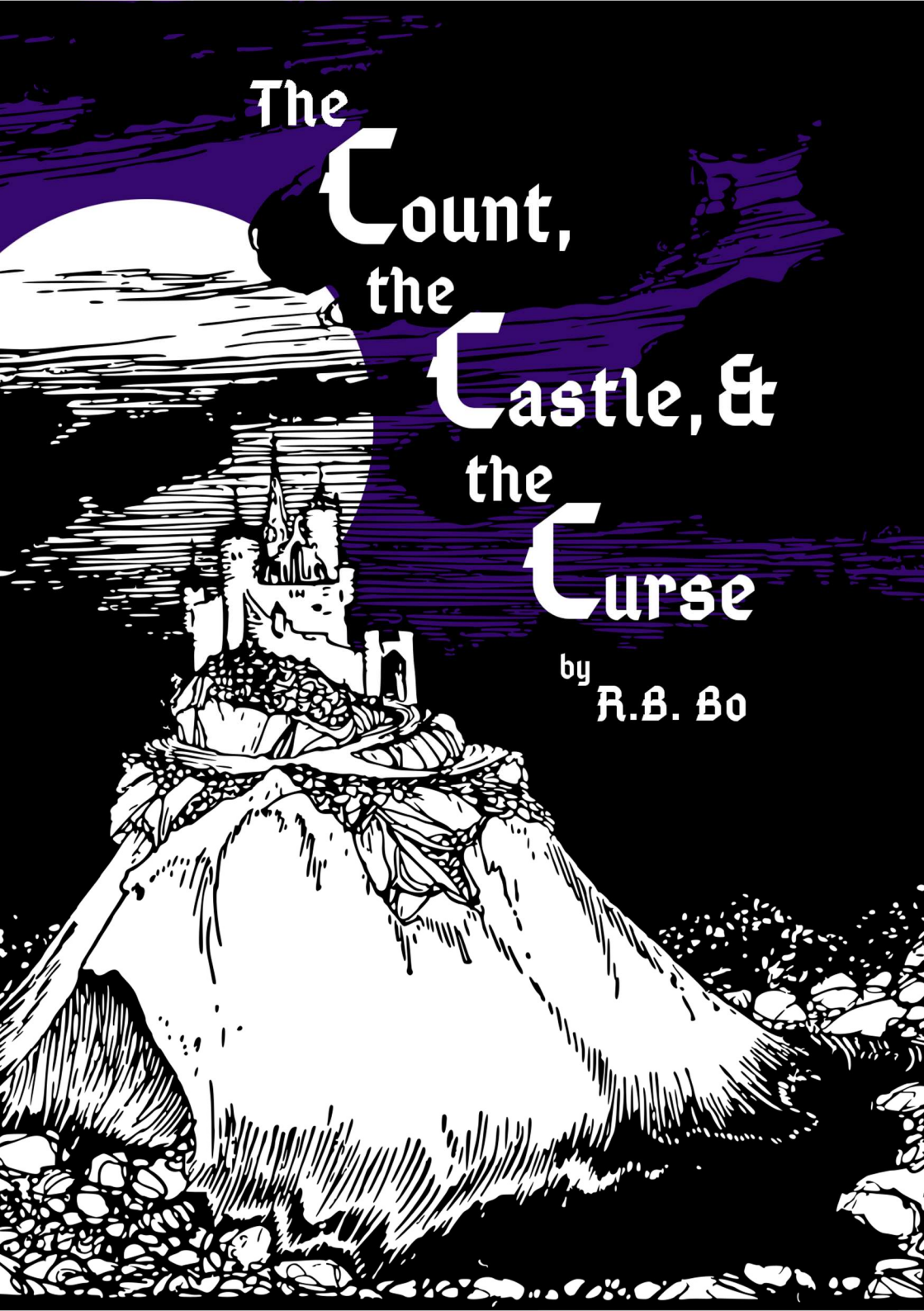
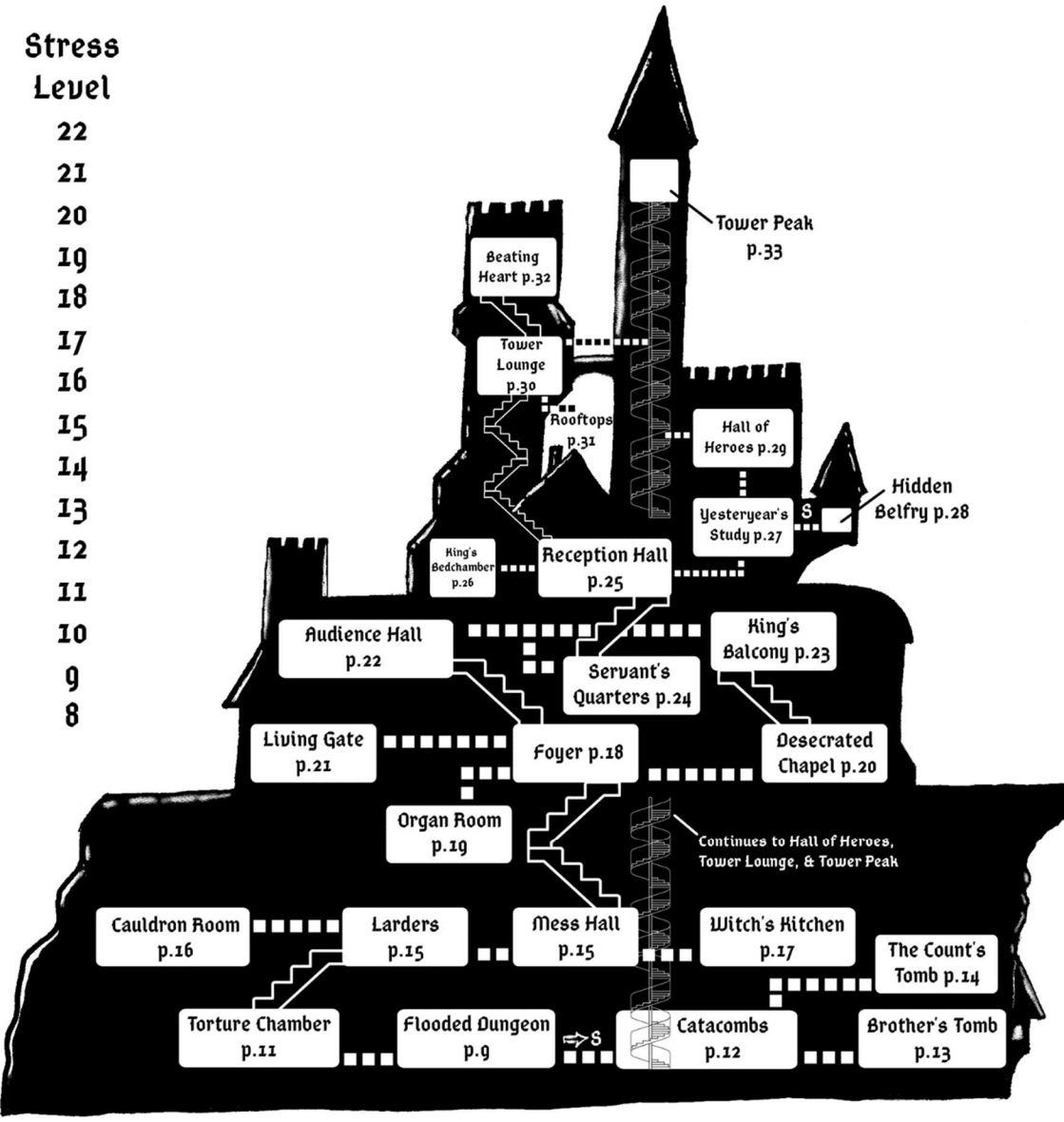

The Count, the Castle, & the Curse
by R.B. Bo


Stress Level
22
21
20
19
18
17
16
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14
13
12
11
10
9
8
Tower Peak p.33
Beating Heart p.32
Tower Lounge p.30
Rooftops p.31
Hall of Heroes p.29
Yesteryear's Study p.27
S
Hidden Belfry p.28
King's Bedchamber p.26
Reception Hall p.25
Audience Hall p.22
King's Balcony p.23
Servant's Quarters p.24
Living Gate p.21
Foyer p.18
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Organ Room p.19
Continues to Hall of Heroes, Tower Lounge, & Tower Peak
Cauldron Room p.16
Larders p.15
Mess Hall p.15
Witch's Kitchen p.17
The Count's Tomb p.14
Torture Chamber p.11
Flooded Dungeon p.9
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Catacombs p.12
Brother's Tomb p.13

Escalating Encounters

▶ **2 in 6** chance for every unexplored room, every 2 previously explored rooms, or when considerable **noise** is made.

d6	Escalating Encounter
1	**The Other Witch** (p.34)
2	**The Count's Animated Armor** (p.35)
3	**Dorothy, the Spider Queen** (p.36)
4	**Sister Geraldine, Fallen Nun** (p.37)
5	**Christina, the Seductress** (p.38)
6	**The Count** (p.39)

Stress Level (SL)

▶ Is **always revealed** to the Players.

▶ Begins at **10** and cannot go below **8** or above **22**.

▶ Determines the Armor Class (AC) of enemies as well as the result needed for Player Characters to pass **any** ability check, skill check, or saving throw.

▶ Only Player Characters & friendly NPCs roll against the **Stress Level (SL)**. Monsters and hostile NPCs roll rules as written in your game system of choice.

Escaping the Castle

▶ Through the **Living Gate** (p.21)
▶ Down a forgotton balcony behind **The Brother's Tomb** (p.13)
▶ A secret passage within the **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20)
▶ A giant talking crow on the **Rooftops** (p.31)
▶ A magical brew in the **Cauldron Room** (p.16)

Vampiric Traits & Weaknesses

▶ Obtained by consuming **blood**.

d6	Vampiric Traits
1	+1 retractable claws (1d6 slashing)
2	**Charm** a creature you can see. Roll **Cha** vs **SL**. Roll again next turn to **Command** charmed creature to do one unharmful action
3	Ultrasonic scream (3d6 thunder). Roll **Cha** vs **SL**. Makes **noise**, can't harm other vampires
4	Climb on walls & ceiling as **Spiderclimb**
5	Turn into a bat with 1 HP (once per area)
6	Give yourself d6 damage to give yourself Advantage on the next d20 roll

d6	Vampiric Weaknesses
1	Vulnerable to fire & radiant damage
2	Disadvantage to all d20 rolls while in the presence of sunlight (Mother's Icon & Sun Sword)
3	Your **Shadow** (10 HP) looks like the monster you may become. Joins in on any combat, attacking only you. If defeated, will reappear at Midnight or if any more **blood** is consumed
4	Cannot directly harm a creature until they harm you first
5	Pale flesh, red eyes, & angled features cause innocent people to believe you're a monster (**Krystopher** & **Matilda**)
6	Your **Vampiric Traits** are suppressed when in the presence of actual vampires (the **Count** & his **Brides**)

Yesterday...

An invitation—by a **Count** of a name you've never heard. From a **Castle** in a land unknown around these parts. And a **Curse** which plagues him, pleading for each of your aid—by name—in exchange for an offer too tempting to ignore.

By next morning a horse-drawn carriage awaited each of you. The dark horses stood silent, their black eyes seeing everything and nothing. The sharp-collared driver shifted on his bench, mumbling to himself. You climbed in anyway.

The carriage lurched forward the moment you clicked the door shut.

This Evening...

Through misty woods and grey fields you saw the tall spires of the **Castle** in their slender glory towering over this strange land. Your carriage joined a procession of others, dropping each of you off before an empty courtyard like noble guests arriving too early—or too late—for a gloomy ball. Your companions glanced at one another as the great **Castle** door hinges groaned as they swung open. It looks like it's going to rain tonight. You stepped inside.

Escorting yourselves through the empty halls, you found the **Count**. A pale corpse of a man, standing tall, eyeing each of you as the starving man lusts for fallen crumbs. He uttered something about a **Curse** he could no longer bare alone...

Then he pounced.

Moments Ago...

Darkness. A struggle. An icy pierce of your flesh. You grew cold and still like a rabbit surrendering to the wolf's jaws...

Yet now you wake. But something still sleeps within you. Hidden beneath that heart-racing urge to flee the **Count**. Escape the **Castle**. Purge the **Curse**.

Or die trying.

Overview

Good evening. *The Count, the Castle, & the Curse* is a low-level gothic-themed adventure scenario in which the Player Characters (PCs) must escape the **Castle** before midnight, lest the **Count** returns to finish his game of cat-and-mouse. In addition, the PCs have been given a **Curse** which may either hinder or help them attain their goals as they explore a means of escape.

This adventure is structured to be played within a 4–5-hour timeframe as either a one-shot or the start of a gothic horror themed campaign. Rather than a traditional "plot" to be followed, the **Castle** is presented as an environment in which the players can interact with the horrors and dangers within, giving them the power to explore as much or as little of the **Castle** as they can before Midnight.

The Count: Has allowed the player characters a chance of escape before Midnight—though he has many ways of toying with them in the meantime. All bets are off after Midnight.

The Curse: The PCs are cursed with the early stages of vampirism and must decide whether to use these powers at the cost of their own humanity. Giving into their Vampiric desires will grant them new powers and weaknesses.

Unique Mechanics

Designed for most d20-focused systems such as Shadowdark RPG, *The Count, the Castle, & the Curse* has several unique game mechanics which alter the way both games are typically ran by use of **The Stress Level**, **Progressive Vampirism**, & **Trinkets from Home**.

Stress Level

Horrors loom around every corner of the **Castle**, and horror is...challenging to pull off properly in certain tabletop games. To symbolize the increasing dread of exploring a vampire lord's castle, **Player Characters roll against an alternating Stress Level (SL)**, which accounts for **every player-facing d20 roll** within the adventure & will rise and fall based on the horrors witnessed & actions taken by the PCs.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** is **always revealed** to the Players.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** begins at **10** and cannot go below **8** or above **22**.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** determines the Armor Class (AC) of enemies as well as the result needed for Player Characters to pass **any** ability check, skill check, or saving throw.

▶ Only Player Characters & friendly NPCs roll against the **Stress Level (SL)**. Monsters and hostile NPCs roll rules as written in your game system of choice.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** increases by **1** by:

- **Witnessing a horrifying event**.

- At the **beginning** of **every real-time hour**.

- A PC acquiring the **Frightened or Paralyzed** condition. This addition is revoked if the condition ends.

- **A PC rolling a Natural 1** on a d20 roll.

- **A monster/enemy rolling a Natural 20** against the PCs.

- **A PC droping to 0 HP**. This addition is **not** revoked if the PC is stabilized.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** is increased by **2** if:

- **Any PC is in total darkness**, regardless of dark/infravision abilities. This darkness suppresses more than just one's sight. This effect does not stack per PC affected, and is revoked once all PCs are surrounded by adequate light.

- Any number of party members are **alone/separated** from the group (beyond an adjacent room). This addition is revoked once regrouped. Stick together!

- **A PC considered "dead"** (see Death & Dying). This addition is **not** revoked if the PC stabilizes or is otherwise revived.

- **Within the presence of the Count**.

▶ The **Stress Level (SL)** can decrease by **1** by:

- **Sharing a strong drink** among your companions. Each PC must **roll a Constitution Save agaisnt the current SL** or gain the **Poisoned** condition until the end of the next unexplored room. The Stress Level will still decrease by 1 regardless.

- **A PC rolling a Natural 20** on any d20 roll.

- **A monster/enemy rolling a Natural 1** against the PCs.

- **Finding a Trinket from Home.**

- **A PC gives in to their Vampirism...**

Progressive Vampirism

The PCs have been **Cursed** with a unique form of Vampirism. It manifests as an intrusive hunger at first, but can be suppressed in its early stage. Giving into such vices however could provide unique benefits—but at what cost?

▶ When PCs first see **blood**, fresh or old, describe how their mouths begin to water. If a PC decides to consume **blood**, that PC gains the following:

- **A Vampiric Trait & Weakness**, both rolled randomly.

- **An additional Vampiric Hit Die**, which is an extra d12 regardless of class, rolled immedately and added to both their current HP & their maximum HP.

- **Lowers the Stress Level (SL) by 1.**

▶ After the first feeding, a euphoric sensation washes over the PC. **When presented with another oppoturnity to feed** on fresh **blood** of anyone other than fellow PCs, that PC must make a **Wisdom Save** agasint the current **Stress Level** or **attempt a bite attack** on the creature.

▶ Each feeding (willfully or not) will grant the benefits as stated above.

▶ After **2** feedings, each concecutive feeding the PC will roll **a d20+Charisma Modifier+any Trinket Dice aquired vs.the toal result of all Vampiric Hit Dice that PC aquired thus far**. If the Vampiric Hit Dice result is higher, the monster inside the PC will overtake them at Midnight & their soul will be forefit. This result is revealed *after* Midnight.

Vampiric Traits & Weaknesses

d6	Vampiric Traits
1	+1 retractable claws (1d6 slashing)
2	**Charm** a creature you can see. Roll **Cha** vs **SL**. Roll again next turn to **Command** charmed creature to do one unharmful action
3	Ultrasonic scream (3d6 thunder). Roll **Cha** vs **SL**. Makes **noise**, can't harm other vampires
4	Climb on walls & ceiling as **Spiderclimb**
5	Turn into a bat with 1 HP (once per area)
6	Give yourself d6 damage to give yourself Advantage on the next d20 roll

d6	Vampiric Weaknesses
1	Vulnerable to fire & radiant damage
2	Disadvantage to all d20 rolls while in the presence of sunlight (Mother's Icon & Sun Sword)
3	Your **Shadow** (10 HP) looks like the monster you may become. Joins in on any combat, attacking only you. If defeated, will reappear at Midnight or if any more **blood** is consumed
4	Cannot directly harm a creature until they harm you first
5	Pale flesh, red eyes, & angled features cause innocent people to believe you're a monster (**Krystopher** & **Matilda**)
6	Your **Vampiric Traits** are suppressed when in the presence of actual vampires (the **Count** & his **Brides**)

Trinkets from Home

Somehow, items from the Player Character's past have found their way into the **Castle**.

▶ When a Player Character finds such a **Trinket**, the Player who found it must describe how this **Trinket** relates to their Character's past life. Each **Trinket** grants the following to that particular PC:

- Gives a little bit of resolve to that Player Character, **healing the PC to max HP** & **granting a 1d6 Trinket Hit Die** that is rolled immediately and added to that PC's maximum HP so long as they possess the **Trinket**. This effect stacks with other **Trinkets** and **Vampiric Hit Dice**.

- Gives a little bit of hope to the rest of the party, **lowering the Stress Level by 1.**

▶ **Trinkets** cannot be shared by other PCs, as that particular **Trinket** is tied to the PC who discovered it. When other **Trinkets** are found, the PCs can determine whose **Trinket** it belongs to before the GM asks that Player to describe the **Trinket**. A Player can have as many **Trinkets** as they can reasonably carry.

Treasure

One of several escapes from the **Castle** require the acquisition of certain items that are labelled as **Treasure** in this adventure. If continuing the PC's adventures should they successfully escape the **Castle**, the Gamemaster can reward the PCs with 100gp per piece of **Treasure** on their person. Non-Treasure item's worth brought out of the **Castle** should be determed by the GM. This is not a scenario for the players to get rich. This is about escape—for gold will do you no good in death!

Death & Dying in the Castle

The **Castle** and its denizens are meant to whittle away at the party's morale before the **Count** arrives at Midnight to finish his game. The final moments for the Player Characters are for the **Count** and the **Count** alone. Therefore, the following happens should a Player Character drop to 0 HP and "die" before Midnight.

▶ If the Player Character died to a hostile creature, that creature attempts to flee with their corpse into the darkness on their next turn. Any surviving PCs will find their lost PC whimpering in a corner in the next unexplored room with **half of their maximum HP**.

▶ If the Player Character died to a trap or nonentity, the surviving Player Characters must drag that PC to a previously explored room. The dead player wakes gasping and screaming with half their maximum HP.

▶ In the event of a total party wipe, the Player Characters awake in the last previously explored room with half their maximum HP. Time has also advanced thirty minutes. Midnight approaches!

▶ At Midnight, the **Count** approaches. Hope dwindles. Death is forever.

Escalating Encounters

The **Castle** is home to several denizens, all of which are loyal to their **Count**. As the Player Characters explore the **Castle**, 6 different beings haunt the halls, toying with their prey before the **Count** comes to collect.

▶ Each time a new room is explored, the Player Characters make considerable noise, or when the scenario directs, the Gamemaster rolls a **d6**.

- On a result of a **1 or 2**, an Escalating Encounter happens in the current room, taking place alongside any other events happening within the area. The GM rolls another **d6** to determine which Escalating Encounter takes place.

d6	Escalating Encounter
1	**The Other Witch** (p.34)
2	**The Count's Animated Armor** (p.35)
3	**Dorothy, the Spider Queen** (p.36)
4	**Sister Geraldine, Fallen Nun** (p.37)
5	**Christina, the Seductress** (p.38)
6	**The Count** (p.39)

▶ Each creature on the table above has a set event which happens chronologically (p.. Once each event has been used or if the creature rolled has been killed/defeated, use the next highest result. The detailed result of all Escalating Encounters is listed in the back of this adventure for ease of reference.

▶ At Midnight, the **Count** may call upon some or all of these Encounters to aid him in finishing off the Player Characters.

At the Stroke of Midnight...

The **Count** appears in the current room.

▶ There might still be a chance for the Player Characters should they be close to reaching a potential exit. The GM should give the PCs a chance to flee into other rooms—though the **Count** can slam any door or appear through any threshold from the shadows to separate or steer the Player Characters to their doom.

▶ Player Characters who have dabbled too far into Vampirism become thralls to the **Count**, and must start their turn making a **Wisdom Save** agasinst the current **Stress Level** or spend their turn attacking one of their former companions. This happens so long as the **Count** is within their prescence.

▶ Should the Player Characters manage the unfathomable and defeat the **Count**, he turns into a blood-red mist and retreats to his coffin in the **Count's Tomb** (p.14), lying asleep and vunerable until the next Midnight. The **Living Gate** (p.21) opens, beckoning the Player Characters to escape with their lives while they can. All of the **Castle's** denizens will do everything within their power to prevent the Player Characters from reaching the **Count**.

The Castle Layout

Rather than mapping out every twisting passage and five-foot square of space, this adventure presents the **Castle** as a series of interconnected areas in which the transitions between those areas are narrated by the Gamemaster as scaling up flights of steps or creeping along twisting halls until the Player Characters reach a significant room or space within the **Castle**.

▶ Combat should be quick and dirty, as it eats up time. A prolonged fight should be a mistake made by the Players, not the Gamemaster. Most creatues within the **Castle** follow hit-and-run tactics, as they are meant to whittle down the PCs and build up **Stress** before the **Count** arrives.

▶ Creatures and objects within a room are defined using Shadowdark RPG's **Distance** rules of **Close** (5ft.), **Near** (within 30ft.), & **Far** (beyond 30ft, within sight). Assume all objects within a single room are **Near** each other unless otherwise stated, as each room in the **Castle** is rather spaceous.

▶ Unless otherwise stated, **Player Characters cannot see beyond one room into the next** due to the shadows or a turning hallway between. Each "adjacent" room however may be given a sensory hint as to what might be beyond the current room.

▶ Someone once said, "YOU CAN NOT HAVE A MEANINGFUL CAMPAIGN IF STRICT TIME RECORDS ARE NOT KEPT". At the start of the game, state clearly to the Players that Midnight in-game will happen at a set real-world time regardless of length of combats, bathroom breaks taken, or other Player shennangians.

Escaping the Castle

There are **5** potential escapes from the **Castle**. Some more obvious than others.

▶ **The Living Gate** (p.21) opens if fed a damsel (p.26) OR if the **Beating Heart** (p.32) is destroyed.

▶ A forgotton balcony behind **The Brother's Tomb** (p.13) leads down a sheer cliff should one get past the weeping ghost and bring enough rope.

▶ A secret passage within the **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20) slides open if the alter is sanctified by a living priest (p.17) and the **Belfry** (p.23) is rung.

▶ A giant talking crow sits in its nest along the **Rooftops** (p.31) and will carry any PCs that bring her Treasure throughout the **Castle**.

▶ A bubbling brew in the **Cauldron Room** (p.16) has a recipie requiring various ingredients around the **Castle** that will teleport the PCs far, far away if drunk.

Artifacts within the Castle

There are **3** particular artifacts which might help the Player Characters overcome their predicament.

▶ **The Count's Tome** (p.22), detailing his rise in life and downfall in undeath.

▶ **The Mother's Icon** (p.12), a symbol of hope—containing the last rays of a dead sun.

▶ **The Sun Sword** (p.33), holiest of blades.

Stats & Conversion

The monsters and NPCs within this adventure are formatted with minimal stats in a layout similar to Shadowdark RPG, with a few alterations.

▶ Armor Class (AC) is not listed. The current **Stress Level (SL)** is used instead, regardless of game system.

▶ For those running more mainstream game systems, you can reference a similar creatue within your game of choice. Any half-decent fantasy game should have vampires, witches, & a few undead.

- However, it is encouraged that you **use the HP values listed within this adventure**. HP for both Player Characters & Monsters are lower than average due to the Player Characters potentially missing attacks more often when they roll against higher **Stress Levels (SL)**. This is not an adventure to be kicking doors down. Swords are no more use here.

Starting the Adventure

The Player Characters wake in the **Flooded Dungeon**. PCs begin the game at maximum HP for their appropriate level, but **have no weapons, armor, or spell components** on their person. Just the clothes on their backs. Holy symbols mysteriously remain on your person.

▶ Any cantrip/spell with a verbal component is spoken loud enough to trigger an Escalating Encouter check, and the Player should be warned beforehand. This check is not rolled during combat.

▶ The **Stress Level** starts at **10**.

Flooded Dungeon

You wake to sloshing water and clinking chains. Smells of decay & stagnant water. Darkness surrounds you, save for a single candlelight floating between your broken cells.

▶ **You're dangling above the water from a single fetter** ➔ slipping out of the chains will make you fall into the water. *2 in 6 chance* of your splashing to douse the candle, putting the room in complete darkness (+2 to SL).

▶ **Single candle nub floating on a brass plate in waist high brackish water** ➔It bobs up and down with the water's movements, and will go out if not careful.

▶ **Soft snoring from a stranger inside a hanging cage** ➔ Scraggly old man, limbs dangling from between the bars. Wakes if called. ➔ Refuses to be saved. Urges to tell you your fortune for tonight's event with his water-damaged tarot deck (see The Old Man's Fortune) ➔ Gives away candle with six matches & a **Trinket** (your mother's favorite perfume) ➔ If visited again, a mouldy skeleton sits inside, arm stretched through the bars holding a smouldering tarot card.

▶ **T-intersection leading to darkness beyond the cells and cages** ➔ To the left, faint echoes of screams and the sharp crack of bullwhips ➔ Leads to **Torture Chamber** (p.11).

- To the right, a squatting gargolye statue at a dead end ➔Large stone head at eye level. Mouth agape. Tongue covered in a flaky rust color ➔ Dried **blood**. Spreading fresh **blood** on the tongue opens a secret door into the **Catacombs** (p.12).

Torture Chamber p.11 ... Flooded Dungeon p.9 ⇨S  Catacombs p.12

The Old Man ' s Fortune

"Oh! New cell mates! Welcome to m'lord's **Castle**. You must be the latest pawns in m'lord's game—a game of hunter & hunted. At midnight, when the moon is at its highest peak, he'll begin the hunt. Feel free to look around until then. But wait! I see a spark in your souls. Your fortune is clouded...perhaps I could read it for you."

"You must be wary traversing the **Castle**. Mustn't let the **Stress** get to you. Mustn't let your hope or the lights go out. Here – take my candle, and this... I believe it belonged to one of you. Smells like home, doesn't it? Find more **Trinkets** from your past—it'll give you the courage to push through. Now quickly, your fortune!"

"Time's up for me, but there's a chance for you. I see in your fortune several means of escape from this **Castle** & the **Count**.

I see a **Beast**. The most obvious route – the door in which you came in – but will you honor the doorman's request? His price may be too great on your conscience.

I see a **Ghost**. A shell of the man whose love led towards his demise. Could you restore what he lost once more?

I see a **Priest**. His life is in jeopardy as we speak. His prayers could restore an escape once forgotten.

I see a **Raven** whose wingspan eclipses the moon. She offers a lofty escape in exchange for gold & silver.

I see an **Enchanter** who's written a recipe for retreat. Find the ingredients, and you might find home."

"There is but one more path to freedom, one that has led to the deaths of many before you, but should you prevail, the **Count's** power might cease forever! I see before me three **Artifacts** which may aid you.

I see a **tome** infused with the **Count's** power, resting on a throne fit for a king.

I see an ancient **symbol** of hope. Find the Mother—the last bastion of light.

I see a **sword**, a great weapon of vengance. Go to a place of great heights—where the stone itself beats with life.

These are your fortunes. Use them well, or perish like the rest of us. **Midnight** is coming. He will come for you... Prepare!"

Torture Chamber

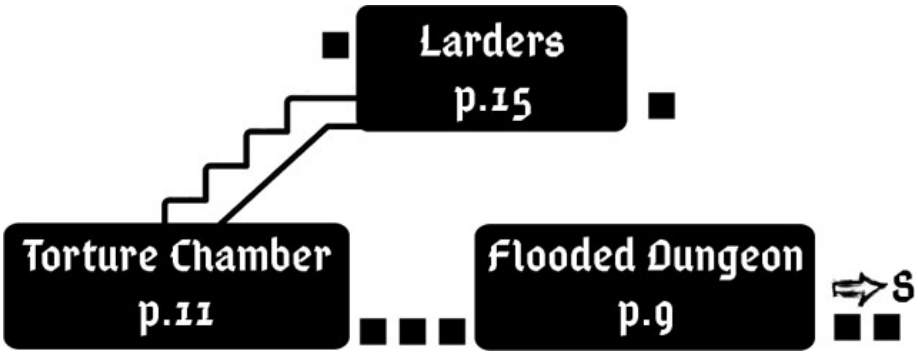
Growing screams of pain. Wooden cranks. The crack of a whip. Then...complete silence inside this flooded torture chamber.

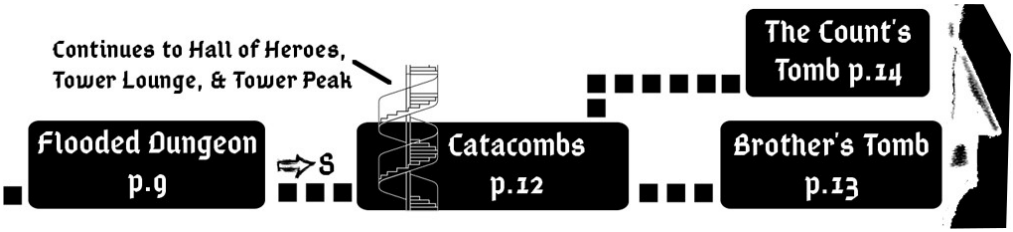
▶ **Cloaked figure looking at you from a 10ft. high stone balcony** ➔ A tall iron candlestick illuminates the balcony as the figure stands from a chair and calmly glides around a red curtain behind it. The candlesticks snuff out.

▶ **All manner of medieval torture devices partially submerged** ➔ Yellowed bones and skeletal remains still strapped to the devices ➔ A **dagger** is buried in a skull's eye socket. A **light hammer** rests inside a shatterd skull. A **spell component pouch** is stuffed inside another skull's mouth. ➔ Various pieces of torture could be used as makeshift equipment. At least **20ft of rope/chain** is here. Torture hooks could be used as **grapple hooks**, etc.

▶ **Concentrated area of bubbling** ➔ upper torso of a corpse wearing **leather armor** surfaces if searched. Another area of bubbling appears nearby ➔ Event repeats, wearing **leather armor** + a **Trinket** (your favorite bedtime storybook, waterlogged) a third area of bubbling ➔ a **Zombie** (6 HP) bursts from the water and attacks (x1 slam +0, 1d6 dmg), increasing the **Stress Level** by **1**.

▶ **Stone Balcony** ➔10ft. high. Corpses chained to wall below have ample handholds. ➔ using a corpse to climb has a 3 in 6 chance of detaching, causing you to fall into the water as they clutch at you, adding **1 Stress**. ➔ 2 wood chairs overlook chamber in front of a red curtain. ➔ stairs behind curtain lead up to **The Larders** (p.15).





Catacombs

Squat ceiling. Thick square columns which double as crypts. Too many corners and places to hide.

▶ **Stone Crypts** ➔ most illegible or crumbling. Several remain sealed and would be **noisy** to open, requiring either the proper tools or a **Strength** check vs. the **Stress Level** (*roll 1d4, no repeats*):

d4	Crypt Contents
1	The name is scrawled out. "Still Wandering" ➔ A lone wood armor stand. A vial of oil and a rag.
2	(Your PC's name). "Alas, (s)he was too late!" ➔ An empty coffin with a **Trinket** (a drawing of your imaginary friend) inside as well as a **mundane weapon, armor, or shield of the named PC's choice**.
3	Baron von Bobber. "Still drowning in his riches." ➔ Thousands of copper coins pour out if opened. **Strength Save** or become buried & helpless until dug out. Corpse inside wears a **Treasure** (bent golden crown).
4	Mother Raven. "Until We Meet in the Heavens" ➔ The **Mother's Icon** around neck. Corpse turns to ash when removed.

▶ **Faint weeping from the north** ➔ leads to **The Brother's Tomb** (p.13).

▶ **Large chamber to the south** ➔ leads to **The Count's Tomb** (p.14).

▶ **Massive curving stairway** ➔ Leads to the **Hall of Heroes** (p29), **Tower Lounge** (p.30), & **Tower Peak** (p.33).

The Mother's Icon: a silver holy symbol of a forgotten sun. Shines light like a torch. Roll a **Wisdom Check** agaisnt the current **Stress Level** to shine at any undead, causing them to retreat. The **Count** does not retreat but cannot directly harm the weilder so long as the light stays upon him.

The Brother ' s Tomb

Larger chamber surrounded by thick wroght iron windowpanes. Rain patters on the opaque glass. A pitiful cry comes from nowhere.

▶ **A lone coffin in the center** ➔ If approached, the sound of weeping grows as a ghostly image appears of a young handsome nobleman. His wealthy attire looks disheveled as he floats around his coffin with his face in his hands ➔ If approached further or spoken to, he looks up and asks, "Who are you? Who am I? Where is my love?"

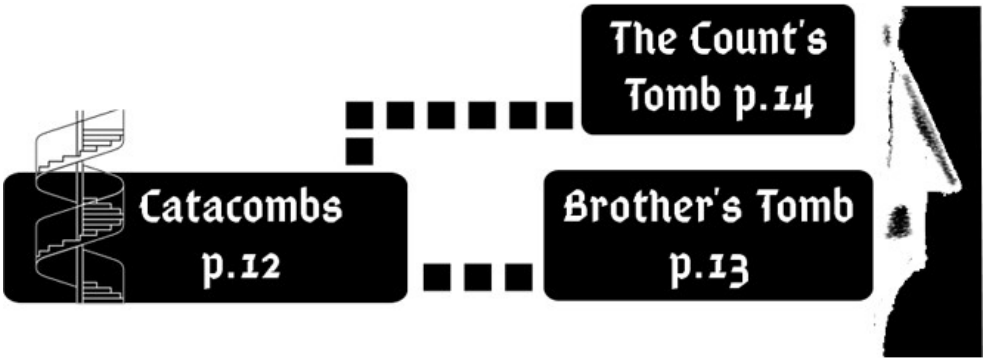
"Who are you? You're not her. Go away! GO AWAY!"

- Continuing to approach causes the **ghost** to **wail** (**Charisma Save** or take 3d6 phychic damage, half on success), **raising the Stress Level** by **1** with each turn wailing.

- If attacked, treat as a **Ghost** in your rule set of choice with 30 HP with the addition to continuously **wail** each round.

- If defeated, the **Ghost** dissipates, shattering the windows with a final **wail**. Check for **Escalating Encounter**. ➔ Searching through the windows reveals a secret balcony outside with a possible avenue for escape should the players be able to survive a 50ft drop to the nearest rocky ledge.

▶ If the **Ghost's** name is spoken aloud (Sergei), it begins to recall his former life. His spirit cannot rest until his love is buried with him. He cannot recall her by name. ➔ If the **Countess's** (p.33) corpse is brought to him, he urges the PCs to lay her beside his corpse within his coffin. ➔ With his lover reunited, his spirit is sent to the heavens, shattering the windows surrounding his coffin and revelaing the hidden balcony outside.



The Count ' s Tomb

A large underground chamber illuminated by wall mounted candles. The air is heavy and thick with dust.

▶ **A subtle dread of feeling watched** ➔ check for an Escalating Encounter each time the PCs enter this room.

▶ **Gothic black coffin lying in the center** ➔ Dark whispers mutter in your head as you approach. Those with Arcane or Religious knowledge may recognize that the coffin is hexed ➔ If touched, your head snaps back and your eyes flicker, seeing through the **Count's** eyes as he (1d4)...

d4	Through the Count's Eyes
1	Glides down the stairwell, into the **Catacombs** (p.12), right behind you
2	Plays the organ in the **Organ Room** (p.19). Suddenly stops, stands, and turns to a mirror. You see yourself in the reflection just before the mirror cracks & the **Stress Level** rises by **1**
3	Sitting in a lounge, high in a tower looking out a window. Pours a decanter of green liquid, drinks, **Constitution Save** or take **5d6 poison damage**
4	Tangled with his brides & a terrified maiden in a large bedroom, taking turns feeding on her (*next Escalating Encounter, nothing happens*)

The coffin opens after the vision. ➔ Inside is a **Trinket** (an unopened letter from a dying family member) & a black onyx **signet ring** (p.16).

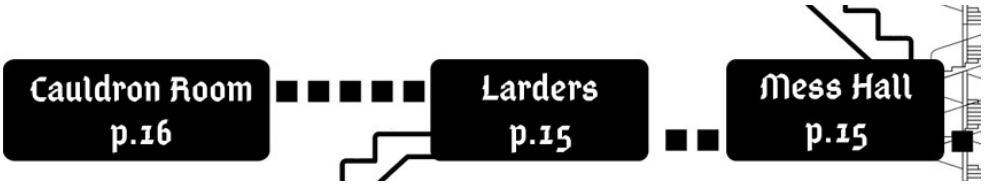
▶ **Three standing coffins nestled in three alcoves** ➔ All empty at first glance.

- The first is inlined with silk and smells of sickly perfume ➔ Contains a **dagger** threaded into the cushion.

- The second is covered in spiders & cobwebs ➔ A shirt of **chain mail** is buried in the cobwebs.

- The third is draped in all manner of unholy symbols ➔ An upside-down cross is actually a **morningstar mace**.

(*If any of the **Count's brides**—Dorothy, Sister Geraldine, or Christina—have been defeated, their bodies sleep here until the next Midnight, vunerable to a potential stake to the heart*)



The Larders

(Intersection)

Three paths lie before you here, but a fourth choice presents itself as well...

▶ **A bloodied man slumped agasint the wall** ➔ Appears to have recently took the coward's way out. Wears **leather armor** and possesses a **short sword**, a bloody **dagger**, a **crowbar** (damage as club) and a **snubbed out torch with flint & steel**. ➔ Your mouths begin to salivate. There's just enough fresh blood left for a taste ➔ If a PC willingly gives in, see **Progressive Vampirism** (p.5).

▶ **Brightly lit great hall ahead**. **Sounds of brash revelry and scents of roasted chicken and earthy herbs** ➔ Leads to the **Mess Hall**.

▶ **Dim greenish glow around a far corner** ➔ To Cauldron Room (p.16).

▶ **Long flight of stairs leading down** ➔ To **Torture Chamber** Stone Balcony (p.11).

Mess Hall

Clinking mugs and slurred songs bounce off the high ceiling within this mess hall.

▶ **8 Castle guards sitting around a long table** ➔ Young men in their 20s. Half drunk. (10 HP each, -2 to ATK rolls), jokingly ask the PCs if they're escaped prisoners. Offer to sit and drink with them as they wait for what's cooking down the hall. ➔ Shares a bottle of **brandy** (lowers the **SL** by **1** if drunk). Asks the PCs for a story, whether about themselves or of other tales they've heard. If bored, they harass the PCs to check on what's cooking in the **Kitchen** (p.17).

▶ **Beautiful gold candelabra as the table's centerpiece** ➔ A **Treasure** if taken. A single black candle burns quickly. ➔ Every turn here ages the guards by a decade, causing them to react slower and become forgetful. If the flame is doused or burns out, all other light sorces are quenched and a sharp silence blankets the darkness. ➔ Shedding new light reveals the **Mess Hall** to be completely built of stacked bones with skulls embedded into the walls floor to ceiling. The bony chairs are fused with the twisted remains of the long-dead guards, adding **1** to the **Stress Level**.

▶ **Gamey smell of something cooking down the hall** ➔ Leads to **Witch's Kitchen** (p.16).

▶ **Steep stairway leading to the Castle proper** ➔ Leads to **Foyer** (p.18).

Cauldron Room

Faint green light illuminates this cramped room full of shelves with strange ingredients neatly stored in glass vials.

▶ **Large black cauldron boiling in the center** ➔ bubbling a glowing green brew ➔ tasting it makes you sick, but anything dipped in this brew glows as bright as a candle for the next two rooms.

▶ **Thick opened tome hung open on dangling hooks** ➔ large rings attached to the book covers hold this book open to a specific recipie:

> Mix it up within the brew,
> Tongue o' ghoul for Master's Tomb (p.14),
> Wart of toad for Castle Foyer (p.18),
> Monkey Paw for Servant's Quarter (p.24),
> Eye of Newt to see the Tower (p.33),
> But it's not free to use my power,
> It won't be much—a minor cost,
> Just don't blame me if you get lost.

The ingredients listed can be easily found among the shelves, including **blood** from various creatures. Mixing certain ingredients into the cauldron causes the brew to change color. ➔ Drinking causes 1d6 poison damage & teleports the imbiber to that location.

▶ **A pointy black hat sitting on a skull** ➔ A **spell component pouch** sits beside it. Wearing the hat makes you look witchy (other witches assume you're a witch initially). ➔ A crumpled up recipie is stuffed inside & says the following:

> If you wish to flee the **Castle**,
> Perhaps my offer is worth the hassle,
> To leave this game, First make a stew,
> With Pinkish rue from my sister's brew
> The Second of many of my requests,
> Add speckled egg from mother's nest,
> Another ingredient for my brew's power,
> The Queen who lives on icing tower,
> The next component, if you dare,
> The noose which hung the maiden fair,
> Now add this in, if you can task it,
> The signet ring from Dark Lord's casket
> One last thing, a piece of you,
> But blood or hair won't simply do,
> An eye, a tooth, a finger or two,
> Should be enough to bring you though.

Should the PCs collect a sample of the **brew** from the **Witch's Kitchen** (p.17), an **egg** from the **Rooftops** (p.31), the **bride cake topper** from the **Reception Hall** (p.25), the **noose** from **Yesteryear's Study** (p.27), and the **signet ring** from **The Count's Tomb** (p.14) & mix it altogether in this cauldron, they may add the final ingredient—a piece of themselves such as an eye, a tooth, or a finger to teleport themselves far, far away from the **Castle** & the **Count's** game. But where will they end up?

Witch's Kitchen

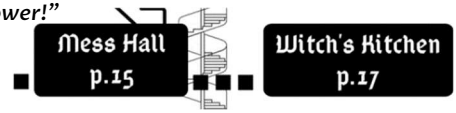
▶ **Muffled cries for help beyond the Kitchen door** ➔ should the PC's open the door, a giant crooked hand reaches through to try to grab them (**Dexterity Save** or be grabbed by the hand and pulled inside).

Through the door is a large mouse hole leading into a **giant-sized kitchen countertop**.

▶ **A colossal, hunch-backed witch peers over you** ➔ raises the **Stress Level** by **2**. A stained blindfold covers her eyes. "*Com'ere, you pesky mice!*" ➔ Too large to damage. Takes **2 actions** on her turn (1d4):

d4	Giant Witch's Actions
1	**Smack with a ladel**. Dex Save if close to the blow or take 3d6 damage. Drawn to loud noises.
2	**Sprinkles enlarging powder** on one toad or spider, giving the creature an extra die of damage and advantage on Str Checks for the remainder of this area. Could be fooled by mimicked croaking.
3	**Feel around for one PC**. Attack or dodge the hand or be tossed into the cooking pot. Can't feel the difference between a person and a toad.
4	**Douse the whole countertop with pepper**. Constitution Save or sneeze, knowing right where you are.

▶ **Large pot boiling on the stovetop ➔ 1d6** fire damage if submerged in the pink rue (p.16). Cries of help from within ➔ A man in priestly garb (12 HP) holds onto a bobbing potato. *"The candles! The green flames give her power!"*



▶ **1d4 giant spiders and 1d4 giant toads crawl and hop around, looking for food ➔ 10** HP each. Will attack each other & PCs equally. Toads croak loudly when approached.

▶ **Green-flamed candles illuminating the Kitchen ➔ 1** on each side of the simmering pot. The size of a 10ft tall column of wax compared to the PCs.

- One candle rests on top of a stack of recipie books surrounded by dunes of spilled flour that makes you cough if crossed ➔ **Constitution Save** vs current **Stress Level (SL)** or cough loudly, making your location known to the witch.

- The other candle is draped in webs beside a **bloody** cutting board ➔ **Dexterity Save** vs. the current **Stress Level (SL)** or slip in the **blood** and juices.

➔ Should both flames be doused, the room goes pitch black. Lighting a new light reveals a **Kitchen** of normal proportions. The feeble witch (6 HP) attempts to flee to hide in the **Cauldron Room** (p.16).

If the **priest** is saved he will join the party. He knows of a possible escape within the **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20) but doesn't know the specifics.

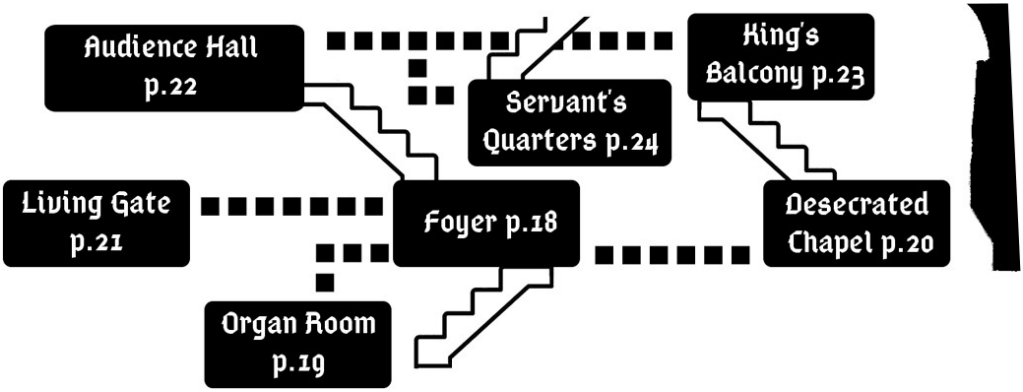
Father Krystopher

"By all that is holy, this place is a madhouse!"

HP 12, **AC** 10, Noncombatant/Commoner, **MV** near, **AL** L

▶ **Personality:** Cowardly, indecisive, stutters when scared.

▶ **Wants:** To get out of here!



Foyer

(Intersection)

Great dusty hall lit by torches in sconces. Vaulted ceiling held aloft by four stone columns. Many directions to go from here.

▶ **To the North, a suit of plate armor stands at attention beside a grand stairway** ➔ Carries a **Greatsword**, armor as **plate**. A **Trinket** (a family member's iconic smoking pipe) plugs one of the breathing holes in helmet. ➔Kicks you if armor or items are taken (8 HP). Tries to run up the stairway. ➔Leads to **Audience Hall** (p.22).

▶ **Distant organ music to the South** ➔ Leads to **Organ Room** (p.19).

▶ **Long, stained glass hallway to the East** ➔ Whispered prayers and incantations as you approach. Leads to **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20).

▶ **A short hall to the West leads to the front gate where you first entered** ➔ Leads to **Living Gate** (p.21).

▶ **Small stairway down** ➔ Leads to **Mess Hall** (p.15).

Organ Room

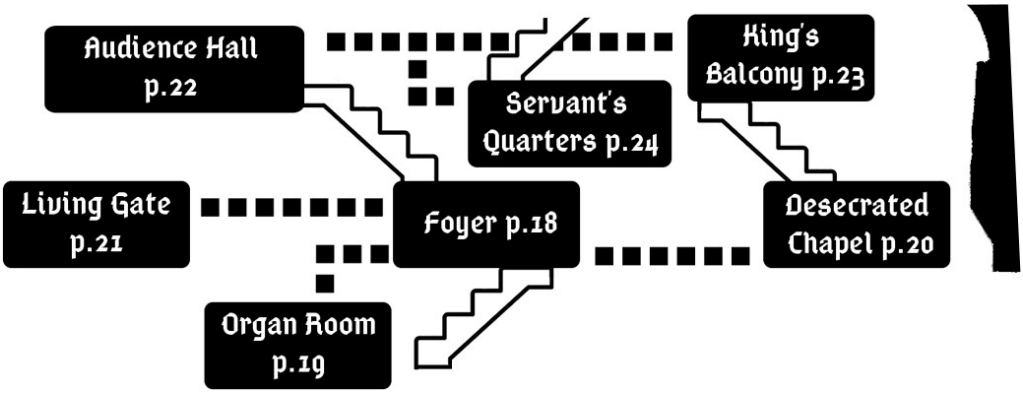
Oppulent marbled walls. Glass chandeliers reverberating to the moaning organ tones.

▶ **Ornate dining table in the center of the room** ➔ Satin cloth. Lavish spread of fine dining. Roasted goat as centerpiece. Goblets of red liquid. Enough seats for each of you. ➔ Eating the food heals you to max HP. The goblets are filled with fresh **blood**, but an unopened **wine bottle** is shoved in the roasted goat's mouth.

▶ **Massive organ moaning a gothic melody at the end of the room** ➔ The **Count** finishes his musical lament with gusto before rising to greet you. The **Stress Level** rises by **2** in his prescence. The wound in your neck feels like ice as he speaks. ➔ Offers you to dine, and will sit down to eat with you. Urges you to try a drink from your goblet. Asks if you found a method of escape, about any **Trinkets** you've found and how they relate to you. Generally tries to waste your precious time.

- If attacked, the **Count** retaliates, dropping PCs to 0 HP if need be but will retreat if able. He will no longer be found here on repeat visits after such an offence.

- If the Player Characters leave peacefully regardless of partaking in the meal provided, the **Count** makes a final remark that he's surprised you haven't figured out which one is the traitor among you yet. Oh well. Guess you'll find out come **Midnight**...



Desecrated Chapel

Lightening flashes through boarded-up stained glass windows. High domed ceiling. Rotting pews.

▶ **Blackened desecrated alter** ➔ Corpse of a priest slumped over, strangled by a **Treasure** (a gold incense censer). Writing on the alter's surface written in blood ➔ KRYSTOPHER. PURIFY. RING THE BELL. ➔ The **priest** (p.17) or a PC with a religious background can purify the alter using the censer. A PC must roll a **Wisdom check** agasint the current **Stress Level**. If failed, the darkness surrounding the alter lashes out as a **Shadow** (20 HP). The **priest** does not need to roll to purify the alter. ➔ Once cleansed, the bell in the **Hidden Belfry** (p.28) must be rung, which opens the secret exit beneath the alter, taking the PCs away from the **Castle** through long forgotten tunnels.

▶ **Tall balcony overlooking Chapel** ➔ an iron sprial stair leads up from the corner of the **Desecrated Chapel**. ➔ Leads to **King's Balcony** (p.23)

▶ **Double door exit down a stained glass hallway** ➔ Leads to **Foyer** (p.16).

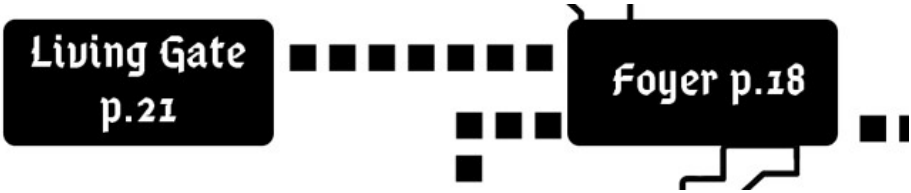
Living Gate

Low, gutteral breaths from the massive double doors . Metallic red veins weave from the doors into the surrounding stone.

▶ **Closed front doors** ➔ Toothy mouth eminates as you approach. *"None may leave until the **Count** has had his fill. But I may look the other way should you offer me the taste of fair maiden's blood. Within my walls there is a **damsel** whom I desire. Bring her to me—alive—and I shall open for you."*

- If the **damsel** (p.26) is fed to the **Living Gate**, the door will smile and say, "Come back at **Midnight**." ➔ At **Midnight**, the door will be open, allowing you to escape the way you came in (*Should the PCs be waiting at the* **Living Gate** *until the stroke of Midnight, the* **Count** *will be standing on the other side as it opens*).

- If the **Living Gate** is attacked, it will scream every round, causing an automatic roll of an Escalating Encounter. The **Living Gate** cannot be harmed directly. Only destroying the **Beating Heart** (p.32) will cause the **Living Gate** to open.



Audience Hall

The **Castle's** throne room. Moth-eaten curtains. Tattered aisle runner. Deathly silence.

▶ **Cloaked figure gliding down a hallway away from you** ➔ The cloaked figure from the **Torture Chamber** (p.11), if met before. Leads to **King's Balcony** (p.23).

▶ **Gothic throne** ➔ A **shield** hangs on the wall above the throne. A goblet of fresh **blood** sits on the armrest. The **Count's Tome** lies on the throne ➔ Those with arcane backgrounds notice a magical ward carved on the cover. ➔ If opened, the book covers the area in magical darkness, with only the words inscribed inside providing enough yellowed light to read from. A **key** (p.27) falls out from the first few pages when opened.

▶ **Large hanging portrait above a dresser** ➔ a painting of two noblemen standing side by side. Long claw marks streak over the younger noble (If met before, the younger noble looks like the **ghost** in **The Brother's Tomb** (p.13)).

➔ Inside the dresser is a **Trinket** (a toy you stole & got away with).

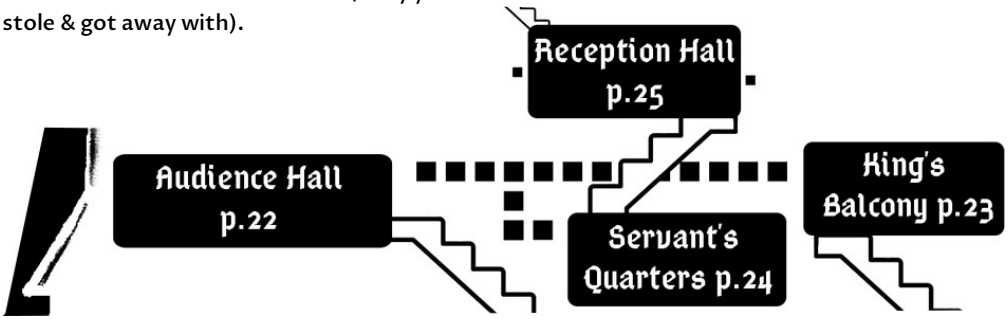
▶ **Slender threshold leading to small, dark corridors** ➔ Muffled sounds of footsteps ➔ Leads to **Servant's Quarters**.

The Count's Tome: a black charred book of dark secrets. Envelops the area in magical darkness when opened.

- The following spells can be cast from this tome regardless of class, rolling an **Intelligence Check** against the current **Stress Level** unless the PC uses a different stat for casting spells. The book must be opened to cast:

Alter Self
Feather Fall
Invisibility
Mage Armor

- You can spend your turn reading the remaining glowing words in the tome to learn of the **Count's** downfall into madness after killing his brother, Sergei, for stealing away his wife the **Countess** while the **Count** was away at war.

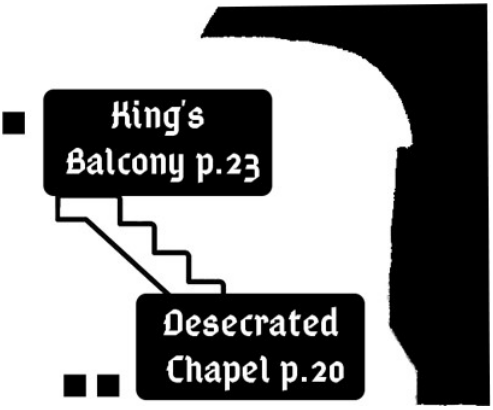


King's Balcony

A high balcony overlooking the **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20) 50ft below. The storm outside pounds on the domed ceiling. An intrusive thought to jump whispers as you glance over the ledge.

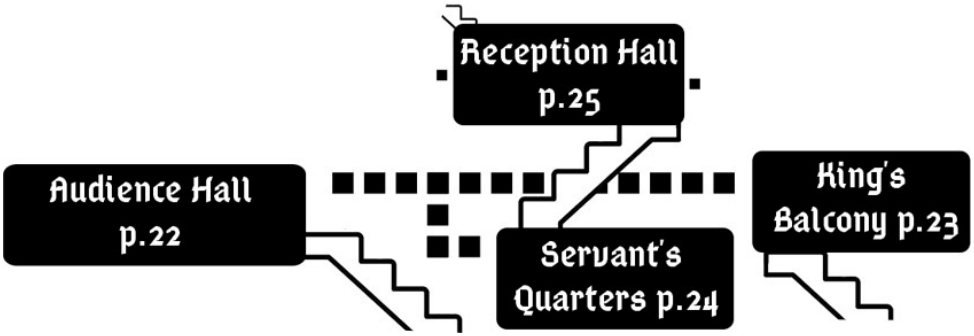
▶ **Cloaked figure sitting in one of two wooden thrones** ➔ Cloaked figure from **Torture Room** (p.11)/**Audience Hall** (p.22). Collapses if touched/attacked. Only a dark cloak left behind ➔ Wearing the cloak allows one to cast a version of Misty Step, rolling an **Intelligence check** or **Spellcasting check** against the current **Stress Level** to cast.

- After Midnight, the cloak (8 HP) comes alive in the presence of the **Count**, attempting to choke the wearer or teleporting them into danger.



▶ **The second wood thone** ➔ Polished, unmarred by time. Intricate carvings of clocks, hourglasses, and a depiction of Father Time/the Grim Reaper along the back ➔ sitting in this throne reveals the **Desecrated Chapel** below to go back in time when it was pristine & new. The sound of a church bell begins to echo somewhere above you, and the whitewashed altar slides open, revealing a secret stairway. Standing from the throne stops the illusion.

▶ **Small spiral stairway down** ➔ Leads to **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20).



Servant Quarters

Cramped corridor of various small rooms dedicated to the castle servants. All doors are opened or kicked down, save for one.

▶ **Rapid footsteps and muttered voices behind the door** ➔ "Bring more towels" "She's crowning—push! Push!" as you approach the door, followed by a painful groan only a new mother in labor could utter ➔ A piercing cry of a newborn as the door is opened. Inside, the room is silent. Old bedframes and sheet covered furniture have been pushed up against the walls. **A baby bassinet** rocks gently in the center, covered in old and fresh **blood**. ➔ A newborn child still covered in **blood** and fluids, swaddled in a **Trinket** (your sibling's favorite blanket when they were a baby).

- The **infant** cries if the **Trinket** is taken. She wants to be held. If allowed to cry, an Escalating Encounter is rolled. If the child is abandoned her cries echo down as far as the next room. Should the PCs return, they will find one of the **brides** (p.34) hunched over the bassinet, crunching on **bloody** flesh, adding **1** to the **Stress Level**.

- Should the infant be taken, she begins to age rapidly for every unexplored room entered. (Newborn, Infant, Toddler, Child, Teen, Young Adult, Middle age, Elderly, Dead). The **Stress Level** raises by **1** when the PCs first notice this. She will call the one who picked her up "Momma/Daddy" & wants to be named.

▶ **Narrow flight of stairs leading up** ➔ Sounds of sharp, static music like an old record player ➔ Leads to **Reception Hall** (p.25)

▶ **Slender doorway at other end of hall** ➔ Leads to **Audience Hall** (p.22)

Reception Hall

Classical music from a gramophone reverberates within this oppulent dining hall. Decroations for a wedding party cover the room. The candlelight here trembles and flickers. Several people are here.

▶ **A sharply dressed waiter approaching you** ➔ Offers **champagne** on his tray. "I'll take your gifts for the happy couple now." ➔ Each PC can give an item of their choice to the butler as a wedding present. Some items offered might require more explaining than others ➔ Offered gifts are taken to the **corner table**. If any PCs refuse, the candlelights shudder and go notably dimmer & the music begins to warp.

▶ **Dancing bridesmaids in the corner** ➔ 4 young girls in faded pastel dresses & flower crowns. "Dance with us!" they ask. ➔ Refusing dims the lights. If accepted, each dancing PC must make a **Dexterity Saving Throw** as they spin with the girls or be teleported to (1d4):

d4	Twirled off to...
1	**Catacombs** (p.12)
2	**Organ Room** (p.19)
3	**Rooftops** (p.31)
4	**Hidden Belfry** (p.28)

▶ **Enlongated dining table in center** ➔ Fine dining placements. 4-tiered wedding cake with a **bride** & groom cake topper (p.16). Rhythmic banging from behind the cake ➔ At the end of the table, the groom is repeatedly slamming his head on the table between words. "Shes. Been. Waiting. For. You." Disturbing him dims the lights. ➔ The wedding cake from the groom's angle has been cut straight down all 4 tiers. **Blood**, bone, and sinew mixed with icing slowly sloshes down off the table, Raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.

▶ **A small table in the corner full of gifts** ➔ Small round table with wrapped gifts in a pile. A brass gramophone plays old music ➔ attempting to stop the music chances songs, progressively more eerie.

- Opening the gifts lowers the lights if noticed by the waiter or the bridesmaids. Inside each gift is (1d4, no repeats):

d4	Wedding Presents
1	A severed head mouthing "help" raises the **Stress Level** by **1**.
2	A jar full of ash . "Gram-Gram" inscribed on the side.
3	**Trinket** (a dead pet's broken collar)
4	**Treasure** (a solid gold codpiece)

▶ **A brass candlestick floats near a stairway** ➔ Leads up to **Tower Lounge** (p.30)

▶ **Strong smell of alcohol down the hall** ➔ Leads to **King's Bedchamber** (p.26)

▶ **An abandoned corridor ending with double doors** ➔ Doors are chained and padlocked (**key** on p.22) on this side ➔ Leads to **Yesteryear's Study** (p. 27)

Should the Lights Go Out...

After 3 offences in the **Reception Hall**, all the lights snuff out. The rhythmic banging from the groom continues but grows louder from a nearby door. ➔ The door bursts open, the **Ghast Bride** (20 HP) crawls toward you, her head bisected vertically, splaying jagged teeth and a lolling tongue as she crys out, "DANCE WITH ME!" & attacks, raising the **Stress Level** by **1**. The waiter, groom, and bridesmaides join her as **ghouls** (HP 10).



King's Bedchamber

Light snoring can be heard in this royal bedroom full of dark drapes and chipped gold filigree.

▶ **A fair damsel asleep on a chaise lounge** ➔ Source of the snoring. Half a dozen empty wine bottles litter the floor around her. Another **wine bottle** rests on her lap. ➔ Her name is **Matilda**. Her memory of how she got here is a bit fuzzy at the moment. ➔ Sobers up quickly if offered to the **Living Door** (p.21).

▶ **A kingly bed** ➔ Untouched, lavish crimson bedspread. Makes you sleepy just looking at it. A book rests on one of the pillows. ➔ *The Most Boring Story Ever Told* ➔ If read, you fall alseep & your spirit drifts like an astral projection. A silver cord from your back links you to your physical body. You float around like a ghost, but you cannot directly interact with physical objects or creatures. Only your silver cord can be broken by the physical realm, snapping you back into your body & taking 4d6 phychic damage. You remain in this state for the next 2 unexplored rooms. All encounters during this time seem to always have a pair of scissors...

Matilda

"Are you—*hick*—here to rescue me or somethin'?"

HP 6, **AC** 10, Noncombatant/Commoner, **MV** near, **AL** C

▶ **Personality:** Half asleep and fully drunk. Too buzzed to be aware of how dangerous of a place she's in. Persists to be carried.

▶ **Wants:** A stiff drink & to go back to sleep.

Yesteryear ' s Study

Large fireplace illuminating a cozy study that feels out of place from the rest of the **Castle**. Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. Plush reading chairs.

▶ **Strikingly beautiful noblewoman reading by the fire** ➔ introduces herself as the **Countess,** wife of the **Count**. She is bored to tears in this **Castle** while her husband is away at war, but his brother **Sergei** (p.13) has provided her access to this private study.

- The **Countess** will converse with the PCs casually, but she cannot physically leave the study, as she is just a faint memory haunting this room.

▶ **Sounds of muffled laughter and kissing beyond the door opposite of where you entered** ➔ Entering the door brings you to through the opposite door of the **Study**, but a new scene lies before you.

- PCs going back through the door they came in reverses time, while entering the door opposite of them advances time.

The Study, Again

The same study as before, only the furniture has been pushed to the sides of the room.

▶ **Heavy blankets & pillows lying before the fireplace, two people entangled beneath the covers** ➔ Two heads appear from the covers—the **Countess** & a nobleman who looks similar to the **Count**, possibly related (or the **Ghost** (p.13) if previously met). ➔ Both scream and yell for you to get out while covering themselves in the blankets.

▶ **Sounds of sobbing beyond the door opposite** ➔ Leads to...

The Study, Once Again

▶ **The Countess, sitting too close to the fireplace** ➔ Distant gaze into the flames. A glass of wine trembles in one hand. ➔ She tells the PCs her husband, the **Count**, has discovered her affair with his brother. In a fit of rage, the **Count** slew his brother, and it is all her fault. All her fault. All her fault.

▶ **Dead silence beyond the door opposite** ➔ Leads to...

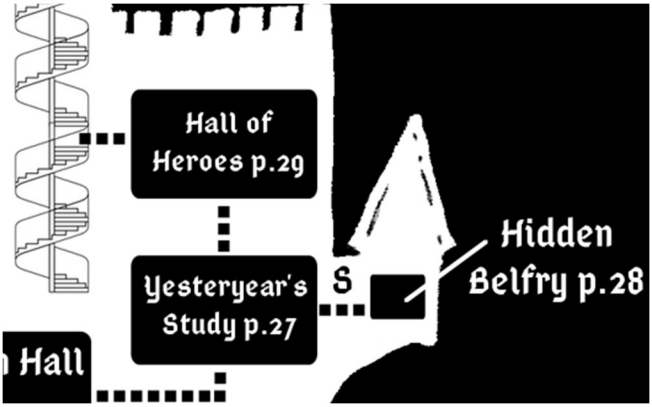
The Study, One Last Time

The fireplace is empty, save for a single lit candle inside.

▶ **A long shadow stretches in the candlelight** ➔ Her feet sway above the floor. Her body is still. Her neck is turned too far against the **noose** (p.16) hanging from the ceiling. The **Countess** is dead. Her grief too much to bear. ➔ Taking down the body or futher examining her reveals her nails to be chipped. Scratch marks are along her arms and hands as if there was a struggle. Maybe, just *maybe*, she didn't do this terrible act of her own will.

▶ **The single candle burns low in the fireplace** ➔ There is no back wall on the inside of the fireplace—just a crawlspace. ➔ Leads to **Hidden Belfry** (p.28)

▶ **The doors opposite** ➔ leads back to the present, either to the **Reception Hall** (p.25, possibly locked on the other side) or to the **Hall of Heroes** (p.29), depending on route enterted.



Hidden Belfry

Wood boards creak underfoot. A circular dead end illuminated by a windowpane high above.

▶ **A thick corded rope dangles from above** ➔ The rope vanishes into the dark void high above you. There is a note attached at eye level ➔ *Do not ring this bell. Misfortune may be an act of virtue, but the demons of this world are drawn to its tones. The master of the **Castle** knows where you are, but to toll this bell would be folly. Do not ring this bell.*

- Pulling the rope sounds the church bell high above. The altar in the **Desecrated Chapel** (p.20)—if purified—slides to reveal a secret exit. If the altar remains desecrated, the **shadow** holds the altar in place until purified or defeated.

- The bell's **noise** can be heard all throughout the **Castle**, and will continue to ring for the remainder of the adventure. So long as the bell tolls, an Escalating Encouter takes place on a result of a **1-5 on a d6**, and is checked for every area entered—even previously explored rooms.

▶ **A Trinket** (a child-sized musical instrument your parents forced you to learn) **leans in a corner collecting dust**.

Hall of Heroes

Long, dark hallway with a row of windows on one side. Flashes of lightening from the storm outside light the alcoves along the wall opposite.

▶ **A stone bust on a marbled stand rests in each alcove** ➔ 5 in total. They are:

- **A young, kind-faced nobleman** ➔ Coils of **rope** (50ft.) are draped around the shoulders. The name "Seregei" listed on a plaque below (If previously met, this bust looks like the **ghost** in the **Brother's Tomb** (p.13)). ➔ The bust animates and says, "Bring me my love—set my soul to rest!" before freezing again.

- **A strikingly beautiful noblewoman** ➔ "The **Countess**" listed on the plaque. Wears a **Treasure** (a gold necklace with a ruby gem) ➔ a whisper on her lips should you take the **Treasure**: "The tower...the tower..."

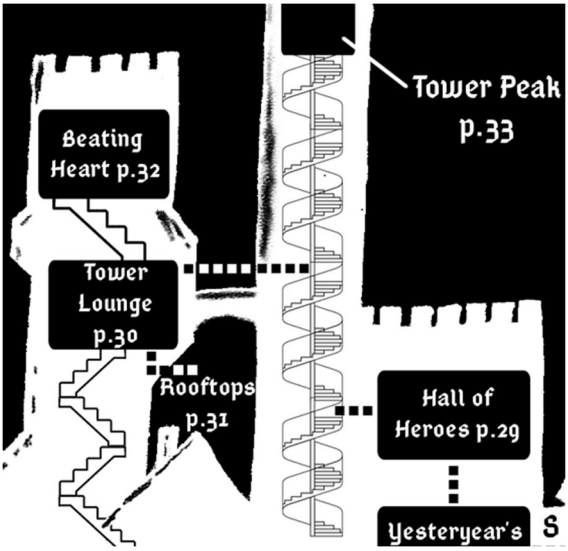
- **An elderly woman wearing a habit** ➔ "Mother Raven" listed on the plaque. Her mouth smiles & says, "Beneath the **Castle**, find my resting place. My power can help you!"

- **A bust covered by a black cloth** ➔ The name of the Player Character examining it is listed on the plaque. ➔If the cloth is removed, you see a bust of you (the Player, not the Character). The face is twisted in pain & the eyes are melted in its sockets. The bust cries out, "Look at me! LOOK AT ME!" ➔ The **Stress Level** increases by **1**, and the PC must make a **Charisma Save** or take **3d6** fire damage as their eyes begin to burn.

- **A bust of the Count** ➔ This bust looks the most lifelike. Its eyes flicker towards you & says, "There you are..." ➔ A flash of lightening, & the **Count** appears behind you & attempts a single bite attack before disappearing in another flash of lightening. ➔ If bitten, the PC progresses towards **Vampirism** (p.5)

▶ **Massive Spiral Stairway at the end of the hall** ➔ Leads down to the **Catacombs** (p.12), up towards a bridge to the **Tower Lounge** (p.30), or all the way up the stairway to the **Tower Peak** (p.33)

▶ **A glow from a fireplace at the other end of the hall** ➔ silhouette of a woman reading in a high-backed chair ➔ Leads to **Yesteryear's Study** (p.27)



Tower Lounge

Curved walls indicate you're in a large tower. An open doorway along the spiral stairs reveal a room full of large rugs and plush chairs, making this otherwise cold tower interior a modest lounging area.

▶ **Large grandfather clock** ➔ Someone in tattered butler garb tinkers behind the clock ➔ a skeleton butler name Gerard. Asks for help to fix the clock, as it requires too many hands to adjust everything at once. ➔ If helped, he crawls behind the clock & shouts instructions.

- Point at one player each time and say the instructions quickly. That player has three seconds to repeat it verbatim. The PCs can only mess up once, causig Gerard to start all over again. If an error is made a second time, the grandfather clocks whirrs and gongs repeatedly, making enough **noise** for an **Escalating Encounter** check. ➔ If successful, Gerard thanks them & sets the time—which is actually thirty minues back from the actual time, giving the PCs more time to escape the **Castle** before Midnight. He asks the PCs if it's the correct time before wandering off.

d4	Gerard's Instructions
1	"Scratch my scapula real quick"
2	"Adjust this pendulum, Spin that pin-wheel, & align the regulator"
3	"Grease this escape wheel, Free that hammer assembly, Tighten the other ratchet, & Wind the balance wheel"
4	"Lock this rack hook, Reverse that suspension spring, Shake the second chime flirt, Loosen the main spring, & Clean my cannon pinion"

▶ **A portrait of the Count hanging on the wall** ➔ Quite realistic, adding **1** to the **Stress Level** as long as it's looking at you. Two pots of black and red paint & a brush sit on a nearby table. ➔ The red paint is actually **blood**. A PC who decides to paint something on the portait of the **Count** must make a **Dexterity or Charisma** check. ➔ If failed, your brushstrokes cause the portait of the count to reach out and attempt to **bite** you, progressing your **Vampirism** (p.5) if bitten. If successful, whatever you painted on the portrait will be on the real **Count** unknown to him, causing the **Stress Level** while in the **Count's** prescence to only increase by **1** instead of **2**.

▶ **Tall, opened window panes** ➔ A **Trinket** (a love letter you never sent) sits on the windowsill getting wet. A giant bird's nest rests on the roof in the distance. ➔ Leads to **Rooftops** (p.31)

▶ **A doorway leading outside** ➔ a narrow bridge crosses over into another tower ➔ Leads up to the **Tower Peak** (p.33), or down to the **Hall of Heroes** (p.29) or **Catacombs** (p.12)

▶ **A dull rhythmic pulsing from the stairs above you** ➔ Leads up to the **Beating Heart** (p.32)

▶ **Echoes of classical music from below** ➔ Stairs down lead to **Reception Hall** (p.25)

Rooftops

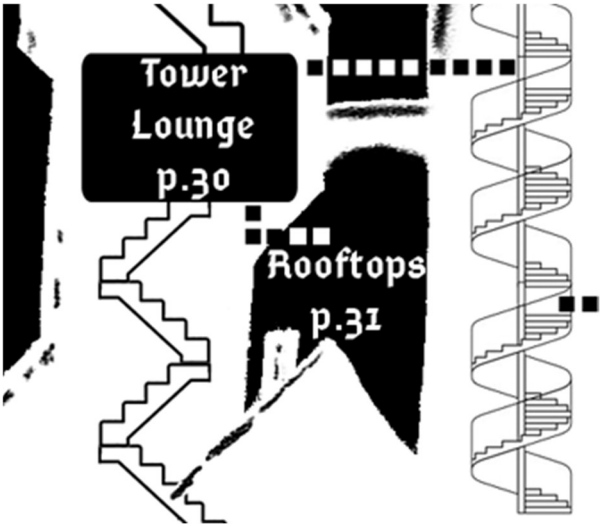
Cold rain slaps the slick tiles. A deathly drop below into the misty unknown. The thunder shakes your very soul.

▶ **Massive orb-shaped nest** ➔ A giant **Raven** the size of a carriage pokes its head out and croaks, "Terrible day for rain." ➔ Offers PCs to come inside. ➔ Cozy. Several shiny objects, various coins, a suit of **chainmail**, a **scimitar**, & a **Trinket** (your childhood diary with all the pages torn out, save one—it details your one secret too dangerous to risk writing inside) surrounding a speckled blue **egg** (p.16) the size of a pumpkin. ➔ The Raven (40 HP) will attack if the egg is stolen. The egg has a **1 in 6** chance of hatching each room. ➔ Crawling out is a humanoid (6 HP) infant with a raven head and claws, covered in yellow mucus, cawing **loudly**.

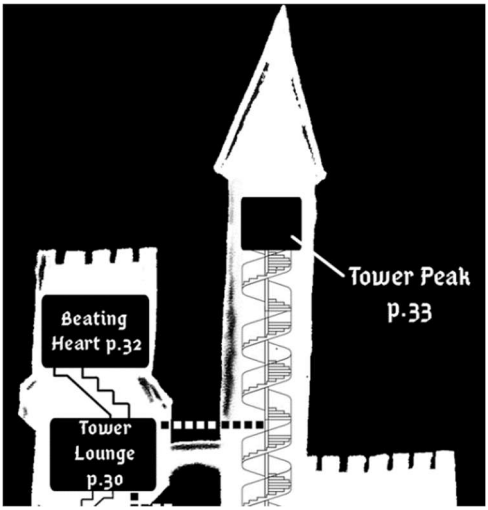
- The Raven offers to fly you away from the **Castle**, in exchange for one **Treasure** per Player Character & friendly NPC. She feels it too cruel to leave anyone behind. Either everyone leaves with her, or no one.

▶ **Edge of the rooftops surrrounded by mist** ➔ Nothing but mist below. Jumping, falling, or climbing down the **Rooftops** teleports the PC to the inside of a coffin in one of the many **Catacombs** (p.12), raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.

▶ **Opened window of a nearby turret** ➔ Leads to **Tower Lounge** (p.30).



Beating Heart



A deep beat pulses as you walk the spiral stairway along this tower. Vein-like trails snake between the stones. *Lub-dub... Lub-dub...*

▶ **Giant, anatomical heart floating in the center of the tower** ➔ It pulsates and glows a dim red. Too far away to be hit by melee attacks ➔ If struck (50 HP), a groan and a **loud** shirek reverberates the **Castle**, as if alive. **Blood** sprays endlessly each time the **Heart** is hit, raising the **Stress Level** by **1** every round until the **Heart** is destroyed. The **Count** & his **Brides** will not allow such an offence to go uncontested.

- If the **Heart** is destroyed, the **Living Gate** (p.21) opens.

Tower Peak

The uppermost room in the uppermost tower of the **Castle**. A single window looks out over the misty forests of this strange land.

▶ **A glass coffin on a stone slab** ➔ A strikingly beautiful maiden lies inside as if asleep (recognizible as the **Countess** if previously met in **Yesteryear's Study** (p.27) or the **Hall of Heroes** (p.29)). ➔Purple bruises around her neck. She holds a **Treasure** (a rose with a gold stem & ruby petals). The glass will make **noise** if shattered. ➔ If released, a whisper comes from between her unmoving lips, "Take me to him." ➔If brought to the **Count** in the **Organ Room** (p.19) or if they encounter him throughout the **Castle**, he will pounce on the PC carrying her—dropping them to 0 HP if needed in order to take her and return her here. If brought to the **ghost** in the **Brother's Tomb** (p.13) the **ghost** will recognize her as his love.

▶ **Thrice-locked iron chest** ➔ **Strength** check to break a lock. Makes **noise**. Each lock can be opened by a **key** possessed by each of the **Brides**. ➔ Inside is a silver sword hilt with a ruby set in the pommel: **The Sun Sword**.

▶ **Spiral stairs downwards** ➔ Leads to **Tower Lounge** (p.30) or further down to the **Hall of Heroes** (p.29) or all the way to the **Catacombs** (p.12).

The Sun Sword: Alights when either in the prescene of the **Count** or when enveloped in complete darkness.

- Acts as a +2 longsword that deals +1d8 radiant damage to undead creatures. Its light overcomes even magical darkness and **lowers** the **Stress Level** by **1** while alight.

- Creatures within the **Castle** other than the **Count** must attempt to flee if struck by the **Sun Sword**.

- Those who have succumbed to **Vampirism** after Midnight using the **Sun Sword** also take 1d8 radiant damage for every successful attack.

Escalating Encounters

2 in 6 chance for every unexplored room or when considerable **noise** is made.

d6	Escalating Encounter
1	**The Other Witch** (p.34)
2	**The Count's Animated Armor** (p.35)
3	**Dorothy, the Spider Queen** (p.36)
4	**Sister Geraldine, Fallen Nun** (p.37)
5	**Christina, the Seductress** (p.38)
6	**The Count** (p.39)

Order	The Other Witch
1	A black cat crosses your path. Attempts to lead you to the **Witch's Kitchen** (p.17).
2	Sounds of someone sweeping as you enter the next room. An animated broom is sweeping the floor. It falls inert if touched, raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.
3	Sweeping sounds again, this time an overweight naked old lady stands sweeping the floor. Holds a finger up to shush the party, which douses all the lights in this room.
4	The black cat appears. Follows the party until another encounter appears, then turns into the witch & attacks.

The Other Witch

"Hee! Awfully late to be wandering abouts, children."

HP 25, **S** -1, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** +4, **W** +4, **Ch** +3, **MV** near, **AL** C

▶ **ATK** claw +0 (1d6-1)

▶ **Cackle:** All who hear must make a **Charisma Saving Throw** or suffer **Disadvantage** on their next mental score (**Int, Wis, or Cha)** check so long as they are in the **Other Witch's** prescence.

▶ **Spell-like abilities:** Chill touch +5 (1d8), Hex (+1d6 additional damage when hit by the **Other Witch**. Disadvantage on one chosen ability check), Polymorph (cat, self only),

▶ **Animate Object:** Animates a single inanimate object to do her bidding.

Order	The Count's Animated Armor
1	A wooden stand meant for a suit of armor rests bare in the room. Metallic clinking can be heard in the distance.
2	Nails on a chalkboard screech as you enter the room. A thin groove scratched into the floor from something heavy & sharp as a dented crimson helmet adorned with golden angel wings rolls toward you from the darkness, raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.
3	Metallic footsteps slowly approach you. A suit of crimson animated armor steps into the light holding an oversized greatsword & attacks. Falls apart if struck. The pieces disperse in all directions on their own after a pause.
4	Slow metallic footsteps increase in intensity. The armor rushes the party in an attempt to fuse itself with a PC. **Strength save** or be fused with the armor, which swings wildly & attempts to break your arm/leg by hyperextending. **Save** each turn. Fail results in armor also having an action on your turn. Success gets you out of armor. Armor retreats if able. If destroyed, falls apart and can be worn as **+1 plate**. At Midnight, the armor reanimates & attempts to snap the neck of its wearer.

The Count ' s Animated Armor

No words from this flaking, red-painted armor—just the grinding of steel against steel.

HP 25, **S** +3, **D** -1, **C** +2, **I** -1, **W** +2, **Ch** +0, **MV** near, **AL** C

▶ **ATK** x2 Greatsword +5 (2d6+3) or x2 armor fuse +3 (1d4 squeeze or unarmed strike). Limbs fused to the **Count's Animated Armor** can use their attack modifiers if better.

▶ **Animated armor:** Individual pieces can act on their own will. Regardless of the number of ways it is separated the **Count's Animated Armor** can only make two attacks/grapples per turn.

Order	Dorothy the Spider Queen
1	Dozens of little spiders scurry from the cracks within the walls and beneath the furniture, raising the **Stress Level** by **1** while in this room.
2	A strange orb completely made up of webbing in the corner of the room ➔ a corpse that looks like one of your PCs. **Wisdom Save** by the one opening it or have the **Stress Level** raise by **1**. ➔ Inside is that PC's preferred mundane weapon.
3	Call for a marching order. Whoever is in the back must make a **Strength Save** or be lifted off the ground by a strand of thick webbing from the ceiling, followed by a **bite** for the throat. Whether she hits or misses, a thin woman with too many arms scampers away on the ceiling, dropping the PC.
4	Casts **web** on the party, a torrent of spiders crawl from the shadows/cracks biting for 1d6 damage, followed by Dorothy rushing on her four spidery legs. Retreats once a PC is free from web. If killed, turns into a swarm of tiny spiders which scamper to her coffin. Several spiders try to carry away an iron key (p.33)

Dorothy, the Spider Queen

"What is it, my babies? Yes, yes. Mother feels them too."

HP 35, **S** +2, **D** +4, **C** +3, **I** +2 **W** +2, **Ch** +3, **MV** double near, **AL** C

▶ **ATK** Bite +5 (2d6+1d6 HP gain) or web bola +7 (1d4 + **Dex Save** or fall prone).

▶ **Swarm Mother:** hundreds of mundane spiders at her beck & call. Can attack as a swarm with 12 HP, cannot be hit by single target attacks. Vunerable to AOE damage. **Dexterity Save** vs biting or 1d6 piercing damage.

▶ **Spell-like Ability: Web** (can hit any creatures that are considered **near** one another. **Dexterity Save** or become restrained)

Order	Sister Geraldine, the Fallen Nun
1	Black pentagram star streaked on the wall/floor, a holy symbol in the center begins to smoke, then alights on fire & falls off the wall, charred.
2	Various holy symbols pinned to the walls, all of which slowly invert upside-down. Dark **blood** oozes from the symbols.
3	**Perception check** or turn a coner and meet a pale woman dressed in a black robe & habit in a silent stare, eyes black and void. Failure results in save vs Wisdom or **Hold Person** as she silently floats away, increasing the **Stress** by **1**. Silently floats into the next room regardless.
4	Portraits of the **Sister** sitting on an easel/hanging on the walls, +1 portrait per repeat encounter. Lights go out if approached, holy symbols heat and smoke, 1d6 fire unless dropped. Once covered in darkness, she flies out from one of the portraits and **bites**. Mundane weapons pass right through her unless they are Cleric weapons. Destroying the portraits or attacking her with a spell causes her to flee. If killed, turns into a pillar of salt, which crumbles and drifts towards her coffin. An iron key (p.33) rests in the salt pile.

Sister Geraldine, Fallen Nun

Silence. Only eyeless sockets staring through your soul.

HP 35, **S** +0, **D** +3, **C** +2, **I** +3 **W** +4, **Ch** -1, **MV** near, **AL** C

▶ **ATK** Bite +3 (2d6+1d6 HP gain) or Claw +3 (1d8)

▶ **Spell-like Ability: Hold Person** (**Wisdom Save** or become frozen, adding **1** to the **Stress Level** for as long as affected). **Sister Geraldine** will attempt to **bite** next turn.

▶ **Dreadful Aura:** Clerics & other divine spellcasters must make a **Wisdom Save** before casting a spell in her prescence.

Order	Christina, the Seductress
1	Pink waft of mist. Strong scent of flowery perfume, a flirty giggle echoes down the halls.
2	Sounds of kissing before you enter the room, followed by screaming that is sharply silenced. Inside the next room is a corpse of what appears to be one of you lying on satin covers & plush pillows—face completely blank as if erased off, as well as an open wound near the jugular. Raises the **Stress Level** by **1**.
3	Call for a marching order. The one in the lead must make a **Charisma Save** to notice one of the other PCs (the copy missing their face from the above result) is acting notably different before they sprout fangs & attempt to bite you. The traitor turns into a pale woman, terribly beautiful were it not for the contorting face as she scampers away like an insect. The original PC walks in from where you came.
4	Appears as **Matilda** (p.26), even if the real Matilda is with the party. Is lost & looking for someone to rescue her. Very clingy. Very flirtatious. Very touchy until she can easily get a **bite**. If killed, turns into a pink mist with wilted rose petals that trail to her coffin. Leaves an iron key (p.33) which clangs on the ground.

Christina, the Seductress

"Such a pretty face. Just a touch. Just a peck. Just a nibble, darling."

HP 35, **S** -1, **D** +2, **C** +1, **I** +4 **W** +3, **Ch** +5, **MV** near, **AL** C

▶ **ATK** Bite +2 (2d6+1d6 HP gain) or Claw +3 (1d8)

▶ **Spell-like Ability: Alter Self**, **Sleep**

▶ **Charming Aura: Charisma Save** or be unable to directly harm **Christina** for one turn.

Order	The Count
1	A sealed note rests under a wine glass filled with **blood**. Inside is a letter of mock apology as well as a peace offering: drinking the **blood** in this glass allows you to choose which Vampiric Trait (p.5) to receive.
2	Lightning strikes, a long shadow of a winged creature flashes in the lights, raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.
3	Quiet peeps can be heard up ahead. A single bat flutters towards the party, followed by a cacophony of large bats battering the party as they fly past, raising the **Stress Level** by **1**.
4	The **Count** appears, taunting the party. Will retaliate if attacked once, then flee as a swarm of bats.

The Count

"Good evening. I trust you are enjoying tonight's game?"

HP 60, **S** +4, **D** +4, **C** +4, **I** +3, **W** +5, **Ch** +4, **MV** double near, **AL** L

▶ **ATK** x2 claw +7 (1d8+4) or x1 bite +7 (3d6+ 2d6 HP gain)

▶ **Master of the Castle:** Can control doors, turn stairs to slopes, light/douse light sources, manipulate shadows, & animate objects (+5 atk, 1d6 dmg)

▶ **Dark Prescence:** +2 to current **Stress Level (SL)** when present.

▶ **Vampire Lord:** Possesses all the Vampiric Traits, but none of the Weaknesses (p.5). Those who have succumbed to Vampirism become his thralls at Midnight (p. 5).

▶ **Personality:** Loyal to his word. Toying. Manipulitive. Like a cat who's cornered a mouse.

▶ **Wants:** To kill you. Creatively.

The Count, the Castle, & the Curse

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