

Expedition to Castle Ravenloft

Adapted for use with the 13th Age RPG from the 3rd edition D&D adventure designed by Bruce Cordell and James Wyatt.

Chapter 1: The Undead Plague

A prisoner within his domain, *Strahd* taints everything he touches. In his growing desperation to escape, the vampire lord turns on the population of Barovia in a mad scheme.

In the village of Barovia, the son of Priest *Danovich* has been slain by bandits. *Strahd* has arranged for an evil tome to be discovered by the priest. Mad with grief, the priest has corrupted by the vile volume. He ressurects his son as a Blaspheme, a plague bearer and plague eater. And then the first zombies appeared...

While his necromantic infection spreads and threatens to consume the village of Barovia, *Strahd* moves to secure what is most precious to him and to eliminate any potential threats to his plan. *Danovich* is dealt with but *Ireana Kolyana*, so reminiscent of his long-lost bride, still refuses his advances. Her father, the *Burgomaster*, is slain for his part in that and the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* has been removed from the mansion.

Now, the mists part and a small band of outsiders are allowed entry into *Strahd*'s domain. They are watched closely by his spies as they move to end his plague. It is against them that he will measure the efficacy of his tools and it is through them that his plan may finally be set into motion.

Sub-Plots and other Challenges

Ashlyn, *Paladin of Pelor*, has risen in the defense of Barovia during the zombie plague. She and her companions, *Thendrick* (cleric) and *Mathilda* (fighter) had come to the village in search of a relic known

as the *Sunsword*. *Therrick* and *Mathilda* went to the church three days ago to seek out the source of the plague and have not returned. The location of the *Sunsword* is revealed in chapter 2.

The *Burgomaster* is dead and his holy relic, which is said to have been capable of keeping even *Strahd* at bay, has disappeared. The location of the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* is revealed in chapter 2.

The local merchant, *Bildrath* is an agent of *Lucian*. *Bildrath* will report the player's public activities to *Lucian* without delay. More on *Lucian* on the next page

Ghouls in the graveyard take advantage of the necromantic plague to feast on the living and the dead alike. Their numbers grow, albiet more much slowly than the zombies.

Madam Eva is the leader of the *Vistani*. While the *Vistani* are distrusted, her proven gift for divination often leads the villagers to swallow their pride when they are in need of her advice. *Madam Eva* is a major figure in chapter 2.

The Plague

Strahd's plague begins and ends with the blaspheme, *Doru*. If *Doru* is destroyed, the plague ceases to spread.

Necromantic Infection

A PC damaged by a zombie's melee attack must make a save (11+) to avoid infection. A critical hit always transmits the infection (no save).

Infected PCs do not clear failed death saves at the end of battle and lose their level in HP with every failed death or last-gasp save. If they die, they immediately rise as a zombie.

Personalities

Arik, Barkeep of the Blood of the Vine tavern (pg 26). Arik knows very little or at least he isn't talking. He serves the Vistani and villagers alike and speaks in a heavy accent.

Ashlyn, Paladin of Pelor and Lightbringer (pg 25). Ashlyn is eager to find her friends and to resume her quest for the Sunsword. Through her, the players may join her order or the Lightbringers, whom are undead-hunters. Ashlyn is a willing ally and may be played as a PC.

Bildrath, Shopkeep and Parriwimple (pg 26). Bildrath is a former adventurer (fighter) and Lucian's spy in town. His son, Parriwimple is simple and very, very strong. Bildrath doesn't budge on his high prices and he has a storeroom in the back that he doesn't let anyone into.

Danovich, Fallen Priest (pg 27). Danovich used to be the village's chief protector from evil. The priest is mad with grief at the death of his son, Doru, and tainted by forbidden knowledge. Since his decline, Strahd and his agents have been able to enter the town at their leisure. Danovich keeps a diary and possesses the *Libre Blasheme*. Danovich is possessed by the *Libre Blaspheme*. If he can be freed from its influence, he will seek penance as a willing ally or as a PC.

Ireena Kolyana, Beloved of Strahd (pg 9 & 31). Ireena is the daughter of the late Burgomaster and a capable fighter. She seeks revenge for her father and desires to recover the family heirloom, the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind*. She harbors a dark secret—Strahd desires her for his bride. She is not aware that she has been dominated by Strahd. Strahd's intelligent minions will not allow her to come to harm. Ireena is a reluctant ally but is available for play as a PC.

Ismark the Lesser (pg 27). Ismark is the son of the late Burgomaster and is happily drunk.

Kolyan Indirovich, Burgomaster (deceased). Ten days dead. Ireena sits vigil over his corpse to be certain that he does not rise as one of the undead. When he died, the secret of how to use the *Holy Symbol of Ravenkind* apparently died with him as neither Ireena nor Ismark could make it work.

Lucian, Servant of Strahd (pg 112). Lucian appears as a half-celestial paladin named Fandromar but is, in truth, the demon possessing him. He generally occupies the Office of Vengeance within the castle (Encounter K72, pg 112 & 172) but he has an agent in town whom he may visit for information (see *Bildrath*). Lucian stops at nothing to preserve Strahd's plans and will act against the PCs if all else fails.

Madam Eva (pg 55). Madam Eva appears as a giantess and leader of the Vistani. She is known for her powers of divination and prophesy. What the players do not know is that she is one of the three cursed guardians for three fanes of great power in Barovia (see chapter 2). Madam Eva's reading establishes some of the plot elements for the game and also determines the locations of several important artifacts (pg 56).

Count Strahd von Zarovich (pg 6, 13, 128-137, 192-197). Strahd does not interact with the PCs or appear in this chapter.

The Vistani (pg 10, 52 & 76). The Vistani are a tight community of those who live on the fringe of Barovia's society. They are bandits, thieves, tinkers, gypsies and other questionable things besides. They offer the only other opportunity for trade in the valley, however, and they are just as effected as everyone else by Strahd's scheming.

Encounters

01. Entering Barovia (montage)

The hard-packed road enters the village of Barovia from the east. In the distance ahead, you hear shouts, screams, and the unmistakable clamor of battle. The streets appear to be full of silent villagers shuffling toward the sound of the disturbance. What do you do?

Players must narrate how they enter and traverse a town decimated by the necromantic infection. Have them fill in details about the state of the homes and shops they pass, who the last holdouts are and how they cope. Address any other tropes of zombie fiction that seems appropriate.

As the player's describe their scene in the montage, have them roll an attack, background check, or save (as appropriate to the narration). Failure a check can be met with damage or complications. Surviving an apocalypse is dangerous and exhausting.

Campaign Loss: The party doesn't arrive in time to prevent Ashlyn's death in the town square. Her story can be told through the surviving NPCs, but the resources she represented would be excised from the campaign (unless you wish to resurrect one of her missing companions to fill that role).

Until the source of the infection is dealt with, this encounter can be repeated as often as the players need to move through the village. If you prefer a fight to a montage, the book encounters are:

E1 (pg 32): Carcass Eaters, Deathlock, Zombies

Players	3	4	5	6
Carcass Eaters	5	5	10	10
Deathlocks	0	1	1	2
Zombies	3	3	4	5

E2 (pg 34): Dire Maggots, Vargouilles, Zombies

Players	3	4	5	6
Dire Maggots	4	4	4	4
Vargouilles	4	4	8	8
Zombies	2	4	4	6

Dire Maggots: The older the animated corpse, the more likely it is to be infested with these pests. I stated them up as a creature, like the original text, but they may work better as a hazard or trap!

E6 (pg 27 & 36): Carcass Eaters, Ghouls, Zombies

Players	3	4	5	6
Carcass Eaters	5	5	10	10
Ghouls	3	5	5	6
Zombies	0	0	2	4

E9 (pg 46): Carcass Eaters, Dire Maggots, Zombies

Players	3	4	5	6
Carcass Eaters	5	5	10	10
Dire Maggots	8	10	17	20
Zombies	3	5	7	10

02. Town Square (combat)

The road leads through the heart of the village where the defenders have been driven back to their last stand. As you approach, you see that the barriers are about to be overrun. A woman in bright plate screams defiance as she doggedly cuts down any zombies that crest the barrier between you.

Only a handful of defenders stand with Ashlyn. Every she misses with an attack, and NPC dies and rises as a zombie mook.

Ashlyn, Paladin of Pelor and the Last Lightbringer.			
3rd Level Wrecker			Init +5
Longsword +8 vs AC —10 damage and the target takes a -4 attack anyone that they are not engaged with until the beginning of Ashlyn's next turn. <i>Undead Hunter:</i> On a natural even hit against undead, Ashlyn deals 20 damage instead.			
HP 45	AC 19	PD 13	MD 17
Detect Undead: Ashlyn knows the location of all undead in near range, but she does not know their number, type, or strength.			

E3 (pg 25 & 36): Ashlyn, Entomber, Zombies

Players	3	4	5	6
Deathlock	0	0	2	2
Entomber	1	1	1	2
Zombie Mob	20	30	40	50

Campaign Loss: The town center is overun by undead, who then turn their attention to obviously occupied buildings. Do the PCs hole up or try to escape town? Do they try to rescue any other villagers?

03a. Church (combat)

The church shows signs of neglect as if abandoned for months or perhaps even longer! The main doors open slowly on rusty hinges. From within, you can hear the chanting of Father Danovich—a nonsense prayer that seems to foul the very air that spills from the church.

Father Danovich stands at the altar but he is not alone in worship. A dozen or so villagers, little more than shadows in the dim light, sit in the pews in rapt attention.

In the isle between the pews, a large ritual circle is inscribed upon the floor. The circle pulses with faint light in time with the Danovich's chant.

Danovich is mad and cannot be reasoned with. He rants in strange tongues, lapsing into common occasionally to drop a hint of his son's death or resurrection and of Strahd's diary.

Danovich might, possibly, be restrained. If he is cured of his madness, he will aid the PCs in atonement.

The folks in the pews are zombie mooks. Deathlocks are in the offices in the front and will flank the PCS if combat begins in the main room.

E7 (pg 40-41): Danovich, Zombies (mooks), Deathlocks

Players	3	4	5	6
Danovitch	1	1	1	1
Deathlocks	0	2	3	5
Zombie Mob	20	20	30	40

Replacing the hole in the floor is a ritual circle (see the map on pg 41).

Circle of Death

A deadly ritual has been set in motion and the Pcs must stop it before its energies spill over into the town. Whenever the escalation die advances, living creature in range of the Circle of Death make a hard last-gasp save save (16+). Characters infected with the necromantic plague automatically fail this save. Those who fail the last-gasp save also lose a recovery. Creatures that die as a result of this attack immediately turn into zombies.

As the ritual progresses, the range of the circle increases with the escalation die:

1 In the circle	3 Near By	5 Down the Path
2 Close	4 Far Away	6 Encompass Town

Disrupting the ritual circle safely is hard (DC 25). A failed check to destroy the circle might increase the escalation die, triggering another wave of unholy energy. If the escalation die increases to 6, the party suffers a campaign loss.

Campaign Loss: The entire town is zombified! Only the Vistani and anyone who fled the town survive. Some of the dead disperse into the wilderness surrounding Barovia to trouble the Pcs at a future time.

03b. Church (combat)

Beneath the trap door in Danovich's quarters is a stairway that leads into a black basement. The basement is full of the scents of stale incense & alchemy. It is as silent as a tomb.

Doru, the blaspheme waits in the south. He has risen Ashlyn's fallen companions as skeletons to act as his guards.

In the northwest corner is the remains of a laboratory which Danovich used to raise his son (see pg 28).

E7A (pg 42-43): Doru, Skeletons

Players	3	4	5	6
Doru	1	1	1	1
Skeleton Warriors	2	4	6	10

Campaign Loss: Doru grows stronger! Even if the zombies are contained, Doru can cause new outbreaks of the plague when it is least convenient. He might relocate to the crossroads and raise the dead there.

04. The Graveyard (optional combat)

The Ghouls aren't part of the necromantic plague but they benefit from it! The decimation of the human population has provided a bounty of fresh, dead flesh for them to feast upon.

Ghouls may stalk single or in small groups, eating the dead in the street or stealing into homes. If their cemetery nest is consecrated, they disperse into the woods (perhaps relocating to the crossroads?).

E6 & E8 (pgs 38-39, 44-45): Ghouls, Ghoul Harpy

Players	3	4	5	6
Ghouls	4	6	8	12
Ghoul Harpy	1	1	2	2

05. The Burgomaster's Daughter (social)

There are several reasons why the PCs may wish to speak with Ireena:

- * She is the Burgomaster's daughter.
- * The Burgomaster was the last known wielder of the *Icon of Ravenloft*, now stolen by Strahd's spies.
- * She is a fighter of minor skill and potential ally in Barovia.

Ireena Kolyana, Strahd's Beloved			
2nd Level Troop			Init +3
Longsword or R: Crossbow +7 vs AC—7 damage. <i>Miss:</i> A longsword attack still deals 2 damage on a miss.			
HP 36	AC 18	PD 16	MD 12
Dominated: Ireena cannot refuse Strahd's commands. Beloved of Strahd: Strahd's agents will not attack Ireena.			

It is obvious that Ireena is uncomfortable if the PCs express any interest in her mysterious suitor although she suspects him of being involved in her father's death.

Use "It is Obvious that..." to try and goad the PCs into revealing Ireena's secret or establishing some sort of relationship where that secret will inevitably be discovered. (Perhaps the PCs stay at the manor or are invited to dinner for their valor?)

If the PCs fail to reveal the secret, Ireena will eventually disappear.

As a vampire, she will confront them in the Castle and curse them for fools while simultaneously praising her new husband's strength and cunning.

Monsters

Skeleton Warrior

4th Level Blocker [Undead]			Init +12
Spear +10 vs. AC —12 damage and an ally may pop free from the target.			
HP 39	AC 18	PD 16	MD 13
Vulnerable: holy Resist Weapons 16+			

Zombie

3rd Level Troop [Undead]			Init +4
Rotting Fist + 8 vs. AC —10 damage. <i>Natural 16+ Hit:</i> Both the Zombie and its target take 1d6 damage!			
HP 60	AC 15	PD 13	MD 9
Headshot: A critical hit against a zombie drops it to 0 hp. Vulnerable: holy			

Zombie Mob

2nd Level Troop (mook) [Undead]			Init +3
Implacable Mob + 7 vs. AC —5 damage. <i>Miss:</i> Add a cumulative +1 damage to the next successful zombie attack.			
HP 12	AC 16	PD 12	MD 8
Headshot: A critical hit against a zombie mook deals triple damage rather than the usual double damage. Grasping Hands: If at least three zombies engage the same target it is <i>stuck</i> . Vulnerable: holy			

Danovich, Fallen Priest			
4th Level Leader			Init +5
Mace +9 vs AC —15 damage and a nearby ally moves up to its speed or makes an attack. C: Cause Fear —One nearby target with 18 or fewer HP gains the fear condition (save ends).			
HP 55	AC 20	PD 14	MD 18
Invocation of Vengeance: Danovich and his nearby allies deal damage equal to their level when they attack and miss. Madness: When hit by an attack against his mental defense, consult the natural result of the attack die. If the result is even, Danovich is vulnerable to the attack. If the result is odd, Danovich takes half damage instead.			

Doru, the Blaspheme			
5th Level Large Wrecker [Undead]			Init +7
Blasphemous Bite +10 vs AC —35 damage. <i>Natural 16+:</i> If the attack hits, the target is grabbed and the armor is also damaged (-1 AC until the armor is repaired or replaced). Light armor is destroyed after one hit, Medium after two hits, and Heavy after three.			
HP 100	AC 24	PD 19	MD 15
Erratic Charge: The blaspheme cannot be intercepted. Guarded: Damage from a successful attack against Doru may be redirected to a close undead instead. Patient Zero: As the source of Strahd's necromantic infection, the blaspheme automatically infects targets that it hits. Plague-Eater: When an infected PC makes a melee attack against Doru and misses, roll 1d4: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The PC's armor is damaged, per <i>Blasphemous Bite</i>. Doru bites the PC for 35 damage. The PC makes a last-gasp save. A skeleton makes a free attack against a creature engaged with Doru. 			

Deathlock			
3rd Level Caster [Undead]			Init +6
R: Enervating Ray +11 vs PD —One nearby target takes 10 damage. <i>Natural 16+ Hit:</i> You are weakened for 1 round. C: Death Knell +8 vs PD —The target loses 1 recovery and the deathlock gains one of the following benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the deathlock is staggered, it regains half of its hit points. If the deathlock is not staggered, it may use the escalation die until the end of the battle. <i>Limited Use:</i> Death Knell can only target a staggered creature or one infected with Strahd's necromantic plague.			
HP 45	AC 14	PD 13	MD 17 (21)
Turn Resistance: The monster gains a +4 bonus to MD against Turn Undead.			

Entomber			
4th Level Wrecker [Undead]			Init +7
Strength of the Damned + 9 vs. AC —20 damage <i>Natural 16+ Hit:</i> The target also makes a save (11+). If the target fails, the earth opens up and swallows the target whole (stuck). The target begins making last-gasp saves as it suffocates beneath the earth. Digging out is a normal task (DC 15) requiring a standard action.			
HP 60	AC 20	PD 18	MD 14
Vulnerable: holy			

Ghouls/Ghasts

All ghasts are ghouls for this game. Using book stats from 13th Age pg 225 with the following changes:

- The ghouls have turn resistance (+4 MD per tier).
- **Ghoul Vomit +8 vs PD**—Move action. 1-2 close targets are stunned for 1 round and contract *Ghoul Stench*.
Limited Use: Once per battle, but it recharges when the ghoul succeeds in using *Pound of Flesh*.
- The ghoul monk's claw attack can attack 1d3 engaged creatures. He also uses the nastier special.

Ghoul Stench: This magical curse causes the target to stink like a ghoul. This counts as one magic item against the character's limit (or two on a critical hit) and as such also comes with a nasty quirk based on the smell.

Ghoul Harpy

Using the Harpy stats from pg 234 with the following changes:

- **Stench**—From the harpy's nest rises a nauseating stench that fills the air, relentlessly assailing your senses. The DC for nearby background checks are increased by 5 and you take 10 poison damage after failing any saving throw.

Carcass Eaters

4th Level Troop (mook) [Beast]

Init +6

Infected Bite +8 vs AC—7 ongoing damage.

Carnage: The vermin's attacks deal 4 damage on a miss, or 8 damage if they are staggered.

HP 14

AC 18

PD 18

MD 13

Dire Regeneration: When the escalation die is even, a new vermin joins the pack at the beginning of the Carcass Eater's turn.

Dire Maggots

2nd Level Spoiler (mook) [Vermin]

Init +2

Drooling Mandibles +6 vs AC—4 damage plus necromantic infection.

Burrow—When touched by the living, the host corpse erupts with maggots, who get an immediate melee attack at +9. If successful, the maggot burrows into your flesh. While within you, whenever you spend a recovery in combat you heal 1/2 the normal amount and become dazed (-4 to attack rolls, save ends).

HP 7

AC 14

PD 18

MD 12

Parasites: Any maggots not within a host at the end of combat die. Any amount of magical healing directed at a maggot or its host will kill a maggot.
Worm: Dire maggots can barely move outside of their host and are only dangerous if engaged.

Necromantic Infection: A dire maggot automatically infects its host.

Vargouille

6rd Level Spoiler (mook) [Aberration]

Init +11

Jagged Bite +11 vs. AC—12 damage and poison. This damage cannot be healed normally until the poison is cured (see Kiss, below).

Critical Hit: The poison advanced by one step. (see Kiss, below).

C: Fearsome Shriek —Up to 3 nearby creatures with 30 or fewer hit points are stunned until the start of their next turn.

Limited Use: 1/battle as a free action.

HP 25

AC 20

PD 20

MD 16

Kiss: A target poisoned by a vargouille turns into a vargouille within a day unless the poison is defeated (hard difficulty). When the target uses a recovery, its hair falls out. After the first quick rest, the target's ears grow long and leathery. Its chin sprouts tentacles. After 8 hours or after the next full heal-up, the transformation completes and the victim's head flies off his shoulders to join the pack.