



THE HORSEMAN

An unknown force is inciting the people and creatures of the idyllic Greenhall to commit horrific acts of murder and carnage. Can the adventurers quell the towering rage of the rampaging Horseman? Part Thirteen of Misty Fortunes and Empty Hearts.

A 2-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *The Horseman*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Curse of Strahd*™ storyline season.

This adventure is designed for 5th through 10th-level characters, and is optimized for five 7th-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The majority of this adventure takes place in two locations that are, currently, part of the barony of Barovia, in the Ravenloft campaign setting. The barony was enlarged recently by the addition of lands that were originally part of the Forgotten Realms. The two locations are the: the run-down village of Oraşnou, and the Quivering Forest, peopled by a tribe of isolationist wood elves and formally part of the Forgotten Realms.

The D&D Adventurers League

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters's experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that continues their story.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a DCI number. This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the

D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

Preparing the Adventure

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the *D&D Basic Rules* or the *Player's Handbook*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure--such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

Ensure that each player has an official adventure logsheet for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player fills out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for experience, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she fill in the other values and write notes at the

conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters's spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting the Adventure

Throughout this adventure, sidebars provide information to assist you in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups and characters of higher or lower levels than the adventure is optimized for. This is typically used exclusively for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 7th-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters.
- Divide the total by the number of characters.
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down.

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition Party	Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Running the Adventure

As the Dungeon Master of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide™* has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

Downtime and Lifestyle

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the D&D basic rules or the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide* for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

Help From Who!?

For the current storyline season, *Curse of Strahd*, the rules for spellcasting services are changed for characters adventuring in Barovia. In Strahd's bleak domain, there simply aren't any settlements where spellcasters can accommodate such needs, and those places of worship that might otherwise provide spellcasting services are overrun with monsters. As such, unless otherwise detailed in an adventure, the only individual able to provide spellcasting services is **Jeny Greenteeth**.

Jeny Greenteeth's services may only be used prior to the beginning of this adventure, as the hag's domicile is currently being besieged by the ensorcelled wood elves of the Quivering Forest.

Refer to Page 7 of the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more details.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

Spellcasting Services

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds (1st level)</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

Acolyte Background

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

However, no religions have established places of worship here of sufficient size to provide spellcasting services. Because of this, characters with the Acolyte background gain no benefit from this trait.

Character Disease, Death, and Recovery

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or are killed. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the *D&D Basic Rules*).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

Death

A character who is killed during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to

spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all experience and rewards from that session (both those earned prior to and after death during that session) and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

Resurrection Madness

In Barovia, the souls of the dead are as trapped as the souls of the living. They become caught in the mists and can't travel to the afterlife. When a humanoid who has been dead for at least 24 hours returns to life, either by way of a spell or some supernatural means, it gains a random form of indefinite madness brought on by the realization that its spirit is trapped in Barovia, likely forever. To determine how this madness is expressed, roll on the Indefinite Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Vampirism and Lycanthropy

Vampires and lycanthropes are not included in the allowed rules for character creation or advancement (see the *D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide*). These conditions grant characters powers and abilities that are not suitable for organized play, and typically impose a restricted or prohibited alignment. As such, characters afflicted with vampirism or lycanthropy must have the affliction cured before the start of their next episode or adventure.

Afflicted characters have the following options:

- Lycanthropes can be cured with a *remove curse* spell. This spell is available as a spellcasting service for 90 gp (though Jeny Greenteeth might have additional requirements; see "Spellcasting Services" earlier in this guide).
- Vampires can be cured by a *wish* spell cast by a fellow player character (*wish* is not available as a spellcasting service). Alternatively, a vampire character can be slain and returned to life with *raise dead*, at the normal cost of 1,250 gp. If a character chooses to end a vampiric curse in this manner, the Dark Powers (see Page 8, *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*) **do not** offer a free *raise dead*, though Jeny Greenteeth might be willing to make a deal (see "Spellcasting Services" earlier in this guide).

An afflicted character who does not end his or her curse is retired from play until able to do so by one of the means above, or through the application of DM rewards to the character.

The Demiplane of Dread

This adventure is set within the *Ravenloft* campaign setting, in the lands of Barovia which exists in the Demiplane of Dread. There are several atmospheric and thematic elements to keep in mind at all times while running your game:

The Land is Bleak

By the will of the Dark Powers, the sun never fully shines in the lands of Barovia. Even during the day, the sky is dimmed by fog or storm clouds, or the light is strangely muted. Barovian daylight is bright light, yet it isn't considered sunlight for the purpose of effects and vulnerabilities, such as a vampire's, tied to sunlight. Nevertheless, Strahd and his vampire spawn tend to stay indoors most of the day and venture out at night, and they are subject to sunlight created by magic.

Winter in Barovia

The winters are cold, wet, and stormy here. The natives of the Demiplane are prepared—well, as prepared as they can hope to be.

The characters, however, are unfamiliar with the realm. Thankfully, the region they came from was experiencing the worst winter in living memory, and are likely to possess winter clothing. If they are not, then, preparations are in order. The village has a single shop called The Hare & Hair where they are able to procure such supplies if they wish.

A dark sentience infuses the very soil, twisting and contorting everything within. In places where you would normally expect wildlife such as deer, rabbits, or squirrels, you instead find wolves, rats, and mangy dogs. Vegetation is rotted and dead, and forests are filled mostly with gnarled, thick trees with bare branches. Colorful, vivacious things simply do not exist.

The Denizens of Oraşnou

Most Oraşnou residents are mundane laborers, farmers, fletchers and other folk who fall under common professions. They typically have gaunt features, as crops often fail to take root, and creatures of the night frequently kill and devour their livestock.

Most are sullen, and often filled with fear, be it from the lands themselves, what lies within them, Lord Strahd, or their own tyrant of a Burgomaster; Ivan Randovich and his cronies.

Be sure to play to the mindsets of these people who live threadbare existences, constantly on the precipice of horror during your roleplaying encounters.

As is the case with most of the denizens of Barovia, most of the people that reside in the village don't possess a soul. These people are empty shells created by Strahd's consciousness to populate his domain. However, about one in every ten people in Barovia are actually possessing of a soul—the souls of the original denizens of Barovia before its transition into the Demiplane. When a being with a soul dies in Barovia, its soul remains trapped until it is reincarnated later. Souls tend to wear clothing with a splash of color or have other features that demonstrate even a small bit of individuality.

Alterations to Magic

The land of Barovia resides in its own demiplane, isolated from all other planes, including the Material Plane. No spell—not even *wish*—allows one to escape from Strahd's domain. *Astral projection*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, and similar spells cast for the purpose of leaving Barovia simply fail, as do effects that banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts that have properties that transport or banish creatures to other planes. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal, such as the *etherealness* spell and the Etherealness feature of incorporeal undead, is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from Strahd's domain is pulled back into Barovia upon leaving that plane.

For the purpose of spells whose effects change across or are blocked by planar boundaries (such as *sending*), Strahd's domain is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Barovia, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such an extra-dimensional space (such as that created by *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*) are subject to the same restrictions as magic cast in Barovia.

While in Barovia, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. In addition, spells that allow contact with beings from other planes function normally—with one provision: Strahd can sense when someone in his domain is casting such a spell and can choose to make himself the spell's recipient, so that he becomes the one who is contacted.

Cosmetic Spell Modifications

At your discretion, a spell can be modified cosmetically to enhance the horrific atmosphere of Ravenloft. A few examples are presented below:

Alarm. Instead of hearing a mental ping when the alarm is triggered, the caster hears a scream.

Bigby's Hand. The conjured hand is skeletal.

Find Familiar. The familiar is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

Find Steed. The summoned steed is undead instead of being a celestial, a fey, or a fiend, and is immune to features that turn undead.

Find the Path. A child's spirit appears and guides the caster to the desired location. The spirit can't be harmed and doesn't communicate.

Fog Cloud. Misty, harmless claws form in the fog.

Gust of Wind. A ghostly moan accompanies the summoned wind.

Mage Hand. The summoned hand is skeletal.

Maze. The surfaces of the demiplane's maze are made of mortared skulls and bones.

Phantom Steed. The steed resembles a skeletal horse.

Rary's Telepathic Bond. Characters linked together by the spell can't shake the feeling that something vile is telepathically eavesdropping on them.

Revivify. A creature restored to life by a *revivify* spell screams upon regaining consciousness, as though waking from some horrible nightmare.

Spirit Guardians. The spirits appear as ghostly, skeletal warriors.

Wall of Stone. A wall created by the spell has ghostly faces sculpted into it, as though tortured spirits were somehow trapped within the stone.

Count Strahd Von Zarovich

Lord Strahd is the Darklord of Barovia. He rules his domain from Castle Ravenloft as Strahd IX; a descendent of Strahd I. In actuality, Strahd I and Strahd IX are the one and the same-- a vampire. As a mortal, Strahd fell in love with Tatyana Federovna; the bride of his younger brother Sergei. In his jealousy, Strahd murdered his brother and became the Darklord of Barovia; which was swept away into the Demiplane along with its ruler. Since then, Strahd is cursed to seek incarnations of Tatyana for eternity. NOTE: Strahd is not present in this adventure.

Not Without Humor

The bleak and oppressive landscape must give way now and then to some moments of respite, not only does this break up the taxing mindset that Ravenloft can evoke, but it also provides good chances for horror to sneak back up on players just as they least expect it.

Adventure Background

The village of Oraşnou has been through dark times of late, including the absence of Burgomaster Ivan Randovich and the dual threats of starvation and orc attack. Likewise, the wood elves of the Quivering Forest have had to contend with the transformative threat of the Demiplane of Dread. Little do both peoples realize that the greatest catastrophe is yet to come: the rampage of the mongrelfolk Omou, driven insane by his obsession with the beautiful and powerful Barovian witch, Esmæ Amarantha.

As Esmæ's plotting draws near to its conclusion, she has seen fit to dismiss Omou's grotesque affections, causing him to run amok in his anguish. Omou is the only minion remaining who possesses the firsthand knowledge of Esmæ which would be needed in order to contain the vestige that is the source of her terrible power.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is divided into three parts.

Part 1. Bloody Demolition. The adventurers are escorting the Wearer in Purple, Ixusaxa Terrorsong, to a camp a friend has established just outside the village of Oraşnou. As Ixusaxa wraps up her exposition regarding the plans of Esmæ Amarantha, the effects of Omou's rampage cause the village to become a scene of carnage. Many within the village have fallen under Omou's influence and are killing and injuring themselves and each other and otherwise destroying the village. As the adventurers's efforts draw to a close, they will spot the stunted, broken silhouette of Omou atop his mount, resembling a *dullahan*, or headless horseman.

Part 2. Dark Awakening. The adventurers track Omou to the nearby Quivering Forest, where he has driven the forest guardians into a homicidal frenzy. The remaining wood elves are putting up a token resistance against the bloodthirsty awakened trees and treat.

Part 3. A Lost and Broken Dream. The adventurers finally catch up to Omou. In his anguish he reveals his unrequited love for Esmæ, and psionically shares his knowledge of Esmæ's vestige if defeated.

Dread vs. Gore

The Horseman is, at its heart, a tragic tale of obsession and misplaced affection brought to a grim end. The key imagery and feel of the adventure should be aimed at conveying a

sense of dread and sorrow. Lurid descriptions can further this mood, but stay mindful of the tone when you describe a scene.

Many of the images and situations described in the adventure's scenarios may disturb players of a young age or sensitive character. Conversely, some groups may find the gruesome aspects of the adventure to be entertaining. You should adjust the tone of the adventure for their specific group, keeping in mind that while many creatures and characters meet a bloody end in this adventure, it is up to the Dungeon Master to determine what works best for individual players.

The majority of *The Horseman* is of a narrative bent and designed to be played within two hours, so storytelling is emphasized over a more mechanical game experience. You might want to review the nonlethal combat options such as grappling or knocking a creature out from Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*, or spells such as *sleep* from Chapter 11 of the same volume.

Adventure Hook

If the characters begin this adventure from within the *Forgotten Realms* or a setting other than *Ravenloft*, have them be transported to the Demiplane of Dread just outside Oraşnou via an unnaturally thick fog or mist, while traveling overland, preferably at night. Proceed to "Welcome to Barovia" (see Part 1, below).

A "Friend" on the Mend. The orcs did not treat Ixusaxa well, but despite her weakened state she wanted to leave the area and the company of the orcs quickly. She has assured the characters that has information that could lead to the return of the lands to Toril but that they must be closer to the village of Oraşnou for the information to be of use.

What The Helm Are You Doing Here?! If the characters are newly arrived in Barovia, simply introduce them to Ixusaxa Terrorsong and Sybil by having them encounter the two women on the road to Oraşnou Village.

Welcome to Barovia

Some characters may be arriving from Faerûn for the first time. For those characters describe a heavy fog bank rolling through their travel path while they are in the Quivering Forest, and when it eventually clears, they are on the outskirts of a small mountain village. It's heavy-handed, but such is the way of the Demiplane.

Any character that participates in this adventure earns **The Demiplane of Dread** story award if they do not have it already. They should be made aware that until this story award is removed, they may not

participate in any adventure that does not take place in Barovia.

NOTE: This adventure may touch on some morally dark moments. Please be careful to gauge your player's comfort with such things, and remember that the goal of a *Dungeons & Dragons* game is for everyone to have fun!

Curse of Strahd Adventures

The adventures for the Curse of Strahd Season of Dungeons and Dragons Adventurers League deliver the most impactful experience when played in numeric order (i.e.: 04-01, then 04-02, and so on) but this is not required. Please carefully read the following pages and be prepared to adjust encounters, especially where key NPCs are concerned! Although DM tips may be found in the adventure, they are unlikely to cover every table or situation.

For a *Ravenloft* game, the world itself should be treated with great respect—it is a character unto itself, and the Dark Powers rarely respond positively to hand-waving and outright dismissal...

Any character afflicted with lycanthropy must receive the benefits of a *remove curse* at the end of this adventure in order to be rid of this horrible affliction. Characters that choose to remain afflicted or cannot afford this spell, become NPCs and are no longer playable in D&D Adventurers League games.

Currently, the only entities able to provide spellcasting services is the hag, Jeny Greenteeth and the elven mage, Aya Glenmiir. For the time being, Jeny happily accepts gold as payment for these services. In time, however, the hag may demand more...abstract...forms of compensation. An upcoming article on www.dndadventurersleague.org will provide additional information on Jeny Greenteeth.

Part 1. Bloody Demolition

There is nothing like the silence and loneliness of night to bring dark shadows over the brightest mind.

—Washington Irving, *Bracebridge Hall*

The Wearer in Purple

The adventure begins with the adventurers escorting Ixusaxa Terrorsong, a Wearer of Purple (a title used in the Cult of the Dragon) to a camp on the outskirts of the village of Oraşnou, originally set up by Sybil Rasia.

Ixusaxa in Characters's Custody

If the characters participated in DDAL04-12 *The Raven*, and have Ixusaxa Terrorsong in their custody, read or paraphrase the following:

The trip back through the Vanishing Hills was not uncontested. It took all of your group's skills to get the battered women to this camp, just outside of Oraşnou. Ixusaxa insisted that for her information to be of any help, they would need to be closer to the village. Sybil agreed, and offered a camp she had felt the need to prepare outside of the village.

Ixusaxa Not in Characters's Custody

If the players did not participate in DDAL04-12 *The Raven*, or do not otherwise have Ixusaxa Terrorsong in their custody, read the following:

It was sheer luck that had your party stumbling across the two bedraggled women. While both are mud splattered, the quality and style are very different. One is wearing purple robes common among mages while the other's dress is a simple colorful skirt, with a plain shirt and leather vest. The latter woman, who identified herself as Sybil Rasia, asked for your assistance in reaching her hidden camp just outside the village of Oraşnou. The women had gotten separated from their original escort during an attack by wolves.

Her companion identified herself as Ixusaxa, a Wearer of Purple of the Cult of the Dragon. Given the motives and practices of the Cult of the Dragon, you might have denied her – but she claims to have important information regarding the troubles of late, and how to put them to an end. She has promised to reveal all once you convey her to Sybil's sanctuary.

Development

Sybil's hidden camp consists of a dry, concealed cave within a mile of Oraşnou's outskirts. The cave has been swept clean of debris and fitted with a rough grate to keep out animals. A large sea chest resides in one corner, locked, waterproofed and full of rations (twenty-days's worth). Two straw bunks are against the wall near the chest, and the opposite wall features an earthen fire pit dug out of the floor. A pair of benches and a rectangular table are the sole concession to comfort.

Ixusaxa: Conversation; not Exposition

Depending on the party's experiences dealing with the Cult of the Dragon up to this point, the adventurers may be loath to trust the wizard's word. Emphasize how Ixusaxa's captivity in the camp of the Bloodhand Orcs has exhausted her beyond any capacity for duplicity. Despite her egotism and general lack of empathy, Ixusaxa is actually quite grateful to the adventurers for their help.

A great deal of information is conveyed to the players during this encounter. It can be overwhelming for players to sit through exposition of this magnitude, so do your best to have Ixusaxa engage the adventurers on a conversational level. Have Ixusaxa ask the adventurers questions when possible, to make the conversation feel organic.

If this is being run as a one-off adventure, you need not relay every detail to the adventurers. Simply imply that Esmæ, through Omou, is bringing death and ruin to the region, and that capturing Omou may be the only way to achieve a favorable end.

Once the party arrives, Ixusaxa seats herself on one of the bunks and offers the benches to the party. The wizard stays true to her word, sharing the following information with the adventurers:

"I was seeking a way to appease the orcs by finding a way back to our native plane. My first attempt at scrying was blocked by wards, but when I tried again, it worked. Unfortunately, the information was not something I felt the brutish orcs could use to our advantage. You however, may be able to defeat Esmæ. By luck, or perhaps by someone's will, I was able to glean a great deal of information."

Ixusaxa provides the following information to the characters, some of which they might know from previous adventures:

- Esmæ was a young girl when she first beheld Strahd von Zarovich, the Darklord of Barovia. She found herself enamored of his power and confidence, and found her way into his service as a Barovian Witch.

- Esmæ, obsessed with obtaining Strahd’s affection, entered the Vault beneath the legendary Amber Temple. There she communed with the Vestige of the Evening Glory. The vestige then merged with the love-struck Esmæ, granting her the power to stretch Barovia’s borders. Hence our being drawn into this accursed place.
- Esmæ’s plan is to obtain four possessions of Strahd’s true love, Tatyana, in order to transform herself into Tatyana and finally become the object of Strahd’s desires.
- Tatyana’s four possessions consist of a *powder box*, a *bone comb*, a pair of *silk gloves*, and a *silver mirror*. Esmæ sent four of her servants, whom she called her Obsessions, to gather Tatyana’s items from around the countryside.
- The first three of Esmæ’s Obsessions have either been defeated or disappeared in recent weeks after delivering their charges to their mistress.
- The last remaining Obsession, Omou, was a crippled leper who was transformed Barovia into a mongrelfolk with vast psionic powers upon entering the Mists. Omou yearns to transform his hideous form into one that matches what he feels is his inner beauty. For then he believes his attempt to win Esmæ’s heart, whom he has lusted after since their first meeting, would be successful. He still has hope that by bringing the item, she will look on him with favor.
- As far as Ixusaxa knows, Omou is on his way to deliver *Tatyana’s silver mirror* to Esmæ, who already has the other three of Tatyana’s possessions in her clutches. If Esmæ is permitted to transform into Tatyana, the vestige’s power stands to increase to the point where a great deal more of the Realms will be absorbed into the Mists.
- All is not lost. The locket recovered from the Amber Temple (in DDAL04-10 *The Artifact*) can be used to separate Esmæ from the vestige with which she has merged, effectively ending her threat. However, the locket must be attuned to the spiritual impressions of the target—Esmæ—and Omou is the last living creature to have seen her firsthand. He must be confronted and questioned, and he is exceedingly dangerous.

She answers any question about Esmæ and her plotting and can fill in any lapses in information that may have been missed in previous adventures.

Once the adventurers have finished their questioning of Ixusaxa, it is late in the evening. The nearest safe place to stay the evening is the Seven Tables establishment in the village. Ixusaxa and Sybil

are completely exhausted, and wish only to rest in this shelter once the adventurers leave.

I Left the Locket in My Other Armor!!!

The adventure is written as if the characters have the locket which would have been found in DDAL04-10 *The Artifact*. If no one at the table played that adventure, or if they failed to acquire it then Ixusaxa has the locket. She got it from one of the orcs. They had apparently ambushed someone who was carrying it. Likely the escaping but wounded Burgomaster fell victim to one of their foraging parties.

It Takes a Village to Destroy a Village

Whether or not the adventurers elect to head toward Oraşnou, they cannot help but notice the chaos erupting in the village as they leave Sybil’s hidden camp. Read the following as they leave:

As you leave the hidden camp and round the base of the foothill, you are greeted by the faint smell of smoke, the flickering glow of firelight, and the sound of faraway shouting. Even from a mile away, you can see the horrible truth: Oraşnou is burning.

Breathless Pacing

As previously stated, *The Horseman* is designed to be played in two hours. For this reason, you may wish to emphasize speed in the pursuit of Omou across the village of Oraşnou as well as the Quivering Forest. Taking even an hour’s rest between the three combat encounters in this scenario could have disastrous consequences, so stress the importance of saving as many innocents from Omou’s ravages as possible.

Omou has traveled through Oraşnou following his disastrous last meeting with Esmæ. After presenting Esmæ with *Tatyana’s mirror*, the mongrelfolk confessed his feelings for her—feelings that she roundly rejected. Omou, overcome by the pain of his unrequited affection, is psionically broadcasting his overwhelming obsession for his fondest desire to everyone around him.

Roleplaying the Villagers

The villagers of Oraşnou have been programmed by Omou to fulfill their personal needs in a way that completely overrides their usual attitudes toward violence and self-preservation. Few villagers are capable of speaking sentences of more than one or two words and they do not stop pursuing their goals in order to talk. Any villager forcibly prevented from performing their maniacal task immediately attacks, fighting with strength and purpose. Villagers fight against their bonds

if subdued, but captured villagers feel their compulsions wearing off after twenty rounds.

The village of Oraşnou is a scene of chaos. The entire settlement has been caught up in Omou's wave of obsession, neglecting even such basic instincts as self-preservation in the pursuit of their goals. When Omou was heading through the village, he observed the industriousness of the people, and the obsessions he instilled in them follow suit. Many of these villagers must be restrained in order to prevent injury to themselves or others, until Omou's obsession power wears off. For instance:

- The village baker is found gorging himself with pastries and breads and even raw dough and flour, which can eventually lead to asphyxiation in the pursuit of his gluttony if he is not stopped.
- The village's **dominated militia**, after killing their lone sergeant began to hunt the villagers, causing the adventurers to come across arrows lodged in the backs of helpless folk, corpses scattered in flight. The hunters eventually begin to hunt each other until all but one of the hunters are dead. There are three hunters and four frightened commoners being hunted.
- The **dominated lumberjacks** of the village are chopping relentlessly at the trees which have not yet been felled, their hands bloody. Some have felled buildings, including Fillar Esven's storefront (see below.) There are two dominated lumberjacks at large in the village.
- Esven himself is unconscious and trapped under a collapsed beam in the back storeroom, bleeding profusely and near death. If he is not freed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) test and healed by at least one hit point, Esven dies by the end of the encounter.
- The dishwasher and wait staff working in the kitchen of the Seven Tables establishment have scalded themselves badly, endlessly washing every dish again and again in piping hot water.
- The village carpenter has overturned a barrel full of nails and is relentlessly pounding nail after nail into half-finished furniture in their workshop. The constant pounding of nails has broken the head off of their finishing hammer, so the carpenter is pounding nails with the heel of their hand, with bloody results.
- Two cooks from the Seven Tables, as well as several people in their homes, have started cooking every scrap of their food stores, causing numerous fire hazards. In their mania they may

even begin to butcher and "prepare" the bodies of the dead scattered around the village.

Many more scenes like this may be found around Oraşnou so allow yourself to create any more that you can dream up. There should be a cap of fifteen villagers for the characters to save before the villagers begin to shake off the effects of Omou's influence, so the adventure can keep rolling along.

To reflect the mad strength and ferocity bestowed upon the villagers by Omou's compulsion, these villagers are more dangerous than ordinary commoners.

The encounter ends once fifteen **dominated villagers/militia/lumberjacks** have been restrained, killed, otherwise dealt with or ten minutes have gone by.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak or Weak Party:** Decrease the number of dominated villagers, hunters, and lumberjacks to 8 in total.
- **Strong Party:** Replace five of the dominated villagers with **dominated militia**.
- **Very Strong Party:** Replace three of the dominated villagers with **dominated militia** and replace two more dominated villagers with **dominated lumberjacks**.

Development

After the requisite number of villagers have been dispatched, restrained, knocked unconscious or ten minutes have passed (whichever comes first), the remaining villagers begin to snap out of Omou's compulsion. One of the surviving militia, only seeing Omou's stunted silhouette atop a horse, reports that they spotted "*a great headless hulkin' figure ridin' away into the moonlight*" just before the compulsion took hold, and can point the adventurers in the direction of Omou's departure.

Ten minutes of poking around and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check of subsequent investigation reveals that Omou stole one of the larger draft horses from a farm on the village outskirts and headed towards the edge of the Quivering Forest. To make matters worse, one of the village children who normally tends the animal is not accounted for and may be following the stolen horse or has been taken captive.

Omou is well away at this point and any more time spent resting or touring the village increases the difficulty of tracking him. For every ten minutes spent in the village after his tracks are found, increase the difficulty of all Wisdom (Survival) rolls

in the beginning of the next section by 2, to reflect the additional damage Omou has managed to inflict on the psyche of the forest's guardians.

Troubleshooting

It is possible for the adventurers to simply avoid the village once they see the goings-on, though walking away from people so clearly suffering should tear at the consciences of any good-aligned characters.

Finding Omou's tracks without the aid of the surviving hunters takes an hour. In that time the village has torn itself apart and nearly all of the villagers have died in the fracas. No experience should be awarded for this encounter if the adventurers do not come to the villagers's aid.

XP Award

For each dominated villager that the characters restrain or subdue, award each character 50 XP, to a maximum of 15 villagers (max award 750 XP).

Part 2. Dark Awakening

He who would study nature in its wildness and variety, must plunge into the forest, must explore the glen, must stem the torrent, and dare the precipice.

—Washington Irving, *Philip of Pokanoket*

Into the Quivering Forest

The adventurers follow the tracks left by Omou the mongrelfolk and his draft horse mount to the edge of the Quivering Forest. The tracks eventually lead to the settlement inhabited by the Greenhall Elves.

Normally isolationist to the point of xenophobia, the Greenhall Elves have been decimated by raging forest guardians, and shortly be made extinct unless the adventurers jump into the situation. With them is Aya Glenmiir is with the elves.

The forest is alive—quite literally—with animated trees grasping and tearing at any creatures unwary enough to venture within the reach of their branches.

General Features

The Quivering Forest has the following general features:

Area. The tracks lead the adventurers through a mile and a half of dense, old-growth forest.

Hazards. It takes three successful DC 11 Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate through the forest without losing track of Omou's progress—though this means that the characters are rushing through the forest at speed. After each check, each character takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from **passing branches**. However, if the Wisdom (Survival) check succeeds by 5 or more, the characters manage to avoid this damage.

In addition, for every ten minutes spent lingering in Oraşnou after being shown Omou's trail, the DC is increased by 2 to reflect the additional time Omou has had to infect the forest's guardians with his madness.

Signs. A character succeeding on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices great pits and holes in the ground here and there throughout the forest. Anyone who investigates the holes and successful on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check realizes that many of the larger trees have uprooted themselves and are making their way toward the Greenhall encampment.

Light. The old-growth forest has a dense canopy and is extremely dark with only the moon for steady illumination. Adventurers with darkvision can see

well enough, but adventurers with normal vision require light sources to perform actions in the darkness without disadvantage.

Exits. If the adventurers can survive their trek through the forest and make their three successful tracking rolls, they emerge from the forest into the Greenhall encampment.

XP Award

If the characters make their way through the Quivering Forest without taking any damage, award each character 100 XP.

Last Stand of the Greenhall Elves

Omou's madness has enraged the dark fey guardians of the Quivering Forest. Driven mad by their obsession to protect the forest at all costs, the awakened trees and treants, normally at peace with the Greenhall elves, have been incited to slaughter, and those of the surviving wood elves who have resisted Omou's pull to insanity are fighting for their lives, making themselves targets so others from their settlement might escape the forest's mad wrath.

The tracks have led you to a clearing in the dark woods. Roughly circular the clearing is strewn with the bodies of elves; seven elves are left standing. Among the dead elves, one in robes still clutches a glowing staff. Six elves yet stand--forming a defensive circle around a seventh; a female elf with black hair. The elves's bows and attention focused on a treat and two other moving trees.

The trees surrounding the clearing appear to be preventing the elves from escaping. The hacked and charred remains of two trees give evidence that the elves do not intend to go down without a fight.

General Features

The area has the following general features;

Area. The elves are penned in a roughly circular clearing 120 feet in diameter. The thrashing limbs of the awakened forest trees are keeping them from making an escape.

Signs. It does not require a check to see that there are no less than twelve wood elf corpses littering the forest floor. Two awakened trees have been felled, one chopped and hacked with swords and arrows, the other burnt to cinders.

Light. The clearing is brightly lit thanks to a *light* spell cast on the end of a staff clutched by a dead wood elf in the center of the clearing. The thrashing limbs of the awakened trees grant disadvantage to

any attack rolls targeting creatures within the clearing from outside of the clearing.

Exits. All possible trails leading out of the clearing are being menaced with the thrashing boughs of **awakened trees** still rooted in the ground. Leaving the clearing invariably results in the escapee sustaining 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage, though a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage.

Inhabitants. The remaining six **wood elf scouts** are back to back in the center of the clearing, firing arrows rapidly at the **treant** and its two tree companions (summoned through use of the treant's *animate trees* ability) menacing them. Within their circle is a black haired elven woman (characters that participated in DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists* or DDAL04-02 *The Beast* recognize her as **Aya Glenmiir**). Without her spellbook, Aya has only cantrips available to her now.

The treant elects to attack mainly via hurling rocks and stumps at the elves with bone-shattering accuracy, sending its animated counterparts to engage the elves in melee combat. Intervention on the part of the adventurers turns the attention of the treant to them and buys the scouts enough time to marshal a fighting retreat into the forest. The woman, however, is injured (has only 20 hp) and down to cantrips and her dagger for offense.

The elves retreat to the edge of the clearing farthest from the treants and continue to fire arrows for three rounds before escaping into the forest, their natural abilities allowing them to escape the awakened trees. Once the combat has cleared, they do not stick around out of gratitude; they get while the getting is good.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Replace the **treant** and its **animated** counterparts with four **awakened trees**.
- **Weak party:** Have the treant create only one animated counterpart with the *animate trees* ability.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add two awakened trees to the encounter.

Development

Once the treant has been defeated and the surviving wood elves make their escape, the awakened trees surrounding the clearing begin to quiet as the Omou's influence begins to ebb. The calming of the forest reveals a trail left by Omou and his rapidly tiring mount, moving toward a series of caves

located near the Vanishing Hills. The tracks left by the dying mount are obvious in the moonlight as the forest thins out.

XP Award

For each elf survives, award each character 50 XP, to a maximum of 6 elves (max award 50 XP).

Treasure

The dead elf clutching the staff bearing the *light* spell also wears the robes of a wizard. He also wears a *ring of animal influence* on a leather strap around his neck.

Searching the other dead elves turns up five pearls worth 100 gp each, an exquisitely crafted gold and sapphire torc worth 850 gp, and a backpack containing a *potion of flying*, a *spell scroll of water breathing* and a *spell scroll of water walk*.

Part 3. A Lost and Broken Dream

We live the same way that we dream—alone.
—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Omou Unhorsed

As the adventurers follow the broken vegetation left by Omou spurring on his dying mount with reckless abandon, they eventually come upon the hapless mount's corpse. Bloody foam is flecked around the draft horse's nose, a clear sign of having been ridden to death. Any adventurer who makes a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Nature) check recognizes, however, that exhaustion was only part of it—the horse's eyes are bloodshot to an extreme degree that was likely brought about by Omou's mental powers forcing the horse to bend to his will.

Past the horse, Omou has left a trail of devastation as the crazed mongrelfolk has crashed through the underbrush without any concern for his personal safety. The trail is very easy to follow and requires no check to detect. After perhaps half a mile, the trail leads into a cave near the borders of the Vanishing Hills. The characters see a dim, flickering light coming from within the cave as the group approaches.

Exploring the cave, which is well-swept and clean, leads them a quarter-mile below the Vanishing Hills before the adventurers finally encounter the broken Omou, in an oval-shaped cave the likes of which cannot be easily spotted from the passage.

A Shrine to Memory

The shrine has the following general features:

Area. The dirt floor of this large chamber is covered in artwork, all depicting a woman's face, beautiful in form, of a quality that borders on photorealistic. Some of these depictions are busts lovingly carved from granite with an eye for detail that would put master sculptors to shame. Some of these expressions are meticulously painted directly on the cave wall from soft pastel pigments. At the far end of the oval, a makeshift shrine has been constructed, the centerpiece of which is an enormous version of Esmæ's face carved directly into the rock wall as a bas-relief.

Light. The chamber is lit by over a hundred separate candles melted over natural recesses in the rock walls. The result is a flickering, soft, but bright

light specifically tailored to illuminate the features depicted in the chamber's art.

As you go deeper into the cave, the faint lyric sound of a flute can be heard echoing.

Under the huge bas-relief (a **guardian portrait**) at the far end of the chamber, the wasted, pathetic form of the canid-raptor **Omou** half-sits, half-lies against the wall. He is playing a primitive but well-made wooden flute with his mismatched hands, tears spilling from his uneven eyes over his scaly cheeks. Omou looks like a cross between a canid and a raptor, short in stature but unbelievably stocky. It is quite obvious how someone viewing his silhouette atop his draft horse mount could mistake him for a dullahan, or headless horseman.

Roleplaying Omou, the Fourth Obsession

Portraying Omou can be difficult. It is important to communicate that he is both victim and oppressor, cruelly used by Esmæ to advance her agenda, but still responsible for his destructive actions following her rejection of his advances. Omou had managed to convince himself that, if only he could demonstrate his inner beauty to Esmæ, she would reciprocate his desperate affections.

The great irony surrounding Omou lies in his artistic talent. Even unlettered adventurers have no trouble recognizing the sheer artistry of his sculptures and paintings. Even the plaintive tones of his wooden flute are clear and evocative, and one might wonder what he could have offered had he not driven himself insane with his profound inability to deal with Esmæ's rejection, despite the fact that, given what he has done, Omou is not entitled to pity.

As the adventurers enter the chamber, read the following.

As you draw closer, Omou ceases to play his flute, letting it clatter to the immaculately swept stone floor. His uneven eyes close, and you hear a voice between a hiss and a growl utter, "She laughed when I gave her the mirror. I had written a poem . . . she laughed at me, and called me weak, and pathetic. She told me to stay far away. But I can't . . . I can't live without her!"

The mongrelfolk's eyes snap open, blazing with fury. "I will show her . . . I will show her that I am strong, I am most worthy! I will kill the interlopers who dare to meddle with the plans of my mistress!"

He pushes himself to his feet and keeps rising, a foot, two feet from the floor, floating. And then the candles and statuettes are floating . . .

Omou is a terrifying combatant with mental powers that are difficult to resist. He begins combat by using *mind blast* on as many adventurers as possible. In subsequent rounds, he throws himself into melee with reckless abandon. He uses *telekinetic ray* to toss objects at and otherwise keep any attackers at bay until his *mind blast* recharges.

Development

If Omou is reduced to 20 hit points or less, he can be persuaded to stand down with a successful Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check. If successful, Omou provides details regarding Esmæ's whereabouts, as well as the mental impressions of Esmæ necessary to correctly use the locket artifact necessary to draw the vestige out of the Barovian witch.

After sharing the information, Omou's misshapen face splits in a hideous grin, his eyes roll up in his head, and he keels over dead—the final victim of his mental powers. Otherwise, Omou fights to the death, and when slain, gasps a single word, "Esmæ," then burn a clear mental impression of Esmæ into the minds of all those within the chamber as he dies.

Treasure

The artwork Omou has created is of extraordinary quality. After the fight, figure on twelve pieces of artwork surviving, less one piece of artwork for every round past the third. Each piece of surviving artwork can be sold for 250 gp.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove the guardian portrait
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add a second guardian portrait; increase Omou's hit points to 162

Conclusion

Due to Omou's rampage through Oraşnou and the Quivering Forest, several long-ranging effects may affect the remainder of the campaign season.

- Some businesses in Oraşnou such as the Seven Tables and the services of Fillar Esven may be forever unavailable. This may limit the use of the village as a base of operations for the adventurers when they at last make their run against Esmæ herself.
- It is revealed by Omou that, since he had already given Esmæ the *mirror* prior to his encountering

the adventurers, Esmæ has everything she needs to begin her dark ritual. The only hope for the region's return to the Realms is to use the locket artifact to draw out the vestige empowering the witch. You gain the **Impression of Obsession** story award.

- If the treants and awakened trees are permitted to slaughter all of the Greenhall elves encountered by the adventurers, the wood elves abandon the Quivering Forest for good, violating their agreement with the dark fey and enraging the hag Jeny Greenteeth. Should this occur, Jeny Greenteeth forever more denies her services to the characters for the remainder of the campaign. Characters that allow this to happen gain the **Quivering with Rage** story award.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Dominated commoner	25
Dominated militia	25
Dominated lumberjack	450
Treant	5,000
Awakened tree	450
Guardian Portrait	200
Omou	5,900

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Subduing villagers	50 (each, max 15)
Avoiding crashing branches	100
Rescuing the wood elves	50 (each, max 6)

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **1,875 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **2,500 experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Elf's pearls	500
Elf's torc	850
Omou's art objects	250 each (max 12)

Permanent Magic Item Distribution

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the Dungeon Master.

Potion of Flying

Potion, very rare

A description of this potion can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Ring of Animal Influence

Ring, rare

This ring is decorated with canid and raptor symbols. The wearer feels predatory urges and desires a diet of fresh meat. A description of this item can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

Spell Scroll of Water Walk

Scroll, uncommon

A description of this spell can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Spell Scroll of Water Breathing

Scroll, uncommon

A description of this spell can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Renown

All faction members earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

Downtime

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Story Awards

Characters have the opportunity to earn the following story awards during this adventure.

The Demiplane of Dread. You have traversed the mists and now find yourself in the Demiplane of Dread and, until this story award is removed, you are unable to leave. So long as you are trapped, you cannot participate in any adventure or event that takes place outside of Barovia. Tread carefully during your time here, the Dark Powers are watching.

Impression of Obsession. You have been subjected to the spiritual impressions of a witch called Esmee Amarantha. Though you aren't sure how, you have been told that the impressions will be enough for you to harness the power of an ancient locket to somehow sap the witch of her power.

Quivering with Anger. You stood idle by while elves of the Quivering Forest were slaughtered by animated plants. Because of this, those that survived have broken their pact with the hag, Jeny Greenteeth. In her anger, she forevermore refuses to provide you with any spellcasting services.

DM Rewards

You receive **625 XP, 312 gp, and five downtime days** for running this session.

DM Appendix: NPC Summary

The following NPCs are featured in this adventure:

Fillar Esven (FILL-er ESS-ven). This less-than-scrupulous and usually has a fair stock of goods. His prices might be a bit high but generally of good quality. Fillar is also more than he appears; he is a wereraven.

Ixusaxa Terrorsong (ICKS-oo-SAH-shuh). Cult of the Dragon Wearer of Purple had been captured by the Bloodhand tribe and was rescued in DDAL04-12 *The Raven*. She knows the secret to escaping the Demiplane of Dread.

Sybil Rasia (Si-buhl RAH-see-uh). Female Vistani fortune teller. First introduced in DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists* and from the Forgotten Realms

Scartia Krutz (SCAR-shuh). Tax collector left in charge when the Burgomaster takes off. Lord Strahd is not taking her head for the village not paying its taxes and she is not going to starve or watch others do so. She might actually have a soul. She does have a basset hound who believes he is a lap dog if she would just sit down!

Gregori Wurlbach (gre-GOR-ee VURL-bok). Male human. Soul. Gregori is a soft, balding man with gnarled hands. He has worked hard for the comforts that he enjoys in the village—chief among these being that his food and drink is provided free of charge thanks to his ability to host the Vistani when they arrive every few months to peddle their wares. He is fair minded and often overlooks his own profits in favor of his community and friends. Unlike other denizens of the duchy, Gregori is friendly and welcoming of outsiders.

Marku Grelon (MAR-koo GREE-lawn). Male human, husband of Crina. Owner of the Seven Tables Tavern. Knows all the best gossip, but never keeps it to himself.

Crina Grelon (KREE-nah GREE-lawn). Female human wife of Marku. Owner and cook of the Seven Tables Inn and Tavern. Her ability in the kitchen is one of the chief assets of the Seven Tables.

Appendix. NPC/Monster Statistics

Awakened Tree

Huge plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d12 + 14)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages one language known by its creator

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

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

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Dominated Commoner

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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

Actions

Improvised weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Dominated Militia

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Dominated Lumberjack

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the dominated lumberjack can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Woodaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage.

Guardian Portrait

Medium Construct, unaligned

Armor Class 5 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The portrait is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targets by *dispel magic*, the portrait must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or become unconscious for 1 minute.

Innate Spellcasting. The portrait innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). The portrait can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *counterspell*, *crown of madness*, *hypnotic pattern*, *telekinesis*

False Appearance. While the figure in the portrait remains motionless, the portrait is indistinguishable from a normal painting.

Mage

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnomish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The mage is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The mage has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*

4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Actions

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

Omou

Medium humanoid (mongrelfolk), neutral evil

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 136 (21d8 + 42)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +7, Int +6, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +6, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +7

Damage Resistance psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Darkness Breeds Darkness. Omou has advantage on ability checks and attack rolls against characters with the **Touched by the Mists** story award. Similarly, such characters have disadvantage on any saving throw made against Omou.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). Omou's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

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

3/day each: *featherfall*, *jump*, *see invisibility*, *shield*

1/day each: *phantasmal killer*, *plane shift*

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Omou fails a saving throw, he succeeds on it instead.

Mimicry. The mongrelfolk can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Obsessive Punishment. If Omou deals damage to a target with the **Touched by the Mists** story award, Omou deals an additional 1d6 damage for each dark gift the character possesses, to a maximum of 4d6 additional damage.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with Omou, he learns the creature's greatest desires if he can see the creature. If the target has the **Touched by the Mists** story award, Omou learns them without the need to communicate telepathically.

Psychic Defense. While Omou is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

Standing Leap. The mongrelfolk's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Multiattack. Omou makes three melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (fists, beak, or claws) plus 13 (3d8) psychic damage. This is a magic weapon attack.

Telekinetic Ray. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or Omou moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of Omou's next turn or until Omou is incapacitated. If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. Omou can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.

Mind Blast (Recharge 5-6). Omou magically emits psychic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Actions

Omou can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Omou regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. Omou can't use the same legendary action twice in consecutive rounds.

- **Keen Eyes.** Omou makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Punishing Dash.** Omou moves his speed and makes an unarmed strike. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.
- **Endless Battery (Costs 2 actions).** Omou makes an unarmed strike against every creature within 5 feet of him.
- **Psychic Drain (Costs 3 actions).** Any creature stunned by Omou's mind blast takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. Omou regains hit points equal to the damage the creatures take.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Omou takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Omou can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- All of the paintings in the room shriek in anger. Any creature except Omou that can hear the paintings must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened.
- Part of the ceiling collapses above one creature that Omou can see within 120 feet of him. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone and buried. The buried target is restrained and unable to breathe or stand up. A creature can take an action to make a DC 10 Strength check, ending the buried state on a success.
- A strong wind emanates from the huge carving of Esmæ and blows around Omou. Each creature within 60 feet of Omou must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed 15 feet away from Omou and knocked prone. Gases and vapors are dispersed by the wind, and unprotected flames are extinguished. Protected flames, such as lanterns, have a 50 percent chance of being extinguished.

Scout (Wood Elf)

Medium humanoid (elf), lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 35 ft.

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

Skills Nature +4, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 +3) piercing damage.

Treant

Huge plant, chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

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

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

Actions

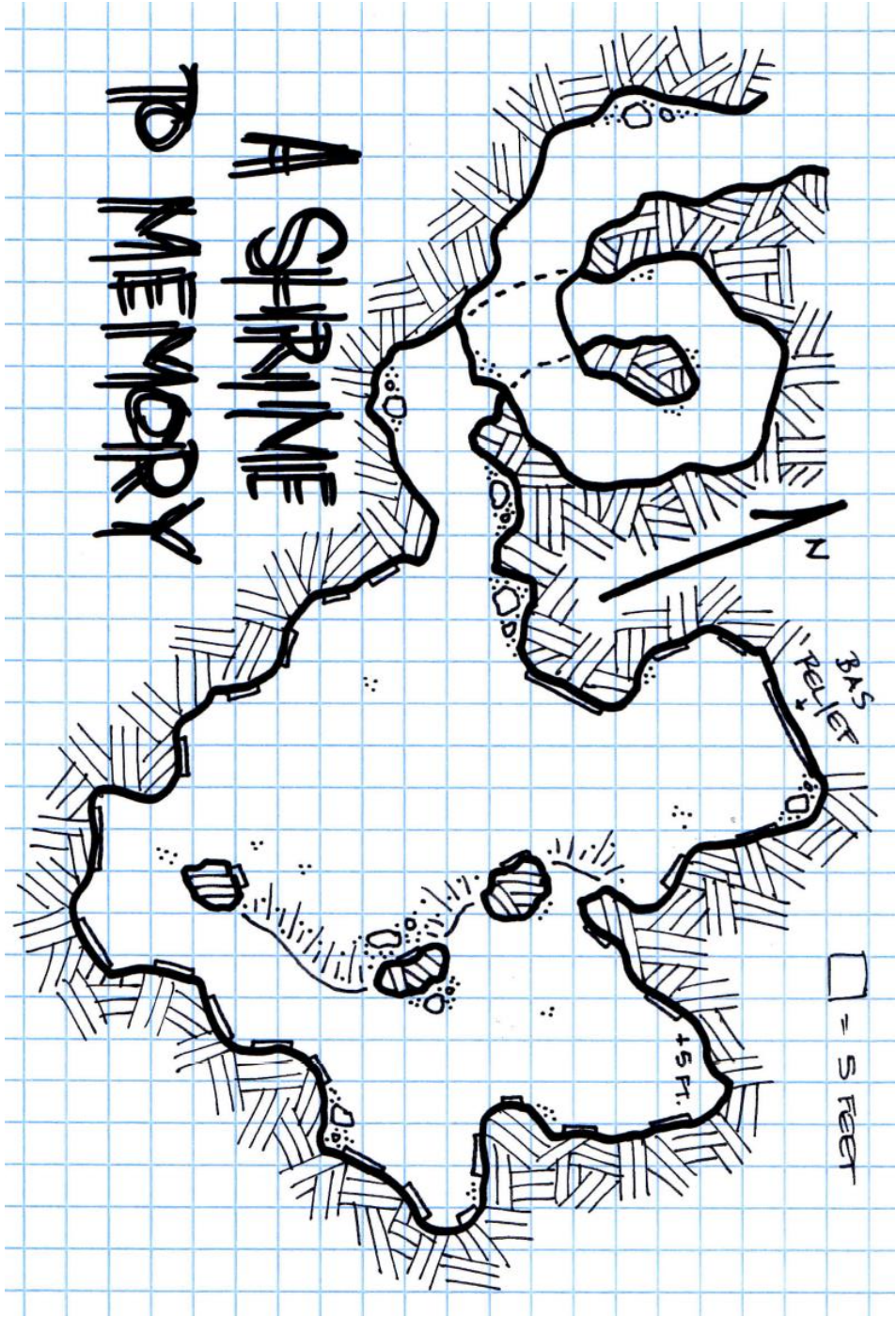
Multiattack. The treant makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

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

Appendix. A Shrine to Memory Map



Player Handout 1. Ring of Animal Influence

Ring of Animal Influence

Ring, rare

This ring has 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. While wearing the ring, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast one of the following spells:

- *Animal friendship* (save DC 13)
- *Fear* (save DC 13), targeting only beasts that have an Intelligence of 3 or lower
- *Speak with animals*

This ring is decorated with canid and raptor symbols. The wearer feels predatory urges and desires a diet of fresh meat. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Results Code: June - August 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of June - August 2016, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

