



THE BEAST

Something strange is afoot within the Quivering Forest. So much so that even the elves of Greenhall have left their homes to seek out help from their newfound neighbors. But, their tales of a strange beast are not earning them any favors; especially among the Vistani, whom the elves suspect are to blame for their ills. Return once more to the Quivering Forest and learn the terrifying truth! Part Two of Misty Fortunes and Absent Hearts.

A Two-Hour Adventure for 1st–4th level Characters



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FAMILY IS NOT AN IMPORTANT THING. It is everything.

--Michael J. Fox

Introduction

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

This adventure is designed for 1st through 4th-level characters, and is optimized for five 2nd-level characters. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

The adventure takes place entirely in the barony of Barovia, in the Ravenloft campaign setting.

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' 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 with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. 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' 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 2nd-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**. This will no doubt lead to some uncomfortable situations and unforeseen consequences.

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 extradimensional 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 ghastly 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 ghastly 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

Long has the Vaduva clan lived in the forest outside of the small village of Oraşnou—a small village located at the base of the mountains of Barovia. In response to some long-forgotten slight, a Vistani seer cursed their bloodline with lycanthropy—something which has led them to take great care in staying away from civilization.

In Oraşnou, Laszlo is a sellsword that prefers the solace of the forest over the company of people. While on a hunting trip, he watched Alina Vaduva quickly take down a bear in the form of a wolf, and was awestruck as she reverted to her human form to clean the beast. The fact that she was a shapechanger did not bother him in the slightest—because again, he had grown accustomed to the wild things in the world. He was smitten, though Alina chose to withhold knowledge of her family's curse from him.

Their courtship was fast and passionate. Within a year, they were married and Laszlo took Alina's surname. Together, they found a niche in trapping and skinning. They sold the furs to the village of Oraşnou, and in return, were given both a place to live and a community to belong to—something that Alina was secretly unsure of. But she had never received such generosity, and they weren't pressed with inquiries of what they did before coming to the sleepy little village.

However, Alina never told Laszlo the full truth about her family's curse. Afraid of what would come if Laszlo discovered her family's curse, she took great pains to ensure that he never met other members of her family. As their relationship grew, she found herself with child and faced a terribly difficult decision—could she tell Laszlo about her curse before the baby was born and risk his anger (or worse, abandonment), or withhold it from him and continue living the lie.

Shortly before the birth of their child, Alina and Laszlo agreed to trek into the forest for one last batch of furs before the winter set in. During the trip, she finally decided to tell him the truth. Laszlo

was livid and lashed out at his beloved. Out of pure instinct, however, Alina shifted and killed Laszlo. Alina herself grievously injured, and now with a tiny newborn that was unlikely to survive in the wild, she stole into Oraşnou one last time to give up her child. Her last motherly act accomplished, Alina retreated deep into the woods to heal her wounds in the hopes that the villagers would raise her child as their own.

Adventure Overview

Once the characters arrive in Oraşnou, they are informed of the coming storms and the danger the village faces if the Laszlo, Alina, and their furs are not returned—and soon!

As the characters set out into the forest, they find that something is not right in the woods, and that things are very frequently not what they seem. Laszlo's campsite is a bloody wreck; it is apparent that a massive wolf mauled him to death.

Following the tracks from here, the characters stalk deeper into the forest and foothills, only to find that Alina's den is the site of a terrible revelation--that she killed her husband after he tried to cut the baby from her, and that she left the child in Oraşnou with no warning about what would happen.

Adventure Hooks

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", below.

Welcome to Oraşnou; Please Help Us.

Otherwise, the characters find themselves in Oraşnou early one gray morning—likely because they've heard of a troubling rumor of a missing persons.

A Tie With Nature. Druids, barbarians, and anyone with the Hermit or Wanderer background may have experienced troubling dreams in the past few days--terrible and savage wolf attacks, abandoned and crying children, and blinding snowstorms.

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.

Part 1. Oraşnou: A Sleepy Mountain Village...

IT IS IMPORTANT TO STRESS THAT THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF TRANSMUTATION IS NOT TYPICALLY A RENDING, BURNING AGONY FOR TRUE LYCANTHROPE, BUT IT IS OFTEN SO FOR THE PATHOLOGIC VARIETY. In fact, many of the true lycanthes with which I have spoken (before destroying them) have claimed that the experience is one of transcendent ecstasy.

Furthermore, true lycanthes retain all of their mental faculties while in any of their forms. At no point do they forget what occurs when not in human aspect, nor do they lose control of their actions. In addition, they always retain their immunities and most of their abilities.

—Dr. Rudolph Van Richten; "Van Richten's Monster Hunter's Compendium, vol. 1"

The Village of Oraşnou

Expected Duration: 15 minutes

Characters arriving from Faerûn find themselves standing on the outskirts of Oraşnou, the Mist steadily falling away from them and back towards the forest. Characters that have played other adventures in the *Curse of Strahd* storyline may already be in the village.

General Features

The general features of Oraşnou are as follows:

Light and Visibility. It is early morning; the sun has not yet fully woken from its slumber. There is thick cloud cover, giving the entire area surrounding the village a dismal gloom.

Climate and Weather. It is wintertime, and though there are piles of snow here and there, it is currently drizzling. Cold, fat raindrops splatter into the mud and heighten the dreariness.

Smells and Sounds. Mud, fresh rain, wood smoke. Whipping wind, clattering shutters, rain on wood and metal.

Thick grey clouds gather far to the east and north, around the mountain range in the distance. The village you are standing in appears to have withstood a number of winter storms; the walls of the buildings are clearly weatherworn; their paint has long since peeled and heavy shutters adorn every window. There is little color here; the clouds have turned even the leaves of the trees and bushes grey and lifeless.

The breeze picks up, flipping your cloaks about as if nature itself was warning you to turn back. A name can just be made out on a weathered sign on a post by the road "Oraşnou".

As the characters enter the village proper, read or paraphrase:

There aren't many buildings in Oraşnou, but one catches your eye—"The Hare & Hair". The sign proudly displays the silhouette of a rabbit with crossed razors underneath. It appears to be the only place open at this time of day; the rest of the buildings shuttered and closed.

A pot-bellied shopkeeper opens the door and waves to you. "Strangers? Come in, come in; there's no sense in you standing outside in the wet and cold. I've got shelter if you're wanting and wares if you're needing."

Gregori Wurlbach is a middle-aged, balding man. He owns and operates this shop, which contains basic adventuring equipment and weapons worth 10 gold pieces and less, but there is one *potion of healing* and one *antivenom* for sale if the characters ask. Gregori marvels at the characters's strange coins, but after biting into them, is satisfied with their authenticity.

The most eye-catching feature of the store is the front window: it has a small number of low-quality furs and skins, including those from deer, bear, and wolf. In a pinch, the skins could function as two sets of cold weather clothing—Gregori is willing to sell the furs for a total of 2 gp if asked. However, as they haven't been properly cured yet, Gregori informs them that the furs will no doubt be worthless after a day or two of use in the rain or snow. If asked, Gregori has cold weather gear available. Each set costs 4 gp; twice the cost of a suit of normal, traveler's clothing.

Additionally, he has three small rooms that have been reserved for travelers (though he admits that they rarely get travelers, especially during the

winter). Each room rents for 5 sp. They've got a bunkbed each and come with a bath and a hot meal.

Roleplaying Gregori Wurlbach

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. Fair minded, he 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.

Gregori is talkative enough, and happy to sell the characters anything they wish to purchase. He informs them that they rarely receive weapons and ammunition or more expensive goods:

- The Vistani travel through here once every other month or so—bringing much-needed goods like food, grains, and raw ore. In exchange for furs, they entertain the locals.
- The Vistani are due within the next tenday, but there aren't enough furs in stock right now. He is afraid that they won't leave any goods this time, and may even stop coming to their village altogether in the future--leading to making this a difficult winter, indeed.
- The remaining furs in the front of the store are lower quality and might be serviceable as cold-weather gear. He gladly sells them, but warns the characters that the furs will likely degrade and become useless after a day or two of use in the rain.
- Everyone in the village helps with the survival efforts; be it through farming, smithing, or hostelry. Preparedness is the currency here.
- Laszlo and Alina Vaduva are the trappers that keep the store stocked with furs, but they haven't returned from their last trip. They are typically only gone a day or two, but it's been nearly a tenday now and everyone is growing worried.
- Alina is about eight months pregnant.
- Last time the Vistani came through Oraşnou, they warned of a "murderous winter to come". The blizzard on the horizon looks especially brutal, and if Laszlo and Alina do not return soon they may not make it back at all.
- Last he knows, Laszlo and Alina were heading to their usual campsite, about four to five hours to the northeast along a well-marked trail.
- There are not very many residents in Oraşnou, and all the other able-bodied men and women

are preparing the village for the coming winter. The villagers no doubt appreciate any assistance that the characters might provide.

- Alina wears a choker emblazoned with a raven; she has never been seen without it.

If the characters ask where they are or where the village itself Oraşnou is located, Gregori looks at them quizzically and after an uncomfortable pause, informs them "*The duchy of Barovia. The domain of Lord Strahd von Zarovich, may he be healthy and well.*" These names are wholly unfamiliar to characters originating from Faerûn.

If the characters wish to perform further investigations, they may do so. Some potential investigation information is noted below, but feel free to create your own responses and information based on character choices. Getting the townsfolk to open up and talk to these newcomers takes one or two hours, depending on how long the players wish to investigate.

Investigating Oraşnou (Short)

If the characters spend a short amount of time (an hour or less) speaking to the villagers, they learn the following:

- Laszlo never spoke about what he did before coming to Oraşnou, but Alina fell quickly and madly in love with him shortly after his arrival. Her family has historically lived somewhere out in the forest, and they've always been a bit rough around the edges. Alina and Laszlo were clearly two souls that were meant for each other.
- Someone dropped off a yowling wolf pup and limped off into the woods well before sunrise about five days ago. Gregori has the pup now.
- The villages around Barovia prize wolf pups; they are something of a status symbol and loyal protectors if properly trained from a young age.
- The villagers are convinced that Laszlo and Alina are dead, and this means that the Vistani won't return this winter. Everyone is afraid that they'll starve as a result, as the Vistani have no reason to stop in Oraşnou without the furs and skins that the Vaduvas provide.

Investigating Oraşnou (Long)

If the characters spend a longer amount of time (two or more hours) speaking to the villagers, they also learn the following:

- Glovia prepares food for those that cannot do so themselves and manages winter rations for the

village. She is not in the village currently, as she is away visiting family some fifty miles to the south. Glovia has been the only friend that Alina has had in Oraşnou, and is the only person that can calm Alina when her rage and anger issues threaten to consume her.

- Most folks say that no wild wolves have been seen in the village in years, but some of the villages claim to have seen a large silver wolf in the village recently.
- For all of her rage, Alina has always had a soft spot for children. Some of the women in the village say that if Alina were to hear a baby cry, she would be rooted in place and temporarily stricken dumb--it was almost surreal to behold.
- Laszlo wielded both whip and bow with equally deadly proficiency--even going so far as to claim that he can never be surprised by his foes. He is very protective of his whip, though some villagers claim that there is an always-moving eye in the pommel -- and that it may actually be cursed!
- Locals spotted wolf tracks around the rear of both Glovia's home and Gregori's shop several days ago.
- Pointy-eared people have been seen around the village recently. The villagers think that they were elves, but elves are rare in Oraşnou--almost mythical. A character succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check can confirm this; the tracks head in the same direction as Laszlo & Alina's hunting grounds.

Development

Once the characters have had a few minutes to discuss the village and the absence of Laszlo and Alina, they can hear a puppy making yelping noises—likely of hunger or a need for attention. Gregori smiles happily and characters that a yelping, tiny newborn wolf pup was tied to Glovia's doorframe just four days ago. "Loyal guardians, wolves, if you get them at a young age. I think he was a bit premature, but I don't tend to look to the fates too closely. Glovia's not due back for a good long while, so I'll just look after the scruffy thing."

The Wolf Pup

Though no one but Alina knows it, the wolf pup is her child—something made apparent by its silver fur.

Gregori mentions that he found the pup tied to Glovia's door frame, but would prefer to keep it for himself. While the characters are out searching for Laszlo and Alina, the

pup eventually escapes during the storm and into the forest where it rejoins with Alina's pack.

Gregori offers to provide access to lodging here in the village if they characters can return Laszlo and Alina safely. They are, of course, welcome to retain any goods they might find in the wilderness. Additionally, Laszlo is a reasonable man; he will no doubt compensate them as well.

Ultimately, Gregori attempts to impress upon the characters that without Laszlo, Alina, and the furs that they bring in, Oraşnou is unlikely to survive the winter.

The Blizzard

The characters have 7 hours before the blizzard sets in; less any time spent in the village. Once the storm hits, at the beginning of each encounter each character must succeed on a DC 9 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the like) and creatures naturally adapted to cold environments.

Part 2. Over the River and Through the Woods

Expected Duration: 80 minutes total

Trekking through the wooded area surrounding Oraşnou can lead to a number of encounters. The characters do not need to participate in every encounter—though add additional encounters if time allows.

The characters should interact with an element on the "**Oraşnou and Its Surrounds**" table, discover Laszlo's body, and then one element on the "**The Deep Wilderness**" table as time allows.

General Features

The woodlands surrounding Oraşnou are unforgiving:

Terrain. The woods outside of the village are far-reaching and treacherous. The ground is stony and the soil hard-packed, with only the hardiest of scrub growth poking through to the sun and trees above. While not difficult terrain, it should be described as if the life has been slowly drained out, leaving the land little more than a withered husk.

Light and Visibility. Dark snow filled clouds overtake the normally overcast sky. As the winter storm descends upon the land, there is a palpable, draining gloom all about. The area is brightly lit during the day, but the clouds prevent the light of the sun from being seen. At night, the area is completely dark, and in the wild regions of the area, the only light that exists is that which the characters have with them.

Smells and Sounds. There is very little evidence of native fauna, though the occasional snapping twig and falling limb should be evident. The characters should feel that they are not alone in the forest, despite evidence to the contrary.

Weather. After each encounter, the snow gets a little bit closer and the weather grows more dangerous. After 7 hours have elapsed, the blizzard hits (see details in the sidebar in the "The Wolf Den", below).

A chill wind blows from the low mountains to the northwest, carrying with it the hint of the coming winter storms. Laszlo and Alina were last known to be on a hunting trip somewhere out there in the wilderness and are long overdue to return.

The storms are close and likely no more than a day away. Clouds, heavy with snow and sleet and worse, threaten to roll down from the mountains to blanket the land in cold death for the unprotected. Without help, it is likely that neither Alina nor Laszlo will survive for long out there.

Part 2a. Oraşnou and its Surrounds

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

Choose (or determine randomly) one encounter from the "Oraşnou and Its Surrounds" table, below:

Once the characters complete this encounter, proceed to the section entitled "The Campsite". They have a chance attempt a long rest there if they desire, but the winter storms will fall upon them soon!

Oraşnou and Its Surrounds

Roll	Type	Title
1	Combat	A Splash of Blood Hawks
2	Combat	It Stirs in the Thickets
3	Combat	Please, Sirs and Ladies
4	Exploration	On the Muddy Banks
5	Exploration	This Does Not Belong Here
6	Exploration	We're Not Alone

1. A Splash of Blood Hawks

The forest has been fairly quiet for the journey so far, but the trees ahead are positively alive with the excited chittering and cawing of hunting birds. Hardly a breath later, they take wing and fly in your direction!

Six **blood hawks** have nested in the hardy maple trees ahead. If the party flees more than fifty feet from the tree, the hawks do not pursue them.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove two **blood hawks**
- **Strong party:** The wind has picked up, imposing disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks
- **Very strong party:** as **Strong party**, and add two more **blood hawks**

Two hours of travel occur before the next encounter takes place. Laszlo's and Alina's tracks continue off to the north from here and are fairly easy to follow. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check also shows that there are elf tracks as well, heading

in the same direction as well as back towards Oraşnou.

Treasure. Once the characters defeat or drive off the blood hawks, they find the partially decomposed body of a human male at the base of the roosting tree. If they search the body, they recover 20 gp from its pockets. There is also a scroll tube half-buried in the dirt; it contains a single *spell scroll of create bonfire*.

2. It Stirs in the Thicket

The characters easily see several sets of tracks here, which a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies as a single, male human among several types of wildlife. The tracks lead to a densely packed thicket ahead:

Though you have not seen much underbrush during your time in the wood, there is a curiously dense thicket ahead. The bushes seem to be in a ring surrounding a seven-foot tall tangle of briars and thorns in the rough shape of a dome. There seems to be a scrap of bright green cloth several feet into the thorny environment.

If the characters wish to retrieve the cloth, they must push five feet into the thorns to pluck it. Once they do this, they can easily make out the form of a prone human body deeper in the center of the dome. The characters can see that the body is wearing a bright green traveling cloak, but until they pull the corpse from the thicket, they can discern no other details.

Barovian Flora and Fauna

The wildlife in Barovia is not what you would typically see in a Faerûnian forest. Instead of deer or foxes, you're more likely to come across mangy wolves. Rats and other vermin take the place of squirrels in the ecosystem. Stress an abundance of predatory or scavenging animals and the lack of prey.

Similarly, plant life is also different. Fruit from trees is spoilt and flowering plants are almost nonexistent. Leaves are dull and colorless with spindly, fraying branches and an unusual amount of thorns and brambles.

The shrubs are actually four **twig blights**, and the thorny dome houses a **vine blight**. However, they lie in wait for at least one of the characters to enter the undergrowth before attacking. They do not stray more than ten feet away the clearing unless they are being actively attacked, in which case, the creatures attempt to meld into the thicket (this

grants total cover and breaks line of sight) to escape or hide.

The entire space covered by the dome and shrubs is considered rough terrain and causes 3 (1d6) points of piercing damage to move through. A creature moving through the brambles that succeeds on a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw avoids this damage. Characters in medium or heavy armor make the saving throw with advantage.

Once the vine blight takes shape, it doesn't leave the clearing. The thorns and briars hold the corpse fast, and moves around as the vine blight attempts to engage the characters.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak party:** as **weak party**, and the vine blight's *entangling plants* ability does not recharge
- **Weak party:** remove two **twig blights**
- **Strong party:** change the **twig blights** to **needle blights**, but they retain the *false appearance* ability
- **Very strong party:** as **Strong party**, and add a **violet fungus** in the center of the dome under the body

Fire damage, such as from a torch or *burning hands* spell, clears the dry brush very quickly, but may cost the characters some valuable treasure as well.

Laszlo's and Alina's tracks continue to the northeast from here. Two hours of travel occurs before the characters have another encounter. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check also shows that there are elf tracks as well, heading in the same direction as well as back towards Oraşnou.

Treasure. If the characters recover the body, they find a *spell scroll of create bonfire* as well as a pouch of rare spell components worth 20 gp. If the characters use fire to clear out the briars, the fire destroys both the scroll and the spell components.

3. Please, Sirs and Ladies

A pot-bellied, heavily mustachioed man kicks the broken wheel of his cart as he curses loudly.

"Please, sirs and ladies, have you the briefest of moments to help a down-on-his-luck merchant? My back aches something fierce, and I need to get this wheel repaired before those storms hit!"

The man, Fluvio, is actually a **bandit**, and he is biding his time until his two **scouts** can get into flanking positions around the characters. He

engages the party in conversation while they dart from tree to tree about 50 feet away from the cart. The bandits have had time to prepare impressive hiding spots, but a character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices them. He is not shy about asking the strongest-looking character to lift his cart so that another character can fix the wheel.

Unless the characters have reason to believe that something is amiss, the scouts likely have a surprise round on the characters as combat begins. Neither the bandit nor the scouts are interested in taking prisoners, though they will not hesitate to flee if the combat appears to be going in the character's favor.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak or weak party:** Remove a **scout**
- **Strong party:** change the **bandit** into a **bandit captain**
- **Very strong party:** as **strong party**, and add a **scout**

Development

The bandits are denizens of the Demiplane of Dread and know nothing about Faerûn.

Two hours of travel occur before the next encounter takes place (see The Campsite, below). Laszlo's and Alina's tracks continue off to the north and east from here and are fairly easy to follow. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check also shows that there are elf tracks as well, heading in the same direction as well as back towards Oraşnou.

Treasure. The weapons and armor that the bandits had been using are of low quality, but the furs in the cart are in excellent shape and would likely be worth 20 gp in Oraşnou. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check might tell the characters that these furs may have previously belonged to Laszlo and Alina. In a pinch, these furs may serve as cold-weather gear. There is also a scroll tube in the wagon containing a *spell scroll of create bonfire*.

4. On the Muddy Banks

The sound of running water can be heard in the distance, and soon a fast-moving—if shallow—river can be spotted. The banks have begun to ice up and flotsam adorns both shores; a number of broken branches sit half in the water and nearly all of their bark is missing; they could almost pass for exposed, twisted bones in the dim light. Though the river is less than thirty feet wide, the chilling spray makes it feel much wider.

With a passive Perception score of 13 or higher, the characters can spot a single woman's boot on the far shore. While the river is not difficult to cross, it has a significant pull and is nearly ten feet deep. Worse, the nearby trees aren't tall enough to act as a sturdy bridge though creative characters may lash a few together or come up with similarly inventive methods to bypass this area.

Characters that do not take care to stay dry (or do not construct a fire on the opposite side in order to dry off) must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution save or gain a level of exhaustion until they have a chance to take a long rest beside a warm fire.

Aside from the single empty boot, there is nothing more of interest here. However, you should take care to use this as a foreboding moment—perhaps ask the players for Wisdom (Insight) checks, ask for the passive Perception scores, and so on. When they report their totals, simply thank them and respond with "I'll update my notes" or something similar.

Laszlo's and Alita's tracks continue to the east, across the river and deeper into the woods. One hour of travel occurs before the characters have another encounter. A DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check also shows that there are elf tracks as well, heading in the same direction as well as back towards Oraşnou.

5. This Does Not Belong Here

After several hours of walking through the forest and seeing no evidence of life aside from a few scurrying creatures, the sight before you is quite curious: a tree has consumed a brightly painted wagon, well decorated with highly detailed carvings and silver filigree. It looks as if the tree has grown around and even through the wagon, and though the paint on the wagon looks fresh this type of growth typically takes decades to complete.

A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the tree has likely been magically influenced; there's something about the tree's growth that is not natural. A quick search of the wagon--made much more difficult by the tree growing through the center of it--turns up little by way of treasure, although a jingling tambourine can be spied hanging from one of the branches as if deliberately placed there.

A message scrawled (in what is unmistakably blood) on the interior of the tambourine reads:

"Family is the Cruellest of Curses"

Laszlo's and Alina's tracks wind off around the wagon and further east, deeper into the forest. One hour of travel occurs before the next encounter takes place. A DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check also shows that there are elf tracks as well, heading in the same direction back towards Oraşnou.

Treasure. The tambourine is very well made and worth 10 gp. No mundane cleaning will remove the bloody phrase—even *prestidigitation* or the like proves fruitless. Only a *remove curse* or the equivalent removes it permanently. If a character elects to keep the tambourine, instruct them to note it on their Adventure Logsheet.

6. We Are Not Alone

As the characters travel through the forest, ask the players to choose to roll for Wisdom (Perception or Survival) checks. If the players roll exceptionally low or high, follow up by asking for Wisdom (Insight) checks. Regardless of their responses, reference the ideas below for appropriate responses:

- Heart-wrenching thoughts of abandoned children, their hungry hands outstretched for food, safety, and approval overwhelm the characters
- There are strange tracks on the ground. They look like they may have once belonged to a wolf, but the tracks are far too large for any breed of wolf that you are familiar with.
- Your guts squirm and twist and it feels like something foreign is wriggling around inside your torso. The feeling passes as quickly as it came on.
- You could swear that something bumped into your hip.
- The shadows grow long and the wind seems somehow colder than ever before. A feeling of loneliness washes over you.

- Memories of your family come unbidden to your mind, but they're different somehow; sadder and full of loss.

The entries above are merely suggestions. This section works best by writing down one of the above messages down on a slip of paper and privately passing it to the character with the lowest or highest roll on their skill check. Wait a few minutes, and do it again. This section may serve as an interesting method to award inspiration tokens to characters that get involved in the messages.

Through it all, Laszlo's and Alina's tracks can be easily followed in a generally eastern direction, though they appear to have sprinted through this area in a zig-zag manner. There is roughly one hour of travel between the encounters. A DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals humanoid tracks; they head in the same direction as well as back towards Oraşnou. A character that succeeds at a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check identifies them as belong to a number of people skilled at moving stealthily through the underbrush; rangers, druids, or elves being the likely culprits.

Part 2b. The Campsite

The characters eventually come across the remains of a campsite. It was here that Alina revealed her true nature to Laszlo who, in retaliation, sought to slay his betrothed and carve the baby from her belly. When the dust settled, Laszlo lay dead, and Alina was gravely injured. When she awoke, she fled.

Expected Duration: 20 minutes

The characters have been in the woods for approximately three to four hours (more if they chose to take a rest or have otherwise been sidetracked). They should have covered about 10-12 miles of ground and should be well aware of the blizzard moving in from the mountains. If they are not, this is a prime opportunity to inform them that the weather is not going to hold out for much longer—the air has become sharp and crisp, and is almost still as the clouds prepare to break and shower freezing doom upon the land.

A campsite can be seen several hundred yards ahead through the sparse growth, but as you draw closer you realize that nothing lives here. There are obvious signs of a struggle--long scrapes in the dirt, fresh boot tracks, and a damaged corpse give away the scene.

The body is that of Laszlo, the trapper and hunter from Oraşnou. However, there is no sign of Alina despite the carnage all over this area.

Is This Laszlo?

The Dark Powers are not finished with Laszlo. If any of the characters have already played adventures that come later in the season, all references to Laszlo in this encounter should be changed to that of a different, unnamed hunter or trapper.

Please refer to the sidebar on that appears after Adventure Hooks for more information about why you may need to make this change. Specifically, refer to the notes about key NPCs.

Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature)

- **DC 9:** The body has been partially ravaged by scavengers.
- **DC 11:** The canine tracks are larger than normal, as if made by a wolf easily twice the normal size.
- **DC 13:** The canine tracks do not appear to originate from outside the campsite. They lead off to the east, and splatters of blood follow alongside.

Wisdom (Perception)

- **DC 13:** Light glints off a silver dagger in the cold ashes of the campfire.
- **DC 15:** The characters find a wolf's tooth embedded in one of Laszlo's wounds.

Wisdom (Medicine)

- **DC 11:** Laszlo has been dead for about five days, killed by a very savage wolf attack.
- **DC 13:** The damage to Laszlo's body is massive in scale, and appears to have been attacked from behind; his most grievous wounds are on his neck and back.
- **DC 15:** There is more blood here than Laszlo could have provided.
- **DC 17:** If the characters have discovered the dagger in the campfire, they can tell that Laszlo appears to have successfully wounded his attacker. The blade of the dagger is thick with charred blood.

Intelligence (Investigation)

- **DC 11:** The tracks are wild and chaotic, but the characters discern a number of wolf tracks among Laszlo's. There are two sets of humanoid tracks; both sets lead into the clearing but only wolf tracks leave this place.

- **DC 13:** If the characters have not yet found the dagger, they spot it in the ashes of the campfire.
- **DC 15:** The wolf tracks head east, away from the camp and into the foothills of the mountains. There are no humanoid tracks heading in that direction.

Once the characters have had some time to examine Laszlo's body, they should be able to recover his bags (see the Treasure section). The wolf tracks head east, into a more inhospitable area. The characters realize that the blizzard is very close—likely no more than a few hours.

Development

After the characters have had some time to investigate the campsite—or perhaps if the characters are especially watchful, maybe because they are aware of the tracks—a number of thin elves emerge from the trees several hundred feet away. They approach the characters with their arms raised in surrender, begging for aid and parlay. Two of them are young males (barely 100 years old, named Earlan Shadowsong and Nim'il Briarbough), Earlan carries the picked-clean remains of a mangy hound they managed to kill and have been eating slowly since arriving. The group is led by an auburn-haired female elf of about 300 years with piercing green eyes who introduces herself as Aya Glenmiir.

Roleplaying Aya Glenmiir

Aya is a female elf of about 300 years. She has long, auburn hair and radiant green eyes, along with a bit of an ego. Originally from Phlan on the Moonsea, where she is a wizard specializing in warding magic, she has a history of being very charismatic and a bit of a flirt.

However, the land here in Barovia has seemingly drained her of her energy leaving her gaunt and withdrawn, and she openly comments on how the nature of magic (known as the Weave) "is just different here". Aya was also featured in DDEX1-6 *The Scroll Thief*, DDEX1-10 *Tyranny in Phlan*, DDEX2-9 *Breath of the Yellow Rose*, and DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists*.

Roleplaying The Elves

The Greenhall elves of the Quivering Forest are xenophobic exclusionists; having lived for millenia within their enchanted wood. However, times being what they are, they have somewhat come out of their shell. Being in such a strange place confuses and scares them. All of this has made the elves rather terse and hesitant to trust.

The elves have been encountered in DDEX1-8 *Tales Trees Tell* and DDEX1-11 *Dark Pyramid of Sorcerer's Isle*.

With the exception of Aya, the elves actually hail from Greenhall—an elven settlement in the Quivering Forest. They inform the characters that they had been investigating the perimeter of their domain, but entered a thick fogbank near the Crossing Inn. When they emerged from the mist, the forest had dramatically changed. Aya recognizes any characters that met her in any of the adventures that she has previously appeared in. She smiles warmly upon doing so.

The village of Oraşnou confuses and alarms them, as the villagers were very withdrawn and wouldn't make eye contact. They swear that they had nothing to do with the carnage at the campsite, though they've seen a massive wounded silver wolf and had been tracking it in hopes of earning an easy meal. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check tells the characters that the elves are not telling the whole truth about the wolf, however.

Charisma (Persuasion):

- **DC 12:** The elves have been in the forest for almost a tenday. They saw Laszlo and Alina, and trailed them for a while. They argued a lot, but appeared to be capable hunters.
- **DC 15:** Laszlo attacked Alina here in the campsite after a particularly loud argument. The elves left the hunters alone, not wanting to see what would happen if Laszlo saw them. (A DC 10 Wisdom Insight check tells the characters that the elves are not telling the whole truth).
- **DC 18:** After the loud fight, Alina...changed; she grew huge teeth and fur. She attacked Laszlo when his back was turned. He defended himself, but he could not avoid his death—he only wept as the beast attacked him. The elves fled, overcome with terror and revulsion. A successful DC 8 Wisdom (Insight) check tells the characters that the elves are telling the truth.

Intimidation may work to get this information, but likely at disadvantage on the skill check. The elves are close to starving and feel that they have little left to lose.

The elves are not intended to be a combat encounter and do not pose a significant physical threat. If the characters decide to attack them, the scuffle is brief and grants no experience. If Aya is attacked, she turns invisible and teleports a short distance away before making good her escape.

While they refuse to take the characters to Greenhall, the characters may be able to convince the elves to return to Oraşnou. With some creative

role-playing—and a handful of rations, trust, and maybe a Charisma (Persuasion) check or two—the elves could actually be convinced to continue Laszlo & Alina's trapping and skinning efforts through the winter. If the characters previously met Aya, she agrees to go to the village without the need for the characters to convince her. The other elves accompany her.

Finally, if the characters wish, Aya is able to provide limited spellcasting services for the characters; specifically, she can cast *remove curse*. See the information at the beginning of the adventure for how much this service costs.

XP Award

If the characters successfully convince the elves to treat with Oraşnou, award each character 25 XP.

Treasure

In addition to Laszlo's silver dagger, the characters find his furs and bags. The assembled furs are easily worth 100 gp, and his bags contain pieces of polished bone and antler; items worth more as finished art pieces and trinkets worth another 20 gp in Oraşnou. The characters find Laszlo's pack in the ruins of the campfire. It contains a shortbow, 12 arrows, an explorer's pack, and a salted ham, all of which have been ruined by the weather. Although it cannot be found, there is evidence that he possessed a pot of ink. The elves have no items worth any amount of value aside from their immediate gear, but taking their gear is a death sentence for the elves.

However, they also find Laszlo's a *whip of warning* on the ground by his body.

Part 2c: The Deep Wilderness

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

Before moving onto Part 3, below, choose (or determine randomly) an encounter from the "Oraşnou and Its Surrounds" table, below:

The Deep Wilderness

Roll	Type	Title
1	Combat	Zombie + Elk = Profit?
2	Combat	In the Forest, Does a Bear...?
3	Combat	Bad Dogs
4	Exploration	Agitation
5	Exploration	I'm Not a Witch!
6	Exploration	Stickmen

The characters should have had two encounters (one from each 2a and 2c) before moving to part 3.

1. Zombie + Elk = profit?

Low growls and grunts can be heard from some ways off, followed by trumpeting sounds and terrific crashes. Low moans immediately follow each crash.

The characters observe a pack of three **zombies** that have recently attacked a pair of elk. One of the magnificent creatures is dead, and the other one is soon to follow. If the characters get involved, the elk is in a full panic and unless magical methods are used, it is unable to distinguish them from the zombies and defends itself. The elk runs away at the first opportunity.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak or weak party:** remove one **zombie**
- **Strong party:** Add two **zombies**
- **Very strong party:** Add four **zombies**

The characters can avoid this encounter if they wish. Wolf tracks continue to the east. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

2. Does a Bear Sit in the Woods?

A very dead bear sits, leaning against a tree slightly off the path—its belly horrifically distended. The stench is overwhelming, even from nearly forty feet away.

The bear corpse is actually home to a **swarm of centipedes**. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that this, and those that succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check see tiny ripples in the dead flesh. Those that succeed on the Intelligence (Nature) check make the Wisdom (Perception) check with advantage.

If the characters physically interact with the corpse, it explodes in a **shower of gore** as the centipedes burst forth. Any creature within 10 feet of the corpse takes 1 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 6 (1d10) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour.

A successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that any amount of piercing damage done from a distance will cause the corpse to deflate with little effect to the characters.

The insects scurry off into the undergrowth unless the characters are within ten feet of them or are attacking them.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Strong party:** Add one **swarm of centipedes**
- **Very strong party:** Add one **swarm of rats** and the creatures don't flee; the exploding corpse deals 11 (2d10) poison damage

The characters can avoid this encounter if they wish. Wolf tracks wind past the bear corpse and off to the north. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

3. Bad Dogs

The forest has grown silent, and the wind has gone eerily calm.

Two **death dogs** are stalking the characters. Characters that succeed on a Wisdom (Perception) check opposed by the death dogs's Dexterity (Stealth) check are not surprised as the beasts spring out to attack them. They pursue unarmored characters first, and flee if reduced to 15 hit points or less.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak party:** As **weak party**; remove one **death dog**
- **Weak party:** The death dogs do not surprise the party
- **Strong party:** Increase the death dogs's Stealth modifier to +6.
- **Very strong party:** Add one **death dog**

Wolf tracks continue off to the north from here and are fairly easy to follow. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

4. Agitation

Do not run this encounter if "We are Not Alone" (see Part 2a, above) was used. However, if time permits, this encounter may serve to reinforce the feeling of loss and chilling loneliness.

As the characters travel through the forest, ask the players to choose to roll for Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) checks. If the players roll exceptionally low or high, follow up by asking for Wisdom (Insight) checks. Regardless of their responses, reference the ideas below for appropriate responses:

- The characters hear faint cries of an infant in the distance, intermingled with the yowling of wolf pups.
- The characters find an arrow formed of a collection of bright red stones on the ground. It points northeast.
- Scratched into a nearby tree trunk are the letters "LV AV". A broken fingernail is still stuck in the wood.
- You feel a sharp stabbing pain across your abdomen, and then your torso goes numb--a heartbeat later, the sensation fades away.
- The trees seem to warp and twist ever so slightly as you look at them, as if they are trying to blot out the sun.
- Suddenly, the only thing you can think about is a warm mug of mulled cider and a blazing hearth.

The entries above are merely suggestions. This section works best by writing one of the above messages down on a slip of paper and privately passing it to the character with the lowest or highest roll on their skill check. Wait a few minutes, and do it again. This section may serve as an interesting method to award inspiration tokens to characters that get involved in the messages.

The characters spot wolf tracks heading northeast from here. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

5. I'm Not a Witch!

Snow has begun to fall, and with it, the temperature plummets. As you prepare to look for shelter an old woman, some fifty feet ahead, waves frantically at you and beckons you all to come closer.

The old human woman leads the characters to her hut, nestled in between three sturdy trees. She is half-blind and very talkative, but she poses no threat to the characters. Characters may decide to make Wisdom (Insight) checks so as to determine her motives--if they do, feel free to describe her warty, gap-toothed smile, stringy hair, and so on as her key features. She tells the characters that she

hasn't needed a name for many years—since she left the village in fact, and has actually forgotten her name altogether.

The small hut is cozy enough, and keeps the old woman protected from the elements. She is very eager to share her rancid-smelling stew, and seems incredibly concerned with the well-being of the characters.

- "Wear a thick jacket, it's cold out there!"
- "Where are your gloves, young lady?"
- "When I was your age..."
- "Do you see how he looks at you? I haven't seen that look in a long time."
- "Be careful in these woods. Some say they've seen a frightful scary ghostie with a gaping hole in its chest."
- "There are some mighty large wolves out this time of year. One came by recently, with a huge belly wound that just kept bleeding."

She allows the characters to stay in her hut as long as they like, but there is only room for two people plus her at any one time. Any unprepared character that remains outside for one hour or more without building a campfire or taking appropriate shelter must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion due to the encroaching cold.

Wolf tracks and a blood trail continue off to the north from here and are easy to follow. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

6. Stickmen

As the characters progress deeper into the forest and the foothills, they begin to notice small bundles of sticks. As they walk further, the bundles take a more humanoid shape and grow in size, the largest of them being about twelve inches from top to bottom, and all of them are hanging from tree branches.

After two miles, the characters come to a clearing. Lashed to a stand of trees are four very large humanoid effigies. Standing almost 15 feet tall, they are quite an imposing sight. A DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check shows that these effigies are likely dedicated to some deity or force, but it is not clear to whom. A feeling of unease permeates the area, and the sense that the characters are being watched is very strong here.

While the tall effigies provide excellent cover from the wind, attempting to rest here requires a

DC 15 Wisdom saving throw; failing this saving throw results in the character gaining a level of exhaustion (and losing the benefit of the rest) as maddening thoughts fill his or her mind.

Bloody wolf tracks continue off to the southeast from here and are easy to follow. There is roughly two hours of travel between this encounter and the next.

Advancing the Adventure

The characters should have had two encounters in addition to "The Campfire". If time allows, feel free to run them through additional encounters from the "Deep Wilderness Encounters" table but be careful to manage your remaining time as well as staying within the maximum gold and experience rewards.

Part 3. Wolf Den

Expected Duration: 20 minutes

Tracking the wolves has been time-consuming, and the weather is turning for the worse. As the storm approaches, the characters find what appears to be the wolf den, but there is more than simple shelter here. Secrets will be revealed and blood will be shed in this place.

Rock and a Hard Place

A massive storm front has been building for the last several days, and as the characters enter the cave the sky breaks loose—in addition to the heavy winds, a thick freezing rain begins to fall in torrential bursts, interwoven with inch-wide hailstones. Staying outside will almost certainly bring death to whomever is foolish enough to do so.

General Features

Alina's lair has the following general features:

Terrain. This cave is a natural formation. The floor and walls are not worked in any way, but this is not rough terrain. The ceiling is about 7 feet high.

Light. There are no light sources in the wolf den. The oncoming storm blots out the sunlight if the party arrive during day hours.

Smells. Wolf urine and rotting meat are powerful scents in this place.

Temperature. The storm causes the temperature to drop very quickly. Characters outside the wolf den take 1d4 points of bludgeoning and cold damage at the start of each of their turns due to the hail and freezing rain; characters wearing cold weather gear take half of this damage. Characters inside the wolf den are cold but otherwise unaffected.

It is quite apparent that this is a wolf den. Broken, gnawed bones litter the floor, and scraps of fur from a large number of animals have been shredded and scattered about the cavern. The smells of offal and rotting meat compete for attention, and the results are exactly as you might expect.

As you take in your environment, a loud peal of thunder reverberates around the cave—the storm outside has finally broken loose! Freezing rain and hail begin to pelt the cave entrance, and a howling wind tears through the forest.

A bit of investigation (no check needed) reveals a satchel amidst the scraps of bone, fur, and leather.

The thick leather shows signs of gnawing but is still closed.

Once opened, the satchel is found to contain a hand-written journal (written in Common), three small bundles of herbs (which, if ingested, restore 1d4 hit points each), a small pot of ink and a writing quill. They also find the **Player Handout**. Many of the pages have been torn or have had ink spilled on them, but some key phrases can be found. Only three of the entries are legible. The remaining pages are stained and smeared with ink, blood, and other unknowable substances.

Once the characters have discovered the journal and read the key entries, or thirty minutes have passed (not quite enough for a short rest), Alina arrives. Read:

The sound of baying wolves breaks the silence. A moment later, a young, silver-haired woman with an immense wolf in tow stumbles into the den; gasping in agony with a bloody hand clasped over her belly.

As she sees you, her face contorts into rage. She spits a curse; flecks of blood dancing on her lips.

Her curses turn into a throaty growl as she falls to her hands and knees. Her body contorts and twists as her form changes to that of a large, silver-furred wolf. The beast throws its head back and howls, and then charges.

Alina and her **dire wolf** are desperate to get out of the storm, and the characters's presence in their home has them in a lather.

Aw, Is That a Baby?

It is possible that the characters interacted with the villagers in Oraşnou or read in the journal that Alina reacts poorly to the sound of infants crying. Cunning characters can attempt to mimic that sound in any appropriate manner, such as succeeding at an opposed Charisma (Deception) check, using *prestidigitation* or similar magic, etc. If successful, all of Alina's attacks have disadvantage until the start of her next turn as her eyes well with tears. Reward creativity here; don't just rely on the roll of a dice.

Tactics

Alina and the wolf flank characters that appear weaker or less-armored. This encounter should have a definite feel of menace and terror—the characters are backed into a corner and the wolves have no other place to go.

If any of the characters are openly wielding the *whip of warning* found on Laszlo's body, Alina

pointedly avoids that character in favor of other targets.

Adjusting the Encounter

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

- **Very weak:** Replace the dire wolf with a **wolf**; replace Alina with a **dire wolf**
- **Weak party:** Replace the dire wolf with two **wolves**; replace Alina with a **dire wolf**.
- **Strong party:** Alina gains the *pack tactics* ability as per the dire wolves. Additionally, the Dark Powers have gifted her with the following trait: **Regeneration:** Alina regains 5 hit points at the start of each of her turns. If she hears the sound of a baby crying or is damaged by a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. Alina dies only if she starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.
- **Very strong party:** as **Strong party**, but Alina's regeneration ability causes her to regain 10 hit points at the start of each of her turns, and a supernatural cold creeps into the wolf den. Any creature that is not garbed suitably for the cold weather must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution save at the start of their turn or gain a level of exhaustion. Alina's thick coat protects her from this effect.

Treasure

Aside from the tattered journal, Alina carries but a single object with her in her wolf form: an old, ornate jade-and-pearl pendant emblazoned with a raven. This necklace is evidence of who she is (if the characters have not already figured it out), and would easily fetch 150 gp from a Vistani merchant.

Where is Laszlo?

If the adventurers have previously encountered Laszlo in other adventures (and thus, did not find his corpse at the campfire), Alina bellows out challenges and taunts during the combat, including "Laszlo's marrow will provide meals for days" and other such lines that indicate she is aware of his death. The characters may also find evidence of Laszlo's death in the wolf den if needed.

Conclusion

The characters can finish searching the wolf den after combat has concluded. No other wolves bother them, even on the journey back to Oraşnou. There isn't much left here—only some scraps of leather clothing and a few broken shiny baubles.

Alina

If Alina was spared, the characters are now faced with the decision of what to do with Alina. Her wound is festering and rotting, and her lycanthropy may not be curable with local resources—Oraşnou simply isn't populated enough to provide the necessary means to remove her affliction (though the characters likely do not know this). Should she reclaim her sanity long enough to be questioned by the characters, she tearfully admits that her "pup" survived despite Laszlo's attack—and that the pain triggered her transformation.

If the characters decide to return Alina to the village, she is scared to return to the village. While it is possible that the characters may still desire to keep her alive, it should be made clear that throughout the journey she became visibly more and more bestial, and that her humanity is likely to be lost forever if she is not cured soon.

If the characters return to the village with Alina in tow, the Burgomaster of Oraşnou, Ivan Randovich, is dismayed with her condition. He informs the characters that despite the girl's injuries, he is confident that she can be saved. He asks an older gentleman (his aide) to help carry the girl inside. As a parting gesture, Ivan informs them that Gregori will likely be happy to hear whatever news they have. Assuming they do as they are bid, read the following on their return:

As you leave the Burgomaster's residence, three shapes appear on the roof: Alina, the Burgomaster, and his aide. A noose of stout rope has been tightened around Alina's neck and a burlap sack filled with what appears to be stones has been lashed to her ankles.

"The moon has cursed this girl!" The Burgomaster says, "There is nothing that can be done to save her, but we can prevent her destroying us all!"

Alina has time only for the briefest of screams as the man behind the Burgomaster shoves the girl bodily from the roof. There is a resounding CRACK as the rope around her neck draws taut.

Gregori is pleased that the characters have returned, and gives them 50 gold pieces for their trouble. He also offers them lodging in his travel house and tells them that they will be welcome for as long as they would like to stay. This does not confer any discount on lodging, but it does guarantee that he'll always have an available room if they need to stay in Oraşnou.

If asked about the wolf pup, Gregori's demeanor changes slightly. *"Damned thing got a good start from the storm and bolted. Shame, too."*

The Elves

Additionally, it is possible that the characters have convinced the elves to come to Oraşnou. They are skilled hunters and would do well to fill Laszlo & Alina's newly-vacated duties in the village. In time, Aya may even recover more of her spellcasting abilities and personality, becoming an asset that the characters can rely on for magical support.

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
Blood Hawk	25
Twig Blight	25
Vine Blight	100
Needle Blight	50
Bandit	25
Bandit Captain	450
Scout	100
Zombie	50
Elk	50
Swarm of Centipedes	100
Death Dog	200
Dire Wolf	200
Alina (Werewolf)	700

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Taking the elves to go to Oraşnou	25

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 225 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 300 **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
Blood hawk coins	20
Pouch of rare spell components	20
Bandit furs and skins	20
Tambourine	10
Silvered dagger	102
Laszlo's furs	100
Laszlo's trinkets	20
Alina's opal necklace	150
Gregori's reward	50

Scroll of Create Bonfire

Scroll, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. This spell appears in the *Elemental Evil Player's Companion*.

Whip of Warning

Weapon (whip), uncommon (requires attunement)

This whip is fashioned from a length of rotting, thorn-covered vine set into a handle made of an unusual purple wood. The pommel is a large chunk of unpolished amber with a moving eyeball trapped within. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

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 the 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 DM.

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. This award is given to those characters that begin their adventures in Ravenloft during this adventure (see "Welcome to Barovia", above).

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.

DM Rewards

For running this adventure, you receive **150 XP** and **75 gp**.

DM Appendix: NPC Summary

Glovia Falinescu (GLOW-vee-uh FALL-in-ESs-coo).

A heartbroken mother and healer who lost her infant child to disease. Blames her own lack of ability for the child's death. Highly educated in anatomy. First of Esmæ Amarantha's four Obsessions.

NOTE: Glovia is not present in this adventure.

Alina Vaduva (uh-LEEN-uh vuh-DOO-vuh). Alina is a skilled hunter and tracker, and can sometimes get carried away with her direct nature and sometimes-fiery temper. Married to Laszlo, and together they own a small but successful fur trading post. Alina is a werewolf due to a curse upon her family line.

Laszlo Vaduva (laz-LO vuh-DOO-vuh). A true outdoorsman, Laszlo has spent most of his life working in the wild. A skilled hunter, trapper, and woodsman, he firmly believes that the land provides everything that his people need. Married to Alina, and together they own a small but successful fur trading post. The people of Oraşnou believe that Laszlo is hiding details about his life before he came to the village, but he does not speak of those dark days.

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.

Aya Glenmiir (EYE-uh glenn-MEER). Aya is a female elf of about 300 years. She has long, pale blonde hair and radiant green eyes, along with a bit of an ego. She is a wizard specializing in abjuration magic—originally hailing from the town of Phlan. Though she has a history of being very charismatic and a bit of a flirt, the land here in Barovia has seemingly drained her of much of her abilities. She

is gaunt and withdrawn, and openly comments on how the nature of magic, the Weave, "is just different here". Aya has been previously featured in DDEX1-6 *The Scroll Thief*, DDEX1-10 *Tyranny in Phlan*, DDEX2-9 *Breath of the Yellow Rose*, and DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists*.

Burgomaster Ivan Randovich (EYE-vun RAN-doe-vitch): Male human. Shell. Ivan has grown fat, vain, and rich on the backs of those he has subjugated. Seeks out Tatyana's Comb. *NOTE: Ivan is not present until the conclusion of this adventure*

Appendix. NPC/Monster Statistics

Blood Hawk

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages --

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The hawk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Pack Tactics. The hawk has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hawk's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Bandit

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful 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, Halfling

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, ranged 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Bandit Captain

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar, and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

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

Reactions

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Blight, Twig

Small plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 4 (1d6 + 1)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	13 (+2)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

False Appearance. While the blight remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a dead shrub.

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage

Blight, Needle

Medium plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Needles. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Blight, Vine

Small plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +1

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

False Appearance. While the blight remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a tangle of vines.

Actions

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and a Large or smaller target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the blight can't constrict another target.

Entangling Plants (recharge 5-6). Grasping roots and vines sprout in a 15-foot radius centered on the blight, withering away after 1 minute. For the duration, that area is difficult terrain for nonplant creatures. In addition, each creature of the blight's choice in that area when the plants appear must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, freeing itself or another entangled creature within reach on a success.

Death Dog

Medium monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	13 (+2)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Two-Headed. The dog has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Actions

Multiattack. The dog makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the creature must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The

creature dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Dire Wolf

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages --

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the vulture's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Elk

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Charge. If the elk moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

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

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Scout

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common

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 attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Swarm of Centipedes

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened,

paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Paralyzing Bites. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by a swarm of centipedes is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Alina Vaduva (Werewolf)

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 in humanoid form, 12 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common (can't speak in wolf form)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. Alina can use her action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into her true human form. Her statistics, other than her AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. Alina has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Mother's Ears. If Alina hears the sound of a crying infant, or if she hears a sound that she believes come from a crying infant, all of her attacks are made with disadvantage as her eyes well with tears.

Actions

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Alina makes two attacks when using the Attack action.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

Claws (all forms). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Zombie

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

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

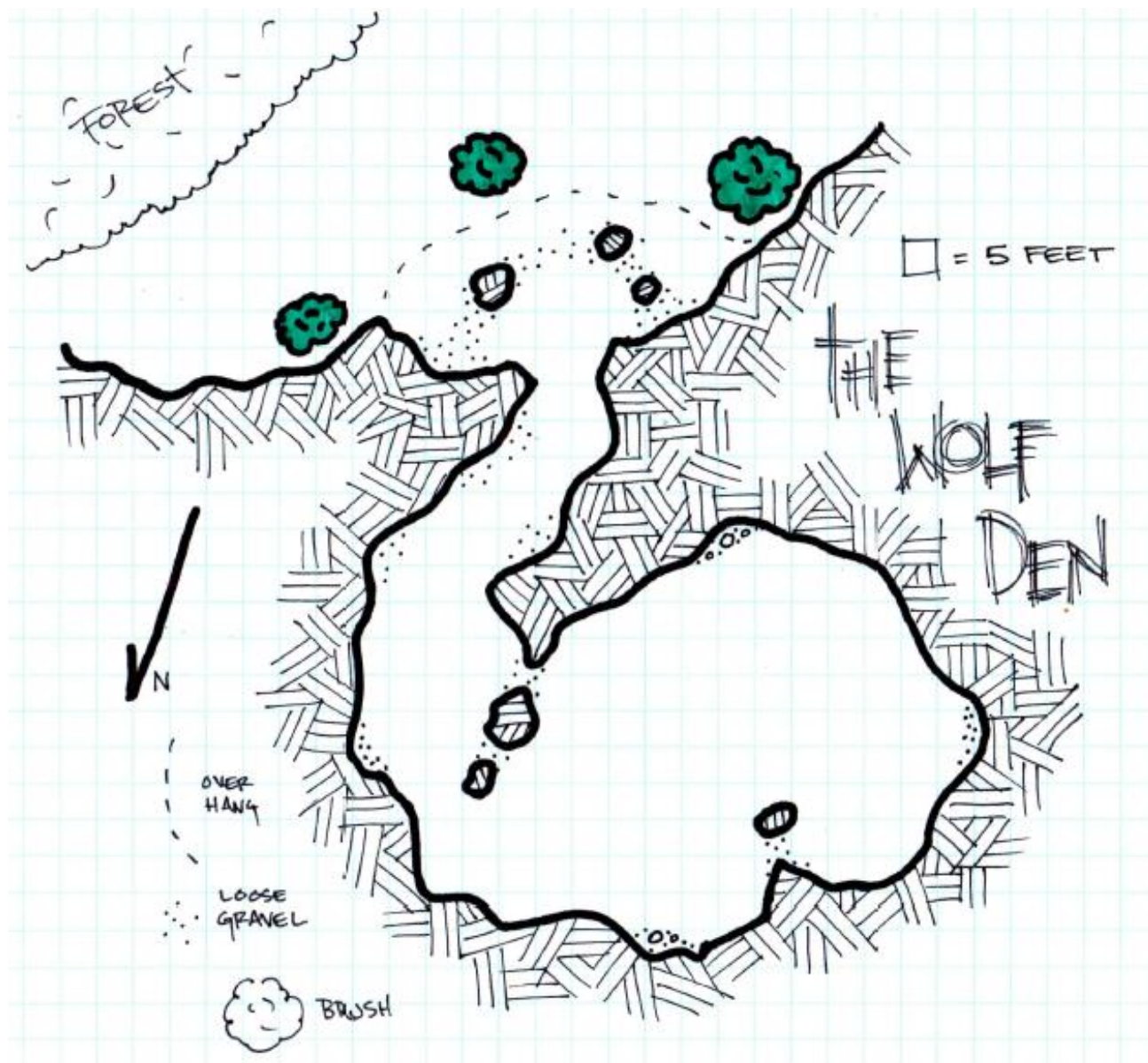
Player Handout: Alina's Journal

I can feel the call,
It pulls me. it...
Compels me? The
forest is so far, so
cold. Laszlo needs me.
our child will need
me. I cannot!

He cut me!
And I ended
him. What will we
do? Ocasnon! I will
take our pup to
the village, and give
him up. I will return
to the forest...

I said goodbye to
my son today. I will
never see him again.
I will never see Laszlo
again. I will never
see people again, lest I
feel the hunger. There
is no cure but solitude.
- END -

Appendix. Map of Wolf Den



DM Appendix 2: Extending to a 4-Hour Session

Many players seek a longer experience than what a two-hour game might normally allow, so here are some options to consider if and when your players request that this adventure be run in a longer capacity.

Standard Rules

The *Curse of Strahd* season is very tightly designed with a large number of factors in mind, but first among these factors is that the adventures are designed to be played in numeric order starting with DDAL04-01 *Suits of the Mists*. Here are the basic rules to bear in mind when you extend this adventure or any other two-hour adventure into a longer format:

- The adventure's rewards (i.e., XP, treasure, renown, and downtime) are not modified.
- Respect the operating hours of your establishment. If you are running in a store or convention, be sure to have enough time to wrap up and clear your table.
- Be sure to notify all the players at your table that this game will run longer than the normal time. If a player leaves early, it will need to be treated the same as if they had left a four-hour game early—this may mean that the player sacrifices certain rewards or may even be unable to complete the story!

Specific Rules for DDAL04-02

This adventure is designed for a two-hour window, but includes a number of elements that are intended to encourage players to replay this adventure—there are typically more encounters than they will get in a single session in the intended format. However, there are a number of elements that you can tweak and work with to maneuver this adventure into a rewarding four-hour experience:

- Expand the time the characters spend in the village by interacting with other key NPCs by name. This requires you to have access to and familiarity with some of the other adventures in

the *Curse of Strahd* season, as the burgomaster, executioner, and tax collector all have key roles to play in later adventures.

- When the characters begin their trek into the forest, the encounters should be adjusted as follows: in Part 2a, they should receive one or two combat encounters (Options 1-3) and two roleplaying encounters (Options 4-6); they should then proceed to the campsite (2b); and finally, the characters should participate in two combat encounters from Part 2c (Options 1-3) and one or two roleplaying encounters (Options 4-6).
- Aya Glenmiir and her elves can become a much firmer encounter – please review her NPC summary for information on adventures that she has appeared in. As a fellow Faerûnian, it is highly likely that she would be extremely relieved to see someone that she might even recognize in the party! Play up the dissociative elements here, though; the Mists of Ravenloft sometimes twist, tease, and poke at the sanity of those they transport here. Aya had an important role in the *Tyranny of Dragons* adventures (Season 1).
- Raise the impact and importance of the snowstorm. Describe it as almost supernaturally cold, with snowflakes so large they can plucked out of the air. By making this environmental event a visceral part of the story, your players will “buy in” to this reality. The Mists may play a role here, as well: as the snow falls, perhaps Alina's tracks continue to be clear and well-marked even though other visibility is reduced significantly.

Ultimately the goal of this season is to use the world and land of Barovia as a character unto itself. To that end, play up your local environmental effects as well, much like a Foley artist for a movie studio. Tap on the underside of the table a few times as the characters trek through the woods, describe creatures with alternative words (ie: rats might be “squat, wriggling, 4-legged beasts with tapered noses, sharp teeth, whip-like tails, and beady, murderous eyes”), turn on an oscillating fan during this game to simulate the character's journey through the snowstorm. You may find that by simply changing how you describe your world extends your game time; requiring no additional modification.

Results Code: March - April 2016

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of March – April 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.

