
THE TOME OF
Strahd

I am the Ancient.

I am the Land.

My beginnings are lost in the darkness of the past.

I was the Warrior. I was good. And just.

I thundered across the land like the wrath of a Just god, but the war years and the killing years wore down my soul as the wind wears stone into sand.

All goodness slipped from my life. I found my youth and strength gone, and all I had left after the glory of conquest... was death. My army settled in the valley of Barovia and took power over the people. In the name of a Just god. But with none of a god's grace or justice. More a Jester...

Ψ 18 24 9 26 6 1 4 20
11 22 2 15 21 7 14 23 12
25 18 10 5 13 16 19 3 8

I called for my family, long unseated from their ancient thrones, and brought them here to settle in the castle Ravenloft, which was my creation. With them came a younger brother of mine, Sergei. He was handsome and youthful and I hated him for both.



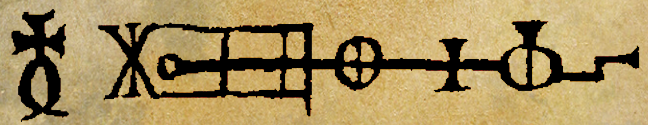
From the families of the valley, one spirit shone about all others. A rare beauty, who was called Perfection, Joy, and Treasure. Her name - I scarce can put ink to parchment to blaspheme it - her name was Tatyana. And I longed for her.

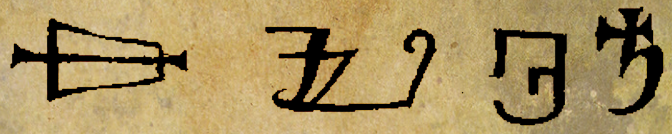
I loved her with all my heart. I was infatuated with her for her youth. I craved her for her joy. But she spurned me! ME! "Old One" was my name to her.

But her name to Sergei was "betrothed" and "beloved" -Her heart went to Sergei. And here, I, in my waning glory am called "elder" and "brother" by them.

The date was set. The world crumbled before me.

With words she called me Old One but when I looked into her eyes they reflected another name. Death. It was the death of the aged that she saw in me. She loved her youth and enjoyed it. But I had squandered mine; drowned my years with blood and conquest. Provided a magnificent castle and life for them, yet I held an empty heart.





The death she saw in me turned her from me. And so I came to hate death, the very idea. My hate is very strong. I would not be called that so soon. I made a pact with Death; Powers of the Dark. A pact of blood. On the day of their wedding, I slaughtered Sergei, my brother. My own flesh and blood. This sealed my pact with that blood, spilled across the stone of Ravenloft.

I found Tatyana weeping. She hid in the garden east of the Chapel. She fled from me. She would not let me explain, and a great anger swelled within me. She had to understand. The pact - it was made for her! I pursued her. Finally, with despair etched on her face, she flung herself from the walls of Ravenloft. I watched. I saw as everything...I even watched her fell from my grasp forever. Forever? I do not accept that.

It was a thousand feet through the mists. No trace of her was ever found.

But of the murder I brought on my own brother I would soon be brought to pay the price. Not so easily would I give recompense. My own guards pierced me through with dozens of arrows to my soul. Through and through I was pinioned but I did not die. Nor, however, did I live. I became undead. I became Forever.

I have studied much since then. Vampyr is my new name. Title. I still lust for life and youth, and I curse the living that took them from me. Even the sun is against me. It is the sun and its light I fear, for little else harms me now. Even a plank of wood through my heart would not kill me. Though those archers are long dead now their weapons are but playthings to me. A sturdy stake would hold me from movement but that is nothing.

The accursed sword brought by my brother, however, the treacherous Sergei - how I hated that blade that shimmered like the sun. Little buoys me as much as having had it destroyed.

I have often hunted for you, Tatyana. I have even felt you within my grasp, but you escape. You taunt me! Teases me! What will it take to bend your love to me? I wish not to subject you to the force I have with so many others. Yet... if I must...

I now reside in Ravenloft. I live among the dead and sleep beneath the very stones of this hollow castle of despair. I shall seal shut the walls of the stairs, that none may disturb me. The way the walls of Barovia are sealed by the mists.

My castle. My valley. My kingdom. My land.

I am Strahd.

