# Fleshing Out Curse of Strahd: The Village of Barovia

The Village of Barovia is the party's first official stop in Strahd's land after Death House. Ideally, this is the first sign of civilization that they've encountered in a while, especially if you used my advice and took Death House out of the village and put it on its own little hamlet on the Svalich Road. After that horror fest, the collection of houses in the lower valley will look like a welcome relief.

## Local Events: Dream Pies

You must, must, MUST do this event. It's wonderful and sets up so much for later on. I would actually recommend having this event occur before anything else in the Village of Barovia. Morgantha and her cart of pies should be the first thing they see in the desolate streets. Of course, there're a few things I changed here.

### Morgantha's Character

* + This is another character portrait I would not show your players.
  + Firstly, try to play Morgantha as the most loving, grandmotherly person in the whole wide world. She's kind to a fault and a shameless gossip (as many elder women can be as a stereotype). When she talks, do your best to make her tell round-a-bout truths instead of outright lies. That way, if your player's insight checks her, she's got nothing to hide.
  + Morgantha is pretty sinister name, so have her introduced as Granny. If asked for her name, Morgantha replies honestly, but shows distaste for it. She says, "Why it's Morgantha, dear. But everyone just calls me Granny. Morgantha is much too formal!"
  + Furthermore, if your players check her and sense that she's a fiend, Morgantha sees that there's a tell on the PC's face and asks what's wrong. If prodded further, she tells the PCs a horrible story of how her mother had a nasty encounter with a witch that left its stain on the whole family. This also isn't a lie. Like her, Morgantha's mother was a night hag and Morgantha devoured her when she was younger. So technically, her mother did have a deadly encounter with a witch.
  + Morgantha knows a little bit about everyone in the village. She knows this information because she has to keep track of her clients, but outwardly just acts like a nosey grandmother. She'll actively ask male PCs why on earth they haven't settled down yet with a nice girl yet and asks the female PCs why they're so skinny. They should get some meat on their bones, for goodness’ sake!

### First Meeting

* + When PCs first see Morgantha on the street, she's just finishing selling a pie to a villager. As the party approaches, they'll be able to overhear the villager thank Morgantha profusely and wish her safe travels. The villager is very normal and their obvious trust of Morgantha should throw PCs off guard.

### Dream Pies

* + For my write up on the mechanics of Dream Pastry Addiction, see this post.
  + The dream pies smell fresh and delicious. Remember that the pies don't necessarily have to be made out meat, so long as they have kid parts inside them. This can include powered bone dust and other weird things. So, describe to the players that she has a small variety of pies to offer:
    - Meat pies, some kind of maple nut pie, and a hearty pie with a potato base.
    - Mentioning the variety of ingredients with also throw your players off. Make sure to list meat pies first, though, so your players aren't thinking about meat by the time the list is completed.
  + If players still fixate on the meat pies and ask kind of meat it is. Morgantha says something like, "Oh, Barovians use all kinds of meat. Especially since we've a dreadful lack of sunlight for good fruits and veggies. I myself prefer chicken, but there's also goat, deer, pig, and wolf meat depending on where you go. You'd think wolf meat would be more of delicacy, huh? Not here, deary! With Lord Strahd in charge there's more wolves in these woods than we know what to do with!"
    - Remember, redirect and overload with information. Surefire way to not answer crucial questions. ;)
  + No matter what, Morgantha will gift the party with a pie to share for dinner. Yes, they normally cost 1gp, but Morgantha wants to get people addicted to her wares. Just like a good drug dealer, the first shots free. She just says that she'll wave the fee since they're new to Barovia and the journey into town must've been hard.
  + When Morgantha describes the dream pies and why they're so expensive (because this will definitely come up when the PCs learn the price), she tells the PCs that it's a bit of magic her mother taught her before the witch killed her. The pies bring the eaters only the sweetest dreams, something poorly lacking in this dreary world. She should get a really sad expression on her face when she says this, honestly seeming grief stricken at the sorry state of the world.

### Afterwards

* + No matter what happens, do NOT have the little after bit of this encounter where Morgantha visits a house and takes the child as payment. Don't ruin all the trust you've just built. If the players follow her, she just continues going house to house and selling her pies, as innocent as ever.
  + Morgantha will happily direct PCs towards the Blood on the Vine Tavern if they're looking for a place to stay for the night.

## Local Events: March of the Dead

I took out this event and this bit of lore from my campaign entirely. Here's why.

### The Purpose of the March

* + Besides the fact that this is a spooky event, its actual narrative purpose is to dishearten PCs. It's supposed to show them that they aren't the first adventures to come to Barovia nor the first to face Strahd. It's meant to show them that all those that came before died and so will they most likely. This is actually a pretty good motivation, if not for a few facts.

### Why I think it Doesn't Work

* + The Chosen Ones Complex
  + Unfortunately, we are all victims of narrative. We see this in movies and video games all the time. Yes, the ancient evil has been trapped in the mountain for the last 999 years. But this year, it's definitely breaking free because this year is the one in which the setting takes place. Yes, many kids have tried to face the chess champion and failed, but you're going to beat him because obviously you're the main character in this story.
  + The same mindset can't help but take hold of your players and therefore takes away from the original purpose of the March.

### Isolation is Scarier than Premonition

* + You can tell someone their destiny one hundred times, but that won't stop them from fighting it. In fact, telling someone that they can't do something is often a big motivator to actually do that thing. This entire event is one big premonition; a prophesy telling your players that they're going to die facing Strahd. But instead of frightening, this will likely only motivate them further.
  + Now, if you want to spookily motivate them, then go for it. Use this event to its fullest. However, if you want to focus on scaring your players, take out this event and this haunting.

## Prior Adventurers in Barovia

Isolation is hella frightening. As human beings, we find safety in numbers and look for companionship to function. You may say you're a loner, but if you had to go into the creepy basement, you'd probably want someone with you. Telling your players that adventurers come through Barovia all the time takes away that isolation. It makes their presence in this land normal. And normal means safe. That's a big "nope" for a horror campaign.

### Far Fewer Outsiders

* + The book tells us that Barovian natives are used to seeing outsiders and so don't react very strongly to foreign races. This is no longer true.
  + To make all of Barovia more isolating, not just the village, drastically reduce the number of outsiders that come through the mists. Now, only handful of outsiders come to Barovia every couple decades. This way, people like Ismark who are only in their 20s may never have even seen an outsider in their entire lives.
  + Natives now react strongly to your PCs' odd races. They may be fascinated by your non-human PCs or be extra distrustful. The reaction will vary from one NPC to another.

### Strahd's Playthings

* + Yes, Strahd likes to torment adventurers. Having fewer of them coming through his lands doesn't change that. It just means he plays with his food a little longer before eating it. After all, what are a few decades to someone who can't die?

### Vistani's Guests

* + One thing in which the book heavily hints is that the Vistani often bring outsiders to Barovia. I took out this bit of lore entirely. I'll do a bigger write up on the Vistani in my next post about Tser Pool, but know that in my version of Barovia, the Vistani do not escort people in and out of Barovia. Pretty much at all. So that's another way outsiders are limited in the campaign.

Overall, limiting the number of people passing through the mists makes the mists seem stronger. Imagine there's a literal wall around a prison. If inmates are known to walk through that wall all the time, or hitch rides out with the wardens, the walls don't seem as limiting. However, if no one ever really comes or goes, those walls seem all the more absolute.

## Blood on the Vine Tavern

* The Tavern will likely be the player's first stop after meeting Morgantha. They'll be looking for someone to talk to and there frankly isn't much else in town. Bildrath's Mercantile is a fine store, but the high prices will likely scare players off.

### The Vistani Owners

* + Alenka, Mirabel, and Sorvia are the Vistani owners of the tavern. In my version of Barovia, the Vistani are much more benign than the book makes them out to be. I'll be doing a much more detailed write up in my Tser Pool post.
  + For now, know that these three Vistani aren't actually Vistani anymore. They're considered Mortu, or Vistani outcasts. The sisters are no longer welcome amongst any Vistani tribes or caravans and have no friends of their own people. They may be Vistani by race, sure, but they are Mortu by culture.
    - As a result, they have none of their classic Vistani power. They don't have the Evil Eye power or the ability to curse someone and they see nothing when they look at a Tarokka card.
    - Strahd himself finds these three pretty deplorable by their Mortu status and actively refuses to use them as his allies. Though the book says these three are Strahd's spies, they are not in this version. Strahd is a lawful individual with a healthy respect for the Vistani, so he would never associate himself with a Mortu. Instead, he uses the barkeep, Arik, to spy on the tavern, using his soulless eyes for his scrying spell.
  + The sisters are exceptionally cruel individuals and shallow by nature, like the popular girls in high school who bully with trickery and deceit. When Alenka, Mirabel, and Sorvia were teenagers, they shunned the Vistani way of life, actively mocking the beliefs of their own people in favor of being enamored by life in solid houses that didn't smell of horse butts (Their words). However, they showed their true cruelty when they tricked another Vistani teenager into a forced romance with a couple Barovian men for a night. They were marked as Mortu and cast out quickly after.

## Ismark the Lesser

* Your players will also come across Ismark when they visit the tavern, who will happily buy the party a round of drinks and invite them to sit with him.
  + SIDE NOTE: If the PCs still have Lancelot the dog with them, Ismark will recognize the pooch. This might give him further incentive to invite the players to side with him. He might ask where they found Lancelot and tell them the dog used to belong to Mad Mary's daughter. If the PCs relate the events of Death House, they will obviously impress Ismark and inadvertently convince him that they're worthy enough to protect Ireena.

### A Player Character as Ismark

* + *This is going to be very repetitive of Ireena's section. I would advise that you have either one or the other. One PC as either Ismark or Ireena, not two PCs as both. Unless the two players are willing to work together quite a bit, this could get messy.*
  + If at all possible, make Ismark a Player Character. Now, this doesn't mean you have to force Ismark's personality down one of your player's throats. Instead, focus on the function of Ismark's character.
  + Ismark is worried about his sister, who's become the main target of a vampire lord. He's a side character meant to care for the main heroine. That is literally his only function in the narrative of this campaign.
  + If you've got a player that wants to play a human male, give him this function. It may not even be his sister he's worried about. Maybe the PC wants to play an older man, so Ireena is his daughter. Or maybe she's his best friend. The function is the same, so the details don't really matter.

### Ismark's Personality

* + For the most part, I stuck pretty closely to the book with this NPC. I made Ismark honest to a fault. He's kind but also has an air of perpetual exhaustion, like the weight of his responsibilities is always one straw away from breaking him.
  + When the players meet Ismark, he's desperate. His father is dead and his sister is in danger, so he's willing to settle for very little in the way of help. Everyone in the village is too smart and/or afraid to go against Strahd's desire for Ireena, but outsiders might be easier to convince. Or buy. He openly admits this fact with a sad, bitter smile.
  + If asked about the 3 Vistani in the Tavern, Ismark calls them Vistani spies. He doesn't know that the sisters aren't either of those things. His prejudice is apparent, but at the same time, he's never met any other Vistani to compare them too.
  + Ismark's kindness to the PCs as well as the promise of reward should get the party to follow him home.

## The Burgomaster's Mansion

When the players get to Ismark's home, they'll be introduced to Ireena and given the details on the job.

### Escort Ireena

* + For the most part, I played this section as written. Ismark wants to protect his sister, who'd being targeted by Strahd. Strahd's been known to take consorts every so often, but neither of the siblings know that Ireena is somehow special.
  + Ismark promises the reward of 50 gold pieces to the characters to escort Ireena to safety. Note that he specifically says, "to safety." Not, just Vallaki or Kresk or whatever, but until she is safe. Ismark doesn't put a great emphasis on this point, though, in case the PCs refuse the job. He's desperate and a little fine print isn't something he's afraid of. He will happily suggest Vallaki as a destination though.
  + Unfortunately, Ismark isn't able to accompany the party or his sister to Vallaki. Since their father is dead, someone has to govern the village and Ismark is too lawful to let his duties slide.
    - I did this specifically to manage the number of NPC party members in my group. I knew that Ireena might be a pretty long-term companion and that my party would likely pick up at least one or two more along the way, so I didn't want to overburden the group with mindless extras. So, Ismark stays behind.

### The Burgomaster's Burial

* + Even as Ismark and the players are working out the details, Ireena pops up and out right refuses to leave until her father is rightfully buried. The players will have to agree to this if they want to move forward.

### SIDE NOTE

* + Should the party still have Lancelot the dog, Ismark offers to care for it after the PCs leave with Ireena. He doesn't recommend returning Lancelot to Mad Mary since he doubts, she would care for the poor old dog with the sorry state of her mind.

## Ireena Kolyana

### A Player Character as Ireena

* + This is going to be very repetitive of Ismark's section. I would advise that you have either one or the other. One PC as either Ismark or Ireena, not two PCs as both. Unless the two players are willing to work together quite a bit, this could get messy.
  + If at all possible, make Ireena a Player Character. Now, this doesn't mean you have to force Ireena's personality down one of your player's throats. Instead, focus on the function of Ireena's character.
  + Ireena is the object of Strahd's desires; a reincarnation of his lost love that he can never obtain. That is literally Ireena's only function in the narrative of this campaign. Everything else about her is just fluff and character development.
  + If you've got a player that wants to play a human female, give her this function. Here's how to adapt her for the role:
    - Her Name: I'm hoping this is common sense, but I'll say it anyway. Don't force your player to be named Ireena. Their character is quite literally replacing Ireena, so the name doesn't matter.
    - Her Appearance: It doesn't matter how the player wants their character to look. Don't force her character to look like Ireena. Instead, Tatyana and all her other incarnations look like the PC.
    - Her Personality: Ireena's personality as an NPC is already up for interpretation. So however, your PC wants to portray her should be fine.

### Her Backstory

* + - If the PC grew up somewhere other than Barovia, maybe a Vistana smuggled her out of Barovia as a baby and she has no idea. Maybe her birth name is in fact Ireena, but she just doesn't know it.
    - If she comes with a pretty homey backstory, try to work with your player so that her character is a bit of a shut in. She's stayed pretty locked up in her house in the Village of Barovia and so doesn't know very much about the rest of the dimension. Beyond the simple names of towns, she's quite ignorant. When the evil king Strahd came to her doorstep, she fled into the Svalich woods.
    - If she's from Barovia, she gets lost in the woods and stumbles on the rest of the party as the mist draws them in. They then go to Death House together.
  + Overall, having a PC take the role of Ireena in the campaign will put a lot more shock value on the narrative. Strahd's pursuit won't just be for a random NPC, but for another player. And players are way more important in dnd and automatically built a faster relationship with the other players.

### Adopted or Not? On Izek:

* + The book tells us that Ireena is the adopted daughter of Barovia's Burgomaster and that her long lost brother is Izek Strazni, the demon armed miscreant from Vallaki. For the sake of incorporating my PCs into the narrative, I changed this.
  + If you've given Ireena's role to a PC, then no problem. Keep this detail and have the surprise hit the whole party when they get to Vallaki.
  + If Ireena is still an NPC, then she's the blood daughter of the Burgomaster and sister to Ismark. She isn't related to Izek at all, so that's a detail/rumor you don't have to worry about dropping on the party. INSTEAD, one of your PCs is Izek's sister. It's entirely possible that one of your PCs was carted out of Barovia as a baby and doesn't know that they're actually a native to this land. In my game, I got lucky enough that my player wanted to be a teifling urchin. The teifling/devil bit ended up lining up really well with Izek's demon arm.
  + In a nutshell, one of your PCs is Izek's sister. Whether that PC also has Ireena's function narratively is up to you.

### Ireena's Personality

* + Ireena is one of the few truly good individuals in the game. She's got a stubborn streak and a love for discovering new things, but also honestly wants to help those in need. Though she fears Strahd, she doesn't let that fear stand in her way and actively works to avoid him.
  + I would *highly* recommend using [this guide to run Ireena as an NPC](https://www.reddit.com/r/CurseofStrahd/comments/8vsw2p/my_notes_on_running_ireena_without_making_her_a/). It's detailed and wonderful and really breathes some life into this otherwise static character.
  + Some of my favorite and most important notes from that guide about Ireena are the following:
    - Redheads are bad luck in Barovia, mostly because of a series of redheaded maidens (Tatyana's reincarnations) that all died horribly. Ireena herself has red-brown hair and regularly dyes it black to avoid attention.
    - Ireena embroiders as her lady-like hobby. Her pack and other things have evidence of her stitch work.
    - Ireena knows the horrors of Barovia all too well. But unlike most people who let those horrors harden and corrupt them, they've only made Ireena more understanding and sympathetic to those in need.
    - Ireena hates feeling helpless and/or useless. While she's not as capable as a PC in battle, she acts as a great support character in order to aid the party. She actively collects spent ammo, patches up wounds, and darts in and out of combat to avoid being in the way. She does not want to be a burden to the party.

### Ireena's Ending

* + I hate the weird, ghost-y endings that the book provides for Ireena. Having her suddenly turn into Tatyana's spirit and fly off on a rainbow of happiness with Sergei is so cheap. It undermines Ireena's character and basically tells us that she's worthless compared to a dead ghost lady that the PCs will never meet. Hell to the No.
  + ***Doomed?***
    - The Dark Powers actively work against Strahd to keep Tatyana just out of his reach. No matter how had he tries, she will never be his. That is Strahd's curse.
    - Unfortunately, Strahd's curse means that Ireena is cursed as well. The closer Strahd gets to Ireena, the more likely the Dark Powers will intervene to take her from him. Yes, Ireena may actively work against Strahd and yes, Ireena would rather take her own life than be with the vampire. But if all that failed and somehow Ireena agreed to marry Strahd and become his one true bride, the Dark Powers would still cause a random meteor to fall from the sky and land on poor Ireena.
  + ***Happy Ending***
    - While Ireena might come to accept that she is Tatyana's reincarnation, she should always retain her own personality. Little flashes of memory and knowledge from Tatyana's life may come back to her under various circumstances, but they shouldn't alter Ireena as a person. Therefore, Ireena should never fly off with Sergei in her happy ending.
    - If Ireena were to avoid Strahd, she could potentially live out her life in hiding. This would be difficult, though, since Strahd has eyes just about everywhere. But it is possible.
    - If Strahd is defeated, Ireena would be permanently free to live out her life. Even if that means Strahd is only replaced with another dark ruler, the new ruler wouldn't have the same obsession with Ireena.

## Event At the Mansion: Mad Mary's Visit

This is something that didn't occur in my game, but I wish it had. At the time, I followed Mad Mary as written and unfortunately, my players avoided her entirely.

### Oh God, Another Crying Trap

* + If you're using my guides, you likely had your PCs tackle the Death House. And Death House began with a pair of isolated, crying children. We all know how that turned out. Having your players then encounter another distinct Victorian townhouse with the sounds of a crying woman inside is not going to sit pretty with them. Players might indulge you as the DM and go explore the obvious story hook. But most likely, they'll say a prayer and avoid it.

### Mad Mary's looking for help

* + After the players meet Ireena and get somewhat situated, Mary comes and knocks at the front door quite profusely. Ever cautious, Ismark jesters that the party and Ireena should stay down and quiet while he goes and answers the door. They've had a lot of unwelcome visitors recently, so he's not about to take chances.
  + When he opens the door, Mad Mary pushes her way into the house.
    - This is actually a good sign for Ismark and Ireena. Mary has not only come during the day, but also entered the house uninvited. Believe it or not, this alleviates some of their anxiety.
  + The players will overhear Mary's frantic rambling. She begs Ismark to help her daughter and is obviously distraught. If the players intervene, and they likely will, she'll latch onto the first PC who spoke and beg them to help her child.
  + As Mary rambles on about Gertruda, make it sound like Gertruda is a lot younger than she is. In Mary's eyes, her daughter is still a little kid, no more than seven or eight, and all her speech implies this fact.
* After the players alleviate some of Mary's hysteria with their reassurances, Ismark will walk her back to her home, leaving the party alone with Ireena. Ireena will then tell the party that Gertruda ran away into the mists over a week ago and is most likely dead. Despite all their promises, there's nothing the party can do.

## A Good Time to Rest

After all the traveling and NPC chatting, your PCs are safely at the Burgomaster's mansion. They've learned a whole lot and met some people and have got some story quests. This is an excellent time for the evening to set in. Ismark agrees that he and the PCs should get the Burgomaster's body to the cemetery in the morning for the funeral.

### Dream Pies

* + MAKE SURE to remind your players about the dream pies so that they try them.
  + If Ireena or Ismark see the pies, they politely decline any if offered. While they don't know what the pies are truly made of, they've seen their addictive properties and know what people look like at their worst. They have nothing against the pies, they're just not of interest to the siblings.
  + Ismark and Ireena would only recommend that each player has a small portion of the pie, just in case. Otherwise, they see no harm in trying it once.
  + The players who indulge in the pie are delighted by the taste. It's quite flavorful, quite unexpected for food from this dreary world. When they sleep that night, they have bright, beautiful dreams full of color. In the dreamworld, they feel hopelessly safe and loved. And then they wake up feeling more empty than usual.

During the night, you might still have PCs take watches, just in case. Nothing will actually happen on this night. Strahd's giving his beloved time to mourn the death of her father. But perhaps someone on watch might hear the sounds of footsteps encircling the house in the night, before leaving. Players who've eaten pie can't be woken until morning.

## The Church

Ireena and Ismark should give the PCs a bit of a warning about the church. After all, the state of Donavich and his son is well known town gossip.

### Doru's Backstory

* + The book tells us that Doru was part of a march against castle Ravenloft that ended pretty tragically. I changed this.
  + Instead, Doru is yet another consort that caught Strahd's eye. If you read my post on Strahd you'll know that, to me, he's a little bit bi. While Strahd prefers women, he's had some male consorts along the way. It's more about power to Strahd, anyway, which appeals to his abusive nature.
    - Doru was a young, frail boy sheltered by the church and his father. Strahd found Doru only vaguely appealing by himself. However, the chance to do something so fun as screw with the church made Doru a promising target. Strahd seduced Doru and turned him, only for Donavich to find out and lock his son in the cellar.
    - In my mind, this happened almost a decade ago instead of only a year prior. I figure, why would Strahd pursue Doru when Ireena is literally right around the corner? Now, Ireena would have been a small child when Strahd came to town and he would have been far less likely to pay her any notice.
  + Donavich spends his every waking hour praying for Doru's soul and hoping his son will come back to him.

### Ismark Accompanies

* + For this side quest, Ismark stays with the party while Ireena stays at home. Ireena really wants to come and stubbornly fights with Ismark, but to no avail. She's already getting the assurance that her father will rest peacefully, so staying safely behind the walls of their home for another day isn't too much to ask.
  + This also keeps that nice limit on the number of NPCs fighting with the party at a given time.

### The Burgomaster's Burial

* + The following morning, the party wakes up nice and refreshed and ready to bury a dead dude. A couple of the stronger PCs will help Ismark carry the coffin across town.
  + Meeting Donavich will be pretty strained. The party should feel really bad for this broken shell of a man. The screams of his son coming from beneath the floorboards will also be quite disconcerting. But Ismark will be able to quietly convince the priest to leave his praying for just enough time to conduct a funeral.
  + The funeral goes off without any issues. At this point, the PCs should be super tense. Nothing terrible has happened to them in a while and they're expecting shit to hit the fan soon. The more you can push the atmosphere and the longer you can hold this tension, the better.
  + ***Strahd Attends the Funeral***
    - Even though Ireena isn't present, this is still his beloved's father. And the Burgomaster's death is very much Strahd's fault and he knows it. The man's death isn't something that Strahd wanted to happen and he honestly laments the Burgomaster's passing, if only because it pains Ireena so.
    - As the funeral progresses, Donavich will begin reciting the final rites and prayers. During this time, have PCs roll perception. At least one of them should be able to spot a figure standing beyond the cemetery fence shrouded in mist. The figure is a tall man, too obscured to really see, but it appears he's wearing all black and is bowing his head as if in prayer.

### Confronting Doru

* + If Ismark and Ireena told the party the details of Doru's story, they may accept that it's a terrible tragedy and leave it be.
  + More likely, nosy players will be nosy and want to help.
  + ***Donavich***
    - No matter what the PCs say, they cannot convince Donavich to kill his son or to advocate the killing of his son. Unless the argument is borderline award winning with some enchantment magic on the side, Donavich can't let his son go.
    - Donavich knows that his son is still within the monster he's become and he knows in his heart that one day the Morning Lord will set Doru free. What's left of Donavich's sanity relies on this belief. Shattering that hope would destroy Donavich entirely.
    - However, PCs can still offer to take a look at Doru and Donavich happily agrees. He's willing to do just about anything for the sake of his son. However, he warns the party repeatedly that no harm can come to his son.
    - If at any point the PCs seem like they're going to kill Doru, Donavich will descend into the undercroft himself and actively fight them. He'll do absolutely anything to protect his boy.
  + ***Into the Undercroft***
    - I debated on how much Doru's thirst would have affected him and what it would take to make him sane again. And here's what I figured: Doru is starving. Like, hardcore. He's a vampire so he can't actually die, but he's in a lot of pain. A measly pint of blood isn't going to be enough to make him feel better.
    - He's been down here for almost ten years without so much as a drop of blood. The players may try to satiate him with some of their own blood, but it's going to take a lot. If they offer a small amount to Doru, it's going to lead to a battle when Doru's thirst takes over his sanity.
    - Should a battle ensue, do everything in your power to get the players to run away. Between Donavich screaming at them to leave his son alone and the hardcore healing abilities of a vampire spawn to a low-level party, this isn't a battle that should go down.
  + ***Outcomes***
    - If the party kills Doru, even accidentally, Donavich is devastated. To borrow from this post, "If Doru is killed, Donavich becomes withdrawn and inconsolable. When the PCs leave the church, they can hear the church bell ring a single time. If the party returns to the church, they find that Donavich has hanged himself from the bell's rope."
    - If Doru escapes, he flees into the woods towards castle Ravenloft. He'll likely come across some wolves or deer and drain them dry along the way, regaining some semblance of his mind. With nowhere else to go, he'll go to Strahd.
    - If Doru is recaptured down in the undercroft, things will proceed without change.
    - My players actually recommended that Donavich keep feeding Doru a little blood at a time to help him. I haven't actually rolled the results of this yet, but when the time is right, I plan on rolling to see a couple things. Whether Donavich gives Doru too much and dies from exsanguination, for instance. If Doru got out during a feeding and killed his father before fleeing. If the feedings actually go well and Doru and his father are having civil conversations again. Who knows?

## Heading Out

With the Burgomaster buried, Ireena is ready to head out to Vallaki. Depending on how badly the confrontation with Doru went, your players may want to spend another night in the village. Ireena and Ismark are pretty heavily against this. They want to get going quickly and they're actually really right about that.

With the Burgomaster laid to rest, Strahd no longer has a reason to let up his pursuit of Ireena. If the players stay the rest of the day and then the night, Strahd will come and attack the house again. This guide has a great chart laid out on how a siege of the mansion might go.

Ismark and Ireena assure the players that they can likely reach Tser Pool before nightfall, which should be a relatively safe place to make camp. Ismark also tells the PCs that there's a Vistani tribe at that location as well who are pretty friendly to visitors, unlike the evil women that own the tavern.

If your players are hurting from fighting Doru, they don't have any fights on the road. If they have nicely avoided fighting throughout the Village of Barovia, you may want to throw in a random encounter of wolves along the way. Either way, they approach the Vistani camp around dusk.