



TARUS'S BANQUET

A Short Web Enhancement
Adventure for *Libris Mortis*

For Four 10th-Level
Player Characters

CREDITS

Design:	Sean K Reynolds
Editing:	Penny Williams
Typesetting:	Nancy Walker
Cartography:	Dennis Kauth
Web Production	Julia Martin
Web Development:	Mark A. Jindra
Graphic Design:	Sean Glenn, Cynthia Fliege

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and on the new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

D&D, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, and DUNGEON MASTER are registered trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The d20 logo is a trademark owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Wizards characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

©2004 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
All rights reserved. Made in the U.S.A.

This product is a work of fiction.
Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places,
or events is purely coincidental.

This Wizards of the Coast game product contains no Open Game Content.
No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without
written permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License
and the d20 System License,
please visit www.wizards.com/d20.

For more DUNGEONS & DRAGONS articles, adventures, and information,
visit www.wizards.com/dnd



Libris Mortis is all about undead—their abilities, how to fight them, how to improve them, and how best to use them in your campaign. This short scenario uses feats, spells, and monsters from that book to build campaign elements that involve undead.

Tarus's Banquet is a short D&D adventure for four 10th-level player characters (PCs). It takes place in and around a manor house near a small city. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*—as well as *Libris Mortis* to run this adventure. This scenario utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure, including the map. Read through the scenario at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, threats, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations). Then review the information on the psychic vampire in *Libris Mortis*. Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information that you can read aloud or paraphrase for the players at the proper times. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *Monster Manual* or *Libris Mortis* is referenced.


ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The story behind this adventure begins some twenty years ago, with a noble family based in a somewhat remote location.

LOPHAR

Lophar, a wealthy aristocrat, was always the black sheep of his family. He frequently hired teams of experts and bodyguards to accompany him on explorations of strange ruins in hopes of uncovering forgotten secrets. On one such trip, he died at the hands of a psychic vampire (see the Vampire Variants section of the New Monsters chapter in *Libris Mortis*) and subsequently rose as a vampire of the same kind under his slayer's control. Shortly thereafter, a band of adventurers killed his master, and he found himself free and blessed with the powers of undeath.

Lophar remained in hiding for nearly a year, returning to his family only after devising an airtight story about his deeds in a foreign land. Ambitious but subtle, he looked within his family for others who might make



good vampire underlings, but most of them disappointed him with their physical weaknesses, petty bickering, or flamboyant personal habits. Eventually, he decided that grooming a youngster to serve him from birth would be much more effective than “shopping” among his adult family members.

Thus, when his sister’s son Tarus was born, Lophar took a special interest in the boy. Over the years, Lophar trained Tarus as his protégé, his agent, and eventually his lieutenant. Lophar made Tarus a vampire about a year ago, and he has not yet needed to use his supernatural influence to control his nephew.

TARUS

Tarus Bargden is a charismatic young aristocrat with a minor talent for sorcery. Raised in the lap of luxury under the watchful eye of Lophar, he willingly entered his uncle’s service and readily embraced the vampiric state when Lophar offered it. Though the young psychic vampire is technically under the control of his uncle Lophar, he willingly obeys the older vampire’s commands, so his uncle has never needed to exercise the magical control he holds over Tarus. Arrogant but diplomatic, skilled in arms but proficient in magic, Tarus embodies the ideal qualities of a tyrant noble, and his vampiric powers serve to back up his decrees quite effectively.

THE PLOT

Whether or not they intended to do so, the PCs took some action that thwarted one of Lophar’s plans in recent months. Though the characters may not even know about Lophar’s existence, the incident has made the vampire aware of them, and he has decided to deal with them now because they’ll only become tougher and more difficult to kill later on. To that end, Lophar has sent Tarus to put an end to the PCs.

On instructions from his uncle, Tarus bought a piece of property near the characters’ home base and spent several months establishing a reputation among the locals as a wealthy nobleman fond of hunting and high-society parties. Though Tarus was already well aware of the PCs’ identities and exploits, he allowed a suitable amount of time to pass before approaching them, so as to prevent questions about how he learned of their existence so fast. He now intends to invite the PCs to his home on some pretext and slay them there. But he recognizes the danger inherent in the mission, and though he is loyal to his uncle, Tarus still values his own unlife. Realizing this fact, his uncle has given him permission to flee if completing this task would mean his destruction.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Tarus begins by issuing the PCs an invitation to his mansion for a banquet and a night hunt beneath the full moon. During the hunt, he and his minions turn on the characters, intending to kill them and explain it away as a terrible hunting accident or monster attack. The PCs must avoid death at the hands of the vampire and his minions and, ideally, destroy them all.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Tarus’s Banquet is an encounter-based scenario in which the action occurs in and around the mansion that Tarus Bargden has purchased. The adventure begins when the characters receive an invitation to a fete at the mansion (see encounter A, below).

A. THE INVITATION


A courier wearing the livery of the Bargden family delivers a message to the PCs when they are at home or at one of their favorite haunts. If the characters live secretly or avoid frequenting any particular restaurant or bar, the message goes to a public organization—such as a temple, wizard guild, or fighting school—to which one or more of the PCs belongs.

The message consists of a folded piece of parchment secured with wax and stamped with the seal of the Bargden family (a boar’s head surrounded by six stars). It is addressed to one or more of the PCs by name, and the name of the organization to which it was mailed is also noted, if appropriate.

The letter reads as follows. Modify the text below as needed, inserting exact dates for the dinner and adding noble titles for the PCs (if appropriate) and a city of origin for Tarus.

My Esteemed Adventurers,

Tales of your accomplishments have reached my ears and elicited a spark of interest within me. It has become my habit to invite persons of interest to my home for dinner, and while I normally extend such invitations only to the nobility, I believe your deeds merit an exception. If I am convinced that your reputations are not unfounded, I may have information of interest to you, and perhaps even a business opportunity.



Your attendance is requested at my mansion at sundown on the eve of the next full moon. Activities include dinner prepared by my servants and a moonlight hunt of whatever fast natural creature we can find near the grounds. Daylight hunts are far too easy for a man of my skill, and I presume that the same holds true for you. Please respond by the day after tomorrow by courier, letter, or in person.

With gracious intent,
Lord Tarus Bargden

A party, the opportunity to make contact with a noble, the possibility of valuable information, and a chance to do business ought to be enough to convince the PCs to attend. If they are still reluctant, or if you don't feel that the above message will catch their interest, modify the invitation so that it makes specific references to people, places, events, or items that directly concern them.

If the PCs respond by letter or courier, they receive a pleasant acknowledgement of their RSVP from Lord Tarus and a reminder of the dinner the morning before it occurs. If they respond in person, they are met by Lennel, Lord Tarus' manservant (see area B1a, below), who accepts their response on behalf of his lord and offers regrets that his master is away on business that day. Lennel politely thanks the PCs for their time and tells them he looks forward to seeing them at the lord's banquet.

No other events relating to this scenario occur until the night of the banquet. Go to encounter B, below, when the PCs approach the manor.

B. THE GROUNDS

Lord Bargden's mansion stands atop a hill in a lightly wooded area about a mile down a private side road. A broad, well-maintained path climbs the wooded hill to the house.

B1. HOUSE EXTERIOR

The mansion was meticulously maintained by its previous owner, and Tarus has ensured that it remained in good repair during his tenancy. This encounter describes the grounds around the manor and the events that occur there prior to the banquet.

B1a. Entry Path (EL 3)

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach point A on the map of the house and grounds.

Atop a hill in a lightly wooded area stands a two-story building with a large chimney at the side and a double-door entrance in the front. A path leads to the left around the house, presumably to a stable. In a clear area to the right stands a long wooden table with eight chairs (one slightly larger than the others). Several servants are busy setting dishes, glasses, and silverware at each place. Four vertical wooden poles surround the table, each holding an unlit lantern about 7 feet off the ground. A thin man with iron-gray hair stands on the paving stones just outside the front door of the manor, directing the servants as they go in and out of the house. The scent of cooking food floats from the manor whenever the door opens.

The servants are busy setting up for the evening's festivities.


Creatures: The servants are normal humans. Tarus doesn't keep them dominated all the time because he wants them to be able to go about their duties in a normal fashion. He isn't shy about using his dominate ability to browbeat them into submission if they become insolent or rebellious, however.

The gray-haired man is Lennel, Tarus's manservant. A sergeant in the army in his younger days, Lennel is polite to guests but a terror to the servants. Like the rest of the staff, he has been subjected to Tarus's dominate ability in the past, so he obeys his master unflinchingly, knowing that his life is the price of erring too greatly. Fortunately, Lennel is as good at taking orders as giving them, and since he served as one of Lophar's private bodyguards for several years (both before and after Lophar became a vampire), he knows how to deal with the Bargden family. Lennel can feel himself growing older now, and he hopes that his master will either make him a vampire or put him out of his misery quickly rather leaving him a weak old man.

☛ **Lennel:** NE male human warrior 4; hp 18. Lennel is unremarkable except that he has the Tomb-Tainted Soul feat (see the Prestige Classes chapter in *Libris Mortis*), plus a few ranks in Diplomacy.

☛ **Servants (10):** Male and female commoner 1; hp 4.

Tactics: When the PCs arrive, Lennel greets them cordially. If they rode to the manor, he whistles for the groundskeeper to take their mounts to the stable for grooming and feeding. Lennel explains that Lord Bargden is out surveying the grounds for a good place to start tonight's hunt and will be back shortly. Until then, he suggests that the PCs go to the party grounds



(area B1b), have a look around, and choose their seats. The only restriction on their choices is that the large seat at the head of the table is Lord Bargden's.

Lennel knows that his role in Tarus's plan is to keep the household running, not to fight. Thus, he tries to escape if combat breaks out, and he surrenders immediately if cornered.

B1b. Party Grounds (EL 3)

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the PCs reach the area marked B on the map of the house and grounds.

The table in this area is set for eight guests. Each place setting features three different plates and a dizzying selection of forks and spoons. The lantern-poles should be more than sufficient to light this entire area during the meal. The hill slopes down to the south and provides a nice view of the hillside and the nearby land.

When dusk begins to gather, Lennel orders one of the servants to light the lanterns around the table.

Creatures: See area B1a, above.

Development: If the PCs' group has fewer than seven members and they ask Lennel about the remaining seats, he explains that Lord Bargden invited some other adventurers to attend this evening and names a few other well-known individuals of the same or lower level than the PCs. He goes on to explain that the other guests had to cancel at the last minute because of some monster hunt.

B1c. Path to Other Buildings (EL 6)

This area is the northwestern edge of the hill upon which the mansion is built. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the PCs reach the area marked C on the map of the house and grounds.

At the northwestern edge of the hill is well-trodden path leading down to the east. About halfway down the hill the path branches into three parts. One branch ends a clearing in front of a building that looks like a stable and a small house constructed of wood and stone. Another branch leads west to the front of the manor, and a third leads south to a small door in the garden wall behind the mansion.

The small building is the groundskeeper's home. The stable also includes a kennel where Tarus keeps his "dogs."

Creatures: In addition to looking after the trees and animals, the groundskeeper tends the garden, entering and exiting through the small door in the garden wall. The garden path leads to the exterior doors on the ground floor (see area C9).

The three hunting dogs kenneled in the stable are actually natural werewolves in their animal forms. Via his dominate ability, Tarus forces them to live in wolf form and serve as his hunting dogs. The creatures actually look more like wolves than dogs, and if confronted with that fact, Tarus claims that they are half-breeds and are probably more wolf than dog. He says he obtained them through a friend who knew a breeder and doesn't know their actual pedigrees. See the Detect Evil sidebar if the PCs use *detect evil* on the dogs.

Unlike the servants, the "dogs" are under the influence of Tarus's dominate ability at all times, and anyone observing them for 1 minute can make a DC 15 Sense Motive check to notice that they're not behaving quite like normal dogs—or even wolves. If the PCs ask about the dogs, Tarus explains their behavior as normal excitement prior to the coming hunt.

Groundskeeper: Male human expert 4; hp 12.

Werewolves (3): hp 20; see *Monster Manual*, page 175.

B2. THE LORD ARRIVES (EL 10)

Read or paraphrase the following when the last light is fading from the sky.

Moments before sundown, a tall man approaches from the southwest. He is dressed in a fashionable noble's outfit, though his boots are dirty. His body is tall, lean, and strong, and he has fair skin, dark hair, and clear blue eyes.

The newcomer is Tarus, and his entrance is a staged event calculated to convince any unduly suspicious guests that he couldn't possibly be a vampire, since he appeared while the sun was still in the sky. Shortly before sundown, Tarus left the house in gaseous form, floated secretly into the trees to the south of the mansion, then assumed human form and walked toward the party grounds. He timed his entrance so that his Endure Sunlight feat could keep him comfortable for the 10 seconds or so he would have to spend in the sunlight.

Tarus greets his guests pleasantly, though his manner is somewhat aloof, like that of most other nobles.

Creatures: Tarus looks only slightly paler than he did when he was alive. Should anyone ask, he explains

the change in his complexion as the result of a severe illness from which he has now fully recovered.

🐾 **Tarus Bargden:** hp 60; see Appendix for statistics.

C. THE BANQUET (EL 11)

Read or paraphrase the following when you decide to start the dinner.

As darkness gathers, Tarus gestures for everyone to join him at the table. The night breezes are warm, and the glow of the torches provides a cozy atmosphere.

As soon as everyone is seated, Tarus signals for the servants to bring the drinks and the first course.

The five-course meal is not poisoned, and in fact the victuals are of exceptionally high quality. Tarus knows that poison in the food might be detected, and worse still, it might have no effect at all on some of the characters. However, any character who deliberately stuffs himself or drinks too much takes a –2 circumstance penalty on attacks, saves, and checks for the next two hours. This penalty increases to –4 if the character overindulged in both food and drink.

Creatures: In addition to Tarus, Lennel, and the other servants, two of Tarus's controlled vampires (Praslin and Kantos) make periodic appearances throughout the meal.

🐾 **Tarus Bargden:** hp 60; see Appendix for statistics.

DETECT EVIL

Tarus and his servitor vampires, Praslin, and Kantos, are evil and can be revealed as such by *detect evil* and similar effects. But an evil nature is not considered sufficient provocation for murder, and the PCs don't have the legal right to attack people just because they detect as evil. In fact, doing so is often a good way to land in prison. Tarus's status as a noble makes this situation particularly difficult, since an unprovoked attack on a member of the nobility is considered a capital crime in most lands. Players who get itchy to attack should be warned about the illegality of their actions, and perhaps of the limitations of the spell as well—Tarus could well detect as evil because he has evil thoughts, even if he has never committed an evil

🐾 **Praslin:** hp 42; see Appendix for statistics.

🐾 **Kantos:** hp 39; see Appendix for statistics.


🐾 **Lennel:** hp 18; see encounter B1a.

Tactics: During the meal, Tarus urges the PCs to eat and drink to their hearts' content, knowing that their overindulgence now will make it easier to hunt them down later. He talks of the invigorating night air, his love of fine food and hunting, and his plans to acquire more property in the area from some of the weaker or poorer nobles.

Tarus also encourages the adventurers to talk about their past adventures. He prompts them for details of their best-known exploits by making comments such as, "I want to hear it from the horse's mouth, as they say, without the commoners getting all the details wrong." If necessary, he relates some of his uncle's adventuring stories, pretending they're his own, to get the PCs to open up. He listens carefully to their tales, hoping to gain a better understanding of their abilities, the kinds of creatures they've fought, and any weaknesses in their personal or group strategies. If he feels that they are too powerful for him to kill tonight with the creatures he has at his disposal, he postpones his murderous plans to a later date, though he still holds the promised hunt tonight to avoid making them suspicious. Reasons for Tarus to delay the attack may include a history of excellent tactics, two or more strong cleric or paladin PCs, a history of fighting undead (particularly vampires) with great success, or the presence of magic items that have a good chance of harming Tarus, such as undead-bane weapons or a *wand of searing light*.

deed. Given the fact that he's a vampire, however, Tarus radiates moderate evil rather than the faint evil that a living human of equivalent level would. This fact should alert the PCs that Tarus is not quite what he appears.

Because Tarus's "dogs" are actually chaotic evil werewolves, they also detect as evil, and that fact is harder to explain. If confronted with the truth about his animals, Tarus feigns ignorance about the cause of their evil auras. ("That would explain why they've been acting strangely," he says, as if with dawning understanding.) He promises to get one of the local temples to investigate the matter as soon as possible. Tarus is an experienced aristocrat and a vampire to boot, so he has an extra edge when it comes to telling a convincing story via the Bluff skill.



During the dinner, Praslin and Kantos come out of the mansion to speak with Tarus periodically. Tarus apologizes for the interruptions, explaining that as his family's representative in this area, he sometimes has to deal with family business at inopportune times. These quick visits give him a chance to pass messages to his servitor vampires and let them examine the evening's prey. At no time does he refer to his uncle Lophar; he simply mentions his family or his father.

Development: If Tarus decides to delay killing the PCs, he tries his best to befriend them during the rest of the evening so that he has an excuse to contact them again at a later date, when he is more prepared to kill them. He uses the intervening time until their next visit to create more vampire spawn, which he hides in the woods until he can unleash them on the PCs as part of his overall plan of attack.

D. THE MANSION

When the banquet is over, Tarus invites the PCs into the mansion for one last drink by the fire to help their meal settle before the hunt. A complete key to the mansion is given in encounter F, below. Read or paraphrase the following when he takes them into the house.

Tarus walks through the front door into what appears to be a sumptuously appointed living room. A great stone fireplace occupies most of this chamber's east wall. The fire has burned down low and is now little more than coals. Against the walls stand eight wooden chairs, and four large, decorative urns mark the corners of the chamber. Two sets of double doors open into the room—one on the north wall, and one on the south. Tarus casually points out the sitting room and the dining room beyond, then makes a grand gesture encompassing the rest of the house.

"Welcome to my humble home. Do make yourselves comfortable," Tarus says easily, taking a seat by the fireplace. "I regret that I cannot show you the rest of the house at this time, but frankly, I have been so busy doing my father's work that I haven't had time to unpack all of my reference books and other belongings. Worse still, some of the trophies from my hunts are still waiting at the tanner's because I haven't had time to arrange delivery, let alone find places to hang them."

Development: If Tarus feels that the PCs trust him or have at least taken a liking to him, he promises them a tour of the entire mansion on their next visit. By that

time, hopefully, he will have everything unpacked.

DI. DEATH IN THE MANSION (EL 13)

If Tarus feels that at least two of the PCs have overindulged in food or drink, and he still plans to murder them tonight, he must decide whether to attack them here in the mansion or wait for the hunt. If he decides to make his move here, he gives Lennel a prearranged signal to bring them poisoned drinks. His toxin of choice is striped toadstool poison (see page 297 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), and Lennel has been instructed to use a double dose (two initial and two secondary saving throws) in each glass because the PCs are extraordinary individuals.

Creatures: If Tarus attacks the PCs here, Praslin and Kantos rush to help, and all three call for the skulking cysts in the corner urns to break free and attack (see area F2). Meanwhile, Lennel and the other servants flee to their quarters since, as living creatures, they are vulnerable to the vampires' Wisdom-draining auras.

✦ **Tarus Bargden:** hp 60; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Praslin:** hp 42; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Kantos:** hp 39; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Lennel:** hp 18; see encounter B1a.


✦ **Skulking Cysts (4):** hp 26; see *Libris Mortis*.

Tactics: Not only is Tarus smart, but he was also trained and educated by an experienced adventurer—namely Lophar. If Tarus has a minute to himself before starting this fight, he casts *mage armor* and *expeditious retreat* on himself. He stays close to his opponents so that they can't use *fireball* or other area spells on him, and he does his best to guard against invisible foes. Otherwise, he tailors his tactics to what he learned about the PCs during dinner. Praslin and Kantos don't have the benefit of Tarus' training, and they don't have specific knowledge about the PCs, but Tarus can give them tactical commands via hand signals. Refer to the Vampire Tactics sidebar for more tips on using the three psychic vampires in combat.

Development: If Tarus decides to proceed with the hunt instead of attacking the PCs in the house, go to encounter E.

E. THE HUNT (EL 11)

If Tarus has decided to attack the PCs during the hunt, he brings them outside after they have had their after-dinner drinks in the living room. He calls for Lennel to bring him a shortbow and the groundskeeper bring him his dogs.



He then invites the PCs to follow him to a new deer path he located just before dinner. If the PCs hesitate, he chides them and offers to make it interesting, betting 1,000 gold coins that he can bring down a deer before anyone else in the group, provided that weapons and not magic are used for the kill. Of course, Tarus has no intention of paying this bet, since he plans to murder the PCs before any real hunting occurs.

Creatures: Tarus, Praslin, Kantos, and three werewolves accompany the PCs on the hunt.

✦ **Tarus Bargden:** hp 60; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Praslin:** hp 42; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Kantos:** hp 39; see Appendix for statistics.

✦ **Werewolves (3):** hp 20; see *Monster Manual*, page 175.

VAMPIRE TACTICS

Tarus has been a vampire for more than a year now and is practiced in using all of his vampire powers. Praslin and Kantos became vampires more recently and are weaker than Tarus, but they are still quite competent. In combat, all three of them make good use of the following vampire abilities.

Wisdom Drain Aura: Each of the three psychic vampires can use this ability to drain 1 point of Wisdom per round from all living creatures within 10 feet. Tarus initiates combat in the mansion (area F2) by taking a standard action to activate this ability, then breaking open one of the cyst-pots as a move action if one is adjacent to him. This technique frees one of the skulking cysts right away, so that it doesn't have to waste time freeing itself. Praslin and Kantos are less effective with their Wisdom drain auras, so they may use different attacks in the first round as the circumstances merit. However, they understand that their combined auras can quickly leave almost any creature a catatonic mess.

Wisdom Drain Slam: A psychic vampire's slam attack drains 1d6 points of Wisdom from any target hit by it (no saving throw). Tarus prefers to attack clerics with this ability because the effect can prevent them from using their most powerful spells. Praslin prefers to rely on his spells and Kantos on his longsword, but Kantos might well switch to a slam attack if he finds his sword ineffective.

Dominate: This ability is best used against a fighter or rogue, who can then be directed to take out one of the PC spellcasters, or possibly even to flank another PC with Praslin, Tarus, or Kantos. Tarus and Praslin are the only ones likely to use this ability unless a potential target has suffered from cumulative Wisdom drain effects.

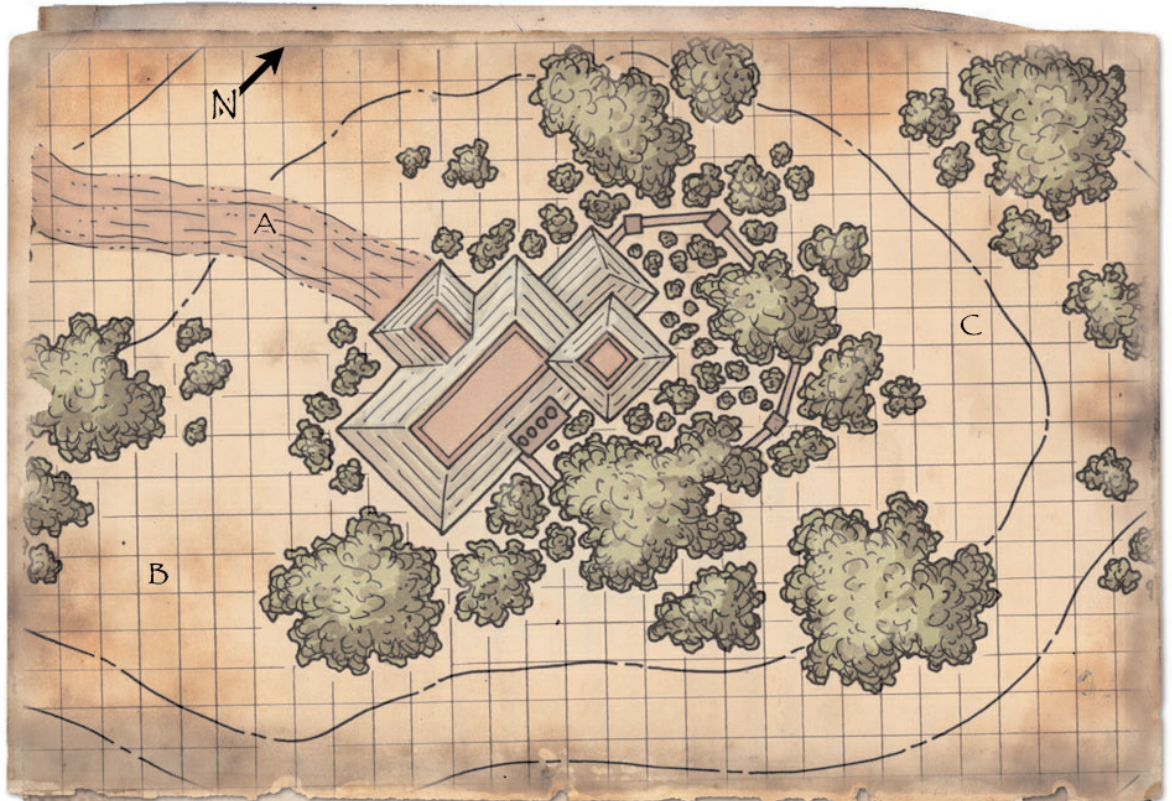
Damage Reduction: Though damage reduction 10/silver and magic is probably not significant to a party of 10th-level adventurers, it does make the vampires all but immune to most normal weapons, as well as a good number of magic ones.

Gaseous Form: Assuming gaseous form is Tarus's favorite way to escape danger, and since the fire is burning low in the fireplace, he can easily use this ability to escape through the chimney to room F14, F15, or even the grounds around the manor house. This ability coupled with his fast healing makes him quite difficult to catch. Praslin and Kantos are under orders to fight until destroyed, so they continue holding off the PCs even if Tarus flees. Like any other vampire, however, they automatically assume gaseous form and retreat to their coffins if reduced to 0 or fewer hit points.

Fast Healing: Lophar taught Tarus that returning to fight another day is always better than dying while making a foolish stand. With fast healing 5, Tarus can afford to retreat for a few minutes until he is once again at full hit points, then stalk the PCs as they work their way through his home or try to get back to town. He prefers not to be forced into gaseous form by severe damage, since the healing process leaves him vulnerable in his coffin, so he normally takes gaseous form on his own turn if reduced to fewer than half his normal hit points. As mentioned above, Tarus has commanded Praslin and Kantos to stay and fight, even if he retreats.

Slam: Because all three vampires have natural slam attacks, all of them can make attacks of opportunity even when they appear unarmed. Tarus and Praslin take advantage of this ability by keeping enemy spellcasters within reach, so that they can take full advantage of attacks of opportunity provoked by spellcasting.

Readied Casting: Praslin prefers to ready an action to attack an enemy mage or a spell-happy cleric, hoping to disrupt a spell by dealing damage. This technique coupled with his predilection for staying close to enemy spellcasters and making slam attacks of opportunity gives him a good chance to thwart an enemy's attacks every round.



E1. DEATH ON THE TRAIL

If the PCs still refuse the hunt, Tarus expresses his disappointment that the heroes can't live up to their reputations. He orders his groundskeeper to bring their horses if they rode to the mansion and dismisses them from his presence.

Tactics: After the PCs leave, Tarus, the other two vampires, and the three werewolves pursue them. The vampires use gaseous form to catch up, if need be. The evil creatures first try to take out the characters' mounts (if any) to slow them down, then attack the PCs themselves. See the Vampire Tactics sidebar for information on their methods.

E2. DEATH ON THE HUNT

If the PCs agree to the hunt, it proceeds as follows. Tarus leads them along the path, dog leashes in hand. The other two vampires are present in their normal forms if the PCs do not seem suspicious of them, or trailing behind in gaseous form otherwise.

Tactics: When the group has moved a suitable distance from the mansion, Tarus pauses to examine a bend in the trail, giving the other two vampires time to materialize if they have been in gaseous form. Then he turns on the PCs, ordering the werewolves and his vampire minions to attack. The group tries to disable one PC as quickly as possible, then hunt down any who scatter. They know that any PCs who get back to town will spill Tarus's murderous plans, so they do everything they can to prevent escapes.

F. KEY TO THE MANSION

The PCs are likely to see only a small part of the mansion, since Tarus directs them outside for the hunt after a short rest in the living room (area F2). However, a full description of the mansion is provided here in case combat occurs inside, or the PCs return here after dealing with the vampires during the hunt.

GROUND FLOOR

The spacious rooms on the ground floor are much like those in any other noble's house.

F1. Foyer

Two wooden pillars separate this wide entryway from the next room. The north, south, and west walls feature shuttered windows.

The foyer has no unusual features.

F2. Living Room (EL 8 or 13)

This room is where Tarus brings the PCs after dinner for a quiet drink. Read or paraphrase the following when they enter.

A great stone fireplace occupies most of this chamber's east wall. The fire has burned down low and is now little more than coals. Against the walls stand eight wooden chairs, and four large, decorative urns mark the corners of the chamber. Two sets of double doors open into the room—one on the north wall, and one on the south.

The urns are made of sturdy clay and painted with floral designs. Each is large enough to hold an adult halfling and is filled with sand to just a few inches below the rim. If asked about them, Tarus explains that the urns were a gift from his mother and are merely decorative. He keeps them filled with sand to prevent the servants from tipping them over accidentally—plus, the sand should come in handy in case of fire.

The chimney of the fireplace (marked 2a on the map) splits into two smaller chimneys between the ground floor and the second floor, and a smaller fireplace connects to each on the second floor (in rooms F14 and F15). The fireplace chimneys allow the vampires to move quickly between floors using gaseous form, since the low fire in this room is only a momentary discomfort for someone in that state.

Creatures: In truth, each of the four urns contains a skulking cyst (see the Monsters chapter in *Libris Mortis*), which is under orders to stay quiet unless Tarus calls for it or its urn is broken. In either circumstance, they spring forth and attack any living creatures they see.

👁️ **Skulking Cysts (4):** hp 26; see *Libris Mortis*.


F3. Sitting Room

The eight chairs and small table in this room are probably used for cozy chats with guests when a more intimate setting than the large living room is desired.

The sitting room has no unusual features.

F4. Study

This chamber, obviously a study, is empty except for a desk and padded chair. Some sort of ledger book and writing materials are neatly arranged on the table.



Tarus uses the study to manage his business interests and correspond with his uncle. Among the notes in the ledger are some remarks on local businesses Tarus would like to purchase and matters about which “Uncle Lophar” should be appraised.

F5. Dining Room

In the center of this chamber stands a 15-foot table with eight low-backed chairs arranged around it. A simple pair of double doors, built to resemble the wall, leads north.

The dining room has no unusual features, though it bears evidence of frequent use. Unlike older vampires, Tarus makes an effort to eat in front of his guests in order to conceal his true nature.

F6. Kitchen

This chamber contains a water basin and a wood-burning stove. Pots and pans hang from the walls in profusion, and dishes and flatware are stacked on shelves.

The secret door leading to area 7 is easily noticed (Search DC 15 instead of 20).

F7. Root Cellar

This small room consists mainly of an open trapdoor in the floor that appears to lead into a food storage area with wall-to-wall shelves.

This chamber actually is a root cellar, but Tarus had a dwarf miner dig a narrow tunnel from here to a spot underneath one of the trees to the north. A Medium creature can move through the passage comfortably, but the exit hole is large enough for only a Small or smaller creature to pass through. This arrangement isn't an obstacle for a creature in gaseous form, and Tarus had the tunnel made so that he could flee if seriously threatened. The exit hole is overgrown with greenery and resembles a small animal burrow.

F8. Pantry & Secondary Kitchen

The shelves in this room are lined with foodstuffs, and the small basin to one side is clearly meant for food preparation. The little table in the room doubles as a cutting surface and a place for the servants to eat.

The preparation of large and complicated banquets often spills over into this room from the main kitchen. The servants usually prepare their own food here as well.

F9. Garden Access

Large coat hooks line the walls of this room, and a thick brush of stiff animal hair is nailed to the floor near a pair of double doors.

The double doors lead to the garden. The brush is used to clean dirt from boots or shoes so as not to track it into the mansion.

SECOND FLOOR

The bedchambers and guest quarters are all on the second floor.

F10. Lesser Servants' Quarters (EL 1/2)

The maid and cook were brought from Lophar's household, and they share this chamber.

This room is furnished with two simple beds and two small dressers.

The chamber is unremarkable.

Creatures: The occupants of this room are completely ordinary except that both have the Tomb-Tainted Soul feat (see the Feats section in *Libris Mortis*), which was forced upon them by Lophar during a special ritual. Their wills are broken, and they dare not disobey any of the vampires.

✦ **Maid and Cook:** N female human commoner 1; hp 3; Tomb-Tainted Soul feat (see *Libris Mortis*).

Tactics: These two servants will not fight even to defend their own lives. If confronted by anyone other than the vampires or Lennel, they flee.


F11. Master Servant's Quarters

This small room contains a bed, a chair, a wardrobe, and a tiny desk. The open window overlooks the garden.

Lennel lives in this chamber. He has no belongings of value, since he is little more than a slave with privileges.

F12. Hallway

This hallway leads north and south and features several doors and pairs of doors on either side.



The doors in the mansion are well constructed and would normally seal well. However, Tarus has cut a small notch in the bottom of each so that a vampire in gaseous form can pass through easily.

F13. Guest Room

A high bed, table, chair, and wardrobe constitute the furnishings of this chamber. Judging from the layer of dust, it hasn't been used in quite a while.

Since Tarus has so few guests, this room is reserved for Lophar's use should he come to visit. Like the beds in areas F16, F17, and F18, this one has a coffin cleverly built into its base. A series of tiny holes in the coffin wall allow a gaseous vampire to access it easily.

☛ **Wooden Coffin:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13.

F14. Library (EL 3)

The door to this room is locked with a good physical lock (Open Lock DC 30) and an *arcane lock* spell (caster level 3rd) from Tarus' wand.

Narrow bookshelves fill about half the wall space in this room. Some of the shelves are only half assembled, and all of them are empty. Unopened wooden crates take up much of the floor, and one large wooden chest stands in the northeast corner by the stone fireplace.

Tarus has forbidden his servants to enter this room, and he has been busy with other matters, so no cleaning or organizing has been done. All of Tarus's books are still in their crates, though Tarus has opened a couple of them and rummaged through their contents in search of particular books to look up a few local, arcane, and religious references. The six crates of books are worth a total of 1,000 gp, but none of them are spellbooks and none are magical in any way. The chest is closed and unlocked.

Creature: Inside the chest is a frustrated deathlock (see the Monsters chapter in *Libris Mortis*) named Archemrik, who was a sorcerer in life. When Lophar killed him, his corpse animated as a deathlock and began hunting Lophar's servants. When Lophar discovered the situation, he arranged to have one of his cleric vampire spawn command the deathlock into service. Eventually, Lophar gave the deathlock to Tarus so that the latter could heal his mortal servants without drawing attention to their dependence on negative energy instead of positive energy.

☛ **Deathlock:** hp 19; see *Libris Mortis*.

Tactics: The deathlock is under orders to remain within the chest and use its *inflict minor wounds* spell-like ability on anyone who requests healing. It can attack only if it is attacked or if Tarus commands it to do so. If freed, the deathlock fights its way out of the house and tries to find Lophar again.

F15. Trophy Room (EL 7)

The door to this room is locked with a good physical lock (Open Lock DC 30).

In this room are several large chairs covered in drab cloths. A few small piles of debris have been swept into the center of the room, and two decorative urns about half the height of a grown human stand in the corners.

Tarus uses this sitting room to display his hunting trophies. He isn't actually interested in hunting and hasn't needed to use this room yet, so he keeps it locked and orders his minions to leave it undisturbed.

Creatures: Tarus has placed three tomb motes (see the Monsters chapter in *Libris Mortis*) in this room to punish any of his servants who disobey him or eliminate any too-curious guests. In addition, the room contains two urns like the ones in the living room (area F2)—one in the northwest corner, and the other in the southwest corner. Each contains a skulking cyst.

☛ **Tomb Motes (3):** hp 13; see *Libris Mortis*.

☛ **Skulking Cysts (2):** hp 26; see *Libris Mortis*.

F16. Praslin's Bedroom

Praslin sleeps in this chamber. The door is locked with a good physical lock (Open Lock DC 30).

This bedroom is furnished with a high bed, a desk, a chair, a wardrobe, and a small bookshelf.

The bookshelves are empty except for a few pages of notes about local spellcasters Praslin has met and some local ladies with whom he'd like to spend more time. He doesn't keep anything of value here because he prefers to have all his belongings on his person in case he needs to flee in the middle of the night.

Rather than feet, Praslin's bed has a hollow, boxlike structure at the base that serves as his coffin. During the day, he's usually resting in the coffin.

☛ **Wooden Coffin:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13.

F17. Kantos's Bedroom

Kantos sleeps in this chamber. The door is locked with a good physical lock (Open Lock DC 30).

This chamber is furnished with a high bed, a desk, a chair, a wardrobe, and a weapon rack.

Kantos was once an officer in the military, and he keeps his room very neat. He's actually a pretty dull individual, so he doesn't bother to decorate.

Rather than feet, Kantos's bed has a hollow, boxlike structure at the base that serves as his coffin. During the day, he's usually resting in the coffin.

♥ **Wooden Coffin:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13.

F18. Master Bedroom

The door to this room is locked with a good physical lock (Open Lock DC 30) and an *arcane lock* spell (caster level 3rd) from Tarus's wand.

This large bedroom is furnished with a high, four-poster bed, three wardrobes, a chair, and a desk. Three curtained glass doors on the west wall open onto a balcony. Paintings of hunting scenes and stuffy-looking aristocrats hang on the walls, and objects of gold and silver rest atop most of the furnishings.

Tarus spends little time here at night, since he chafes at spending all the daylight hours confined in his protective coffin-bed. The valuables in the room include a candlestick, a pair of nonmagical rings, and a thick gold chain hanging from a small wooden rack. The total value of these items is 300 gp.

♥ **Wooden Coffin:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; break DC 13.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs get the better of the three vampires, Tarus tries to flee. If he believes that the PCs still consider him human, he flees in human form and turns gaseous once he's out of sight. He then waits until the PCs decide to leave or until just before sunup to return to his coffin-bed. He may also take the opportunity to any attack lone PCs who try to search his house.

If the jig is up and it's clear that Tarus is a vampire, he flees in gaseous form, taking advantage of the tree-tops to obscure his location and throw off pursuit.

Eventually, he makes his way to a safe spot where he can hide out during daylight, then proceeds as fast as he can to report to his uncle Lophar.

If Tarus is killed, the PCs may decide to loot the mansion. The decorations and portable valuables therein bring about 500 gp on the open market, in addition to the valuables mentioned elsewhere in the text. However, the mansion and its contents legally belong to Lophar, and the elder vampire wastes no time in telling the local authorities that the PCs are thieves. He eventually sends a mortal servant to take care of the house, working with the local law to get the PCs ousted if necessary.

In addition, Tarus is an aristocrat, and any attack on him (unprovoked or not) attracts attention from the authorities. If Tarus is killed or driven away, the local authorities eventually piece together the fact that the PCs were invited to his home on the last night he was seen. They then begin to investigate the characters' role in Tarus's disappearance. Claims that Tarus was or is a vampire are not sufficient proof of their lack of guilt, and proving a missing person is a vampire is a difficult task. Thus, the PCs are likely to remain under suspicion for quite some time—especially with Lophar applying pressure to key local nobles and magistrates.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the PCs survive their encounter with Tarus and his minions, Lophar will try to kill them again, though it may take him several months to marshal enough resources to do so. Alternatively, the elder vampire might just hire an assassin to take them out one by one.

If the PCs permanently kill Tarus, Lophar becomes quite angry and tries to strike back at the PCs in the most harmful way possible. Lophar has been a vampire for more than twenty years and an aristocrat for forty years before that, so he is accustomed to taking all the time he needs to achieve his goals. The killing of his nephew makes him cautious, so he formulates his new plan with great care. Because Lophar is far more powerful than the PCs, any direct confrontation they have with him is likely to go badly for them.

APPENDIX: STATISTIC BLOCKS

This section details the statistics for the vampires in this adventure.

♥ **Tarus Bargden:** Male human psychic vampire aristocrat 7/sorcerer 1; CR 10; Medium undead

(augmented humanoid); HD 8d12+3; hp 55; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+7 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +11 melee (1d4+5/19–20, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+7 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +11 melee (1d4+5/19–20, masterwork dagger) and +6 melee (1d6+2 plus 1d6 Wis, slam); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, Wisdom drain; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistances (cold 10, electricity 10), spider climb, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 20, Dex 20, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +21, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +8, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +8, Hide +13, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Ride +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +6, Spot +16, Survival +6; Alertness^B, Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Endure Sunlight (*Libris Mortis*), Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

Blood Drain (Ex): Tarus can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each successful attack, he gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, Tarus can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by Tarus's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn (see *Monster Manual*, page 253) 1d4 days after burial. If Tarus instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under Tarus's command and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time, Tarus may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than 16 HD; any spawn he creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. Tarus may voluntarily

free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Dominate (Su): Tarus can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This ability is similar to a gaze attack, except that he must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone Tarus targets must succeed on a DC 20 Will save or fall instantly under his influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): A living creature hit by Tarus's slam attack gains two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Tarus gains 5 temporary hit points. Tarus can use his energy drain ability once per round.

Wisdom Drain (Su): Slam, 1d6 Wis; see *Libris Mortis*.

Alternate Form (Su): Tarus can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell (caster level 12th), except that he does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in his alternate form, he loses his natural slam attack and dominate ability, but he gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Fast Healing (Ex): Tarus heals 5 points of damage each round so long as he has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, he automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. He must reach his coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (He can travel up to 9 miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to Tarus while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, he is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, Tarus can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but he can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex): Tarus can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Tarus is treated as a 12-HD undead for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempts.

Undead Traits: Tarus is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a

Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing. He has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known (5/5 per day; caster level 1st): 0—*detect magic, mage hand, mending, read magic*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, mage armor*.

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, masterwork dagger, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of Charisma +2, wand of arcane lock (11 charges), 1,508 gp.

☛ **Kantos:** Male human psychic vampire rogue 2/fighter 4; CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 6d12; hp 39; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +5; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d6+10 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +14 melee (1d8+13/19–20, +1 longsword) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+10 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +14 melee (1d8+13/19–20, +1 longsword) and +7 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +9 ranged (1d8/19–20, light crossbow); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, sneak attack +1d6, Wisdom drain; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistances (cold 10, electricity 10), spider climb, trapfinding, turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 24, Dex 18, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Bluff +9, Climb +11, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +6, Handle Animal +9, Hide +17, Intimidate +6, Jump +11, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Listen +16, Move Silently +17, Ride +14, Search +10, Sense Motive +12, Spot +14, Swim +11, Tumble +9; Alertness^B, Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw^B, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)^B, Weapon Specialization (longsword)^B.

Blood Drain (Ex): Kantos can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each successful attack, he gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, Kantos can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by Kantos's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn (see *Monster Manual*, page 253) 1d4 days after burial. If Kantos instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under Kantos's command and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time, Kantos may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than 12 HD; any spawn he creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. Kantos may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.


Dominate (Su): Kantos can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This ability is similar to a gaze attack, except that he must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not affected. Anyone Kantos targets must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or fall instantly under his influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): A living creature hit by Kantos's slam attack gains two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Kantos gains 5 temporary hit points. Kantos can use his energy drain ability once per round.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Kantos deals 1d6 extra points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Kantos may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with his sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

Wisdom Drain (Su): Slam, 1d6 Wis; see *Libris Mortis*.

Alternate Form (Su): Kantos can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell (caster level 12th), except that he does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in his alternate form, he loses his natural slam attack and dominate ability, but he



gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Evasion (Ex): If Kantos is exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Fast Healing (Ex): Kantos heals 5 points of damage each round so long as he has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, he automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. He must reach his coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (He can travel up to 9 miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to Kantos while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, he is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, Kantos can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but he can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex): Kantos can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Trapfinding (Ex): Kantos can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. He can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If his Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, he discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Kantos is treated as a 10-HD undead for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempts.

Undead Traits: Kantos is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing. He has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, +1 longsword, light crossbow, gauntlets of ogre power +2, potion of inflict moderate wounds, 375 gp.

Praslin: Male human psychic vampire sorcerer 6; CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 6d12+3; hp 42; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk +6 melee

(1d6+3 plus 1d6 Wis, slam) or +8 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate, energy drain, Wisdom drain; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistances (cold 10, electricity 10), spider climb, turn resistance 4, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 18, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 20.


Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +9, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +3, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +13, Spot +14, Survival +3; Alertness^B, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

Blood Drain (Ex): Praslin can suck blood from a living victim with his fangs by making a successful grapple check. If he pins the foe, he drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each successful attack, he gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Once per day, Praslin can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve him for 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by Praslin's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn (see *Monster Manual*, page 253) 1d4 days after burial. If Praslin instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under Praslin's command and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time, Praslin may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than 12 HD; any spawn he creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. Praslin may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Dominate (Su): Praslin can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This ability is similar to a gaze attack, except that he must use a standard action, and those merely looking at him are not



affected. Anyone Kantos targets must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or fall instantly under his influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): A living creature hit by Praslin's slam attack gains two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, Praslin gains 5 temporary hit points. Praslin can use his energy drain ability once per round.

Wisdom Drain (Su): Slam, 1d6 Wis; see *Libris Mortis*.

Alternate Form (Su): Praslin can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph* spell (caster level 12th), except that he does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in his alternate form, he loses his natural slam attack and dominate ability, but he gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of his new form. He can remain in that form until he assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Fast Healing (Ex): Praslin heals 5 points of damage each round so long as he has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, he automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. He must reach his coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (He can travel up to 9 miles in 2 hours.) Any additional damage dealt to Praslin while he is in gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in his coffin, he is helpless. He regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, Praslin can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but he can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex): Praslin can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Praslin is treated as a 10-HD undead for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempts.

Undead Traits: Praslin is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing. He has darkvision out to 60 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8*/6/4 per day; caster level 6th): 0—*dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *identify, mage armor, magic missile*; 2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 17), *Melf's acid arrow* (+7 ranged touch); 3rd—*vampiric touch* (+5 melee touch).

*Praslin normally casts *mage armor* well in advance of any expected hostile encounter, so he has only seven 1st-level spell slots available per day.

Possessions: *Bracers of armor +1, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +1, wand of darkness* (40 charges), *scroll of stone shape, scroll of solid fog*, 86 gp.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean K Reynolds is a freelance game designer living in Encinitas, California. His D&D credits include the *Monster Manual*, the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*, and *Savage Species*. You can find more game material at Sean's website <http://www.seankreynolds.com>.