

FLESHING OUT CURSE OF STRAHD: CHARACTER OPTIONS



A Campaign Companion by MandyMod



FORWARD

The few character options presented here are intended for player characters from Barovia. As such, this document contains very minor spoilers for the *Curse of Strahd* campaign. Additionally, all the options listed here are considered homebrew race options and should only be used by players with the approval of the table Dungeon Master.

For the original *Fleshing Out Curse of Strahd: Player Primer*, which is spoiler free, check out other work by MandyMod on the DM's Guild [here!](#)

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CHARACTER OPTIONS

The following race options are intended to be used alongside the Barovian Player Primer should a player need to reroll a character in the *Curse of Strahd* campaign.

As a native of Barovia, there are a handful of new race options that might be available for a new player character. The following character options were built as variations of existing races and subraces to hopefully ensure balance and easy use for both players and the Dungeon Master. Each option provides a light summary of the race or subrace from a background standpoint, followed by the statistics a player would need to use the race.

SPOILERS AHEAD!

The following character race options are intended for player characters from Barovia and contain minor spoilers for the *Curse of Strahd* campaign. If you are a new player to the module, close this document immediately and refer to the standard Player Primer to help you roll a spoiler-free player character.

Of the few available options listed here, none include a vampire-based race. Vampires in Barovia are all traced back to Strahd, their original creator, and quite literally must follow his commands as a result. A player character bound to the campaign's central villain could actively prevent their companions from fighting him — a necessary part of completing the game. A player character that is a vampire must either be a higher vampire from another realm or be a vampire spawn of a higher vampire from another realm.

Unlike the tables found in the Player Primers, which only inspire character backstory and personality development, the following options alter the core mechanics of the game and are undoubtedly considered homebrew race options. As such, these options are only available to players at the discretion and approval of the Dungeon Master.

DUSK ELF (ELF SUBRACE)

Dusk elves are a rare subset of elves native to the Domains of Dread and are all but extinct. Many centuries ago, their people were in a war against Strahd's father, King Barov von Zarovich, and were annihilated. Those that remained settled into the Barovian valley. However, only a few centuries later, one of the dusk elf women managed to seduce and then slight Strahd, angering their vampire king. Strahd ordered the execution of all the dusk elf women, effectively damning what was left of their people to extinction.

The dusk elves have since avoided all confrontation and calls to adventure, their cultural spirit crushed in the wake of such defeat and loss. They have little hope for their people and seek to live the remainder of their lives without further hardship.

Of the elven subraces, dusk elves are one of the most humble, their elven arrogance purged from them with their many defeats.

The dusk elves of Barovia have a small village of hovels south of the town of Vallaki. They share the space with a large Vistani encampment and use their colorful neighbors as protection from the beasts of the Svalich woods.

Like most elves, dusk elves are lithe and slender in build, with angular features and long pointed ears. However, they have dark skin that ranges from a lighter grey color to a dark, charcoal black, much like drow. Unlike drow, they have black hair and tend to have matching dark eyes.

DUSK ELF TRAITS

Age. No dusk elf child has been born since the execution of all their women. As such, a dusk elf character from Barovia has a minimum age of about 250 years.

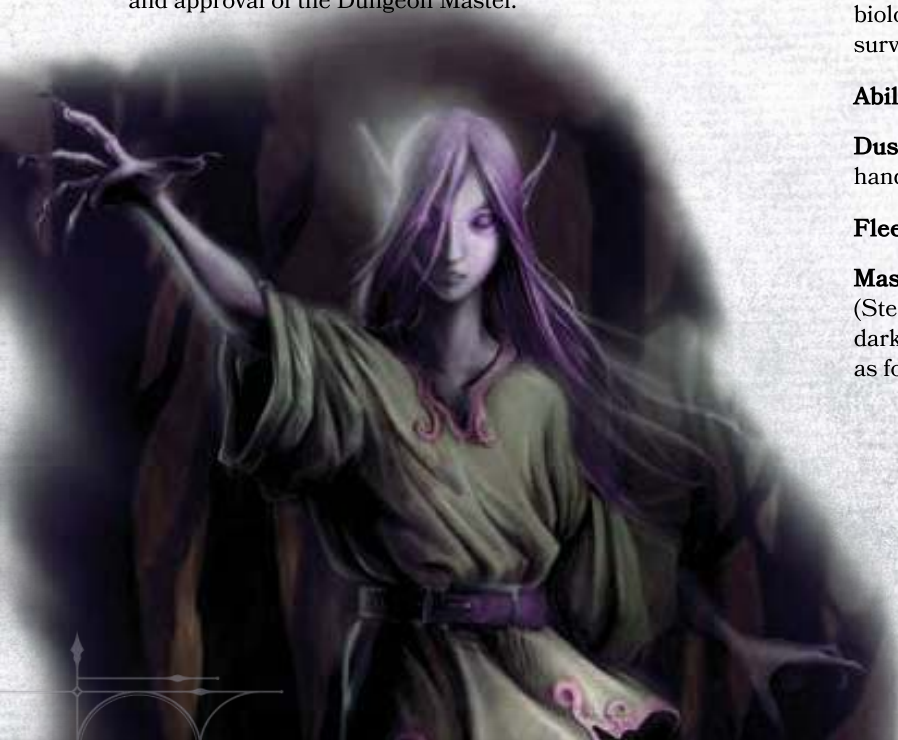
Gender. All current dusk elves are biologically male and incapable of bearing children. However, it is possible through some story means or magical fluke that a dusk elf female may have avoided the purge of their women. If your character is biologically female, speak to your DM to determine how they survived or avoided the executions.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Dusk Elf Weapon Training. You have proficiency with the hand crossbow, light crossbow, shortbow, and longbow.

Fleet of Foot. Your base walking speed increases to 35 feet.

Mask of the Shadows. You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks when you are attempting to hide within darkness or in heavily obscured, natural environments such as foliage, heavy rain, falling snow, and mist.



VISTANI (HUMAN SUBRACE)

The Vistani are a colorful and boisterous people lightly based on the real world Romani culture, more often derogatorily referred to as gypsies. Mostly nomadic, the Vistani travel in small family groups across the lands of Barovia using horses and painted, barrel-top wagons as transport. While they travel often, they have two main hub camps in Barovia that they use as bases: the Tser Pool encampment and the encampment south of Vallaki.

Visually, the Vistani generally have tanned, cinnamon colored skin and black hair. They dress in colorful fabrics and love to layer various patterns and designs on their wares. While they usually have brown or hazel colored eyes, pale colored eyes pop up from time to time.

The Vistani worship no gods, but believe in the Threads of Fate that bind all things. They believe that everything happens for a reason in some predetermined weave of time. Their culture also values the gift of foresight and most large groups have an honored seer among them. The most famous Vistani seer in Barovia is Madam Eva, who makes her permanent home at the Tser Pool camp.

The Vistani highly value family and raise their children communally. However, like in every culture, not all Vistani are good and loving. The individual Vistana that betrays their family, culture, or otherwise does some heinous act, is banished from the Vistani and is marked as a Mortu. Mortu lose all their Vistani power and are cut off from the Threads of Fate.

While the Vistani are quite open and welcoming to outsiders, most Barovians are unfairly biased against the Vistani and believe them all agents of Strahd. Many centuries ago, before Strahd was a vampire, the Vistani saved Strahd from dying and Strahd promised them safety in his lands as thanks. The Vistani are now the only people able to come and go from Barovia freely and are often left alone by the general horrors of the land. This clemency has earned them their unfair reputation.



VISTANI TRAITS

The following mechanics replace the Human Variant options in the PHB.

Ability Score Increase. Two different ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

Vistani Skill. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Deception, History, Insight, Perception, Performance, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth.

Mist Bound. You have decided to take up arms against Strahd and have joined a party of adventurers set on vanquishing the vampire king. Because of this decision, Strahd has relinquished his quarter and clemency towards you. You are no longer safe from the beasts of Barovia and cannot freely traverse the surrounding mists and cross into other planes. However, you maintain your Vistani relationships and are welcome among your brethren.

Precscience. The Vistani have an inherent connection to the Threads of Fate and often manifest elements of precognition.

You gain proficiency with Tarroka cards.

Your gift also helps you foresee and avoid incoming danger. Once per long rest, when another creature damages you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage taken by $1d8 +$ your charisma modifier.

Vistani Curse. A Vistana's connection to the Threads of Fate enables them to curse an individual as repayment for an injustice or a slight.

You can use this feature to cast the *bane* spell at first level without somatic or material components. When you reach 9th level, you can instead use this feature to cast the *bestow curse* spell at third level without somatic components. The saving throw DC for either spell is $8 +$ your proficiency bonus $+ your Charisma$ modifier.

Alternatively, instead of casting a spell, you can curse an individual in one of the following ways.

- The target is unable to perform a certain kind of act involving fine motor control, such as tying knots, writing, playing an instrument, or sewing.
- The target's appearance changes in a sinister yet purely cosmetic way. For example, the curse can place a scar on the target's face, turn the target's teeth into yellow fangs, or give the target bad breath.
- A nonmagical item in the target's possession disappears and can't be found until the curse ends. The lost item can weigh no more than 1 pound.

Once cursed in this way, the effect lasts 24 hours, until the target acquires healing equal to or greater than the *lesser restoration* spell, or until you dismiss it. If the target is undeserving of such a curse or punishment (at the discretion of the DM), the effect will not take hold and you will immediately take $1d6$ psychic damage.

Once you use the Vistani Curse feature, you may not do so again until you complete a long rest.

WERERAVEN (HUMAN SUBRACE)

Lycanthropy is, above all else, a curse. However, there is a distinct difference between infected and inherited lycanthropy.

The first is the traditional curse, which is nearly uncontrollable and passed to others like a disease, through bite. Infected lycanthropes are traditionally evil and are unavailable to players as a race.

On the other hand, inherited lycanthropes obtain their curse through their parents. Their curse is far more controllable and beneficial to their host, though still must be managed carefully.

Currently, there are two forms of lycanthropy that exist in Barovia: werewolves and wereravens. Unfortunately, there are no known inherited werewolves in the valley and the infectious packs that live in the wilds are feral and dangerous. Wereravens in Barovia, on the other hand, are almost exclusively inherited in nature and tend to live peaceful, if secret, lives amongst other Barovians. Most notably, there is a collective of wereravens that privately support one another that call themselves, the Keepers of the Feather.

Wereravens refer to their tightly knit groups as kindnesses. A kindness of wereravens usually numbers between seven and twelve individuals. Not surprisingly, wereravens get along well with ravens and often hide in plain sight among them. Additionally, wereravens tend to collect shiny trinkets and precious baubles.

By taking this subrace, you are an inherited wereraven lycanthrope. At least one of your biological parents also is a wereraven and has the curse, which they passed on to you. You were not bitten by a wereraven and you do not possess the ability to pass on the curse form of this lycanthropy through your bite.

WERERAVEN TRAITS

The following mechanics replace the Human Variant options in the PHB.

Ability Score Increase. Two different ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

Wereraven Skill. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Deception, Insight, Perception, or Stealth.

Birds of a Feather. You have advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks dealing with ravens.

Shapechanger. As an action, you can shapechange into a raven-humanoid hybrid, into a raven, or back into your human form. Any equipment you are wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

While in your hybrid form, your base AC becomes 12 and your unarmed strikes may use either your Strength or Dexterity modifier to attack. The damage for your unarmed strikes is 1 + either your Strength or Dexterity modifier. The damage type for your unarmed strike is either slashing damage from your talons or piercing damage from your beak.

While in your raven form, you gain the statblock of a **raven** but maintain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as your hit points.

You revert to your human form when you reach 0 hit points.

Curse's Fury. While in hybrid form, as an action you may enter a state of fury, an echo of your lycanthropy's infectious brother. While in this state of fury, you gain the following benefits.

- You are resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-silvered or non-magical weapons.
- You have advantage on all dexterity and wisdom Saving throws, as well as acrobatic checks to escape grapples.
- You ignore the effects of exhaustion.
- Your base speed increases by 15 feet.
- You gain a +5 bonus to your passive perception and perception skill.
- You can make 3 unarmed strikes as an attack action. The damage for these strikes becomes 1d6 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier + your proficiency bonus. These attacks can benefit from other class bonuses, such as sneak attack and smite.

Your curse's fury lasts for 10 minutes or until you reach 0 hit points. During your fury, you become unable to distinguish friend from foe. You continue to attack the nearest creature you can perceive, and make perception checks to detect hidden or distant creatures if you can't detect any passively.

When your fury ends, you immediately gain three points of exhaustion. You may use this feature once per long rest.

Silver Vulnerability. You take an extra 1d4 damage from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage that comes from a silvered weapon. While using *Curse's Fury*, any damage you take from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage that comes from a silvered weapon is instead doubled.

Mimicry. You can mimic simple sounds you have heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check. You can only use this feature while in hybrid or raven form.

WEREWOLF (HUMAN SUBRACE)

Lycanthropy is, above all else, a curse. However, there is a distinct difference between infected and inherited lycanthropy.

The first is the traditional curse, which is nearly uncontrollable and passed to others like a disease, through bite. Infected lycanthropes are traditionally evil and are unavailable to players as a race.

On the other hand, inherited lycanthropes obtain their curse through their parents. Their curse is far more controllable and beneficial to their host, though still must be managed carefully.

Currently, there are two forms of lycanthropy that exist in Barovia: werewolves and wereravens. Unfortunately, there are no known inherited werewolves in the valley and the infectious packs that live in the wilds are feral and dangerous. However, it is possible that one or two families of inherited werewolves have survived in the valley. Unlike wereravens, inherited werewolves tend to avoid major settlements and live on the outskirts of towns or in tiny hamlets.

Werewolves refer to their family groups as packs. A pack of werewolves usually numbers between five and twelve individuals, with one werewolf that stands out as the leader and alpha of the pack. Not surprisingly, werewolves get along well with wolves and other canines and often have many nearby. Additionally, werewolves tend to respect strength and work well in groups with a defined leader.

By taking this subrace, you are an inherited werewolf lycanthrope. At least one of your biological parents also is a werewolf and has the curse, which they passed on to you. You were not bitten by a werewolf and you do not possess the ability to pass on the curse form of this lycanthropy through your bite.

WEREWOLF TRAITS

The following mechanics replace the Human Variant options in the PHB.

Ability Score Increase. Two different ability scores of your choice increase by 1.

Werewolf Skill. You gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Animal Handling, Athletics, Intimidation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Man's Best Friend. You have advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks dealing with wolves and dogs of size medium or smaller.

Shapechanger. As an action, you can shapechange into a wolf-humanoid hybrid, into a wolf, or back into your human form. Any equipment you are wearing or carrying isn't transformed.

While in your hybrid form, your base AC becomes 12 and your unarmed strikes may use either your Strength or Dexterity modifier to attack. The damage for your unarmed strikes is 1 + either your Strength or Dexterity modifier. The damage type for your unarmed strike is either slashing damage from your claws or piercing damage from your bite.

While in your wolf form, you gain the statblock of a **wolf** but maintain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as your hit points.

You revert to your human form when you reach 0 hit points.

Curse's Fury. While in hybrid form, as an action you may enter a state of fury, an echo of your lycanthropy's infectious brother. While in this state of fury, you gain the following benefits.

- You are resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-silvered or non-magical weapons.
- You have advantage on all strength and wisdom Saving throws, as well as athletics checks to escape grapples.
- You ignore the effects of exhaustion.
- Your base speed increases by 15 feet.
- You gain a +5 bonus to your passive perception and perception skill.
- You can make 3 unarmed strikes as an attack action. The damage for these strikes becomes 1d6 + your Strength or Dexterity modifier + your proficiency bonus. These attacks can benefit from other class bonuses, such as sneak attack and smite.

Your curse's fury lasts for 10 minutes or until you reach 0 hit points. During your fury, you become unable to distinguish friend from foe. You continue to attack the nearest creature you can perceive, and make perception checks to detect hidden or distant creatures if you can't detect any passively.

When your fury ends, you immediately gain three points of exhaustion. You may use this feature once per long rest.

Silver Vulnerability. You take an extra 1d4 damage from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage that comes from a silvered weapon. While using *Curse's Fury*, any damage you take from bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage that comes from a silvered weapon is instead doubled.

Keen Hearing and Smell. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell. You can only use this feature while in hybrid or wolf form.



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