

Skyrim - Dark Brotherhood Quests

In every other part of this huge game, the fighting is part of the story, but sometimes optional. This quest line *requires* that you become a virtual assassin; killing NPC's to advance the story line. So, if you are worried about the moral implications of murder, do *not* join The Dark Brotherhood. Instead, consider *destroying* the Dark Brotherhood. That path is short, and pays 3,000 gold coins.

Whether you decide to *join* the Dark Brotherhood or *destroy* it, you must first go to Windhelm, northeast of Whiterun. When you get to Windhelm, go east, up the steps from the main gate. Turn north when you get past the first building and continue north until you see a woman and boy talking. Listen to the conversation. Idesa Sadri thinks Aventus Aretino is a cursed child. Grimvar Cruel-Sea suspects that the orphaned Aretino boy is performing a "Dark Sacrament". Idesa convinces Grimvar not to ask Aventus to play with him.

They are standing at the door to Aretino's house. Pick the lock on the door (novice) and go inside. You will hear the boy chanting. Go upstairs, to see Aretino kneeling before a semi-circle of eleven lit candles. Speak with him and he will tell you about his bad experience at the Honorhall Orphanage in Riften. He thinks that you are a member of the Dark Brotherhood, responding to his incantations. He wants you to kill the headmistress of the orphanage, Grelod the Kind.

Innocence Lost

Speak with Aretino and ask him about payment. Go outside; select this quest and then Fast Travel southeast, to Riften. Follow your quest arrow to the orphanage, and then open the unlocked front door. Inside, witness Grelod the Kind give a scolding to four children: Hroar, Francois Beaufort, Runa Fair-Shield, and Samuel. If you speak with Constance Michel, who is standing nearby, she will tell you that, unlike Grelod, she loves the children.

Wait until Grelod goes inside her bedroom. Follow her inside and close the door. If you speak with her and tell her about Aventus, she will threaten to give the boy the beating of his life. Kill her and do not be alarmed when the children rush in. They are overjoyed that she is dead.

Return to Riften and tell Aventus that Grelod is dead. He will give you a plate, ending the quest.

Sleep for as little as one hour. If you do not sleep, a courier will deliver a letter to you with the words "We know", although this may take up to three days. In either case, if you sleep enough, you will wake up in a wood shack. In front of you, lounging on top of a set of wooden shelves, see the leader of the Dark Brotherhood, Astrid. When you speak with her, she will tell you that by killing Grelod, you stole a Dark Brotherhood contract. To repay this debt, she insists that you kill one of three hooded hostages behind you on the other side of the room. Speak with each of them.

Fultheim the Fearless admits that he is a mercenary and has killed many people. Alea Quintus, mother to six children and having no husband, admits to having enemies. Vasha admits to being a criminal and threatens to kill you if you do not release him.

This is where you *must* decide whether to join the Dark Brotherhood. If you decide not to kill any of the hostages, then kill Astrid instead. Take her "Abandoned Shack Key" and Dark Brotherhood Armor. You may free the hostages. If you kill a *hostage*, skip down to "With Friends Like These..."

Destroy the Dark Brotherhood!

This quest will appear in your Quest Log if you kill Astrid. Outside the shack, the local dragon may soon attack you. Quickly Fast Travel to any city and tell any guard that you have killed the leader of the Dark Brotherhood. He/she will tell you to go to Dragon Bridge and tell Commander Maro the same story. Go west, to Dragon Bridge and then follow your quest arrow to a building named "Oculatus Outpost". Inside, tell Commander Maro that you have killed the leader of the Dark Brotherhood. Jubilant at this news, he will give you the password to the Brotherhood Sanctuary and promise a handsome reward if you to kill the rest of the gang.

Exit the building and check your map to find the Sanctuary southwest of Whiterun and west of Falkreath. When you get to the Sanctuary, down in a rocky grotto, you find a "Black Door" with a painted skull on it. When you activate the door, a deep whispered voice says, "What is the music of life?" Answer with, "Silence, my brother".

Beyond the door and down the stairs, come to a room with two exits. Your quest arrow points you to the west room. Inside, find Arnbjorn sitting with his back to you. Kill him without alerting the other members of the group, each in their own part of the sanctuary. If you need to retreat, the game will allow you to re-enter the sanctuary without again speaking the password. None of the group will follow you outside.

When Arnbjorn is dead, take his Stone of Barenziah from the top of his dresser. In the lobby, take a Soul Gem from the shelves and read "Sithis", to raise your Alteration Skill. Then go down the north tunnel to a much larger room with a waterfall. Note four more quest arrows that represent the locations of your four remaining victims.

Find the Veezara just to the left, when you enter the room. The lizard will probably be your most difficult target. After he dies, stand next to the Word Wall and learn "Kill - Marked for Death".

The hallway at the top of the steps east, accesses the rest of this small cave complex. The iron door south, leads to a room with Festus Krex. He is a spell caster, but has no armor. The door on his south wall leads back to the waterfall. Instead, return to the main hallway and check inside another bedroom northeast. Find a book, "Sacred Witness", for a boost to your Sneak Skill. West of the main hallway, you will find Nazir. He carries a scimitar, but wears no armor.

This large bedroom has five beds, an urn and a locked (novice) chest. Walk west of here, down a wooden ramp, and cross the sanctuary Dining Room. Up the stairs from there, find Gabriella, who also wears no armor. She is your last victim and the quest will update when you kill her. Somewhere in the facility, you will run into their pet Frostbite Spider, Lis. Exit outside and Fast Travel back to Dragon Bridge. Commander Maro will give you 3,000 gold Septims.

With Friends Like These...

This quest will appear in your Quest Log if you kill any of the hostages. Astrid will offer you employment in the Dark Brotherhood. After she gives you the key, exit the shack and be ready to fight the local dragon - if you do not leave the area quickly enough. Check your map to find the Dark Brotherhood Sanctuary west of Falkreath and southwest of Whiterun.

When you arrive at the Sanctuary, located in a rocky grotto, you see a "Black Door" with a painted skull on it. When you activate the door, a deep whispered voice says, "What is the music of life?" Answer with, "Silence, my brother". Inside, speak with Astrid. She will give you a set of Dark Brotherhood Armor, and tell you to speak with Nazir, ending the quest.

Sanctuary

Have another conversation with Astrid, exploring all dialog options. Then go deeper into the small cave complex to find the rest of the gang telling stories about their contracts. One child named Babette says she is much older than she looks. A vampire bit her when she was ten years old. Speak with Nazir and he will give you three easy contracts. You may complete them in any order. To make the job more efficient, complete all three before returning to the Sanctuary for payment.

Before you leave, find a book, "Sacred Witness" in a bedroom and read it to raise your Sneak Skill. Open a locked (novice) chest and an urn in the room with five beds. Stand next to the Word Wall and learn the Shout "Kill, Marked for Death". Find a book, "Sithis", on a shelf in the first room past the entrance, to raise your Alteration Skill. Find a Stone of Barenziah on top of a dresser in the bedroom west of that shelf.

Beitild

Select this quest and then check your map to find Dawnstar on the coast of the northern ocean. Beitild runs the local mine. Pick the (novice) lock on her house after midnight. If you get there early and then move your clock to midnight, you may have to move it one more hour after that, to get her sleeping inside the house. Use one-shot kills on all these victims, to avoid a bounty.

Ennodius Papius

Select this quest and then check your map to find Anga's Mill northeast of Whiterun. From the town, go west up the road a short distance, to the area just above the waterfall. Papius lives in a tent by the river, all alone.

Narfi

Select this quest and then check your map to find Ivarstead southeast of Whiterun. Narfi is a beggar who lives alone, in a half-destroyed house on the western outskirts of town.

After you complete the three easy contracts, return to the Sanctuary. Inside, notice the whole group standing around in the main waterfall cave. The jester, Cicero, has brought in a tall wooden crate. Listen to the conversation until the group breaks up and walks away. Astrid will speak to you and give you your first challenging contract.

Mourning Never Comes

Before you leave on this mission, follow your quest arrow to find Nazir. As you leave the waterfall cave, you may hear Cicero mutter softly to himself, "Oh yes mistress, you're the boss...for now". Speak with Nazir and tell him that you have completed the three contracts he gave you. Collect your blood money. Then select the "Mourning Never Comes" quest.

Exit the Sanctuary and check your map to find Markarth in the far west of Skyrim. When you get there, follow your quest arrow to find Muiri. She wanders all about the town. Speak with her. She will tell you that she wants you to kill her bandit husband, Alain Dufont, because he ruined her life. She has a second request that you also kill Nilsine Shatter-Shield, because her former friend will not forgive Muiri for her bad judgment marrying the bandit in the first place. To assist you in these two murders, she will give you two vials of Lotus Extract poison.

Windhelm

Go to Windhelm. Nilsine Shatter-Shield wanders around this city. Follow your quest arrow to find her. Then target her in Sneak mode, so that nobody sees you kill her. You need not use the poison.

Raldbthar

Check your map to find Raldbthar northeast of Whiterun. You will see two or three bandits standing guard outside. Dispose of them and then open the big gold door to Raldbthar. This is one of several entrances to Blackreach Cavern, which you may have explored during the Main Quest.

Inside, find a bandit who may be sleeping in a corner of the first room. Farther southwest, the bandits have skewered a Skeever on a spit, roasting it with a Dwarven Flame Trap. You could run through the flames to find the room with your target, but you may want to take the east corridor instead. It leads to the bandit living area. There, you will find three bandits and a Dwarven Chest.

From this room, the end of the south hallway has a locked (expert) gate. Behind it and up the stairs, is a balcony that overlooks the room where your targets sit next to a campfire. You could also access that room by going down the hallway northwest, from the locked gate.

On the balcony, pull the two levers on the two Crossbows. If you are in Sneak mode, the three bandits below you may not even move. You probably will not hit anyone, but the effect is worth the effort. In Sneak mode, snipe your target, Alain Dufont. The game has marked him with a quest arrow over his head. Killing Dufont completes the contract. None of the three bandits is wearing any armor. They are easy kills. Be aware, however, that a log ramp on the northwest wall gives them access to your balcony. If any of them become aware of you, they will run up that ramp.

Go down into the room and loot it. Two of the other exits, one locked (adept), out of this room get you back outside the ruin. One of the bandits has the "Irkngthand Consortium Key", but it fits no locks in this ruin. Two ingots lie on a stone shelf. On a similar shelf, find and read "2920, Last Seed, v8", for a boost to your Sneak Skill. Look on the dark northeast wall to find a wooden chest.

The gate southwest takes you to a room with the last bandit. Open two unlocked Dwarven Chests and one locked (apprentice) Dwarven Chest. Open the locked (master) gate, to find three Coin Purses, ingots, ore, armor and an unlocked Dwarven Chest.

If all you want to do is finish the quest, then ignore the following green text and skip down to the blue text on page eight. The door to the southwest of where the last bandit was patrolling is Falmer territory. If you have the time to explore the ruin, I recommend you do so. It has interesting puzzles, Dwarven Traps and machines. The route takes you down to Blackreach Cavern.

On the other side of the southwest door, a dispenser on the wall of this cluttered hallway ejects a Dwarven Sphere. If you retreat to the larger room, the Sphere can follow you up the steepest stairs. After you defeat it, go through the door southwest.

Beyond the door is a room full of Dwarven machinery and one agitated Dwarven Spider. In addition, two Dwarven Spheres will pop out of dispensers in the west and south corners. They will do this when you get close to the dispensers, even if you are in Sneak mode, but may not see you until you move or target them. Open a locked (apprentice) chest. Find a Coin Purse and potion in two corners of the room.

Exit the room southwest, to a corridor with a Dwarven Spider Dispenser on the *floor*. Throughout this ruin, if you move about in Sneak mode, the *spiders* may not detect you. You can waddle past the dispensers safely, if your skill is high enough. This is a benefit and a curse. You avoid conflict, but you miss the opportunity to mine the shattered machines for their Soul Gems.

Just around the corner, a Rotating Blade Trap will activate. This one has two blades that move to the center of the slope and then back again. Note that, in some places, the blades do not quite reach the walls. Use this feature to pass them safely, by dodging into the safe areas and waiting until the blades pass. Then run up the slope to the top.

In the next room, be ready to fight a Dwarven Sphere that is rolling about. One way to defeat it is to have it chase you back to the Rotating Blade Trap. Stand in one of the safe nooks and watch while the Sphere runs into the blades and disintegrates. Keep this technique in mind for the next enemies you meet. At the southwest end of the small room where the Sphere was patrolling, are some steps going northwest up to a balcony. The next Sphere is patrolling there. You could use the blades trick again. Flammable liquid covers the floor up there. In addition, a Dwarven Spider hides inside a dispenser on that balcony. You may have to come out of Sneak mode to activate it. When the area is safe, open a locked (master) chest.

Exit the balcony down the northwest corridor. Halfway along, two more Spiders are hiding in dispensers. At the end of the hallway, find a lift that takes you down to "Raldbthar Deep Market". At the bottom of the lift, a sloping hallway goes down to a door. A Rotating Blade Trap will pop out of the slot. This one has only one blade, but is deceptively dangerous.

Eight to ten Falmer creep around in the large room beyond the door. If you retreat from them, back up the slope, you must again pass the blade. Make one misstep and the blade will kill you. Try this instead. Open the door and then go back up to the top of the slope, above the trap. Shoot an arrow or two through the open door to encourage a few of the closest Falmer to run up the slope. The trap will kill them, just as it will do to you if you are not careful. The rest of the Falmer will stay in the room. Two of them defend the upper level of the high-ceilinged room. Go down to the doorway. Then slowly, carefully and systematically exterminate them.

After you have cleared the room, find one Falmer Chest in a tent, a locked (apprentice) Dwarven Chest halfway up the stairs and a Falmer Chest in the northeast corner of the upper level. Near that chest, find a button. Push it and then watch a drawbridge fall into place, from the central tower to the south wall. Cross the bridge and walk along a hallway to the west end of the room. In that hallway, be aware of two Dwarven Spider Dispensers on the south wall.

Past the dispensers, stop at the top of the sloping metal bridge. Look north, at the central tower. Between the two Falmer Tents sits a Dwarven Chest. To cross the wide space, activate your Whirlwind Sprint Shout. To get off the ledge safely, use the same Shout, but point it west.

Open a door on the west wall to find a Stone Pressure Plate in the narrow hallway. This activates a Dwarven Crossbow on a platform opposite you south. The crossbow fires three explosive bolts and they will surely kill you if you step on the plate. To release the bolts safely, jump up on the big pipe that runs along the east wall. Then stand with your back against the pipe, where it rises up to the ceiling. Shoot the Pressure Plate from here - with an arrow. When you drop back down from the pipe, a Dwarven Spider drops from the dispenser on the north wall - behind you.

At the bottom of the steps below the Pressure Plate, defeat another Dwarven Spider that drops down from a dispenser on the north wall. Beyond it, watch out for another Stone Pressure Plate on the floor. This one releases a set of Swinging Bars from the ceiling. Beyond that plate and around the corner north, note the *twelve* dispensers along the walls and on the floor. Hazardous as this looks, I was only able to liberate one Sphere and one Spider.

At the end of that long hallway, turn the corner and go through the door west. Beyond it is a very short hallway with four buttons and a set of bars blocking your way. The second button from the right drops the bars. The button on the left activates a Dwarven Flame Trap. None of the three jets of flame, however, targets the button itself. The other two buttons appear to do nothing, although for high-level characters, the buttons may release Dwarven Spiders from the two dispensers. A fifth button, in the corridor beyond the bars, raises or lowers the bars.

Past the bars, open the gold door to find a fenced area with a gate. You can see a Falmer near his tent on the left and a Falmer near his tent on the right. To the south, is a gated enclosure holding two Chaurus bugs. You can see them moving about and, when you get closer, hear them clicking.

Open the gate and kill the Falmer on the left first. The one on the right may be a Gloomlurker. They can heal themselves. Sometimes in here, a pair of Dwarven Spiders spawns past the gate. I could only get that to happen once, and I do not know from where they came. Kill a third Falmer at the west end of the room, near his tent. Kill a fourth Falmer near the tents on the south wall.

After all four Falmer die, loot the room for two Soul Gems on a rock shelf and two unlocked Falmer Chests. One Falmer tent on the south wall has a locked (expert) gate in front of it. Inside the tent is a chest with good treasure. The odd hole on the wall in the southwest corner of the room has a Falmer inside, but it did not come out for me. Shoot the two Chaurus bugs through the opening of their enclosure. Then unlock the (novice) gate. Inside, open an unlocked chest, a locked (apprentice) chest and a locked (expert) chest. Pick up ingots and some ore from a shelf.

The Falmer have jammed various items into the room's gear-sets, so that the gears will not turn. They *must* turn, because they provide the power to the switch on the bridge. Remove the following items from four sets of gears: a Leg Bone, a Skull, a Human Spine and a piece of Dwarven Scrap. The last item jams a set of gears underwater.

When all the gears turn normally, push the button on the bridge. This drops the second half of the drawbridge into place. Behind it, a Dwarven Centurion Guardian will come to life. You have lots of room to move around in here, so lure the slow, clanking machine into the larger part of the room and have plenty of time to open the chest it guards. You can even lure the machine back through the gates and doors. Then close the gate/door. The machine appears unable to open gates or doors, although if you leave the room it somehow can. Alternatively, destroy the Centurion and take its Soul Gem(s). In either case, go through the door at the end of the bridge northwest.

Beyond the door, walk a short hallway to a set of metal bars. Pull the lever to lower the bars. In the next room, destroy two Dwarven Spiders. Then loot one Dwarven Chest in the small room north. Open a locked (adept) Dwarven Chest on the wall. Find ingots and ore on the rock shelves. Stand on the west side of the "Dwarven Mechanism" in the center of the room. Activate it, to cause a set of stairs to appear. Go down those stairs and through the door at the bottom.

Beyond the door, the locked (expert) gate on the north wall opens to an unlocked Dwarven Chest and a locked (master) Dwarven Chest. The door at the end of the hall west opens to a high ledge above this enormous cave. For a detailed account of Blackreach Cavern, read the green text in my [Skyrim Main Quest Walkthrough](#) (pages 26, 27 and 28). To continue the Dark Brotherhood quest, "Mourning Never Comes", retrace your path a short distance, up the stairs to the room with the Dwarven Mechanism. Activate the lift to the surface.

Return to Markarth and follow your quest arrow to find Muiri. You may find her working inside The Hag's Cure. She will pay you and give you a magic ring that helps you brew better potions. Then return to the Sanctuary and speak with Astrid. She is suspicious of Cicero and fears he is plotting treachery. She wants you to hide in the Night Mother's Coffin, so that you can overhear whom Cicero speaks with behind his locked door, and what he says. This ends the quest.

Whispers in the Dark

Follow your quest arrow to find the Night Mother's Coffin. Pick the lock (novice) and then hide inside the coffin. Your screen will go dark, but you will hear Cicero humming. He will talk to the coffin, "Are we alone?" and "Everything is going according to plan." Then the Night Mother speaks, but you are the only person who can hear her. She calls you "The Listener", and she has a task for you. The coffin will open and, at first, Cicero is angry. After you talk with him, however, he becomes overjoyed that the Night Mother has finally spoken to someone.

Astrid will burst into the room. Listen, while she and Cicero have a conversation. Then Astrid will speak with you. She is skeptical of your story and tells you that she is still the leader. She will send you to Nazir, while she considers the import of what has happened.

Follow your quest arrow to find Nazir. Ask him for more work. He will give you two more contracts. You must assassinate a bard named Lurbuk and a vampire named Hern. The quest ends.

Lurbuk

Exit the Sanctuary, select "Contract: Kill Lurbuk" in your quest log and then check your map to find Morthal northwest of Whiterun and southwest of the Kjenstag Ruins. Go to Morthal and then find Lurbuk in the Moorside Inn. If he is not in his room, ask him to sing you a song. After he finishes, he will often go to his room. Kill him in his bedroom, with one shot in Sneak mode.

Hern

Select "Contract: Kill Hern" in your quest log and then check your map to find Half-Moon Mill southwest of Whiterun and north of the Sanctuary. The house at the mill has a novice lock. During the day, you may find Hern inside, but if you wait, he will come outside and walk toward the mill where his wife is working. He will stop on the middle of the bridge. **Save your game** before you attack him, because he is tougher than your previous victims were. If you are not sure that you can kill him without incurring a bounty, speak with him. Goad him into attacking you and then let him hit you first. If you are defending yourself, the game will not force a bounty on you.

When you return to the Sanctuary, Astrid will stop you. Speak with her. She will now agree to the Night Mother's request. You must go to Volunruud and speak with Amaund Motierre.

The Silence has been Broken

Before you leave, follow your quest arrow to find Nazir. Tell him that you have completed the two contracts he gave you. He will pay you. Then exit the Sanctuary. Select this quest and then look on your map to find Volunruud north of Whiterun and east of Labyrinthian.

When you arrive, you find that Volunruud is another one of those large round stone holes in the ground, found all over Skyrim. Loot four urns and two chests before you open the door. Inside, just past the door, destroy a skeleton sitting on a throne. At his feet, read a notebook "Heddic's Volunruud Notes", to begin a Side Quest named "Silent Tongues" that has you recovering two ceremonial weapons. These weapons allow you to enter "Elder's Cairn". Save this quest for later.

Go down the steps north, to a room with four exits. The quest arrow points you west, to a small sunny circular room with six dead Draugr lying on the floor. Go through the wooden door in this room to find Amaund Motierre and a guard named Rexus. Motierre wants you to kill several people, among them the emperor of Tamriel. Motierre instructs Rexus to give you a Jeweled Amulet and a Sealed Letter. If you read the letter, Astrid will later remark on your indiscretion.

Return to the Sanctuary and speak with Astrid. Show her the letter and amulet. She will direct you to have the amulet appraised by Delvin Mallory. Go east to Riften and enter the Ragged Flagon. If you have not been there before, read the green text below. Otherwise, skip the green text.

In Riften, go down some steps below the central marketplace, to find a metal gate. Open the gate and then open the door behind it to, "The Ratway". You have a tough fight coming up at the "T" intersection at the end of the entrance tunnel. You can hear Hewnon Black-Skeever and Drahff having a conversation. When they detect you, they will attack you. Just beyond the two men may be a "Lowlife", who may attack the two men or you. If you do not meet him now, you will later.

After you have killed all three men, continue down the tunnel to a ledge. Drop down and activate a door. Jump back immediately, to avoid the spike trap, and then go through the door. Beyond the door is a round stone room with flammable liquid dripping from a clay pot. Look for a Skeevever in the south tunnel. The room to the west has only minor treasure. Exit through the south door, to a room with five Bear Traps. "Gian the Fist" will attack you here. In a corner, find an Alchemy Lab.

Open a gate to the south, *run* up the steps east, to avoid a swinging log trap. Open the gate and go through the north tunnel to a room with a book on the table. Read "Beggar", for a boost to your Pickpocket Skill. Go east and open the door to the "Ragged Flagon" tavern.

Delvin Mallory usually sits at a table in the Ragged Flagon. Show him the Jeweled Amulet and offer to sell it to him. He will give you a "Letter of Credit", worth 15,000 Septims to Astrid. Return to the Sanctuary and give the letter to Astrid. Speak with her about the contract that the Night Mother gave you, ending the quest.

Bound Until Death

To encourage the emperor to visit Skyrim, you must murder his first cousin, Vittoria Vici, at her wedding. Look on your map to find Solitude northwest of Whiterun. Go there and follow your quest arrow to the Temple of the Divines. Then **save your game**. Scout the area adjacent to the outdoor wedding. The bride and groom will wait patiently for you while you plan the murder.

From where the groom and bride sit, go through the northwest door. On the balcony at the top of the stairs, take a magic bow, Firiniel's End. Also, find an Elixir of True Shot and several powerful arrows. You *could* shoot the bride from here. Look at the stonework above where the groom and bride sit. They will walk up to the balcony there, where the bride will make a short speech. In fact, until you kill her, the pair will repeat this action every two minutes.

To get the full reward, you *must* kill Vittoria while she is making her speech. Note the gargoyle above that balcony. It is in serious need of repair. If someone were to give it a push, it would fall down onto the balcony, killing anyone below.

If you take an Invisibility Potion *immediately* after activating the gargoyle, you can leave the scene without incurring a bounty. Another way to avoid bounty is to Fast Travel, as soon as you hear the gargoyle *hit* Vittoria. If you Fast Travel too soon, the gargoyle will not hit her. If you act too late, the game will not let you Fast Travel. In addition, every time I used Fast Travel, Astrid later told me that she could *not* give me any gold, because I did not kill Vittoria while she was speaking.

If you have completed the Thieves Guild quest line, then you have access to the "Nightingale Subterfuge" Power. You could aim it at the groom, Asgeir Snow-Shod. Then *he* will kill his wife. However, if you do not have the Quiet Casting Perk, the guests may hear you casting. Then everyone will attack you and you incur the bounty.

You could turn into a werewolf. You gain this power when you do the Companions quest line. Drop down from the gargoyle, slash the bride with your werewolf claws, jump to the ground and then run for the exit. Swim far away from any witnesses. Wait until you turn back into a human. This works well. You incur no bounty and you get both rewards.

Complicating things, Astrid sends Veezara to create a diversion for you when the bride dies. If you do not exit the murder scene quickly, Veezara will speak with you. This may alert nearby guards to your crime. So try to avoid having Veezara speak to you. If anyone discovers that you are the murderer, the bounty is 1,000 gold coins. If you have completed the Thieves Guild quest line, the guard who catches you will lower that bounty to 500 gold coins and then release you. To discover if you have a current bounty, go to Journal>General Stats>Crime.

If you do *not* Fast Travel, the shortest escape route begins just southeast of the wedding reception. Past the entrance arch, turn south, toward the windmill. Go through the door at the base of the stone arch south. You will find a tunnel south. At the end of the tunnel, find the exit from the city.

If you do not have time to loot Vittoria's possessions, you may return later. If her body is no longer on the balcony, find it in the Hall of the Dead, southwest of the wedding venue. In the basement of the hall, find a door to the Solitude Catacombs. The catacombs also have an outside door. Vittoria's nondescript coffin lies on a rock shelf near the southeast exit from the catacombs. Three walking Skeleton Warriors patrol those catacombs.

Return to the Sanctuary and speak with Astrid. She will give you a "Summon Spectral Assassin" Power that you may use once a day. It conjures up the ghost of Lucien LaChance, a former leader of the Dark Brotherhood. He will defend you until an enemy defeats him. Astrid will also give you a large gold reward if you killed Vittoria while she was addressing the wedding guests from the balcony. Then Astrid will send you to Gabriella, who will give you your next assignment.

Breaching Security

Gabriella will give you an Incriminating Note. She wants you to kill Gaius Maro. He is the son of Commander Maro, who is in charge of the emperor's security force, Penitus Oculatus. After you kill him, place the Incriminating Note on Gaius Maro's body. To get the best reward, do *not* kill him in Dragon Bridge *or* along any road.

When you arrive in Dragon Bridge, you will see Gaius Maro say his goodbyes to his father and then walk up the main road. He is on a security tour of Skyrim, in advance of the emperor's visit.

Inside the Penitus Oculatus Outpost in Dragon Bridge, lying on a table is a paper with Gaius Maro's schedule written on it. A Penitus Oculatus Agent sits at a desk inside. *Slowly* Sneak through the door and steal the schedule. Then you will always know where Maro is going. He continuously repeats the route detailed in the schedule. Go to any city on that schedule.

For instance, you could wait for him in Whiterun. Go there, move your clock to Turdas evening and then rent a room from Hulda in the Bannered Mare (10 gold). Follow her upstairs to the room, which is one of the nicer ones you can rent in Skyrim. It has a balcony that overlooks the Dining Room and the front door. Have a seat and wait for Gaius to enter the front door at about 6:30 P.M. Any time you want to check his progress, look for his moving quest arrow on your map.

Gaius sits in a chair, eating and drinking until just after midnight. Then he gets up, moves to his room at the east end of the building and sleeps. Enter his room and shut the door. Gaius is *very* strong, so use the extra power of your best weapon and Sneak mode to whack him in his sleep. Stand next to the bed to block him, so that he cannot open the bedroom door and get help. After he dies, place the Incriminating Note on his corpse.

Alternatively, if you think you can best him, speak with him and goad Maro into attacking you. After he hits you once, defend yourself. However, he is quite capable of killing you and the local town guards will probably not intervene. You will incur no bounty. Place the note on his corpse.

Then return to Sanctuary and speak with Gabriella. She will reward you with gold and Olava's Token, which adds a Miscellaneous Quest. The quest has you searching for an "assassin of old" and his unique Dark Brotherhood Armor. Although it is not part of the main Dark Brotherhood quest line, I have included a walkthrough of Hag's End for those who like a good dungeon crawl, and want some very nice armor. Skip the **green text** if you just want to continue the main quest.

Hag's End

Find Olava, an old woman sitting on a bench in front of her house in Whiterun. The house is behind the one you can purchase. Give Olava the token and then ask her to foretell your future. She "sees" a ruin in the north of Skyrim, called Hag's End. Look on your map to find Deepwood Redoubt, west of Solitude and northwest of Dragon Bridge.

When you finally arrive at Deepwood Redoubt, you must eliminate a group of Forsworn, who are outside defending the ruin. In the hall just past the entrance door, be wary of the chest on the south wall. The holes beneath it contain metal spikes. They pop out when you open the chest.

Open the gate southeast, to find a crypt. Beware the Stone Pressure Plate that shoots darts from the base of the stairway. Then go up those stairs southwest, to find two Forsworn warming themselves around a campfire. Three more of them prowl along the bridge southeast. If you encourage them with an arrow or the Throw Voice Shout, they will present a nice target for your bow.

Then go through the arch southwest, kill a Forsworn and loot an urn. Take a Coin Purse from a stone table and be wary of two Frost Runes on the floor of the room southwest. Open one urn.

The room has two exits. Go through the opening in the southwest corner of the room, to find another room. Inside it, kill one Forsworn sleeping on a bed and take her "Deepwood Redoubt Key". The room has an urn to loot and an Arcane Enchanter. Then return to the previous room and open the locked (expert) door on the southeast wall with your new key.

Beyond the door, find a long tunnel northeast. Avoid stepping on the Stone Pressure Plate that releases a Spiked Gate Trap. You will cross a bridge enclosed in iron bars. You saw this bridge earlier - from below. At the end of the hall, pick up a Coin Purse. Go up the stairs to open an urn and a door to "Deepwood Vale". Beyond the door, you find yourself inside a huge rocky bowl, with open sky above you. The setting is reminiscent of a volcanic caldera.

A dozen or more Forsworn have established a village on the ramparts below you. You may be able to see several of the dozen hide tents that the Forsworn call home. An icy mist blows about, at times obscuring your view. Whittle down the Forsworn defenders. Snipe the ones you can see. Ignore the dragon. Then, before you go up to the village, follow the watercourse from the south waterfall. Where the water disappears into the rock, find and open a locked (apprentice) chest.

Then go up the steps east, to the Forsworn Village. Defeat any who survived your earlier attack. Open one chest and take a Coin Purse. Swim under a bridge at the north end of the camp, to find a locked (apprentice) chest at the bottom of the stream. At the highest point of the village, find the "Forsworn Briar Heart" leader, who has a nice wooden chest in his tent.

The Hag's End entrance door is at the top of the east steps. Before you open that door however, climb the rocks between the falls and the door. At the top of the falls, find a wide ledge with a locked (expert) chest, containing the best treasure. Another good chest lies on the ledge south of this one. There is just enough of a crevice between the two ledges, for you to climb across to the second chest. On that south ledge, besides the chest, is a *second* door into Hag's End.

The game has allowed you to enter the second door. Behind it, is a Word Wall. Learn the Shout "Sand, Slow Time". The room also has an Arcane Enchanter. A northwest gate in this room will not open from this side. Go back outside and drop down to the first Hag's End door.

Beyond the lower door, find a Dining Room to the east. In that room, defeat two or three witches. However, when you attack the Hagraven, she will teleport away, leaving behind only a blue cloud. The bedroom northwest has an Alchemy Lab. Exit the Dining Room northeast, through a doorway to a collapsed room. Shoot a Flame Spell at three Frost Runes on the floor. Then open three urns.

Exit the room and go up the steps southeast. At the top, be wary of a Stone Pressure Plate that releases a Swinging Log Trap. Take some Soul Gems and open two urns. Open a chest, but be aware that closing the chest shoots darts from holes above the chest.

At the top of the steps southwest, the Hagraven who disappeared is sitting on her throne. Also in the room, two witches attend the Hagraven. Snipe her with an arrow and she will disappear again, but the two witches will come down the stairs and attack you. In that room, boost your Illusion Skill by reading "Mystery of Talara, part 4".

Behind the throne (but *only* if you are doing the Olava's Token Quest) find a handle on the wall. A stone door will lower to reveal a small closet. In addition to the wooden chest, find the body of a "Dark Brotherhood Assassin" lying on the floor. He wears the armor you have come here for:

The Boots add Silent Movement.

The Armor adds 100% to Poison Resistance.

The Cowl adds 35% to damage when using a bow.

The Gloves add *double* Sneak Damage with One-Handed Weapons.

Exit the room by pulling a lever to lower a drawbridge. Cross over a room you passed through earlier. Halfway down the northwest tunnel, is a doorway southwest, to a room with a fireplace. The room looks empty, but when you go to pick up the "Hag's End Key" lying on a shelf to the right of the fireplace, a huge Frostbite Spider drops down from a hole in the ceiling. Watch for a witch who may join your fight with the spider. Defeat them both and then continue up the tunnel.

At the top of the northwest steps, find an intersection. The west fork has a locked (master) gate that opens with the key. Behind the gate is a small room with a Coin Purse and a chest. When you close the chest, Fire Jets shoot down from the ceiling *and* from the two dragon statues behind you.

The east fork has a set of three gates that open by pulling the handle on the wall. Metal spears shoot out from holes in the wall, all the way up to the top of the steps. However, they only do this when someone pulls the handle. You can safely walk up those steps to find two or three more witches and the disappearing Hagraven. Note that you can use the handle to spear the witches.

The room they inhabited has a round pool of flammable liquid. On the wall next to the pool, see a ring attached to a chain. You must pull the chain to open the southeast gates. As soon as you do this, the obvious Clay Pot Trap will fall into the flammable liquid and start a fire. Target the pot and burn the pool of liquid. Then pull the chain to open the gates. Take three Soul Gems. I could find nothing behind the locked (expert) gate on the southwest wall. Behind the locked (expert) Iron Door on the northwest wall, find a potion and an urn. The Hag's End Key opens these gates.

Go up the southeast slope, open an urn in the hallway and find yourself back in the room with the Word Wall. Because you were here before, you feel safe. You are not safe. Outside waiting for you is the Hagraven. When you go through the door, she will no longer run away. She will conjure up two Frost Trolls. Higher-level characters may see Ice Wraiths. Then the Hagraven will begin throwing powerful Fireballs at you. You have two good choices.

On the other side of the door, you could quickly drop down from the ledge and run out of range. Alternatively, you could Sneak through the door and over to the northwest edge of the ledge. Across from you is ledge above the falls where you opened the locked chest. The Hagraven may kill you before you can *climb* along the crevice to that ledge. Instead, use the Whirlwind Sprint Shout to cross the gap to the ledge. Then hurry around the corner for cover. Use a Healing Spell.

Now you have confined your three enemies to a small ledge. Go into Sneak mode and target the Hagraven. Then destroy both of the Frost Trolls. If you get Ice Wraiths, however, they *can* chase you. The game will allow you to Fast Travel to the Sanctuary when the enemies are dead.

The Cure for Madness

In the waterfall room of the Sanctuary, find Astrid talking with the other members of the Dark Brotherhood. While you were out, Cicero attacked and wounded Veezara. Wait for the talk to end. Then Astrid will speak to you. She tells you that her husband Arnbjorn chased after Cicero and has not returned. She wants you to search Cicero's room for evidence of where he went.

Follow your quest arrow to find "Cicero's Journal - Final Volume", on his end table. Read it and take it. Return to Astrid and tell her the contents of the journal. She wants you to take her horse, Shadowmere, and find her missing husband, Arnbjorn. Then she wants you to kill Cicero.

Exit the Sanctuary and watch the little pond outside begin to bubble. Shadowmere forms from the bubbles. Take him north, to Dawnstar (the horse can Fast Travel with you). Near Dawnstar, find the oldest of the Dark Brotherhood sanctuaries. Arnbjorn is sitting wounded on the ground outside the entrance. Speak with him and then activate the Dawnstar Sanctuary door. A whispered voice will say, "What is life's greatest illusion?" Answer, "Innocence, my brother".

Inside, as soon as you turn the first corner, you can hear Cicero ranting. His valuable jester outfit is lying on the table in the first room you come to. Open a wooden door north, to find a large room with three barred openings. A Sanctuary Guardian Ghost draws his sword. Defeat him and then note that one set of the bars opens from its other side. Take a Coin Purse from the table.

Go down the corridor west, following Cicero's blood trail. When you approach the rope bridge, three metallic spears begin shooting from your right, in a rhythmic pattern. On the other end of the bridge, another Sanctuary Guardian waits for you. Snipe him dead and then slowly pass by each spear in turn. Note the four clay pots hanging from the ceiling.

At the bottom of the steps on the other side of the bridge, read "The Marksmanship Lesson", for a boost to your Archery Skill. Read also, "Fire and Darkness", to increase your One-Hand Skill. As soon as you step into the next room, you must defeat two more Sanctuary Guardians. Shoot an arrow across the room to make them spawn. Then target the nearby tripwire, to drop the four clay pots above. Fire fills the Training Room beyond, incinerating the Sanctuary Guardians.

On the other side of the room, go up the steps east. At the top, find the room with the three barred openings that you saw earlier. Defeat two Sanctuary Guardians. The chain on the south wall lowers one set of bars at the top of the west steps. Someone has barred the wooden door east, from its other side. Take a Coin Purse from the box and then go through the ice tunnel northeast.

Just past the place where you see two Bear Traps, the tunnel splits in two. The left route is the low road. Take the high road, right. Both routes go to the same large cave. Inside that cave, you must fight a troll named Udefrykte, or Sneak past it. A Dual Flame Spell works well against the troll. A chest sits on the upper level of the cave. Then continue west, on the lower level.

Open a wooden door south and then pull a chain to lower the bars. Then go down the steps and fight two Sanctuary Guardians. Around the corner at the west end of the crypt, fight three to four Sanctuary Guardians. The last one of these may be extra tough. Open a locked (master) chest in a short hallway just before you get to the north steps. At the top of those steps, pull a chain to drop the metal bars. Past them, watch for a Bear Trap. At the "T" intersection, left takes you out of the ruin. Right, past the wooden door, gets you to the room where Cicero is cowering on the floor.

Speak with Cicero. The game gives you a choice of whether to kill him or not (Remain Silent). Cicero suggests that the Night Mother would not want you to kill him. Decide, and then open his unlocked chest. Even if you let him live, you can still pick his pocket for the 500 coins he carries. He will notice you do this, but encourage you to take the money. Return to the Sanctuary and speak with Astrid. Tell her that Cicero is dead. Lie if you have to. She will send you to Krex.

Recipe for Disaster

Follow your quest arrow to find Festus Krex. He believes that Anton Virane, in Markarth, knows the identity and location of "The Gourmet", who is Tamriel's most famous chef.

Exit the Sanctuary and Fast Travel northwest to Markarth. Go up the hill west, to the very top. Enter the Understone Keep and follow your quest arrow to find Anton Virane. Speak with him to learn that The Gourmet is an Orc named Balagog gro-Nolob. Assassinate Anton Virane.

Go to the Nightgate Inn, northeast of Whiterun and southeast of Dawnstar. Inside, go down the stairway at the west end of the building, to the cellar. Alternatively, you could go down through the outside trapdoor on the other side of the inn. Balagog gro-Nolob is alone in the cellar.

Kill him and then take his "Writ of Passage". Drag the corpse behind one of the large wooden casks, by holding down the same key you use to Activate, until the body will move. Hit the Activate Key again to drop the body. The game will let you know when you have hidden the body. Then exit up the ladder on the north wall. Outside again, return to the Sanctuary and speak with Festus Krex, ending the quest.

To Kill an Empire

Festus Krex will give you gold coins and the "Nightmother's Band", a magical ring that enhances Sneak and Destruction. Then he tells you to see Astrid. When you speak with her, she gives you some "Jarrin Root Poison" to put in the emperor's food. She also describes your escape plan.

Exit the Sanctuary and Fast Travel to Solitude. Find Commander Maro standing in front of the "Castle Dour, Emperor's Tower" door. It is very near the location of Vittoria's wedding. Show Maro your writ and then enter the door behind him. Find the kitchen at the south end of the lower level. Find a Chef's Hat on the shelves on the east wall. Equip the hat and then speak with Gianna, who is stirring a pot of broth. She is delighted to meet the best chef on the continent.

Gianna will ask you what ingredient to put in the broth next. She will do this four times. Choose *any* ingredient you like. Finally, you could tell her to include the Jarrin Root, although it is an optional ingredient. Now that the poisoned (or not) food is ready, follow Gianna to the Dining Room. She will serve the emperor first. When he tastes the food, he finds it delicious and then, if the food is poisoned, he falls over dead. If you did not poison the food, then you must kill the emperor the old-fashioned way. The two guards will immediately attack you.

Run south, through the door and then along the bridge as far as the game will let you. Commander Maro and three guards will stop you. Someone has betrayed you. You have killed an imposter. Maro tells you that he has sent a detachment of troops to destroy the Sanctuary and everyone in it. When you regain control of your character, note that the game has added a bounty of 1,500 gold. Continue running to the tower in front of you and then down the steps. Halfway down the tower, a tunnel takes you north to the city street, where the guards will attempt to arrest you. Instead, you could continue down to the bottom of the tower and exit the city on the waterfront. However, either way, you will eventually have to deal with the bounty.

If you have completed the Thieves Guild quest line, then your bounty will only be 750 gold. Pay the guard and he will let you go. If you have not completed the Thieves Guild quests, and you do not have the Bribery Perk, then you must pay the full bounty, go to jail, or resist arrest.

Outside the city once more, return to the Sanctuary. For plot reasons, you cannot Fast Travel there. Approach the Sanctuary slowly and carefully. Kill the four Penitus Oculatus Agents guarding the area outside the Sanctuary, ending the quest.

Death Incarnate

Find Festus Krex pinned to a tree with arrows. Enter the Sanctuary to find it in flames. Find two agents at the bottom of the entrance steps. Ignite the flammable liquid on the floor to whittle down their health or kill them. Then finish them off. Find Veezara dead on the floor.

In the main room, find three to four agents fighting Arnbjorn in his Werewolf form. The game will not allow you to hurt the agents until Arnbjorn dies. Then kill the agents. Find a path through the flames. Find Gabriella dead. Help Nazir fight off boss Agent Arcturas. Then speak with Nazir.

Follow Nazir, while he tries to find a way through the flames. Defeat one or two more agents. The Night Mother will speak to you while you are running. Nazir says, "There's got to be a way out of here", but the flames block you on all sides. The quest arrow points you to the Night Mother's stone coffin. Enter it again and it will close. You can hear the Night Mother say, "Sleep", while you hear the room around you collapsing.

Your screen will again go black. You can hear Nazir and Babette trying to force the coffin open. While they do that, the Night Mother tells you that Astrid is still alive in the Sanctuary and that you must speak with her. The coffin opens. Speak with Nazir.

Follow your quest arrow to find Astrid lying on the ground horribly burned, but alive. When you speak with her, she tells you that she foolishly betrayed you to Commander Moro. She wants you to kill her and take over the leadership of the Dark Brotherhood. Pick up the "Blade of Woe", lying on the ground next to Astrid. Equip the weapon and kill Astrid with it.

Return to the Night Mother and listen to her tell you that you must complete the original contract to kill the emperor. She sends you to the Bannered Mare, in Whiterun, to speak with Amaund Motierre. He knows where you can locate the real emperor, Titus Mede II.

Hail Sithis

Speak with Nazir and then Fast Travel to Whiterun. Enter the Bannered Mare and speak with Amaund Motierre. Explore all dialog options with him. Exit the building and then Fast Travel to Solitude. Exit the city gate and then go west and south to the docks. Alternatively, to shorten your walk, Fast Travel to the East Empire Company. Standing on the docks, find Commander Maro.

To avoid incurring a bounty, speak with Maro. He thought you were dead and immediately attacks you. Let him hit you once and then take your revenge against him. From here, jump into the water and swim east, to the area beneath the huge rock arch of Solitude.

You should see a large ship anchored in the harbor. Find the anchor chain, near the stern. Activate the chain to climb it. You will find yourself inside the ship's cargo hold. Unlock an apprentice chest. Take a Coin Purse from between some wooden crates. Go up the south steps.

You will hear and see two seamen walking south for something to eat. On the other side of the bulkhead south, through the arch, is a bedroom with another seaman. You could kill all the members of the crew. However, Sneaking past them might be more satisfying for you.

Follow the two seamen south, but be prepared for another one to wake up from his bed and walk toward you from his bedroom. All three men go into a large dining room west. The three men will all turn their backs to you, but a guard is roaming north and south. Wait until he goes in to the south room, and then Sneak northwest up the stairway. At the top, you have two ways to go.

If your low Lockpick Skill makes it difficult for you to open the locked (expert) door at the top of the stairs, you can get a Katariah Master Key. There is one hanging from a peg in the Captain's Quarters at the south end of the deck from here. Sometimes the key falls off the peg to the floor. Either Sneak in and take the key from the peg, or kill Captain Avidius and take his key. Sneaking into this room is difficult enough that you should use an Invisibility Potion or the Shadowcloak of Nocturnal Power (Thieves Guild). Once you have the key, you have the option to run anywhere in the ship, outdistancing your pursuers. The key will open the emperor's cabin and none of the seamen or agents will follow you in there.

A ladder outside the captain's quarters takes you up to the deck, near the bow. Half a dozen seamen and agents defend the area. If you walk up the sloping bowsprit, all the way to the top, you will find a sword, Windshear, embedded in the wood at the end.

Alternatively, if you *can* pick the locked (expert) door at the top of the northwest stairs, it opens to a wide hallway. Sneak past a bedroom south, with two Penitus Oculatus Agents inside. The door on the north wall has Lieutenant Salvarus behind it. He also has a Katariah Master Key. Go up either stairway south, to the landing above.

The hatch on the *south* wall of the landing exits outside to the rear main deck. The half-dozen agents and seamen there will detect you. At the stern, up where the ship's wheel is mounted, the emperor has installed a throne. Next to the throne is a book, "King". It raises your Two-Hand Skill.

Back inside, at the landing, the locked (master) door on the *north* wall opens to the cabin of Emperor Titus Mede II. Inside, find him sitting at his desk waiting for you. He will get up and face you. Speak with him, to learn that he has a dying wish. After you get your gold, he wants you to kill the person who hired the Dark Brotherhood to kill him. You may accept or reject this request. Then he will walk to the window and turn his back to you. His last words are, "Well, on to the business at hand, Hmm?" The game music may turn very somber after you kill him.

If you do not have it already, take his "Katariah Master Key". Open his locked (expert) Bedroom Door on the west wall, using the key, and then loot the room. Exit the ship through the door on the northeast wall. This puts you on a balcony outside. Jump into the water and swim to the shore.

Fast Travel to Whiterun and then go inside the Bannered Mare. Speak with Amaund Motierre. He will tell you that your payment is inside an urn at Volunruud. If you choose to kill Amaund, his last words are "But... we had a deal...!" Fast Travel to Volunruud again.

Then go through the entrance. Sometimes, another skeleton spawns on the throne just past the door. If that happens, check all the urns and chests outside for treasure. Then go to the same room where you had your first contact with Amaund Motierre. Open the marked urn to get 20,000 gold Septims. Open the nearby chest as well, although it may have only minor treasure.

Fast Travel back to the *Dawnstar* Sanctuary, and enter the new Dark Brotherhood hideout. Speak with Nazir and tell him how much gold you got for the emperor contract, ending the quest.

The Dark Brotherhood Forever

Before you leave the new Sanctuary, the Night Mother should speak to you. Find her coffin and then approach it. She will give you a never-ending series of contracts.

Where You Hang Your Enemy's Head

When you exit the Sanctuary, if you let him live, Cicero will be standing there. He will threaten to kill you, but he is merely teasing you. He will offer his services to the Dark Brotherhood again and will be your follower if you can put up with him.

Fast Travel to Riften and enter the Ragged Flagon. Speak with Delvin Mallory and purchase all of the upgrades he is offering for the new Dawnstar Sanctuary. Keep asking him for more upgrades until he tells you that he can do no more for you. Then the quest ends.

Return to the Dawnstar Sanctuary and note the various changes to the hideout. Babette can teach you Alchemy and sell you various Ingredients and Recipes. Either of two new Dark Brotherhood Initiates will be your follower. Nazir will give you three more contracts and, when you have completed them, will give you more. Try out the new secret exit/entrance. Speak with the four torture victims. Three of them will tell you where they have stashed treasure. The fourth will threaten you. For some reason, you cannot release them, but you can put them out of their misery.

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