at least 10 each, the device produces 1 charge every 1d4 rounds. The wearer can feel the device humming with energy when it holds a charge. Once charged, the device stays charged indefinitely until the charge is expended or the device is removed.



A wearer can also attempt a Charisma check as a full-round action to forcibly charge the device. The DC for doing so is 15 + the number of attempts the wearer has made to recharge the device in the past hour. A scientist or learned physician can make a scientific knowledge check instead of a Charisma check. If the check fails by 4 or less, the character uses a full-round action and provides no power to the device, but takes 1 point of Charisma damage and 1 point of Constitution damage. If the check fails by 5 or more, the device explodes, dealing 1d4 points of both Charisma and Constitution damage to the wearer, in addition to the 1d6 points of damage normally dealt by any exploding *power source*.

An exploding biocharger deals electricity and slashing damage. The wearer receives no saving throw against this damage.

CL 10th; Create Device (Wondrous Item), Craft (metalworking) 12 ranks or scientific knowledge +12 or higher; Price 10,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

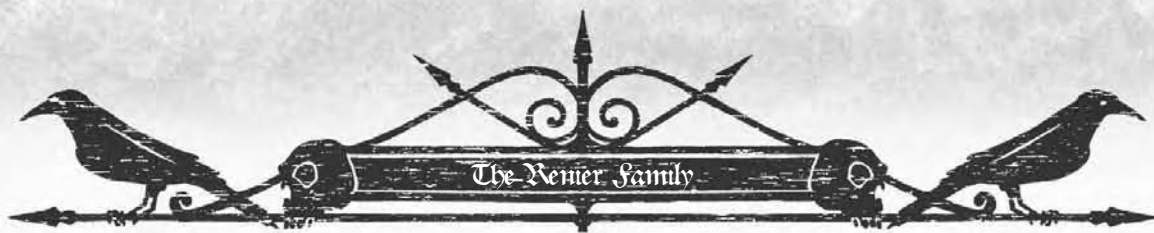
Story Hook

A most wondrous machine has been discovered in a secret laboratory long hidden beneath the nearby mountains. Its function seems to involve the creation of golems, but none of the scientists who discovered it have yet managed to make it work. Some notebooks found within indicate that it is operated by means of biomechanical energy. No *power source* sufficient to operate such a machine was found, though, and its operation remains a mystery — but the notebooks are all signed “Mordenheim.”



Chapter Eight:
Blood of the Rat

The Kenier
Family



Dearest Mary,

I cannot stress enough how important it is that you and the children remain in Darkon until I send for you. Olaf and his men will keep you safe there. I am becoming increasingly concerned that they will not be able to protect you from enemies we may have here. I'm not sure anyone would be able to.

I have learned that the loving relationship we first believed to exist between Lady Jacqueline and her sister Louise is but a sham. The two hate each other deeply, and I am growing increasingly certain that Louise's offer to establish me as a premiere recruiter and supplier of men-at-arms to the nobles of Richemulot is part of one of many plots she seems to be engaged in against Lady Jacqueline.

To make matters worse, the cousins we met at the Lady Jacqueline's ball are madmen. They approached me with a bizarre tale that Lady Jacqueline and her sister are some sort of monsters. What kind I cannot say, for I ejected them from the house forthwith. However, my research has indicated that they too are involved not only with some obscure plot against Lady Jacqueline, but also appear to be engaged with a strange cult that holds rituals within the confines of the ancestral crypts in Ste. Ronges.

In most circumstances, I would believe that someone who has earned so much hatred from family members as Lady Jacqueline appears to have done must be a black-hearted fiend. I have not found any evidence of this, however. If anything, all signs point to the contrary; she is an intelligent and generous woman surrounded by ungrateful and evil relatives. I would inform her of the plots against her, but I have come to realize that I am being watched — and this is why you must stay in Darkon.

Darling, it seems like madness, I know, but— everywhere I go, there are rats in the shadows, staring intently at me. Some manner of sorcery is being used to watch me, and it hails from Louise or else the detestable brothers, or perhaps some unseen ally they possess. I do not know what enchantments are in use, but it is the only explanation I can imagine for the rodents' behavior. I likewise do not know what actions might be taken against me if any of them witness me revealing what I have learned to Lady Jacqueline. I know that I must do so eventually — for she is in desperate need of someone to lend her support — but I need to find a way to do it so no harm will come to me, you, or our children.

Do not be concerned for me. I have dealt successfully with the "noble" families of Nova Vaasa. I can straighten out the difficulties here as well. Please follow all Olaf's instructions until I send for you.

Thinking of you always,

Javier Renier





The Reniers

In days long forgotten by all who currently live within the Domains of Dread, and only dimly hinted at in the oldest of diaries maintained by Claude Renier, there were two branches of the Renier family who had already been at each other's throats — both literally and figuratively — for centuries.

Many years ago, the Reniers were widely honored as heroes throughout the realms they originally hailed from. One of their most fabled members, Jacques Renier, was one of the original settlers in the land that eventually became Mordent, and it was he who built the original House on Gryphon Hill as well as the current seat of the Weathermay family, Heather House.

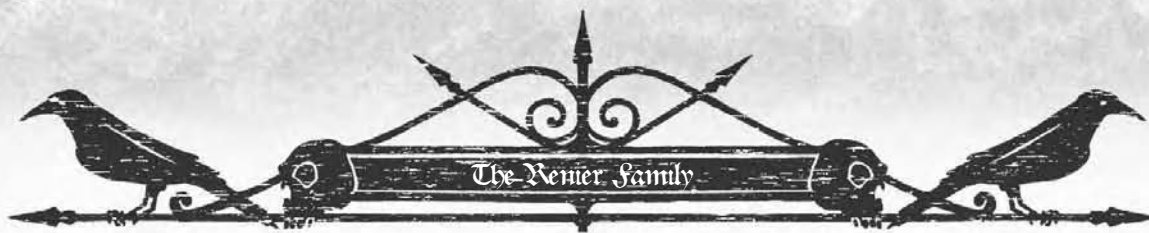
No one knows what caused it, but a few years after the Reniers settled in Mordent, a dark heritage that had been deeply hidden within the family blood emerged. Whether Jacques Renier's children had been cursed by the dark spirit that even then was said to dwell within the House on Gryphon Hill, or whether the foulness had simply somehow been held in check is a complete mystery, but five of his six children proved to be natural wererats. The Reniers departed from Mordent, and those of

them who were wererats turned their backs on their family's noble heritage. This was the dawn of a feud that lasted until Claude Renier led his family through a magical portal to the lands of Mist. At that time, the non-wererat Reniers on their original home world could claim ultimate victory, because one of their number had been in the hunting party from which Claude and his family had been running.

For Claude, however, the feud was not over. In a curious development that could only have occurred in a patchwork-continent like the Core, the non-wererat branch of the family had entered mist-shrouded lands of Ravenloft many decades earlier. A handful of Reniers had been visiting Mordent — returning briefly to visit the manor house their ancestors had once called home — when it was claimed by the Mists.

Ever the adventurous sort, these unafflicted Reniers were among the first people from the newly formed domain of Mordent to travel to Barovia, where they attempted to free the population there from their vampire overlord. They all died, however, leaving behind small children who had but the slimmest knowledge of their family history. When grown, most of these children eventually immigrated to Darkon in search of more opportu-





nities than the tiny land of Mordent could offer. Here, the family has spawned many popular local heroes — whose bravery as militia-men or officers in Azalin’s army brings honor to their family name — but any trace of their outlander roots have been completely forgotten.

Shortly after Claude Renier emerged as the ruler of Richemulot, the Darkon Reniers contacted him, curious to know if he was aware of any relationship between his family and theirs. Claude’s response was a furious rejection of the possibility, and a covert dispatching of assassins in hopes of ending the other branch of the Renier family. Jacqueline went on one of these missions, but, as the first stirrings of resentment toward her grandfather were already starting, she instead saw to it that the mission failed. Although Claude saw the Darkon Reniers as a threat, Jacqueline saw them as potential allies.

Over the years that followed, Jacqueline kept quiet contact with them — and covertly held a hidden hand over them, shielding them from her grandfather until the day she’d finally had enough and killed him. When Darkon started to descend into chaos and the Darkon Reniers came under attack from would-be despots who didn’t want to have to deal with a pack of reputed “heroes,” she extended an invitation for her cousins to join the growing nation of Richemulot.

The beleaguered Darkon Reniers accepted her seemingly kind offer, little knowing that the invitation was extended only so Jacqueline could keep a closer eye on them — and perhaps because she considered them a potential source of new wererat allies and breeding stock. She had been hearing rumors that her own first-born son might be eyeing her seat of power covetously, so allies were a sorely needed commodity. The Reniers formerly of Darkon now dwell in a series of large buildings near the center of Mortigny. Small elements of the family remain in Darkon and Mordent as well.

As for the extended family of Richemulot Reniers, Jacqueline’s older sister Antoinette and younger brother Raul each have one child, and Antoinette has recently become a grandmother; of the elder generation, only Jacqueline’s twin Louise has yet to have a child. Jacqueline herself has borne four sons, with her eldest being the father of twin boys. So far, all children born to Jacqueline and her siblings are wererats, and all of the darklord’s nieces and nephews are receiving the best education money can buy in Richemulot while also being

groomed to assist their aunt in ruling her domain. Jacqueline is known to dote on her grandchildren, though the stirring ambitions of Jacques may soon end the lives of his entire family.

Fitting In

While there are two distinct branches of the Renier family, they have more shared traits than differences. The differences are easily summed up as follows: One branch produces natural lycanthropes and the other does not. Clearly, if a character is from the lycanthropic branch, he should be a natural wererat; if he’s from the branch that *doesn’t* produce wererats, he should be human (or perhaps half-elf or the like).

However, that said, there are some Reniers from the wererat branch who are *not* lycanthropes; roughly one in six children born to Renier women is not a natural lycanthrope. Such a child has the all the other qualities listed under “Renier Family Traits,” however, and he or she may well become an afflicted wererat soon enough. These non-wererat children are viewed as embarrassments by the wererat Reniers, and are usually barely tolerated. Interestingly, the biggest threat to the wererat Reniers does not come from the descendants of the Reniers that entered Ravenloft through Mordent, but rather these discarded family members; some are in the advanced stages of a plot to gain control of the domain, a venture for which they may carefully attempt to recruit family members who relocate to the domain. (More information on this plot can be found in **Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol. III.**)

The other branch of the family is comprised of pureblooded humans. Although the occasional Renier has dallied with an elf, no recognized member of the family has ever been the product of such a mixed union. Any such family members may have contact with their mothers or fathers, but they have not relocated to Richemulot with their relatives, or if they have, they live apart from other family members and are generally assumed to be close friends rather than actual children.

Regardless of the branch from which a Renier springs, they are almost without fail charming individuals. All seem possessed of a certain poise and a mastery of the social graces. Some are truly as noble as they seem on the surface, but the majority of the family — particularly those on the wererat side of the family warren — would frame their own mother for murder if it were to their benefit.



Player character Reniers are most likely to be from the Darkon branch of the family. If particularly creative DMs and players are interested in having PC wererats in a campaign, then the three children of Antoinette and Raul would be ideal; in the period from 750 to 755 BC, they are all of starting player character ages.

The children of Jacqueline might also make interesting PCs, even if their ages are a bit beyond the typical starting PC, as they range from the mid-

twenties to early thirties. With the exception of Jacques, Jacqueline Renier's children have all left Richemulot for other parts of the Core; unlike their elder brother, they had the distinct feeling their mother did not like to have so many potential claimants to her power within close proximity. Since the whereabouts of these children are unknown, the DM and players have free reign; perhaps Jacqueline has even lied about all of her children being wererats. Maybe one of them is a pureblooded human.

The DuBoises of Richemulot

The DuBoises have been masters of a sprawling estate west of Pont-a-Museau in the borderlands with Dementlieu for as long as anyone can recall. The now-extinct Tinctnoire line are the only nobles of Richemulot who can actually lay ancestral claim to the DuBois home and the lands upon which it stands. Claude Renier tolerated the DuBoises because they are a family of simple landed gentry whose primary concern was making sure their peasantry was hale and hearty so that the rich vineyards and cherry orchards could be properly tended. When Jacqueline assumed leadership of the domain, she not only tolerated the DuBoises, but found their ancestral ties to certain merchant houses of Dementlieu to be exceeding useful when it came to pursuing her vision of Richemulot's bright economic and political future.

As the years went by, however, and Henri, the youngest son of House DuBois, grew into manhood, Jacqueline grew even more interested in this family of noble farmers. She admired Henri for his good looks, sharp mind, light sense of humor and straightforward honesty. The admiration eventually deepened to love. Jacqueline knew she had to take action or she would lose him when she lost control of her shapeshifting ability, as she always did when in the company of someone she truly loves. She tried to infect him with lycanthropy so that he might come to understand her better.

Yet she failed because, unknown to her or any other Renier, a strong resistance to lycanthropy runs within the bloodline of the DuBois.

While Henri DuBois' older brother was always too nervous to make any serious inquiries into his brother's fate, perhaps one or more of his children might be brave enough. Armed with courage, determination and the family gift, maybe a DuBois PC might be able to unlock the decades-old secret of his or her uncle's disappearance.

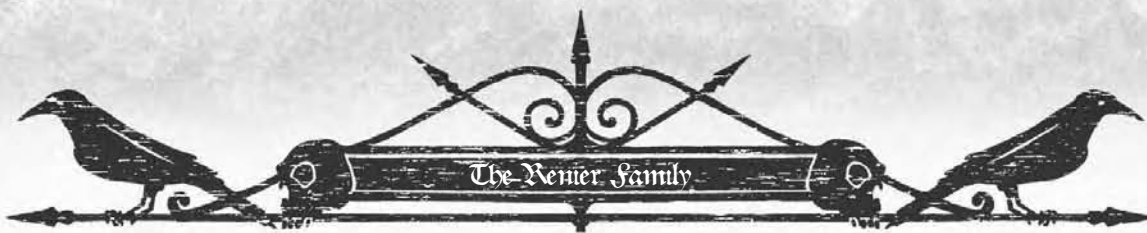
DuBois family Traits

The DuBois are a relatively handsome folk who have inherited the best physical features from the people of Dementlieu and those native to Richemulot. It is the hidden ability that even the family remains unaware of that is the most important sign of a true DuBois, though, a miraculous resistance to infection by the dread disease of lycanthropy.

- A DuBois suffers a -1 penalty on all Charisma-based checks made with respect to natural lycanthropes.

- **Lycanthropy Resistance:** All DuBoises receive a +5 racial bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist any lycanthrope's curse of lycanthropy. Further, if a DuBois should be unfortunate enough to contract the disease, she suffers only one uncontrolled transformation; afterwards, she automatically gains complete control over her transformations as if she were a natural lycanthrope. Of course, this benefit is also a curse in disguise, for once an infected DuBois realizes that she can control her transformation, she is not likely to want to be cured of the affliction.





Claiming Membership

Domains that value stoutness in women and strong builds in men will find little in the Renier physique to admire, but nearly everyone willing to express an opinion on the matter will say that the eyes of a Renier are most fascinating to behold. Those eyes are invariably set within a narrow face with pale skin and gently angular, exotic features, framed by dark hair. The eyes in particular are what set the Reniers apart — they are usually brilliantly blue or green, with apparent flecks of gold, sparkling when the light hits them just right.

Renier family Traits

- **-2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma:** Reniers from either branch of the family are known to be among the most handsome people in the domain; however, they are not always the wisest or most sensitive.
- **Natural Wererats (lycanthrope branch only):** Five out of six Reniers born to the lycanthrope branch of the family are natural wererats.
- **Curse of the Rat (pure humans only):** Most human Reniers are but a bite away from becoming afflicted lycanthropes. Those who are not natural lycanthropes are particularly susceptible to infection by the strain of lycanthropy that is spread by

wererats. Reniers suffer a -8 penalty on all Fortitude saves made to resist any wererat's curse of lycanthropy.

- **Rodent-Friend:** Both branches of the Renier family have a strange affinity for rodents of all types, gaining a +2 competence bonus on Handle Animal checks when dealing with such creatures. Further, they gain a +2 bonus on all Bluff and Diplomacy checks made in dealings with wererats or other rodent-like monsters. This ability has a slight downside for Reniers who are sorcerers and wizards; they must take some type of rodent if they summon a familiar.

- **Allergen:** All Reniers, wererat or no, suffer severe allergies to a particular substance. (For the Renier wererats, the chemical bane quality is subsumed by this family trait; assume that these traits are interchangeable and identical.) Curiously, the allergen varies from family member to family member, with no apparent pattern. The allergy can be to a particular mineral or animal, a type of food or plant. More often than not, it is to some utterly obscure substance, so many family members go their entire lives without discovering what it is they are allergic to. (These Reniers often think they are free from this peculiar family trait, but they are wrong.)





Chapter Eight: Blood of the Rat

This family drawback can make life difficult for a Renier who happens to be allergic to a common substance. For instance, one allergic to chicken must check every inn where he eats to make sure they aren't using chicken broth in their gravy, while someone allergic to gold, silver, or copper must do business transactions involving coins of that substance either very quickly or while wearing gloves.

The origins of this strange affliction are unknown, but it is unquestionably linked to Renier blood. Perhaps it arose at the same time the taint of lycanthropy entered into the once-honored lineage, or maybe it is the result of some other curse. To date, no Renier has consulted outside arcane specialists or mystics for fear that the knowledge of this family weakness could somehow be turned against them, nor have any been able to learn the origin of the affliction through their own magical or mundane practices.

The DM should secretly decide the substance to which a Renier player character or NPC is allergic. She can make this choice on her own, or she can choose or randomly determine one of the substances from the following list:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Beef | 11. Jade |
| 2. Belladonna | 12. Lye |
| 3. Chicken | 13. Pears |
| 4. Camphor | 14. Platinum |
| 5. Copper | 15. Pork |
| 6. Dandelions | 16. Pussy willow |
| 7. Fermented grapes | 18. Rye |
| 8. Gold | 18. Silver |
| 9. Grapes | 19. Sugar |
| 10. Iron | 20. Wolfsbane |

If the Renier is in contact with the allergen for more than a few seconds, he starts to break out in a rash the following round. Depending on the area affected, the painful itching, burning sensation imposes anywhere from a -2 to a -8 penalty to all skill rolls, attack rolls and saving throws for one hour after a thorough washing. For example, if Antoinette Renier is allergic to fermented grapes and gets splashed with a goblet of wine, she suffers an allergic reaction the following round. If the wine splashed on her face and blouse, she might suffer a -4 penalty to her rolls until she can get out of the tainted clothes and clean herself carefully.

If the Renier ever finds the toxic substance within his or her body (whether through ingestion,

injury, or some other means), the allergen behaves like an ingested poison with a Fortitude save of DC 20. The initial effect is 1d6 points of Constitution damage, while the secondary effect is 2d6 points of Constitution damage.

While the DM should occasionally expose the character to his or her allergen (and even at the worst possible moments and in the worst possible ways), it should not be something that makes the character unplayable. As long as the character behaves in an appropriately cautious fashion once the character's allergen has come to light, it should not necessarily be his or her downfall. Of course, there's nothing that says that a cunning enemy might not discover that a Renier always avoids eating beef, and then try to poison him with something as harmless as a stew.

On the other hand, players should realize that there *will* be times when a Renier character falls victim to his allergies in some fashion.

Family Feats



When creating a member of this family, whether a wererat or a normal human, at least one of the feats gained during character creation must be chosen from the following list (or the Sharp Ears feat, printed below): Agile, Alertness, Back to the Wall^R, Bestial Conscience^H, Dabbler^H, Dodge, Feral Rearing^C, Improved Initiative, Investigator, Knowledgeable^H, Literacy^H, Lunatic^R, Persuasive, Piercing Gaze^C, Sharp Eyes*, Sharp Wit*, University Education^H, or Wealth^H.

New feat

While particularly suited to Renier characters, the following feat may be taken by anyone.

Sharp Ears [General]

You are adept at picking up snippets of conversation and sounds that just happen to drift your way.

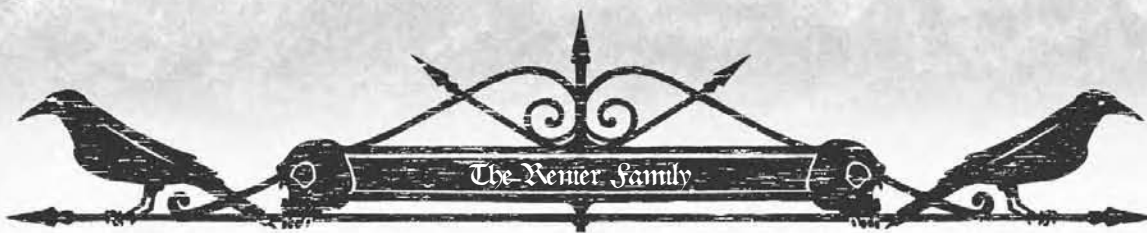
Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Gather Information checks and Listen checks.

Family Classes



Most Reniers from both branches are either aristocrats or rogues. Exceptional members of the family multiclass into a range of adventuring classes, with fighters perhaps the next most common class; the





best among them sometimes adopt prestige classes, most often black powder avenger^H, court poisoner^{G4}, dilettante^H, duelist, grimetrekker^{G3}, moon bane^C, moon child^{G4}, pistoleer^V, or propagandist^C, or else one of the two new prestige classes described below: the recruiter and the rumormonger.

Recruiter

The recruiter is particularly adept at rallying others to his banner, either through payments, promises or threats, and he has turned this ability into a profession. Where there is a need for labor, soldiers, or lynch-mobs, the recruiter can be trusted to help organizers to find the best talent for the job. He is very adept at discerning an individual's talents and potential, at reading their wants and desires, and in saying the right things to attract their interests. Further, members of this trade eventually develop minor magics to aid them in their efforts.

A recruiter who can *keep* the loyalty of those he draws to a cause is a highly sought after vassal indeed. Unfortunately, more often than not, recruiters rely on overly positive presentations of the tasks for which they are recruiting; they rarely lie outright, for that would surely damage their future efforts, but they rarely discuss the downside of the job.

Any Richemulot noble who wishes to keep his or her status is liable to have at least one member of this class among her advisors. Recruiters have also been fanning out from Richemulot in increasing numbers to spread the word in the realms of the Core about the free housing and bright future that can be had for those willing to work hard and help build a new economic center in Jacqueline Renier's dominion.

Other domains where local recruiters can be encountered include Darkon (where members of the class are busily help-

ing to rebuild Azalin's army and navy), Invidia (where they can be found building and even leading mercenary bands for Malocchio), Nova Vaasa (where they help organize the militias maintained by the five noble families), and on the isolated islands of Rokushima Taiyoo (where both the feuding warlords and the assassin clans rely on recruiters to keep the quality of their ranks high).

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify for the recruiter (Rcr) class, a character must meet the following criteria.

Alignment: Any neutral.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Bluff 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks, Knowledge (local) 5 ranks, Perform (oratory) 8 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

Feats: Negotiator, Persuasive.





Chapter Eight: Blood of the Bat

Class Skills

The recruiter's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class features

The following are class features of the recruiter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The recruiter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. The recruiter is proficient with light and medium armor, as well as bucklers and light shields.

Inspiring Oratory (Ex): At 1st level, the recruiter can inflame a friendly or neutral crowd, spurring them to activity. In most cases, recruiters use this ability to encourage townfolk or idle mercenaries to sign up with the group he is recruiting for, but it is also occasionally used to reinvigorate

troops who are losing their enthusiasm for the cause they were hired to fight for.

When using this ability upon a crowd of potential recruits, the recruiter makes a Perform (oratory) check. The result determines how many recruits step forward from the crowd. The roll is modified by how long the recruiter addresses the crowd and based on the crowd's composition, as shown on Table 8-1.

This skill must be used in a public place. Recruiters can visit as many marketplaces, waterfront gathering places and taverns as are present in a town, and a different check can be made at each location. However, if a recruiter is too successful in his efforts, local authorities may take a dim view of his activities, assuming he isn't working for them already. (No noble wants to see an outsider raising an army in his streets, or otherwise luring away his able-bodied workforce.) Attempts to recruit at any given location can only be made once per week.

If the Diplomacy check fails, the recruiter does not find anyone interested in joining his cause. There are no ill effects from a failed roll — the recruiter is professional enough to not attempt to sway hostile crowds — but he is still limited to one weekly attempt per location.

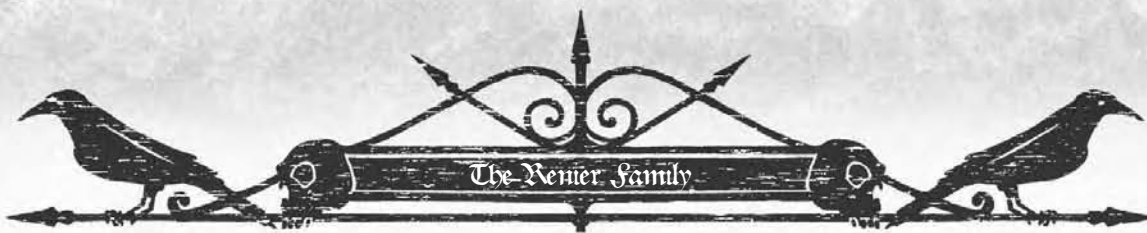
Table 8-1: Inspiring Oratory Variables

Circumstance	Diplomacy Check Modifier
Recruiter is recognized as having worked for crowd's enemies	-4
Many distractions while recruiter speaks	-3
Majority of crowd is of different race/society/culture than recruiter	-2
Majority of crowd is of different than recruiter	-1
Recruiter from society/culture known as ally of crowd	+1
Recruiter addresses crowd for more than 3 minutes	+1
Recruiter has trustworthy reputation to majority of crowd	+2
Recruiter addresses crowd for more than 10 minutes	+4
Recruiter has outcast rating (OR)	-OR

Diplomacy Result	Number of Able Recruits†
10 or less	0
11-15	1d4
16-20	2d4+1
21-25	3d6+2
26-30	4d8+3
31-35	5d10+5
36+	6d12+10

† A recruiter can never recruit more than one half of his current audience, regardless of his Diplomacy check result.

The numbers of recruits assume the recruiter is attempting to locate people to fill the most basic roles in a militia, ship's crew, or construction project (i.e., 0-level NPC classes). If more specialized help is needed (experts in particular types of warfare, crews with experience plying the misty waters of the Nocturnal Sea, and so on — class and level is left to the DM's discretion), then the numbers above should be divided by 5.



Spells per Day: Beginning at 1st level, a recruiter gains the ability to cast a small number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, a recruiter must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so a recruiter with a Charisma of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells. Recruiter bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the recruiter's Cha modifier. A recruiter casts spells just as a sorcerer does.

Upon reaching 4th level, and again at 6th, a recruiter can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least 1 level lower than the highest-level recruiter spell the character can cast. A recruiter may swap only a single spell at any given level, and he must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for that level.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd, 6th and 9th levels, the recruiter receives a bonus feat from the following list: Athletic, Back to the Wall^R, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Courage^R, Diligent, Greater Supernatural Resilience^{G3}, Haunted^R, Iron Will, Jaded^R, Mesmerizing^C, Open Mind^R, Quick Draw, Secret Society^H, Sharp Ears*, Sharp Eyes*, Sharp Wit*, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Supernatural Resilience^{G3}, Voice of Wrath^R, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

The recruiter must meet all the usual prerequisites for these feats.

Leadership: At 4th level, the recruiter has gained a reputation as someone who can be trusted to provide sell-swords and other skilled workers with lucrative opportunities. As such, he develops his own cadre of loyal followers who wish to consistently benefit from the good fortunes he generates. He gains Leadership as a bonus feat.

Inspire Confidence (Ex): Recruiters eventually become adept at not only attracting talented individuals to a cause, but to keep them motivated and inspired. At 5th level, the recruiter can use his oratory to inspire confidence in recruits and other allies. This ability functions as the inspire courage bardic music ability, except that inspire confidence grants all allies a +1 morale bonus on all attack and damage rolls, skill checks and Will saves.

At 10th level, the morale bonus granted to inspired allies increases to +2.

Friends in Strange Places (Ex): At 7th level, the recruiter has dealt with so many different mercenaries, nobles and adventurers that he can find a friendly contact in all but the most alien, hostile, or desolate environments. To locate a contact, the recruiter need merely make a DC 15 Gather Information check. The friendly contact is at the very least willing to impart information commonly known in the area and to warn the recruiter and allies away from dangers they may not have been aware of. In most cases, the contact offers the recruiter a place to rest for the night, if need be. In order to convince the contact to endanger himself or extend costly favors, the recruiter is likely to have to make Diplomacy checks (DC set by DM) and possibly offer bribes.

The character can use this ability a number of times per week equal to his recruiter level.

Judge of Character: At 8th level, the recruiter has developed an ability to ascertain the relative perils or difficulty of any endeavor. He gains Judge Difficulty* as a bonus feat

Recruiter Spell List

Recruiters choose their spells from the following list.

1st Level: *Comprehend languages, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disguise self, epiphany^V, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, read magic, remove fear, Tasha's hideous laughter.*

2nd Level: *Calm emotions, charm person, daze monster, detect thoughts, detect undead, enthrall, locate mark^{G2}, sanctuary, tongues.*

3rd Level: *Awaken guilt^V, charm monster, command undead, good hope, lesser geas, speak with animals, suggestion.*

Table 8-2: Recruiter Spells Known
— Spells Known —

Level	1st	2nd	3rd
1st	—	—	—
2nd	2	—	—
3rd	3	—	—
4th	3	2	—
5th	4	2	—
6th	4	3	1
7th	5	3	2
8th	5	4	2
9th	5	4	3
10th	5	5	4

Table 8-3: The Recruiter

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day		
						1st	2nd	3rd
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Inspiring oratory	—	—	—
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Spellcasting	1	—	—
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Bonus feat	2	—	—
4	+3	+1	+1	+3	Leadership	2	1	—
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Inspire confidence +1	3	1	—
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Bonus feat	3	2	1
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Friends in strange places	4	2	1
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Judge of character	5	2	1
9	+6	+3	+3	+6	Bonus feat	5	3	2
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	Inspire confidence +2	5	4	2

Rumormonger

This character's stock in trade is the dirty little secret that others want to keep hidden. She is adept at ferreting them out and even more talented at spreading them with just the right spin to do the most harm to her target's reputation.

Rumormongers are most common in Richemulot, Dementlieu and the isolated city state of Paridon, where rumor and innuendo are simultaneously coins and weapons. Rumormongers who don't mind living dangerously can also be found whispering at social functions in Borca.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify for the rumormonger (Rmr) class, a character must meet the following criteria.

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Gather Information 6 ranks, Knowledge (local) 5 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 5 ranks, Listen 3 ranks.

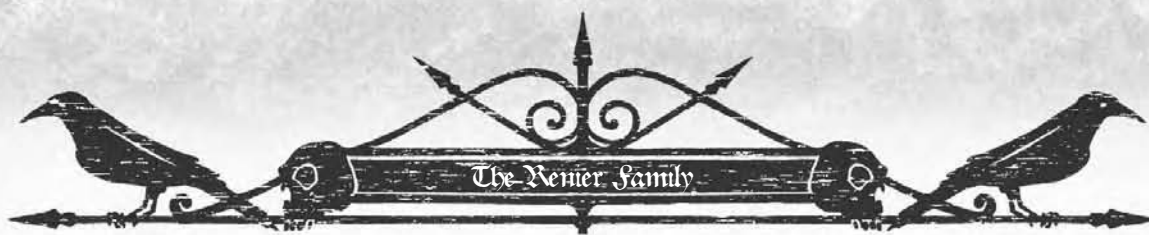
Feats: Sharp Ears*, Skill Focus (Gather Information).

Class Skills

The rumormonger's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.





Class Features

The following are class features of the rumormonger prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The rumormonger gains no additional weapon, armor, or shield proficiencies.

A Friend to All (Ex): The rumormonger is exceptionally adept at getting others to trust her (for good or ill). She gains a competence bonus equal to her rumormonger level on all Gather Information and Sense Motive checks.

It's Not What You Say (Ex): The rumormonger gains a +5 bonus on all Bluff checks made to start gossip (see the "Gossip" sidebar).

It's How You Say It (Ex): At 2nd level, the rumormonger has developed an ability to start "whisper campaigns" that greatly outshines that of common gossips. If she succeeds at a Bluff check to start a rumor, she may control the spread of the rumor as she wishes. For example, she may have the rumor spread only among an isolated section of the community, such as the membership of a certain

Gossip

A New Use for the Bluff Skill

The Bluff skill can be used to spread rumors about another character, affiliation, or group. Gossip is a popular weapon wielded by the Reniers and certain others in Richemulot, such as characters who have levels as propagandists^C, recruiters and rumormongers (the latter two both being new classes described in this chapter).

By making a successful Bluff check opposed to a typical listener's Sense Motive check, a character can start a particular line of local gossip, whether malicious or harmless. For this purpose, a "typical listener" is decided by the DM based on the social circles amongst which the character wishes to start the gossip. For example, starting a rumor among uneducated low-level peasants is liable to be fairly easy (Sense Motive +0), while doing so among political leaders of Richemulot will probably be quite difficult (Sense Motive +10 or more).

Attempting to start a rumor also draws the usual circumstance modifiers for a Bluff check. However, in most cases — unless the character is attempting to start unfriendly rumors among allies of a target of censure, for example — the listeners are generally treated as willing to believe the character (thus imposing a –5 penalty to their Sense Motive checks).

For example, if Elise deMaison decides she wants to spread gossip that Louise Renier's latest dalliance with a young dandy (who happens to be Elise's former beau) has left Louise with child, Elise would make a Bluff check. The DM assumes that her typical listener, a low-level aristocrat, has a Sense Motive bonus of +3; however, the DM also acknowledges that Elise's circle of friends also tend to like such juicy bits of gossip, so they suffer a –5 penalty for being "willing." Elise's player rolls a 12, but adds +5 for Elise's Bluff skill modifier, for a total of 17; the DM rolls a 9, for a Sense Motive result of only $9 + 3 - 5 = 7$. Very soon, a new bit of gossip will be making the rounds of the afternoon tea parties in Pont-a-Museau.

Rumors started using the Bluff skill can be tracked back to their originator through the use of the Gather Information skill. The DC to track a rumor is 5 greater than the Bluff check result that was rolled when it was started. Thus, continuing the above example, Louise Renier could find the source of Elise's ugly rumor by making a DC 22 Gather Information check.

Rumors generally spread over the course of a week in a typical small city, assuming there is fertile ground for the story to spread. The DM may modify this amount of time based on the relative success of the Bluff check and the size of the community in question. (So Elise's rumor, above, might spread in just a few days, since she beat the opposed Sense Motive check by a full 10 points and the elite social circles of Pont-a-Museau, despite the size of the city, are relatively small groups.)

Special: A member of the propagandist^C prestige class gains a bonus equal to his propagandist class level when making Bluff checks to start gossip.



Chapter Eight: Blood of the Rat

club or organization, and she may keep the rumor from reaching certain ears or groups, as desired. Further, she may choose to have the rumor spread to any number of individuals or communities as desired, from a handful of close acquaintances to an entire city or domain.

Traceless Gossip (Ex): At 3rd level, the rumormonger is a master at planting information about others in ways that make it virtually impossible to trace the tales back to her. Gather Information checks made to trace gossip started by the rumormonger suffer a –10 penalty.

Table 8–4: The Rumormonger

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	A friend to all, it's not what you say
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	It's how you say it
3	+1	+0	+0	+3	Traceless gossip

Family Magic



either branch of the Renier family is renowned for wizards or magical artisans. However, draped over an over-stuffed chair in the rarely visited, cobweb-choked library on the third floor of the Renier ancestral home called Chateau Delanuit is a dusty, threadbare traveling cloak. It is a unique magical item known as the *cloak of the rat*. Created by one of Claude Renier's older siblings, it traveled with the old rat to Richemulot when he first came there.

Further, within the left inner pocket of the cloak is a crumpled page torn from a book. At first glance, it appears to be covered with gibberish penned in a childish hand. In actuality, this is a unique spell—*rat eyes*—concealed by a *secret page* that reveals its hidden writing only if the word *salaud* (High Mordentish for “rat”) is spoken nearby.

New Magic Item

Cloak of the Rat

This magic item must be created from a cloak, coat, or jacket that has at least one pocket.

Cloak of the Rat: The most obvious function of this garment is an ability to dry quickly and remain clean. No matter how waterlogged, muddy, or filth-stained it becomes, the garment dries within 1 hour of being hung in a dry location, and any stains and smells upon it likewise vanish. When the hour is up, the garment is covered with dust no more repulsive than that left on clothing after a journey along a dry country road.

A second, less immediately obvious function is that up to four pockets on the garment function as miniature *Heward's handy haversacks*. Each pocket can hold a maximum of 1 cubic foot in volume or 10 pounds in weight, without changing the base weight of the garment or showing any bulges. Like the *haversack*, the wearer always finds the item he reaches into a pocket to find.

All other conditions of these extra-dimensional storage spaces that apply to *Heward's handy haversacks* also apply to the pockets on a *cloak of the rat*.

Moderate conjuration; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *Leomund's secret chest*, *prestidigitation*; Price 1,800 gp.

New Spell

Rat Eyes

Divination

Level: Brd 1, Drd 1, Rgr 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. ft + 40 ft/caster level)

Target: One rat or similar rodent

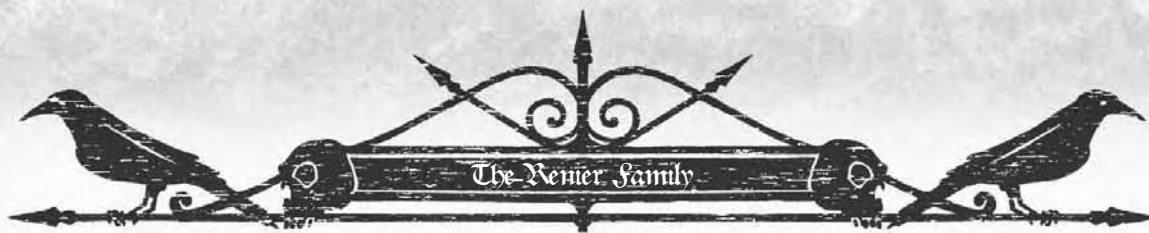
Duration: 5 minutes/level

Saving Throw: Yes

Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster controls the movements and shares the vision of a single rat, chosen from within line of sight. Once affected, the animal can move out of the caster's line of sight, but the spell continues in effect as long as the rat remains within the spell's range. The caster can see anything the rat sees.





The rat targeted by this spell can be mentally instructed by the caster to move and look in any desired direction. However, the rat cannot be forced to do anything but stop, walk, run, or look in a given direction. If the rat is ordered into combat or otherwise instructed to do something that would harm or endanger it, the spell immediately ends. (Ordering the rat to observe something that might be dangerous to it does not end the spell, as long as the rat can watch from a hidden location that it perceives as relatively safe.)

Story Hook

A Renier who is a distant cousin to the ruling family (a player character, or an NPC with whom they are friendly) is approached by a friend or member of the DuBois family. The Renier is asked if he would be willing to approach Lady Jacqueline or her sister Louise to beg for aid in discovering once and for all what happened to Henri DuBois. The DuBois family members share with the PCs what little they know about Henri's final days and the circumstances around his disappearance. While all signs point to involvement on the part of Lady Jacqueline Renier, they find it hard to believe that someone who has been as generous to the family as she has would be involved in the disappearance of Henri, particularly when they were so in love.

Whether the characters approach Jacqueline or Louise in their search for information about Henri DuBois, they find only firm denials; the Reniers "have already done all that can be done to find the missing man." (These statements are actually true; despite her failure to transform Henri into a wererat, Jacqueline is still in love with him and at the very least wants to know what his current situation is, while Louise wants to kill Henri and make sure her sister finds his mutilated corpse.)

Whether or not the characters launch their own investigation, they eventually find themselves under attack by wererats and mysterious assassins. The attacks are easily dealt with at first, but they quickly become very deadly — and Renier characters may discover just how vulnerable they are to lycanthropic infection.

Who is behind the efforts to kill the party before they locate Henri DuBois? Is it some of the hateful non-wererat members of the Renier family? Is it perhaps Jacques Renier, Jacqueline's son, who has been keeping Henri captive in the hopes that his mother's ongoing search will leave her exposed enough so he can assassinate her?

Or could it be that the assassins are sent by Henri DuBois himself, who was driven mad by the double-blow of witnessing the transformation of his beloved Jacqueline and then being attacked by her immediately after? He may not have been transformed by Jacqueline, but perhaps he has since become infected by an aberrant strain of wererat lycanthropy, and is now so monstrous that he can barely be recognized as human — and a cult of wererats who formerly chafed under Jacqueline's rule now worship him as a god and follow his every whim.

Finally, perhaps the attacks against the party have nothing to do with Henri DuBois at all. Instead, they are merely another attempt on the part of Louise Renier to remove her sister from power, using the PCs as her weapon. She is sending the killers at the party and planting clues that implicate Jacqueline. Louise might even be leaving clues to convince the party that Jacqueline is a monster — a vampire, or perhaps even a wererat, although the clues should indicate that she is an infected lycanthrope, not a natural one.



Chapter Time:
Blood of Hunger

The
Von Zarovich
Family



Von Zarovich — my name invokes a sting of fear in the hearts of even the sternest heroes and the most experienced investigators. The Von Zarovich name carries with it a legacy of sadness, evil, corruption and darkness unequalled by any other great house of the realms. In fact, my researches into our origins suggest that, but for the excesses of Strahd Von Zarovich and his unforgivable crimes against his own family, we would not now be cursed by the darkness that so easily takes root in our hearts.

Over time, I have come to suspect that the Strahd Von Zarovich who currently rules Barovia is no other than the same evil being that began our curse. Yes, though it strikes terror through me to even whisper such a thing, I have become convinced that Strahd is, in fact, one of the undying, a vampire that preserves his own evil life through the murder of others. His longevity, cruelty and cunning are legendary, yet, to my shame, though he is easily the best-known of our bloodline, he is far from the only Von Zarovich that the good folk of the realms must fear.

In the early days of Barovian history, the Von Zaroviches were (along with the Dilisnya, Katsky and Petroona) the leading noble clan of the realm. In those days the Von Zaroviches were bold warriors driving the wicked Tergs from Barovia and liberating an entire nation. Their leader in those days was the mighty Strahd I. My ancestor's tale has been related time and again over the years — his illicit love for his brother Sergei's betrothed Tatyana, Sergei's murder at Strahd's hands, the massacre of Sergei's wedding guests at the hands of Dilisnya assassins and the suicide of sad Tatyana.

Nearly the entire Von Zarovich clan perished on that night, though Strahd himself survived, I now believe, somehow transformed into a vampire. My investigations indicate that he spread the rumor that his relative, "Sturm," had missed the wedding; in Sturm's guise, then, he himself undertook a campaign of vengeance against the Dilisnya and their patriarch, Leo. Though the Von Zaroviches were weakened and nearly destroyed, we emerged victorious, successfully driving the Dilisnya from the realm.

In time, the household itself began to recover, though the taint of Strahd's sanguine thirst has touched all of us to some extent. To this day, sadly, House Von Zarovich remain one of the most dangerous in the realms, home to schemers and diabolical geniuses as well as ruthless killers and practitioners of the darkest of dark arts.

I believe that it is vital for you to fully understand the other members of my household, My Darling, if you are to truly understand what you join should you consent to become my wife. And so I humbly relate my origins to you, Dearest, in hopes that you may forgive me my family and help me to escape the evil fate so many of us embrace and instead follow the path of good I sense shining from within you.

— letter from Reval Von Zarovich to his prospective wife and fiancée, Kataryna Mandorova, priestess of the Morning Lord





The Von Zaroviches



his great family is as old as Barovia itself, and its evil is as deep as any in the Dread Realms. The Von Zaroviches are the living embodiment of gothic horror, a family cursed by the sins of its founders and tormented by the wickedness of its present ruler. With this history and this dark burden, it is not surprising that most members of the Von Zarovich clan have followed paths of corruption.

Unlike some other households, however, the Von Zaroviches also harbor a handful of others — brave and strong-willed individuals capable of resisting the call of darkness, of living their lives independently of their grim heredity. Some have even embraced the powers of good, but these individuals are few and far between.

Fitting In

Von Zarovich is quite a widespread clan, with minor branches in several lands beyond Barovia's borders, such as Kartakass, Invidia and Verbrek. Most remain concentrated in the mountainous regions of Barovia, however, where they are free to pursue whatever cruel schemes they desire because of their connection to Strahd and the ruling house.

Strahd is at best an absentee ruler who takes little interest in the lives and welfare of his citizens. For the most part, he leaves the daily running of the nation to his boyars and burgomasters. Although these positions are not normally awarded to members of the old ruling families — the Katsky, Petrovna, or the hated Dilisnya — Strahd is willing to make an exception in the case of his relatives, and open positions are sometimes awarded to minor members of the Von Zarovich household.

Gaining such a position sometimes requires a Von Zarovich to make a direct appeal to Count Strahd himself, which of course requires a pilgrimage to Castle Ravenloft — the dark heart of the Dread Realms. Strahd isn't necessarily an ungracious host, yet save for a desire to maintain control in his realm by whatever means necessary, he has no overwhelming sense of loyalty or warmth toward his own bloodline. Requests for assistance should always be phrased as politely and cordially as possible, and denials must be accepted with good grace lest the supplicant find himself on the receiving end of Strahd's displeasure.

Those Von Zaroviches who don't hold important positions in the realm can be of just about any

social station from simple freeman on up. Distant claims to Von Zarovich ancestry are quite common, for the family's worst traits are only expressed in those who are most closely related to Strahd. All carry a certain amount of the family's taint, however, and the inhabitants of Barovia treat all who bear the name or claim a relation to it with a certain fearful respect.

Even outside Barovia, the name of Von Zarovich garners considerable respect, even though other darklords such as Ivana Boritsi and Azalin Rex harbor deep hatred for Strahd and his family and will not hesitate to take vengeance on members of the Von Zarovich household. Consequently, members of the household tend to tread carefully when in hostile territory, even though it is contrary to the household's traditional arrogance and self-assurance to do so.

Being a Von Zarovich comes with some responsibilities, for although Strahd has little love or loyalty for other family members, he nevertheless rules with an iron hand, demanding that his relations never bring disrespect or derision to the household. Von Zaroviches must dress well, and their weapons and armor must always be of the highest quality; their dwellings must always be kept in good condition, and they must never be drawn into such petty concerns as local power struggles, street crime or similar plebeian pursuits.

Adventuring is allowed, though a Von Zarovich is expected to keep his adventuring companions at arms' length. He must avoid carousing, brawling, excessive drinking, gluttony and associating with unseemly members of the opposite sex. An adventurer is certainly entitled to seek his fortune, but the gross display of magical skill is strongly discouraged. Despite the horrors of the past, House Von Zarovich retains its dignity and demands that its members observe the strictest rules of decorum.

In some cases, Strahd himself has been known to intervene should any of his family members violate these rules. First, trusted servants are sent to inform the offending scion that his behavior is unacceptable. Usually this is enough to shock a wayward family member into good conduct, but those who persist may end up with another visit, this time by another high-ranking Von Zarovich. Should Strahd himself ever become directly involved, the scion's career as a Von Zarovich — and indeed his life — is probably over.





Being Good

Though there is indeed a darkness in the heart of the Von Zarovich soul, there remains in some a tiny spark of indefatigable goodness and a willingness to battle the influence of the shadow. Such individuals are quintessential gothic characters — good-hearted individuals who try to do the right thing but who must constantly battle the evil in their souls.

Good-aligned Von Zaroviches are still accepted by the family, though they are certainly treated like black (or, perhaps more accurately, white) sheep — ostracized, ridiculed and constantly tempted to follow the Path of Corruption. Only if a good-aligned Von Zarovich's activities put him in direct conflict with the family will he face open opposition.

In some ways, the Von Zarovich heritage can be a powerful inducement to a good character, for the memory and knowledge of a household's past sins can show her quite clearly what actions or excesses to avoid. They also provide sins and crimes for which a good character can seek atonement (that the character herself did not commit these crimes usually shouldn't matter to a selfless gothic

hero, for the sins of the parents are invariably passed down to sons and daughters).

For the most part, a good-aligned Von Zarovich avoids the family's homeland for fear of coming into direct conflict with other family members. Wandering adventurers sometimes openly admit to their Von Zarovich pedigree in order to show that they have defied their evil heritage, or simply to show that not all Von Zaroviches are bad. Others hide their past and their ancestry as well as they are able, carrying it inside them like a secret shame. In all cases, however, the good-aligned Von Zarovich feels a deep and abiding need to right the wrongs of the world and to see justice done.

No matter how much they do, however, the darkness of the Von Zarovich soul never goes away completely.

Claiming Membership

Claiming membership in house Von Zarovich is not necessary *per se* — an individual is either a Von Zarovich or she is not. The nature of the Dread Realms and the influence of the Dark Powers is such that a Von Zarovich scion simply *knows* her true heritage and understands her connection



to the shadows. Even those who are not immediately informed of their intimate connection to the most infamous household in the realms will know that they are different from the cowed, superstitious peasants that surround them.

Distant relatives or those whose parents attempt to hide their Von Zarovich legacy almost always learn of their connection — if not by finding it out through research or by being told, then perhaps by the dark and troubling dreams or visions that often plague them as they grow older. The murder of Sergei and tragic suicide of Tatyana is often the subject of these visions, as is the lonely and tormented existence of Strahd himself, wandering his cold, bleak castle tormented by the spirits of his countless victims. In time, it becomes clear to the Von Zarovich scion that these are not truly dreams, but instead mystical visions of Strahd's past and present.

Though Strahd is far from the most loyal or supportive family patriarch, he nevertheless welcomes new members to the family, even going so far as to explain the individual's genealogical connection to House Von Zarovich. Sometimes this revelation fills the recipient with nothing less than horror, bringing Strahd himself a tiny but welcome moment of joy and sadistic pleasure. He especially enjoys passing the truth on to good-aligned characters, for he knows that their path will most often spiral into darkness.

Once a Von Zarovich knows of his or her heritage, life is rarely the same. Simply being associated with Barovia's ruling household brings considerable benefits, from the terrified respect of the peasants to the obsequious fawning of innkeepers, boyars and burgomasters. Occasionally, family holdings become available and Strahd or another high-ranking Von Zarovich may award them to a noteworthy (or even an undeserving) relative. As in other kingdoms, estates and property that are confiscated from traitors and enemies of the state are sometimes given to newly recognized Von Zaroviches for safekeeping.

Von Zarovich Family Traits

- **+2 Intelligence:** Von Zaroviches tend to be cunning and shrewd individuals.
- **Taint of the Blood:** The cursed taint of Von Zarovich blood is etched deep into the heart and soul of all family members. Though these fearsome traits are strongest in those most closely related to Strahd himself, nearly all of Von Zarovich ancestry

show at least one of these inherent curses. The DM should assign at least one of these features to any Von Zarovich character, although the character should not be made unplayable; for instance, if more than one is assigned, then the curses need not take effect *every* time their requirements/triggers are fulfilled.

Lure of the Dark Powers: The Von Zarovich has a permanent +1% modifier to all powers checks. For example, an unprovoked assault upon a friend normally requires a 2% powers check, but in the case of the tainted Von Zarovich character, this percentage rises to 3%.

Nightmares: From time to time, Von Zaroviches are tormented by terrible dreams of darkness and blood. Whenever he sleeps, the Von Zarovich character must make a Will save (DC varies based on the character's actions the previous day, but generally 10–15) or be visited by nightmares; if nightmares do occur, the character is considered fatigued upon waking. If they visit the Von Zarovich for any three nights in succession, he is considered exhausted.

Thirst for Blood: When in combat, every time he wounds an opponent with a melee attack, the Von Zarovich must make a DC 12 Will save or fly into a berserk frenzy, gaining a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls and attacking that opponent until it falls (even if he had been dealing nonlethal damage up to that point, for instance). Once the opponent drops, the Von Zarovich must make a DC 15 Will save each round or continue to attack it, effectively making a coup-de-grace attack that round. If at any time he rolls a natural 1 on this save, the character immediately abandons the fallen enemy and throws himself upon the nearest opponent, still gaining the bonuses for his frenzy. If this opponent drops, the Von Zarovich must again make a Will save to avoid mutilating the fallen as described above.

The DM may apply penalties to the Von Zarovich character's Will saves if the current opponent is a hated enemy (these modifiers should range from –1 to –5, with higher modifiers given only for major antagonists of the character or perhaps traditional family enemies).

A Von Zarovich character can't undergo a frenzy at the same time as he experiences a vision of horror (see below), even though he may have both curses.

Visions of Horror: On occasion, some Von Zaroviches are visited with images of the horrors





from their family's past and the horrors of the future, as well as haunting images of the torments that await them at the hands of the Dark Powers. Every time he is wounded in battle, the Von Zarovich character must make a DC 12 Will save or be dazzled by these flitting images for the duration of the present combat and for 1d3 rounds thereafter. A dazzled character takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks and Spot checks. (Multiple "dazzled" effects do not stack.)

A character can't experience visions of horror at the same time as he is possessed by his thirst for blood (see above), even though he may have both curses.

Family Feats



hen creating a Von Zarovich, the player or DM should select at least one of the character's feats from the following list (or from among those new feats described below) during character creation:

Alertness, Ancestral Legacy^V, Athletic, Cold One^R, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Courage^R, Darkness Within^C, Diehard, Endurance, Haunted^R, Heroism^H, Hollow^C, Iron Will, Jaded^R, Knowledgeable^H, Library^H, Literacy^H, Magical Aptitude, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Piercing Gaze^C, Portents^V, Second Sight^C, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Mastery, Weapon Focus, Vampiric Regeneration^C, or Voice of Wrath^R. The character must meet all requirements for each feat, as usual.

The following new feats should be available only to Von Zarovich characters (or, at the DM's discretion, to those of some other bloodline that has a history of vampirism among its ancestors).

Blood Ritual [Metamagic]

You may recover arcane spell energy using the blood of a sacrificial victim.

Prerequisites: Blood Spell*, wizard level 9th.

Benefit: You can cast spells as if by means of the Blood Spell feat (q.v.), except that you may shed the blood of another creature rather than your own. The victim used to gain this benefit must be helpless, and drawing blood from him or her provokes attacks of opportunity. Using this feat always extends the spell's casting time to at least 1 full round.

You must make a powers check as if you had inflicted "routine torture" every time you use this feat.

Blood Spell [Metamagic]

Accessing the dark curse of your bloodline, you may shed your own blood to power your arcane spells.

Prerequisites: Wizard level 5th.

Benefit: This metamagic feat is unique in that it requires hit points rather than additional spell levels to function. By ritually cutting yourself as part of casting a spell (thereby increasing the spell's casting time), you may avoid expending the prepared spell slot. You must sacrifice a number of hit points equal to twice the total level of the spell cast (which may be modified by other metamagic feats) to do so. The casting time of the spell is increased based on its usual casting time, as follows.

Normal Casting Time

Free action

1 standard action

1 full round

More than 1 full round

Modified Casting Time

1 standard action

1 full round

2 full rounds

+1 full round

For example, a wizard with this feat wishes to cast the empowered *vampiric touch* he has prepared, but wants to be sure he can cast the spell again. By cutting himself for 10 points of damage and increasing the spell's casting time to 1 full round, he provides the spell energy to cast the spell (which is normally 3rd level, but has been modified to use a 5th-level spell slot because of the Empower Spell feat).

Commanding Gaze [General]

Your penetrating, unnatural gaze is often enough to stop even the most hardened killer in his tracks.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Cha 13, Piercing Gaze.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can cause any target within 30 feet to make a Will save (DC 10 + half your HD/levels + your Charisma modifier) or be stunned for 1 full round. A creature that saves against your commanding gaze is immune to its effect for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting, supernatural ability.

Lure of the Blood [General]

Due to your inherited connection to Strahd's curse of vampirism, your melee attacks can cause bleeding wounds.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6, Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, fighter level 4th.





Benefit: Choose a melee weapon for which you already have Weapon Specialization. Whenever you wield a weapon of that type in combat, it functions as if it had the *wounding* property in addition to any actual magical properties it might bear. This is a supernatural ability.

If you are of good alignment, you must make a 1% powers check for every 24-hour period during which you utilize the benefit of this feat.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of weapon.

A fighter may select Lure of the Blood as one of his fighter bonus feats. He must have Weapon Specialization with a weapon to gain the Lure of the Blood feat for that weapon.

Touch of Darkness [General]

You can attack foes with an enervating attack that resembles a vampire's energy drain.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +10, Cleave, Darkness Within^C, Power Attack.

Benefit: Any time you successfully strike a living opponent in melee combat, she takes 1 point of Strength damage.

Family Classes



Most Von Zaroviches have a natural aptitude for magic. Wizards abound among them, as do sorcerers and practitioners of divine magic; nearly all of the latter have dedicated themselves to the gods of evil. However, fighters and rogues are not uncommon among them, for House Von Zarovich is from its ancient roots a warrior clan; still, in the present age, warrior-types are actually outnumbered by spellcasters. The Von Zaroviches do not normally claim much of a connection with nature, so barbarians, druids and rangers are uncommon; likewise, they aren't known for their asceticism, making monks even rarer. Paladins — champions of the light and justice that the Von Zaroviches find utterly repellent — are the rarest of all and are generally abhorred or scorned by other members of the family.

Exceptional Von Zaroviches who take prestige class levels most commonly choose archmage, blackguard, dreamcaster^C, eldritch knight, hierophant, knight errant^H, loremaster and night lord^C. In addition, there are two new prestige classes presented below that are virtually unique to

those of Von Zarovich blood. (A DM may decide to let other characters take these prestige classes, but should have a good reason for doing so — such as the character being an adoptee or special ally of the family).

Crimson Hound

The Von Zaroviches have always excelled at both the black and the martial arts, and their guardsmen — touched by the bloodlust that has cursed the family for generations — are among the most feared and dangerous fighters in the Dread Realms. They are named for their fierce loyalty to their household, their unstoppable desire for violence and their great skill in tracking and brining down enemies of the great Von Zaroviches.

Crimson hounds generally lead Strahd's elite army units and guard the most important locations and citadels in Barovia. For especially sensitive or important missions, a crimson hound, if placed in command of a unit of veteran soldiers, may be given the authority to engage in any activity necessary for the security of the state and the welfare of House Von Zarovich. Of course, this usually entails the shedding of large quantities of innocent blood and excessive acts of torture and mayhem, but such are a crimson hound's specialty.

Hit Dice: d10.

Requirements

To qualify to become a crimson hound (Crh), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Intimidate 8 ranks, Survival 4 ranks.

Feats: Iron Will, Jaded^R, Track.

Special: The crimson hound must swear an unholy oath to obey Count Strahd Von Zarovich and his appointed representatives. If the hound ever disobeys a direct order from any such source, he is cast out of service (if not hunted down and slain outright) and cannot progress further in this class unless forgiven and reinstated by Count Strahd himself.

Class Skills

The crimson hound's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis) and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.





Table 9-1: The Crimson Hound

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	True servant
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Command
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Demoralize
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Hold person
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Fearsome presence

Class features

All of the following are class features of the crimson hound prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Crimson hounds are proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all types of armor and shields (except tower shields).



True Servant (Ex): At 1st level, the crimson hound gains a bonus against any mind-affecting spell or ability that would cause him to directly disobey his Von Zarovich masters or to undertake actions that would plainly oppose or undermine the interests of the Von Zarovich family. The value of this bonus is equal to the character's crimson hound level.

Command (Sp): At 2nd level, a crimson hound can use *command* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum once per day). The save DC is equal to 11 + the crimson hound's Charisma modifier.

Demoralize (Ex): At 3rd level, the crimson hound gains the ability, through his ferocious exhortations and fearsome threats, to dishearten his enemies. As a standard action, the crimson hound can make an Intimidate check; all enemies within 20 feet must then make a character level check (DC = the crimson hound's Intimidate result). Those who fail suffer a -1 penalty to all attack rolls and saving throws for 2d4 rounds. The crimson hound may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Demoralize is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Hold Person (Sp): At 4th level, a crimson hound can use *hold person* once per day. The save DC is equal to 13 + the crimson hound's Charisma modifier.

Fearsome Presence (Ex): At 5th level, the crimson hound's fearsome threats can be terribly unsettling to foes. As a standard action, the crimson hound can make an Intimidate check; all enemies within 20 feet must then make a character level check (DC = the crimson hound's Intimidate result). Creatures that fail are affected as follows: Those having fewer levels/HD than the hound are frightened for 4d6 rounds, while those having as many or more HD/levels are shaken for 2d6 rounds. The crimson hound may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Fearsome presence is a mind-affecting fear effect.



Tyrant Mage

In some ways, the Von Zarovich family are quintessential tyrants, ruling with absolute authority and treating their subjects with disdain or at best benign neglect until they disobey or until the Von Zaroviches need them. Then, members of the household are quick to lay the heavy hand of oppression upon their people.

Commonly, the infamous Von Zarovich tyrant mages are not themselves rulers, but serve the house patriarchs, using their considerable magical abilities to control, oversee and if necessary repress the peasants of Von Zarovich lands. Tyrant mages proved instrumental in Strahd's struggle against the Ba'al Verzi, and when the assassins failed to kill Strahd in 350 BC, the tyrant mages descended upon the cabal and almost completely destroyed it. Only the tragic massacre of 351 BC, in which Sergei Von Zarovich and Strahd I (supposedly) perished, saved the Ba'al Verzi. Seriously weakened by the tragedy, the tyrant mages spent the next few years piecing the realm back together and rebuilding their forces.

Since then, the tyrant mages have continued to serve House Von Zarovich, helping to ferret out and eradicate those who would disrupt the security of Barovia, and destroying threats to Strahd and his followers.

Hit Dice: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a tyrant mage (Tm), a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

Feats: Any two metamagic feats.

Special: Ability to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

Class Skills

The tyrant mage's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the tyrant mage prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Tyrant mages gain no proficiency with any weapon, armor, or shield.

Spellcasting: At every tyrant mage level, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in whatever arcane spellcasting class had granted her access to 3rd-level spells. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (bonus metamagic feats, and so on), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. This essentially means that she adds the level of tyrant mage to the level of her previous arcane spellcasting class, then determines spells per day, spells known and caster level accordingly.





Table 9–2: The Tyrant Mage

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	<i>Charm person</i>	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Tyrant's eye	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	<i>Suggestion</i>	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	<i>Dominate person</i>	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class

If the character has more than one arcane spellcasting class that grants her access to 3rd-level spells, she must decide to which class she adds each level of tyrant mage for the purpose of determining spells per day and spells known.

Charm Person (Sp): At 1st level, a tyrant mage can use *charm person* as a spell-like ability once per day. The save DC for this ability is 11 + her Charisma modifier, and her effective caster level is equal to her actual arcane caster level.

Tyrant's Eye (Ex): At 2nd level, the tyrant mage gains a +2 competence bonus on all Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

Suggestion (Sp): At 3rd level, a tyrant mage can use *suggestion* as a spell-like ability once per day. The save DC for this ability is 13 + her Charisma modifier, and her effective caster level is equal to her actual arcane caster level.

Bonus Feat: At 4th level, the tyrant mage receives a bonus metamagic feat.

Domination (Sp): At 5th level, a tyrant mage can use *dominate person* as a spell-like ability once per day. The save DC for this ability is 15 + her Charisma modifier, and her effective caster level is equal to her actual arcane caster level.

Family Magic Items

The following items are all family heirlooms belonging to the Von Zarovichs and their retainers.

Heartsblood Orb

This crystalline sphere is about the size of an apple and glows with a rich, reddish inner light. When held, it feels cold to the touch and gives

good-hearted wielders a tangible sense of dread. The orb is reputed to contain a small amount of blood from an ancient, powerful outsider defeated by Count Strahd I. Rumor claims that this outsider still lives and will one day seek out the orb's holder to take horrific vengeance on him and all others who have ever benefited from its magic.

Heartsblood Orb: This item conveys cold, electricity and fire resistance 10 and a +1 bonus to all saving throws upon its possessor. Once per day, the holder of the *heartsblood orb* can use it to cast the equivalent of a *heal* spell (caster level 11th) upon himself.

Moderate conjuration and transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *heal*, *resistance*, *resist energy*; Price 53,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Sanguine Chalice

The Von Zarovichs have many fell magic items, some of which require the suffering of other living beings in order to function. This item was made long ago, well before Barovia's descent into the mists, intended to replenish the bodies and spirits of Von Zarovich soldiers and leaders. Some sympathetic historians claim that the chalice was originally powered by holy water or perhaps wine or some other innocuous fluid, but most believe that the item was always used with the blood of victims.

The *sanguine chalice* is a beautiful silver goblet, etched with intertwined roses and skulls; it bears several large blood-red stones set about its base. When blood is poured into the cup, these stones glow faintly, throbbing slightly as if to a struggling heartbeat.



Sanguine Chalice: When the equivalent of 2 points of temporary Constitution worth of the blood of any living creature is poured into the chalice, its magical powers activate. The contents of the chalice can then be drunk, granting the user any one of the following benefits (user's choice).

- The drinker is healed of 4d8+7 points of damage.
- The drinker is affected as if by *remove disease*.
- The drinker is affected as if by *neutralize poison*.
- The drinker's fatigue or exhaustion conditions are removed as if he had slept 8 hours.
- The drinker gains a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls for 1d10 minutes.
- The drinker gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC for 1d10 minutes.

The chalice is usable only three times per day and is considered an evil item for the purpose of provoking powers checks.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bleed*, *cure critical wounds*, *neutralize poison*, *remove disease*, *shield of faith*; Price 70,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Scarlet Breastplate

This item is magnificently crafted, enameled in deep, vivid red and etched with thorny vines and flowers. Such breastplates are typically worn by Von Zarovich officers, though a few have turned up in the hands of bandits and mercenaries (presumably after being wrested from their legitimate owners). Wearers of the breastplate are granted considerable strength and resistance to magic, but become prone to rash acts.

Scarlet Breastplate: This +3 *breastplate* grants its wearer the benefit of spell resistance 19. As well, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength, but also a -2 penalty to Wisdom. Any time there is an enemy with a drawn weapon within charge range, the wearer must make a DC 15 Will save or immediately charge that opponent. (If there is more than one opponent within range, he charges whichever is closest.)

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bull's strength*; Price 60,000 gp; Weight 30 lb.

Sword of the Bat

Made of night-black steel, its hilt in the form of a stylized bat and quillons in the form of a bat's

outstretched wings, this weapon has been carried by the best of the elite Von Zarovich warriors for generations.

Sword of the Bat: This +4 *wounding ghost touch longsword* grants its wielder a fly speed of 50 ft. (good maneuverability) for up to 1 hour each day while holding the weapon. The flight ability need not be used all at once, but may be broken up into any number of uses per day, as long as the total time spent flying does not exceed 1 hour.

Moderate conjuration, transmutation and necromancy; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *Mordenkainen's sword*, *overland flight*, *plane shift*; Price 173,000 gp; Weight 3 lb.

The Tome of Strahd (Minor Artifact)

Ostensibly a self-serving, self-glorifying biography penned by Strahd Von Zarovich himself, the original copy of this book is held in the depths of Castle Ravenloft. Black-bound and reeking of tangible evil, the original *Tome of Strahd* also has substantial magical powers. Many copies of this book exist — most are incomplete or inaccurate in some details and have little or, more often than not, no magical power.

The original tome resides in a special chamber, resting on a black oak bookstand. Strahd himself adds to the book from time to time, and it miraculously always seems to have enough pages to accommodate whatever he writes.

Tome of Strahd: The *Tome of Strahd* functions as a *book of vile darkness*, save that it functions for arcane (not divine) spellcasters, who gain a +2 inherent bonus to Intelligence (rather than a +1 bonus to Wisdom and one experience level) if they read the book.

In addition, reading the book causes any reader to gain one of the Von Zarovich curses (see Taint of the Blood in Von Zarovich Family Traits, earlier in this chapter), but also allows any evil character who reads it to thereafter take any of the Von Zarovich feats (see Family Feats) as if he had Von Zarovich blood.

Due to the detailed information contained in the book, any evil character who spends 1 minute poring over the book gains a +2 bonus to any Knowledge check made the following round, as long as the check has something to do with curses, evil magic, the Von Zaroviches, the Dread Realms, or the undead.

Strong evocation (evil); CL 17th; Weight 5 lb.





Story Hooks

Call of the Blood: A player character has been plagued by horrifying nightmares. Eventually, either he or his friends discover the horrifying truth — that he is distantly related to the infamous Von Zarovich family. The character is periodically visited by dreams in which a dark noble invites him to accept his destiny, and he may also develop one or more of the Von Zarovich curses. The character and his companions must deal with the constant danger of giving in to the family's bloodthirsty heritage and decide whether to fight the darkness or simply accept the inevitable and embrace it.

The Lost Tome: The *Tome of Strahd* has been stolen! How such an outrage could have been perpetrated under the very nose of the powerful Count is anyone's guess, but Strahd Von Zarovich immediately calls upon all of his household to find the volume. The obvious suspects are traditional enemies such as Azalin Rex and the Dilisnya family, but it is up to the DM to decide who is really behind the act.

One possibility is that the culprit is none other than Malocchio Aderre, ruler of Invidia, who has finally discovered his ability to teleport without error anywhere in the Dread Realms, regardless of

the will of the realm's darklord. This event could lead to a major confrontation and possibly result in a crisis that necessarily shakes all the realms, for Malocchio's ability deals a major blow to the balance of power among the darklords.

Assassin Hunt: While Strahd Von Zarovich is usually content to allow his relatives to go about their business in peace (as long as they do not unduly embarrass the family), he sometimes calls upon family members to take care of certain delicate matters of business. A Dilisnya assassin has been seen in the city of Zeidenburg. While it is unlikely that this individual can threaten Strahd himself, he can nevertheless inflict considerable damage on family holdings and create mischief within Barovia's borders by associating with and aiding rebels, bandits, criminals and other troublemakers who are especially common in Zeidenburg.

A Von Zarovich scion (the player character or an NPC close to the party) and his companions are commanded to journey to Zeidenburg, locate the assassin and find out what she knows. The characters are forced to plunge into the dark intrigue of Zeidenburg, dealing with crime lords, renegades, Gundarakite rebels and a secret underground network of Dilisnya allies and informants.



Appendix:
A Rogues'
Gallery



s with other such appendices, this one should be read only with DM approval.

The following character descriptions illustrate possible members of the families addressed in detail throughout the various chapters of this tome. They may be utilized by the DM as NPCs or used to suggest starting points and ideas for player characters.

In the NPC stat blocks below, italicized feats indicate bonus feats gained from race, class, or bloodline.

Boritsi

Bevel Boritsi, Eldest Son of Anton Boritsi

Male human, Ari2/Rog3/courtier 3: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 plus 3d4+6 plus 2d6+4; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grp +4/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/18–20, +1 rapier) or +9 melee (1d4+4/19–20, +2 dagger) or +7 ranged (1d4+4, 10 ft., +2 dagger); SA *charm person* 3/day, sneak attack +2d6; SQ alluring, attractive, Boritsi traits, evasion, gift of numbers, trapfinding, trap sense +1; AL LN; SV Fort +4 (+8 vs. ingested poisons), Ref +5, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +5, Balance +5, Bluff +11 (+13 sending hidden messages), Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +17 (+19 on opposed checks), Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Gather Information +15, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +3, Profession (foreman) +4, Ride +3, Search +4, Sense Motive +8 (+10 vs. Bluff), Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +8, Swim +3, Tumble +4, Use Rope +4.

Feats: Alertness, Judge Difficulty*, Poison Resistance (ingested)*, Sharp Wit*.

Languages: Balok; Mordentish.

Signature Possessions: +1 rapier, 2 matching +2 daggers, ring of protection +2.

Description

Bevel is a handsome man apparently in his late twenties, with the pale skin and dark hair typical of the Boritsis. He has strong facial features and striking blue eyes similar to those of his aunt, Ivana Boritsi. As the eldest son of Anton Boritsi, he could have his pick of jobs within the company, but he has always delighted in physical activity, so he can often be found laboring alongside the cargo-han-

dlers at the Boritsi Trading Company's yards and docks.

Bevel has the manners and polish of the most well-bred men of the finest courts of the Core, but can also hold his own in a fight or a brawl or in trading sailors' bawdy talk.

Background

Born in 719 to Anton Boritsi and Katarina Piechota, Bevel grew up in the lap of luxury. He received the finest education that Mordentish and Dementleuse tutors could provide, and learned the ins and outs of the family business from one of the Core's most talented merchants, his own father. Anton also taught him how to keep a smile on his face and seem like everyone's best friend, all the while carefully observing their strengths and weaknesses so he might strike hard should they prove unworthy of his friendship or trust.

Bevel's mother, a daughter from a minor trading company, instilled in both Bevel and his younger sister Hellena a love of the outdoors and the physical world, as well as a degree of respect for the commoners who labor at the menial tasks in their business. All these lessons have led Bevel to pursue work as a foreman in the shipping yards of the Boritsi Trading Company. He continues to work in this capacity whenever he can, although since his father's death in 739 BC, the need to tend to the overall business has taken him away from his roots perhaps more than he cares to admit.

While Bevel's mother taught him respect for the lower classes, the examples set by his father and his infamous aunt — not to mention virtually every Dilisnya cousin he's ever met — has led him to believe he can't fully trust any of his peers. Five years ago, Bevel's distrust of his fellow nobles was driven fully home when a girl he loved, Maria Paldo, was shown to be slowly poisoning him in the hopes of inheriting part of the Boritsi Trading Company by finishing the task of murdering him just after their wedding night. Agents of his aunt discovered the truth about Maria before it was too late, and it was they who saw to it that she was... fittingly punished.

Unfortunately for Bevel, since he has taken over the family business, his respect for the lower classes is also quickly eroding. While working there in his youth, he had of course noticed the occasional theft from the yards. He had stood by and watched his father punish the thieves when caught, but now that he was in charge, he saw thievery on



virtually every level, from the lowest workers to the foremen and caravan masters.

Over the past decade, Bevel's punishments toward lazy and light-fingered workers has become harsher and harsher, putting even the reputation of his stern father to shame and truly shocking those who have dealt only with the smiling, urbane character he affects most of the time.

Current Sketch

Since the incident with Maria, Bevel has avoided attachment to any noblewomen, despite his mother's insistence that it's time for him to start a family. He continues to attend social functions and pretend that he might court daughters of landholders in Borca and neighboring lands; in truth he has no interest in them beyond what insight their chatter may give him regarding competitors or potential markets.

Further, as his frustration with the avarice and sloth among the lower classes grows, Bevel is becoming increasingly alienated from the people he once loved to work alongside. At present, he trusts and confides only in his mother and his sister Hellena, although he is greatly encouraged by his baby brother Lollar's devotion to the Home Faith. He hopes that with a Boritsi in the church hierarchy, the growing tide of corruption in Borca can be stemmed.

Recently, Bevel met Gennifer Weathermay-Foxgrove. He was impressed with her honesty and straightforward manner; she had come to Borca to meet his aunt, and did not in any way try to deceive him about her motivations. For the first time in years, Bevel found his heart stirred, for Gennifer seemed as beautiful on the inside as on the outside. Although her meeting with Ivana was far from positive and she has now been commanded to never set foot on Borcan soil again, Bevel hopes he will see her again someday soon.

He is considering sending Hellena and a caravan master or two to Mordent to investigate the profitability of opening a trading post in Mordent like the one Sulo opened on the isle of Liffe. If the word comes back positive, he will have an excuse to disobey his aunt's order that he never see Gennifer again.

Combat

Bevel is not easily goaded into combat, instead trying his best to talk his way out of disputes using



his considerable diplomatic talents. If this fails, he is a moderately competent combatant, and if he is attacked anywhere near a Boritsi Trading Company office or caravan, several workers come to his defense.

If a fight does break out, Bevel is not above shoving one of his daggers in the back of an enemy who isn't looking. He is also not above going after a foe at a later date, even if the dispute was apparently resolved; if the insult to Bevel or his family is grave enough, he will not let it go.

Gift of numbers (Su): As a full-round action, Bevel can determine the exact number of coins in any standard container simply by running his hands through them. When doing this, however, his hands seem to turn withered and blackened, so he always does so only in private; gloves or any other hand covering negate the ability. This strange ability came to Bevel two years ago, the result of a failed powers check when he nearly drowned a worker in a vat of Richemulot wine from which the man had siphoned a full wineskin.



d'Honaire

James Mousel, Heir to the Legacy of Germaine d'Honaire

Male human, Aril/Exp6/analyst 4: CR 9; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 1d8 plus 6d6 plus 4d4; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grp +6/+7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +1 rapier) or +4 ranged (1d10+1/x3, 50 ft., +1 pistol and +1 bullet); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +1 rapier); SQ d'Honaire traits, insightful, likable, mindshadows, trusted friend; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +21, Decipher Script +13, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +19, Handle Animal +4, Heal +15, Hypnosis^R +17, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (history) +9 (+11 with access to personal library), Knowledge (local) +9 (+11 with access to personal library), Listen +7, Profession (alienist) +11, Ride +3, Search +11 (+15 finding information in books), Sense Motive +15, Spot +9, Survival +6, Swim +5.

Feats: Investigator, Library^H, Literacy^H, Mesmerizing^C, Negotiator, Soothing Presence*, Warm-Hearted*.

Languages: Mordentish; Balok, Darkonese, Vaasi.

Signature Possessions: +1 rapier, +1 pistol, 10 +1 bullets, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +2.

Description

James Mousel has dark brown hair shot through with gray streaks. His skin has a perpetually tanned hue, a vestige of the Vistani blood that runs from his grandfather's side of the family, while his ice-blue eyes come from his d'Honaire blood. Although he is now at the age where most d'Honaire men start turning plump or even obese, James remains lean, almost gaunt in appearance.

Background

Born in 721 BC to François Mousel and Joelle Fontaine, James grew up around his father's growing mesmerism and medical practice; at the same time, he learned much about Hala's gentle healing methods from his grandmother, Bernadette d'Honaire-Mousel. It was only natural that he should follow in the footsteps of his elders, and it wasn't long before parents and grandparents alike came to realize that, if James applied himself, he



might someday rival the legendary Germaine d'Honaire in skill.

After learning what he could in Mordent, James traveled the Core to study with famous doctors, alienists and mesmerists there. In Dementlieu, though, he was received with hostility and distrust by his grand uncles, although his Uncle Dominic was welcoming. These good relations came to an end, however, when a patient in the Mousel Sanitarium confided to James that he had been involved in the murder of the young man's grandparents and of Gerard d'Honaire. The patient claimed that Dominic had been behind the deaths. Although François chalked the man's confession up to madness, James was convinced of the truth of it, and he severed all ties with his relatives to the north.

Over the past decade or so, James has taken all he has learned and synthesized his practice into a new approach to curing mental illnesses. Developing these methods at the Mousel Sanitarium and spreading their influence to other sanitariums has been the main focus of his life for many years. While he loves his wife and children, they have always been secondary to his life's work.



Recently, James has mended some of the bad relationship between himself and the d'Honaire in Dementlieu. The catalyst to this was Celeste d'Honaire, a brilliant young woman who sought him out in the hopes of studying his methodology. He convinced her to return home, but her passionate endeavor eventually served as a bridge between James and Dominic. The two men now correspond regularly, mostly about political matters. James also corresponds with Celeste, as she remains interested in learning from him.

Current Sketch

James continues to operate the Mousel Sanitarium and to research and expand upon his analytical techniques with help from his semi-retired father. As James' work continues, both men are growing increasingly certain that they are unlocking not only secrets of the mind, but also some more profound, even mystical revelations.

In particular, James has started to see some similarities between some of his recent findings and some of the wilder "oneirological" theories formulated by Dr. Gregorian Illhousen before he mysteriously vanished. While James thinks he should continue his research into these mystical secrets, his father is growing increasingly concerned at what is taking shape before them. François wants James to take their methods in a different direction, but James believes there is never any harm in knowledge.

As James' relationship with his father sours, he grows closer to his niece, Celeste d'Honaire-Loverde. Despite her youth and his encouragement for her to return to Dementlieu when she sought to become his apprentice, Celeste is someone he views as the only person who might become a full partner in the next stage of his development of the "analytical method."

Combat

James resorts to physical violence only as a last resort. He first attempts to reason with attackers, or to outwit or bluff them into standing down. If that fails, the good doctor usually has bodyguards when traveling or orderlies nearby when at the sanitarium. As a last resort, James has some basic combat training and possesses an enchanted rapier and pistol that was given to him by a grateful former patient.

Celeste d'Honaire-Loverde, Heir to the d'Honaire Darkness

Female human Aril/Exp1: CR 1; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 1d8-1 plus 1d6-1; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 deflection), touch 12, flat-footed 11; BAB/Grp +0/+0; Atk +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed) or +0 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); SQ d'Honaire traits; AL NE; SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +6, Craft (poetry) +5, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +4, Heal +4, Hypnosis^R +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +5, Profession (alienist) +3, Ride +2, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5, Swim +2.

Feats: *Cold-Hearted**, *Soothing Presence**.

Languages: Mordentish; Balok, Darkonese, Lamordian, Vaasi.

Signature Possessions: *Mesmerist's pendulum* (see Family Magic Items in Chapter 2), *ring of protection +1*.

Description

Celeste d'Honaire-Loverde is a frail-seeming woman in her late teens, with delicate facial features framed by strawberry-blonde hair. Despite always having had access to the finest food and highest standards of living, she appears as if she is on the verge of collapse from starvation and exhaustion. Even on her best days, the pallor of her skin makes the dark circles around her pale blue eyes seem even more pronounced, and causes what might otherwise be a beautiful face to appear somewhat ghastly. Only by wearing heavy face powder and makeup, such as at a formal ball, does she not appear deathly tired.

Her physical appearance is only slightly worse than the truth. While she is not quite as sickly as she looks, Celeste has never had robust health; every winter, she is the first in the household to suffer from colds and is always the one hit hardest by illnesses. When walking or on her occasional horseback rides, she also tires far more quickly than her companions.

Celeste's weak physical state, however, is in stark contrast to her strong spirit and razor-sharp intellect. Friends of the d'Honaire family have quipped that perhaps her soul is so demanding that it is consuming her physical body, for no doctor has been able to offer any physical reason for her weak health. While there is no truth to such silly conjecture, there is no denying that Celeste has been





contrary and stubborn in all things since her earliest years. In fact, her run-down appearance has become more pronounced as she has grown increasingly at odds with her parents and other relatives.

Background

Born in 739 BC, Celeste grew up in the lap of luxury, with her every whim and desire met by her doting parents, Julianne d'Honaire and Bernard Loverde. She was close with the other youngsters of the d'Honaire family and learned at an early age to act coy and cute in order to win the affection of others.

Celeste also showed early talent as a poet, so that was the direction her parents attempted to direct her. Yet as she entered her teens, she grew increasingly interested in the study of medicine and mesmerism long practiced by her family, and set her heart on becoming a physician. By fifteen, Celeste had all but abandoned poetry, spending her spare time reviewing medical texts and writing letters to famous doctors and mesmerists throughout the Core. Her parents objected and threatened to have her confined to a finishing school, and her Uncle Dominic arranged for her to be admitted into the domain's finest school, but Celeste fled

southward hoping to become a student of her Mordentish cousin, Dr. James Mousel.

Despite decades of alienation from his relatives to the north, Mousel encouraged the girl to return home, convincing her that good relations with her family were more important than a medical career. At the same time, he asked Dominic d'Honaire, with whom he had had no contact for many years, to intercede on Celeste's behalf with her parents. Through the combined efforts of Dominic and James, Celeste is currently working at Wilhelm Mikki's asylum in Chateaufaux, where she is swiftly proving to be the best student Dr. Mikki has ever had. Mikki believes that, with a few years of training and education, she might equally rival the greatest medical minds of the Core.

Unbeknownst to all, though, Celeste has a rather less-than-humanitarian reason for her interest in medicine and mesmerism.

Current Sketch

Despite her seeming devotion to the medical arts, Celeste actually harbors no empathy for her fellow person. A darkness fills a large part of Celeste's soul, one that generally blinds her to the feelings and cares of others, so that she tends to view them as little more than the means or obstacles to achieving her goals. Her superior intellect allowed her to recognize at an early age how much power physicians, mesmerists and alienists could wield over their patients if they approach their positions correctly, and that is what enamored her with the field.

When she learned of James Mousel's "analytical method," she knew she had to master it — yet she does not view it as a way to help people, but instead as a way to bring them under her sway. Unlike her uncle Dominic d'Honaire, Celeste does not enjoy toying with others simply to play with them. Her manipulations are not born from cruelty or boredom, but are motivated by greed and a desire for prestige and power.

If Celeste could obtain her goals without having to harm or disenfranchise another human being, she would be perfectly content to leave others alone. She knows this is not feasible, though, so she uses her sharp mind and charming personality to gain the friends she needs to accomplish what she wants. She continues to study Mousel's methods and she has targeted a number of patients whom she hopes to turn into her puppets when she is proficient enough.



The only potential threat that Celeste sees to her goals is her Uncle Dominic. From an early age, she noticed the unusual power he seemed to wield over others. At first, she was disgusted by the way others bowed to his every whim. Later, she grew jealous, and after returning to Dementlieu she decided to convince her cousin James to help her discover Dominic's secret.

More recently, she has decided that maybe she should target Dominic with Mousel's "analytical method." She suspects this could be a very dangerous gambit, however, and is weighing that option against simply leaving Dementlieu for Richemulot (along with her family, of course) and using the knowledge she has already gained to set up her own "mental health practice" in the neighboring land. Getting them away from Dominic, she reasons, would make every older member of her family — all of whom continue to encourage her to reconcile with her parents — easier to manipulate.

Combat

Celeste has no combat training, and her relatively weak physique makes her even less capable than most. Although she carries a dagger for self-defense when traveling, she relies upon hired guards (or on orderlies at the asylum) to protect her from threats she is unable to neutralize through charm and diplomacy.

Dilisnya

Andrei Palasçu

Male human Rog7/deceiver 3: CR 10; Medium humanoid (human) (6 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 7d6 plus 3d6; hp 35; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 Dex, +2 armor), touch 14, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grp +7/+9; Atk +13 melee (1d6+4/19–20, +2 *short sword*) or +12 ranged (1d4+2, 10 ft., masterwork dagger); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+4/19–20, +2 *short sword*); SA sneak attack +6d6; SQ con artist +1, contacts +1, deceptive, Dilisnya traits, evasion, poison use, trap sense +3, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +9, Bluff +12, Climb +10, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +9, Disguise +14 (+16 acting), Escape Artist +14, Forgery +13, Gather Information +7, Hide +13, Intimidate +7, Jump +12, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +14, Open Lock +5, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +10, Survival +1 (+3 tracking), Swim +3, Tumble +9, Use Rope +5.



Feats: *Deceitful*, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Balok; Falkovnian, Mordentish.

Signature Possessions: Leather armor, +2 *short sword*, 4 masterwork daggers, vial with 6 doses of poison (injury, Fort DC 20; 1d6 Con/2d6 Con), *cape of the mountebank*, thieves' tools.

Description

Having become quite successful as an importer-exporter in Dementlieu, Andrei has made himself a fixture at the most lavish parties among Port-a-Lucine society, where his dashing good looks enabled him to win the hearts of many lovely women. He is also known to drink heavily and has lost large sums gambling. With a reputation as a rake and wastrel, Andrei further diverts suspicion, allowing him to pursue his more nefarious occupation.

Background

A minor Dilisnya family member, Andrei Palasçu was forced to leave Borca by the intrigues and manipulations of Ivana Boritsi (coupled with a lack of support from her cousin Ivan Dilisnya). Accordingly, he made contact with Dilisnya members in Dementlieu and undertook the difficult





carriage trip from Sturben to Port-a-Lucine, where he set up shop as an importer, exporter and occasional smuggler (a small amount of semi-public dishonesty hides Andrei's greater criminal activities).

Those who need to know are aware that Andrei Palasçu is one of the most discreet and well-connected thieves, spies and killers in Port-a-Lucine. Though called upon infrequently in those capacities, usually through the services of confidential go-betweens and other minor members of the Dilisnya bloodline, Andrei guarantees confidentiality and quick resolution, no matter what the job. Already he has rid the city of two leading crime bosses, allowing rivals to move into their territory, and provided a powerful merchant with embarrassing information about other mercantile concerns. He is careful not to work against the Council of Brilliance or Dominic d'Honaire, whom he has been strongly advised against offending.

Current Sketch

Andrei maintains his cover identity as a decadent nobleman — a popular conceit for Dilisnya family members. He is careful to cultivate the image of someone who is wealthy but chronically short of money due to his gambling habit and extravagant tastes. In reality, Andrei keeps his income tightly controlled and has vast gold and silver reserves, far more than he needs to survive. His legitimate business is actually quite successful, shipping beer, wine and foodstuffs through his contacts in Borca and sending fish, weapons and fine clothing from Dementlieu. These activities help him locate potential clients in addition to maintaining the illusion of a successful but spend-thrift businessman.

Andrei always makes sure that no word of his exploits ever gets back to Borca, lest Ivana get wind of them and send someone to end his fun. In reality, this is unlikely, for Ivana is not terribly concerned about what displaced Dilisnyas do outside of Borca, as long as they do not let their activities interfere with her political games and machinations.

Andrei maintains a lavish mansion in the wealthy Quartier Savant. A three-story chateau with extensive grounds purchased from its impoverished previous owner, the mansion is well protected by guard dogs and cunningly-built alarms that awaken Andrei instantly should any intruders attempt to enter. He deals personally with any

lesser attacker, while using his cloak to escape more powerful interlopers.

Andrei's fortune is hidden in the cellar, beneath a series of intricately designed secret doors and passages. Only the most determined or knowledgeable of thieves can get close to this treasure, and a number of deadly traps have also been laid, making theft from this cunning Dilisnya a highly dangerous proposition.

Combat

Andrei prefers not to fight directly, but instead is skilled at striking from hiding, allowing his prey to get as close as possible before catching a foe off-guard with a deadly poisoned throwing dagger. If forced to fight in the open, he defends himself efficiently and uses the powers of his *cloak of the mountebank* to make a clean escape. Indeed, this item is one of the chief reasons for his success at vanishing from crime scenes without a trace, and is easily his most prized possession.

Rodjan Dilisnya

Male human ex-Pal3/blackguard 10/Ftr2: CR 16 (see Path of Corruption); Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 3d10+3 plus 10d10+10 plus 2d10+2; hp 97; Init +3; Spd 20 ft. in armor; AC 27 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +12 armor), touch 11, flat-footed 26; BAB/Grp +15/+20; Atk +21 melee (1d10+6/19–20 plus *contagion*, claws [demon armor]); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+6/19–20 plus *contagion*, claws); SA command undead 6/day (as 8th-level cleric; +2 on rebuke checks), smite good 4/day, sneak attack +3d6 (+4d6 vs. flat-footed); SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, dark blessing, Dilisnya traits, DR 10/magic, fiendish servant, lay on hands (45 hp), Path of the Demon, poison use; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Concentration +5, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +8, Heal +3, Hide +3, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Ride +14, Sense Motive +6.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Cleave, *Great Cleave*, *Improved Critical (claws)*, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, *Power Attack*, *Stealthy Blade**.

Languages: Balok.

Blackguard spells (3/2/2): DC 11 + spell level; CL 10th.

Path of the Demon (Su): Having progressed to the Embrace, Rodjan has been granted several “blessings” by the Dark Powers, as follows (all modifiers are already included in the stat block



above). Due to these benefits, his CR has been increased by +1.

- *Stage One:* Rodjan has a +2 bonus to Strength, but his features are distorted into a rather demonic form.

- *Stage Two:* Rodjan has a +2 bonus to Dexterity and a +2 bonus to Charisma, but suffers a -2 penalty on all Cha-based skill checks.

- *Stage Three:* Rodjan has a +4 natural armor bonus to AC, but he is affected by holy water and similar substances as if he were a fiend.

- *Stage Four:* Rodjan has damage reduction 10/magic, but he now can be detected via *detect evil* as if he were a fiend.

Signature Possessions: Demon armor, boots of speed, orb of storms.

Description

Small and muscular, Rodjan Dilisnya has tremendous strength and the prowess of a warrior. He was once a handsome man, with curly blond hair and dark blue eyes. Since his turn toward corruption, however, his face has taken on a cruel visage, some even call his features demonic (though not to his face). He usually wears dark clothing, his armor is elaborate and menacing in appearance and his whole stance speaks of his vile tendencies.

Background

Once a shining paladin, a champion of good, Rodjan Dilisnya has become one of the foulest and most debased creatures imaginable. Born outside of Borca, in the relatively sophisticated city of Mordentshire, Rodjan's was raised by his mother in the family traditions of secrecy, assassination and crime. To her great shame and disgust, young Rodjan did not take well to the Dilisnya lifestyle, rejecting the path of the killer and sneak-thief, instead taking holy vows to serve Ezra and battle injustice wherever he found it. Within a few years, Rodjan had completely estranged himself from his family and had taken up the sword of a paladin.

For several years, Rodjan proved a tremendous embarrassment to his family. Slowly, however, the taint of Dilisnya blood began to show. Rodjan's enthusiasm for exterminating evil gradually grew into a fanatical love of combat, then to an abiding belief that everyone who opposed him was, by definition, evil. Finally, when he one day demanded payment from a caravan that he had saved from bandits, Rodjan's career as a paladin ended. Enraged at the caravan-master's refusal, he slew a



dozen innocents, including several children and elderly folk. Covered in blood, he strode into the wilderness, only to find that his powers as a paladin had deserted him.

Furious, Rodjan obstinately rejected Ezra and called upon the Dark Powers to grant him power. They obliged, transforming the once-powerful paladin into a blackguard. Soon, Rodjan became as feared and infamous as he had once been good and just. He cast aside his holy sword and silver armor, taking up instead an enchanted suit of grim black-and-red armor, eschewing other melee weapons in favor of the armor's bloody claws.

Rodjan quickly gathered a band of other debased warriors around him, and began hiring himself and his men out as mercenaries and guards. Today, he remains active in some of the wilder and more lawless portions of the Dread Realms; he has made contact with Ivan Dilisnya, offering to help should open conflict with Ivana Boritsi ever break out.

Current Sketch

Currently, Rodjan and his band occupy a fortress in Forlorn, where he dominates the local goblin clans and treats with potential employers. He is prepared to travel throughout the Dread Realms in search of riches, and is especially fond of



taking jobs that involve the shedding of large quantities of innocent blood. Rodjan leads a band of roughly a dozen evil Dilisnya fighters and rogues, along with fifty warriors and low-ranking fighters from a range of lands and backgrounds. All are employed for their ruthlessness, and the band is available to the highest bidder, ready to take on any task no matter how unpleasant or evil.

Though he has never taken any official title or moniker, Rodjan is becoming popularly known as “the Demon.” In reality, Rodjan is well along the Path of Corruption, having reached Stage Four: the Embrace. Rodjan knows in his heart that he is bound for eternal damnation — but he no longer cares, so long as his lust for blood is slaked.

Though he is loyal to the family, Rodjan has begun to nurse notions of displacing Ivan as Dilisnya patriarch, and even if this scheme does not succeed, Rodjan may one day grow so wicked as to be rewarded with his own Dread Realm — he appears to be on track to one day take up the mantle of a darklord one way or another, ruling one of the Core Realms or perhaps his own bloody island of terror.

Combat

Rodjan enjoys battle greatly, leading his mercenaries from the back of his fiendish heavy warhorse mount, Nightmare, whom he spurs fearlessly into battle while slashing at foes with the wicked claws of his *demon armor*. With little regard for his own safety, Rodjan seeks to smash through foes to attack the closest leader or officer.

When forced to dismount, he uses the powers of his *boots of speed*, cutting enemies to pieces almost before they realize he is upon them. He often employs his *orb of storms* to further damage his foes. So far, he seems blessed with incredible luck, for he has emerged from every battle unscathed.

Drakov

Sir Viktor Helsing

Male human Ftr12/raptor knight 4: CR 16; Medium humanoid (human) (6 ft. tall); HD 12d10+36 plus 4d10+12; hp 136; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. in armor; AC 24 (+2 Dex, +8 armor, +4 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 22; BAB/Grp +16/+20; Atk +25 melee (1d8+8/17–20, +4 *mighty cleaving unholy longsword*) or +21/+21 ranged (1d10+3/19–20, 110 ft., +3 *hawk bow of seeking*); Full Atk +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8/17–20, +4 *mighty cleaving unholy longsword*) or +21/+16/+11/+6 ranged (1d10+3/19–20, 110 ft., +3 *hawk bow of seeking*); SA crossbow charge, improved trample, rage 2/day; SQ DR 5/

magic, Drakov traits; ALLE; SV Fort +15, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +11, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +17, Jump +10, Ride +19, Survival +4, Swim +9.

Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Equestrian^C, Hawk’s Cry*, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hawk bow), *Improved Critical* (longsword), *Jaded^R*, Leadership, *Mounted Archery*, *Mounted Combat*, *Power Attack*, *Rapid Reload*, *Trample*, *Weapon Focus* (longsword), *Weapon Specialization* (longsword).

Languages: Falkovnian; Balok.

Signature Possessions: +3 *breastplate of invulnerability*, +2 *heavy steel shield*, +4 *mighty cleaving unholy longsword*, +3 *hawk bow of seeking* (see “Hawk Bow” sidebar in Chapter Four), 20 bolts.

Description

Viktor is a darkly handsome man with black hair and deep-set violet eyes. Since his audience with Vlad, he has let his hair grow and has cultivated a small beard, which only enhances his diabolical good looks. He is normally encountered on the hunt or on patrol with his knights, seeking out enemies or simple peasants with whom he can have some sport (that is, engage in crossbow practice). Viktor wears a rich black cloak and a beautiful breastplate emblazoned with the Drakov arms and rides a powerful black warhorse named Kol.

Background

Sir Viktor Helsing always felt out of place as he grew up. Though his mother was the picture of a doting, loyal Falkovnian woman, his father always seemed distant and cold. Like most young noblemen, Viktor joined the Falkovnian military at an early age and quickly rose through the ranks, first as a page, then as a sergeant, and finally as a squadron leader; he fought against rebels, bandits and nonhuman insurrectionists, winning glory and fame. Though his family professed pride in his accomplishments, Viktor still felt that he was somehow separated from them, as if they were two strangers cheering him on from the other side of a vast and impassible chasm.

When he was summoned to the presence of Vlad Drakov, Viktor was torn between fear and elation. Was he to be punished for some unknown infraction, or praised for his bravery and service to the nation? Viktor himself might have guessed the truth, had he ever taken the time to ponder the question — that he was actually an illegitimate son



of the Kingsfuhrer himself, conceived during a First Night encounter between his mother and Vlad Drakov.

Now, at last, Viktor's life made sense: the distance and coldness of his father, the icy but genuine pride that they took in his accomplishments, the strange looks that they sometimes gave him. Other things also became clear; Viktor's love for violence and bloodshed, his affinity for hawks, his growing sense of sadism and superiority regarding the lesser inhabitants of the kingdom. When Vlad Drakov invited Viktor to officially join his household, he enthusiastically accepted.

At first, all was well. Viktor served alongside Vlad's elite guardsmen, and was trained in the ways of the household. He practiced falconry with the chief nobles of the realm. He feasted with his new-found father and enjoyed the bloody spectacles that were presented for the Kingsfuhrer's pleasure. After two years, Viktor was awarded the coveted title of raptor knight.

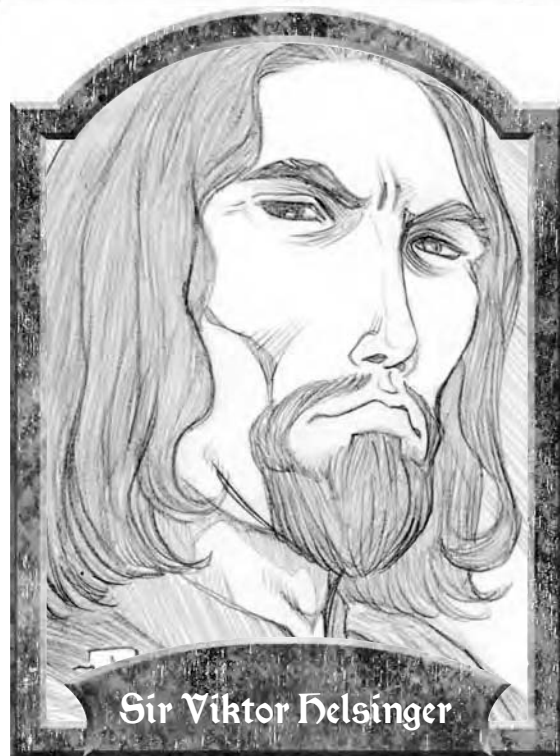
In time, however, things began to change. As had always happened in the past, Vlad Drakov began to lose faith and interest in his newest favored son. No matter what he did, Viktor seemed to disappoint his father, and Vlad began to send him away on errands more and more, at last assigning him command of a unit of raptor knights assigned to keep "order" in the western portions of the kingdom, along the frontier with Dementlieu.

Current Sketch

Viktor isn't a terribly subtle individual, and his vices are well known — with each passing month he grows more like his father, engaging in sadistic killings of innocent peasants, bouts of hard drinking and lustful exploitation of the local women. For all the world, he looks like a loyal member of House Drakov — rejected by his father and left to pursue his own increasingly bloody amusements.

Deep in his heart, however, Viktor has begun to lose faith in his nation and his ruler. He knows that the mere thought of disloyalty is a capital offense — particularly for a scion of the ruling household. He has no idea how to relieve his growing unease, to reassure himself that Drakov's (and thus Falkovnia's) is just.

Today, Viktor has not heard from his father in months and now wonders if he can ever regain the Kingsfuhrer's favor. Despite this, he continues to enjoy the benefits that membership in House Drakov brings — terrorizing peasants, taking his



pleasure from any female who takes his fancy, hunting for humans as well as animals, and growing more bloodthirsty and merciless by the day. Perhaps in this fashion Sir Viktor can attract Vlad's notice and once more take his place at his father's side, but in the meantime he simply uses his status to gain as much pleasure for himself as possible.

Sir Viktor has recently taken over a pleasing villa on the shores of Lake Kriegvogel, by the simple expedient of having its owner, Rudolf Strasser, arrested and executed for treason. Viktor then simply seized the lands and the villa (along with the former owner's two attractive daughters) as "property of the state." He has turned the place into a fortress, filling it with his servants and toadies and throwing lavish entertainments, often with bloody diversions in the form of bear-baiting, executions, torture and gladiatorial combat.

The two daughters, Eva and Vanna Strasser, are currently Viktor's favored concubines, and are both willing to do almost anything to please their "master" — so as to spare themselves the fate of their father. Their mother, Gundra is employed as a scullery maid in the household, a hostage against their good behavior. Just the same, Eva and Vanna both nurse a deep hatred for Viktor, and if the opportunity presents itself they are quite willing to



take whatever steps may be necessary to kill him or bring him to ruin.

Much of the time, however, their plotting is interrupted by competing for his favor, for Viktor takes great pleasure in playing the two sisters off against each other.

Combat

Viktor enjoys combat, especially against weak or helpless opponents. Normally he rides down foes and crushes them beneath his horse's hooves. Against more powerful foes, he usually lets his men take the brunt of the fight, shooting at enemies with his crossbow. He is not averse to close combat, but prefers his enemies to be "softened up a bit" before attacking. As might be expected, he is most fond of striking fleeing opponents from behind. Though he has a sadistic streak and an increasing fondness for slaughtering the weak, Viktor is no coward and fights bravely if required.

Godefroy

Michael Jendalis

Male human Brd5/accomplished medium 6: CR 11; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 5d6–5 plus 6d6–6; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; BAB/Grp +7/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d6/18–20, +1 rapier); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6/18–20, +1 rapier); SA cantrips, spells, turn undead 11/day (+2 on turning checks), *unseen servant* 4/day; SQ bardic knowledge +5, bardic music 5/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1), Godefroy traits, improved mist sight, spirit counselor (*augury*, *locate object*, *speak with dead*); AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 19.

Skills: Bluff +12, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +5 (+7 acting), Gather Information +10, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Jump +1, Knowledge (religion) +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Perform (sing) +15, Sense Motive +13, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +11.

Feats: Alertness, *Ethereal Empathy*^R, *Ghostsight*^R, Improved Turning, *Mist Sight*^{*}, *Poltergeist Hands*^{*}.

Cantrips (7/day; DC 14): *Dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*, *know direction*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close*.

Accomplished medium spells known (3/3/3/2; DC 14 + spell level): 1st—*deathwatch*, *detect undead*, *hide from undead*, *true strike*; 2nd—*darkness*, *find traps*, *hypnotic pattern*, *whispering wind*; 3rd—*blink*,



dispel magic, *gaseous form*, *remove curse*; 4th—*break enchantment*, *death ward*, *divination*.

Bard spells known (3/4/2; DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *dirge*, *ghost sound*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1st—*alarm*, *cure light wounds*, *hypnotism*, *mage armor*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *tongues*.

Unseen servant (Sp): Michael may use *unseen servant* as a full-round action up to 4 times per day (caster level 1st).

Signature Possessions: +1 rapier, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *cloak of ghostwalking*, *lesser amulet of life protection*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, masterwork lute.

Description

Michael Jendalis is slender to the point of gauntness. His eyes are a luminous blue, and they tend to dart about, fixing here and there on nothing that anyone else can see. His hair is jet-black, and his skin, like that of many Godefroys, is unnaturally pale. His features are delicate and almost feylike. Though he tends to cough frequently, as though he suffered from consumption (actually residual pneumonia, which he has had several times in his life), he smiles frequently and seems at ease with others. He moves with an ethereal grace





that often makes people who don't even know him stop to watch him pass.

Background

As noted in his conversation with Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove (see the beginning of Chapter 5), Michael Jendalis is the son of Pernella Weathermay, who was related to both the Godefroys and the Weathermays. George Jendalis, his father, has no relation to the line, and his blood doubtless gave Michael the constitution to survive his legacy.

The fact that he was born at Gryphon Manor awakened Michael's latent talents at a very young age. Despite his frail physical appearance, Michael has faced down countless dangerous and angry spirits and amassed a considerable fortune from what spirits have told him.

Current Sketch

Michael long ago made peace with his physical weakness and learned to revel in his ability to walk the line between life and death. In some ways, death fascinates him. However, he is in no hurry to toss aside all the pleasures of this world, even though he understands the next one better than most. He knows that when death comes for him, his existence will shift only slightly, since he will return as a ghost.

Michael has never killed another human, since he well knows that its spirit would return to haunt him. He has, however, returned to Gryphon Manor and spoken with several of the spirits there, including his mother's. The irascible lord of the manor has threatened him, but has never harmed him — possibly because he has taken no action against either him or his family wealth. Michael also knows the predicament that Daniel Foxgrove would face should his daughters ever decide to investigate the place. Thus, the young medium intends to divert them by supplying them with as much information as they wish about the place while using his innate charm to cozen them into investigating other mysteries.

Michael currently lives in his father's home — a modest bungalow in Mordentshire. He is the youngest practicing medium in Mordentshire, and the best. He has fitted the place out with all the typical divination items that people expect to see, even though he does not require them. He has discovered over the years that people expect a certain degree of "performance" when consulting a medium, and he tries not to disappoint them.

Hiregaard

Narana Hiregaard, Granddaughter of Sir Tristen Hiregaard

Female human, Rogi/Ftrl: CR 2; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 1d6 plus 1d10; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +2 armor, +1 shield, +1 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grp +1/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/19–20, +1 *longsword*) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, 60 ft., masterwork shortbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hiregaard traits, trapfinding; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +4, Bluff +5, Climb +6, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +1, Jump +1, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Move Silently +3, Ride +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +4, Swim +5, Tumble +4, Use Rope +4.

Feats: Athletic, Combat Expertise.

Languages: Vaasi; Mordentish.

Signature Possessions: Leather armor, light steel shield, +1 *longsword*, masterwork shortbow, 12 arrows, *choker of protection* +1.

Description

Seventeen-year-old Narana Hiregaard is slender and athletic, with a narrow, tanned face that is framed by night-black, shoulder-length hair. A smile usually plays on her lips and in her brown eyes, but when confronted with injustice, dishonesty, arrogance, or ignobility, particularly among members of her own social class, an icy and dangerous expression sets itself upon her attractive features.

Narana is a life-long tomboy who hates the formal gowns of society functions, who dislikes spending time with her peers of either sex and prefers the company of the Hiregaard family's retainers. As the youngest daughter of Sasha Hiregaard, she lags behind her other siblings by over ten years and has always had her quirky ways indulged by protective brothers and doting parents and uncles. Her grandfather is particularly proud of her strong spirit and natural devotion to enforcing justice.

It has been acknowledged by the Hiregaards that Narana's destiny lies beyond the balmy plains of Nova Vaasa. When she was twelve, her father took her on a visit to Egertus to see the newly expanded harbor and the ships that were being launched there. Ever since, even while mastering



traditional Vaasi pursuits such as riding, she could talk of nothing but the sea and someday exploring the lands beyond the misty horizons. With suitors slow in coming (as she has older sisters who are far more demure in nature and therefore far better prospective wives), Narana has been encouraged by her parents and older siblings to follow whatever course her heart wishes.

Current Sketch

Last year, a group of merchants came to Sir Tristen seeking to borrow funds and men-at-arms to better protect their ships from growing pirate attacks on the Nocturnal Sea. (The merchants had already been rebuffed by other Vaasi lords, or found their demands for compensation too high.) The patriarch of the Hiregaard family promised a small amount of funds in exchange for cheaper cloud-berry wine from Tepest.

Narana, however, decided that more needed to be done. She convinced her parents and Sir Tristen to support and fund a warship operated by the Hiregaards. Narana has been supervising the preparation of the ship and the hiring of the crew and men-at-arms. She intends to lead the mission, but is wise enough to hire a seasoned captain and crew, as well as skilled adventurers to support her.

Even Prince Othmar has high hopes for the expedition, though he is dubious that a teenage girl should be leading it. Still, neither he nor any of Narana's elders in the Hiregaard family has seen any reason to doubt her ability to successfully mount this effort.

The *Waveproowler* is expected to set out on its first pirate hunt within the month.

Combat

Although Narana is a competent fighter and can already outride some of her older brothers, she is still reluctant to engage in combat unless absolutely necessary. She is not a coward, but she understands that her family hires men-at-arms and retainers for a reason. At the insistence of her father and grandfather, she never goes anywhere without having at least two bodyguards (human War2) nearby.

If a confrontation appears to be going badly for her bodyguards, Narana joins the fray, usually attempting to flank the enemy and attack them unawares. She is not at all above "fighting to win" (i.e., what other Hiregaards might call "fighting dirty"); she knows that she can't help those who rely upon her family if she is dead.

Mordenheim

Artisa Juvenoth (Eva Mordenheim)

Female human Exp5/scientist (biologist) 4: CR 8; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 5d6 plus 4d4; hp 31; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 deflection), touch 12, flat-footed 11; BAB/Grp +5/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d4–1/19–20 plus 1d2+1 nonlethal and stun, *hand stunner*) or +7 ranged (1d8/19–20, 80 ft., masterwork light crossbow); SA applied science, science; SQ discovery (robust health), mind over metaphysics, Mordenheim traits, scientific knowledge +8; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +13; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +8, Craft (alchemy) +16, Craft (metalworking) +12, Decipher Script +13, Gather Information +10, Handle Animal +3, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +12, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (nature) +20, Listen +13, Search +18, Spot +14.

Feats: Create Device (Wondrous Item)*, Investigator, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), University Education^H.



Languages: Lamordian*, Balok, Darkonese, Falkovnian, Mordentish

Applied science: 5/day—blindness/deafness, contagion, remove blindness/deafness, remove disease. Caster level 4th; save DC 14 + spell level.

Science: At will—cure minor wounds, inflict minor wounds, resistance, touch of fatigue¹, virtue; 8/day—cure light wounds, endure elements, inflict light wounds. Caster level 4th; save DC 14 + spell level.

Mind Over Metaphysics: Artisa gains a +2 bonus on all saving throw against spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.

Signature Possessions: Hand stunner, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +1, oil of preservation, wand of fireballs (25 charges; scientific item), power source (biocharger).

Description

Though she herself does not realize it, Artisa is really Eva Mordenheim, long-lost adopted daughter of Baron Mordenheim and his wife Elise. She is currently 30 years old and slight of build, with watery blue eyes and dishwater blond hair that she wears carelessly tied back. Like her long-lost adoptive parents, she is highly intelligent but slow to form friendships.

Background

As described in *Secrets of the Dread Realms*, Artisa was adopted as a child by Baron Mordenheim and his wife Elise. She spent a few years in their household, where Elise doted upon her. The baron's creation, Adam — a creature literally stitched together from the parts of corpses and animated by the baron's scientific skills and energy from the Dark Powers — was introduced to her as a brother. Unlike her adopted mother, Eva was not entirely repulsed by Adam, in whom she saw a bit of humanity. But Elise refused to accept Adam's continued presence, and the Mordenheims argued incessantly about what to do with him.

Eventually, Adam came to take Eva away with him, but Elise interrupted and attacked him. The incident so frightened Eva that she ran out onto the balcony of her room and fell over the railing. Adam caught her hand, but Elise attacked him again before he could drag Eva to safety, and the child fell to the ground.

The unconscious Eva was picked up by a servant and taken to be cared for by his sister, who healed her wounds and raised her as her own



daughter — for the girl had lost all memory of her previous life and of the Mordenheims. Though her second adopted mother wanted her to take a husband and settle down, the shy Eva (now called Artisa) had other ideas. She threw herself into her studies and won a prestigious fellowship at the university, where she earned a degree in biology and entered graduate school. There she met her husband-to-be and married at last.

Current Sketch

Artisa is married to a biologist she met in graduate school named Jervais Juvenoth, with whom she has five children. Though Artisa cares deeply about her family, she does not hesitate to leave the children in the care of a nanny while she and Jervais work on their research. Science is everything to her, and she and her husband enjoy animated discussions about biology — particularly on the subjects of preservation and healing. She entertains a fantasy of someday reanimating dead tissue, though even her husband considers that goal impossible. Jervais fears his wife's ambition, since he *does* believe in the gods. Artisa, however, does not, and her seeming inability to consider the morality of her research has driven a wedge between them.



Artisa and Jervais live in a three-story townhouse. The house has a nursery and plenty of play areas for the children, plus a large science library and two fully equipped laboratories, one for her and one for Jervais. The two employ a cook, three maids, a nanny and several tutors for the children. They once had a butler, but when he died they didn't replace him, since they so rarely entertain. (Rumor holds that he never received a proper burial, and that Artisa has his corpse in the house somewhere, perfectly preserved for some future use.)

Combat

Artisa dislikes physical combat and, if for some reason forced to fight, prefers to negate threats at a distance with her crossbow. When she cannot do so, she uses her *hand stunner* and other scientific devices to disable foes. If she manages to render a foe helpless, she might be tempted to take him to her laboratory to study his living body, hoping to gain more knowledge of the human system.

Renier

Javier Renier, Cousin Caught in the Middle

Male human, Rog4/Ftr3/recruiter 4: CR 11; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 4d6+4 plus 3d10+3 plus 4d6+4; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +2 armor, +1 deflection), touch 14, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +9/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+2/15–20, +1 *keen rapier*) or +13 ranged (1d10+1/x3, 50 ft., +1 *pistol* and +1 *bullet*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+2/15–20, +1 *keen rapier*); SA sneak attack +2d6, spells; SQ allergen (silver), evasion, inspiring oratory, Renier traits, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +5, Bluff +9, Climb +5, Cipher Script +5, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +6, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Gather Information +12, Hide +5, Intimidate +9, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +6, Perform (oratory) +11, Profession (mercenary) +6, Ride +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +11, Spot +6, Swim +3, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +5.

Feats: Back to the Wall^R, Courage^R, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms), Improved Initiative, Judge Difficulty*, Leadership, Negotiator, Persuasive, Sharp Wit*.

Languages: Balok*, Darkonese, Mordentish, Vaasi.

Recruiter spells known (3/2; DC 12 + spell level):
1st—*comprehend languages*, *read magic*, *remove fear*;
2nd—*daze monster*, *locate mark*^{G2}.

Signature Possessions: Leather armor, +1 *keen rapier*, +1 *pistol*, 10 +1 *bullets*, *ring of protection* +1, thieves' tools.

Description

A dark-haired man with a narrow face, a long narrow nose and brilliant blue eyes, Javier Renier is slender of build and moves with a natural predatory grace. He carries himself like the experienced fighting man that he is, and his face and arms show small scars from many battles and sword-fights.

Javier is an honest man who makes friends and enemies for life, a rarity among mercenaries — a man of scruples, morals and strong honor. He speaks gruffly and rather bluntly with everyone but his beloved wife and children. They alone are allowed to see his gentler side, something that has remained hidden from the world at large for the two decades he has worked as a mercenary and a military recruiter in Darkon, Falkovnia and Richemulot.

Background

Javier Renier was born in 720 BC, the son of Mikkel and Esther Renier, life-long residents of Darkon. From an early age he gravitated to the Renier tradition of adventuring and monster-hunting, and by his late teens he was gaining a solid reputation among adventurers. By 20, though, he'd already grown tired of associating with grave robbers and ghost-hunters, and he turned his talents to working as a hired guard for nobles and wealthy merchants. With them, he gained such a sterling reputation for trustworthiness and honesty that his employers started turning to him for advice as to whom else they should hire as men-at-arms.

It was only natural that Javier should change professions yet again, moving from sell-sword into an arranger of work for sell-swords. The move from warrior to organizer was prompted to a large degree by Javier's marriage to Mary Kasten, as he did not want to condemn the person he loved more than anything to widowhood before her time. Children soon followed.

Within two years, Javier had gained a reputation for lining up reliable and brave guards and troops for noble houses in Nova Vaasa and for



merchants and city leaders in Darkon. However, when the Grim Harvest toppled Azalin's government in 750, several of the pretenders to the Wizard-King's throne decided that Javier's skill as a military recruiter might be too valuable an asset for their competition and decided that he needed to be removed from the picture. No matter how emphatically he swore that he would limit his business to Nova Vaasa for the duration of the unrest in Darkon, he found that he was increasingly forced to fend off attacks from suspicious lordlings who would rule all of Darkon.

He was about to quit his homeland and relocate his family to the slightly better nation of Nova Vaasa when he received a letter from Jacqueline Renier, ruler of Richemulot, whom he had always assumed to be only a very distant cousin. Jacqueline's letter confirmed Javier's belief, but it also offered an invitation to move his family to Richemulot, where they would be safe. In return, Javier would use his recruiting talents to help Richemulot's nobles secure skilled guardsmen for the cities and towns of the domain — and he would still be able to command his usual fees. Javier and his wife gladly moved with their babies to what they hoped would be the security of Richemulot.

However, it did not take long before the feuding branches of the Renier family in Richemulot attempted to either lure Javier to support them exclusively, or attempted to manipulate him into a position where he would serve as a weapon against other family members. He quickly caught on to the danger and secretly sent Mary and the children back to Darkon where he hoped they would be safer.

Current Sketch

Javier is convinced that Lady Jacqueline is a kindly woman who is so consumed by her ambitions to build a grand nation for the people of Richemulot that she is unaware that she is surrounded by jealous, evil and outright insane relatives. Further, he has come to regret accepting help from Jacqueline's twin-sister Louise, who helped him become the premiere source of troops for Richemulot's nobles when he first relocated.

It seems that whenever Javier tries to see Jacqueline to warn her about the plots brewing against her, another noble with whom he has a contract needs to see him immediately. (He has long since realized that the affection that Jacqueline and Louise seem to have for one another is purely



for show; Louise hates her sister and may well be engaged in plots against her.)

Javier desperately wants someone he can trust to either take care of his business or to carry a message to Jacqueline. Unfortunately, the only people he trusts implicitly are needed to protect his family from known enemies in Darkon and suspected enemies in Richemulot.

Combat

Anyone who has had business dealings with Javier Renier would be amazed at his dirty and vicious fighting style. When it comes to battle, Javier is utterly practical and ruthless; whatever one has to do to carry the day is justifiable. While he is not one to slaughter defenseless foes and always accepts a surrender, he takes advantage of every opening he can find.

Louise Renier, Twin Sister of a Darklord

Female human, natural wererat, Ari8/Sor3 (human form): CR 12; Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger) (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 1d8+3 plus 8d8+24 plus 3d4+9; hp 69; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +3 armor, +1 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +7/+7; Atk +12 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +1 rapier of speed) or +13 ranged (1d10+2/x3, 50 ft., +2



pistol); Full Atk +12/+12/+7 melee (1d6+2/18–20, +1 rapier of speed); SA spells; SQ allergen (curry), alternate form, low-light vision, Path of the Rodent, rat empathy, Renier traits, scent, summon familiar; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +16 (+18 vs. rat-like beings), Climb +10, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +13 (+15 vs. rat-like beings), Forgery +6, Gather Information +14, Handle Animal +6 (+8 with rodents), Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Listen +15, Ride +8, Spot +7, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +11, Swim +10.

Feats: Alertness, Eschew Materials, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms), *Improved Initiative*, Iron Will, Sharp Ears*, *Weapon Finesse*.

Languages: Mordentish; Falkovnian.

Sorcerer spells known (6/6; DC 12 + spell level): 0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*alarm*, *charm person*, *magic missile*.

Path of the Rodent (Su): Having progressed to the Stage Three corruption, Louise has been granted several “blessings” by the Dark Powers, as follows (all modifiers are already included in the stat block above).

- **Stage One:** A veritable tunnel rat, Louise can always take 20 on Survival checks made to determine her direction or to keep from getting lost, and all such checks require only a free action.

- **Stage Two:** Even in human form, Louise can squeeze into a tiny area like a rat; she may move through tight spaces as if she were a Small creature. Any creature witnessing her contort her body in this manner must make a DC 10 horror save.

- **Stage Three:** Louise is immune to all diseases and poisons (except for her deadly allergy to curry). However, she must eat 1 pound of rotting refuse each day or she becomes sickened until she consumes the requisite material.

Signature Possessions: +1 rapier of speed, +2 pistol, 10 bullets, 10 silver bullets, *bracelets of armor* +3 (as *bracers*), *choker of mind shielding* (as *ring*), *ring of protection* +1.

Description

In human form, Louise Renier is a stunning woman whose age is virtually impossible to pin down. Although chronologically she is nearly 70, the Dark Powers have seen fit to extend her life, and she wears her advanced years as lightly as her twin sister; her appearance is closer to that of a

woman in her early thirties. She possesses the wiry, athletic build so often associated with people of Richemulose stock. Her beautiful face has vaguely exotic, angular features, and it is framed with black hair that has gone gray at the temples. She has green eyes that seem to be speckled with tiny gold flakes.

Contrary to the popular styles of her homeland, Louise tends to wear her long hair down and with little styling; unknown to all but a few, this apparent flaunting of convention is actually a means to hide the mangled ear that resulted from an old injury.

When in hybrid or dire rat form, Louise is covered with lustrous gray fur shot through with streaks of black. In either form, her left ear appears tattered and torn.

Background

Louise Renier was born on a faraway world in the year 719 BC, her family representing the closest thing that could be called a “ruling house” among wererats. She and her twin sister Jacqueline were the favored children of the patriarch, Claude Renier, and they spent their childhood and early adult years in competition for his affection. Jacqueline always seemed to be ever so slightly more favored than Louise, no matter how hard she tried. Even though it was Louise who discovered the magic portal that allowed the family to escape pursuers when all seemed lost, Claude *still* seemed to give Jacqueline more credit than she was due.

As the family established itself first in Falkovnia and later in Richemulot, Louise’s jealousy of Jacqueline grew into bitter hatred. At one point she attacked and tried to kill her twin, but all that she learned was that perhaps Jacqueline *was* better than she, for Louise barely escaped with her life. By the time she obtained magical healing, the scars on her body and the damage to her ear could not be undone.

The only time in the past 40 years that Louise and Jacqueline have been able to feel any sort of sisterly bond was the day Jacqueline finally became fed up with Claude. She shared her feelings with Louise, who — shocked to learn that her sister felt exactly as she did in terms of deserving but never receiving their grandfather’s approval and affection — joined her in staging a plan to remove him from their lives once and for all. Together they deduced that Claude was fatally allergic to cam-



phor and set up a situation where they could poison and then kill him.

At the last minute, however, Louise lost her nerve and Jacqueline executed their plan alone. With Claude dead, Jacqueline claimed the leadership of Richemulot, and made it clear to Louise that she would forever be a distant second.

Over the years, Louise has tried to break out from under Jacqueline's shadow by other means, either by attempting some unique contribution to the growth of Richemulot, or by starting a family of her own. All former efforts have, unfortunately, met with disaster of a variety of kinds, some through simple bad luck, and others because of sabotage from Renier cousins who want to limit the power the sisters wield. Fate — or perhaps some other force — has always stepped in to destroy or remove any suitable mates Louise locates, always just before she has had a chance to consummate a relationship.

Similarly, Louise has more than once resolved to leave Richemulot behind, for nothing she attempts seems to fully succeed there. Whenever she has been close to finalizing arrangements to relocate — Dementlieu continues to hold an allure — Jacqueline steps forward with a mixture of tasks, rewards and pleas to keep Louise nearby. Initially, these projects always seem to lead Louise to a position of enhanced prestige and power, and thus she is kept happy for a time, but soon it becomes clear that Jacqueline is also benefiting from Louise's efforts, her star continuing to shine brighter than that of her sister.

Over the past two decades, Louise has initiated a number of plots to embarrass Jacqueline, or to shift the power Jacqueline wields in the wererat community to herself. Invariably, the plots narrowly miss their target and instead eliminate or weaken enemies of Jacqueline. As a result, the wererats continue to be loyal to the great Jacqueline Renier, with Louise winning only that respect given the twin sister of the gifted leader.

The only area in which Louise has excelled beyond Jacqueline is that of magic. Since she was a small girl, Louise has shown potential as a sorcerer. However, her progress in the field has been slow, for she has a hard time staying focused on the mental exercises that could help her learn more spells.



Louise Renier

Current Sketch

Louise continues to dwell in her sister's shadow, and her resentment festers within her. Although she hides it well, her mood tends to vacillate from jealous hatred to seething anger, and thence to dark depression. When consumed with hatred and jealousy, she spends her days and nights conceiving and implementing complex plots intended to bring her sister low. In her angrier moments, she lashes out at anyone who has ever offended her in the slightest; this includes even those who are part of her schemes against Jacqueline but who have not accomplished enough in her eyes. The rage is even more severe if it is triggered by Jacqueline spoiling one of Louise's schemes.

When she sinks into depression, Louise stays locked within her rooms at Chateau Delanuit, or retreats to the Renier country cottage. Usually, the depression is lifted by news that one of her schemes appears to be coming to fruition (which brings her transitory bouts of happiness) or news of another successful venture or manipulation by Jacqueline (which tends to swing her back toward anger, jealousy and more scheming).



Louise has also grown determined that she will start a family of her own, regardless of what fate wishes. She has long been aware that Jacqueline becomes almost frantic to keep Louise involved with public and political life in Richemulot whenever her sister's departure from the domain appears certain. She has started to suspect that the unfortunate fates her would-be mates suffer may not fate alone conspiring against her: It could be Jacqueline guaranteeing that Louise will never have something as good as or better than what her twin has.

With this in mind, Louise has put forth quiet inquires and delicate feelers to determine what manner of wererat community exists in Dementlieu and where she might best purchase a home. Instead of announcing her intentions or publicly showing her mate, she plans to set everything up privately and then relocate. She remains paralyzed, however, by a lack of trustworthy minions or hirelings, and by her own attacks of depression and rage.

Louise has also sent out a call for a tutor who can help improve her skill as a sorcerer. In particular, she has come upon a spell that she desperately wants to learn, but currently lacks the skill to do so. (The spell in question is *rat eyes* [see Family Magic in Chapter Eight], and Louise thinks that it might be just the tool she needs to gain an edge over Jacqueline—or at least to give her the ability to spy on her sister and determine once and for all if she is actively sabotaging her life.)

Combat

Louise is not a highly skilled fighter, though she is competent; she attempts to avoid physical confrontation if at all possible. When moving about Richemulot, or when at the Renier country cottage, she is always accompanied by 5 human bodyguards: 2 normal humans (Ftr3) and 3 afflicted wererats (Rog2/Ftr2). Two of the wererats are also nearby when she is home at Chateau Delanuit. Her bodyguards engage hostiles first while Louise remains clear of the fray and attacks with her spells and her pistol.

When forced to fight, Louise uses her spells first. One lesson she learned in childhood was to always keep her true nature secret from the uninitiated: Louise never assumes her hybrid or rat forms in view of others unless she is facing wererats who are already aware of her true nature (alternately, she might do so if she has no other options and is facing certain doom, but this circumstance has never yet come up).

Von Zarovich

Talena Von Zarovich, "Strahd's Dagger"

Female human Wiz9/tyrant mage 5: CR 14; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 9d4 plus 5d4; hp 35; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 10; BAB/Grp +6/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d4–1/19–20, adamantine dagger); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4–1/19–20, adamantine dagger); SA spell-like abilities, spells; SQ summon familiar, tyrant's eye, Von Zarovich traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +16, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Listen +3, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +20, Spot +3.

Feats: Blood Spell*, Cold-Hearted*, *Enlarge Spell*, *Extend Spell*, *Jaded*^R, *Quicken Spell*, *Scribe Scroll*, *Silent Spell*, *Vampiric Regeneration*^C.

Languages: Balok; Luktar, Patterna, Vaasi, Sithican.

Spell-like abilities: 1/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *dominate person* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 16). Caster level 14th.

Wizard spells (4/5/5/5/3/3/2; DC 14 + spell level).

Signature Possessions: Adamantine dagger, *amulet of death ward*, *chaos diamond*, *minor cloak of displacement*, *ring of wolf summoning*^M.

Description

In addition to the family's cruel streak, Talena has inherited its legendary beauty; blessed with unnaturally pale skin and raven tresses, many claim that she is herself a vampire. Though she is actually human, Talena does nothing to discourage this belief, and in fact plays it for all it is worth, normally dressing in revealing and seductive clothing concealed by voluminous cloaks or other fanciful wraps.

Background

A distant cousin of Strahd Von Zarovich, Talena undertook the study of magic at a young age and found that she had a real knack for spellcasting—particularly those magics that controlled others' actions, either through compulsion or through the infliction of pain. As she advanced in power, she came to Strahd's attention and was immediately recruited into his service as a tyrant mage.



Talena progressed quickly, surprising her instructors with her enthusiasm and skill. She was initiated as a full-fledged tyrant mage within a single year, where most recruits took over three. Two years later she was one of the most successful and dangerous tyrant mages in all of Barovia, with dozens of arrests and executions to her credit. Soon she was known as “Strahd’s Dagger,” his left hand, a keen weapon that slays without hesitation.

Current Sketch

Talena Von Zarovich has certainly found her calling as Strahd’s living weapon. Her heart, never terribly warm to begin with, has grown icy cold, and now the only thing that can bring her even brief excitement is the prospect of killing an enemy of the state. Talena’s emotional state is equally chill; though she has taken many lovers, they usually fail to hold her interest, and she abandons them as readily as she takes them. The lucky ones are given a small reward and sent away, while the unlucky ones — those who irritate her in some way — are rewarded with a trip to the dungeons below Talena’s manse, where they make the acquaintance of her hounds or her hired torturers.

Talena lives in a grim stone keep on the Gundar River. She has a company of elite guardsmen at her service, and sometimes brings prisoners here for interrogation and torture in the cells that lie beneath the keep. She has a number of undead servants as well — they are Strahd undead (see *Ravenloft Gazetteer Vol. I*), given to her by Count Strahd as a reward for her faithful service.

Combat

Unlike many spellcasters, Talena adores combat, and even sometimes fights hand-to-hand after casting *Tenser’s transformation*, *stone skin* and perhaps a couple of other “buffing” spells. On dangerous missions she is always accompanied by one or more squads of her elite guards, and allows them to engage in any heavy fighting while she supports with spells.

Talena prefers destructive spells, particularly those that deal in pain, and also those that control the actions of others. She is quite fond of having her men encircle small groups of foes, then using her spells and spell-like abilities to force them to fight one another, finally sending in her escorts to pick up the pieces.

Andrez Weissritter, Troubled Knight

Male human Pal 9: CR 9; Medium humanoid (human) (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 9d10+9; hp 57; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. in armor; AC 21 (+1 Dex, +8 armor, +2 shield), touch 11, flat-footed 20; BAB/Grp +9/+12; Atk +15 melee (1d8+6/19–20, +3 *holy longsword*) or +12 ranged (1d6+5, 20 ft., +2 *shortspear*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+6/19–20, +3 *holy longsword*); SA smite evil 2/day, turn undead 7/day (as 6th-level cleric; +2 on turning checks); SQ aura of courage, aura of good, *detect evil*, divine grace, divine health, lay on hands (36 hp), *remove disease* 2/week, special mount, Von Zarovich traits (thirst for blood); AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: Concentration +3, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +9, Heal +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Ride +9, Sense Motive +5.

Feats: Cleave, *Courage*^R, Divine Might, *Heroism*^H, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Languages: Balok.

Paladin spells (2/1; DC 12 + spell level).

Signature Possessions: Masterwork full plate, masterwork heavy steel shield, +3 *holy longsword*, +2 *shortspear*.





Description

Andrez Weissritter cuts a heroic figure in his gleaming steel armor astride his paladin's mount, named Engel. In his prime, the 30-year-old paladin embodies the legends of Count Strahd Von Zarovich as a consummate warrior, before his embittered fall from grace. Andrez stands just over 6' tall. He has dark hair and eyes and classically handsome features. His muscular body testifies to his excellence in combat. He carries himself with poise and grace, though his face often bears a troubled look, as if he wages a constant inner war. He dresses in well-made, though not ostentatious clothing.

Background

Born nearly 30 years ago in a small Barovian village, young Andrez Kreigel (Weissritter is an assumed name; see Current Sketch) grew up on horror stories about the excesses and atrocities of the Von Zaroviches. In time, however, Andrez began to feel the slow and inexorable tug of his true heritage, and was horrified when his mother finally confessed that his family was related to the Von Zaroviches. Recoiling from his heritage, Andrez swore to follow a different path, and embraced the all-healing power of the Morninglord, taking up arms as a paladin.

Andrez's greatest secret is his connection to the Von Zarovich family, which he hides with near-fanatical devotion, even going so far as to change his surname to Weissritter (or "White Knight") and cutting off all contact with his family and friends from Barovia. He lives in fear that his secret will someday be discovered, even though he cannot say what might happen should this occur.

Alas, the taint of the Von Zaroviches is difficult to escape, and once he set off on his quest for justice, Andrez found that he had a love for battle—a bit too much love, in fact, for from time to time he stopped in the middle of a fight, hacking and slashing at foes who had already been slain in a berserk, bloodthirsty rage. In his heart, he knows that this is a result of his damned heritage, but he is determined to overcome it nonetheless. His conduct, while not frequent, has attracted attention, however, and some adventurers have refused to work with him, fearful of his strange "rages."

Andrez has redoubled his efforts to pursue the path of justice, trying with all his being to suppress his heritage. He has wandered the Dread Realms for years, gaining a reputation as a fearless, if somewhat unpredictable and occasionally dangerous, righter of wrongs. While freeing a group of kidnapped children from a lich in Valachan, he obtained his *holy sword*, and later crossed paths with the astoundingly lucky hero Robin Stillwater, with whom he adventured for a time until finally moving on, seeking to make contact with Rudolph Van Richten's adherents.

Current Sketch

Currently, Andrez has become closely associated with Gennifer and Laurie Weathermay-Foxgrove, hunting and destroying both undead and lycanthropes; his goal is only to rid the world of their evil, but he understands the necessity in helping the Weathermays to find new and more effective ways of defeating their foes. He has tried several times to atone for his rages and must be doing something right, as he somehow keeps his powers as a paladin.

Andrez has no real home or base of operations. He presently resides in Mordent, occupying quarters in a small keep leased by the Weathermays, but is there only part of the time. Most of Andrez's life is devoted to wandering the nearby countryside, hunting down the creatures of evil who threaten commoners. He has considered relocating to



Dementlieu and pursuing his mission (as well as gathering information for the Weathermays) in or around Port-a-Lucene.

Combat

Though he tries to fight according to the paladin's ideal — defending the weak, helping the helpless, showing mercy to defeated foes, converting evil to the side of light and truth — Andrez is always troubled by his heritage, although he has developed the strength of mind in general to avoid

savaging corpses and slaying those who have surrendered honorably.

When not in the throes of rage, Andrez eagerly charges into battle, usually leading the attack while mounted on Engel, hewing left and right with his +3 *holy longsword*. He generally charges the most powerful wicked foe that he can, and then keeps his target busy while his companions deal with lesser threats. He is always the last to retreat and, if not enraged, is only too willing to give up his life to save an innocent.

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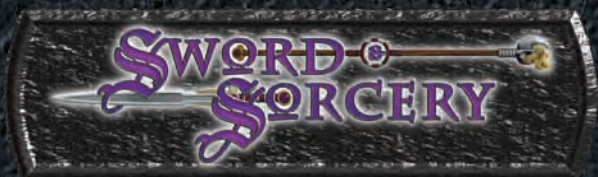
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