

Gold. Love. Soul.
Choose one. Lose the others.

Ravengold

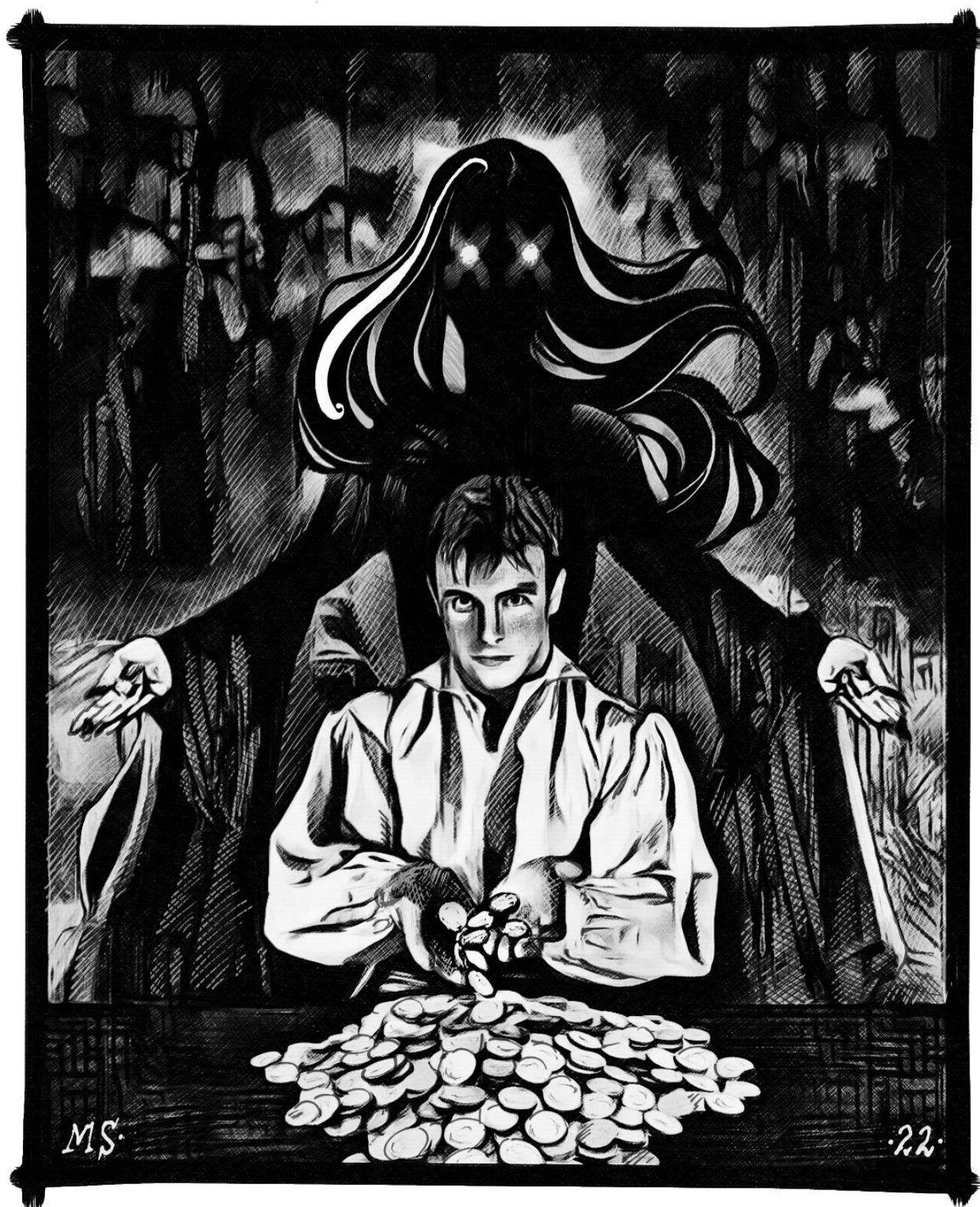
Miniseries created by Mart Sander

THE PREMISE

RAVENGOLD is an eight-episode family-friendly magical adventure series set in regency-era Europe at the start of the 19th century - a land of magic and evil spirits, of superstitious village folk and sea-borne pirates - and follows the increasingly troubled adventures of Matthias, a poor beggar boy turned filthy-rich Count, whose life completely changes when he comes face to face with the ancient forces of darkness that once ruled the land. Forced to spend the night in a crypt just outside the gates of a lonely village, Matthias finds himself the unwitting groom-to-be of the ghostly Baroness Brigitte, disgraced daughter of the once-powerful Ravengold family, buried in un-consecrated ground after having taken her own life centuries before. Since her death, her undead brothers have been bringing her eligible candidates to replace her murdered lover - murdered in an ice hole for his involvement with the Baroness - and Matthias is the latest in a long line of unlucky young men.

She grants him wishes, every night at midnight, when she appears to him and insists he asks her for as much as he can carry of anything he wants. Every single day for an entire year. He cannot ask for anything twice, and if he fails to ask for anything at all, she will whisk him away to the realm of shadows. In order to receive all his heart desires, Matthias must agree to one day give the Baroness something he does not own, and when he does, it will not be his to give. Baffled by her seemingly nonsense riddle, he agrees, and so falls victim to the ancient curse of Ravengold, forced to ask for something different every day.

But being careful what he asks for isn't Matthias' strength, and his insatiable greed for more brings him both riches and despair in increasing quantities, episode after episode, until he receives the greatest gift of all... but the hardest to accept.



THE STORY

Matthias, orphaned and penniless, naturally asks the Baroness for riches. After a chance encounter with the current owner of Ravengold Castle, Count Falk - who has lost all his land and also his daughter in a game of cards - Matthias uses his newfound wealth to pay off all the Count's debts, masquerading as a well-to-do lord, in return for the hand in marriage of the Count's beautiful daughter, the Countess Clara. But the debt must be paid by a member of the Falk family, and so Matthias is adopted and made Count of the castle, where he settles into a privileged existence. He uses the Baroness' gifts to amass filthy wealth, but in order to keep his involvement with the forces of darkness a secret, he is forced to commit unspeakable acts, and one by one prominent characters mysteriously die or disappear.

But individuals from Matthias' recent past begin to suspect he is in league with the fabled Baroness, putting him in danger of the executioner's axe. The only way to escape the curse of Baroness Ravengold is to ask her for something she cannot bring him, and in an effort to outwit her, he asks her to fetch him a shadow, which he believes she will be unable to bring. However, she is impossible to outwit, and Matthias finds himself saddled with an extra shadow - which if noticed would attract an angry mob hellbent on killing him - and he is forced into a life of darkness.

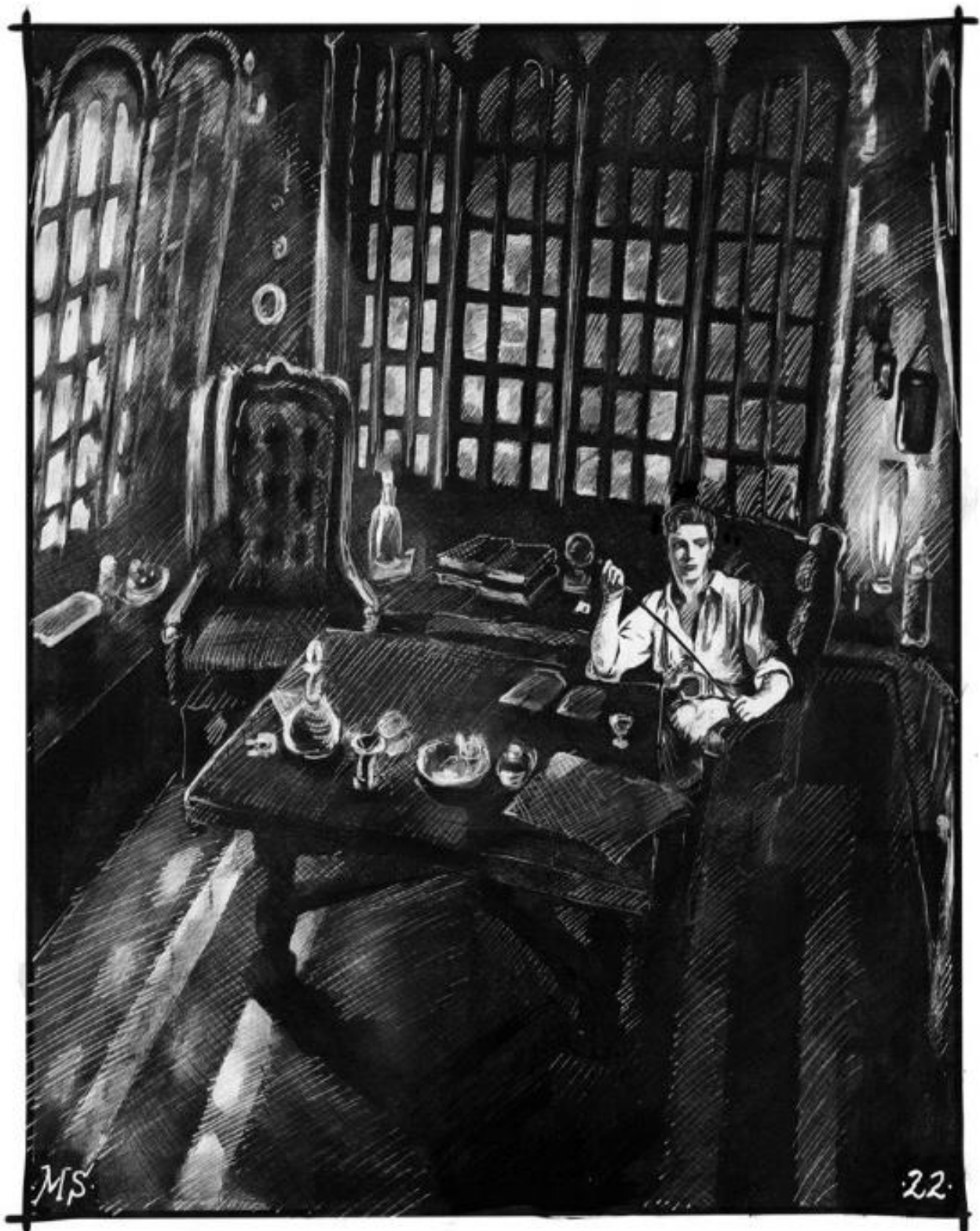
A chance conversation with the Count reveals an awful truth: the Count is in fact Matthias' real father, and worse still, Clara is his sister. The Count had crossed paths with their mother when he had been a young soldier, in the village where Matthias had grown up, the result of which were twins, a boy and girl; in a drunken stupor the Count accidentally killed Matthias' mother and buried her in the woods, but he adopted Clara, never telling her the truth of who he was, leaving Matthias to grow up in an orphanage. Beset with guilt, the Count can neither admit the truth nor live with it, and he takes his own life. Matthias is believed to be his murderer, and his request that the Baroness bring the Count back to life to prove his innocence turns horribly wrong.

With his new life as Count in ruins, and wanted for Count Falk's murder, Matthias goes on the run. He soon discovers the original owner of his new shadow - a shadow which has been trying to kill him - is a former resident

of the castle, one Baron Ravengold, who was supposed to have died some two hundred years earlier, and yet is apparently still alive and now an unbeatable card shark, emptying the coffers of every gambling casino on the Continent, and having won everything, including Clara's hand in marriage, from the Count. But this debt has now been settled, by Matthias. Reduced to a life of living in the dark - the only way to keep the shadow's murder attempts at bay - Matthias sets sail around the Continental coast, on a wild goose chase to apprehend the Baron and return his shadow to him.

However, his adventures make him many enemies, and some surprising friends, and when he finally encounters the owner of his extra shadow, he discovers that it isn't Baron Ravengold at all, but an uncanny card shark by the name of Hódmezővásárhely, from Hungary. Hódmezővásárhely had lost his own shadow to the Baron in a game of cards, and is now being forced to travel around Europe winning a huge fortune at every port, in order to have his shadow returned to him. And whilst Matthias has been at sea, the Baron has returned to Ravengold Castle to reclaim his family's land. Matthias reunites Hódmezővásárhely with his shadow and heads back to Ravengold Castle, where the long-dead Baron has returned to power, having outwitted death for two hundred years. And the ghostly Baroness, who has been granting Matthias wishes every midnight for a year, has suddenly stopped showing up.

It is only when Matthias comes face to face with Baron Ravengold that he realises he has been a pawn in the Ravengolds' mission all along, and he is devastated to discover Clara has died in childbirth to a baby girl. When Matthias sees the baby, he realises the Baroness has returned to the world inside the body of his daughter - she must have known this would happen all along, which is why she has been using Matthias from the beginning of the story, to secure herself a return to living in the castle. The Baron says Matthias' only chance of redeeming himself for all his sins, and of moving forward with his life, is to forget everything that has happened. Forever. The Baron bestows upon him a magical spell, one which will cause anyone who knows Matthias to forget they ever met him, the very way the Baron has evaded detection for the past two centuries. Matthias has no choice but to accept, and he finds the only thing he still remembers about himself is his own name. But for the first time in his life, he is happy being who he is. Sometimes, happy endings are never what we expect.



THE SHOW'S APPEAL

RAVENGOLD will be both light and dark in tone, sometimes humorous, not overtly violent, and suitable for children. It will be fraught with obstacles at every twist and turn, as Matthias finds his actions bring him an ever-increasing array of problems that only an undead Baroness granting him wishes every midnight could resolve. But as each thing he asks for presents a problem he never could have foreseen, the audience will root for Matthias, even though his actions are often questionable, or downright unscrupulous and worse. But he is the hero of our tale, and we will want him to succeed.

From suspense in the snowy landscapes of Estonia, to danger on the high seas, Matthias will confront evil spirits, murderous pirates, mutinous crew and that most dangerous of all enemies... himself. As nothing is beyond his control, and no problem is not easily solved with the help of the phantom Baroness, Matthias will find himself the owner of magical objects that can help him see in the dark, transform into someone else, grant him access to anywhere he desires, and see through the eyes of his enemy.

But his own soul, darkening with every episode, threatens to destroy him far quicker than the forces of darkness ever could...

And the ghostly Baroness is a constant threat, as the first time Matthias fails to ask anything of her at midnight, she will whisk him away to an eternal world of shadows. He must solve all his problems, save all his friends, and destroy all his enemies, whilst keeping himself beyond the Baroness' grasp every single day, by asking sometimes for the most mundane of things, like a single pea. Audiences will tune in every episode to see how he fares, and what new issues await him on his journey.

It's a classic tale, of boy done good, done bad.

THE EPISODES

EPISODE 01 - THE BARONESS

A YOUNG BEGGAR LAD, MATTHIAS, FLEEING HIS FALSE IDENTITY IN THE CITY, BECOMES ENTRAPPED BY THE SPELL OF THE LONG-DEAD BARONESS BRIGITTE.

In his desperate flight from a city where he's concealed his true identity, the young beggar lad Matthias seeks refuge in a tranquil village. There he finds himself visited every midnight by the ghostly Baroness Brigitte Ravengold, who will bring him anything he wants in return for his soul should he be unable to think of something to ask for. The only way to break her curse is to ask for something she cannot bring. He asks for wealth, and lots of it, and catches sight of the beautiful Countess Clara Falk in the windows of her adoptive father's castle, formerly the Ravengold family home, who are now no more. Matthias promises himself he will find a way to marry her.

EPISODE 02 - THE COUNT

MATTHIAS BUYS HIMSELF INTO THE POWERFUL FALK FAMILY, AND IS PROMISED THE HAND IN MARRIAGE OF THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTESS CLARA

Matthias uses his newfound wealth to save the ruined Count Falk from his debtors, and in return is granted the hand in marriage of his adopted daughter Clara. However the Count's debtor mistakes Matthias for the highwayman Magnus Crux, a wealthy merchant's son whom Matthias had previously posed as in the city, and threatens to put an end to Matthias. Matthias demands the Baroness bring him the debtor's heart, thus starting down a path of darkness he can never return from.

EPISODE 03 – CLAUS

MATTHIAS' SECRET IS DISCOVERED, BY THE UNLIKELIEST OF CHARACTERS

Matthias reveals to the village Vicar his involvement with the ghostly Baroness and her forces of darkness, but is forced to kill the Vicar when he demands they send the Baroness back into her grave. When a new Vicar arrives from the city to perform the wedding of Matthias and Clara, it is a man called Claus, whom Matthias has met while posing as the wealthy merchant's son in the city. Claus realises Matthias could not have purchased from the city all the wonderful gifts for Clara he claims to have purchased, but has instead received from the Baroness, as the bay has been frozen over for two weeks. Claus confronts Matthias, and says he knows that he is lying to everyone, but has no idea why. Matthias is worried his new life will come tumbling down.

EPISODE 04 – WÖBS

MATTHIAS LEARNS THE AWFUL TRUTH OF HIS OWN IDENTITY, AND HIS AND CLARA'S NEW LIFE LIES IN TATTERS

Matthias and Clara are wed, and Matthias learns from the Count an awful truth that even the Count himself did not realise – by a twist of fate, the Count is revealed to be his father, and Clara his sister, conceived when the Count had been a soldier many years ago in Matthias' home village of Wöbs. Worse: the Count had killed their mother and has lived a life of torment ever since, adopting Clara to try and save his own soul, unable to declare her his own illegitimate child. When the Count realises Matthias is his son, and that his children have married, he throws himself to his death rather than living with the truth. Clara is devastated, and Matthias is believed to be his murderer. In an attempt to prove his innocence, Matthias demands the Baroness bring the Count back from the dead.

EPISODE 05 - THE ARABELLA

MATTHIAS IS FORCED TO LEAVE HIS NEW LIFE BEHIND AND EMBARK ON A DESPERATE MISSION

The Count re-lives long enough to attack Matthias, who forces him back into his coffin. In an attempt to break the curse of the Baroness and ask her for something she cannot bring him, Matthias has requested a shadow, believing he will be set free. But the Baroness cannot be beaten. Now saddled with a second shadow that is trying to kill him, Matthias is forced to leave his castle life behind and sets sail aboard The Arabella, a ship he purchases at the city port, together with a crew, and he journeys around the European coast on the tail of Baron Ravengold, an unbeatable card shark who allegedly has no shadow, and whom the Baroness has informed him is the shadow's original owner, a former resident of Ravengold Castle. But the Baron is always one step ahead.

EPISODE 06 - THE MARQUIS

MATTHIAS IS GIVEN A MAGICAL DOUBLE IDENTITY, BUT FINDS HE NOW HAS AN EVIL ALTER EGO... WHICH THREATENS TO DESTROY EVERYTHING MATTHIAS HAS ACHIEVED

Hunted by the law for the murder of the Count, Matthias asks the Baroness for a new identity, and is given a magical handkerchief which he can wear on his face, transforming him into a handsome Marquis. But the Marquis causes trouble everywhere he goes, and soon assaults a young woman who is invited aboard The Arabella, and murders her father. Matthias is forced to dispose of the magical handkerchief and continues his search for the elusive Baron Ravengold.

EPISODE 07 – HÓDMEZÖVÁSÁRHELY

MATTHIAS FINALLY CATCHES UP WITH THE ORIGINAL OWNER OF HIS SECOND SHADOW... BUT NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS

Matthias comes face to face with the original owner of his murderous second shadow, but it isn't Baron Ravengold. Instead, it is a Hungarian gambler by the name of Hódmezővásárhely, who lost his shadow to the Baron in a game of cards, forced to travel round the casinos of Europe as a wild goose chase to draw Matthias from the Count's castle. What's more, the Baron is heading to the castle, his former family home, to

claim it back. Matthias realises the Baroness has planned this all along, and sets sail back towards home, to save Clara from the Baron's evil clutches.

EPISODE 08 - THE BARON

MATTHIAS RETURNS TO THE CASTLE TO DISCOVER ALL IS LOST... AND THE ONLY WAY TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE CURSE OF RAVENGOLD IS TO PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE

When Matthias reaches the castle, he meets with the Baron only to discover that Clara has died in childbirth to their baby daughter. It is clear the daughter is a re-incarnation of the Baroness, and her plan all along has been to return to the world in human form. Matthias is still wanted for the Count's murder, he has lost everything he had, and the Baron offers him the only way out. But the price of freedom will cost Matthias more than he can imagine.

THE CHARACTERS

Matthias



An 18-year-old orphan boy in search of his fortune. He is handsome and likeable and knows how to win people's trust. He is naive and trusts his own actions, but justifying these he often shows narcissistic and egotistic tendencies. He has a certain dark streak to his nature and occasionally lets this alter ego take over. Very easy to befriend and identify with.

Baroness Brigitte



A ghostly phantom and disgraced daughter of the once-powerful Ravengold family, she has been preying on eligible young men from the local village since her death hundreds of years before. Buried in a crypt on un-consecrated ground after throwing herself from a high window at Ravengold Castle when her brothers murdered the village boy she had fallen in love with, she cursed her brethren to find her a replacement groom-to-be. She appears every midnight to the one she has chosen, and brings them anything they ask of her, but always with a caveat – should they fail to ask for anything, she will whisk them away to her realm of shadows. She is able to fetch anything that is asked of her – from the present, the future or the past – and it only takes her a moment. Her real goal though, is to return to the world in a living human body, and she'll play the long game to achieve it.

The Vicar



A devout man of God, he will not let anyone enter his village if they cannot prove to him they are of good intention. Since the village church was all but destroyed following a lightning strike, he has ordered master craftsmen from the nearby city of Reval. He takes Matthias under his wing following Matthias' run-in with the forces of darkness at the Ravengold Mausoleum, where lies the undead Baroness, and actively protects the silver chain which has always encircled it, keeping Baroness Brigitte in her grave. As Matthias rises to power at the castle following his brief stay in the village, the Vicar soon comes to suspect the Baroness has begun to visit the young man every midnight. Intent on protecting him, he insists they seal the Baroness in her tomb with silver and holy water. But the forces of darkness are often stronger than the forces of light.

Count Falk



The current landowner of Ravensgold Castle, Count Falk has fallen on hard times. Having gambled all his land and possessions away, he is now practically destitute and has turned to drowning his sorrows every day with spiced wine, which is always on hand. Hot-tempered and quick to anger, he is known to take the whip to those who wrong him. His three sons have all died, and he has one adopted daughter, the beautiful Countess Clara, but he has lost her as well as his castle in a game of cards, and soon must give everything over to Captain Wurm, who is on his way to claim his master's winnings and take Clara's hand in marriage, part of the winning deal. The Count would end it all tomorrow, but he is devoted to Clara and so will not leave her to the mercy of the world without his protection. He hides a dark secret about his distant past which will one day soon come to haunt him.

Countess Clara



Young and beautiful, Clara has now reached marriageable age, and was once desired by every eligible gentleman in the land, hoping to marry into her father's massive wealth. But since the Count has now lost almost everything, she is no longer seen as a worthwhile bride, and only one old groom-to-be wants to marry her, the insufferable Captain Wurm, whose master won him her hand in marriage in a game of cards, as well as ownership of Ravengold Castle. Beset with loathing for the man, and for her father's destitution, she sees no future for herself and often considers throwing herself from the castle windows. All she needs to return to the happy young girl she used to be is a worthy suitor... such as Matthias.

Mistress Ursula



The current housekeeper of Ravengold Castle, she is loyal to the Count and has often talked Clara down from jumping from a high window. Protective of the Count's reputation, she is bossy and strong-willed and will not allow anyone to gossip about the ruination of the family's fortune.

Claus



A young Clergyman just out of seminary school at the University in Dorpat, Claus has travelled to the city port of Reval in search of his friend Magnus Crux, who is now a wanted highwayman, only to find he has apparently been murdered by his dead father's unscrupulous housekeeper, the Mistress Magdalena. Claus is head-strong and good-willed and becomes pastor at the rebuilt church in the village where Matthias has befriended (and murdered) the Vicar in an attempt to hide his involvement with the ghostly Baroness. Claus suspects Matthias is lying to everybody, as he claims to have bought goods from ships that have docked in the Reval bay, but Claus knows the bay has been frozen over for two weeks. Unable to prove anything, he carries out his duties for the church unwaveringly, which includes marrying Matthias to the Countess Clara.

Wolfram



A brave ex-soldier and son of a shipman, Wolfram has taken to hard drinking with seafarers in the inns of Reval, to drown the sorrows of having been dismissed from the military for failing to apprehend Magnus Crux and bring him to justice. Wolfram jumps at the chance to sail with Matthias aboard The Arabella. He is boisterous and reliable.

Magnus Crux



Son of a wealthy merchant in Reval, Magnus attended the University in Dorpat, where he befriended Claus and was set to become a man of God. However he soon fell in with the wrong sort and absconded, turning instead to a life of crime and becoming a wanted highwayman. Following an argument with his cohorts, he was fatally shot and managed to make it back to the gates of Reval on horseback. However, as he lies dying by the roadside, he is discovered by a homeless Matthias, in a flashback to the main story, where he gives his signet ring to Matthias and asks him to deliver his apologies to his father. However Matthias instead steals Magnus' identity and masquerades as the wealthy merchant's son until Claus and Wolfram arrive to bring Magnus to justice. Matthias escapes the city and joins a trio of master craftsmen who have been commissioned to repair the damaged church at the local village, and finds himself at the crypt of Baroness Brigitte, where he realises the master craftsmen are actually the Baroness Brigitte's undead brothers, where our story begins.

Mistress Magdalena



The trusted housekeeper employed by the merchant Crux, Magnus' father. Since the merchant's death she has been keeping the house and the merchant's finances running smoothly, waiting for the return of Magnus... at least, on the surface. The truth is, she and her secret husband Captain Wurm have been bleeding the merchant's estate dry, though no one would believe it. She is helpful and reliable... at least, that's what she seems.

Captain Wurm



Minion of Baron Ravengold, Captain Wurm is an unscrupulous military man and criminal. Together with Mistress Magdalena, to whom he was married in secret and away from any church, he has been bleeding the wealthy merchant Crux's estate dry. He is also the only suitor interested in marrying Countess Clara, who is decades younger than him. Whilst all other eligible men in the land have lost interest in marrying a Countess with no family fortune, Wurm still wishes to marry her, and has been gifted her hand in marriage by the Baron, which was won in a game of cards. He is heavy-set and over-bearing, quick-tempered and gloating. An enemy of Count Falk.

Jörgen



Raised in the fishing village of Storby on the island of Nargen, seventeen year old Jörgen is a trustworthy young man, the first of his kind to leave home for the port city of Reval in search of fortune. Earning his passage to dry land as a steward's assistant, he is working as a valet at a tavern in the city when Matthias makes his acquaintance. Jörgen becomes Matthias' trusted crew member aboard his newly-acquired ship The Arabella, as Matthias sets sail in search of the owner of his murderous shadow. Jörgen is brave and dedicated, a valued member of the crew who will pay the ultimate price for defending the ship and its master.

Brahim



Brahim is a Berber corsair aboard a pirate ship which one night attacks and boards The Arabella. A proud and fierce fighter, he works for Captain Hayreddin, who is a man of dark magic. Unable to be killed, Captain Hayreddin keeps his heart in an iron coffin on which he sits night and day, which can only be opened by a single key buried beneath the floor of the Carthaginian mosque. Brahim will do all he can to rid the world of Hayreddin and take his place as Captain, and strikes a deal with Matthias' alter ego the Marquis - in return for the key, which Matthias requests from the Baroness at midnight, Brahim agrees to actively hunt the owner of Matthias' second shadow, and keep him prisoner until Matthias can come to give the shadow back. Brahim is a fierce opponent and a valiant friend.

The Marquis



When Matthias asks the Baroness for a new face, in a bid to be unrecognisable to anyone who may be after him, she brings him a magical handkerchief which once placed over the owner's face transforms into an alter ego. Meet the Marquis, Matthias' alter ego, a sadistic killer who seduces people aboard Matthias' ship The Arabella with intent to kill. Matthias finds the Marquis' evil personality attempts to possess him whilst he sleeps, and must be destroyed before he jeopardises Matthias' mission to return the shadow to its owner.

Silvia



Silvia is the beautiful daughter of Rittmeister Bathory, a gambler who Matthias encounters in one of the gambling casinos in his quest for the owner of the shadow. Silvia is invited aboard The Arabella with her father, after Matthias, wearing the face of the Marquis, wipes them out in a single game, but she soon falls prey to the evil desires of Matthias' alter ego.

Hódmezővásárhely



An uncannily gifted card shark from Hungary, Hódmezővásárhely is the original owner of Matthias' murderous second shadow, which he lost to Baron Ravengold in a gambling casino. He travels around the Continent cleaning out the coffers of every casino he ever visits. Due to his uncanny winning streak and the fact he has no shadow, he is believed to be in league with the forces of darkness, and has become a myth, whereas in truth he is a rather awkward individual living the high life off the back of all his winnings. But he has been compromised by Baron Ravengold, who won his shadow from him in a game of cards and now commands him to travel around the casinos of Europe and clean up every night in order to have his shadow returned to him. He has his shadow returned to him by Matthias, who was given it by the ghostly Baroness.

Baron Ravengold



The youngest son of the last Baron of Ravengold Castle two hundred years ago, forced out of his land when the Count's forefather sacked the castle and defeated the Ravengold family. As he escaped, he visited the Baroness Brigitte's crypt and woke her from the dead, aware she was fabled for granting wishes, but that she also destroys anyone who succeeds with her help. Destined to perish anyway, he promised her if she granted him eternal life, he would one day make the lands of Ravengold hers again. She brought him an elixir from the distant future, one which didn't grant him eternal life but slowed down his ageing process so much that he is still alive and well two centuries later. Bound by his promise to the Baroness, with the help of Hódmezővásárhely he has won back everything the Count's family ever laid claim to, and in order to keep Matthias distant, he has commanded Hódmezővásárhely to go on a winning streak around the Continental coastline, knowing Matthias will stop at nothing to apprehend him and be rid of his murderous second shadow, allowing the Baron to return to the castle and prepare it for the Baroness' return. He has also traveled the world and studied Egyptian magic and has mastered a spell that causes everyone who meets him to instantly forget him, securing his anonymity all these years.

The Baron's story would make a great prequel series!