

GREYHAWK[®] ADVENTURES

Official Game Adventure

Vecna Lives!

by David "Zeb" Cook



GREYHAWK® ADVENTURES

Vecna Lives!

Credits

Design: David "Zeb" Cook
Editing: Mike "Mike" Breault
Cover Art: Jeff Easley
Interior Art: Ken Frank
Cartography: Steve Beck
Typography: Tracey Zamagne
and Gaye O'Keefe
Graphic Design: Paul Hanchette

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POB 756
Lake Geneva,
WI 53147
USA

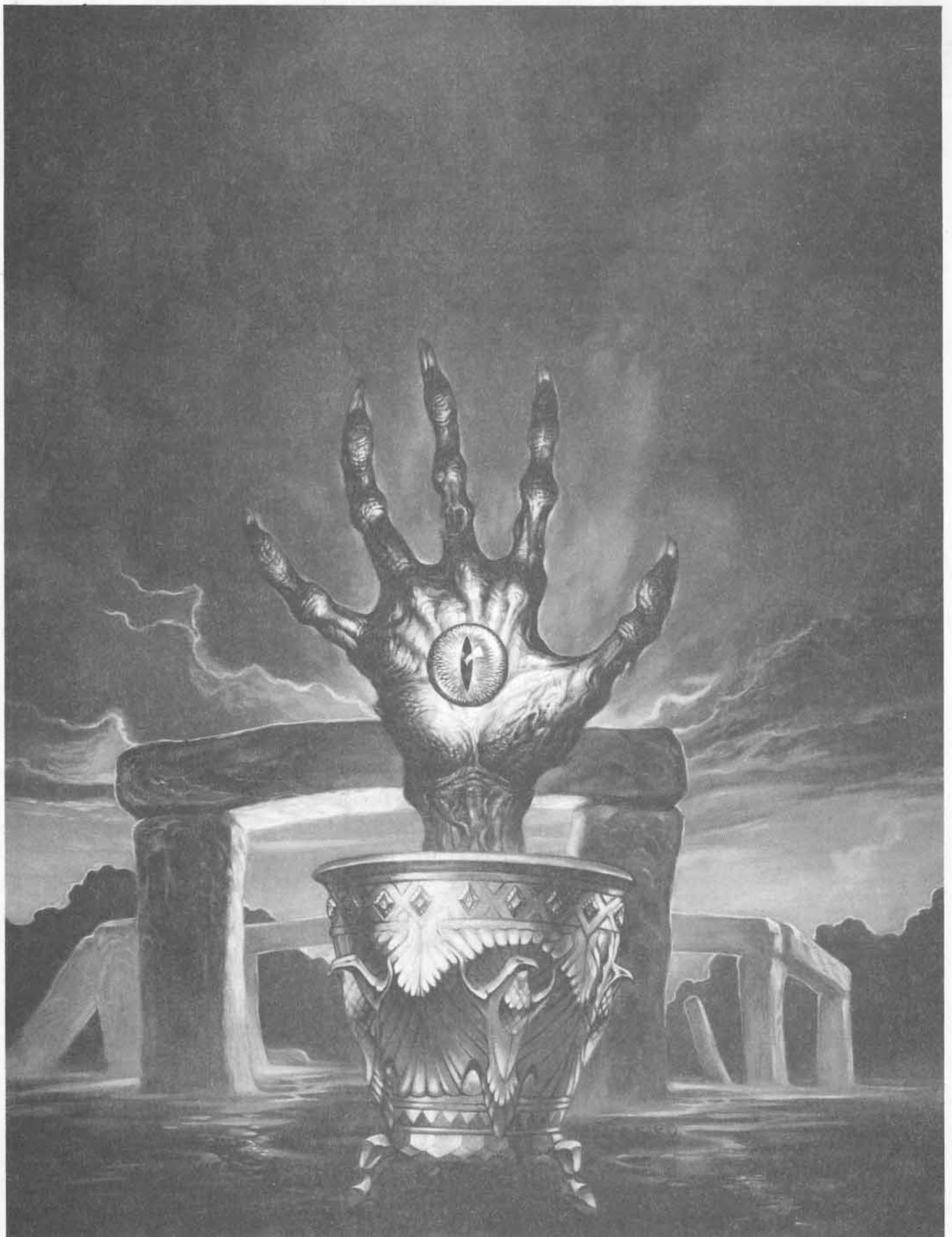


TSR, Inc.

TSR Ltd.
120 Church End,
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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Introduction

"The morning after the Feast of Himar, certain citizens of Fleeth came out of the town and entreated upon the besiegers to speak with Lord Vecna, the Whispered One, in his spidered pavilion. They told him they were ready to place the city and all their possessions at his discretion, provided their lives were spared. The Whispered One replied that he could not agree to such terms, nor indeed to any others, and that he would see the heads of all Fleeth stacked before him.

"Hearing his terrible utterance on their fate, these same burghers beseeched him to mercy, offering themselves if he would spare the good people of Fleeth. Perhaps the Whispered One was amused, for he ordered them to place one of their number, his family, and slaves into Lord Vecna's hands.

"Lots were taken and an upright burgher, Goodman Artau, called his family from within the walls. 'Join me, for the Great Lord has granted us safety to leave this land,' he told his wife, seeking to ease her mind. Reassured by his gentle words, she and her children passed through the gate to join her husband. Pleased, the Whispered One gave them all over to Kas the Hateful.

"For a day, the burghers watched Goodman Artau and his family die at the hands of Kas. When at last it was done, the burghers pleaded to take their leave, certain their city had been saved. But the Whispered One turned to his barons and spoke to them. 'My lords,' he said, 'the people of this city are ready to surrender it at my discretion, on condition that their lives are spared. However, I will not make peace with them on these terms, nor any others, except with your consent.'

"'Our sagacious master,' replied the barons, 'we advise, and even beg you, to accept the terms they offer.' But the Whispered One did not listen. That very day the mangonels and war-wizards were set up outside the walls. The assault went on for about five hours and then the wizened lord broke the walls of Fleeth with a wave of his hand.

"By the dawn, the heads of citizens were stacked before the burghers. Their own wives and children stared at them foremost. This was the humor of Vecna, and as his final cruelty, he allowed these burghers to depart in peace and guaranteed their safety for the remainders of their sorrowful lives."

—from *The Chronicle of Secret Times* by Uhas of Neheli

Vecna Lives! is a high-level adventure for use with the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. In addition to the rules set, this adventure uses many of the places and people described in the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK® Campaign Set*, the *City of Greyhawk Boxed Set*, and the *GREYHAWK Appendix to the Monstrous Compendia*. These products are necessary to completely use the material given here. Also helpful are the *GREYHAWK® Adventures and Manual of the Planes* rule books. Although the adventure can be played without these products, you will find your task as DM much easier if both are available. In addition, the *Falcon's Revenge*, *Falconmaster*, and *Flames of the Falcon* adventures provide additional material and background on the city of Greyhawk and surrounding lands. Hints and suggestions of what is to come appear in

these adventures, although these may turn out to be only rumors.

Vecna Lives! is intended for a party of six to eight player characters. A balanced mixture of races and classes is recommended and characters should be 12th to 15th level (or the player should have commensurate skill). Since Vecna's powers can be adjusted to the needs of your campaign, player characters should have magical items appropriate to your style of play. It is not recommended that any character begin the adventure possessing an artifact or relic.

Successful completion of this adventure requires steely resolve and steadfastness on the part of both players and DM. This is no surprise for the players—in any adventure they expect to meet challenges that will test, even threaten, their existence. However, because of the high risk in this adventure, the DM must also be prepared to act boldly and decisively.

In short, this adventure is meant to kill characters. If you are a DM who cannot bring himself to kill a player's prized character or one who can be pressured to "give a guy a break," you must be extra strong when running *Vecna Lives!* Beginning with the opening scenes, player characters *will* die here! If you let characters off the hook, allowing them to survive when they should be dead, then the fear that is so important to this module will not be generated.

To this end, you must carefully consider whether you will allow your players to use their favorite player characters in this campaign. If you do, you must be ready to kill these characters—sometimes coldly and harshly. There are many opportunities for characters to die in this adventure



and some of them are quite arbitrary and may even seem unfair. Unless your player can accept the death of a favored character, it may be best to use the player characters provided.

The reason for all this emphasis on character death is quite simple. *Vecna Lives!* is meant to be a nerve-wracking, even terrifying, adventure. You want your players to be scared. One of the most frightening things in an AD&D® game is the complete destruction of a player character. Unless your players feel like they could be annihilated at any moment, they will not get the full enjoyment *Vecna Lives!* has to offer.

The Horror of Vecna

In many ways, *Vecna Lives!* is like a horror movie. Through your descriptions and the vivid imaginations of your players, the adventure tries to evoke an atmosphere of suspense and tension. In a horror movie, the director has a variety of tools to help him scare you out of your seat—editing, music, sound effects, make-up, lighting, and special effects. In addition to these technical tools, he has the full range of dramatic techniques used by all story-tellers—prologues, pacing, misdirection, characterization, pathos, foreshadowing, allusion, and more, all building to a satisfying climax.

Like the director, you, the DM, have a variety of tools and techniques at your disposal. You are in complete control of the story. Role-playing games have their own versions of special effects. Encounters can be edited just like scenes in a movie. Furthermore, you, too, are a storyteller with all the tricks of that trade.

Since this adventure is already prepared, the basic plotting is done for you. Still, since your player characters could easily go off the track, you should bear in mind the elements of a good story

for those times when you have to “wing it.” Read the climax to this module before you start playing the adventure—even if you don’t read anything else in advance. This way you know what the big, final scene is. Then be careful that you don’t top it earlier in the adventure. You don’t want the end to be anticlimactic.

To get the most out of this adventure, you must work carefully to build a suspenseful atmosphere for your players. While the basic tension comes from the adventure itself, more has to come from you. The most challenging adventure in the world can be thoroughly boring if it isn’t told with enthusiasm. After all, being a DM is a lot of work. If you’re doing your job right, you should be exhausted at the end of each gaming session.

Surprise and Suspense

It’s important to know that there is a difference between surprise and suspense. Surprise, yelling “boo!” to make someone leap out of their chair, is a useful technique, but don’t mistake it for suspense. A horror movie or adventure that relies on monsters leaping out from around every corner quickly becomes boring. Everyone starts to anticipate the next “boo!”

Surprise does have its uses, however, and can be a part of suspense. A good sudden scare will make your players feel physically excited—heart racing, rapid breathing, and hands shaking. However, these feelings will quickly pass if you haven’t built any suspense.

Order of Encounters

When you are ready to play, plan your gaming sessions out in advance. Try to plan out the sequence of encounters. Each encounter is like a movie scene. A director puts the scenes of his movie in a certain order do more than to tell his story. The juxtaposition of scenes and the change

from one scene to the next affect the mood of the tale. The example below highlights the difference.

Example #1

Scene 1: The heroes arrive in town on a bright, sunny morning. They find a carter to bring their gear to the castle of Count Draman, their host.

Scene 2: The heroes arrive at the castle and find their host dead, his body pinned to a great chair by a thick spear.

Example #2

Scene 1: The heroes arrive in town in the midst of a howling storm. There is no one in sight. Answering their calls, the carter refuses to go out on such an ill-omened night and the characters are forced to leave their gear in the village. They march through the pouring rain to Count Draman’s castle.

Scene 2: The heroes arrive at the castle and find their host dead, his body pinned to a great chair by a thick spear.

Although both examples describe the same events, each has a very different mood. The first creates surprise, perhaps even mild shock. There are no clues, no warnings of what is to come. The second scene creates a sense of foreboding and dread. The storm and the superstitious carter are hints and suggestions of what is to come. Although cliché and obvious, these clues make the players watchful, perhaps even nervous. Some other useful juxtapositions include the following:

Victory/Defeat: Allowing the player characters to succeed against a seemingly major villain, deadly trap, or a puzzle increases their confidence. This victory may be followed by a stinging defeat or the discovery that their accomplishment was only a small part of something greater and more powerful.

In this adventure, for example, you might end a session with the



player characters discovering the *sword of Kas*, which they will believe is the weapon needed to destroy Vecna. In the next session, they confront Vecna with their treasured weapon, only to discover it is ineffective against him.

This technique must be used sparingly, however. You don't want to take away all your player's accomplishments or they will get discouraged. Wait until they are overconfident and cocky, then give them a reverse and it will remind them that things are not as easy as they seem.

Innocence/Evil: This technique does not involve throwing vampiric killer children at your player characters or having the sweet old granny be an axe-murderer! You can, however, highlight the contrast between good and evil by placing two encounters back-to-back. For example, the players arrive in at a small hut where good and honest folk greet them. These NPCs have no dark secrets or ulterior motives and the characters learn useful information from them. Upon leaving, the player characters cross the ridge and descend into the gloomy valley dominated by the dark castle on the far side. The extreme difference in the two scenes highlights the danger that is always nearby.

Humor/Terror: Laughter, forced or not, is an important release for suspense. Most good horror movies have some elements of fun in them—tense moments that build up to a joke. The line between comedy and terror is slim and laughter can easily be turned to fear. Humor causes players to lower their guard, leaving them vulnerable to new attacks. For example, the player characters are attacked by a bumbling band of cultists—the villains fall down at inopportune moments, get in each other's way, and even faint in terror. In the middle of this comic scene, the evil ghost of Kas floats into the room,

intent on destroying the player characters. The laughter suddenly gives way to fear.

Mood

A vital factor in building suspense is establishing the proper mood. You do this with words and descriptions. Some of the examples above have already shown this. Mood is established through the setting of the encounter and the behavior of NPCs. Storms, suspicious strangers, gloomy castles, dark forests, and more are all fairly standard horror devices to establish a mood. Unfortunately, they are also heavily overused and have lost much of their impact.

Your task is to find ways to make these elements fresh and exciting. You need to find ways to skew them off of player expectations. You need to change the rules of the horror setting.

For example, there is the standard castle illuminated in the night by a bolt of lightning. It has been used so many times that it is something of a joke. Instead, you should find something else to set the mood. The castle is seen by day, in a cold, autumn drizzle. The walls have a greasy, wet sheen to them and the ivy's green leaves are just beginning to turn brown. It could be wintertime and the castle's roofs are covered in sooty snow while curving icicles hang from the eaves. It could be a wonderful spring day with a bright and shining castle, giving no hint of the horrors that lay inside.

Foreshadowing

Suspense is a form of fear. If your players are not afraid, there can be no suspense. So, how do you make players afraid?

To make your players sweat, you must let them know they are in danger before anything actually happens. Take a standard dungeondelving situation—the monsters waiting on the other side of the door.

Which creates more tension—the player characters open the door and discover the monsters, or the player characters hear a strange noise on the other side before they open the door? In the second case, the players suddenly stop and have to judge the amount of risk. They know something is there, but don't know what.

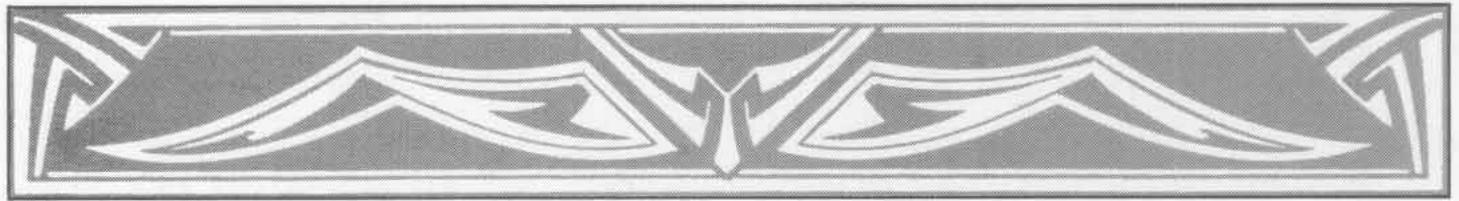
The trick is to give your players hints that they are in danger without revealing enough for them to avoid that danger. In movies, this can be done by showing the audience the threat (the monsters lurking behind the door) but not showing it to the hero (about to open the door). This is a little harder in a role-playing game, since players are both audience and heroes.

You can use foreshadowing techniques to some extent. Fleeting, incomplete, and inaccurate glimpses of the major villains will put characters on their toes. The characters can discover Vecna's grim handiwork just moments after the fact. Ancient manuscripts suggest the full extent of Vecna's power. Even his Hand and his Eye, as powerful artifacts, only suggest the full extent of Vecna's power.

Tricks and Tools

Description and pacing are not the only tools you have to create tension. In a role-playing game, there are a number of other things you can do to drive your players crazy.

Timers and Stopwatches: If you can, bring a kitchen timer or stopwatch to your game. Be sure to put it where the players can see it. Then, when the players are in the middle of a particularly tense situation, where fast decisions must be made, start the timer. Give each player ten seconds (or even less) to say what he will do. Cut the player off at the end of this time—even if he's still describing his actions—and go to the next player. Make sure they see the timer counting



off their seconds. For your part, try to resolve everything quickly, without delays. Keep this pace going until you reach a point where their characters can rest.

Don't do this too often. Timers really increase the pressure the players feel, so you should save this until you really need it. That way, when it happens, they will feel the tension all the more.

Lights: While it's not recommended that you try to play by candlelight (it's too hard on the eyes for one thing), you can do some simple lighting tricks while you play. Dimming the lights (if you can) during scenes that build up to a major encounter can enhance to spookiness of the events. (It can also tip off your players that something is going to happen if you use it more than once or twice.)

Another trick is to turn out the lights completely, plunging your players into unexpected but momentary darkness. This obviously should be saved for those crucial moments when the party is engulfed in darkness, knocked unconscious, etc. A flashlight can then be used to create special effects—although it is no more practical to play by flashlight than by candle.

Sounds: Music is an effective way to build suspense, but it is hard to use without the proper equipment. You simply cannot put on a CD, tape, or record and let it play while you game. You must be able to control the timing and choice of music.

CD players with remote control are particularly useful for this. Before the session, select the CD or CDs you think appropriate, noting down the track numbers. Write these on a sheet of paper, including the effect or mood they create. Then, during play, you can use the remote to key up the track you want when you need it. The remote also enables you to turn off the music

when you no longer need it.

Not everyone has access to CD players and remotes. With planning, a portable tape player can do the same thing. In this case you will need to select not only the music, but also the order you will need it in. Once you've done that, you can make a tape of the pieces you need. Earphones (so you can cue the tape to the correct spot during play) are helpful.

Finally, a pocket dictaphone tape-recorder can be used the same way. The sound quality will not be the best, but most have a cue feature that enables you to jump forward and backward on the tape quickly. Furthermore, you can record your own sound effects (including dialogue).

Good sources for sounds and music are sound effects records, movie soundtracks, and anthropological folk recordings ("Chants of the New Guinea Tribesmen" or other such "primitive" music). Some of these may be available at your local library.

Secrecy: A few minor precautions will go a long way toward keeping your adventure suspenseful. An often forgotten practice is to simply keep the name of the adventure a secret. Don't tell the players they are playing an adventure titled *Vecna Lives!* If you do, you can be sure those players who know something of Vecna will suspect anything and everything. While that might be good for a while, it will ultimately spoil the adventure.

If possible, keep this adventure hidden—don't even show your players the cover. Plead innocence if they accuse you of using it. Make up a fake adventure name if they ask what they're playing. Only after the characters are well into the adventure (far enough that they can't back out), should you spring the true title and purpose on them.

The Story of Vecna

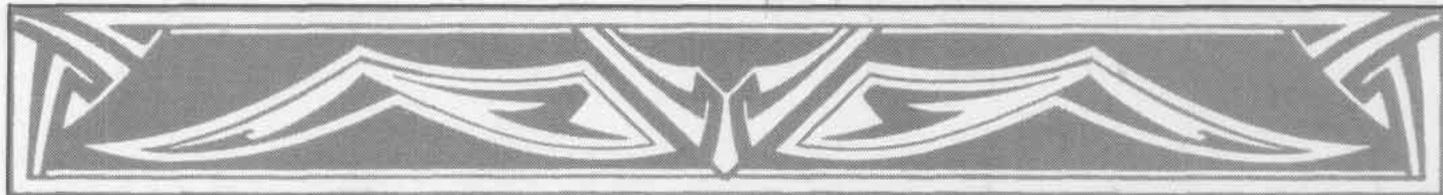
Vecna is very much a figure of mystery. He dates back to a time of near-prehistory in Greyhawk, before the migrations, before the wars between Suel and Baklunish, perhaps even before the ascendancy of the Suloise Empire itself. He is a figure more of legend than fact and, like all legends, there are embellishments, exaggerations, distortions, contradictions, and confusions attached to his name.

The following information about Vecna is a collection of truth, contradiction, and misinformation. It's not meant to give a precise background of this mighty archlich. Instead, it represents the confusing picture the player characters are likely to gain if they research Vecna's history.

In his time, Vecna was considered the mightiest of all wizards, unsurpassed in his knowledge of all the arcane arts. From the loneliest chamber of a black tower, he ruled over a now-forgotten nation. Some say his realm was beyond the great mountains to the west. Another theory holds his tower once rose from the very depths of the Nyr Dyv. A few writers even go so far as to claim Vecna's dominion extended over another plane and that he was ultimately destroyed by a revolt of the greater powers that dwelled there!

Even in life, Vecna's strictness and cruelty were infamous. He built a great kingdom based on his wizardly skills and his fiendish cruelty. Some tales claim he bred entire villages like cattle, simply to keep his foul laboratories supplied with subjects for his experiments. Others describe military campaigns where he annihilated entire cities beneath tidal waves of rock and earth. Old tales from the Duchy of Urnst even claim Vecna was responsible for the creation of the Bright Desert!

With time, like all things human (although some tales claim he was



half-elven), Vecna grew old and neared death. The black oblivion caused no terror in him, only anger and rage. He was determined not to die and in his conceit came to believe that immortality was not merely possible, but was his right. He began a search for the ultimate power needed to overcome the Greater Power, Death.

What happened next is not known for sure, as no witness from this time set his words to parchment. According to some tales, Vecna amassed enough power to confront his own death and forever imprison it, thus escaping his doom. According to others, Vecna's pride and arrogance so offended the Greater Powers of the outer planes that cursed him to dwell forever on the border between life and death, never again to fully live or rest in tranquil death. A third version is that Vecna found the secret magic of life and thus transformed himself into the most powerful of lichens.

Whatever the method, there is no doubt that Vecna entered a new stage of his foul history. Beyond death, he became the greatest of all lichens. Even though his body gradually withered and decayed, Vecna remained "alive" and continued to expand his evil dominion. So formidable and hideous was his temper that men feared to speak his name. Lord Vecna was the Whispered One, the Master of the Spider Throne, the Undying King, and the Lord of the Rotted Tower.

It was during this time that Kas the Bloody-Handed rose to the fore among Vecna's lieutenants. As the arch-lich's body weakened, Kas became his instrument of rule. Though still supreme in his power, Vecna took less and less interest in the daily affairs of his kingdom. Kas pronounced Vecna's judgments, presided over the Council in Vecna's name, and heard the reports from Lord Vecna's foul army.

As a sign of Kas's authority (and to protect his lieutenant from the intrigues of others), Vecna forged the sword of Kas, a magical weapon like none ever known. Tale-spinners say its iron was taken from the heart of a frozen star and forged in flames stolen from the sun. Though dull and unadorned, it shimmered with evil. Its edge could bite any metal and its blade never dulled. When Kas wielded it, no man could withstand him.

Fashioned by Vecna's hand, the sword was evil, even when compared to its creator. It whispered to Kas in secret voices, feeding the warrior's pride and vanity. "You are greater now than your master," it said. "You are the true ruler of all his lands." Slowly it seduced him, urging him to usurp Vecna's throne and send the arch-lich to death forever. And gradually Kas came to believe its words.

At last, emboldened by the sword's sweet voice, Kas struck at his lord. No man saw the battle, but with its end Vecna's dark tower crumbled into dust, leaving only the sword and a pile of ash. The body of Kas was never found. Of Vecna, all that remained were his lifeless Hand and Eye.

In the millennium and centuries that passed, these three objects have surfaced time and again, first in one distant land and then another. Each time, their discovery brings great power and ultimately great woe, for the evil of their masters still lingers within them.

But the history of the artifacts is not all that remains to be told of Vecna. His will, evil and perverted, was too powerful to be destroyed when his body perished. For untold centuries it drifted, refusing to surrender. Strangely, small traces of power flowed to it, the energy of worshipers on Oerth. Even one as depraved as Vecna attracted those who revered and adored him.

Gradually, Vecna's cult grew and

he assumed the powers of a demigod. The process took a long time—gathering his power, responding to his worshipers, and settling himself among the greater powers. Vecna persevered and eventually reached the point where he was accepted as a minor demigod in the legions of evil.

Guaranteed immortality, Vecna was still not satisfied. With his scheming mind, he has devised a plan to ascend to greater godhood and humble his rival deities. With his usual long patience, Vecna has been working on this plan for centuries. Working through his avatar or others, the Whispered One has carefully found seven magical items. Each item has been placed in a secret location, the position strategic to his plans.

These items, when fully powered, will cast a mystical web of energy over all of Oerth, cutting off all other gods from their followers. Already they are creating interference on a local scale. Only Vecna will receive the adulation of his worshipers; the other gods will weaken and leave the path open for Vecna to rise to the fore. Then the Whispered One will open the gates of time and bring forth his faithful followers from the past. Feeding on their devotions, Vecna will become the greatest of gods.

There is only one difficulty that remains for Vecna—finding his Eye and Hand. They are the final keys to fully empower the web, the final keys that open the gate of time. He knows not where these are. In the final confrontation with Kas, when they were sundered from his body, the gods (perhaps foreseeing his powers) hid them from his senses. Vecna cannot detect their energies; he can only find them by seeing their effects on others, much like finding a boat by the wake it creates. Too many times he has come close, only to have them escape his grasp. This time, he is determined not to fail.



Prologue

Wherein the Circle of Eight Begins a Membership Drive

This short prologue sets the mood and tone for the rest of this adventure. In it, you will give out pregenerated player characters (all powerful wizards) and then, almost as quickly, kill off the entire party. Only after these wizards are dead will you introduce the regular characters, the ones used for the rest of the adventure.

Although this seems extreme and unfair, you should play the prologue this way. By doing so, you are going to make a very clear point to your players—this module is dangerous! Especially since the permanent characters are lower level than those who have been slain!

The Circle of Eight

Begin the adventure by giving your players copies of the Circle of Eight character sheets (found at the back of this book). Explain that they are about to begin a special adventure, one that requires the skills and backgrounds of these player characters. (If this doesn't work, do whatever you can to convince the players to accept these characters and no others. You don't want them using their own player characters at this time.)

Allow the players to select their favorite character from the Eight. If you have fewer than eight players, have each player choose one character and set the others aside. If you have more than eight players (which is not recommended), some players will have to sit and watch at this time. Assure them that you will find a way to get them into the game very shortly.

After the players have chosen their characters, read the following:

Oh, the life of a powerful wizard! As a callow youth, you were certain it was the life of luxury and excitement—easy living, riches and power with the wave of a hand.

Of course, your old masters never told you about the other part—the responsibility for lives of entire villages, cities, even lands. Of course, it's an honor to be part of the Circle of Eight, guiding and protecting Greyhawk. Naturally, you have to do it all in secrecy, acting behind the scenes so you don't mock the mayor's authority. And equally naturally, you never get the credit.

Now, through divinations (or rather, their failure), you've sensed some great danger to Greyhawk. And not just you, either. All your fellow wizards at the Guild of Wizardry have sensed something ominous. Whatever it is, Mordenkainen, leader of your circle, is worried. He wants the best, the cream of the crop, to investigate this mystery.

After reading this text, tell your players that their PCs are standing outside a small, forgotten mound in the Kron Hills west of Greyhawk. The wizards' divinations, communes, and other spells have led them to this spot. They know only a little—a great danger is growing, one that will threaten Greyhawk, and that this cairn is connected to (but not the source of) that danger.

At this point the players will cer-

tainly have questions. Allow them to ask what they want. Answer their questions, within the limitations and guidelines below.

Where are we? Somewhere in the Kron Hills. Do not tell the players the precise location at this time, since part of the adventure is to discover what became of the Circle of Eight—the players will know they are all dead, but the second group of PCs will not know where or how.

Why are we here? Mordenkainen, leader of the Circle of Eight, sent you. The divinations, while not precise, strongly suggest that some danger is building for Greyhawk.

What is the danger? Nobody knows—and that is what's worrisome. Something of great power is affecting all divinations concerning the future of the City of Greyhawk. It does not seem to affect divinations into other topics, only those concerning the fate of the city or the cause of the disruption.

So why send the Circle of Eight? Anything powerful enough to disrupt the divinations of the Circle of Eight must be investigated. If it is strong enough to interfere with your spells, then can anybody less than the Circle of Eight hope to succeed? Furthermore, secrecy is vital. Mordenkainen and the other wizards in Greyhawk are already having difficulty keeping the affair to themselves. If the priests get wind of it, who knows what panic they might create? Finally, there is a matter of honor. Should it get out that the Circle of Eight cannot handle the problem, the prestige of the group is going to suffer a severe blow.

How did we find this place? After setting out (in secret) from Greyhawk, you have spent several



days homing in on this point. It has been something like a children's game of hot or cold. Right now, you are very hot. There is no doubt this cairn is somehow related to your troubles.

What do we do now? Well, probably, you should investigate the mound. Don't you agree?

The Mound

From the outside, this cairn (see the Burial Mound map) appears to be an unexceptional member of that category. Standing in the center of a wooded hollow, the mound rises above the surrounding slough. The ground here is wet, sucking and thick with moss, but is not hazardous to cross.

The cairn rises to form an uneven mound 15 feet high on average. The sides, once steep, are rounded and covered with moss and vines. Several small saplings have taken root there. The top is thick with plants, even massive oaks, a testimony to the age of this cairn. Along the southern edge, the earth has sagged and collapsed inward to reveal a root-choked passageway lined with heavy blocks of stone.

The inside of the mound contains a few simple passages and chambers. These are all built from megalithic stones, cunningly fitted together. The ceiling slabs once had thick beams as additional support. These beams have long since rotted away. Many of the ceiling stones are cracked by their own weight. These have been further weakened by the thick tangle of tree roots that have forced their way down from above. These roots must be cleared away for characters to move through the passages.

Furthermore, violence to the slabs (sudden temperature shifts, explosive forces, abrupt movements, etc.) caused by magical forces run a 10% chance of causing a collapse. The stone in a five-foot area gives way, cascading rock

and dirt into the tomb. Anyone beneath a collapse suffers 1d10 points of damage. Fortunately, the tree roots keep such collapses from becoming worse. A collapse will not block a passage, but characters must spend a round to cross it.

The entire mound radiates an aura of magic. This is caused by the magical protections that were placed on it (to keep its occupant trapped inside.) In most of the passages, the characters gain a +2 bonus to saving throws, while evil creatures suffer a -2 penalty to their attack rolls. This protective modifier does not apply to the final chamber (Room 7), where the strength of evil has been too strong. Furthermore, once inside the mound, characters cannot use *passwall*, *dimension door*, *teleport*, or similar spells to escape. These magical blocks were built to prevent the imprisoned occupant from leaving.

The Occupant of the Mound

The mound is the grave of Halmadar the Cruel. Actually, he was not buried but interred alive by his followers. During his time, which was more than a century ago, Halmadar came into possession of the Eye and Hand of Vecna. These artifacts gave him, already a powerful fighter, enough power to become the evil master of several counties to the north. The artifacts further corrupted his already vile spirit, transforming him from merely cruel to sadistically evil.

Finally his subjects could not bear any more. After several unsuccessful attempts, they managed to drug their lord into a deep sleep. Miraculously for them, the powers of the Hand and Eye suddenly failed at that point. Still, fearing they would be cursed for shedding noble blood, the conspirators choose instead to imprison Halmadar within his own burial mound. Here they assumed he

would die of starvation. For additional safety, they sealed the mound with powerful enchantments, preventing the cruel lord from escaping.

He did starve to death, but that was far from the end of him. Although the Hand and Eye failed to save him from capture, their evil energies have transformed his body into a quasi-lich state. Not a lich, since he lacks the necessary magical formulae, Halmadar is a gaunt, undying creature. He still has flesh and bones, and his body has resisted decay, but the skin is withered and drawn tight. At first glance he looks like one of the walking dead—grave pale and bony. He is suspended, however, between life and death. He is not an undead and so does not have their immunities or weaknesses. Nor is he alive, with all the benefits and problems that condition entails. Furthermore, Halmadar is completely dominated by the artifacts and believes himself to be Vecna. He does not know his own name, and only responds to the title Lord Vecna. (He is referred to as Vecna/Halmadar, hereafter.) The artifacts, of course, sense otherwise. The Eye and the Hand, their powers restored, await something or someone—the player characters—to provide the key to Vecna's return.

Investigating the Mound

Even before the player characters enter the mound, the adventure is underway. Vecna/Halmadar is instantly warned (through his *foresight*) of the arrival of the Circle of Eight. He immediately uses his *clairvoyance* and *ESP* to investigate the player characters. Vecna/Halmadar can scan them before they cast any spells (if they choose to). The result for each character is as follows:

Tenser—invisible, unreadable
Bigby—visible, unreadable
Otto—visible, readable

Drawmij—visible, readable
Nystul—visible, readable
Rary—visible, unreadable
Otiluke—visible, readable
Jallarzi—visible, readable

At this point, pay attention to the conversation and actions of the player characters. Vecna/Halmaradar knows everything the player characters discuss. The words of unreadable characters can be deduced from the thoughts of others (and their own actions). Although Tenser is himself completely undetectable (i.e., he cannot be seen or read), the presence of an eighth person should be evident from the thoughts of others and possibly even the actions viewed. (Imagine a movie where one character has been carefully removed from the frame.) Vecna/Halmaradar takes whatever cautions seem appropriate, based on the preparations of the player characters.

If the player characters scan the burial mound itself (through *clairvoyance*, *ESP*, or other scrying methods, they won't see Vecna/Halmaradar. He is completely concealed by the permanent nondetection abilities of the artifacts. However, the scrying character can see every other detail of the mound.

After scrying the party and determining their route, Vecna/Halmaradar uses his *monster summoning IV* power twice, obtaining an ankheg and three fire toads. The creatures are dispatched to the first chamber of the cairn, to ambush the player characters (the ankheg clears the roots away). The once-human creature then returns to his scrying. Vecna/Halmaradar figures these beasts will not weaken or slow the player characters. He does this more for his own amusement and also to see how the group functions in combat.

1. Entrance

The side of the mound has sagged inward at this point, revealing a dark passage beyond. Damp air, thick with the odor of moldering earth, hangs around the entrance. Thick roots clog the passage.

The ancient outer door that once closed this barrow has long since collapsed. The opening is small, but one turn of digging can clear away the broken stone, loose dirt, and thick roots that block the entrance.

The passage inside is also choked with roots. These can be cleared by cutting (at the rate of ten feet per turn) or by magical means. A *fireball* or similar spell will instantly eradicate them, but such a method runs the risk of causing a collapse.

2. The Outer Seal

The passage ends in a solid block of curved stone, carefully cut and set in place. There is some kind of carving on the stone, but patches of thick, red fungus cover parts of it.

The patches of fungus are russet mold. Characters who get close enough to study the carvings will inhale the spores of the mold. Once the mold is cleared away, the writing proves to be magical. If read (through use of a spell), it is clearly some type of protective inscription against evil.

It is a logical surmise that the inscription was placed to keep things out. It was, however, placed to keep Vecna/Halmaradar in. This is not evident from studying the carving, however.

The seal is mortared into place

and gives no evidence that there is a chamber beyond. It can be bashed down by items or spells capable of causing siege attack damage. It has 10 hit points for this purpose. Hammers and picks can reduce the seal to rubble in 1d4 + 1 hours. Some spells, such as *stone shape* or *passwall*, can be used to get through. However, a *knock* spell has no effect, since the seal is not a door and was never intended to open.

Russet Mold (1): AC 9; MV 0; HD nil; hp nil; THACO 15; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA Spores; SD Immune to weapons, cold, fire; SZ S; ML nil; AL N

3. The Vaulted Chamber

This circular chamber arches up perhaps ten feet. It is difficult to tell, since half the chamber is a tangle of tree roots. The floor is a litter of broken bits of stone and dirt, but at the far side is a large carved block. Off to the right is another archway, free of the tangling roots. Just ahead of you sit three squat toads.

The toads are the fire toads summoned by Vecna/Halmaradar (if he had time). The ankheg is hidden in the tangle of tree roots overhead. The beast is cunning enough to use the toads as bait for its victims.

The toads breathe as soon as the archway is opened (provided they are not surprised). The ankheg waits until it is either injured (by an area effect spell) or a victim passes underneath. Then it will dangle down from above, strike at its target, and attempt to pull the character back into the mass of roots overhead. Otiluke is easy to pull up, while Otto is far too heavy to lift. Any other character attacked requires a check to see if the roots hold (80% chance they hold). If the roll fails, roots, victim,



ankheg, and ceiling all come crashing down. The victim, ankheg, and anyone underneath suffer 1d10 points of damage from the falling stone. The ankheg fights to the death.

The stone slab on the far side of the chamber was intended as the sarcophagus of Halmadar's queen. With his hurried interment, it was never used. The lid can be lifted off by four strong men. Inside there is nothing but dust and a few insects.

The passage to the heart of the mound is free of the tangling roots, cleared by the ankheg when it entered the chamber.

Ankheg (1): AC 2, underside 4; MV 12, Br 6; HD 5+2; hp 30; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (crush) +1d4 (acid); SA squirt acid; SZ L-H; ML 9; AL N

Fire Toad (3): AC 10; MV 6, hop 6; HD 4+1; hp 22, 20, 15; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8 (fireball); SA fireball; SZ S; ML 10; AL CN

4. Magical Trap

Cast upon the stonework floor here is a modified *forcecage*. Through the use of a *wish*, this spell has been rigged to spring into being if a human steps on the space. Once up, the magical cage remains until dispelled.

The cage can be detected by a *find traps* spell or similar means. As with the outer seal, it is natural for the characters to assume the trap was built to keep intruders out, but again, it is intended to hold Vecna/Halmadar in, should he break through the inner seal.

5. Pit

The passage here is blocked by a large, rough-sided pit. Apparently a section of the old stone floor has caved in, leaving this gaping hole. Sludgy, black water fills the bottom.

The pit averages 15 feet deep, of which the bottom five feet is water. The walls are nothing but crumbling dirt and even the stone facings of the old passage are precariously balanced over the hole. Attempting to climb around the walls is very dangerous even with the aid of *spider climb* or similar spells. There is a 70% chance the wall breaks away in pieces, dropping the character into the pool below. If this happens while the character is clinging to the stone facings of the old wall, the block will also fall, along with most of the ceiling here, causing 2d10 points of damage to the character. When the dirt settles, daylight shines through a hole to daylight in the top of the mound.

Living at the bottom of the pit is a colony of crystal ooze. It has lived here for years, thriving on the small animals, insects, and tree roots that have tunneled down into the mound. In the murky water at the bottom of the pit, it is 90% undetectable.

Crystal Ooze (1): AC 8; MV 1, Sw 3; HD 4; hp 18; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SA poison; SD immune to acid, cold, fire, weapons cause lessened damage; SZ M; ML 10; AL N

6. The Inner Seal

The hallway ends in another thick slab of stone. It is heavily carved with magical inscriptions. Reading these causes no harm to the characters (although this requires a *read magic* spell), but it does reveal that a powerful protective seal still functions on the stone. The seal is a powerful protection device, like none the characters have ever seen before. They might be able to deduce the school of magic functioning here, but they cannot learn its purpose without an *identify* spell.

As long as the inscriptions remain, the stone cannot be affected by magic or blows. It cannot be de-

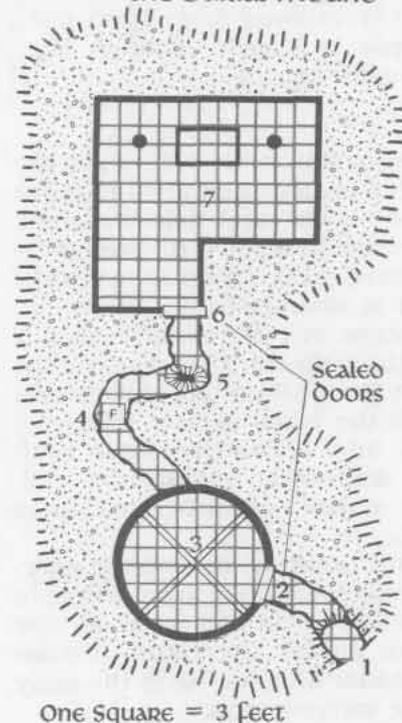
stroyed, nor can spells such as *passwall* or *dimension door* grant access through it. The enchantment can be partially broken with a *dispel magic*, but the seal was created by a 20th-level wizard.

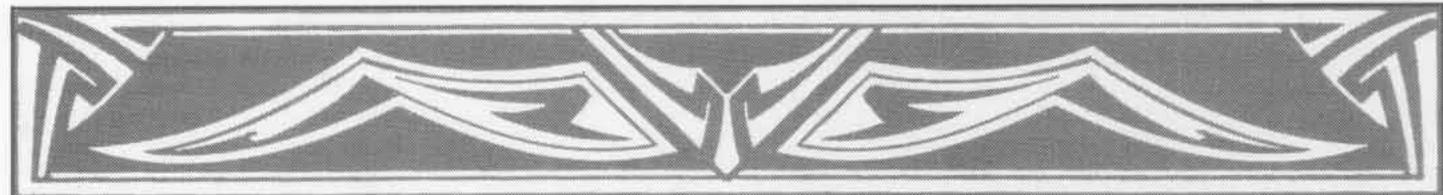
Once the enchantment has been removed, the stone can be destroyed by any ordinary means. Breaking the stone takes 10 points of damage from a weapon or spell causing siege damage. Otherwise, spells can be used to open a route through the rock.

7. Vecna / Halmadar's Prison

This room is by far the largest in the mound. It is crammed with ancient burial offerings. These have long since corroded, withered, and rotted, leaving only ghost-like husks of what they once were. Piled haphazardly along the walls are large

Prologue:
The Burial Mound





pots with faded glazes, wooden chairs that crumble at a touch, and bronze art pieces, crusted in green patina. Even the walls of the chamber speak of past opulence, since they are covered with strange, clearly magical writings. A large stone platform fills one end of the chamber; atop it is an elaborately carved sarcophagus. The wood has begun to rot away, and a husk-like corpse is visible through the holes in the side.

The writings on the walls are similar in form and style to those found on the seal just breached. They radiate a powerful *protection from evil* spell. This strong aura of good is counter-balanced by the immense evil of Vecna/Halmadar and the artifacts. Thus, most of the room gives off no particular aura, while the walls radiate faintly of good and Vecna/Halmadar radiates somewhat stronger of evil. The entire chamber radiates magic.

Unfortunately, the player characters are not likely to have time to notice all this. As soon as the group enters the room, Vecna/Halmadar attacks. He is the body in the sarcophagus.

You must control the upcoming battle, since you want the player characters to lose. On the first round, Vecna/Halmadar wins the initiative. (If you must, you can justify this because of Vecna/Halmadar's *foresight* and his innate spellcasting ability, both of which give him the edge in this battle. If he loses the initiative for any reason, remember that his 70% magic resistance will shield him from the PCs' attacks. (It is strongly recommended that you secretly roll the dice and then announce the attack had no effect.)

Prior to the group's entrance, Vecna/Halmadar used his *eyebite* power (charm). Vecna/Halmadar's first action is to use his *monster summoning IV* power. This causes three gargoyles to appear behind the party, blocking the exit. The player characters will hear a small click (the snap of fingers) and then suddenly the shuffling and roaring of the gargoyles. At this point, Vecna/Halmadar has not revealed his presence.

In the next round, as the players turn to deal with the monsters, Vecna/Halmadar uses his *time stop* power. Within its radius, it will affect all the player characters (no saving throw). The effect lasts for three rounds. In that time, Vecna/Halmadar bursts out of his

coffin and kills the six least-damaged player characters (held characters can be automatically slain and the quasi-lich has two attacks per round), breaking their necks with the strength of the Hand of Vecna. He also makes three attacks with his *eyebite*, attempting to charm one or more of the surviving characters.

Since the player characters are frozen in time, describe the quasi-lich's movements as a blinding blur. They hear a high-pitched cackling, like a record spinning too fast. ("I'm Vecna! Vecna! You fools have released me!" or words to that effect.)

When the spell wears off, six of the player characters drop to the ground, dead. The gargoyles are not where they were when the battle began. The gargoyles, outside the area of effect, have moved to surround the group as much as possible. Spells planned by the survivors may be cast into empty air.

In the following round, Vecna/Halmadar automatically gains the initiative, simply because he seems to have appeared out of nowhere. He uses his instant death touch (no saving throw) to slay another character. He also makes his last *eyebite* attempt to charm the remaining character. Meanwhile, the gargoyles close in on the survivor.

After this, Vecna/Halmadar uses his *cone of cold* power (20d4 + 20 points of damage). If the character is still standing after this attack, he is subjected to a second cone, unless obviously immune to the first. Should this be the case, Vecna/Halmadar tries one of his other attacks—either a touch to *cause serious wounds* or *disintegrate*.

At some point, the player characters may want to escape (probably after the quasi-lich has handily killed several of the party.) Unfortunately, part of the same magic that binds Vecna/Halmadar in this chamber blocks the use of *passwall*, *dimension door*, and



teleport spells. Only when the characters are free of the mound can they use spells to flee.

To summarize, Vecna/Halmaradar the quasi-lich attacks as follows:

Round 1: Gargoyles are summoned and appear in the hall behind player characters. This signals the beginning of combat.

Round 2: Characters state their actions. Characters and gargoyles roll for initiative. Regardless of outcome, Vecna/Halmaradar acts first, using his *time stop*.

A. First round of *time stop*: Vecna kills two characters, attempts to charm third, gargoyles move out of the way.

B. Second round of *time stop*: Vecna kills two characters, attempts to charm third.

C. Third round of *time stop*: Vecna kills two characters attempts to charm third (if necessary).

Characters come out of *time stop* and take their action. Vecna/Halmaradar suddenly appears behind them. Gargoyles have moved to different positions. Six characters fall dead, throats crushed.

Round 3: Characters check for surprise. If not surprised, characters state actions and initiative is rolled. Vecna/Halmaradar wins. Touches and slays character. Gargoyles attack remaining character (if gargoyles are still alive).

Round 4: Normal initiative is rolled. Vecna/Halmaradar uses his *cone of cold*.

Rounds 5+: Normal combat. Vecna/Halmaradar attacks to kill the remaining character.

Gargoyles (3): AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15; HD 4+4; hp 29, 21, 20, 11; THACO 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; AL CE

Vecna/Halmaradar, Quasi-lich: AC 0; MV 12; F20; hp 89; THACO 5; #AT 2; Dmg special; SA Eye and Hand; SD Eye and Hand of Vecna; SZ M; AL LE

After the Battle

As soon as the battle is over, your players are likely to be in shock over the swift, ruthless nature of their party's demise. Good role-players should be able to deal with this (and truly clever ones may intuitively understand the overall purpose of the scene). If you can, let the shock of what has happened slowly sink in. That will give it greater impact.

However, not all players may be so calm. Some may become angry and accuse you of being unfair. (Which, of course, you were—the characters were never supposed to stand a chance.) Keep your own temper, and blame the designer of this adventure if you must.

After everyone has accepted their fate, tell your players to turn in their character sheets. These characters are dead. Then begin with Chapter 1.

The Fate of the Circle

By the end of this section, you've just destroyed the entire secret ruling class of the City of Greyhawk, the keepers of the Balance, and the watchdogs against the rise of chaos or tyranny. Now there's nothing to check either the forces of Law or Chaos.

Well, yes. This sudden power vacuum in Greyhawk is intentional. Events are building in all of the Flanaess, world-shattering events that may someday lead to an even greater adventure for your players. While this adventure does not deal with those events, some of the seeds are intentionally planted here. The disappearance of the Circle of Eight is one of these events.

Good riddance, you say. Of course, that's only if you don't need them and never used them. Now that they are gone, future player characters may be able to assume the roles they held.

If you cannot run your campaign without the Circle of Eight, or if you just have a fondness for those

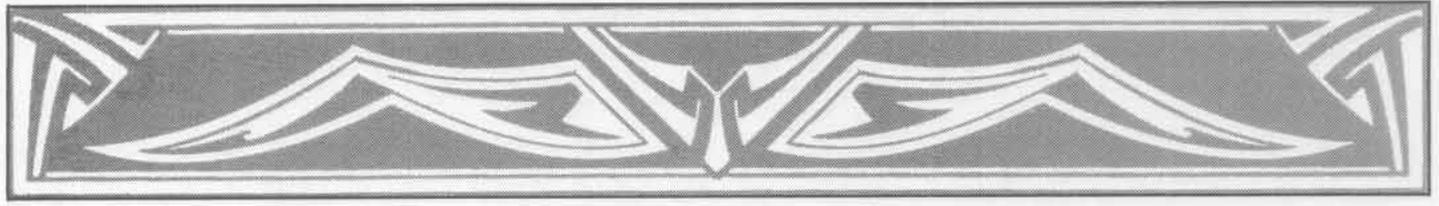
famous old wizards, take heart. Dead doesn't mean gone forever—especially not with powerful spell-casters. There are several ways to recover or replace the Circle of Eight (if you do bring them back, keep them out of circulation for at least a year):

1) True, Tenser, Bigby, and all the others were just killed, but that doesn't mean there aren't more of them. Each wizard took the precaution of leaving a little bit of himself to be cloned. Even now, the mystical signals have been sent to begin the process. Of course, the clones won't be ready for almost a year.

2) Although Vecna/Halmaradar takes care to destroy every shred of his victims, *resurrection* or *reincarnation* are still possible. Gathering some small trace of the departed will require at least one *wish*, maybe more, for each character. After that, a *resurrection* attempt can be made. Again, this process will take a very long time. Few outsiders will suspect anything, since it is hardly unusual for Rary or the others to disappear for months at a time.

3) It may be that Nystul and the others are unrecoverable. Their names are now the stuff of history. Still, their deaths need not become common knowledge. Impostors, seeing a good thing, might try to take their place. "Sure, that Drawmij might be an imposter, but what if you accuse him and you're wrong?" A skilled con man with a little magical talent could probably keep the deception going for months, even years. Reputation carries as much weight as deeds.

4) If the Circle of Eight really is irrevocably destroyed, it is not going to be common knowledge. Mordenkainen and others will try to keep it secret. Eventually, they will look for new recruits. Who is in the Circle of Eight is not important; that the Circle of Eight exists is vital, however.



Chapter 1:

A New Beginning

After you have destroyed the Circle of Eight, you are ready to begin again. Hand the player copies of the second set of pregenerated characters—the Followers of the Eight. The adventure will work best if each player takes the appropriate follower of the wizard he just played. This will strengthen the feeling of urgency for the player, urgency to discover just what did happen to his previous character. The relationships between wizards and followers are given below.

Bigby—Ortux (paladin)
Drawmij—Allentar (thief)
Jallarzi—Marial (mage)
Nystul—Yars (fighter)
Otiluke—Imiric (ftr/ill)
Otto—Johanna (priest)
Rary—Torik (priest)
Tenser—Cymria (ftr/mage)

Of course, players may want to change characters for a number of reasons. Allow this. Do not force any player to use a character he does not feel comfortable with, if at all possible.

After handing out the character sheets, have the players read through the character backgrounds. It helps if each player then gives a brief description of himself to the others, telling as much or as little as he cares to. Each character sheet also includes a listing of the character's attitudes toward the other members of the party. These are meant to increase the role-playing aspect of the game. Players are not bound to these. Should the descriptions prove to be disruptive, you can ignore them.

No equipment or money is given on the character sheets. Simply tell your players they have sufficient funds to buy any equipment they need. (For larger items, such as ships, you may limit this to hiring the vessel and crew.) Likewise, each character has money on hand for daily expenses and reasonable bribes. Players cannot share or trade

magical items listed on their PCs' sheets. Each character must make do with what is given to him. Items found during the course of the adventure can be divided up as the players wish.

Once the players are comfortable with their new characters, you can begin the adventure.

You are peacefully going about your afternoon business (whatever that might be). Even though nothing has happened in the city, you can feel an undercurrent of tension. Your old companion (Tenser, etc.) has been particularly secretive of late, poking through old books and burying himself deep in the libraries of the city. Come to think of it, you haven't seen him for a couple of days.

All at once, fiery lances of pain rip through your skull! The pain is powerful, and in it you see a vision.

Each character has a vision of the death of his companion wizard. If you can, describe to each player the death scene of his particular friend. Make them wrenching, but don't ever give the players a clear description of where or who killed the Circle of Eight.

From the vision, the characters are certain the Circle of Eight is dead. At this point, the players may want their characters to get together so they can do something. This can be done, but the player characters know each other only marginally, having met just a few times. These meetings were enough for each character to form snap judgments about the others.

After the pain subsides, the characters receive no more visions. Nor do they suffer any aftereffects. However, one image remains strong in their mind—the face of their dying friend and the thought “Warn Mordenkainen!” This request is espe-

cially urgent and will not leave their minds until they carry it out.

Off to See the Wizard

There's only one difficulty with delivering a mysterious message to a reclusive and powerful wizard—where do you find him? He doesn't advertise his location and he doesn't like uninvited guests.

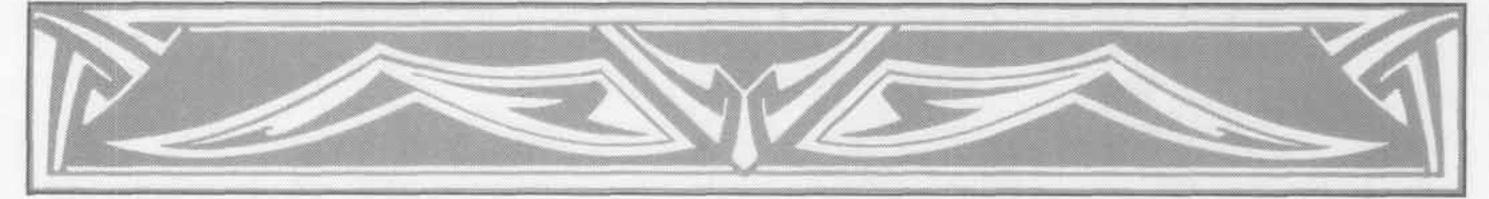
Since the characters are friends of the Circle of Eight, they are not without some information about Mordenkainen and his habits. They know he lives in a mountain castle far from Greyhawk and that he almost never visits the city he seeks to protect. Cymria remembers Mordenkainen often spent his time at Tenser's stronghold on the Nyr Dyv. Without Tenser's invitation, it would not be wise to go there.

The best place to gain more information is at the Guild of Wizardry. (Complete information on this Guild and its members can be found in the *City of Greyhawk Campaign set*.)

At the Guild, the Porters—the gruff dwarven guards—allow only Marial and Cymria (both Guild members) to enter, politely greeting them with “A fine day to you, Miss Marial,” and “The guildhall is brightened by your presence, Miss Cymria.” The remaining characters are blocked at the door.

If the mages try to bring in the rest of the party, the Porter of the Watch says, “I'm very sorry, miss, but I don't see them on the list of today's guests.” He reminds the mages that guests must be entered in the book (behind him) by evening of the day before. “And we can't go changing the rules now.” He adamantly refuses to let the rest of the party in.

Your players should know better than to try to force their way in. If not, have them quickly captured or rendered helpless by strange and powerful magical effects (of your own devising). The porters will scowl at the two mages and say, “I'm afraid this



will come up before the Membership Committee, ladies."

Inside, the mages can seek information from a number of different sources. These are the following:

- * General gossip
- * Kieren Jalucian, Master of the Guild
- * Darnak Khorshkan, Head Porter
- * Jawal Severnain, Librarian
- * Kondradis Bubka, Mage of Exchange
- * Heironymous Tigana, Alchemist
- * Tobin Potriades, Senior Tutor
- * Ephraim Blackrod, Master of Ceremonies

General Gossip: Spending the afternoon mingling with the visiting wizards and senior students of the University, you don't really learn much about Mordenkainen. Most of those you talk to have never met him, although they have heard of him. A few have seen him once or twice, but it is always at least several months ago.

Kieren Jalucian: Surprisingly, the Master of the Guild makes time in his busy schedule to meet with the characters. (It seems he is a paramour of Marial's friend, Jallarzi.) The characters have met Jalucian before and know he is normally a carefree and friendly man. Today, however, he seems worried and concerned.

Before offering anything, he wants to hear to the characters' reasons for seeking Mordenkainen. The news of Jallarzi's apparent death comes as a severe blow to him. He sags back in his chair, barely able to suppress his tears.

After he regains his composure, Kieren tells the characters what he knows.

"It's a great secret, you must understand. Only a few of us know, although the rumors are spreading. It was first noticed about six months ago by Master Bubka. His *superior identification* spell was acting strangely. The subsequent investigation revealed a number of our powerful divinations were inexplicably failing.

"We didn't want to create a panic, so the Guild kept quiet about their

discoveries. I talked this over with Jallarzi, and she agreed. I know about her position on the Circle of Eight, you see. The next thing I know, Mordenkainen has come from his mountains to pay me a visit. He wanted to know everything we had learned. And now you say my beloved Jallarzi might be dead...."

Kieren ends his story, slumped behind his great desk. For the moment, the will seems drained out of him. If the characters press him about finding Mordenkainen, he rouses himself and apologizes. "I forgot. Mordenkainen gave me this," he says, taking a ring from his desk. "He said I should use it when I have learned more. Gather your friends tonight at the Roc and Oliphant in Clerkborg. Then, we will see what happens." With that, the interview is over.

(The Roc and Oliphant is located at C14 on the City of Greyhawk map. In description is given on page 71 of the *Gem of the Flanaess* book. Both of these are found in the *City of Greyhawk Campaign Set*.)

Darnak Khorshkan: The sturdy dwarven porter naturally knows Mordenkainen, since no one enters the Guild without passing his gate. This does not mean he will talk about the wizard. Darnak does not tolerate idle gossip about those he sees or what they are doing.

If the player characters can convince Darnak they have important information for Mordenkainen, he will tell them to look up Ravel Dasinder, the Patriarch of Boccob.

Jawal Severnain: The head librarian is a surprising character—a renegade dark elf. Since the player characters are not powerful mages, Jawal only grudgingly agrees to see them. If he can be persuaded that their mission is important enough to disturb him, he willingly cooperates. The head librarian remembers Mordenkainen, of course, since he never forgets visits from the arch-mages. The wizard stopped in recently to study some old tomes. He has no idea how to find Mordenkainen.

If the characters ask about the books, Jawal says he will have to check the files to see what was re-

quested. If the characters come back in a few days, the librarian will have the information.

Tobin Potriades: The half-deaf, half-blind senior tutor has not seen Mordenkainen for a long time. In fact, he has no useful information at all. Nonetheless, he will go on and on about Mordenkainen to anyone who will listen.

Heironymous Tigana, Kondradis Bubka, and Ephraim Blackrod: These three have no useful information concerning Mordenkainen.

In the House of Boccob: The players may decide to talk to Ravel Dasinder—either from talking to Darnak or from prior knowledge. Whatever the reason, they first have to arrange an interview. Few people can just walk into the patriarch's quarters without permission. If the characters are coy about their reasons, the patriarch's aide will schedule them to meet with Ravel in 2d6 weeks. An appropriate bribe can reduce this to 1d4 weeks. If the characters mention their concerns about the Circle of Eight or Mordenkainen, the interview happens in 2d4 days; a bribe after mentioning the Circle results in an appointment the next day.

In the interview, Ravel carefully hears out the characters' tales. He offers little in the way of suggestions or advice, but he questions them in detail about seemingly minute points—what time of day was it, what were the characters doing, what did they see in the background, what did they have for lunch, etc. In the end, he tells them to meet him tomorrow evening at the Roc and Oliphant. There he may be able to give them the answer they seek.

Heard it Through the Grapevine

If the characters don't think to go to the Guild of Wizardry or the Temple (i.e., they ask their own contacts or strangers on the street), the reaction is "Mordenkainen who?" The arch-mage is not well-known in the city. At least one NPC will say, "You know, you ought to check with the Wizard's Guild."

Chapter 2:



A Meeting with Mordenkainen

In this section, the player characters have a chance to finally hear from Mordenkainen and learn what is going on. They also get visitors from a surprising source, who will lead them in new directions.

The Roc and Oliphant

The Roc and Oliphant, as described in the *City of Greyhawk* Campaign set, is a boisterous student tavern near the University. Noted for its cheap food and drink, the tavern is a hubbub of aspiring intellectuals, unpolished bards, and underpaid sages. If the characters are meeting Kieren, he chose this tavern because it suits his tastes. Ravel, on the other hand, feels their actions are less likely to attract attention here than at the more sedate (but preferred) tavern, The Savant.

A map of the Roc and Oliphant is provided. This should only be necessary when the actual battle be-

gins. When the characters first enter, read the following.

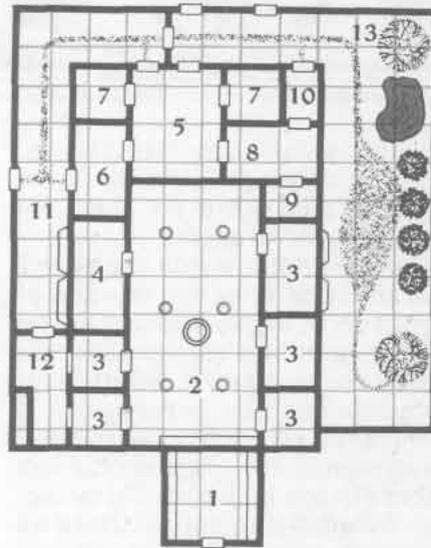
The tavern, battered and a little run-down, is lively tonight. The main hall is packed, mostly by thin, serious-looking young men. They crowd the benches around the fire-pit, earnestly debating today's lecture. Beer mugs clink and slosh. Near the back a group of students is loudly serenading a red-faced coed, well into the second verse of a bawdy drinking song. Bedraggled trenchers bustle from the back kitchen, carrying platters of roast bird and bowls of rich, greasy stew. Wenches with fistfuls of mugs dodge the clumsy advances of drunken sophomores. Along the side wall, sitting on a chair perched atop a table, is a piper preparing to play. The tavernkeeper is near the kitchen door, shouting instructions to his servants, who are manhandling a fresh keg up from the cellar.

Looking about the main salon, the characters do not see their contact (either Kieren or Ravel). It is clear, however, that there are several smaller rooms off the main salon. If they inquire with the tavernkeeper or one of his workers, they learn their host awaits them in the Garden Room. If the characters do nothing, eventually their contact appears in the doorway to the Garden Room and irritably waves them over.

The Garden Room is a small, private chamber. It is dominated by a scarred table and heavy, oak chairs. Candle sconces provide a flickering light. Bay windows, fitted with small panes of leaded glass, look out on the small kitchen garden of the tavern. The garden is thick with herbs, beans, peas, and squash. A few flowers, planted by the innkeeper's wife, give some color to the green. The whole garden is enclosed by a rough stone wall. A wooden gate with a stone arch leads to the street.

Seated at the head of the table, in

Roc and Oliphant



One Square equals 10 feet

1. Entrance Hall
2. Main Room
3. Private Banquet Rooms
4. Garden Room
5. Kitchen
6. Pantry
7. Servant Quarters
8. Master's Parlor
9. Master's Bedroom
10. Master's Antechamber
11. Kitchen Garden
12. Chicken Coup
13. Private Garden

a high-backed chair, is the characters' host (Kieren or Ravel). In front of him is a decanter of plum brandy, a half-filled cordial glass, a tray with several more glasses, and a strangely carved ring.

Teleconferencing

The mage (or patriarch) takes a small sip of the brandy and motions for the characters to join him.

"I see you made it. Please fasten the door and sit. You might enjoy this brandy; it's particularly good." He unstoppers the decanter and offers to pour a drink for those who want it. After you are all settled, he continues.

"I've thought over your tale. I must say, it does seem strange, but with Mordenkainen, I'm not surprised. If what you say is true about the Circle of Eight, then the situation is very serious. I have decided Mordenkainen must know."

The PCs' host then picks up the ring and slips it on his finger. His eyes close in concentration. Slowly an image begins to form on the opposite side of the table. It takes the shape of an older man, dignified and serious. He is tall, and his slightly graying black hair

is severely cut. The figure glances at everyone in the room and finally returns to its summoner. "You have learned something?" it asks in a solid, deep voice.

At this point, have the NPC turn over the conversation to the player characters. The figure is a projected image of Mordenkainen, linked to the distant wizard through the ring. The real Mordenkainen is somewhere in the Yatil Mountains.

Mordenkainen is an impressive personage and he knows it. While not vain or petty, he is not above using his reputation to awe others into obedience. He is also stubborn. During this interview, he says little and offers less. If pressed on a point, he becomes more entrenched. If insulted or irritated, he delivers an acidic tongue-lashing. If the player characters are utter fools with no brains or respect, he imperiously commands them to investigate and icily ends the interview.

However, if the player characters keep their wits about them and show the proper respect, Mordenkainen treats them as helpful allies—but not equals. He listens to their tale and suggestions with an open mind. He shares information he thinks the characters need to know.

After he is introduced, Mor-

denkainen first wants to hear the PCs' tales. When this is finished, he questions each character. Some of his questions are odd, dealing with intimate details of the departed Circle members ("What was old Rary's favorite color, anyway?"). He makes no attempt to soften his blunt and skeptical tone. By these questions he is both getting more facts and testing the characters to see if they really are henchmen of the Circle of Eight. Fortunately, the characters are able to answer his questions.

After hearing all the characters can report, Mordenkainen stops to ponder their words. At this time, the PCs can ask their own questions. Most, Mordenkainen ignores. Again, should the characters be rude, insulting, or incredibly dense, Mordenkainen simply ends the interview.

If the player characters have not heard the explanation of recent events (see Kieren's explanation in the previous chapter), Mordenkainen summarizes it now.

To these sketchy facts, Mordenkainen adds his own findings. The strange events of the last six months apparently have something to do with the Eye and the Hand of Vecna and an astrological alignment. How the artifacts figure in or what the alignment is, he cannot guess. (As DM you can



prattle off a list of strange risings, wanings, and alignments of various stellar bodies, if the characters ask.) Mordenkainen himself has been in the Guild's library, looking for books that might reveal more on the subject. *The Chronicle of Secret Times* has given some hints and might yield more.

Mordenkainen does not know where the Circle of Eight met their deaths. The only thing he suggests is that they were searching for the Eye and the Hand. Further research may turn up more information about these artifacts.

One alarming note he adds is that the divination blackout—the failure of those spells—is beginning to spread to other parts of Oerth. He has had reports of similar problems from the Kingdom of Furyondy and the Duchy of Urnst. The only bright spot is that, so far, this strange blight on divination has affected only those spells of 3rd level or higher.

Mordenkainen suggests three possibilities for what is disrupting the divinations of Greyhawk. Each has its own disturbing implications.

1) Some powerful group is at work, trying to isolate Greyhawk, perhaps in preparation for a coup. The conspirators know how to cause the blackout using the items and conjunctions described above. Mordenkainen himself favors this theory.

2) The priests and citizens of Greyhawk have managed to offend the divinatory deities and are now being punished. The old mage doesn't consider this likely, since there are too many holes in the logic. He doesn't see just how the Eye, Hand and conjunctions would fit into this. "However, the gods," he concludes, "are seldom logical."

3) The realms of the greater powers are themselves in turmoil, making predictions on the fate of Oerth impossible. Mordenkainen

discounts this one completely, since the Eye and the Hand of Vecna should have no effect on such a power struggle.

Mordenkainen wants the player characters to discover the fate of the Circle of Eight. Meanwhile, he will be spending his time investigating the divination failure with his spells and library resources. If the player characters learn anything significant, they should tell either Kieren or Ravel. On no account should they spread the news to anyone else. "There is no point in causing a panic," Mordenkainen warns firmly.

The Attack

While the characters are busy at Mordenkainen's interview, cultists of Vecna are moving to attack the tavern. Sent by Vecna/Halmadar (who backtracked along the trail left by the departed Circle of Eight), their instructions are to slay whomever might interfere with his plans. This includes the player characters and any NPCs present at the meeting.

The cultists have carefully coordinated their attack, dividing themselves into three groups. The first, dressed in normal clothing, has filtered into the main room after the player characters entered. They have taken seats around the hall, all where they can watch the side rooms. The second group waits outside, near the kitchen entrance. Pulling up their cloaks, they are mingled with the beggars who wait at the kitchen door for scraps of food. The third group is leading the attack by crossing the garden wall. They plan to burst through the windows and kill everyone in the room. If the characters flee, the other two groups have orders to stop them.

Group 1 (in the tavern)

Priest of Vecna (see cult description at end of book): Str 14, Dex 7,

Con 13, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 7; AC 3; MV 12; MU 5/P 9; hp 32; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; save vs. mind control +3; SZ M; ML 15; XP 2,000; AL LE

Wizard Spells: *chill touch, protection from good, spook, ventriloquism, flaming sphere, mirror image, haste*

Priest Spells: *detect good, command (x2), detect magic, curse (x2), hold person (x3), find traps, know alignment, chant, animate dead (x2), cause blindness, abjure, cloak of fear, flame strike*

Magical Items: *wand of fear, potion of vitality*

The Blood of Vecna (4): AC 5; MV 12; F5; hp 31, 27, 26, 25; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175 each; AL LE

Group 2 (at the back door)

Almarth the Halt: AC 2; MV 12; F8; hp 47; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1; SZ M; ML 14; XP 975; AL CE

Magical Items: *staff-mace, potion of fire resistance*

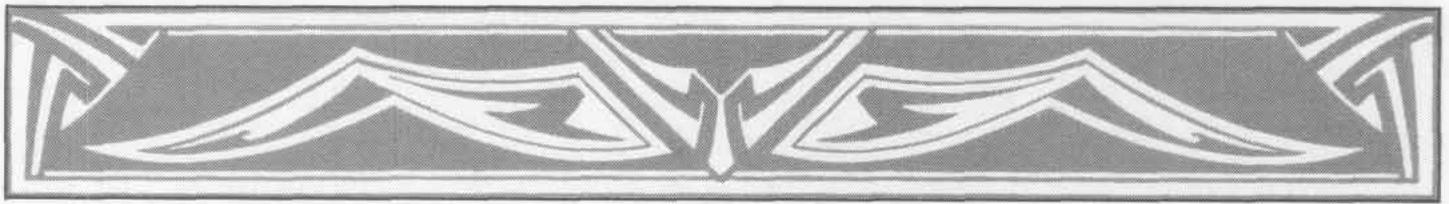
The Fingers of Vecna (4; see end of book): AC 7; MV 12; T4; hp 24, 17, 13, 11; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA Hide in Shadows 30%, backstab x2; SZ M; ML 11; XP 175; AL NE

Group 3 (in the garden)

The Eye of Vecna: AC 2; MV 12; HD 12, hp 49; THACO 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10 (gaze); SA gaze; SD immune to surprise, -1 to initiative; SZ M; ML 15; XP 6,000; AL LE

Magical Items: *chime of interruption*

The Hand of Vecna: AC 0, MV 12; HD 13; hp 71; THACO 7; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8+7 (x2), 1d10+7; SA



Strength drain; SZ M; ML 15; XP 7,000; AL LE

The Blood of Vecna (see end of book) (6): AC 5; MV 12; F4; hp 29, 27, 23, 21, 20, 18; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120 each; AL LE

When the cultists attack, the NPC contact (either Ravel or Kieren) immediately tries to get away. He is not prepared to deal with a full-scale assault; after all, Greyhawk is supposed to be a civilized city. Whether he lives or dies is of no importance to the adventure. He doesn't do anything of consequence in the battle, since he's more concerned with escaping.

The attack is launched by the Hand, who tears through the windows into the room. Immediately following him, clambering over the sill, are the six cultists. The Eye remains back in the shadowy darkness, attempting to feed on the player characters.

In the main room, the noise of the fight is barely noticeable. Only a few folks near the door can hear anything over the buzz of conversation and the wails of the piper. While noticing it, these folks are not going to get involved.

If the battle erupts into the main room, those present flee. They are students, not warriors. Benches topple as the scholars scramble to get out of the way. Because of the general noise and confusion, the panic is limited to the area near the battle at first. It quickly spreads outward like a wave, as the occupants of the tavern escape the building. The surging crowd uses all the exits.

The characters can attempt to use the confusion to make an escape. It takes the cultists in the main room 2-4 rounds to get clear of the crowd. After this, they attack the characters in earnest. If the player characters use the time

to flee, they can escape into the street. The cultists do not follow, ordered off by the Eye.

If the characters go out the back exit, the Fingers of Vecna are waiting for them. All are attempting to hide in shadows, but only one has been successful. Almarth the Halt stands in the center of the street; he issues a bold challenge to any who try to pass.

If the characters act boldly, they can use the confusion caused by the crowd to escape (if they so desire). The students boil out the door, scattering the Fingers. Almarth's path to the player characters is blocked. As before, the Eye will call off any pursuit, confident that the cultists can track at least one of the player characters.

If the characters stand and fight, the Eye and the Hand are more than happy to try to kill them all. However, if the battle goes badly for the villains—either is severely wounded or all their followers are slain—they retreat. The two lieutenants are far too valuable to the priests of the cult. If the Eye or Hand is slain or flees, all other cult members flee.

After the Battle

If the player characters win the fight, searching the bodies reveals little of value (beyond the magical items listed). The Eye and Hand have nothing else of note. The Fingers and Blood are likewise without identification. However, each cult member wears a fetish around his neck—an upraised palm with an eye in the center.

If Almarth the Halt was encountered, characters familiar with the criminal side of Greyhawk recognize him. They don't know who he is, but they remember seeing him in some of the dives of the River Quarter, particularly the River Rat (location R7 on the City of Greyhawk maps). Almarth is clearly a Rhennee, one of the gypsy river folk who ply the Selin-

tan.

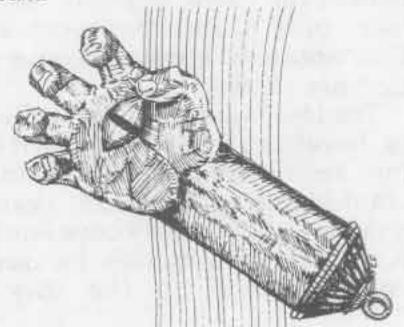
The priest of Vecna has a ragged sheet of scrip that is faintly magical. On it are penned seven words in elaborate calligraphy. The writing is not a magical language (i.e., it can be read by any character), but the inking is magical in nature. The writing style is distinctive and clearly that of a professional scribe. The words are nonsense:

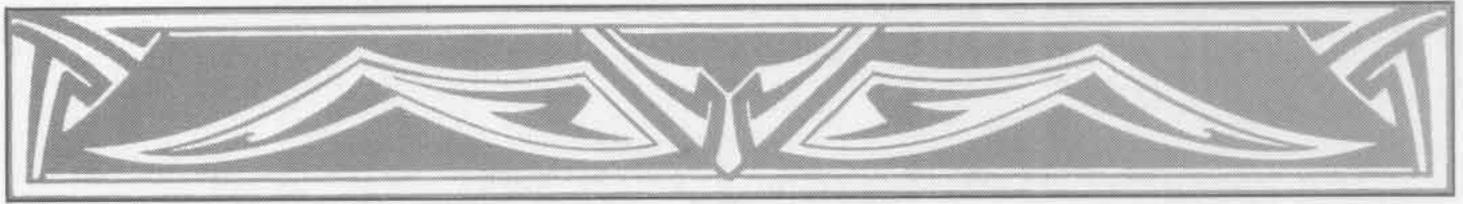
dalvlos
eurich'banhk
hiiacsh
lonte
maelfuer
tomke
cirnag

Beneath the words are the simple instructions: "Recite but one word from the *Book of Pain* and only if you must." If any word is read aloud, it glows and then fades from the page.

These words are taken from the *Book of Pain*, used to control the Hand. The words themselves are not magical, but hearing any one of them triggers agonizing magical tortures in the mind and body of the Hand. They must be spoken in his presence to have effect. The words were magically conditioned into the Hand by his makers. The priest was supplied with the scrip, just in case the Hand became too difficult to control.

If the player characters fled, they still were able to notice the strange talismans worn by the followers of Vecna.





Chapter 3:

Research

Up to now the characters have been on the receiving end of a series of strange messages and attacks. Now, they could let this go on forever, but it is more likely they will want to learn the identity of their informants and carry the battle to their foes. They are going to have to do some detective work to get their answers.

There are five main places to gather the information they need—the library of the Guild of Wizardry, the library of Grey College, the Great Library of Greyhawk, the temples of the city, and the dives of the River Quarter. (Players may think of other useful sources in addition to these.) At each location, characters have the chance to learn answers to different questions. Some are the result of obvious clues (the books consulted by Mordenkainen and the others), while others are more subtle (identifying the symbols through the temples). The information is given below according to the location visited.

The Library of the Wizard's Guild

Player characters are most likely to come here to check the books recently read by Mordenkainen. In addition, they may also come across researches by other members of the Circle of Eight. As before, only Guild members and their approved guests (24-hour notice) are allowed in.

The Head Librarian for the Guild is Jawal Severnain. As noted before, he is a renegade dark elf, most comfortable in the quiet, gloomy shadows of the musty book stacks. (Complete information on Jawal can be found in the *City of*

Greyhawk boxed set.) He has little time for unnecessary requests and little patience with those he sees as inferiors.

If the player characters have not been to see Jawal already, he is cool and superior toward them. After convincing him of their need, he reluctantly looks in the records. If the characters are searching for a specific book, he can fetch it within an hour. Otherwise, if they are reading the records to see what others have taken out, Jawal will need one to two days.

The characters can cut through all Jawal's officious bureaucracy if they cite Kieren Jalucian's support of their researches. At this point, Jawal becomes noticeably more cooperative. Jawal is not afraid of the Master of the Guild, but he holds Kieren in great respect. If the characters try to use Kieren's name to threaten Jawal, the librarian unhesitatingly calls their bluff. Kieren comes down absolutely on the side of his trusted fellow mage and is very irritated that the characters would do such a thing.

Eventually, Jawal provides a list of books recently requested by various members of the Circle.

Mordenkainen: *The Chronicle of Secret Times* by Uhas of Neheli

Rary: *The Beasts of Humanity* by Balar, *The Dragon-Scale Tome*

Jallarzi: *Treatise on the Practices of Hidden Ones*

Jawal will have one of his assistants fetch any book the characters request from the list.

Grey College

This highly respected school (location C1 on the *City of Greyhawk*

map) has a number of small and highly specialized libraries, each serving a different department. The libraries are scattered throughout the complex of buildings. Visiting each library takes a minimum of two hours, not including the time spent studying any books found there.

To use the libraries, the characters must first obtain permission from the Dean, Tomarkis Ancher-var. More administrator than scholar, Tomarkis is a busy but kindly old man. Once the characters make an appointment, he hears them out and, provided they are not insulting, grant them access to his libraries. However, he does not allow them to remove books from the college.

Getting permission is simplified if the characters mention their plans to either Kieren or Ravel. Both men are well-known to the Dean. A brief note from either of them is sufficient to cut through any red tape.

The college has libraries on the following subjects: Alchemy, Architecture, Economy, Engineering, Geography, Healing, History, Literature, Music, Painting, Sculpture, and Theatre. Characters can visit any ones they wish.

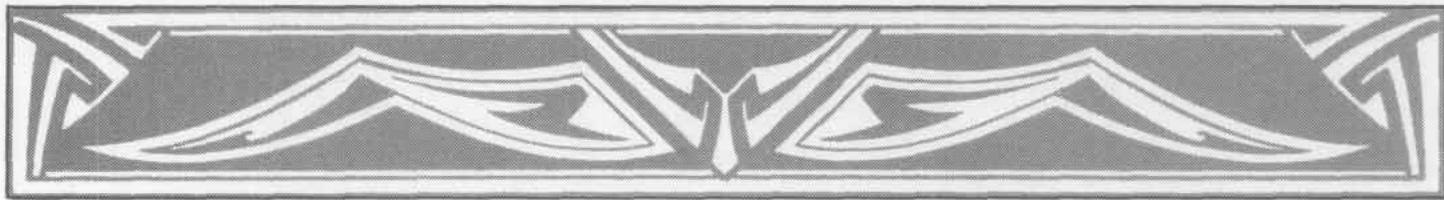
Alchemy: Drawmij consulted one text recently, *A Rigorous and Complete Treatise on the Theoretical Applications of De-salinated Waters in the Production of Potions*. The text is not useful in any way to the current mission.

Architecture: Not visited.

Economy: Not visited.

Engineering: Not visited.

Geography: Several visits by Otto and Otiluke are noted within the past few months. The texts consulted are the *Gnomicspheris*, *Imaginary Landscapes*, and *The*



True Relation of the Nyr Dyv and the Lands Surrounding.

Healing: Otto deposited his own pamphlet, *Curative Music*, for others to read.

History: Jallarzi requested two books: the *Flann-aerich'nyt* and *A History* by Coerlan Attlander.

Literature: Not visited.

Music: Otto is a frequent patron of this library. However, it is clear from consulting the lists that nothing useful is to be learned here.

Painting: Not visited.

Sculpture: Not visited.

Theatre: Not visited.

The Great Library of Greyhawk

Player characters may think to go to the greatest library in the city. For convenience, they are all members. (Even the non-literate characters are members so they could help their friend on the Circle of Eight in his researches.) Because of the importance of the books, meticulous records are kept of all activity. To get to these records, however, players must

bluff an assistant librarian into turning them over. The most effective trick is to convince the clerk that the PCs are members of the city watch and are acting on the direct orders of the Oligarchy (the ruling council of the city). Otherwise, there is always bribery.

The books consulted at the Great Library were few. Otiluke used *The Poems of Thalac Jiwo* and *The Book of Stone*. No other texts of apparent importance were referenced.

Reading the Books

The characters can choose to scan or read in detail any book from any of the previously mentioned sources. Scanning the pages, looking for key words or perhaps even diagrams, takes only one hour per book. However, there is only a 30% chance of finding a useful entry. This chance is increased by one for every point of Intelligence the scanning character has. Only one character can scan a book at a given time.

Alternatively, a character can

take the time to read a book in detail. This takes considerably more time; the reading time for each book is given in the following descriptions. If the book is read, the character automatically learns any useful information presented in it.

Of course, to either scan or read, the character must be able to read the language in which the book is written. Not all are written in the same language. Some use obscure and ancient dialects of current tongues. This may affect the understanding of the text. The language of the tome and any effect this has is listed below.

The Books

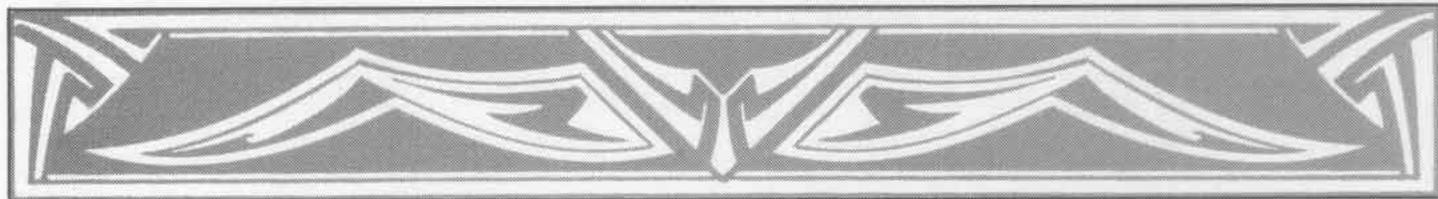
The Beasts of Humanity

Language—Old Oeridian

Reading Time—2-5 days

This work is a rambling encyclopedia of the horrid perversions of man. Described therein are many fascinating monsters, all once human but now twisted, some accidentally, some purposefully, by powerful magic. The lineage of





several family curses is outlined. (You may wish to mention a family Ravenloft, if you have you may wish to mention a family of the RAVENLOFT™ Campaign setting, if you have it.) The practices of secret cults are outlined. Among these is a mention of the Eye and the Hand. They are identified as "important tools of an unknown cult, symbolically associated with the founder of the religion." A rough sketch of the powers of each is also given.

The Book of Stone

Language—Common
Reading Time—1 day

The Book of Stone takes its name from its covers, made from thin slices of malachite. Within the rich green bindings are a few slim pages describing the internment of Halmadar the Cruel (see the Prologue) in a burial mound somewhere in Flann-aerich (a name for the Kron Hills).

The Chronicle of Secret Times

Language—Suloise
Reading Time—2 weeks

This book, a massive tome bound in purple leather, is the work of the great historian Uhas of Neheli, one of the later Suel families that settled what is now Keoland. Uhas was the official dynastic historian and produced two major works in his lifetime—the *Official History* and this work. The first is the approved history of the Neheli dynasty. The *Chronicle* is Uhas's description of the scandals, corruptions, crimes, and cruelties that were not included in the approved history.

Early in the *Chronicle*, Uhas describes the coming of the Neheli family from the ancient Suel lands. A good portion of the first chapters describes the struggles between the Neheli and the previous lord, the Whispered One, Lord Vecna, and his lieutenant,

Kas. The account does not say much about Lord Vecna himself, except that he was a great and cruel sorcerer and that he was eventually brought down by Kas. However, it does describe some of the powers and dangers of the Hand and the Eye, since these items fell into the possession of the Neheli, at least for a short time.

From all this, characters can learn five powers of the Hand and three powers of the Eye. (You should choose which ones to reveal.) The history also hints at the evil effects of the artifacts. Finally, Uhas speculates on the method of destroying the Eye and the Hand. (This need not be the correct method, however.) Characters can also learn the general background of Vecna, although this is not important to the current adventure.

The Dragon-Scale Tome

Language—Old Oeridian
Reading Time—2-4 days

This book, so named because its pages are made from fine shavings of blue dragon hide, is an investigation into the history and fate of 20 of the most prominent artifacts on Oerth. Written by Timonas of Jalpa by the command of the Emperor of the Malachite Throne, the book is a compilation from other histories, rumors, legends, and spells. Thus, it is a mixture of fact and fiction.

In it, characters will find a section on the Eye and the Hand of Vecna. This describes the appearances of these artifacts over the centuries, beginning with the Insurrection of the Yaheetes (in the Dreadwood), then with the reign of Vecna the Second at Tyrus (believed to have been somewhere along the Pomarj coast), to the Gnomelord of Blemu, and on to the Paladin-King of Miro (location never identified).

The last entry for the Eye and the Hand concerns Halmadar the Cruel. The account tells of his evil

rule and subsequent internment. Timonas places Halmadar's kingdom north of the Nyr Dyv, in the present-day Shield Lands. Of Halmadar's burial, Timonas simply notes that his tomb was hidden somewhere south of the great inland water. He speculates that the Eye and the Hand are still there.

Flann-aerich'nyl

Language—Flan
Reading Time—1 day

This small book is a simple geography of the region. From it, characters can learn that Flann-aerich is an old name for the present-day Kron Hills.

Gnomicspheris

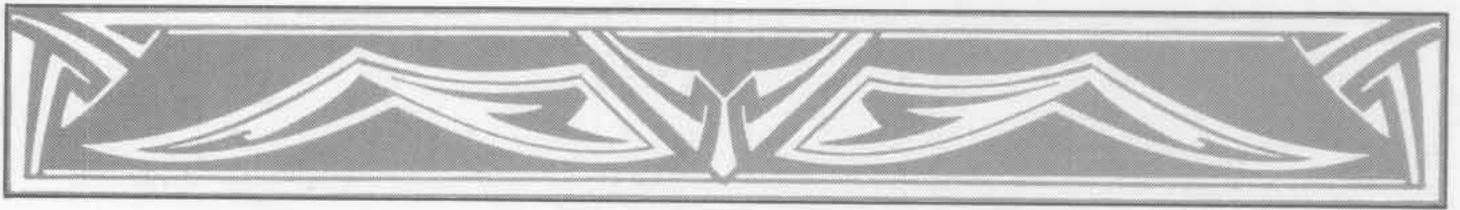
Language—Gnomish
Reading Time—1 day

This gnomish work describes many of the warrens of the Kron Hills. Of particular interest is the section on the warren of Osna-brölt. This gnomish community is located in the northern section of the Kron Hills. The history tells how a group of humans arrived about one century ago and hired the gnomes to construct a special tomb. The gnomish builders thought it odd, because the tomb was built more to hold something in than to keep grave-robbers out. Furthermore, the humans made the gnomes swear a great oath, pledging to keep the location of the tomb a secret. The secret has been kept up to this day.

A History

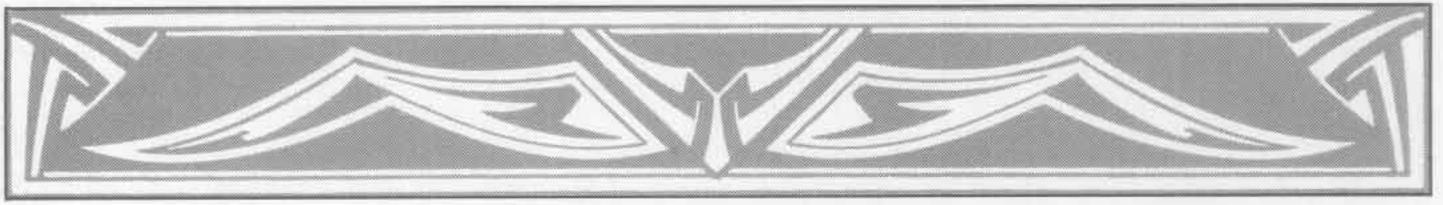
Language—Common
Reading Time—2-7 days

This book, pompous, self-important, plodding, and dull, contains an account of the early years of the city of Greyhawk. Most of it is opinionated and self-serving, creating a distorted view of the principal players in those early years. Hidden among all these, the characters will find a



Kron hills Sketch map





short account of a minor event in the early years, during the Expulsion of Evil, the deliberate purging of various evil cults and factions from the city. One group mentioned is the Cult of the Whispered One. Small but influential, the cult was an extremely stubborn group to purge. Its strength resided in two members, the Eye and the Hand, who were able to terrorize the citizenry. Only after much struggle was the cult put down. The Eye and the Hand were never captured or killed. The cult's headquarters was never found.

Imaginary Landscapes

Language—Suloise

Reading Time—1-4 days

The small size of this book is deceptive, for the material within its pages is a complicated mixture of prophecy, fact, and metaphysical theory blended together under the guise of fiction. To the reader, it is never clear what meaning or interpretation is intended. Indeed, readers cannot even agree on the contents. There is no question that the words remain the same, but each reader structures the text to meet his own expectations.

This quandary is the heart of the theory of subjective divination, the basis of *Imaginary Landscapes*. Vastly simplified, subjective divination proposes a magical theory where what can be imagined becomes a potential reality. Therefore, by imagining possible futures, one is actually predicting future events, through the act of creating those events. (Wizards love this sort of stuff.)

Imaginary Landscapes is therefore not a work of fiction but a prediction of the future—except that some of the events it describes have already occurred since the book was written, while others remain fictitious, and others have yet to occur, if they happen at all.

Any character who reads this book gets a headache. Further-

more, only those with an Intelligence or Wisdom of 15 or greater can draw anything meaningful out of this mishmash. If the reading character qualifies, he finds a chapter where the divinations of the world disappear as Magic (a living being) dies, leaving only the art of subjective divination. In the tale, the hero (such as there is one in this odd, little book) discusses the death of Magic with the Incomplete Man—a character whose body is constantly dividing and re-assembling during the course of the conversation. The Incomplete Man takes credit for the death of Magic, which he brought about to make himself whole.

The Poems of Thalac Jiwo

Language—Old Oeridian

Reading Time—1 day

Written by Thalac Jiwo, also known as Thalac the Sighted, this is a collection of prophetic poems. Although his prophecies are thickly buried in riddles, word-play, and vague descriptions, scholarly wizards agree that Thalac was an amazingly talented and accurate seer.

One of the last poems of the book is suggestive of current events. In it, Thalac writes of a time when sight pales, the key will turn in the locked gates of Time, and the halls of heaven will hail a new king. In general, Thalac's description of events does not sound good.

Treatise on the Practices of Hidden Ones

Language—Common

Reading Time—1-2 hours

This is a small broadside prepared by Bishop Imphalas of Furyondy, Servant of Hieroneous the Invincible. Meant for the general public, in it Bishop Imphalas describes (in alarmist terms) several vile and wicked cults that a good man might fall prey to. His descriptions of their evils are sensa-

tionalist and not always accurate, but he writes with a good fire-and-brimstone style.

Among those evils he describes is the Cult of Vecna. Characters who read this pamphlet should be given a description of the cult and its general goals. The cult is described at the end of this adventure.

The True Relation of the Nyr Dyv and the Lands Surrounding

Language—Common

Reading Time—2-5 days

This book is a scholarly gazetteer and history of the nations on the shores of the Nyr Dyv. Written by Norfil van Defflitter, it is part an account of his travels and partly his commentaries on the tales and stories of the Nyr Dyv. Van Defflitter's work is praiseworthy for its thoroughness. Every tale that reached his ears is dutifully noted down.

Unfortunately, van Defflitter would have profited from a greater dose of skepticism and a more organized mind. He seldom questions the truth or accuracy of the stories he has heard. Worse still, van Defflitter launches into maddening digressions whenever one tale reminds him of another. For example, while writing about the channels of the Artonsamy River, he digresses into a lecture on the formation of the Rift Canyon, which in turn leads him to a discussion of gnomish mining techniques in the lower reaches of the Cairn Hills. By the time he returns to his original topic, the readers have lost track of his original arguments!

If the characters can wade through van Defflitter's work, they can learn useful information. The historian repeats the tales of Halmadar the Cruel (see *The Book of Stone* and *The Dragon-Scale Tome*) and fixes the location of Os-nabrölt on the shores of Midbay.



He even tentatively locates the Tomb of Halmadar with a simple sketch map. This page shows signs of having been recently traced. (Give the players a copy of the Kron Hills sketch map.) Finally, he suggests that the Cult of Vecna may still be active in parts of the Kron Hills and the lands farther to the northwest.

The Temples

Wise players should consider visiting one or more of the temples in Greyhawk as part of their researches. Unless they have been asleep, it should be clear to them that the characters have been attacked by some sort of secret cult. Certainly those who would be best informed about cults, particularly dangerous ones, are the openly practicing priests of the city.

(As the DM, you may want to subtly suggest the player characters visit the temples if they do not think of it themselves. This is especially true if the player characters have seen or saved the life of Ravel Dasinder. As the patriarch of Boccob, he can provide much useful information.)

Not every temple is worth visiting, nor will the characters be warmly greeted at every temple. When making these calls, the professed faith and alignment of the player characters and the nature of the temple's deity both affect the outcome, as described in the following paragraphs:

Same Faith: Characters who are openly of the same faith as a temple can go to that temple and ask their questions. The priests are helpful, attempting to answer questions as completely as possible. The character can even request spells to obtain complete information, although a donation to the temple will be required. (Divinations of 3rd level or greater will not work, however.)

No Professed Faith: If the player characters do not follow

any particular deity, they can approach any temple desired. The reaction of the priests depends on the alignment of the temple. Lawful temples provide aid only if the need is great—and the character seriously considers conversion. Neutral temples provide aid solely on the basis of need, although characters have to provide some sort of service to the temple, usually attendance at a set number of services or work among the poor of the city. Chaotic temples provide aid on the basis of personal character. Grasping, cynical, and insincere characters are apt to be turned away. Those helped must make a public announcement of the glories of the temple. Good temples are apt to be more helpful, while neutral ones require the characters to show cause.

Different Faith: Characters of a different faith can get help only from temples of the same general alignment. Even then, such aid is unlikely. Character requests are likely to be met by long sermons, lectures, and pressure to convert. Priest PCs receive help only if their patriarch makes a direct appeal to the other temple. Since this involves begging a favor from another temple, it is not something the patriarch will agree to lightly. Even then the appeal may not be granted.

Information Gained

What can be learned (if anything) from each temple in the city is listed below. The temples are listed alphabetically, by the title of the deity worshiped (the temple's location on the *City of Greyhawk* map is given in parentheses).

Beory (T11): The druids of Beory have no useful information concerning the Cult of Vecna. If asked about events beyond Greyhawk, they may tell of disturbances in the natural forces somewhere to the west and far northwest.

Boccob: If the patriarch, Ravel Dasinder is on good terms with the player characters (especially if he was present at the attack of the cultists), he does all he can to help. Unfortunately, his divinations are not useful. He knows nothing about the Eye or the Hand, but Ravel identifies the symbol as that of the Cult of Vecna. He's heard some rumors of this evil group and thinks it may be active among the Rhennee.

Fharlanghn (G13): The priests know nothing of the cult. If the characters ask the right questions, Adari Farwander (a gnome sage) has heard disturbing stories coming from Osnabrölt. If the characters swear to investigate and return with more information, he provides them with an accurate map to the gnome warren.

Heironeous (G14): As champions of justice, the priests here are ever watchful for the activities of strange cults, especially after the recent business with the Spurned Cult of Iuz. Through their contacts with the city watch, the priests have heard reports of a strange cult matching the characters' description. The priests can arrange a meeting with deputy constable Barch Hillclimber, commander of the River Watch Station. The constable has more information.

Norebo (T26): The priests of Norebo have no useful knowledge.

Olidammara (T10): The priests have seen the symbol carried by the cultists. These were worn by some of the thugs of the River Quarter. If a proper donation is made, the priests remember one in particular, a Rhennee named Yagos Slevak.

Pelor (G10): As one of the important temples in Greyhawk, the priestesses of Pelor try to stay up-to-date on the events of the city. In this they are greatly aided by the close friendship between the high matriarch, Sarana, and constable Derider Fanshen. The priestesses



have seen the cult symbol before. According to their sources, it is active somewhere in the River Quarter. This, combined with the recent destruction of the Spurned Cult of Iuz, has the priestesses worried over the increasing occurrences of evil cults within the city walls.

Pholtus (R8): The priests of Pholtus know nothing useful. They are too absorbed in their preaching to pay attention to outside events. If shown the symbol, they instantly decry it as evil, but they are too rigid and self-righteous to be of any help.

Ralishaz (S4): Those foolish enough to visit the priests of Ralishaz succeed in alerting the Cult of Vecna. The priests claim to have no useful information, but in truth have had some secret contacts with cult members. Any character asking too many questions of the priests is cursed (-1 penalty to THACO and saving throws). This lasts until a *remove curse* is cast.

Rao (R12): The kindly, quiet patriarch of Rao, Jerome Kazinskaia,

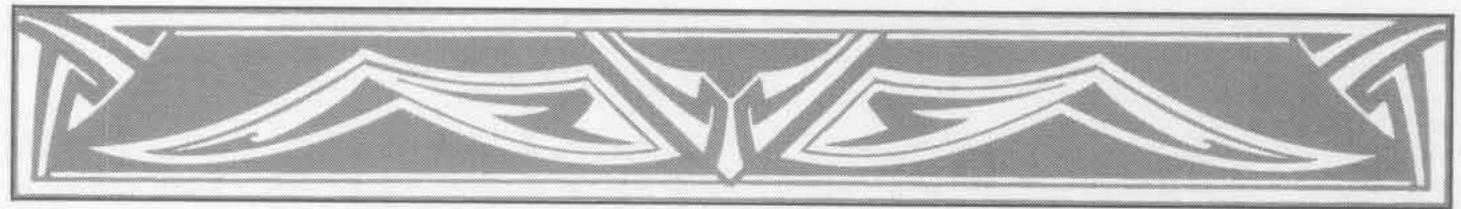
is quite knowledgeable in the affairs of the city. Unlike many other patriarchs, he takes the time to personally meet with the player characters. Jerome identifies the symbol as a secret cult active among the Rhennee. Furthermore, he has heard tales of the Eye and the Hand. He recommends the players carry their investigations to the River Rat (R7). If asked about the failure of divination spells, his reasoned answer is that this is a sign of conflict among the Greater Powers.

St. Cuthbert (G4): The stout priests of St. Cuthbert do not provide information without first attempting to convert player characters or, if followers, for reprimanding them for backsliding. This always takes the form of a long harangue and possibly a good, firm beating (if the priests can get away with it). If the characters are on good terms with the priests, the beating can be skipped.

After enduring this treatment, the characters learn only a little

from the priests, who are normally remarkably well-informed. Although they are concerned by the problems with divinations, their deity has not revealed this as a threat to the temple. They recognize the symbol as the Cult of the Eye and the Hand, an evil group that has come to the fore since the destruction of the Spurned Cult of Iuz. The priests are confident the cult is no threat, since St. Cuthbert has not forewarned them of any danger. (In truth, these divinatory powers have been masked by Vecna's machinations.)

Trithereon (R14): Although well-informed of goings-on in the River Quarter, the priests and priestesses of Trithereon are loathe to help the player characters. The heroes are clearly in league with the tyrannical forces of the city, seeking to oppress the individual will of her citizens. While the priests have no love of evil, they are more outraged by the city's ban on evil cults—since this violates individual will. If the characters can show that the cultists



themselves are tyrannical and oppressive of free will (which should not be too hard, if they think of it), the priests cooperate.

According to their information, the cult has been particularly active in the River Quarter, moving in on the territory of the now-defunct Spurned Cult of Iuz. More information might be had from the Rhennee who congregate at the River Rat, particularly from Yagos Slevak.

Ulaa (S10): Dwarves and gnomes will have the greatest success when dealing with Guldan Rockflint, matriarch of Ulaa. She has no information about affairs in the city. If asked about gnomes or affairs outside the walls, she has more information. Her fellow priests among the gnomes of the Kron Hills have reported strange outbreaks of an evil madness. Communications with Osnabrölt have been broken. She can provide accurate directions to the gnome warren if asked.

Xerbo (T14): This temple, devoted to mariners and travelers, is favored by the Rhennee. Many of the priests here are Rhennee and all have good contacts among the river folk. Therefore, even the priests of Xerbo are tight-lipped and suspicious of nosy strangers.

If the player characters make a good impression, the priests prove to be good sources of information. They are familiar with the Cult of Vecna, because it is gaining strength among their flock. The cult is active somewhere among the river people, although they do not think it is permanently based in Greyhawk. From the reports they have received, they believe the Eye and the Hand are powerful leaders of the cult. Apparently, these two, and other cult members, were smuggled into the city from somewhere up north.

The priests introduce the player characters to Avrel Riskar, a Rhennee noble (see NPC descriptions at

end of this book). He will help the player characters find more information among the dives of the River Quarter.

Zilchus (G12): The priests of Zilchus know nothing of the cult or strange events outside of Greyhawk. Upon learning the player characters are not wealthy, the priests want little to do with the group.

The River Quarter

If the characters try to track down the cultists who attacked them, the trail should lead, sooner or later, to the River Quarter, the seamy and rough portion of the city. Drunks and gamblers mingle freely with the prostitutes and bully-boys; thieves and fences brazenly deal on the narrow side streets. Constables break up suspicious crowds while assassins ply their trade in the next alley. Avaricious moneylenders watch while their thick-skulled thugs exact overdue payments from the local shopkeepers. All this makes it home, sweet home, for the thrill-seekers and adventurers of Greyhawk.

While in the River Quarter, nosy characters are going to attract the attention of the major power factions of the district—the Rhennee, the Thieves' Guild, the Beggars' Union, and possibly, the Shape-changers. Complete information on all these groups can be found in the *City of Greyhawk* boxed set; abbreviated information on each group is given below. In addition, the PCs' questions draw the attention of two other groups, the Cult of Vecna and the remnant of the Spurned Cult of Iuz.

The Rhennee

The Rhennee are a tribe of seminomadic river gypsies located on the reaches of the Selintan River. With their flat-bottomed keelboats and barges, they range from the northern reaches of the Woolly

Bay, up the Selintan and the Neen, and all along the coasts of the Nyr Dyv. With the exception of Greyhawk and a few other cities, they make no settlements ashore, living entirely on their brightly painted boats.

The Rhennee are an insular people, isolated from foreigners by walls of custom and ritual. They speak common and a variation of thieves' cant. They are clannish, showing loyalty to their kind in the face of non-Rhennee. They do not recognize the laws or justice of outsiders. They govern themselves and do not take their quarrels outside their clan.

The Rhennee do not have a formal government or ruler. Instead, they are informally ruled by clan heads, one male and one female. Each family or family group recognizes a "lord" or "noble," normally a patriarch of the clan. He orders migration routes and times, passes judgments, and approves dealings with outsiders. Each lord is supported by a matriarch of the clan, a "wise woman." The wise women have special powers of healing and divination. Armed with these skills and tradition, they advise the lords. In truth, few lords are foolish enough to ignore the advice of their wise women, so, in a way, the matriarchs are the true powers among the Rhennee.

Under the lords are the barge-masters. These men command individual boats. Each is considered the master of his ship, as long as he abides by the broader dictates of the family's lord. The menfolk and boys are ranked next in status, while women and daughters are above only outsiders in status.

The Rhennee are bound by ties of blood and honor. If a relative is wronged or slain, guilt and innocence matter less than revenge. Honor is as important as death. Cowardice is the greatest crime of all.



Player characters will quickly discover that questioning the Rhennee about anything is pointless. It is worse than pointless if the characters ask about fellow gypsies. If the players ask questions about Almarth the Halt or Yagos Slevak (both Rhennee), word will get back to these men. Within 1d3 days, the NPC disappears from Greyhawk, smuggled out on a departing Rhennee boat. Questions about the cult are met by dark glances or hasty gestures to ward off evil.

If the player characters are foolish enough to use force, they can get the answers they seek. However, their act triggers a blood feud. Thereafter, the party is subject to attacks by Rhennee at any possible time. Such attacks should be treated as random events. The attacks do not end until the characters are slain or they are forced to make peace (which should not be easy).

The best method of getting information from the Rhennee is through an introduction. Several of the temples in the area can arrange this (see the earlier "Temples" section). With the assistance of their guide, the player characters can discreetly ask their questions.

Regardless of their means of obtaining information, the characters are eventually approached by a Rhennee, Turim Varostak (see the "NPC" section). This old, peg-legged man claims to be a bargemaster. He's heard the characters were asking questions and has come forward to help—for a price, of course. After coyly playing with the player characters, Turim reveals the information given in the "What the Rhennee Know" section. He wants the player characters along as patsies and covers for his own activities.

Turim Varostak is actually the avatar of Vecna. He is attempting to track down Vecna/Halmadar (who has usurped the Voice's posi-

tion in the cult) and recover his Eye and Hand (the artifacts, not the monsters). When Vecna was slain, his Eye and Hand were lost to him. Vecna the demigod cannot locate these artifacts, as their emanations are somehow blocked from him. The only way Vecna can trace the artifacts is when someone uses them to amass power. Although he cannot detect their energies, he is wise enough to deduce their presence from sudden changes in the balance of power throughout the Flanaess.

In the past, the demigod has come close to recovering them, only to have the artifacts disappear from sight. This time, with Vecna/Halmadar interfering in his own cult, Vecna the demigod has been able to move swiftly.

What the Rhennee Know

General Questions: Talking to any average Rhennee can get the characters answers to some questions. If shown the symbols, the river folk shy away, muttering charms to ward off evil. The Cult of the Seeing Hand (as the Rhennee call it) is an evil group. The cult isn't active around here, but is sometimes found around Velderdyva Bay on the Nyr Dyv. The Rhennee have also heard of the Eye and the Hand (the monsters) from tales they use to scare their children. They believe the Eye and the Hand are real, though. Most suggest the player characters go to Dyvers or Verbobonc if they want to learn more. Finally, a few of the Rhennee remember some old wizards nosing around the waterfront in recent weeks.

Yagos Slevak: If the characters are unaware of his position as a cultist of Vecna, Yagos is certainly not going to tell them. He is helpful and cooperative, since he hopes to lure the party into a trap well outside of Greyhawk. He tells them everything they could learn from general questioning.

In addition, Yagos claims to have stumbled across a group of cultists in Verbobonc only a few months ago. Reluctant to return, he can be persuaded to take the group there on his barge. He pretends to be fearful of the cult and insists on a hefty payment (in advance) for his services.

If the player characters expose Yagos as a cultist to the man's fellow Rhennee, all sympathy for the bargemaster disappears. The clan sentences him to death and prepares to take Yagos out in the river to drown him. Nothing the characters say can change this, however, they can get permission to question the bargemaster. (The Rhennee grimly offer to help make Yagos talk.)

Yagos knows the location of the cult temple in Verbobonc and can guide the characters there. He has heard that something important is up at Osnabrölt in the Kron Hills. He has also been told by other cultists that Vecna has returned. So long as he is useful, Yagos hopes to stay alive. Therefore, he won't reveal exact locations, but insists on being taken as a guide. (He will, of course, try to escape at the first reasonable chance.) The players must negotiate with the Rhennee for Yagos's life. They agree only if the player characters travel on one of their barges, so they can keep guard over the clan traitor.

Turim Varostak: If the player characters rely on Turim Varostak for answers, he disappears for the night. In the morning, a Rhennee (later identified as Yagos) is found dead off one of the piers. Turim, meanwhile, has gathered complete information (all the facts that Yagos knows). He insists on coming along, to avenge the honor of the clan, and only gives his information if this promise is made. Graciously, Turim offers the use of his boat and crew for the journey.

Almarth the Halt: This tough character meets the same fate as



Yagos, if the characters expose him to the Rhennee. At least he does not go down without a fight. Loyal to the end, he cannot be forced to talk. At best, the player characters can confirm that Yagos is also a cult member—but only if they make Almarth think someone betrayed him. If they can mind probe him (by spells or devices), he knows as much as Yagos. In addition, Almarth smuggled the Eye and the Hand into Greyhawk.

The Thieves' Guild

This Guild in the River Quarter is the largest in Greyhawk. Like all Guilds, it is fiercely protective of its territory. If the player characters start doing thief-like work, the Guild comes down hard, insisting on receiving its cut. Player characters asking questions attract notice, but the Guild does not take any action.

Thief player characters can try the Guild for information. The Guild offers no clues about the symbols or anything related to the Cult of Vecna. It has some idea of what is happening, but the Guild Master has no desire to embroil his organization in the matter.

The Guild knows more about Yagos Slevak. It has been watching him for some time, concerned that he is undertaking jobs that are properly Guild business. The Guild doesn't mind smuggling, but it believes Yagos has been rolling a few drunks. From its observation, the Guild has learned Yagos belongs to a secret cult. Learning all this will cost the player characters, of course.

The Beggars' Union

This branch of the Thieves' Guild specializes in information. It has many members in the River Quarter. The characters can hire it to gather information for them. If no mention is made of the cult, the Eye, the Hand, or the cult symbols,

the price ranges from 10 to 50 gp. If there is any stated connection to an evil cult, the price immediately jumps to 100 to 500 gp.

The beggars can locate Almarth the Halt or Yagos Slevak in 1d3 days. Both are staying in the back rooms of the River Rat.

The beggars have no luck finding any secret cultists or cult locations in the city. They demand their fee anyway.

Although the beggars cannot locate the Eye or the Hand, they do learn these creatures were smuggled in by a Rhennee bargemaster. They know the River Rat and the Green Dragon Inn are two Rhennee hangouts.

The Shapechangers

This group cannot be contacted by the player characters, since they are secret assassins. However, you may want to have the Shapechangers attack the player characters as a random encounter.

Also known as the Polymorph Squad, the Shapechangers attempt to lure unsuspecting victims into deadly ambushes. Once they kill their marks, the group polymorphs the bodies into bizarre creatures, so they can sell the body parts to mages in need of strange spell components.

The Shapechangers are highly skilled at their work. If you do have them attack the characters, remember they are extremely cunning and skilled. If things go badly for them, the group flees. There is no profit in fighting to the last man (or woman).

Members of the group include the following NPCs:

Clannair Blackshadow (dark elf male): AC -1; MV 12; F5/M8; hp 36; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1; SZ M; AL NE

Spells: 4 1st, 3 2nd, 3 3rd, and 2 4th

Magical Items: *elven chain mail*

+2, long sword +1, wand of paralyzation, ring of invisibility

Imogen Gellet (human female):

AC 3; MV 12; T9; hp 44; THACO 16; #AT 2 (+1 penalty to THACO on 2nd attack); Dmg 1d6+1/1d4+1; SA Hide in shadows 60%, Move silently 70%, Backstab x4, poisoned weapons; SZ M; AL CE

Magical Items: *leather armor +1, short sword +1, dagger +1, ring of fire resistance, boots of elvenkind, dust of disappearance*

Harral Shastri (human male):

AC 8; MV 12; M9; hp 34; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2; SZ M; AL LE

Spells: 4 1st, 2 2nd, 3 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th

Magical Items: *ring of protection +2, dagger +2, ring of free action, potion of extra-healing, wand of magic missiles, wand of polymorphing*

The Cults

When the PCs nose around the River Quarter, they automatically attract the attention of the few Vecna cultists in Greyhawk. At this time the cultists do nothing beyond discreetly keeping tabs on the characters. They are awaiting further orders from the Heart of Vecna.

At the same time, the characters' questions attract the attention of the Spurned Cult of Iuz. The few followers of Iuz remaining (since the cult was recently purged from Greyhawk) at first become alarmed, fearing the characters are searching for them. Upon learning that the characters are searching for Vecna, the Iuzists become intrigued. Eventually, acting on orders from their master, they too start following the characters. Iuz hopes the player characters will lead him to the Vecna cult and possibly even the two famous artifacts, the Eye and the Hand.



An Interlude

At this point, the player characters should have enough information to begin their pursuit. They may dawdle though, hoping to gain more facts or suspecting they have missed some vital clue. The following events are designed to spur them on and make them realize the urgency of their mission. Do the steps in order, but use them whenever you feel the players need a little prodding.

Spell Failures

- * All priest divinations of 5th level or higher are guaranteed not to function. *Commune* spells do not work, although *commune with nature* still contacts the spirits of Oerth. The player characters may not notice this immediately, but the priests of Greyhawk will. They can inform the characters of this latest development.

- * *Contact other plane* inexplicably fails. This comes to the attention of the players almost immediately, since the spell failure causes consternation among the wizards of Greyhawk.

- * All spells involving astral and ethereal travel fail. (This does not affect magical items.) Unlike the failure of divinations, the closure of these planes is not likely to be noticed immediately. However, the player characters will hear of it sooner or later, especially if they frequent the Wizard's Guild.

- * Priests discover their granted powers are behaving erratically. There is a 30% chance the power will fail—simply not be there—when the priest calls upon his power. This chance increases by 1% with every week that passes. This problem should be immediately noticed by the player characters. If not, it is quickly brought to

their attention by NPC priests.

- * Non-Vecna priests recover their spells at a slower rate. With each passing week, it takes an hour more of rest to recover spells. PC priests also notice that more concentration is needed to acquire spells and receive the necessary inspiration from their gods.

- * Finally, the sky goes dull—not dark, just a hazy dull gray. The sun does not seem as bright as it once did, and the stars do not shimmer as much at night. When this happens, all communication with the outer planes is severed. Vecna will reign supreme.

Sightings

If your characters just aren't getting your obvious hints, you can spur them on with some vivid appearances by Vecna (or someone pretending to be Vecna) that will, with luck, get them moving. It is suggested you use these appearances only as a last measure. They are somewhat heavy-handed and will detract from subtler parts of the adventure.

- * One of the rumors the characters hear is that Vecna has been sighted in Greyhawk. Like all rumors, the sighting was made by a "friend of a friend" and cannot be confirmed. Characters may hear the same tale several times over, with the events slightly different in each telling.

- * The most sensitive of the player characters has a dream of Vecna. In it, he sees a mummified man, his left hand a withered stump, leading some evil ritual. The exact details of where or who is present is not clear. The worshipers are chanting, "Hail, Lord Vecna," over and over, leaving no doubt as to whom they are addressing.

- * The same or another player character has a waking vision of Vecna. A form, which the character knows is the arch-lich, appears before him. Flanking Vecna are the Hand and the Eye. The lich points his finger ominously at the character, causing an icy chill to sweep through the room. With that, the apparition vanishes.

Tracking

In addition to any research, the characters may ask around town to see if anyone saw the Circle of Eight before they left. You may or may not want them to gain clues this way. If the characters gather all their information on the street, they will miss useful clues in the libraries and temples. On the other hand, if they can't learn anything on the street, they may feel frustrated. The following are some of the responses they can get to their questions.

- * "Circle of Eight? They fight in the arena, don't they. No? Well, never heard of them then."

- * "Oh, you mean that wizard fellow who always hangs out around here. Well, I haven't seen him for a couple of weeks."

- * "Of course, I remember the worthy mage. He was in only three weeks ago, preparing for some sort of trip. No, he didn't say where he was going."

- * "It seems to me that information like that ought to be worth something. Don't you agree, gentlefolk?"

- * "I saw them hanging out near the River Rat, down on the waterfront. Most unseemly place for men of their stature, if you ask me."

- * "I heard from a friend that they left town—took a Rhennee boat upriver. Those damn gypsies probably did your friends in."



Chapter 4:

Traveling

At this stage in the adventure, the player characters have accomplished all they can in the city of Greyhawk. It should be reasonably clear to them that further adventuring must be done in lands far from the city walls. This is the only way for the characters to discover what has happened to their masters.

Of course, your players may have missed your obvious hints and will want to keep scouring the city for their foe. If the suggestions in the "Interlude" section have not spurred them to travel, you may have to whack them over the head. Have Turim (Vecna's manifestation) come up with a fantastic bit of information pointing to Verbobonc, or let one of the players receive a much overdue note from his master, telling of his plans to travel to Osnabrölt. This ruins the mystery, but it does get the group moving.

Getting There

Getting to Verbobonc or Osnabrölt is no simple matter, for both places lie far from the walls of Greyhawk. Unless the player characters are already familiar with the route, they cannot travel alone, since they will quickly get lost. The same applies to magical travel, particularly teleporting.

Checking with the usual sources fails to turn up any guides knowledgeable in the lands between Greyhawk and their destination. The characters do learn that the Rhennee regularly sail from Greyhawk to Verbobonc and other cities on or around the Nyr Dyv. The characters will have no trouble finding a boat that is preparing to sail. There are three possible boats the characters could take,

depending on which Rhennee NPC they have met: Avrel Riskar, Yagos Slevak, or Turim Varostak.

As a noble, Avrel is the master of several boats. For a price, he can easily arrange passage for the player characters on one of his ships. The boat used, a flat-bottomed barge, is named the *Gilfar*. Its bargemaster, Andros Jagosnich, is a coarse and hairy man. Loud and boastful, he alternately terrorizes and cajoles his crew. Seldom sober, he never completely loses his wits to drink. Andros is a skilled river pilot, greatly respected by those Rhennee who know him. In their eyes, his behavior and faults are in no way unusual. Since the player characters are under his protection, the bargemaster forbids his crew to steal anything from them.

If the characters take the *Gilfar*, nothing truly unusual happens on their journey, except for random encounters. However, because of their questions in Greyhawk, the crew has been infiltrated by assorted cultists. The Cult of Vecna has assigned one man to watch the player characters. This is either Yagos Slevak (if he has not yet been approached by the player characters) or an unnamed Rhennee. He makes no moves against the player characters unless he is certain of success. Turim Varostak also finds a place among the crew.

If the characters are foolish and accept passage from Yagos Slevak, they sail on his boat, the *Weeping Maiden*. His barge is a crew of cutthroats, a disreputable batch of Rhennee, although they look to be honest and hard-working. While none of them know of Slevak's role as a cultist, they have no qualms about serving under his evil command.

At first, the voyage on the *Weeping Maiden* seems normal enough. When the boat reaches the waters of the Nyr Dyv, however, this changes. During a night when the barge is far from shore, Yagos orders his crew to set upon the player characters. They try to capture the characters, truss them up, and throw them overboard—after stripping them clean, of course. The crew does not want to kill the characters on board, since this would mean bad luck. If the characters defeat the crew, the party can take over the ship, although they can command the sailors only by force. The crew mutinies or jumps ship at the first chance.

Finally, the characters may take passage with Turim Varostak. The peg-legged, old Rhennee commands the *Vaspar*. His crew members are quiet and mind their own business, although they watch the player characters with great suspicion. In truth, they are not Rhennee but freshwater scrag, polymorphed into Rhennee form. Characters may notice that Turim seldom has to give orders to his crew, but when he does it is in a strange language. Other clues can also be noticed: their filthy habits, grotesque meals, even their ignorance of basic land-dweller customs and practices (like fire-building or smoking).

Turim does not intend to harm the player characters during the voyage, nor does he allow the scrag crew to attack them. However, the scrag are bloodthirsty monsters; if threatened, goaded, or tempted, they attack the PCs. They are clumsy fighters in human form (hence their worsened THACO), but they retain their trollish invulnerabilities and regenerative power (in water only). If a

fight breaks out, Turim uses whatever force is necessary to end it. Should one or two player characters die in the process, he is not too upset.

Should the player characters for some reason detect the true nature of the crew, Turim acts. He dispels the *polymorph* spell and orders the scraggs to capture the player characters, so he can learn everything they know by means of torture. If the scraggs are defeated, Turim flees magically. Vecna's manifestation does not wish to waste valuable energy fighting a small-time group like the player characters.

If the player characters take the *Gilfar* or the *Weeping Maiden*, they may discover that the Cult of Iuz has also been busy. One of the crew members is a cult priest. Beryn Talkin by name, he has orders to spy on the characters to learn all they know about Vecna and the cult. Beryn takes care not to reveal his priestly abilities. As a stranger, he is not well-liked by the rest of the crew.

Gilfar or Weeping Maiden Crew (parenthesized alignments apply to *Weeping Maiden* crew)

15 normal sailors: AC 7; MV 12; HD 1d6 hp; hp 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SA backstab x2, HS 20%, MS 25%; SZ M; ML 10; AL N (NE); XP 35 each

5 guards: AC 4; MV 12; F5; hp 47, 39, 38, 32, 24; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA backstab x2, HS 25%, MS 20%; SZ M; ML 12; AL N; XP 270 each

Andros Jagosnich (Gilfar): AC 3; MV 12; F7/T5; hp 40; THACO 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8; SA backstab x3, HS 45%, MS 70%; SZ M; ML 15; AL N; XP 975

Beryn Talkin, Priest of Iuz: AC 5; MV 12; P9; hp 50; THACO 16;

#AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2; SA spells; SZ M; ML 15; AL CE; XP 2,000

Spells: *Detect good, detect magic, darkness (x2), know alignment, silence 15' r., slow poison, spiritual hammer, continual darkness, glyph of warding, speak with dead, abjure, cure serious wounds, flame strike*

Magical Items: *Mace +2, necklace of missiles, bracers of defense AC 5*

Vaspar Crew (10 freshwater scraggs): AC 3; MV 3, Sw 15; HD 5+5; hp 42, 40, 39, 37, 36, 35, 35, 32, 32, 30; THACO 15 (18 when polymorphed); #AT 3 (2 when polymorphed); Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/3d4 (1d4/1d4 when polymorphed); SA special; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML 14; XP 650 each; AL CE

Encounters on the Way

The following encounter tables are used for the voyage from Greyhawk to Verbobonc (roll 2d10).

2D10 Roll	Nyr Dyv	Selintan/ Vilverdyva
2	Sea hag	Greenhag
3	Zombie, sea*	Nymph
4	Lacedon	Lacedon
5	Scrag	Scrag
6	Pike, giant	Dragonfly, giant adult*
7	Merrow	Merrow
8	Turtle, giant snapping*	Turtle, giant snapping*
9	Rhennee barge**	Rhennee barge**
10	Merchant	Merchant
11	Pirate	Pirate
12	Fisherman	Fisherman
13	Spider, giant water	Crayfish, giant
14	Lamprey, giant	Leech, giant
15	Water beetle, giant	Frog, giant water

16	Nixie	Dragonfly, giant nymph*
17	Naga, water	Naga, water
18	Gar, giant	Swanmay
19	Dragonnel*	Dragonnel*
20	Water weird	Water weird

* Found in the GREYHAWK® Adventures Appendix to the *Monstrous Compendium*.

** Rhennee barges vary in size and crew. From 1 to 8 barges are encountered. Use the following ranges to determine each barge's complement.

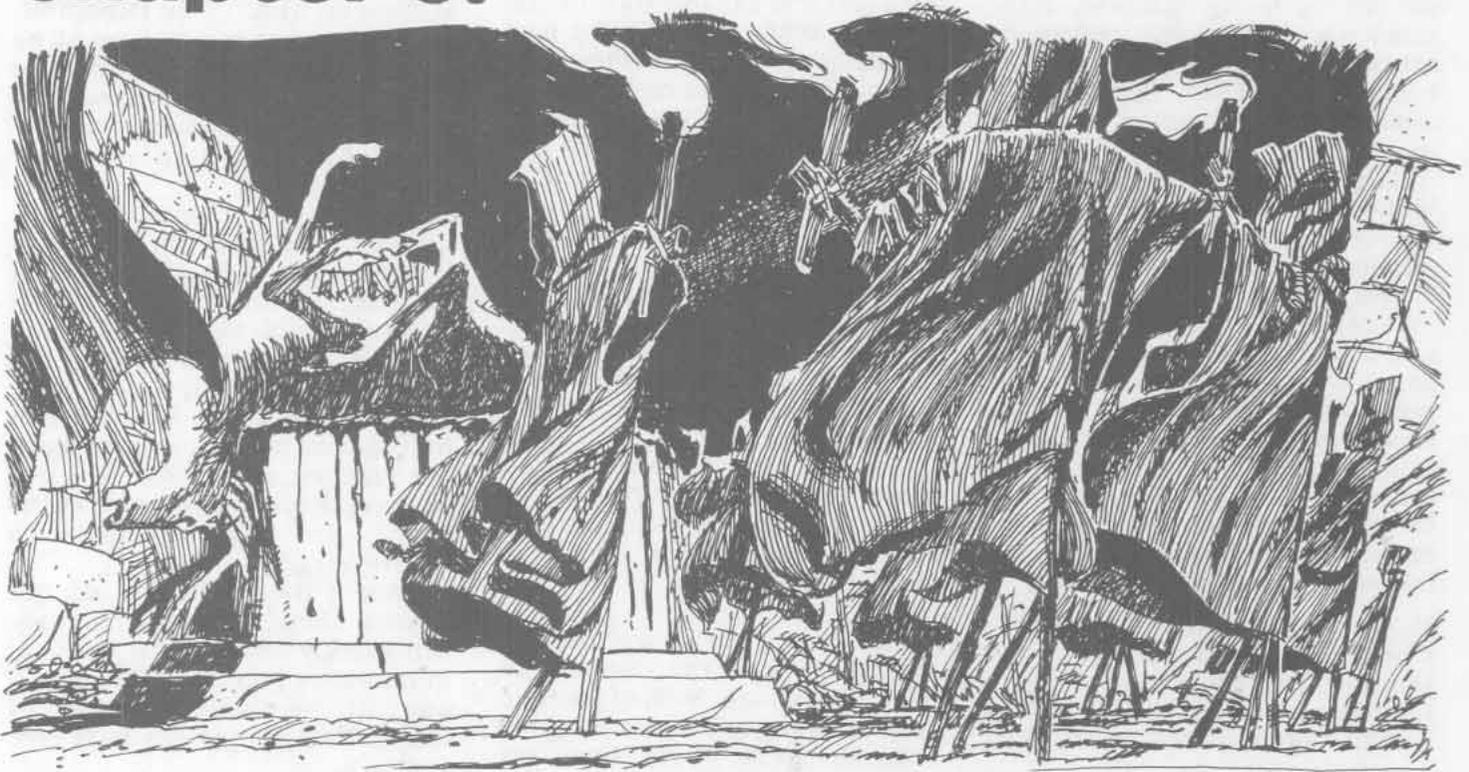
- 1 bargemaster—dual-class fighter (4-7)/thief (5-7)
- 2-4 guards—dual-class fighter (3-5)/thief (2-4)
- 13-24 folk—50% fighters (1-2), 40% thieves (1-4), 10% dual-classed
- 1 wise woman—see the *City of Greyhawk* set for more details
- 2 female assistants to the wise woman

Rhennee are generally armed with battle axes and long swords. In addition, 50% of the crew carries spears, while the remaining 50% use heavy crossbows. Each barge has 1d3 ballistae mounted fore and aft.

The Rhennee generally do not attack other Rhennee vessels, unless the two clans are involved in a blood feud. If this is the case, the encountered barge(s) attempt a swift, short attack, hoping to kill a few of their enemy and escape.



Chapter 5:



Verbobonc

In Verbobonc, the player characters can either seek to learn more information about the gnome warren of Osnabrölt or they can continue in their tracking of the Vecna cult. Either way, they come to the attention of the Voice of Vecna, currently working out of this port city.

If the player characters have come in the company of Yagos Slevak, believing his promises to expose the cult, you can skip to "The Cult Acts" section. Although he leads them into a trap, Yagos does circumvent the need to scour Verbobonc for clues.

If the player characters have arrived in Verbobonc looking for more information about Osnabrölt, go to the "Gnomeburg" section. This part will tell them what they can learn in Verbobonc about the gnome warrens of the Kron Hills.

If the player characters are searching for the cultists of Vecna, consult the "Searching" section. This tells where to find information and the reactions of various NPCs to the questions of the player characters.

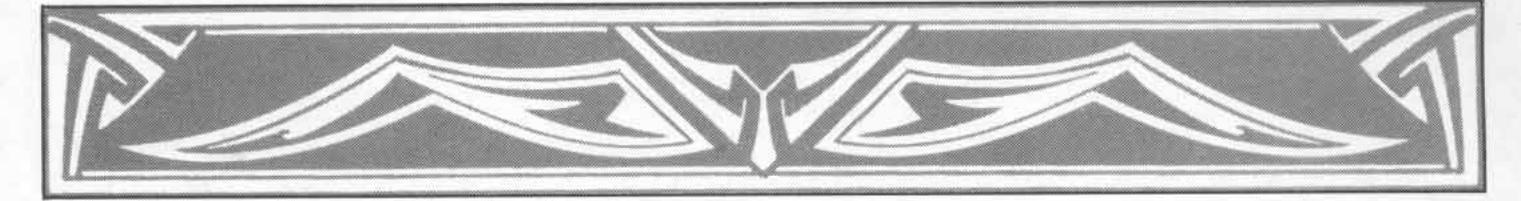
In all cases, the cult knows the player characters are in town. "The Cult Acts" section describes how the cultists react to various courses of action the characters might take.

The City

Located on the shores of the Velverdyva River, Verbobonc is the capital of the Viscounty of Verbobonc. With a population of 11,000 humans and assorted gnomes and elves, Verbobonc hovers between a large town and small city in size. The city is walled and well-maintained, with many fine examples of ancient elven architecture.

Long before the founding of the Viscounty, elves and humans lived in settlements along the river. Verbobonc was the greatest of these, once the seat of an elven principality. Although few elves remain in the city since the woodlands have been slashed back, present-day human occupants have carefully preserved the elven work.

The finest surviving example is, without a doubt, the palace of Viscount Wilfrick of Verbobonc, ruler of the land. This is a large complex of buildings and gardens, tastefully arranged to provide natural-seeming vistas from nearly any window. Its construction is typical of most of the elven buildings of Verbobonc. The palace is graced by many slender towers joined by airy, arched bridges. These perilous trestles are braved only by the nimblest humans, although elves manage them with graceful ease.



Inside, the rooms and halls have high ceilings, and the walls are pierced by many windows. Hallways are narrow and staircases are commonly built without banisters. Wood and very light-grained stone are the common building materials.

In general, the ruling class of Verbobonc is disdainful of those without titles or position. Titles of nobility and rank matter greatly. Those without titles—gentlemen and peasants—are not unimportant, but they are simply not of the same social class. Wealth and power have little to do with it. Furthermore, rank within the nobility is important. Those of lesser status are expected to show deference to their superiors. The orders of precedence and terms of address are as follows (from highest to lowest):

Viscount—"His Noble Lordship"
Bishop—"Your Holiness"
Baron—"Your Prominence"
Lord Mayor—"Your Lordship"
Knight Commander—"Most Honorable Sir"
Abbot—"Father Abbot"
Knight Banneret—"Right Honorable Sir"
Knight Companion—"Most Worthy Sir"

Use these rankings (and the terms of address) to confound and harass your player characters. For example, a knight commander will probably be offended if the characters call him "Right Honorable Sir Damfreis" and he will certainly take offense if they don't address him by his proper title at all!

Even the commoners of Verbobonc suffer from the arrogance of class. Gentlemen do not associate with simple peasants. Tradesmen are better than merchants, merchants above common laborers. The Rhennee are outcasts, the lowest of the low, even beneath the beggars of Verbobonc.

The ruler of the Viscounty is His

Noble Lordship, the Viscount Wilfrick of Verbobonc. Noted as being a just and capable warrior, the Viscount Wilfrick has for the past decade or more dealt with several major threats to his realm. By far the most notable of these were the events surrounding the First and Second Risings of the Temple of Elemental Evil.

Because these menaces struck so close to his capital, the viscount has maintained a well-disciplined and motivated army ever since. The bulk of his troops are mounted, and horsemen are greatly respected throughout the land. In times of danger, the army is supported by a well-trained peasant militia. Made up of mostly good and lawful freemen, the levy does not hesitate to muster in the face of some threat to the Viscounty.

Still, the player characters are unlikely to meet the viscount, as he is a busy man. Most of his time is spent ruling and supervising his army. Unless the player characters possess important credentials as ambassadors of a foreign land, Wilfrick simply does not have time for them.

The official the player characters are likely to meet is Bishop Hauflen of St. Cuthbert (see NPC Appendix), especially if they should need clerical aid. The entire viscounty is his bishopric, thus making him second only to the viscount in power and influence. While upright and good, he is perfectly aware of his power and has no qualms about using it. The player characters will only receive his aid and cooperation if they play by his rules. A great believer in the protocol of his position, the bishop receives only those of rank. Commoners must normally make do by dealing with the lesser priests. Untitled player characters will have to be very persuasive if they wish to see the bishop.

Gnomeburg

If the player characters arrive in Verbobonc looking for Osnabrölt, the Rhennee of the city are of no use. The characters will have to find someone with knowledge of the gnomes. The gnomes live inland, far from the territory of the barge clans.

Any player character with knowledge of the region (a gnome from the Kron Hills, a Velunan, an elf from the nearby forests, etc.) knows that in Verbobonc, along the wall farthest from the river, is a gnome enclave called Gnomeburg. The Rhennee are unfamiliar with that district. If the characters leave the Rhennee slums along the waterfront, they can easily find a merchant to direct them to Gnomeburg.

Even if the characters do not know about Gnomeburg, they can quickly learn of it if they enquire about gnomes. Most everyone in Verbobonc knows of Gnomeburg, though few have ever visited it.

If the characters don't go inquiring about gnomes, but they ask about Osnabrölt in the dock area, they eventually meet Oaklin, a half-elf. He is a member of the Cult of Vecna. More information about him and his actions is given under "Searching" section.

Gnomeburg is a small section of Verbobonc, tucked away in the shadow of the city wall. It is only a few blocks of tiny, half-buried structures, built in a style similar to the gnome warrens of the Kron Hills. Trees grow thickly in this district, almost disguising the gnome enclave as a park. Scattered throughout the wooded streets are a number of small inns and taverns.

Only one of these, Kron Hall, is frequented by non-gnomes. All other establishments have doors too small and ceilings too low for human comfort. Kron Hall is specially built for use as a meeting

place between the gnomes of Gnomeburg and the big people—humans, elves, and the other large races. It is a quiet place, lacking the usual revelry of other taverns. Local gnomes seldom go here, preferring their own, more comfortable establishments. Kron Hall is frequented mainly by parties of adventurers, out-of-towners, and those who have business with the gnomes. At one table is a group of human and gnome jewelers, discussing an impending gem purchase, while at another a band of elven warriors visits an old gnome friend.

Kron Hall is run by Miral Cutterfro, an independent-minded gnome. A good and gracious hostess, she runs Kron Hall with an iron grip. Her place is quiet and friendly and she makes sure it stays that way. Veteran to many a bar fight, she doesn't allow any weapons in her establishment. If a fight breaks out, she has no hesitation about wading in with a good

stout club. She'll lash out at all involved, giving good licks with her cudgel. Brawlers are thrown out. If need be, every gnome (and many of the big folk) in the place come to her aid.

Miral is friendly but not gossipy. Part of her success comes from making connections between gnomes and big folk. If you need a good gem cutter, a goldsmith, or a guide to the hills, Miral can probably steer you to the gnome for the job. She avoids idle gossip, since it's bad for business; asking too many questions about Gnomeburg makes her clam up in suspicion.

Miral's four teenage sons often work as runners, carrying messages to the residents of Gnomeburg. They know virtually every resident of every warren. There is always at least one son available to act as a runner. They know to be quick in their errands, but not so quick that Miral can't sell another round of ale.

If the player characters ask Miral about Osnabrölt, she cheerfully gives them the information. She sees no harm in being helpful, but having never been there, she can't give accurate directions. She can send for a gnome guide, if the player characters want one. The guide summoned, Vargannos Ache-Feet, is a competent guide and can be hired for the journey at a cost of 100 gold.

If the player characters ask or talk about the Cult of Vecna, Miral is not particularly interested. She listens politely like a good innkeeper, but she won't offer any comments. Cutterfro doesn't know anything about such a cult, and the whole thing smacks of gossiping to her.

If the player characters press their questions about Osnabrölt, Miral becomes suspicious. This much interest is just not healthy. Although she's never been there, she remembers some vague allusions to a great treasure stored in





Osnabrölt. Strangers asking for details about the place sounds like bad news to her.

If, by some chance, the player characters can convince her of their good intentions, she tells them the tale of the "sacred treasure of Osnabrölt." According to the legend, a long time ago (by gnome standards, making this a very long time in human terms), a strange human strode into Osnabrölt. He was tall and gaunt, and had only a single eye and hand. As was the custom then, the gnomes gusted him and, after feasting and drinking, they set to games of wrestling and strength. During these, the stranger bested all the champions the gnomes had to offer. When it was over, he drew out a great sword, like none ever seen before.

"I have beaten you, every champion who has come before me. For this I have the right to lay a charge upon you. This sword shall be your bane and your strength. You must guard it till it can be found again." With those words, he thrust the sword into the earth of the great hall, plunging his hand deep into the ground, till the hilt could not be seen. With this, he strode out the doors of the hall and vanished in the night, refusing the hospitality that was offered him.

Ever since, the fortunes of Osnabrölt have been dark. In peace, the warren suffers—its crops do not grow and their craftsmen are ill-fated. In warlike spirit and martial skill, however, there are none to be found better in all the hills.

Vargannos Ache-Feet (gnome):
AC 1; MV 6; F8; hp 45; THACO 13;
#AT 3/2; Dmg 1d6+2 (Str and magic); SD +2 to magic and poison saves; SZ S; ML 12; AL LG
Magical Items: *short sword +1, field plate +1* (gnome-sized), *bag of holding, potion of super-heroism*

Vargannos is a soft-spoken gnome whose gentle demeanor hides his combat skill. He speaks little, seldom having much to say, especially to strangers. He seems to constantly walk stoop-shouldered, his eyes cast to the ground.

Searching

Most likely, the characters arrive in Verbobonc following the trail of the Cult of Vecna. Finding the cult in Verbobonc is not going to be a simple matter. The viscount and bishop are both lawful and good, and the bishop is particularly harsh in his suppression of evil religions. Of course, the viscount, after the tribulations caused by the Temple of Elemental Evil, has no love for the plottings of secret cults. These factors have driven the Cult of Vecna into hiding.

Searching for clues of the cult must be done with great discretion. If characters begin openly asking for knowledge of Vecna's followers, they attract the attention of three groups: the cultists themselves, the priests of St. Cuthbert, and the knights of the viscount. None of these groups view their questions in a friendly light.

Once the cultists are aware of the characters' intentions, they send one of their number, Oaklin the Half-Elf (see NPC Appendix) to befriend the party. His job is to spy on the group, keep the cult apprised of their movements, and, when eventually ordered, lead them into the cultists' trap.

The knights of Verbobonc behave in a much more direct manner. At some point the characters receive a summons to appear in the court. It is not a polite invitation delivered by a messenger, but a command to make an immediate appearance, backed up by a squad of seven Gentlemen of the Watch led by the Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask, a knight banneret of the

Viscount of Verbobonc's Mounted Borderers. (If any of the characters are known to be titled, the officer of the watch is of equal or greater rank, if possible.)

The characters are hustled to the palace of the viscount, there to be brought before the Provost of the City, His Prominence Rollo Augustin. The magistrate wants to know why the characters have been asking questions, what they knew when they came, what they have learned, and who told them. He is blunt and expects answers. The characters cannot bargain with him. If the PCs are uncooperative, he orders them imprisoned; if the PCs are insolent, they are tortured. If the PCs are cooperative, the provost's mood gradually eases, although he does not become friendly. Rollo insists the characters keep him informed of everything they learn, suggesting there may be some benefit in it for them (besides avoiding jail). The Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask is to be their contact.

The meeting is not exactly futile. If the party was well-mannered during the meeting with the provost, Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask (a lawful good chap), suggests they investigate the old quarry south of town. According to his nephew, who runs a country inn on the Lowroad nearby, there have been some strange mutilations in the woods around the old pit. It might just be an isolated band of goblins, but the knight thinks it is worth looking into.

Characters who ask Alfentrask where they can find possible cultists are given a list of inn and tavern names. These include the Red Ox (near the waterfront), the Bristling Hedgehog (across from the big tower just north of Gnomeburg), the Scythe and Sheaf (a few blocks south of the Tradesmen's Gate), and the Hanged Man (on the Torturer's Square). The knight does not know if there are any cult-



ists at these taverns, but these establishments certainly have evil reputations.

Bishop Haufren is no less interested in the characters, but his approach is not quite as direct. From him the characters receive a polite invitation to meet with him for an afternoon soiree. The message is delivered by a priest and a RSVP is expected.

The soiree turns out to be more of a private tea than an afternoon party. The bishop himself meets with the player characters. His concerns are the same as those of the provost: what do the characters know and who told them? While equally as hard and unyielding as the provost, the Bishop cannot use the obvious threat of prison. Instead, he persuades reluctant informants with offers of clerical assistance and threats of its denial should they need aid in the future. Since the church of St. Cuthbert is the dominant religion in all of Verbobonc, these are no idle threats. Characters who are not followers of St. Cuthbert cannot get aid without his word. Even those who do hold to his religion can be excommunicated at a word.

If the bishop feels the characters are basically upright people (and he has a good sense for this), he, too, will feed them a few droplets of information. He is not direct, since, if the characters fail, he prefers that the church's role remain concealed. Instead, he asks where the player characters are staying and then suggests, "You might try staying at the Scythe and Sheaf Inn. I've heard it's a place well suited to people such as you." He also mentions that the countryside, particularly the gnome settlements of the Kron Hills, has suffered from evil in times past. If the characters don't get his hint to visit the Scythe and Sheaf, then he figures they are not the right ones for the job.

The taverns mentioned by the Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask are

all of the same mold: dingy and smoke-filled, frequented by an assortment of thugs, thieves, luckless adventurers, and ne'er-do-wells who sit, sullenly gulping mugs of stale sack and sour beer. Fights erupt almost every night. Most of the patrons only watch the brawls, letting the tavern's bully boys clear the brawlers from the floor. Sometimes a spirited round of wagers is raised, but most of the patrons do not care to waste their money on gambling.

Each tavern requires several nights of consecutive visits before the characters can draw any conclusions concerning the clientele. During these visits there is a 60% chance something interesting or unexpected happens. Use the following table to determine the event, or you can create your own unique encounter.

D20 Roll	Event
1-5	Brawl
6-8	Gambler
9-11	Gossip
12	Job Offer
13-14	Knife Fight
15-17	Raid
18-20	Threats

Brawl: A fight breaks out, involving 1d4 + 1 NPCs. The player characters are not involved, although a chair may come crashing their way. They can either stay out of it or join in. No weapons are drawn unless the player characters do so first.

Gambler: An open game of chance (cards, dice, or whatever) is starting up. One of the player characters is invited to join. One of players in the game is a professional with a gaming proficiency of +3. His adjusted proficiency check (for his skill) is 18. Given his high ability, the fellow attempts cheating only if his losses have been heavy. This does not happen too often.

Gossip: The player characters pick up rumors from the barkeep or barmaid.

Job Offer: Someone approaches the player characters with the offer of adventure. Do not use this event unless you have something prepared and want to give them a short break from *Vecna Lives!*. Whatever the job is, it should be short and easily completed in a single night. Possibilities include breaking into a noble's villa, strong-arming a merchant, shadowing someone, or acting as bodyguards on a dangerous rendezvous.

Knife Fight: A table near the player characters is pushed aside or shoved over with a crash. Two men, who had been arguing before, go at each other with daggers. The owner shouts for help in breaking up the duelists before someone gets killed and ruins his business. No one else is going near the pair. The player characters can get involved or help out, as they see fit.

Duelists (2): AC 7; MV 12; HD 2d4 hp; hp 5, 4; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SZ M; ML 13; AL CE; XP 15 each

Raid: The Gentlemen of the Watch burst into the tavern. Several customers duck out the back or disappear into dark corners. The Watch are searching for a thief. They examine everybody and take a few outside for questioning. One of those questioned could be the player characters. The Watch are none too gentle in their work.

Threats: One of the player characters is accosted by a drunkard. The NPC accuses the player of some insult—a rude push, paying too much attention to his woman (or her man), failure to make a toast, or just looking ugly. The NPC tries to pick a fight with the character. The drunk is clearly outmatched, but will not stop. The fight is without weapons unless the character draws a weapon or several of the player



characters gang up on the NPC. No one else moves to intervene, waiting to see how the player character acquits himself.

Drunken Bully: AC 9; MV 12; HD 1d6 hp; hp 3; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 or 1d8; SZ M; ML 15; AL CE; XP 15

The time spent in the Red Ox, Bristling Hedgehog, and Hanged Man, while perhaps lively, does not turn up any useful information. At the Scythe and Sheaf the characters may or may not spot cult members. If they know Yagos Slevak, they will find him there. With him is the young half-elf Oaklin. They are in earnest discussion about something. After a time, Yagos and Oaklin shake over something and then the half-elf leaves. Oaklin is wary of being followed. Any characters trying it must either successfully hide in shadows (or move silently, the DM's choice) or roll a successful Dexterity check against half their normal attribute score. If the characters successfully follow Oaklin, go to "The Cult Exposed" section.

Likewise, the characters can attempt to sweat the truth out of Yagos. If promised his life, he folds in quickly, telling the characters enough information to find the cultists (see "The Cult Exposed"). However, if left alive, he finds some way to get his revenge on the characters; it is, after all, in his nature to do so.

If none of the characters recognize Oaklin or Yagos, the half-elf makes his move to befriend the party. If this happens, see "The Cult Acts" section.

The Cult Acts

Whether or not the player characters find the Cult of Vecna, the cultists are going to find them. However, the cult's survival in Verbobonc depends on secrecy. There is absolutely no way they will at-

tack the player characters openly. Even ambushes on the back streets of Verbobonc are out of the question. Instead they must lure the player characters out of the city and into a trap. Their agent for doing this is one of their members, an expert at cons and confidence games—Oaklin. Complete information on the half-elf can be found in the NPC Appendix.

If the characters arrive in Verbobonc aboard Yagos's or Turim's barge, Oaklin finds the group on the waterfront shortly after they arrive. If Turim is with the group, he spreads word they are looking for the cult regardless of what the characters do. (It is in the Vecna manifestation's best interests to locate the cultists quickly.)

In the initial meetings, Oaklin is coy, careful not to offer too much to the player characters. He presents himself as a guide to the seamier sides of Verbobonc. Oaklin's story is that he's heard from his Rhennee friends that the player characters were asking questions. For a couple hundred gold, the half-elf is glad to work as a guide.

Role-play Oaklin carefully. He doesn't make extravagant promises. He wants money for his guide service. He never mentions the Cult of Vecna. He gives no hint of knowing what the characters want in town. If the characters bring it up, he knows nothing—but he can check around. Most important, Oaklin doesn't pretend to be something he's not, and he doesn't reveal all that he is. He is not a nice person and knows there is no way he can disguise that. So instead, he plays the part of a two-bit hustler.

Oaklin takes his time. He is persistent but not too pushy. If the characters refuse his help, he waits, confident that they won't learn anything without him. After a while, he repeats the offer and he'll keep this up until the characters either hire him or leave town.

Once Oaklin has the job, he be-

gins the second stage of his, and the cult's, plan. Oaklin knows perfectly well what the player characters are looking for (through the divinations of the cult's priests), but he can't let the group know this. Instead, the half-elf works to get the heroes to tell him who and what they are searching for. Only after the characters have told him they are searching for the Vecna cult does Oaklin bring up the subject and tell them about the events at the old quarry outside town.

If, for some reason, Oaklin fails to get the characters to confide, he takes a third course, only slightly riskier. After showing them around to various places where he knows there is nothing to learn, Oaklin says he has some new information. Like a true informer, he haggles over the price. Once this is settled, the half-elf describes rumors he's heard about an abandoned stone pit on the Lowroad out of town. Someone or something has been killing animals up there, doing it in a particularly unpleasant fashion. The militia's poked around, but they haven't found anything. Oaklin has no idea if this is useful.

If asked, Oaklin has no desire to go with the group to investigate. If the characters force him or offer more money, the half-elf accompanies them.

Ambush at the Quarry

Oaklin's instructions take the characters about 13 leagues out of Verbobonc (see the Verbobonc and Surrounding Lands map). The quarry is about a league south of the Lowroad that runs from Dyvers to Veluna City. The road is moderately well-traveled, carrying local trade. Much more traffic sails the Volverdyva River, especially keel-boats hauling goods for the large markets of Dyvers and Greyhawk. The way to the quarry is along an old, seldom-used trail.

Half a league before the trail is a



small country inn, the Rock Powder Inn. Though not a dive, the Rock Powder has seen better times. Built in the days when the quarry was a thriving business, the inn once housed journeyman stonemasons, engineers, and merchants who had dealings at the pit. Now, with the quarry abandoned, it does a small trade with travelers on the road. It also serves as a post-house for the Viscount's riders. The inn is run by Grammo Saxinus and his wife, Ansrith. Their daughter, Cylene, a pretty country girl in her late teens, helps in the public house. Grammo and Cylene are half-elves, his wife a full elf from the Gnarley Forest. She mostly stays out of sight, tending the inn's kitchen gardens, while Grammo minds the public house.

Grammo is a good innkeeper. Those who want conversation get it; those who want to be left alone are left alone. He never comments on his guests or neighbors. After all, who wants the local innkeeper saying bad things about them? Grammo is not hesitant to talk about other events that happen in the area, so long as they don't involve neighbors.

The strange deaths in the area are valid topics of conversation. Something has been killing wild animals and livestock in the region. While he hasn't seen any of the bodies, the peasants have told him the deaths weren't caused by animals. The good folk have tried to catch the killer without any luck. Most of the killings have been around the area of the old stone quarry. The peasants won't go there. According to their tales, the pit was abandoned after the masons dug down into the Underdark and released things that weren't supposed to live on the surface.

Grammo doesn't believe a word of this. As he explains it, most everything unusual or evil that's found in the area is blamed on the old pit. The quarry closed because

the good limestone ran out, not because there were any monsters. A lot of people fell on hard times when the pit closed, so it's natural the locals should look for something to blame. Even here, his own inn, has had a tough go of it.

Once Grammo realizes the characters are adventurers intent on visiting the quarry, he makes them an offer. He's willing to give them free food and lodging, but only if they can come back with some proof that the old quarry isn't haunted, cursed, or whatever. The stories are putting off business. Dispelling them would help not only him, but all the people in this area. Although it is a poor offer, Grammo is sincere.

If Oaklin is accompanying the player characters, Grammo offers one final note before returning to his work. Discreetly he signals the most trustworthy-looking character aside. "I've seen that one before," Grammo confides, nodding toward Oaklin. "He's a bad sort, evil company. I wouldn't travel with him if he paid me. I'm telling you now so you'll know." After this, he says no more on the subject.

That evening the sky darkens and a light drizzle begins to fall. This weather continues all night. During the evening, several freemen from the local farms come in for a draught of warm wine to take the chill off their bones. They avoid the player characters and keep to themselves.

As it grows late, a young dairyman, his boots thick with mud, comes in out of rain. His thick hair is plastered against his head and his clothes are soaked. He's shivering but it's not from the cold. His wide eyes and pale face clearly show that he is upset about something. Hurriedly joining his fellows at a bench, the freeman gulps down a flagon of wine. The player characters cannot help but overhear the conversation.

Young Farmer (speaking somewhat breathlessly): "...along the old Wirthin trail, I found some blood. Big trail of it went off into the wood, it did, toward the pit." (Gulps down more wine.)

Old Man: "Eh, how do you know? That trail's nowhere near the old pit!"

Young Farmer: "I followed it. I had a good sword with me, an' figured I might find what's been making the trouble. With the rain, there's no telling how long that trail'd last—but when I got up on the ridge, I could see lights down there, moving around. An' there was this moaning noise. That was enough for me, I tell you! I lit out straight for here!"

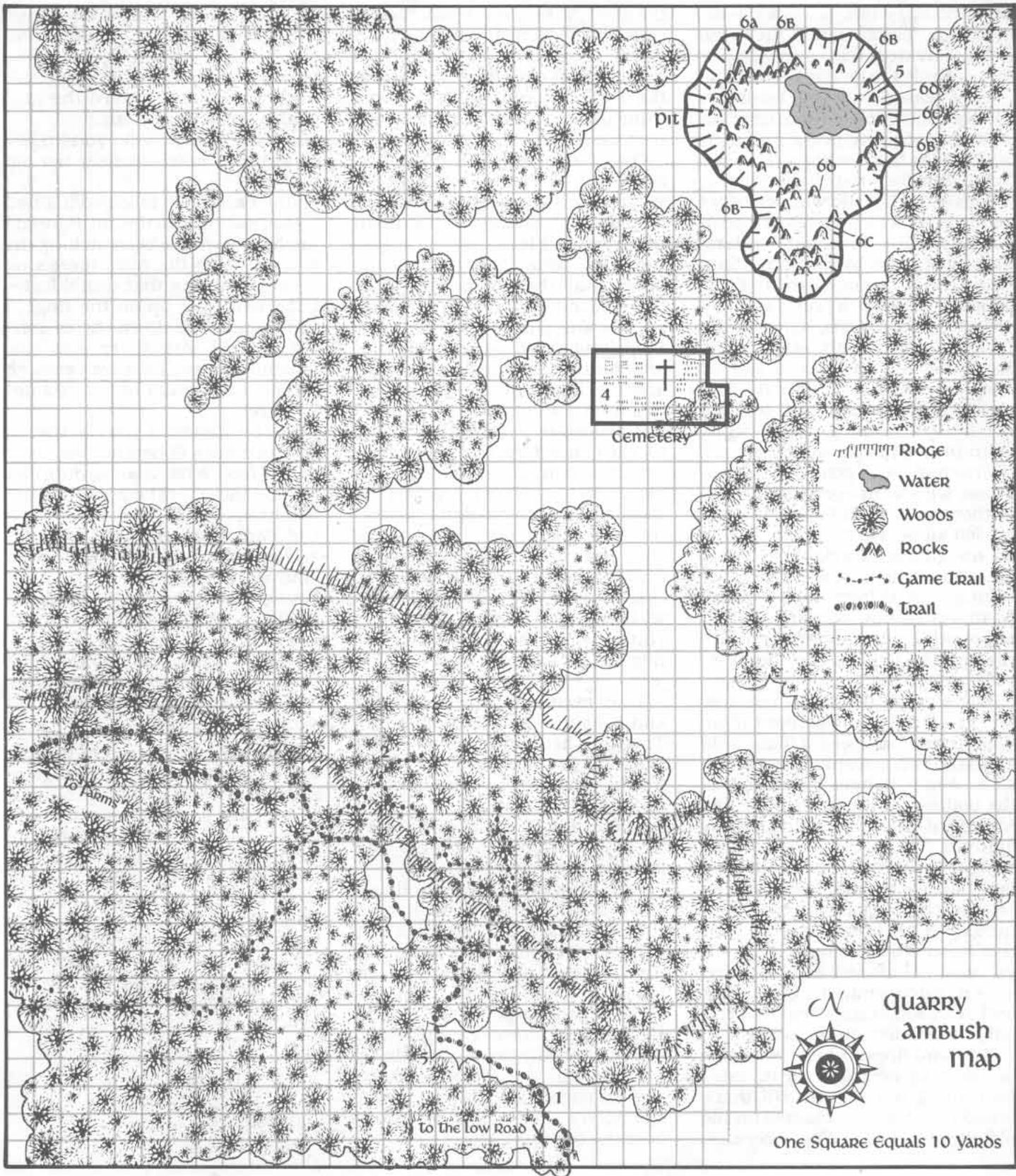
Cylene (Standing beside them): "Oh, Dennis O'Berrin, you're a daring fool! What if something had got you there?" (The young farmer blushes.)

Old Man: "Tomorrow we'll get ourselves up there, and we'll see if your words are true."

Young Farmer: "What about the militia? I could be to the city by tomorrow..."

Old Man: "Nae, the nobles won't be interested in the likes of you. This is a local problem. We don't need no outsiders."

If the player characters intrude on the speakers, the group gives sullen answers to their questions. They clearly don't want to talk about the strange goings-on with strangers. At best, the player characters can get directions to the old Wirthin trail. No one is going to guide them, certainly not on a night like this, and their company is not welcome tomorrow. Grammo just shrugs that there's nothing he can do if the characters look his way.





The Pit

If the party has been sent by Oaklin (or if he is with them), the cultists are prepared. Continue reading this section. If the group arrives without any cultist's knowledge (i.e. they did not send them here), go to the "Caught Off Guard" section.

The player characters should go to the quarry the night they hear the young farmer's tale. If they choose to stay in the inn, have one or more of the NPCs—probably Grammo or Oaklin—point out that the group may very likely miss its only opportunity to find the cult. Others have been at the quarry in daytime, without success. Now must certainly be the best, perhaps only, time to go.

The way to the pit is slippery and cold. Use the Quarry Ambush map for this part of the adventure. The low clouds blot out any light from the moon or stars, while the rain reduces vision of all kinds. Light sources are effective to a maximum of 30 feet. Beyond this, the landscape disappears in a haze. Infravision is effective out to 40 feet, beyond which the landscape is veiled. If the characters are without light sources or infravision, they suffer the full penalties for darkness (-4 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and +4 penalty to Armor Class; no damage bonuses for Dexterity or Strength in combat). The world is pitch black and wet.

While the young farmer at the inn was telling the truth, he did not know his story was being used to bait a trap for the player characters. The cultists purposefully left the trail for him to find. (The dairyman has a habit of taking that trail to the inn for his nightly cup.) Likewise, they arranged the lights and noise for his benefit. To top it all off, the poor yokel was given a jolt of a *fear* spell, just to give the story an extra convincing touch. The farmer acted just as desired, flee-

ing to the warm comfort and safety of the inn. Now the cultists are prepared for the arrival of the player characters. Sentries have been posted and the ambushers are in position.

Key to the Quarry Ambush Map

S (Sentry): One imp lookout, the familiar of one of the priests, is posted at each marked position, watching for the arrival of the player characters. There is a 15% chance the imp is noticed if the group is actively looking for the enemy. If the characters are simply moving down the trail, they pass by without noticing the creature. The imps have instructions not to attract attention. Once the characters have passed out of sight, the imp telepathically alerts the Thought of Vecna leading the ambush. After sounding the alarm, the imp follows the player characters, attempting to fly silently as it does so. It stays out of sight of the characters, simply heading where it thinks the party went (i.e., toward the pit). When the characters reach the ambush site at the quarry, the sentries are behind the PCs, trying to block their escape.

Imp (1): AC 2; MV 6, Fl 18 (A); HD 2+2; hp 13; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA Special; SD Special; MR 25%; SZ T; ML 9; AL LE; XP 650

1. The Wirthin Trail: The trail is nothing more than a narrow, muddy track that runs from the Lowroad, across a wooded ridge, and into a small farming valley beyond. The branch from the Lowroad is marked by a milestone ("Verbobonc—40 leagues—May the gods have grace on you, traveler"). Once on the Wirthin trail there are no markers to indicate the correct route at any branches. Everyone who takes the trail is assumed to know where they are going.

Most of the trail runs through woods. At the edges, these woods are thick with brush, particularly raspberries and grapevines. Farther in, the forest floor opens up. The trees are old, with large trunks and spreading branches. Fallen branches, toppled trees, and small ravines are the greatest obstacles off the trail.

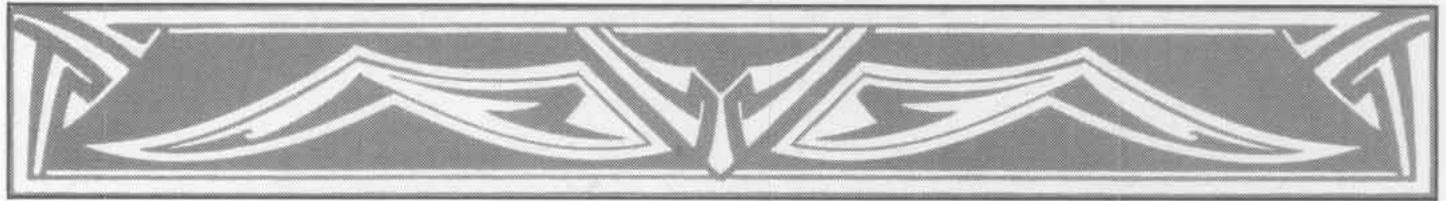
2. Game Trails: These narrow paths cross the Wirthin trail at several points. They are broad enough to be mistaken for regular trails by inexperienced woodsmen. Rangers can easily tell these are not human trails.

If the characters follow a game trail, it twists and turns for 100 to 600 yards and then disappears.

3. Bloodstains: This is the spot Dennis O'Berrin found. The rain has obscured the markings somewhat, but it is still clear that something died or bled heavily here. Rangers and others with tracking proficiency have no trouble following the trail of blood. It plunges into the woods, going in a straight line for the quarry. Characters without tracking proficiency can still follow the trail if they roll a successful Wisdom check against half their attribute score. The modifier total for following the trail are -5 (+4 for mud, +2 for occasional bloodstains, -5 for rain, -6 for lighting).

If the characters lose the trail, they can still estimate the direction to the quarry (provided they have a compass or someone who can determine direction). They must travel cross-country to reach their goal. Have characters who become totally lost flounder about in the woods for a while until they accidentally stumble on the pit. Eventually the player characters should arrive at their goal.

4. The Uneasy Dead: As a welcoming committee for the player characters, the priests of Vecna have animated the corpses of an old graveyard near the quarry.



This cemetery was filled with the bodies of those who died in the pit; consequently many of the skeletons are horribly broken and mangled. They carry stonemason tools as weapons—singlejacks, mauls, chisels, and even wedges. The skeletons have orders to attack any creature that does not give the secret signal of Vecna. Consequently the skeletons have already slaughtered several animals that wandered into the area. It is possible the player characters could mistakenly assume the skeletons are the cause of the strange deaths in the area. However, examining any of their recent kills shows that their handiwork does not match the reports the characters have heard.

Skeletons (30): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each, THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (weapon); SD special; MR special; SZ M; ML special; AL N; XP 65 each

5. The False Ceremony: To lure the characters into the trap, the cultists (under the direction of the Thought of Vecna) have prepared what seems to be an impressive evil ceremony. At the bottom of the pit, near the pool of stagnant water that fills the bottom, is a group of hooded figures, holding torches around a central, blood-stained altar-stone. The carcass of a freshly killed deer is sprawled across the block. Next to the stone stands a lone figure in green and red robes. He or she (since it is impossible to tell) seems to be presiding over the ceremony. All the figures are standing stock-still. A droning chant rises from the group. Fog rises from the chill pond and swirls about the feet of the cultists.

The figures are nothing more than scarecrows, draped with black robes. Each figure has a torch lashed to its crossbar, making it look like a cultist holding a

torch. With the use of some careful staging and *ventriloquism* spells, the ambushers are baiting a trap for the player characters. The ambushers are hidden elsewhere in the pit.

The scene has been created to lure the characters within range of a colony of vampiric mists that dwells in the dark nooks of the old quarry. These creatures were the original cause of the strange deaths in the area. Needing a trap, the cultists have only embellished on the activities of the mists, telepathically enlisting the cooperation of these evil creatures.

When the characters move within 50 feet of the altar or pond, the mists attack. The strongest is coiled around the altar, feeding on the carcass. Five others swirl about the surface of the pond, agitated at being denied a portion of the meal. All swarm upon the player characters are quickly as possible.

Each mist attacks until it is fully sated. Once fed, it attempts to return to its dark dens. If attacked while retreating, the creature becomes enraged and fights to defend itself. None of the mists stop feeding until sated or killed. The mists have no treasure, having fed up to now on wild animals.

Mists, Vampiric (5): AC 4 (8 when substantial); MV 12 (6 when substantial); HD 3; hp 17, 14, 14, 12, 10; THACO special; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA special; SD special; MR special; SZ M; ML 14; AL NE; XP 270 each

Mist Hit Point Record

	Current hp	Max. hp
Leader	17	24
Mist #2	14	24
Mist #3	14	24
Mist #4	12	24
Mist #5	10	24

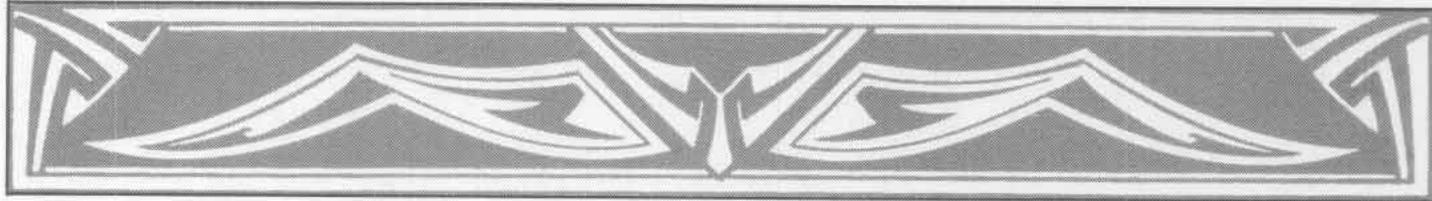
Use the Mist Hit Point Record to keep track of each vampiric mist's current hit points and feeding state (use a pencil). Each time a mist is damaged in combat, subtract that number from both the "Current hp" and "Max. hp" entries. Each time the mist causes damage, add half the damage caused (round fractions down) to the "Current hp" total. If a mist's "Current hp" total reaches 0 or less, it is dead. If the "Current hp" entry ever equals the "Max. hp" entry, the creature has finished feeding and tries to leave.

For example, in the first round Mist #2 attacks. Unprepared, the party causes only 4 points of damage. The creature's "Current hp" total drops from 14 to 10, while its "Max. hp" total drops to 20. On its turn, the mist drains 5 points of blood. It regains 2 points ($5/2 = 2.5$, rounded down to 2) to its "Current hp" entry, raising its total to 12 at the end of the round.

6a-6d. The Hidden Cultists: Concealed in the rocks at the points noted are various members of the Cult of Vecna. They stay hidden until the characters are caught up battling the vampiric mists. As that battle winds down, the cultists attack. The type and tactics of each cultist is explained under the letters below.

A. The Thought of Vecna: This wizard priest is the leader of the ambush. As such, his job is to direct the other cult members through his spells. He does not take an active part in the attack or reveal his position unless necessary. Even then he only uses his spells, attacking the characters from a distance.

B. The Blood of Vecna: These positions are manned by fighters, cast-offs from Verbobonc. Lifted out of the gutters of Verbobonc by the Thought of Vecna, these men owe everything they now have to the cult and will die defending it. Their task is to rush the party. The



Blood have orders to ignore the fighters and concentrate on spell-casters.

C. The Teeth of Vecna: These invokers are carefully hidden in the jagged rocks of the old quarry. When the battle begins, their task is to snipe at the player characters, hitting them with long-range spells. Their initial attacks are with area-effect spells, until the fighters close with the party. After this, the Teeth use individual target spells, concentrating their fire on the fighters in the group. Since each wizard is carefully hidden in the rocks, he gains the benefits of 75% cover (-7 penalty to missile attack rolls, +7 bonus to saving throws vs. spells causing damage). The Teeth hold their positions until they no longer have effective spells or the player characters charge them.

D. The Fingers of Vecna: Hiding in rocks near each of the Teeth of Vecna is a halfling thief concealed by a *cloak of elvenkind*. Throughout the combat, these thieves do not reveal themselves, unless the Thought believes they are absolutely needed. The duty of each Finger is to protect the wizards. If the player characters come after the wizards, the thieves have orders to let the group pass and then attack the characters from the rear, backstabbing if at all possible.

Thought of Vecna: AC 4; MV 12; P9/W5; hp 32; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA spells; SA spells; SZ M; ML 14; AL LE; XP 2,000

Magical Items: *dagger +1*, *staff of withering*, *ring of blinking*, *bracers of defense AC 4*, *potions of healing*

Spells: Wizard—*alarm*, *message* (x2), *shield*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *infravision* (cast at start); Priest—*command*, *curse*, *detect magic*, *protection from good*, *chant*, *hold person*, *heat metal*, *withdraw*, *feign death*, *prayer*, *speak with*

dead, *meld into stone*, *repel insects*, *tongues* (reversed), *flame strike*

Blood of Vecna (5): AC 3; MV 12; F7; hp 44, 40, 39, 37, 33; THACO 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+1; SZ M; ML 15; AL NE; XP 650 each
Magical Items: *sword +1*, *ring of protection +1*

Teeth of Vecna (2): AC 10 (3 in cover); MV 12; W8 (invokers); hp 21, 20; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA spells; SD spells; SZ M; ML 11; AL LE; XP 1,400 each
Magical Items (each): *potion of diminution*

Spells: *magic missile* (x3), *spook*, *ventriloquism* (cast at start), *flaming sphere*, *darkness*, 15' r., *detect invisibility* (cast at start), *web*, *fireball* (x2), *fly*, *lightning bolt*, *Otiluke's resilient sphere*, *shout*, *wall of ice*

Fingers of Vecna, halflings (2): AC 8; MV 12; T6; hp 28, 17; THACO 18; Dmg 1d8; SA move silently 45%, backstab x 3; SZ S; ML 10; AL NE; XP 420
Magical Items: *dagger +1*, *cloak of elvenkind* (small size)

After the Battle

If the ambushing fighters are all killed and the player characters still seem to be in sound condition, the Thought of Vecna calls off the attack. The invokers use their *fly* spells and take to the air, followed by their imps. The Thought goes invisible and makes his way back to where his mount, a dragonnel, is waiting. The Fingers slip back to where their ponies are tied.

If the player characters take any prisoners, they can force them to talk. Only the Thought refuses to speak. All the others, motivated by the appropriate threats and promises, reluctantly speak. *ESP* spells can be used to extract the same information from any attacker including the Thought. A *speak with*

dead spell may allow the characters to learn the information, provided the right questions are asked.

The information to be gained ranges from the obvious—the attackers are cultists of Vecna, the quarry was a trap, the cult does not use the quarry—to the not so obvious—Oaklin and Yagos are cultists, and the cult meets in a secret basement of the Scythe and Sheaf. Boastfully perhaps, the prisoners announce that the characters are too late. Word has come that Vecna has been reborn and is coming to Verbobonc tomorrow to restore his empire.

If the player characters lost the battle and were captured, they have a sorry fate awaiting them. Prisoners are bound and left at the edge of the pond, as food for the vampiric mists. Every 12 hours, the mists come out to feed, each creature draining 2 hit points of blood. After two days, Grammo Saxinus, leading a band of locals, bravely ventures out and rescues the survivors.

If all the player characters are killed (and you still want to continue the adventure without starting over), they can be resurrected, provided their bodies are intact and resurrection survival rolls are made. In this case, Bishop Haulfren, upon receiving a sketchy vision sent with great effort by St. Cuthbert, recovered the bodies and raised the characters. Now they are recovering in the temple of St. Cuthbert. The player characters, of course, owe Bishop Haulfren a very, very big favor, and he's not one to forget that.

Should the player characters fail to gain any information at the quarry and return to town empty-handed, there are several ways to keep them moving forward. Oaklin and Yagos are both in town, the former at the Scythe and Sheaf, the latter among the Rhennee. When found, either can be quickly



convinced to talk. They reveal the same information given above.

Should the player characters totally miss all these opportunities, there are still three possibilities remaining. If absolutely necessary, Bishop Haufren or the Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask can tell the player characters his men have discovered the cult headquarters. Although easy, this is rather obvious and not recommended. Second, Turim Varostak finds the player characters and guides them to the cult meeting. His excuse for helping the player characters is given in "The Cult Exposed" section below. The third choice is to have the characters arrive too late. The Scythe and Sheaf is a smoking ruin, to the excitement of everyone in town. The events given in "The Cult Exposed" section have already occurred and are described to the player characters by eyewitnesses.

Caught Off Guard

If the player characters manage to find their way to the Rock Powder Inn without alerting the cult, the group can capture Oaklin, who is arranging the trap, unprepared. When the party arrives at the inn, Oaklin, who is staying there, becomes noticeably nervous. He thinks the trap has been discovered and the player characters are here to get him. When the group goes out to investigate the old quarry, Oaklin follows. This time there is no ambush, although the vampiric mists are still present. Still shaken by the presence of the characters, Oaklin attempts his own ambush sometime while the group is in the woods. If in danger of death, Oaklin surrenders and, if questioned, gives the characters the information outlined above.

The Cult Exposed

Using the information they have gained, the characters should be ready to conduct a raid on the Scythe and Sheaf, for which they may or may not want assistance. Remind them frequently that haste is of the utmost importance.

If the characters have definite proof of the cult's existence and activities, they can force an interview with the provost. Confronted by their proof, he orders a squad of 20 knights, led by the Right Honorable Sir Alfentrask, to seize the cultists. The characters are allowed to accompany this group, but they are definitely not in command.

Alternatively, the characters could approach Bishop Haufren with their evidence. Proof of the cult's activities raises in the bishop a holy fury such that he assigns a holy fury such that he assigns four priests to accompany the group to the tavern. The bishop

also alerts the provost, who sends the guard noted above, but the characters remain in charge of the operation in this case.

Gentlemen of the Watch (20): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SZ M; ML 13; AL LG

The Right Honorable Sir Alfen-trask: AC 0; MV 12; F8; hp 68; THACO 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg 2-8+3 (strength and magic); SZ M; ML 15; AL LG

Magical Items: *broadsword +2, field plate +2, brooch of shielding*

Priests of St. Cuthbert (4): AC 2; MV 6; P6; hp 31, 28, 27, 14; THACO 18; Dmg 1d6+1; SA spells; SZ M; ML 14; AL LN

Spells: *bless, command, cure light wounds, hold person, spiritual hammer, withdraw, prayer, remove curse*

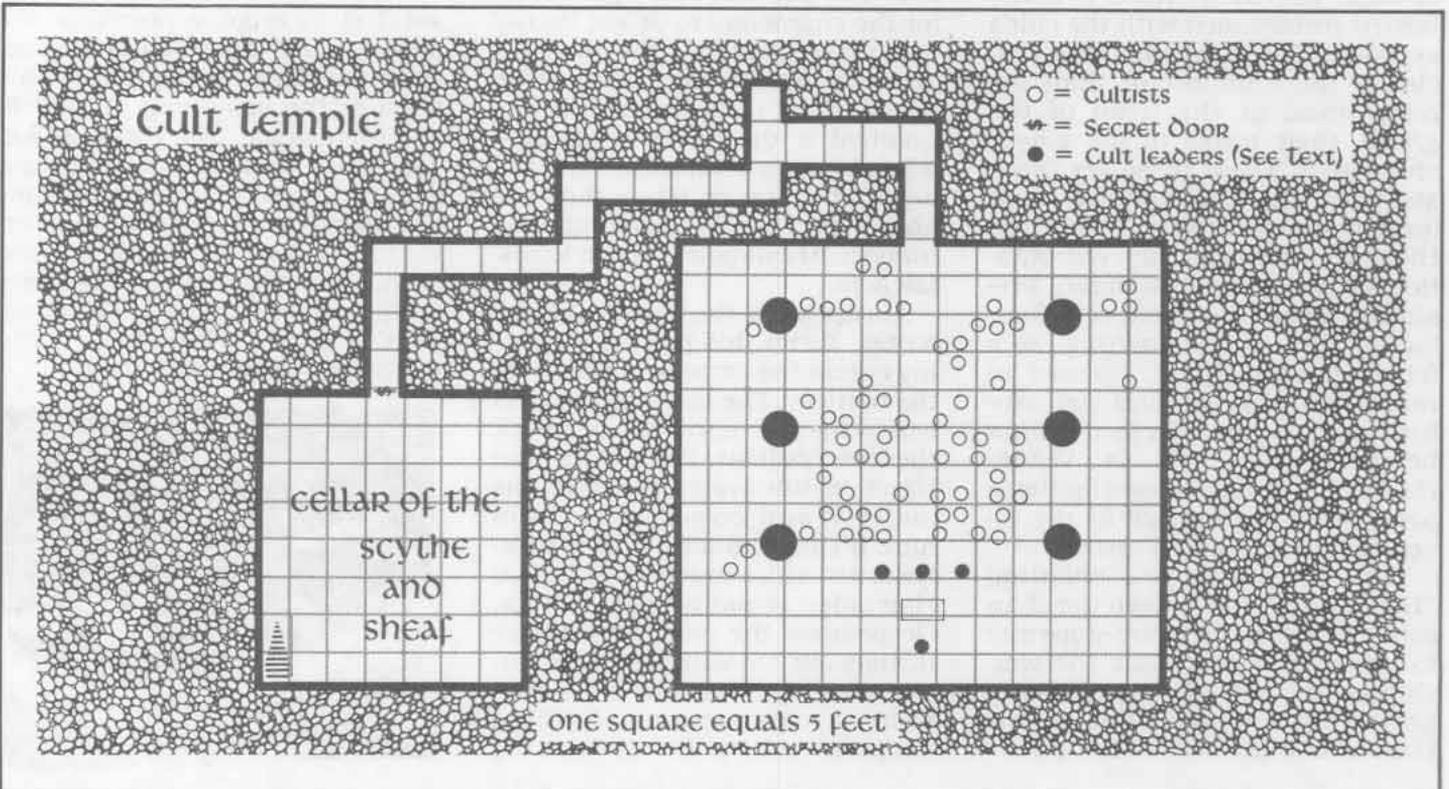
Magical Items: *potion of extra-healing (1 each)*

Before the characters arrive at the tavern, they are approached by one more "ally"—Turim Varostak. The old, peg-legged Rhennee has "...got a pretty good wind of what yer up to. I can see it in yer eyes. I wants to be there, 'cause I gots score to settle with them. 'Twas their lot what done this to me leg. So take me on, lords. I'm handy with a boathook an' yer won't have to watch after old Turim, no sir." Even if the characters refuse him, Turim tags along behind, hobbling after the group as quickly as he can. Of course, Turim's motives are entirely different from what he claims.

Arriving at the Scythe and Sheaf, the group must first get past the innkeeper and his bully boys. If the Gentlemen of the Watch are with the group, this is not a problem. As soon as the thugs see the law, the place clears. Fighting the player characters is one thing, but no one wants to be caught by the law.

Even if the characters are alone, they need not fight the thugs. The bully boys are armed only with clubs. Any demonstration of sufficient force (such as drawn swords) clears them off. The innkeeper, who is not a cultist but has been taking their pay, makes a half-hearted attempt to keep the characters out of his basement. However, he too is not going to wait around for the law to arrive.

The basement of the tavern is small and dark. There is narrow path through the center of the floor, with hogsheads of cider, sacks of wheat, and piles of potatoes filling the rest of the space. Any character can follow the dusty trail that goes from the ladder to the far wall. This wall is free of goods. Those who listen at the wall hear distant chanting on the far side. Searching at it reveals a secret door that pivots open to reveal a narrow, low-ceilinged tunnel. The sound of chanting is quite clear now.



The tunnel goes straight for a short distance and then goes through various turns connected by short sections of tunnel (see the Cult Temple map). A glow of light comes from around the final bend. There are no guards posted and the characters can look around the corner without being discovered.

The temple is a large, low-ceilinged chamber, the cellar of an old building long since built over and forgotten. It is dimly lit by candelabras standing in the corners. The muddy floor is covered by thick rugs; the dampness is causing them to mold slightly at the edges. At the far end is a finely carved but ill-used table that serves as the temple's altar. Set on it is a statue of an upright hand clutching a glaring eye. The eye is a large, yellow jewel of some type.

The chamber is filled with cultists. The majority are simple worshipers, standing with their backs to the characters. These men and women are dressed in a variety of clothes, but each wears a green tabard emblazoned with the cult's symbol. Three hooded figures, clearly more important than the rest, stand at the head of the group, their backs to the player characters. These three are Diraq Malcinex, the Eye, and the Hand (provided neither the Eye nor the Hand was slain in the confrontation at the Roc and Oliphant). Presiding over the congregation, facing the tunnel opening, is a fourth hooded figure, dressed in rich robes of green and red, embroidered in gold. His face cannot be seen, but this is Vecna/Halmadar. The possessed fighter is just presenting himself as the revealed god as the PCs arrive.

The worshipers are chanting "Hail, Lord Vecna!" when the characters arrive. If the group stops and listens, it becomes clear the worshipers are not offering this as a prayer but are addressing Vecna/Halmadar at the head of the altar.

At this point, something happens, but the exact events depend on who is present. If the Gentlemen of the Watch or the priests of St. Cuthbert are with the characters, an attack is launched. The characters have no say in this. If the characters are alone and do not attack, they are spotted by Vecna/Halmadar. Whichever happens, as soon as the battle begins, the hooded figures reveal themselves. Play this up for the dramatic impact. First have the high priestess turn, then the Hand followed by the Eye. Finally, have Vecna/Halmadar throw off his hood. Be sure to describe him in the same terms as you used in the Prologue. Although the characters have never seen him before, the players will remember Vecna/Halmadar and what he did to the Circle of Eight. This should make them scared, very scared.

Allow the battle to go for several rounds with Vecna/Halmadar doing nothing but directing the cultists. The point of this fight is not for the characters to defeat Vecna/Halmadar, but to set the stage for Turim to reveal himself as the true Vecna. Wait until the battle has reached a dramatic moment—when the characters are on the verge of defeat or when they are about to face Vecna/Halmadar himself. At this point, Turim Varostak acts.

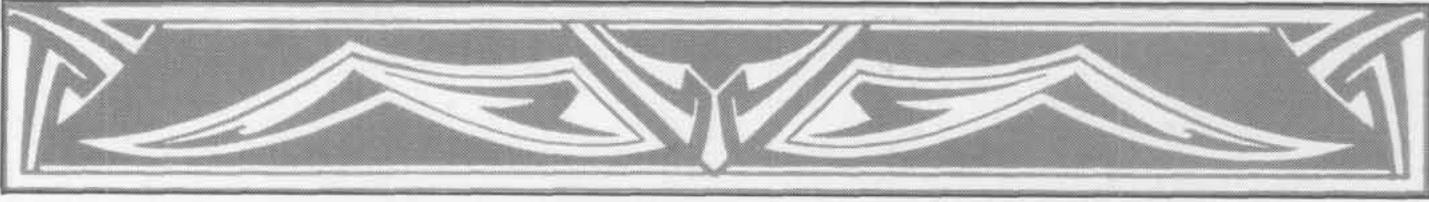
Abruptly, in the middle of the battle, Turim, his peg-leg thumping across the carpets, strides past the battlers. The manifestation releases his fear aura, driving back the lesser cultists. The Eye and the Hand instinctively recognize his majesty and cower away from him. If Diraq attacks, Turim paralyzes her with a touch. Only Vecna/Halmadar remains to face him. Desperately the possessed fighter thrusts out his withered hand, attempting to call up one of its awesome powers. Nothing happens—neither the Eye nor the

Hand of Vecna will function against their true lord.

"Fool!" bellows Turim, his voice far stronger than ever before. "You thought you could claim the power of Vecna with the mere Eye and Hand? I will not be usurped by a worm like you." With that little speech, the manifestation strides up to Vecna/Halmadar and seizes him. If the characters attempt to interfere, the manifestation prevents them, although he uses only non-lethal spells on the group. He then removes the Eye and the Hand from Halmadar's possession. As soon as this happens, the imposter's body decays and crumbles, his postponed death suddenly overtaking him.

As soon as Turim gets the Eye and the Hand, his appearance changes. His peg-leg vanishes and his whole body is restored. He seems stronger and more vital than before. Triumphantly turning to the player characters, Turim says, "Know, my allies, that I am the true Vecna. Thanks to your aid, I shall reign supreme in the heavens." He makes a move to destroy the characters (a wave of his hand or the beginning of a spell) and then stops. "No, I will not kill you. Let it be said that Vecna is a generous god. Indeed, because you have been such faithful servants I will make you great and powerful over all of the Flanaess. Come to Tovag Baragu and collect your reward!" With that, Vecna vanishes, teleporting away.





Chapter 6:

Aftermath

Whether or not the characters were present, the events of what happened at the cult temple are well-reported. Vecna has returned and has offered, or challenged, to reward the player characters at a place called Tovag Baragu. This is not a name known to the locals.

Tovag Baragu

There are three ways the characters can learn about Tovag Baragu—through the offices of Bishop Haufren, by consulting with Mordenkainen, or by returning to the libraries at Greyhawk.

Fortunately, Verbobonc is not without its resources. Although the town cannot rival Greyhawk for the excellence of its libraries, Bishop Haufren does keep a stock of ancient texts. If the characters have had dealings with the bishop already, they can go to him with their problem. The bishop demands some type of payment or service for his help. If the characters already owe him favors, they must submit themselves to a quest before he will help.

If the characters have a method to contact Mordenkainen (by spell only), they can present their problem to the old wizard. The question isn't even difficult for him, since Tovag Baragu is practically in his back yard (at least on a geographic scale). He provides them all the information they need to find the place.

If the characters return to Greyhawk, they must do so quickly. Teleportation is the only practical method for travel in this case. If the characters don't have it, the bishop or provost will arrange it (for a price). Once in Greyhawk, the group has no trouble finding information

on Tovag Baragu in the extensive libraries of the city.

It turns out that among scholars of the arcane, Tovag Baragu is a well-known place. That is, people know where it is and know its peculiarities, but they do not know why the site exists. (Complete information on Tovag Baragu is found in the *GREYHAWK® Adventures* hardback book.)

Tovag Baragu, also known as the Stone Circles, is found on the shore of Lake Udrukankar, deep in the heart of the Dry Steppes (west of the Crystalmist Mountains). Tovag Baragu is a mysterious structure of massive stone blocks set in five concentric circles. It is unquestionably ancient, although its precise origins are unknown. Most scholars believe it is the only surviving relic of the Baklunish empire, the same that was destroyed by the Invoked Devastation of the Suel. Certainly it must be a powerful magical site to have survived what nothing else in all the Baklunish lands could withstand.

What makes Tovag Baragu particularly interesting are the strange magical powers it sometimes exhibits. Several explorers describe how it magnified distant scenes, even scryed faraway lands. It may produce some magical effect on local weather. These, though, are minor compared to the powers that are only suggested at. It is believed that Tovag Baragu can create vistas of distant times and planes, even opening a gateway between the stone circles and the scene viewed. How this particular process is activated or controlled, no one has ever learned.

As a final warning, most of the travelers who have visited the Stone Circles have made comment about the local tribes. These sav-

age nomads hold the Stone Circles to be holy ground. They take a hostile view of strangers poking around the pillars; only careful negotiation has enabled explorers to investigate the site at all.

In the course of their investigations, the characters find a reasonably accurate map to the Stone Circles (see the *Beyond the Crystalmists* map). While not detailed or precise, it will enable them to find their destination.

A Vision

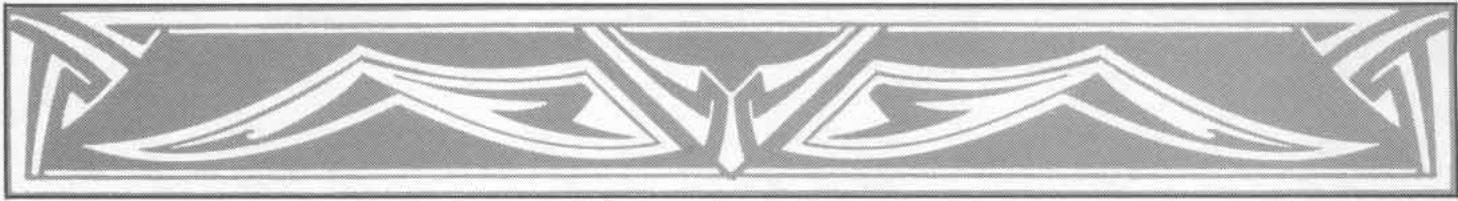
If the characters have not been to Osnabrölt and do not show any intention of going, the following vision comes to the highest level priest in the group during his sleep. When the character awakes, he remembers the details of the dream perfectly.

You are standing at a crossroads in the middle of a dark forest. A wind is howling madly through the trees, but around you everything is still.

Turning around, you see an old, feeble fighter supporting himself against the sign post. Two signs point in different directions from the post. One says "Osnabrölt," the other is blank.

"You must go. Find my sword. With it you may find the way to defeat him." The old fighter says no more, then fades into nothingness. Both arrows now point down the trail to Osnabrölt.

If the players do not get the hint to go to Osnabrölt after all these clues, give up on them. They can continue the adventure without the *sword of Kas* (hidden in the gnome warren) only to discover they really need it later on.



ISLANDS
MOUNTAINS



Plains of the Paynims

© Mlakand

Ull

Kestor

VALLEY OF THE MAGE

GRAND Duchy of Geoff

HORNWOOD

Gorna

STARK MOUNDS

STERICH

Istvin

JOTENS

Loftwick

BISSEL

Hookhill

RUSHMORS

GOOD HILL

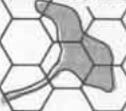
Thorward

LO

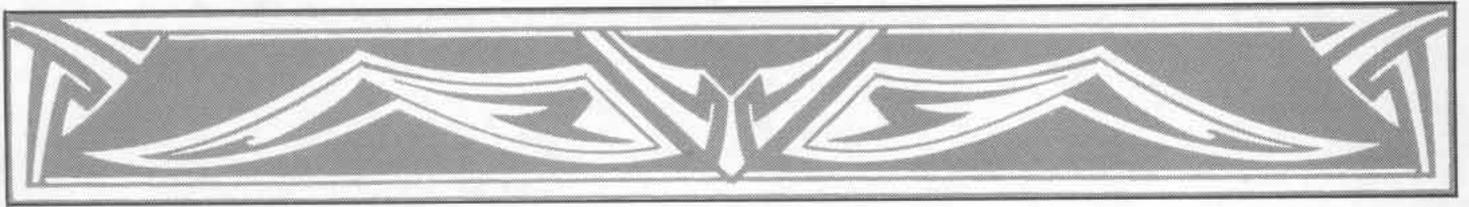
CR

M

Tovag Baragu



DRY STEPPES





**Beyond The
Crystalmists**

Land of Ice

Sterich

Istivih

Orow

Abandoned Pass

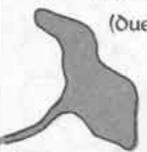
Davish River

Giants

X
Caravan
Attacked

No Water

• TAVOG BARAGU
(Due West Of The Davish)



Land of One-legs

Lands of Artimal

Avig's
Rocks

many
Dead Things
here

Suel-haut

Sea of Dust

BARBARIANS
HORSE

Chapter 7:

Osnabrölt

In this section the characters discover the *sword of Kas*, which has been hidden in the tunnels of the gnome warren for centuries. Still, the discovery is not easy, since the characters must undergo a test of the gnomes in order to claim this powerful item.

The Road to Osnabrölt

If the characters have not learned Osnabrölt's location from all the maps and guides made available to them up to now, they can learn the location easily enough in Verbobonc.

The journey to Osnabrölt is relatively uneventful. There is a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter for every five leagues (15 miles) traveled. If an encounter occurs, determine what is encountered from the table below.

2D10 Roll Encounter

2	Shadow dragon
3	Adventurers
4	Halfling traveling entertainers
5	Norker raiding party
6	Brownies
7	Gnome merchant
8	Orc raiding party
9	Viscounty militia
10	Viscounty patrol
11	Deer
12	Brown bear
13	Human merchant
14	Dwarf prospector
15	Bandits
16	Hill giant
17	Wyvern
18	Wolfwere
19	Giant-kin, spriggan
20	Treant

Encounters with good-aligned characters and creatures are peaceful unless the PCs take some hostile action. These encounters

are opportunities to exchange news and learn conditions on the road ahead. Osnabrölt is a hot topic among the dwarves and gnomes encountered. The latest news (that has not yet reached Verbobonc) is that something powerful and terrible swept through the little warren, murdering the inhabitants and destroying the homes. This something, perhaps a human, came through the village only a few weeks ago. News of the disaster did not reach the outside world until a week ago (it took that long for the few survivors to dig their way out of the ruins). Osnabrölt's neighbors have pitched in to help rebuild the community, but it is terrible times indeed for that small village of gnomes.

Encounters with evil-aligned groups almost always end in battle (or flight by the villains if the player characters are powerful). The Viscounty and the Kron Hills are both well-patrolled, particularly after the troubles with the Temple of Elemental Evil. Thus, evil creatures within these lands are here to raid and steal. The player characters look like good targets when first seen.

Into Osnabrölt

As the characters near the gnome community, the trail grows narrower, yet the traffic increases. The group should have several encounters with parties of gnomes coming and going from Osnabrölt. There are males and females carrying tools, fresh bread, clothing, lumber, milk, and other supplies needed by the disaster-struck community. These groups view the player characters with suspicion, but, if treated courteously, all tell the same tale of destruction and death in Osnabrölt.

When the characters finally reach the small community, it is clear that a powerful force has struck here. The warrens, a group of underground tunnels and homes, are shattered. The village was originally built into a huge mound with windows and doors peeking out of the bushes and sod at various points. Now, roofs are collapsed in some areas, blown completely away in others. Jagged cracks show where walls have split. Most of the survivors have moved up from underground and are now living in a temporary tent village. Some distance away is the remains of a huge funeral pyre, where the less fortunate were put to rest. Gnome guards stand ready at all points around the site, watchful for wild animals and humanoid raiders.

As the characters enter the village, the gnomes in the tent village eye them sullenly. Children hide behind their mothers and fathers, fear in their eyes. Before the group can get too close to the refugee camp, the guards draw up in rank blocking the path. Other guards move around to the flanks and rear. The gnomes make no aggressive moves, but they are not going to be caught napping if the visitors prove hostile.

The leader of the guards, Maldo, hails the group and asks them to state their business. If the characters mention Vecna or the tomb built 100 years ago, the gnomes exchange wary glances with each other. If Kas or the sword are mentioned, the little warriors quickly stifle a gasp of surprise. None of these revelations does anything to improve relations between the two groups. However, if there is a gnome with the party, he can ease the tensions somewhat. Vargan-

nos Ache-Foot automatically handles introductions for the player characters. He is very concerned about what has happened here.

If the characters manage to demonstrate their good intentions, Maldo relents, allowing the group to enter the encampment. Maldo leads them to the leader of the community, Old Gudrune, a female gnome. Her hip broken in the disaster, Old Gudrune has refused what little clerical aid there is, insisting that others need curing more than she. The matriarch is confined to a straw pallet under a simple tent. Her brother, almost as old as she is, sits nearby brushing the flies away when she grows too weak to care for herself. Right now, though, she is awake.

Old Gudrune is an exceptional leader. She is both cunning and diplomatic. Careful in her choice of words, the matriarch seldom says less than exactly what she means but not so much as to reveal her mind. Even now, in pain and grief,

she manages to retain most (if not all) of her diplomatic skill. She does not offer any details of what happened here, but instead hears the characters out. Only after weighing their words does she offer any explanations of her people's plight.

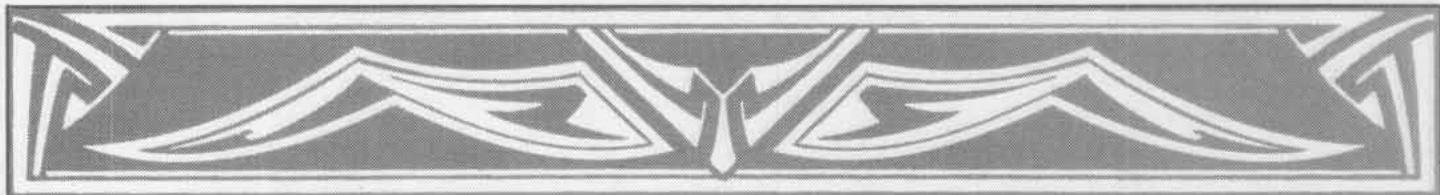
If the group offers clerical aid (and they have made a good impression), Old Gudrune gratefully accepts, although she still refuses any healing until all others in the camp are well. Maldo is ordered to take the healers to the sick and wounded. There are more than enough injuries and diseases to exhaust the spells of the characters. There are virtually no dead, since all bodies were burned almost immediately after death. These cremations are a grim necessity. Only one gnome priest survived; should plague break out this holy man would be inadequate to halt the spread of disease. The priest is grateful for any help the characters can offer; although the player char-

acters do not believe in the same gods, he recognizes their goodness.

As Gudrune explains it, the disaster the characters see was wrought by one man, though he hardly seemed a man. Several weeks ago he arrived during the night, demanding the warren submit to the empire of Vecna. The council (of which she was a part) thought him deranged and so refused. Furthermore, they were fearful of his madness, and thus denied him the hospitality that gnomes customarily offer. With that, the creature lashed out in fury. He alone devastated their warren, disintegrating walls, freezing whole families, slaying the guards, and summoning terrible monsters to attack them. Their magic and weapons seemed powerless against this monster. In an instant, their homes were destroyed and their attacker gone.

By the next morning, Gudrune has an answer for the player characters. If they are searching for the tomb, she describes another group





of humans (the Circle of Eight) who passed through a month before. They, too, asked about the tomb, and were shown where it lay. Shortly after their visit, this disaster struck. Gudrune is sorry, but she cannot fulfill the characters' request.

If the characters have not yet heard the story of Osnabrölt's sacred treasure (see Chapter 5), they hear it now. Furthermore, there were conditions put on the gnomes, supposedly uttered by the stranger, setting the term of their duties. According to local tradition, the gnomes of Osnabrölt must guard the sword "until the needy come to the lame for aid." The player characters can argue that now is that time: they are the needy, Old Gudrune and her crippled village the lame.

The matriarch allows that this may be true, but she is reluctant to end the duty with which she has been charged. The gnomes of Osnabrölt believe the mysterious guest to have been some malevolent god and are still fearful of displeasing him. Before Old Gudrune can give up the sword, she puts the player characters to a test. As is her way, she does not tell the characters they are being tested. Gudrune simply creates the conditions.

Gudrune's test is absurdly simple on the surface. While the group is in camp, a gnome dame presents them with a small mourning dove hatchling. "We found this," the gnome says as she sets the scrawny little bird at the group's feet. The gnome does not say any more than this. What is to be done is up to the player characters.

While doing their work, the gnomes are secretly watching the player characters to see what they will do. Just how the characters treat the hatchling determines whether or not they are shown where the sword lies.

Searching for the hatchling's nest is the best possible response.

It can be found high in the top of a wind-battered tree, 100 feet above the ground. Climbing to the nest is perilous, such that a Climbing check must be made for every ten feet above 60. The nest can also be reached by *fly* or *levitation* spells. However, the mother bird attacks any person who comes close to her nest. These attacks are more frightening than harmful, but harming the mother does defeat the purpose of returning the hatchling to the nest.

The second best option is to adopt the baby bird and care for it. This is a responsibility not to be taken lightly, since baby birds are very demanding.

If the PCs return the bird to the nest or adopt it, they earn passing grades on the test.

Decidedly bad choices include refusing the bird, abandoning it in the woods ("It'll take care of itself."), casting spells on the little creature (especially spells to speed its growth), trying to pass the hatchling off onto another (such as a gnome child), or killing it. In any of these cases, the group fails the test. Gudrune will not show them the location of the sword. No threat can make her reveal it.

If the characters pass the test, Gudrune summons the group back into her presence. She thanks them for her kindness, "especially for the hatchling." This is the first indication she gives of knowing about the bird. "After careful consideration, I believe it is prudent to take you to our sacred treasure." This is a solemn occasion for the gnomes, for, if Gudrune is right, it means the fulfillment of a prophecy and their release from a task that has lasted centuries.

Getting Steamed

Before the characters are taken to the sacred chamber (which survived the attack undamaged), they must endure the purification rites

and holy rituals the gnomes have devised over the years. These preparations take several days. There is nothing that can be done to hurry the process, so the characters should contemplate the virtues of patience during this time. Of course, occasional reminders of the urgency of their mission won't hurt either.

The first phase of the rituals is to fast for 24 hours. During this time, the characters are allowed only water in small sips. They are also required to bathe several times, as the gnomes furiously scour them with pumice-like stones. They must all wear new garments, and so, when not bathing, the group can be stitching together simple tunics from tent cloth.

After fasting for 24 hours, the characters must purge their bodies by sweating. The gnomes have thrown together a simple sweat lodge, built a fire, and have been heating stones for 12 hours. At dawn the characters and Maldo are placed, naked, in the lodge. It is cramped, built more to gnome standards than human. A pit in the center is filled with heated rocks. Water is poured over these, creating clouds of steam. All through the day water and hot rocks are added to the pit, keeping the lodge torturously hot. The characters are required to stay in the lodge until sundown.

The sweat lodge quickly becomes a test of endurance. Every hour, each character must roll a Constitution check. The daylight lasts 14 hours. If a check is passed, the character endures with no ill effects. The first time a check fails, the combined effects of heat and hunger give the character hallucinations. These are minor at first: sounds, voices, and apparitions seen at the periphery of vision. Gradually the hallucinations become more extreme; the character has conversations with talking worms, gets advice from birds, the



sweat lodge opens up and the character flies through the sky, and he may even see and talk with his ancestors. The hallucinations are generally not frightening, nor are they bizarrely incoherent. In fact, to the person experiencing them, they make perfect sense.

The second time a character fails a Constitution check, he passes out. The heat has overtaken him. Thereafter, the character suffers 1 hit point of damage each hour. Any person removed from the sweat lodge before sundown is not allowed into the sacred chamber. It is up to the conscious characters to decide if an unconscious person should be removed.

At sundown, the characters are taken from the lodge and dressed in their new clothing. Each is christened with a new name (even Maldo). These names usually reflect something seen or heard while in the lodge. Thus a character who hallucinated about wild dogs might be named Dog Man. With the new name comes adoption into the Osnabrölt clan. The characters are honorary gnomes. Now, purified and ready, the characters are taken to the sacred hall.

The Sword of Kas?

The procession to the hall is a simple, yet solemn, affair. Leading the way is Old Gudrune, carried on a pallet. Behind her is Maldo carrying a torch. The characters are each given a torch and expected to follow him. Characters who were hallucinating or passed out before are not cured simply because they are out of the sweat lodge. They will still see and hear things that are not there. Exhausted characters must be supported by others. None of the group should feel too fit and strong after 14 hours in the steam bath.

The procession picks its way through the rubble until it finally arrives at an old, age-stained door. Gudrune is carried aside and from her pallet nods to the characters.

"If I had not been so infirm, I, too, would join you. Now, I give you over to my son, Maldo. He is your guide from here." With a tired wave of her hand, Gudrune orders Maldo to open the door.

For all its build up, the sacred hall of Osnabrölt is a pretty plain affair. Pulling the stiff door open, Maldo leads the group into a large, unfurnished chamber. It is little more than a hollowed-out cavern. The floor and walls are bare dirt, the ceiling dirt supported by a framework of beams and braces. A few roots dangle from the ceiling. There are no furnishings, decorations, or even trash. The room is barren.

"This is where it happened," says Maldo, indicating the room. He steps aside, allowing the characters a better view. There is no sign of a sword.

When the characters ask about the sword, Maldo points to the floor. "He plunged it into the ground there, burying it deep beneath the earth." He has no idea what the characters are supposed to do now; he assumed they had a plan.

Probably the characters will decide they must dig the sword up. If so, they must do it with their bare hands. Whatever they decide, just before they do it, have each character roll a Constitution check. Make a show of noting their results. This check has no effect on anything, but, given the previous checks and hallucinations, it should add uncertainty concerning the events that follow. Is this all real or just another strange hallucination?

After the checks, tell the characters they hear a faint rumbling noise. Listening carefully, it seems to be coming from under their feet. As the noise grows louder, the dirt in one spot begins to tremble, bouncing up and down as if it sat on the skin of a drum. Suddenly it flies upward, hit by something from below. There is a glint of metal and then

more. Before the eyes of the characters, a uniquely wrought sword rises up out of the ground—the *sword of Kas* (although hallucinating characters might wonder if all this is really happening).

The first time any character touches the sword, he instantly suffers 2d20 points of damage. Thereafter that character can handle the sword without harm. Upon grabbing the hilt, the character's mind is instantly filled with images. Strongest of these is a feeling of bonding between the character and the sword. They belong together. The other predominant image is that of Vecna—the sword holds a burning desire to find and destroy the arch-lich. The sword seems filled with the power to eradicate the corrupt fiend. Instantly the character can sense the general direction Vecna in which can be found and knows if it is distant or near. Right now Vecna is somewhere very far to the southwest. (For further explanation of the *sword of Kas's* powers, see the Appendix.)

Since the sword has apparently come to the hands of the player characters (something that has never happened before), Maldo and the other gnomes can only assume that the prophecy has been fulfilled. The characters are meant to have the sword and are welcome to take it with them. A great feast is prepared and the characters are not allowed to leave until at least the next morning.

The Enemy

It is during this feast that the camp is attacked by priests of Iuz. The resident demigod of Oerth has been following the activities of Vecna with growing concern. Already his minions have followed and watched the player characters, for Iuz has determined they are central to the drama that is unfolding. Now, just a little too late, Iuz has learned of the *sword of*



Kas. He means to have it for his own, ready for the upcoming battle against Lord Vecna.

The attack is a direct assault on the camp. Believing the gnomes to be in disarray and not aware of the presence of the player characters, the cultists plan to charge in and seize the sword. They do not anticipate strong resistance.

No special map is needed for the battle. Place or draw a number of obstacles on the playing area—trees, tents, fires, and rubble. Put the player characters and 12 gnomes near the center of the area. Let the characters position themselves. After the characters are placed, the cultists attack all from one direction. The spellcasters stay back and attempt to use their spells, while their servants attack in a grand melee. The cultists have instructions to find the sword and bring it back. Once the sword is spotted, they concentrate their attacks on that character. If possible, the cultists snatch the weapon and flee.

The cultists fight until they get the sword, all the servants are killed, their leader is killed, or his morale is broken. The player characters may recognize the leader—Beryn Talkin. He has been following the characters for some time and served aboard one of the Rhennee barges on the journey from Greyhawk to Verbobonc. In this encounter, he is wearing the bloodstained white robes of the cult, identifying himself as a priest of Iuz.

If the cultists escape with the sword, the survivors make their way back to Verbobonc, there to board a ship bound for Iuz.

Beryn Talkin, Priest of Iuz: AC 5; MV 12; P9; hp 50; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3; SA Spells; SZ M; ML 15; AL CE; XP 2,000

Spells: *cause light wounds, darkness (x2), detect magic, chant, silence 15' r., slow poison,*

spiritual hammer, animate dead, blindness, continual darkness, abjure, cure serious wounds, flame strike

Magical Items: *mace +2, necklace of missiles, bracers of defense AC 5*

Subpriests (2): AC 6; MV 12; P6; hp 32, 21; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SA Spells, SZ M; ML 13; AL CE; XP 650 each

Spells: *cause fear, cause light wounds, spittle, heat metal, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer, continual darkness, dispel magic*

Magical Items: #1—*ring of earth elemental command, potion of fire breath (already in effect); #2—cloak of arachnida, gloves of missile snaring*

Servants of Iuz (20 Orog): AC 4; MV 6; HD 3; hp 23, 20 (x2), 19, 18, 17, 16, 15 (x2), 14, 13, 12 (x2), 11 (x3), 9 (x3), 7; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (weapon); SA +1 to damage; SZ M; ML 14; AL LE; XP 65 each

Gnomes (12): AC 4; MV 6; HD 1; hp 8 (x3), 6, 5, 4 (x2) 3, 2 (x4); THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ S; ML 15; AL CG

If the player characters capture any of the priests of Iuz, particularly Beryn Talkin, they can readily get answers to their questions. Curiously enough, the priests do not consider the player characters (or the gnomes) enemies, only obstacles to their goals. Now that they have been defeated, Beryn Talkin (or any other priest) is quite willing to change his plans.

Beryn proposes a deal. In exchange for his freedom, Beryn offers to ally with the player characters against Vecna. To him, this all makes perfect sense. Iuz (and his priests) have no love of Vecna, and whatever the demigod is doing, it is a threat to Iuz's current power. On the other hand, Iuz

could care less about the player characters. To Iuz the Old, the adventurers are nothing more than gnats. He does not fear the group or anything they could do. He does fear Vecna.

Currently, the player characters offer some hope of defeating Vecna; however slim that chance might be. They still hold the *sword of Kas*. If Iuz cannot have it, it makes sense to ally with those who do. Therefore, the priest of Iuz is willing to lend his support to the player characters in the battle against Vecna. In addition to his own spells, Beryn offers the considerable aid of the Cult of Iuz, should the characters desire it.

The player characters are going to be suspicious, even incredulous. Who can blame them? As demonstration of his honesty (in this matter at least), Beryn will submit himself to a *detect lie* spell to prove the sincerity of his words. The priest may even submit himself to a *quest* spell, provided he can be convinced the caster will not betray him by adding special conditions or limitations. The only condition Beryn allows is to not attack the characters until Vecna's plans are thwarted. In exchange, the priest demands the same of the characters, sworn on the most solemn oath he can conceive. The priest does not hide the fact that the alliance ends the minute this goal is accomplished.

If the characters agree, Beryn keeps his word. The threat of Vecna is great enough to hold the chaotic to his word. Of course, the priest is not out to win a popularity contest. He takes some pleasure in irritating, embarrassing, defying, and manipulating the player characters. Furthermore, he is still chaotic and still evil. His solutions to problems match his character—torture and death are far better than kindness and mercy. Beryn is under no obligation to do things according to the rules of good.

Chapter 8:

Across the World

There are several ways to get to the Standing Stones, provided the characters have managed to learn where this ancient ruin stands. The mode of travel chosen depends on the means and cleverness of the player characters.

Overland: The longest, most difficult, and most dangerous way to get to Tovag Baragu is by traveling cross country. If at all possible, characters should find some other method of travel. It will be difficult for the DM to maintain the suspense of the pending confrontation with Vecna if the group takes eight different game sessions just to get there.

Still, the journey, or part of it may be unavoidable. There are two basic routes that can be taken from Verbobonc. The first goes south through friendly settled lands until reaching the barrier of the Crystalmist Mountains. These savage peaks must be crossed with little benefit of trail or guide. Once on the other side, the characters continue their journey across the trackless lands of the Dry Steppes until they reach Tovag Baragu.

The second route is longer, but has the advantage of avoiding the dangerous peaks of the Crystalmist. From Verbobonc, the characters trek to Ket, then southwest to Ull, and finally across the Dry Steppes to their goal. While avoiding the lands of giants and the like, the route takes the characters through the hostile kingdoms of Ket, the Paynims, and Ull.

Each route is divided into stages and the travel time from place to place is noted on the charts below. In addition, the typical encounter table used for that part of the journey is noted. The characters are all assumed to be mounted for this journey.

The Southern Route

Stage	Travel Time
Verbobonc-Enstad	3 days
Enstad-Tringlee	7 days
Tringlee-Niole Dra	3 days
Niole Dra-Flen	6 days
Flen-Istivin	2 days
Istivin-Crystalmist Mts.	2 days
Across the Crystalmist Mts.	9 days
Across the Dry Steppes	11 days
Total	43 days

The Northern Route

Stage	Travel Time
Verbobonc-Veluna City	5 days
Veluna City-Mitrik	2 days
Mitrik-Thornward	4 days
Thornward-Lopolla	8 days
Lopolla-Ulakand	11 days
Ulakand-Kester	7 days
Kester-Tovag Baragu	12 days
Total	49 days

Clearly it would be desirable for the characters to reach Tovag Baragu faster than either of these routes allows.

Flying: If all characters can travel aboard a flying device such as a *carpet of flying*, have flying mounts, or are possessed of some other flying ability, the trip can be reduced to a straight-line journey. The length of the trip for various methods of flight is listed below.

<i>Carpet of Flying</i> , 1 person	18 days
<i>Carpet of Flying</i> , 4 person	32 days
Griffon	26 days
Hippogriff	22 days
Pegasus	16 days

Teleportation: This is clearly one of the best methods to reach the Stone Circles quickly. Unless the character feels like teleporting to an unknown destination, he

should take the time to scry the area. However, because of the powerful magical auras generated by the Stone Circles, the spellcaster cannot scry the actual site itself. Instead, he must pick some landmark 2d6 miles distant. The spellcaster needs two days to study this area carefully. If using *teleport without error*, the chance increases to very familiar.

Via the Planes: If characters get clever and use some sort of planar travel (*plane shift*, *astral spell*, etc.) to cut the time and distance from Verbobonc to Tovag Baragu, they are in for a nasty surprise.

Tovag Baragu is not just a series of stones, it is also a powerful artifact serving as a gate to other planes, worlds, and times. When activated, Tovag Baragu exists in all times and planes. Just as they are about to reach their destination via planar travel, the group sees Tovag Baragu on their chosen plane. Standing in the center is Vecna (see the scene described in Chapter 9), having just activated the Stone Circles. The demigod sees the player characters and gloatingly tells them they are too late. Soon his worshipers from the past will pour into present-day Oerth, giving him the power to become the supreme god of all Greyhawk. (Note that the *sword of Kas* will be screaming for Vecna's blood by now.) After contemptuously allowing the characters to enter the circle and attack him (whereupon the *sword of Kas* fails), Vecna casts them all through one of the archways with a wave of his hand, sending the characters to the Citadel Cavitius on the edge of the Negative Material plane. Information on the Citadel can be found in Chapter 10.





Chapter 9:

Tovag Baragu

Upon reaching Tovag Baragu, the Stone Circles, the characters undoubtedly believe they are preparing to face the final battle against Vecna. They have tracked him down and they believe they have the means—the infamous *sword of Kas*. Unfortunately for them, nothing could be further from the truth. Their quest to defeat Vecna still has far to go. Still, this confrontation is important. Aside from learning the true extent of Vecna's powers, the group is also made aware of his plans, and ultimately sent to the one place where they might find the true means to defeat the evil demigod.

Arrival

Unless they employ planar travel (which has the consequences noted in Chapter 8), the player characters face little opposition cross the Dry Steppe in search of Tovag Baragu. The fearsome tribes of the steppe, so often mentioned in explorers' texts, are strangely absent. It is only within three miles of the Stone Circles that characters encounter any of the tribesmen—and then there are hundreds of them. The nomads have camped around the Stone Circles. As the characters pass through, the nomads stand aside, making no effort to challenge the heroes. Instead, whole families look toward Tovag Baragu, expectantly waiting for something. The area is strangely quiet with only occasional whinnies breaking the silence.

When the characters are within 1,000 yards of the Stone Circles, they see a figure standing at the very center of the rings. It is apparently a human and sometimes moves to one of the arches only to resume its position at the center of

the ruin. At 500 yards, the characters can be reasonably certain the figure is Turim Varostak, the Vecna manifestation. As yet, he gives no indication that he sees the player characters. The air shimmers between several of the arches. Shadowy movements can be seen through these, but it is impossible to make out any details.

At 100 yards, the characters are certain the figure at the center is Turim. Unlike the old sailor they knew, this Turim, while still one-legged, is energetic and vital. He is no longer stooped and moves about the center of the circle with speed and grace. Turim still gives no indication that he has noticed the player characters.

Between the arches, more detail is evident. There are five different scenes. Three show moving figures, one of them a large mass of bodies. The fourth is black with shimmering spots of light. The fifth scene is a greasy, dull gray, unrelieved by any features save an occasional change in hue.

When the characters pass the first ring of the Stone Circles (see the Tovag Baragu map), have each character roll a Wisdom check. Those who succeed feel a subtle shift in their surroundings. Looking about reveals nothing different, either within the circle or outside. As the characters pass through the rings, they can carefully examine the five scenes that appear in the archways. The Vecna manifestation only reacts to the characters when they reach the center or attack him, whichever comes first.

The Gateways

The arches of Tovag Baragu are actually doors to different times, planes, and places. Normally inac-

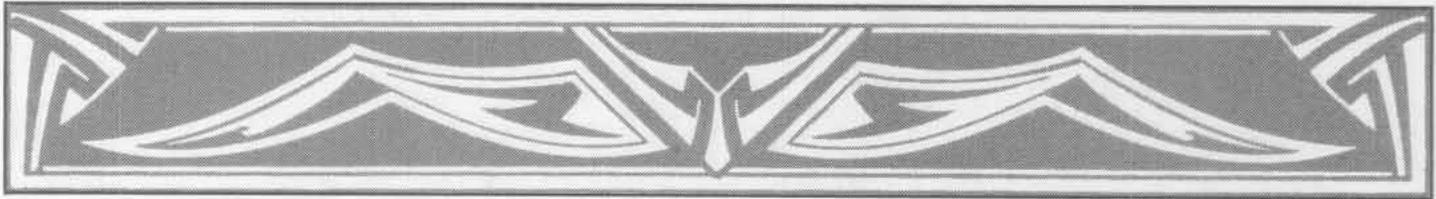
tive, these can be opened by those who have the knowledge and power—and the restored Vecna has both. Once opened, these gateways can be used to view distant events and times and, in some cases, pass between here and there (or now and then).

When active, each gateway shows a scene of its destination. The scene is visible only on the inside of the arch. When viewed looking toward the center of the Stone Circles, the gateway seems to shimmer with distortion like a giant lens. Distant objects seem close, creating a telescopic effect. Walking through an active arch from the outside in has no ill effect. The character suddenly seems to step through the picture—but not out of it.

The result of walking into a scene depends on the status of the gateway. If it is only a window used for scrying, the character can step through the gateway without harm, although he feels a warm tingle over his skin. If the gateway is fully opened as a door, anyone stepping through the arch is instantly transported to the place and time depicted. The gateways can be set to be one-way or full portals. One-way portals are invisible from the other side. Full portals create a doorway at the destination like the doorway here.

Vecna has currently opened five gateways, while searching for the right combination that leads to his own age just moments after his "destruction" by Kas. Most of these gates are merely windows, but a few are one-way portals.

A. Baklunish Capital: This gateway seems to open automatically whenever the Stone Circle is activated. It is a one-way portal. The scene shows a city of clearly ancient design, lit by the moon,

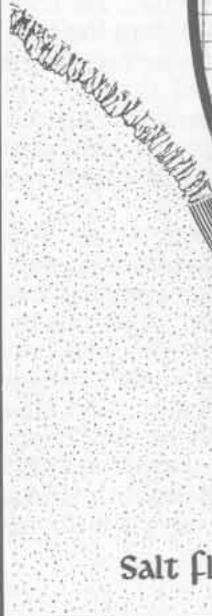
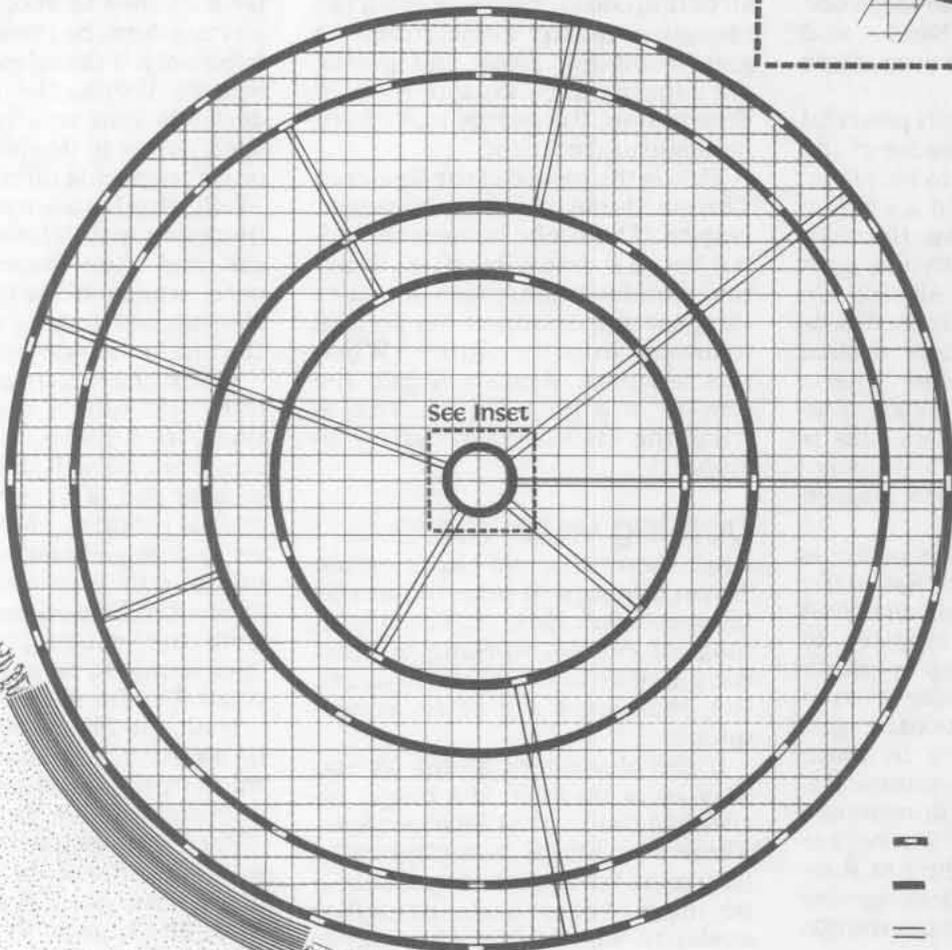
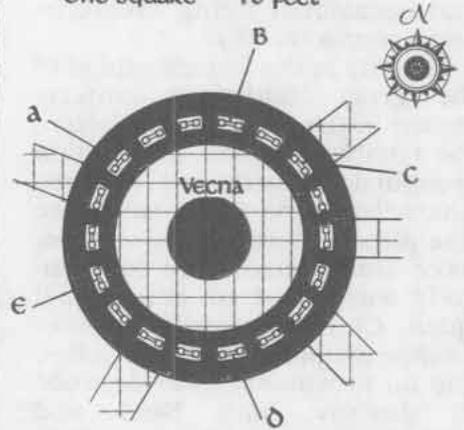


Tovag Baragu



Central Ring (Inset)

One Square = 10 feet



Salt flat

STAIRCASE

Embankment

Trail
→
To the
Paynim Camp

-  Pillar Archways
-  Stone Platforms
-  Paved Roadways

One Square = 25 feet



stars, and torchlight. It rises up over the shore of a gently lapping lake. Ships bob along the shore and occasional flying creatures move across the sky.

The city is the former capital of the great Baklunish empire, shown in the final months before the terrible Invoked Devastation brought down by the Suel wizards. Characters who enter this time (the place is here, on the shore of Lake Udrunkankar) are immediately suspected of being Suel spies. Characters will discover strange magic, decadent societies, and an unwinnable war destined to destroy both Suel and Bakluna—but then the characters already know that.

B. Dorakaa: Being both powerful and prudent, Vecna is aware of the threat Iuz the Old poses to his plans. Therefore, he has opened a window (not a gate) onto Dorakaa, the capital of Iuz's realm. The city is a grim and filthy place. The streets are filled with goblins and orcs. Skulls seem to be the predominant motif in architecture and decoration. This is a land hostile to all that is good. Fortunately for the characters, this is only a window and they cannot accidentally find themselves trapped in Dorakaa.

C. Ancient Flan: This scene is another window, inaccessible to the characters. It shows a strange land (one of the ancient empires of modern-day Keoland), again clearly of an older age. The people dress in clothing long since out-dated, garments today seen only in tomb paintings and ancient statues. Racially they are similar in appearance to some Keoland. There are many other clues that hint at their ancient existence: chariots, bronze weapons, and strange races mingle among them.

D. The Citadel Cavitius: This archway looks out over a grey, gloomy expanse. At first it seems featureless, but close inspection reveals the dim outline of a mas-

sive skull in the distance. This is the Citadel Cavitius, one of the mysterious citadels on the edge of the Negative Material plane. The scene here is a one-way door. More information about Citadel Cavitius is given in Chapter 10.

E. Empire of the Whispered One: This archway is just forming as the characters arrive. Currently it is only a window. (It takes several time-consuming steps to open windows and transform them into gateways.) The scene shows the remains of an immense palace, shattered and broken. The destruction could only have occurred moments before, since rubble is still crumbling away and people are running in confusion. Even in destruction, the palace looks both majestic and corrupt.

This is the palace of the Spidered Throne, the seat of Vecna's ancient empire. The scene is moments after Vecna's defeat by Kas. Vecna the manifestation plans to enter the past and summon his faithful followers into the future. When this happens, Vecna will gain the powers of a greater god. This is what the characters must try to stop.

Dealing with Vecna

Until the characters either attack Turim or speak to him, the avatar ignores them. He is occupied with magical rituals, working to open the gateway to the past. As usual, the characters are of no consequence.

If the characters attack Vecna, they have no luck. His magic resistance (now 70%) blocks spells. Those who attack him physically, he tries to paralyze with a touch. If he must, Vecna casts nonlethal spells to immobilize the player characters.

When given the opportunity to speak (either when addressed or after he has defeated most of the group), Vecna makes an offer to the players.

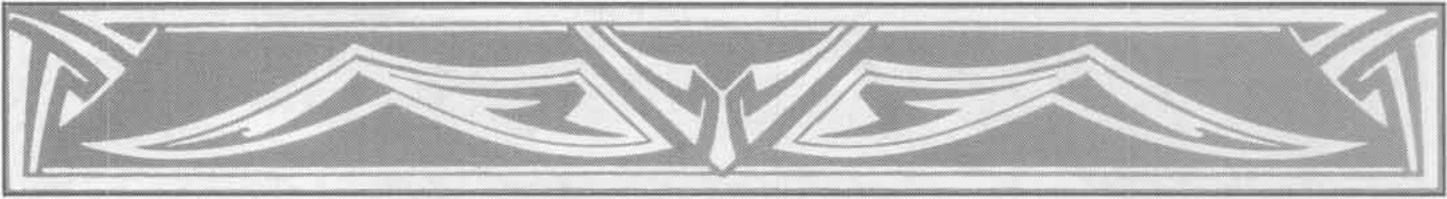
"I see you have decided to accept my offer. I promised to reward you, and I will." Turim pauses with an evil smile on his face. "I will make any one of you my right hand, my voice on Oerth. Soon, when my worshipers step through from the past, I will be the greatest of all gods. Istus, Incabulos, and the others will be nothing next to Vecna. Join me and you will be more powerful than you can imagine. If you want this, all you need do is one simple thing. Kill your friends. Do this and ultimate power is yours." Vecna pauses to give each character a chance to accept his offer. If anyone does, he releases that character only. If the released character attacks Vecna, the manifestation destroys him utterly (he has the spell power to do this easily). If no one accepts his offer, Vecna sighs. "Well, think about it," he says, as he casts a *wall of force* around himself and then dispels any spells used to immobilize the characters. He watches and waits to see what the characters do next.

If any character accepts Vecna's offer and fulfills the grim conditions, the adventure is over. Vecna has won; he will become the sole greater god of Greyhawk. He honors his promise, elevating the traitor to demigod status by creating a minor cult centered around the character. The character is retired from the campaign permanently (as a demigod he is now under the control of the DM).

If all the characters refuse Vecna's offer, the manifestation casts them through the gateway to Citadel Cavitius, his personal prison. "Since you refused me, you can join Kas in eternal hell!" Vecna gloats as the group tumbles through the gate. To succeed in defeating Vecna, the group must find both the means to defeat him and a way to escape and return to Tovag Baragu.



Ken Frank



Chapter 10:

Citadel Cavitius

Trapped on the negative quasi-plane of Ash, the characters have a chance to learn how to defeat Vecna, if only they can find the legendary Kas and persuade him to reveal his secrets. Before they can use this knowledge, they must find a way to escape from Vecna's eternal prison.

Arrival Again

When the characters tumble through the gate, they land in the center of a group of stone rings similar to those of Tovag Baragu. The only major difference here is that the stones, instead of gleaming white, are gray columns of ash. The ground is covered in gray ash, approximately six inches deep.

A shimmering field surrounds the area of the stones, making a dome over the structure. This field forms a long passage at one end, an arched hallway that leads to Citadel Cavitius. The shimmering field marks the limits of Vecna's demi-plane. Within the field, air is maintained and the thick veils of ash are held off. The field can be crossed, but characters will find life difficult, and possibly very short, beyond the limits created by Vecna.

The Citadel

Where the characters have arrived is a special, small section of the negative quasi-plane of Ash. Originally, this piece was part of that uniform and deadly wasteland, undistinguished from the surrounding gray. Vecna took an interest in this place and, over the centuries, transformed the hostile environment into his own private fortress and prison—Citadel Cavitius.

Vecna has chosen to build his citadel on the border between the plane of Ash and the Negative Material plane. Through spells and magical devices, he has formed a small pocket of solid matter and fashioned it into Citadel Cavitius. He then constructed a gateway, and sealed both away from the deadly effects of both the Ash and Negative Material planes. This place is Vecna's domain.

At first sight, Citadel Cavitius can be seen only dimly through the thick pall of gray ash. It looks like a giant human skull with the cranium sliced away. The citadel is dark and colorless, a slightly lighter gray than the dull haze of the plane. Closer inspection suggests that the citadel may not just look like a skull, it may actually be a skull of gigantic proportions. The material and surface is just like bone, although on an immensely larger scale. The walls are bleached and weathered, although no sun ever shines and no wind ever blows here.

The entire citadel, like the gateway, is surrounded by a shimmering field of force. A similarly protected pathway connects the two places. Outside the field, the dismal expanse of the plane is clearly seen.

Characters can leave the safety of the field at any time, venturing out onto the planes of Ash or Negative Material as they wish. However, this is likely to have dire and deadly consequences. Neither plane has air. The ash of the quasi-plane can be converted to air by means of spells, but no such material exists on the Negative Material plane. Both planes cause physical damage. The Negative Material plane sucks away a character's very life-force, causing 2d6 points

of damage and the loss of one level (with appropriate loss of hit dice and abilities) for every round spent unprotected on the plane. Only powerful spells such as *negative plane protection* can prevent this damage. The plane of Ash drains warmth from all who enter it, causing 2d6 points of damage each round. *Protection from cold* and similar spells can prevent this.

Citadel Cavitius is primarily used by Vecna as a prison. Here he has sent those who have offended, attacked, or even hurt him. It suits his corrupt and evil mind not to slay his enemies; instead he condemns them to hopeless and unending gloom. The gate to the citadel is one way and the only escape is through spells or magical devices that normally only Vecna possesses.

Life in the Citadel

The fortress is occupied by perhaps 1,000 dreary souls, all the victims of Vecna's wrath. While a few of these have kept their spirit, most have been crushed by the monotony and hopelessness of their existence. More than a few have gone quite mad and many have deliberately walked beyond the field to their death. The despair of the prisoners is almost physical. When Vecna visits, he thrives on the emotions that charge the air.

Like the citadel, everything about the prisoners is gray and bleak. Their clothes are faded and tattered rags, impregnated with gray ash. Their faces are pale and dirty. Torches only dimly light the hovels. The only music heard is mournful and dirge-like. No one smiles. No one plays. There is no kindness, no curiosity, and, worst of all, no hope.

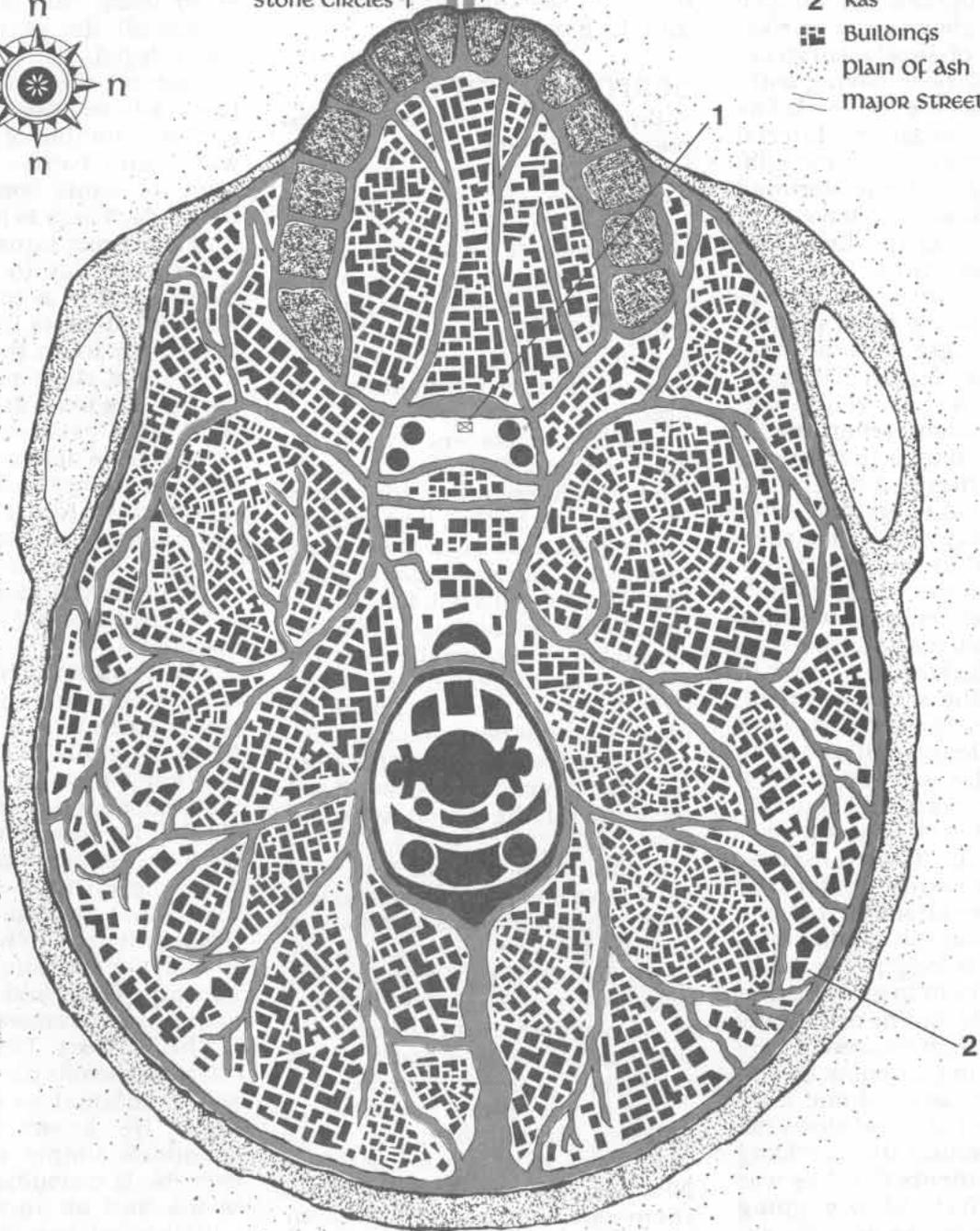
Furthermore, the city is a bi-

CITADEL CAVITIUS



To The
Stone Circles ↑

- 1 Characters Enter Here
- 2 Kas
- Buildings
- ⋯ Plain Of Ash
- Major Streets



1/4" = 10 YARDS



zarre hell. It is perpetually cold and dark. Most of the inhabitants are found on the streets or among the ruins, scrounging for fungus to eat and burn. Fires are built haphazardly throughout the citadel: in the streets, alleys, even on rooftops. Groups of lonely survivors huddle around these, saying nothing. More hellish are the dead. The power of the Negative Material plane leaks through into the citadel, animating and transforming the bodies of those who have died. Shambling among the living are zombies, skeletons, ghouls, wights, even vampires. Fortunately for the living, these undead draw their strength from the stray energies of the Negative Material plane, so they do not need to feed on the living. Some retain intelligence and spend their time among the living as if they had never died.

When the characters first enter the Citadel, they must have their names entered in the rolls by the Doorkeeper. Dressed in old monk's robes, the Doorkeeper is a whining and officious old man. Sitting on a high stool, a little writing desk in front of him, the scribe mechanically requests their names and crimes for his ledger. After this, he cites the rules of the citadel. "There is only one truth about this place," he intones, peering over the desk at them. "Hope is useless; you will never escape." After that he pays no more attention to them.

Characters can ask about names inscribed in his ledger. The Doorkeeper urges them to give up, that all hope is futile, but he eventually complies with their request. If they ask about Kas in particular, the old man pulls a musty volume from the shelf behind him and blows the ash away. Opening the crackling pages, he comments that Kas was one of the first. Slowly going through the pages, he finds the entry and reads it aloud.

"Kas of Tycheron, arrived last day of the First Age. Crime, high

treason. Sentence, unending imprisonment.' He's here, in the citadel somewhere," comments the Doorkeeper. "That way into the citadel." The old man points to a dark staircase that climbs upward into the gloom.

Searching For Kas

Although player characters may possess the means to escape (through spells or magical devices), there is little point in doing so until they learn how to defeat Vecna. The only person who might have this information is Vecna's old lieutenant, Kas. By sending the group to Citadel Cavitius, Vecna has given them the opportunity to perhaps gain the information they need.

Ideally, the players should deduce what to do without outside guidance. Even if they don't, they can still learn by their own actions. The easiest way is to use a *commune* or *contact higher plane* spell. These spells will function in the Citadel. Divinations of this sort are no longer blocked because the group is no longer on Greyhawk. Only beings of the Ethereal or inner planes can be contacted, however. Whatever is contacted does not know how to escape, but it can recommend the group seek out Kas.

If the characters do not have these spells (or don't think to use them), more obvious methods of guiding may be necessary. If the group has the *sword of Kas*, it will communicate to its owner that Kas is somewhere near. The sword gives a feeling of urgency about trying to find the evil warrior.

Third, the group may try explaining their problem to one of the prisoners of the citadel. The NPC character apathetically hears them out. After assuring them there is no hope, he recommends they seek out Kas and tell him. The treacherous lieutenant is consumed by hate and would be inter-

ested in hearing any news of his evil master.

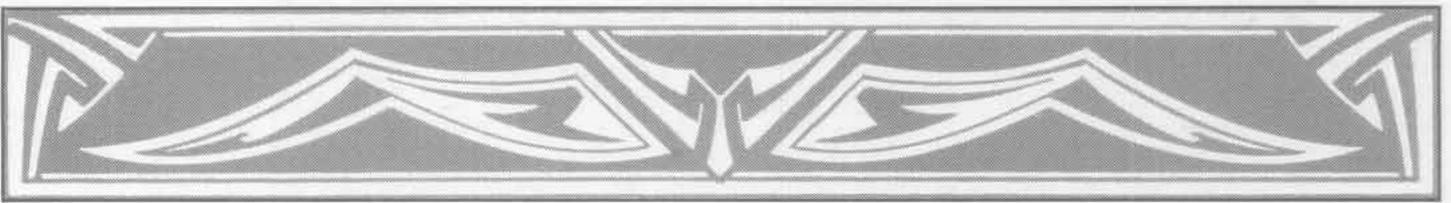
Finally (and least satisfying), the priest of Iuz, if he is with the group, suggests they seek out Kas. Try to avoid using this option, since it makes all the player characters seem stupid.

Once set on this path, finding Kas is still no easy matter. The citadel is a jumble of streets, alleyways, and ruins, all fashioned from the same bone material as the walls. There is no urban planning, no street signs, and no map.

The only way to locate the ancient warrior is to keep asking other inhabitants for information. This leads to an interesting time for the PCs, since many of the people here are mad, driven insane by their bleak existence. Their madnests have taken many forms. Some are quiet and gentle, while others rave. Not a few have become homicidal, only waiting for the right trigger to explode. The following descriptions can be used when questioning various NPCs about Kas.

The Prophet: This character is found wandering the narrow cluttered streets, madly waving a torch. He grabs a PC by the shoulders and, shouting in his face, predicts doom and destruction of the citadel. He has seen the signs in the sky, changes in the weather, read the entrails of beasts. He knows that soon the Great One will destroy them all. They must listen to him for salvation. (He knows nothing of Kas and does not care about the characters.)

The Killer: This non-player character seems like a normal person, as normal as this prison allows. He answers the initial questions simply enough. However, he is consumed by hate for Vecna and all those associated with the arch-lich. Any mention of Vecna enrages this NPC so much that he attacks. All the while, the madman rants about the plots and



conspiracies the characters are weaving against him. He links them to Vecna, accuses them of treachery, and even confuses them with enemies and friends from his own past. If restrained and disarmed, he slinks away.

Madman (1): AC 7; MV 12; F5; hp 37; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1; SZ M; ML special; AL N; XP 175

The Hero: This lunatic, once an adventurer like the characters, has become convinced that he fought his way into this citadel (and was not imprisoned). The hero is supposedly here to defeat the evil Vecna in a fittingly heroic duel. Consequently he spends his life searching for Vecna. He spurns the false Vecnas as illusions sent to fool him. If the characters mention or ask about Vecna, the hero offers to join them. Whether or not they accept, he follows the group about, lamely attempting to assist. He cannot function as a team member, and his only tactic is to charge, screaming, "Death to Vecna!" If the characters attack him or try to drive him away, the hero decides they are in league with his arch-enemy.

Hero (1): AC 2; MV 12; F9; hp 68; HD 1d6 hp; THACO 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+2; SA *long sword* +2; SZ M; ML special; AL CN; XP 975

Vecna: This elf, an earlier victim of the Eye and the Hand, is still convinced he is the true Vecna. His missing hand and eye he considers a proof of his claim. None of this is aided by the fact that he is a competent, though utterly insane, wizard. He wanders the streets, muttering foul curses and off-handedly blasting any who cross him. If the characters ask him about Kas, he launches into a vitriolic rant against the warrior and then demands the characters lead him to Kas. If they refuse, he gets

violent. If they accept, he follows along for about an hour until something else catches his interest and he leaves.

Pseudo-Vecna (1): AC 10; MV 12; W12; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA spells; SZ M; ML 10; AL CE; XP 4,000
Spells: 4 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 4 4th, 4 5th, 1 6th

Kas

Eventually the player characters are able to track down the mighty Kas. He resides in one of the oldest sections of the citadel. There he presides over a group of toadies and undead, all of whom view him as the master—and in a way he is, for Kas died long ago. The Kas that remains is Kas the Vampire (see the NPC Appendix).

When the characters arrive, they must convince Kas to hear them out. The vampire cares nothing for them or their plight. If the group mentions Vecna and offers the chance to hurt the demigod, Kas becomes interested and decides to hear them out.

As the characters tell their story, Kas listens with mild interest. If they openly display the *sword of Kas* or suggest that they have it, his interest perks up. Only when they are finished with the story will Kas ask what they want.

If the characters ask for the secret to destroying Vecna, Kas laughs. Vecna cannot be destroyed. His own failure is proof of that. However, he does have information he is willing to bargain for. His price is steep—he wants the *sword of Kas*. If the characters do not have it, they have nothing to offer him.

The bargaining should be hard and furious. Kas wants only the sword. Nothing else will do. If the characters demand more, he tells the group that he, and only he, can get them home—but to do it he needs the *sword of Kas*. Kas is

not lying, since he knows of the sword's plane-shifting powers. He does not have any intention, though, of bringing the player characters back with him. His only concern is to escape Citadel Cavitius.

If the characters foolishly give over the sword without first taking some type of precautions, Kas seizes it and uses the plane-shifting power to escape. He does not go to Oerth (since the only place not blocked by Vecna's growing power is Tovag Baragu) but some other plane where Vecna will not find him. The characters will have to find some other way home.

If the characters are wise, they enforce their terms with real threats against Kas's life and safety. The vampire has no desire to be destroyed when escape is so close. If a realistic threat can be made, he fulfills the bargain. He tells them what he knows and uses the plane-shifting power to send them back to Tovag Baragu.

Once the deal is made, Kas tells the group what he knows. It is really very simple. The PCs cannot kill Vecna; he is immortal. Neither can they use the *sword of Kas* against Vecna, as Kas learned long ago that it is ineffective. (The characters may already know this.) It was only through chance that he was able to blast Vecna into the lowest reaches of the outer planes. Even then, Vecna's evil survived. According to Kas, the only hope the characters have is to call upon another of Greyhawk who is the equal of Vecna. (If the characters can't figure out this means Iuz, Kas will tell them.) Even then, Vecna must be cast into the outer planes. That way, at least, the Whispered One will be out of the way for a long time.



Chapter 11:

The Final Confrontation

When the characters finally discover an escape route from Citadel Cavitius, they must face Vecna one last time. Overmatched by Vecna's power, the characters must call upon the only other being able to battle Vecna—the demigod Iuz. While these two struggle, the characters must find a way to ensure the safety of Oerth from either victor.

Return Home

Because of Vecna's increasingly powerful protections, the only point the characters can return to on Oerth is Tovag Baragu, the evil demigod's gateway to other worlds. No matter what method is used—*plane shift*, *astral spell*, *wish*, magical device, or even forcing the citadel gateway open—the characters return at night. The stars and moon shine brightly overhead, gently illuminating the landscape. A cool breeze plays through the stones.

At the Stone Circles, little has changed. The Paynims, sensing Vecna's final deed, have drawn closer to the center. A tribal chant, praising the great lord, rises from their lips and fills the air. Turim Varostak still works in the center, chanting a powerful spell. All his attention is directed toward a single gateway—the one leading to Vecna's past, the ruins of the palace of the Spidered Throne. The spell he chants is droning, hypnotic. It pulls at the characters, drawing them toward the avatar.

Through the gateway can be clearly seen a great mass of people. They are all surging and milling forward, their attention focused on the window as if they can see through into the present. They,

too, seem drawn by Turim's chant. The first are just preparing to step through the opening.

When the characters appear, Turim notes their arrival but does not break his chant. So long as the characters do not interfere, he ignores them. Operations are at a crucial stage right now. If the characters attempt to disrupt the ceremony, Turim uses the quickest and most effective spell possible to permanently eliminate the characters. Death or destruction of the group is his first choice, immobilizing them second, and casting the group back to Citadel Cavitius is third. Again, he should easily have the power to accomplish his goals.

By this time the players should be aware that the PCs lack the power to defeat Vecna. To proceed any further they need help. Help can come from many sources, some good and others not so good.

Kas: He is no help at all. His only concern upon arriving on Oerth is to escape. Night will not last forever and he needs to find protection from the sun. His first choice is to disappear among the tents of the Paynims. If he cannot do this, he leaps through the gateway into ancient Bakluna. At least there it is night and there is a large city nearby.

Iuz: Iuz is the most likely candidate to provide help, although the player characters may not want to do this. If Beryn, priest of Iuz, is still with the group, he takes the decision out of the player's hands and calls upon his god. Iuz hears and comes. If the player characters break down and call, Iuz responds. Good characters worried about their alignment can be assured that while this is a blot on their careers, it does not condemn them to

everlasting evil. Paladins are instantly stripped of their powers. They must undergo some fierce atonement and quests, but once this is done they can be allowed to regain their status as true defenders of law and good.

The Gods: The gods may interfere if the characters refuse to call upon Iuz directly. Summoning the last of their remaining power, all the gods of Greyhawk (finally perceiving the threat Vecna poses) contact the player characters. In a moment of revelation, the characters realize they must call upon Iuz. He is the only chance to stop Vecna. The good gods do leave the lingering suggestion that thwarting both Vecna and Iuz would be best.

Finally, if all else fails (and the DM doesn't want Vecna to win), Iuz simply appears. He has finally tracked down his enemy. This method is not particularly satisfying since the characters did not do anything to cause the appearance.

The Battle of the Demigods

Whatever the means, Iuz the Old appears to challenge Vecna. This is a threat the avatar cannot ignore. The two confront each other and begin a fierce battle at the center of the Stone Circles.

Since this is the final battle, the climax of the adventure, the DM should describe the duel in dynamic terms. The two demigods do not simply cast spells at each other, they blast rays from their hands, whirling disks fly from their fingers, explosions burst among the stones, fiery balls scream through the air. In hand-to-hand struggle, their blows sound like thunder in the sky. The unbreakable stones of Tovag Baragu



throw shards from the demigods' strikes. Everything should be described in titanic terms.

At the same time, the DM does not want the player characters reduced to passive bystanders during the climax. It is important that the characters have some vital role in the final battle. Thus there are several things the characters could or should accomplish to affect the outcome.

First, although things seem to go well for Iuz at the beginning of the battle (he is, after all, a demigod and Turim is only an avatar), the balance of power quickly starts to swing the other way. Vecna is the better strategist and still has the powers of a lich. Worse still, with each blow Turim seems to grow in strength. The gate he has opened to the past is starting to function. Already Vecna's worshipers are stepping through. Upon entering the present, these men fall to their knees in reverent prayer for their god. It is up to the characters to block this conduit of Vecna's power. They must prevent more worshipers from entering the present. (If the characters don't realize this, Iuz directs a few blasts at the gate, killing some of the cultists. If the group still does not catch on, Iuz shouts, in a booming voice, to stop Vecna's followers from entering. Vecna will throw a few magic missiles at the characters before being again distracted by Iuz.)

The worshipers are not lambs. Most are evil fighters whipped into a berserk frenzy. They are not going to be denied. A fierce melee erupts around the gateway. At the start of the battle, 20 warriors have entered the circle. Each round five more cross through unless their bridgehead into the future is contained. The warriors fight to the death.

Warriors of Vecna (20 initially):
AC 4; MV 12; F3 (average); hp 18

(average); THACO 16 (berserk); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 + 2 (spear and berserk); SZ M; ML 20; AL LE; XP 65

The only problem with fighting these berserkers is that Vecna seems to have an endless supply of them. The characters' efforts are ultimately futile unless the gateway can be closed, somehow. The stones cannot be broken by anything within the characters' powers. Their only hope is to physically block the gateway or have Iuz try to damage the gate.

If the characters tell (by shouting) Iuz to damage the gate, he immediately perceives their plan and launches a spell (DM's choice of whatever seems most colorful and appropriate) at the arch. (This damage can also occur accidentally.) There is a resounding crack, followed by an enraged scream from Vecna. The stone of the gateway splinters and the image in the arch suddenly scrambles (much like interference on a television set). Indeed, all the gateways suddenly start to show random scenes, leaping to different planes, times, and places without any control. Tovag Baragu has been permanently damaged. The gateway to Vecna's time is closed. At the same time, the magical aura shielding Greyhawk starts to weaken. Tovag Baragu was apparently the key power source for the shield.

Sometime during the fight, the characters should realize they have a third problem. Even if the characters stop Vecna's scheme, they are still left with one, possibly two, enraged and evil demigods right in their laps. No sane character should expect any rewards from the survivor! The characters must find a way to rid themselves of the danger.

Theoretically, the characters could simply run away. This is not a real solution, since neither demigod will be content to let the char-

acters live quiet lives. The best choice is to get rid of both Vecna and Iuz, at least temporarily. The malfunctioning Tovag Baragu offers the best hope of accomplishing this. If the characters can force the two battlers through one of the gateways, the demigods are plunged into a random plane. Weakened from their battle, it will be a long time before either can return.

Forcing Iuz or Vecna through a gate is no easy matter. The characters have the advantage of surprise, but even still it takes courageous action. Both demigods must be grappled and overborne through an adjacent gate. Those grappling with Vecna must endure the effects of his touch. Iuz has no such protections, but he is not an easy target. The best time for the group to attack is when both demigods are locked in hand-to-hand combat. Then they can be hurled as a pair through the gateway.

If the characters succeed in expelling the evil pair, the two plunge into the darkness, howling and tearing at each other. A great gout of flame rushes up and bursts out of the gate, sending a fiery blast 40 feet long and ten feet wide. All within the area of the fire must roll a saving throw vs. breath weapons. Those who fail suffer 15d6 points of damage. Those who save have the damage reduced by half. Thereafter, a similar gout of flame spurts from a randomly chosen gate every 3d10 minutes. Spouting flame and randomly scanning planes and times is how Tovag Baragu remains from now on.

Unnoticed in the fiery burst (the characters easily had more than enough to attend to) two small objects hurtled through the gate to land in the tall grass some distance away—the Hand and the Eye of Vecna.

Chapter 12:

When All's Done

There are two possible ways this adventure could end. Either the characters are victorious and have defeated Vecna or they have failed miserably, probably at the cost of their lives. Either result has repercussions for the player characters and possibly the world.

The Characters Win

If the player characters succeed in their adventure, they have saved the world from a terrible fate. Not only that, they have saved the gods themselves from overthrow and destruction. Without necessarily realizing it, the PCs have earned a reward from the deities themselves.

The gods being what they are, they do not just appear and hand the players some wonderful treasure. They are much more subtle than all this. Such crass displays are not their style. Instead, each character receives some permanent reward that cannot be lost or stolen. The exact reward depends on the DM, character, and campaign, but some suggestions are given here.

- * Luck in the form of a +1 bonus to all saving throws and ability checks.

- * Immunity to fear

- * A guaranteed *resurrection* the next time the character dies (do not tell the player).

- * +1 to prime requisite scores

- * An increase in the number of spells the character can know (not memorize) per level

- * A +1 bonus to all ability scores

- * +1 bonus to THACO

Thereafter, the gods will operate in more mysterious ways. The characters will never lack for ad-

venture or employment. Great opportunities will come their way. Others will remember them in song. Life will be good.

Not all the gods love them. Vecna and Iuz both violently hate the characters. Although they cannot directly affect the player characters, both try to manipulate events to the characters' disadvantage. Player characters can expect frequent ambushes by cultists, as well as strange accidents and dangerous coincidences. Between the attentions of good and evil gods, life will not be dull for the group.

Vecna Wins

It is entirely possible for the player characters to lose, allowing Vecna to emerge victorious. While this is bad—very, very bad—it does not cause the end of the campaign. Player characters can still have exciting and dangerous adventures in Greyhawk.

Vecna's victory does change the nature of Greyhawk dramatically. First and foremost, the demigod is immediately elevated to the status of Greater God (see the *Legends & Lore* hardback book for details). All other gods are reduced by one rank, so that Vecna is the only Greater God in Greyhawk. Demigods (except Iuz) wither and fade for lack of power from their worshipers.

With his ascendancy, Vecna ushers in a new reign of terror over Oerth. The forces of evil are given great rewards and powers, while the defenders of good struggle to stem the tide. The Great Kingdom becomes a resurgent force and begins a march of conquest over the good lands. The City of Greyhawk falls under the sway of evil oligarchs. The giants of the Crystalmist Mountains grow in

strength, while the drow beneath the peaks begin to expand onto the surface. The sun grows dimmer and nights become longer. Darkness, both moral and physical, slowly stretches its fingers out over the land.

In this grim world, there is plenty of adventure for player characters. As evil grows, valiant adventurers become more and more vital to stem the corrupt advance. More and more terrors must be defeated, kingdoms saved, and insidious villains ferreted out. In such a world, player characters will seldom have time to sit back and relax.



Appendix I:

The Artifacts of Vecna

The artifacts of Vecna—the Eye and the Hand—are body parts of the powerful arch-lich Vecna. Immersed in evil and power, the Eye and the Hand have continued to exist long after the rest of Vecna was presumably destroyed. As a part of his body, each still holds a portion of his tremendous will, the evil ambition that was powerful enough to sustain his body for centuries beyond its own death. This willpower give the Eye and the Hand both their powers and their dangers.

The Eye of Vecna

The Eye of Vecna appears to be nothing more than a small withered pebble or clot. It radiates a powerful aura of magic, if this is checked for. No indication of the type of magic can be discerned. The Eye's powers can be learned only by trial and error, although it will reveal its capabilities once it has successfully dominated its owner. The Eye is thoroughly and irredeemably evil, but it does not radiate evil if this is checked.

The Eye of Vecna can be used only after it is set in the empty eye-socket of a humanoid creature. Once this happens, the Eye can be commanded to function. The powers must be learned by guessing or research if the character hopes to use these. At the same time, the Eye begins to exert its influence over its owner. Once placed, the Eye cannot be removed by magical means.

The great danger of the Eye is that it will eventually dominate its owner, first forcing its victim to obey the Eye's will and finally convincing the person that he is Vecna.

The Eye has many powers, fragments of the abilities once possessed by Vecna. These are listed below. Those powers under "Constant Abilities" are revealed as soon as any situation arises where they would have an effect. The character does not have to command these to function. The other powers must be discovered by invoking the ability.

Constant Abilities:

- * *True Seeing* (as the wizard spell)
- * *Foresight*

Invoked Abilities:

- * *Clairvoyance*—at will
- * *Eyebite*—3 times per day
- * *Glassees*—3 times per day
- * *Domination*—once per day
- * *Vision*—once per week

The Hand of Vecna

This artifact was once the left hand of the powerful arch-lich Vecna. Like the Eye, it is hardly imposing or fearsome in appearance. It resembles nothing more than a black, withered hand, mummified and claw-like. It radiates powerful, unidentifiable magic. There is no indication of good or evil—although, like the Eye, it is thoroughly evil.

To be used, the Hand must be placed on the stump of the left arm. It instantly grafts into place and thereafter cannot be removed by any magical means (including wish spells). Even the gods are loathe to interfere with the impious magic of Vecna. Once attached, the Hand functions normally, although it always remains black and withered. As with the Eye, the powers of the Hand must be discovered through trial and error. Each use runs the risk of domination. If this happens, the

Hand reveals its full powers (but it is now in control of the character).

The Hand of Vecna is even more powerful than the Eye. Only a few of its powers are constant abilities. The majority are activated by simple gestures or thoughts; no verbal or material components are necessary. Thus, all uses of the Hand have no modifier to the initiative.

Under "Invoked Abilities," the Hand gesture needed is listed with each power.

Constant Abilities:

- * Immunity to *magic missiles*
- * 19 Str in left hand
- * *Withering touch*—causes 2d6 points of damage to plants and plant-based creatures

Invoked Abilities:

- * Point index finger—*light*, at will
- * Point two fingers—*hypnotic pattern*, three times per day
- * Point three fingers—*color spray*, five times per day
- * Point four fingers—*cone of cold*, 3 times per day
- * Point five fingers—*disintegrate*, once per day
- * Touch with one finger—*cause light wounds*, at will
- * Touch with two fingers—*cause serious wounds*, five times per day
- * Touch with three fingers—*remove fear*, at will
- * Touch with four fingers—*animate dead* (touch only), three times per day
- * Touch with whole hand—*instant death*, no saving throw
- * Fist—*extinguishes all fires*, normal and magical, at will
- * Palm out—*time stop*, once per day
- * Thumb down—*darkness*, 15' radius, at will
- * Snap fingers—*monster sum-*



moning IV, three times per day

* Wiggle fingers—*audible glammer*, five times per day

* Wave hand—*animate object*, three times per day

The Resonating Powers

One great secret of the Eye and the Hand is the existence of additional powers when the two artifacts are brought together. So little is known of this because it has almost never happened, no more than twice in the entire history of the two artifacts. Of those instances, few records remain. (Treat this as an exacting question with non-existent resources if the question is posed to a sage.)

When the same character has both the Eye and the Hand in place, the following powers are gained:

Constant Abilities:

- * *Detect magic*
- * *Comprehend languages*
- * *Non-detection*
- * *Protection from good*
- * 70% magic resistance

Invoked Abilities:

- * *ESP*, at will
- * *Control temperature*, 10' radius (cold only), three times per day

Domination

Using either the Eye or the Hand is not without great risk. The fierce energy that powers the artifacts is strong enough to force the possessor to act against his or her will. The artifact first dominates the character and eventually imposes its own personality completely over that of its owner.

Each time one of the invoked powers of either artifact is used, the character must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell (with a -2 penalty, -6 if both artifacts are possessed) to resist domination.

Even elves and half-elves are subject to this attack—their normal abilities to resist charms do them no good in this case.

If the domination is successful, the artifact assumes control of the player character. The artifacts are evil and do all they can to further the cause of evil and self-aggrandizement, especially at the expense of others. While in command, the artifact has full knowledge and control over all the character's normal abilities. It, of course, has complete control over its own powers.

The artifacts have the following goals:

* Acquire more magical power—the Eye and the Hand lust after magical spells and devices, even if they are useless to the character. The rights of prior owners are not important.

* Acquire temporal power—a dominated character will seek to establish his own empire. This will probably start small, but no deed is too heinous to reach this goal.

* Revenge on Kas—if anything of Kas (Vecna's former lieutenant) is known or exists, the artifacts seek to find and destroy it. This includes any and all descendants of Kas, and the *sword of Kas*, naturally.

* The Return of Vecna—the artifacts know Vecna lives (in some fashion) and can be returned. They force their owner(s) to begin gathering the materials and spells needed to bring Vecna back to Greyhawk.

* Destruction of good—if nothing else, the artifacts attempt to cause whatever harm possible, preferably wherever the blow to faith and friendship will be most keenly felt.

Within these guidelines, the dominated character works as subtly as possible. It is even possible for the character to be unaware of the domination (i.e., the arti-

facts may not assert their control immediately). The domination lasts until the character can successfully break it, as per the guidelines of the spell.

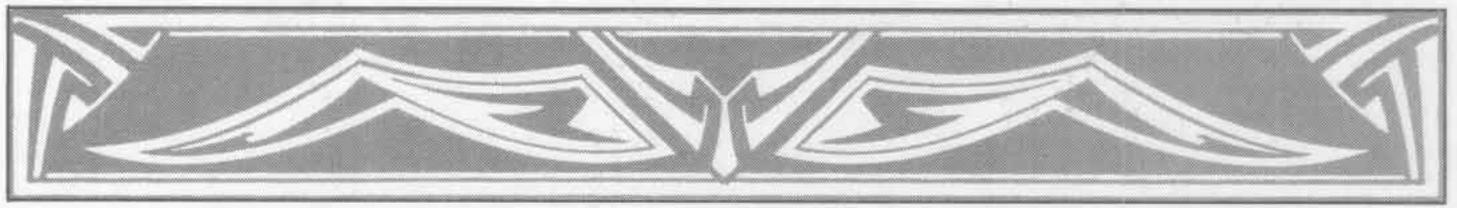
Each time the character breaks free from the artifact, he is weakened by the effort. His Wisdom decreases by 2 points upon overcoming the domination effect. This loss cannot be restored by any means short of divine intervention, and, as with all things associated with Vecna, even the gods are loathe to interfere. Once a character's Wisdom is reduced to 3, the artifact exerts complete control over the character; escape is no longer possible. Although the mind of the character is reduced to that of a pup, the artifact endows its victim with a Wisdom of 15.

Along with the Wisdom comes a change in the character's personality. The victim's habits, attitudes, even mannerisms change to approximate those of the ancient arch-lich, Vecna. The dominated character engages in intense scholarly research, avoids sunlight (although this has no adverse effect), devises and sets in motion the most arcane cruelties in the name of magical science, and actively seeks out and destroys any potential threat or competition to his own power. The character denies he is anyone other than Vecna, although the artifacts continue in their efforts to restore their true master.

Destroying the Artifacts

The Eye and the Hand of Vecna are items that have existed for thousands of years or even longer. Clearly, getting rid of these devices is no simple task. It will require efforts of heroic proportions on the part of the player characters.

No single method for destroying the artifacts is given here. Even though this adventure takes place



in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® campaign setting, artifacts are personal things. Destroying an artifact must be harder than your current characters can accomplish. Make them spend money and time learning the secret method needed. Make them travel far from their normal lands. Pose for them one or more seemingly impossible tasks—impossible for their difficulty or simply because they are completely illogical. In short, have a lot of fun.

Several suggested methods to destroy the Eye and the Hand are given below. Each clearly leads to an adventure you will have to expand upon.

- * The Eye can only be destroyed in the heart of the Sea of Dust, where it must be roasted in the scorching flames of the oldest red dragon in all of Oerth.

- * The Hand must be carried to the heart of the Positive Material plane by one who has never experienced fear. There it must be crushed by hand into powder.

- * Both artifacts can be destroyed if they are shattered on the Golden Forge at the Heart of the Sun.

- * The Eye must be encased in volcanic glass from the Hellfurnaces and then shattered against the crystal sphere that encloses all of Greyhawk space (see the SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set for details).

- * The Hand must be willingly fixed to the purest person in all the City of Greyhawk.

- * The Hand must be given to the vilest, most corrupt person in all of Greyhawk. Though he will profit from it greatly, after a time he will drain it of all its power.

Of course, you may find these suggestions too simple for your player characters. In that case (or if you simply have a better idea), you are certainly welcome to create an adventure entirely on your own. This will ensure that your campaign will be like no other.

The Sword of Kas

The remaining significant artifact in the story of Vecna is the *sword of Kas*. Fashioned by Vecna himself, this sword is a powerful weapon, although it may not be all the characters expect.

The sword is a huge weapon, fashioned along the lines of a two-handed sword. The blade is six feet long, while the hilt adds another two feet to the overall length. Any normal sword made to such proportions would be virtually unmanageable by a human, but the magical endowments of the *sword of Kas* allow it to be handled by any warrior with grace and ease, albeit with two hands.

The blade is in the flame or water style, the edge of the blade rippled with iridescent undulations. A vein of magically hardened gold forms the center spine. The hilt is wrapped in red leather, flecked with gold. The guards are fashioned from polished pieces of unicorn horn. The pommel is a leering, bearded face, designed so it forms a small basket at the bottom of the hilt.

The sword radiates magic, although the type of magic changes each time the sword is checked. It does not radiate good or evil, although the sword is thoroughly evil.

In some ways, the *sword of Kas* is quite different from other artifacts. Much like a standard intelligent sword, the *sword of Kas* communicates telepathically with its owner. Aside from a committed desire to destroy Vecna and his artifacts, the *sword of Kas* displays no personality. It does reveal some (but not all) of its powers.

The *sword of Kas* was fashioned during the height of Vecna's power in unlife. Seeing that his empire was growing too vast, Lord Vecna choose one of his faithful, Kas, to serve as his right hand. To mark the symbol of Kas's office, the Whispered One fashioned a sword

and filled it with power.

Eventually, Kas grew tired of his role as an underling. His pride and arrogance grew until he believed he could rule in Lord Vecna's place. Urged on by his sword (as a thing of Vecna's it held a small part of his ambitions), Kas led an assault on the Spidered Throne. Only then did Kas discover that Vecna had built safeguards into the powerful weapon. Designed by his own hand, the sword was powerless against Vecna, its maker.

Although Kas was somehow able to destroy Vecna's body in the battle, the warrior was also annihilated. Only the *sword of Kas* and the Eye and the Hand remained. However, in death Kas imparted his rage and hatred of Vecna to the sword—his contribution to the artifact's personality.

Since that time, the sword has surfaced throughout the Flanaess. Each time its wielder has risen to great power as a warrior, but he has been obsessed with finding the artifacts of Vecna. After reaching the highest peaks of his career, the warrior sets out on a quest in search of Vecna, only to disappear forever.

The *sword of Kas* can be used by any of the warrior class. So powerful are the enchantments on it, however, that when first touched it causes 2d20 points of damage. Thereafter the sword can be handled freely by that character. Although evil, the *sword of Kas* makes no distinction according to alignment—all warriors who handle it are eventually changed to one degree or another.

If the character is not killed by initial contact with the sword, he remains its sole possessor until he is slain or freely gives it over to another person. The *sword of Kas* is not a fickle weapon, as it functions for anyone who holds it. However, characters are not likely to give it away, since one of the detriments of the weapon is that it makes its



owner possessive, forcing the same loyalty as it gives.

The other major problem with the sword is its hatred of Vecna. Normally this animosity lies dormant until the owner becomes aroused against Vecna in some way. That emotion triggers a reaction in the sword. Slowly it begins to feed that hatred with secret suggestions and urgings. Using its powers, the sword attempts to lead the character to Vecna (or his artifacts) so the Whispered One's final destruction can be wrought.

Unfortunately for its possessor, the *sword of Kas* cannot use its powers against Vecna or the artifacts. Even though it has led brave warriors to the goal more than once (only to see them destroyed), the sword has no knowledge of its own limitations.

The *sword of Kas* has both constant and invoked powers. Both sets of powers are in effect only while the sword is gripped. The sword never reveals the existence of the constant abilities. With the exception of the Defender power (which must be discovered by trial and error), the constant abilities automatically come into effect whenever the situation arises. Of the invoked abilities, those powers marked with an ampersand (&) are revealed to the sword's owner as soon as he holds the sword. Those powers not marked must either be learned by trial and error or are called upon when the sword thinks appropriate.

Constant Abilities:

- * +6 Defender (as per the *sword*, +4 defender in the *DMG*)
- * Double damage to outer planar creatures while on the Prime Material plane
- * Immune to *fear* spells
- * Immune to magic missiles
- * Immune to *charm* and *hold* spells
- * Pollutes holy water within 30-foot radius
- * *Foresight*

Invoked Abilities:

- * & *Shield*, 3 times per day
- * & Fire giant strength (-4 bonus to THACO, +10 bonus to damage), lasts 1 turn, 3 times per day
- * Paralyze by touch (-4 penalty to saving throw), 3 times per day
- * *Plane shift*, once per day

The Drawbacks

As noted above, the *sword of Kas* has several limitations on its powers. It temporarily loses all powers when within 60 feet of Vecna or one of the artifacts of Vecna. Nor do its powers function to protect against attacks from Vecna at any range. The character is not immune to Vecna's magic missiles, the sword does not provide its Defender abilities against his attacks, it provides no warning through *foresight* when the Whispered One strikes, etc.

The sword also seeks to control its owner, forcing the person to seek out and destroy Vecna or anything related to him, until this grows to a violent obsession. In this, it is the bane of the Cult of Vecna. This control is handled like that of other intelligent weapons, except that 1d10 is added to the sword's personality score each time a check is made. The *sword of Kas* has an Intelligence equal to 19 and an Ego of 20. Once the sword seizes control of a character, the possession cannot be broken by any means short of a *wish*.

A more immediate problem for the sword's possessor is its insatiable demand for blood. The *sword of Kas* revels in violence and destruction. If not sated with fresh blood every day, the sword immediately attempts to take control of its master. If successful, it forces the character to kill something—whatever is available, even other characters. If the character wins the personality struggle, he can hold the sword in check for the day.

Like all artifacts, the sword slowly corrupts and influences its

owner. While the *sword of Kas* does not directly change a character to evil alignment, it gradually causes him to become possessive and greedy. As a result, the character's actions may indicate an alignment change.

The character will not voluntarily give up the sword for any reason. Attempts by others to even touch the weapon are viewed with hostile suspicion and can even result in violence. Eventually the character becomes paranoid that everyone is after the *sword of Kas*. This obsession becomes such that the character finds it impossible to cooperate with anyone, even old companions. Either he must live a cursed and lonely existence or the sword must be separated from him.

Destroying the Sword

For the same reasons listed under the Eye and Hand of Vecna, no single, specific method is given for destroying the *sword of Kas*. The DM can either use one of the methods here or create one more appropriate to his campaign. Whatever the method, it should be heroically difficult, an adventure to be remembered.

* The *sword of Kas* must be cast over the Waterfall of the Moon to shatter on the rocks below.

* The *sword of Kas* is destroyed when Vecna is slain.

* The sword must be hammered into a plowshare with the cudgel of St. Cuthbert.

* The memory of Kas must be wiped from the minds of Oerth. When this happens, the sword simply ceases to exist.

The ideas here are only suggestions. The DM is welcome to create any other method of destruction he desires. Doing so will give your campaign a unique character, setting your world off from all others.

Appendix II:

Vecna as Demigod

Relatively new to the ranks of deities, Vecna is seldom recognized as a demigod by any but his worshipers. Known as the "Whispered One, Maimed Lord, Master of Secrets," Vecna has a small but increasingly active cult in the lands of the Flanaess. Vecna is a patron god of black secrets, especially those magical in nature. Still, for the majority of mortals, Vecna is identified as an arch-lich, although he transcended this paltry honorific ages ago.

Although other gods might find the lack of recognition displeasing, the condition has, to now, suited Vecna's needs and matches his secretive nature. He enjoys the position of outsider among the great powers of the outer planes. Their attentions are diverted elsewhere and he is allowed to continue his plans and schemes undisturbed.

Formerly a lich, Vecna has retained the horrid appearance of these monsters. His body is mummified with patches of dry rot showing through the tatters he wears for clothing. His left arm ends in a crumbling stump. Vecna's face is covered by a silken scarf, veiling his features underneath.

Role-Playing Notes

Vecna prefers to act indirectly in the affairs of men, guiding and steering his followers to goals only he understands. Nursed on treachery and deceit, the Whispered One has no compassion for mortals, even his own worshipers. Those who follow him must commit themselves to being utter pawns to his schemes. Followers who serve him well are rewarded with knowledge, usually damning secrets oth-

ers would prefer stayed hidden. Those who anger Vecna often find themselves betrayed and blackmailed, their darkest sins suddenly known to those who can hurt them most.

Statistics: AL LE; WAL any evil; AoC secrets & magic; SY eye in hand

See the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Legends & Lore* hardback book for an explanation of the format and abbreviations used here.

Standard Divine Abilities: As a demigod, Vecna automatically has the following powers. These powers do not apply to his manifestation.

Communication: Vecna can speak to his followers (or others) on another plane only through his manifestation.

Comprehend Languages: The demigod speaks and understands all languages.

Granted Abilities: Vecna can grant his priests (or, in special circumstances, any worshiper) any spell or power up to 5th level.

Immortality: If destroyed, Vecna reforms in 1d100 days.

Initiative: Vecna automatically gains the initiative when fighting mortals.

Magic Use: Vecna can use any spell (wizard or priest) at will.

Magic Resistance: Vecna is 70% resistant to mortal magic, 40% resistance to that from demigods, and only 20% resistant to that from gods of greater stature.

Multi-Tasks: Vecna can perform any two actions at once without any penalties.

Planar Travel: Vecna can move from plane to plane only by spells or magical devices.

Saving Throws: Vecna has a sav-

ing throw number of 4 in all categories.

Sensing Ability: Vecna knows what is happening within one mile of himself or any worshiper.

Teleport: Vecna can teleport to any point on the same plane at will and without error.

Vecna's Manifestation

(20th-Level Wizard)

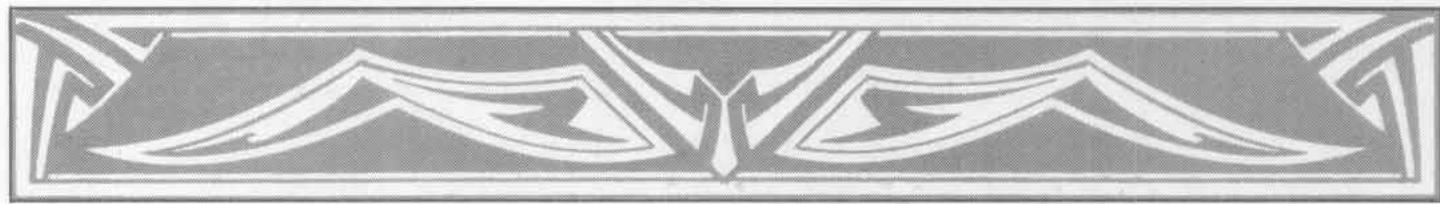
Vecna's manifestation takes the form of a middle-aged man marked by some crippling handicap, usually a missing leg. He carries no weapon other than a simple wooden crutch. He casts spells as a 20th-level wizard. Although mortal in form, the manifestation retains many of the properties of Vecna's previous incarnation as an arch-lich.

Str 14*	Dex 14*	Con 18
Int 20	Wis 18	Cha 13
MV 9*	SZ M (5'6")	MR 45%*
AC 0	HD 18*	hp 116*
#AT 1	THAC0 10	Dmg 1d10

* If Vecna has recovered his Eye and Hand, these statistics for his manifestation become Str 19, Dex 17, MV 12, MR 70%, HD 20, hp 124

Special Att/Def: Vecna's manifestation can utilize all the powers of a normal lich at will. He can generate a *fear* aura, causing creatures of 5 HD (or levels) to roll a successful saving throw vs. spell or flee for 5d20 rounds. His touch can chill, causing 1d10 points of damage and paralysis until dispelled. He can be hit only by weapons of +1 or better enchantment.

In addition to his magical resistance, Vecna's manifestation is immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*,



electricity, insanity, and death spells. The manifestation cannot be turned. As a wizard, he can cast spells as if 20th level (including the restriction of spells per level), but he does not need spell books or material components. Vecna's manifestation has access to all spells of all schools.

Finally, the manifestation (in keeping with Vecna's role as master of secrets) can discover any personal secret a character might have. He often uses this power to keep worshipers in line and to blackmail powerful figures.

The Duties of the Priesthood

Priests of Vecna are rare, primarily due to the stringent requirements needed to qualify. However, the priests have a large degree of freedom in their activities. Their most important duty is to recover the Eye and the Hand of Vecna, so these can be returned to their god. Beyond this, the priests are expected to collect and study strange magical items, destroy or weaken any threat to Vecna, and restore his empire for the day when he returns. Twice yearly they must sacrifice large quantities of magical items to Vecna.

Requirements: AB must be dual-or multi-classed mage/priest; AL LE, WP dagger, darts, mace, staff; AR; SP charm, combat, divination, elemental, necromantic, protection, summoning; PW 1) command undead (using turning tables); 5th) *legend lore* once per day; TU nil

The Cult of Vecna

Although the number of Vecna's worshipers are few and their activities secret, the Cult of Vecna is a potentially powerful force. Up to now, the cult has been held in check by the more active Spurned Cult of Iuz, but that group has suffered a series of recent setbacks.

These events, coupled with the recent appearance of Vecna/Halmdar (who is not Vecna's manifestation), have given Vecna and his cultists the opportunity to strike. Now they are ready to increase their power, and that of their god, in a major way.

The cult is rigidly organized into a hierarchy of evil. Each cultist has a specific position and role, based upon his abilities and importance. Ostensibly, those of lesser position must defer in all matters to anyone of greater rank; the true matter is somewhat different, for the Cult of Vecna is very lawful evil in outlook. Thus all members seek to find some advantage over their superiors—while also keeping their underlings in line. Secrets and blackmail are commonplace within the cult.

Each hierarchy of the cult is identified with a particular body part. Some positions are unique, either to a single priest, character, or monster. Some positions are open only to priests, while others are available to any character class.

The Voice of Vecna

This is the highest position of the hierarchy, short of Vecna himself. There is only one who can claim to be the Voice, and that is Vecna's manifestation.

The Heart of Vecna

Her Most Enigmatic Excellency, Sublime Mistress of the Whispered One, the Heart of Vecna is the high priestess of the cult. Through her, the commands of the Whispered One are transmitted to the faithful. The current Heart of Vecna is Diraq Malcinex of Ket (see the NPC Appendix). The Heart always wears a blood-red robe with no decorations on it.

The Eye and the Hand

These two creatures (see the New Monsters Appendix) are the lieu-

tenants of the Heart of Vecna. They can also be directly commanded by the Voice of Vecna. The Eye and the Hand are unique creatures—only one of each is in existence at any given time. Should one be killed, another can be created to take its place.

The Thoughts of Vecna

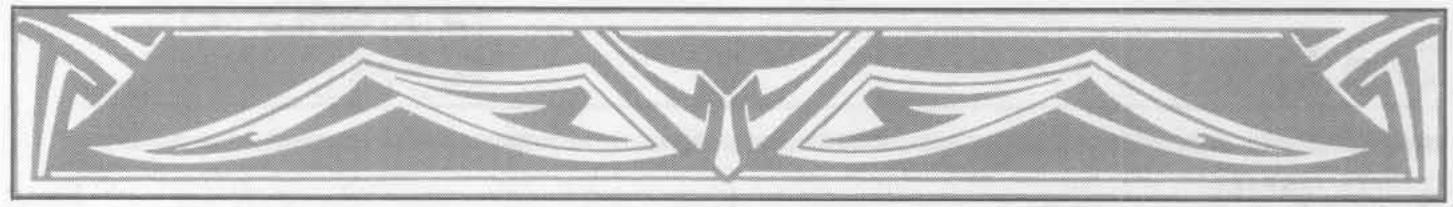
After the Heart come the Thoughts of Vecna. The Thoughts of Vecna lead the Organs, the name for congregations of worshipers. Since the cult is small, there is seldom more than one Organ to a city or area. The Thoughts wear robes emblazoned with a pattern of lightning bolts, signifying the devastating power of thought.

Within the Organ, there are several priests, but only one Thought. Traditionally, the highest level priest of the Organ is the Thought of Vecna. All lesser priests are subservient to him. The followers do not contest the Thought's position, but, since they are evil, lesser priests have been known to blackmail their superiors, particularly with the threat of exposure. This is a dangerous business, since the Thought of Vecna may simply annihilate the challenger.

The Memories of Vecna

The lesser priests of a given Organ are known as the Memories of Vecna, for it is through them that the day-to-day existence of the cult is assured. Thus they guarantee that his name will never be forgotten. The number of Memories under a Thought depends on the size and importance of that Organ. However, there is only one lesser priest of 5th level or greater in a given Organ. The Memories wear robes decorated with abstract designs.

Although Memories are, by the law of the cult, bound in obedience to the Thought, they are always looking for ways to advance their own power. Deceit, betrayal,



blackmail, and assassination are all practices the priests use against one and another. To survive, successful priests use their powers to gather secrets, act as spies for their higher-ups, and ruthlessly deal with their enemies.

While these activities would make priesthood in the cult seem murderously short, the lawful nature of the cult requires that any evil deeds be subtly done. Once such machinations are exposed, the perpetrator is at best disgraced and more often eliminated by a clerical tribunal. Indeed the threat of exposure to the clerical courts is used by superiors to keep the lesser priests in line.

The Teeth of Vecna

Of the lay members of the cult, none have higher status than the mages and specialist wizards. These followers are known as the Teeth of Vecna, for their fearsome bite—the magical spells they carry. Typically attaining higher levels in wizardry than the dual-class priesthood, the mages are

still considered inferiors. They lack the total commitment of the Heart, Thoughts, and Memories. They are called upon to create any special devices and spells that might be needed by the cult.

The Fingers of Vecna

As the Master of Secrets, Vecna's second-most important group of laymen are thieves, known as the Fingers of Vecna. The thieves are responsible for carrying out many of the special missions of the cult. They are responsible for gathering many of the secrets the cult uses to blackmail officials. They also make payments to corrupt guardsmen and terrorize upright citizens. When on a mission for the cult, the thieves dye their fingers red, so their victim will know who sent them.

The Blood of Vecna

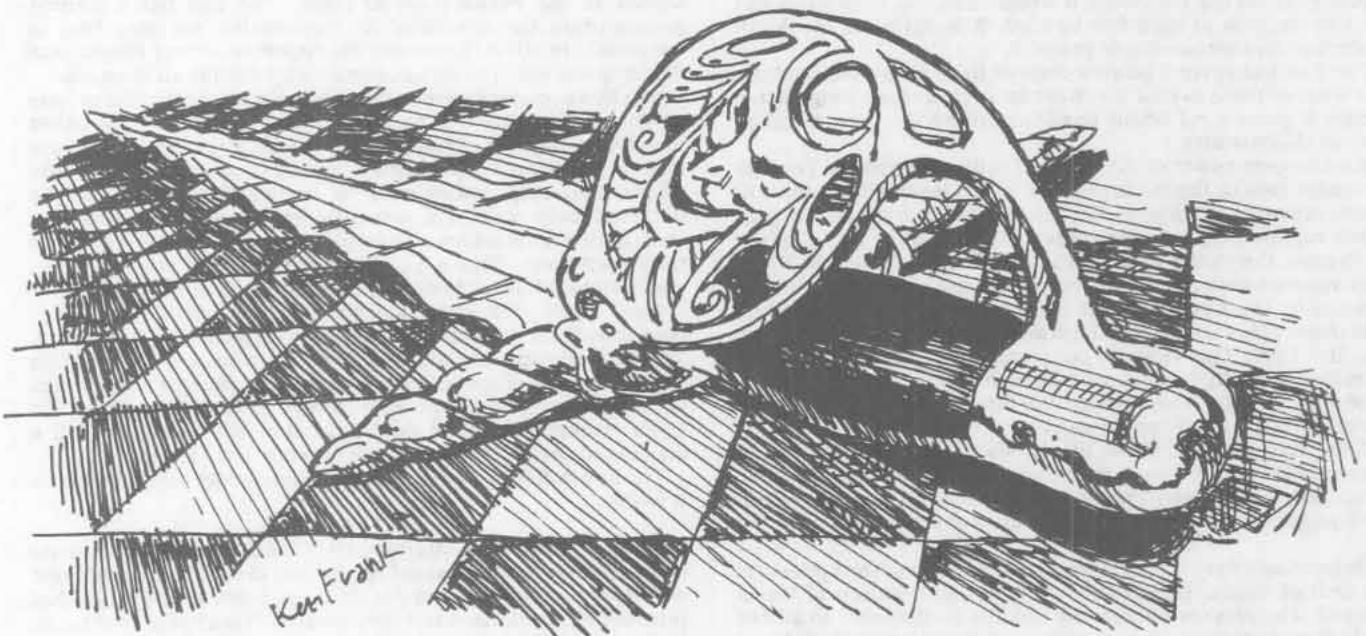
The third group of laymen are the fighters. These characters are the Blood of Vecna. Most are highly dedicated to the cause of the cult, ready to die of it if they must. Their

deaths, they are assured, will hasten the coming of Vecna. When that day comes, the faithful of his cult will be rewarded with dominion over all the non-believers.

Like the Fingers, the Blood of Vecna mark themselves when on missions for the cult. In their case, they smear red dye over their faces, a symbol of their willingness to die for the cult.

The Spawn of Vecna

The least of the cultists are the common folk, those evil and corrupt citizens and peasants who have joined in hopes of sharing in the coming glory. Although lacking in special abilities, the adulation of these people is necessary for Vecna to gain power. Viewed as his helpless children, these common folk must be protected from all harm—unless Vecna orders otherwise. In many ways they are isolated and protected from the evil practices of the priesthood, since there is no greater crime than attacking even the smallest portion of Lord Vecna's power.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary/cult
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional
TREASURE:	W
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
<hr/>	
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	12
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10 (weapon)/gaze
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Gaze
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to surprise, -1 to initiative
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5'-7' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	6,000

The Eye is one of the chief lieutenants of the Cult of Vecna. Although only one has ever been seen, it is impossible to be certain that there is only one of these creatures. The Eye is a creation of Vecna's and, thus, it is entirely possible that more than one exists.

The Eye stands seven feet tall. Once it was human, but to become the Eye it has been transformed. Its head has been replaced by a giant eyeball. Its body is slender and moves with a quick, light grace. The Eye normally dresses in long green robes, trimmed with red. Eyes, embroidered in golden thread, decorate the hems. In public, it covers its robes with a gray cloak, and its head is concealed by a deep hood.

Combat: The Eye's main purpose is not to fight, but to gain information. It is not, however, without combat ability. The Eye normally fights with a two-handed sword. It also keeps two dirks hidden, one strapped, hilt down, to each arm. In situations in which it cannot use the sword, it crosses its arms, then whips out the two daggers to fight two-handed. It is lightning quick (19 Dexterity) and astoundingly graceful.

The Eye has several powers derived from its transformation. The least of these is that it cannot be surprised, as long as it is awake. It gains a -1 bonus to all initiative rolls, from a limited form of clairvoyance.

It is the gaze power of the Eye that is most fearsome. The Eye no longer eats in the normal sense, but it feeds on the souls of others drawn in by its gaze. Each round, the Eye can use its gaze attack on one target. Unless previously said to be avoiding the Eye's gaze, the victim must roll a saving throw vs. death. Those who succeed suffer no ill effect that round; those who fail are claimed by the Eye. Their life force is drawn into the Eye and held there. (This is seen by others as a ghostly form being sucked into the Eye.) The victim's body falls inert. The Eye cannot consume its metaphysical prey until the body is destroyed, but once that is done, the trapped life-force is devoured and can never be recovered by any means short of divine power.

If the Eye is slain, those life forces it has trapped but not devoured instantly return to their proper bodies. The Eye can voluntarily release any undeavored life forces. As a side effect, the Eye gains access to all the memories of those it traps.

Habitat/Society: The Eye is a creation of the wizard-priests of the Cult of Vecna, possibly through the intercession of Vecna himself. The process of creating the Eye is unknown to all but the highest ranking members of the cult, but it involves *wish* and other high-level spells. Because the process is difficult, time-consuming, and dangerous, there is believed to be only one Eye at a time.



Whatever the process is, it strips the Eye of all humanity. The Eye feels no emotional bonds or noble virtues, and it displays several peculiar mannerisms. Limited precognition causes the Eye to finish the sentences of others before they have a chance to say them. The Eye surrounds itself by mirrors and is fascinated by reflections. Sadistically cruel, the Eye purges its own pain and frustrations on helpless victims.

According to the cult priests, the Eye's purpose is to be Vecna's senses on the Prime Material plane. The Eye has a limited precognition (as described in the combat section) that is constantly in effect. It can use *clairvoyance*, *detect magic*, and *find traps* at will. The Eye automatically detects all illusions.

The Eye's primary purpose is as psychic tracker for the priests of Vecna. Once the Eye has seen an intelligent being—either directly or through scrying—it can sense that creature's aura over large distances. The range depends on the abilities of the player character. Those with no spellcasting ability can be detected only within a one-mile radius. Those with any spellcasting abilities are detectable at a radius in miles equal to their spell level. Thus a 12th level wizard (who is able to cast spells up to 6th level) is detectable within a six-mile radius.

The Eye's tracking ability is not infallible. Large concentrations of magical energy can shield a target's aura. Artifacts, stockpiles of magical items, or even areas with a high preponderance of spellcasters all have this effect. For example, simply entering the Guild of Wizardry is enough to block the Eye's tracking sense. In doubtful cases, the Eye must roll a successful saving throw vs. spell to retain the "scent."

The Eye is able to communicate telepathically with whomever it wishes.

Ecology: The Eye is only one part of the Cult of Vecna. Because of its peculiar properties and specialized creation, it is regarded with awe by the rank and file. It is not a priest or part of that priesthood, but rather a tool they created. It is utterly loyal to the high priests of the cult and will take commands only from them.

The Hand

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
<hr/>	
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	13
THACO:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8 (x2, weapon) + 7/1-10+7
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Strength drain
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'6")
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	7,000

The Hand is the second of the cult of Vecna's two lieutenants, the other being the Eye. Like the Eye, the Hand is a created being, a human modified by powerful spells to become what it is today. Only one has ever been identified, and given the difficulty of creating the Hand, it is likely that only one exists.

The Hand is a squat, heavily-muscled humanoid, almost dwarven in size and shape. As part of the transformation, the Hand no longer has a head. Instead, a giant hand sprouts from its neck. There are no indications of mouth or sensory organs, yet the Hand does not seem impaired for the lack of these. The Hand dresses in a pleated kilt, decorated with colorful swirls and jagged stripes. A thick leather girdle, festooned with daggers, is its only other garb. In public it wears a blue-green robe with a large hood. It grips an embossed leather mask to hide its "face."

Combat: The Hand was intended to fight, to be the muscle of the of the Cult of Vecna. It is well-suited to the task. The Hand has a 19 Strength (+3 to attack rolls and +7 to damage). It fights with weapons in its two normal hands and crushes with the third, strange appendage.

The Hand normally begins a battle by throwing daggers (1d4+7 points of damage), two per turn. It carries 12 daggers on its belt. Just before closing for a melee, it draws the two swords carried on its back. It can fight with both of these with no penalty. The third hand is used to seize and crush the opponent, causing 1d10+7 points of damage with a successful attack (and holding on to squeeze for the same damage each round after a successful attack).

It is by this third attack that the Hand feeds. Lacking a mouth, it finds nourishment by drawing the strength from other things, living and non-living. Gripped in its third hand, steel becomes brittle like glass until it finally crumbles into dust. Living creatures lose 1d6 points of Strength each round they are held. The Hand



can maintain its grip from round to round, both causing damage and draining Strength. Held characters can break free by rolling a successful Strength check. If a character is drained to 0 Strength or less, he dies. Lost Strength is regained at the rate of one point per day.

Habitat/Society: The Hand was created, through spells, by the wizard-priests of Vecna. The process is incredibly complex and torturously painful—indeed, so much so, that it peels the essence of humanity away from its subject. What is left is a barely intelligent, bestial thing. Unable to speak, the Hand can only express its rages through mute gestures. Like the Eye, the Hand is marked by strange behaviors. Fawning submissiveness, gently stroking a friendly hand, suddenly becomes hysterical rage, as he blindly flings himself at walls. Even when calm, the Hand is never still, trembling and twitching uncontrollably.

Since it lacks mouth and ears, the priests communicate with the Hand via telepathy. Although it lacks sensory organs, the Hand is endowed with magical senses equal to or slightly better than a normal person's. The Hand is immune to darkness, blindness, deafness, and other attacks that would affect a normal creature's sensory organs. A *dispel magic* renders it blind for one round.

Ecology: Among the cultists of Vecna, the Hand is ranked after the high priests and the Eye. It is held in great fear by the cult's followers, since it carries out the pronouncements of the high priests, but its brute physical quality does not inspire the icy terror of a more sinister being like the Eye.

Appendix IV:

NPCs

Almarth the Halt

Male Rhennee
8th-Level Fighter
Chaotic Evil

Str 16 Int 14
Dex 14 Wis 8
Con 9 Cha 7

THACO: 13
AC: 2
Hit Points: 47

Thieving Abilities (as 4th level thief):

PP	OL	F/RT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
41	32	26	37	36	37	60	0

No Armor

Magical Items: *Staff-mace, potion of fire resistance*

Almarth, also known as the Halt for his game leg, is a tall, stocky man. His complexion and build clearly mark him as one with Rhennee blood. His head is shaven clean and he keeps it brightly polished. A jagged scar runs from the back of his neck to up above his left ear. He sports a thick, black mustache and goatee. Gold-coin earrings dangle from his ears. He has a noticeable limp in his right leg, a reminder of the time a giant almost shattered his right knee.

Almarth dresses in the style of a Rhennee noble, although he is not of that esteemed rank. His clothes were clearly once expensive, but are now worn and faded. Ill-fitting and mismatched, they were also clearly not tailored for him. Each piece was taken from his victims or stolen from a poorly guarded laundry line. Almarth would never imagine paying for anything.

Although a fighter, Almarth has larcenous and evil soul. Far from an accomplished thief, he has minor pilfering skills, as do all Rhennee. Unlike many others of his clan, Almarth has not perfected these abilities. He chooses the simpler approach of brute force and violence to his thieving. In Greyhawk he makes his living by assault, mugging, and robbery. Occasionally, he sells his sword arm to strong-arm for evil moneylenders or work as a bodyguard for important thieves.

Morally, Almarth is venal and sadistic, not even adhering to the traditional Rhennee sense of honor. Loyalty based on love or kinship is alien to him; only fear of Rhennee retribution keeps him from betraying his fellow boatmen. While hardly steadfast, he is most loyal to those who appeal to his cruel sensibilities or those who hold forth the greatest reward. He is not truly mercenary, however. For years he has been a dedicated cult member, not for pay or power, but because the preachings and promises of Vecna appeal to him.

With his distinctive appearance and evil reputation, Almarth is well-known throughout the waterfront district. He spends most of his time at a quiet table in the River Rat or aboard his barge, moored at one of the decaying piers. Knowing his moods, the other Rhennee have little to do with him; they even make signs to ward off evil when he is around. These things do not bother Almarth, but instead serve to swell his black pride.

Avrel Riskar
Male Rhennee
9th-Level Fighter/
12th-Level Thief
Neutral Good

Str 16 Int 14
Dex 13 Wis 16
Con 11 Cha 14

THACO: 12
AC: 0
Hit Points: 57

Thieving Abilities:

PP	OL	F/RT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
49	60	44	59	49	40	65	40

Magical chain
Backstab x 4

Magical Items: *scimitar +1, chain mail +5, helm of telepathy, ring of feather falling, potion of rainbow hues, potion of longevity*

Avrel Riskar is an elderly man, between 60 and 70 years old. His true age is unknown, even to himself, since calendars were never a strong point among his people. Although stooped and slow-moving, he carries himself with great dignity. He laughs often, showing broad, toothy smiles that wrinkle up his face and close his eyes down to narrow squints. His teeth are brown-black, since he is fond of chewing tamal leaves, grown in the lands of the far south. His conversations are laced with spits he casually launches at the floor. His clothes are plain homespun; he does not dress in the outrageous attire of other nobles and bargemasters.

Riskar is respected for his great age, wisdom, and, to a lesser extent, his pilfering skill. There are younger men more accomplished in the art, but few have seen or remember as much as Avrel does. For

all this and more, Avrel Riskar is considered one of the nobles of the Rhennee. He heads a family of 176 souls and rules over seven barges: *Gilfar, Leaping Swan, Hake, Cormorant, Vendevic, Rusty Father*, and *Avrel*, his flagship. Under his rule the Riskar family has prospered. His bargemasters are content and his people well-fed. His granddaughters find good husbands, and there is no shortage of eligible brides for his grandsons. All in all, life is good for the Riskar clan.

Perhaps because of his wisdom, Avrel has one trait, somewhat unusual for his people, that stands above all others. The old noble has a strong sense of right and wrong, coming down almost always on the side of right. Not only is he extremely honorable, according to the codes of the Rhennee, he also is concerned about the influences of evil and wrongdoing in the world.

This is hardly enough to convince him that thieving is dishonorable or evil, but he does have limits that are not shared by most other Rhennee. He forbids killing except in fair battle. Theft from those in your trust is unpardonable. Providing aid to evil is also outlawed on his barges. No one in the clan is required to fight evil, but he does not allow his people to deal in slaves, sell weapons to the orcs of the Pomarj, smuggle spies of the Great Kingdom, or shanghai innocents from the docks of Greyhawk. Perhaps this has hurt him financially, but Avrel feels the cost is more than worth the inner strength it has given his clan.

Beryn Talkin
Male Human
9th-Level Priest of Iuz
Chaotic Evil

Str 14 Int 12
 Dex 11 Wis 17
 Con 12 Cha 11

THACO: 16
 AC: 5
 Hit Points: 50

Spheres: Combat, Divination (minor), Guardian, Healing, Necromantic (minor), Summoning, Sun (reversed); Additional spells—*spittle **, *cause fear*, *heat metal*, *dispel magic*, *true seeing*, *feeblemind*, *forbiddance*, *confusion*

Spells: 6 1st, 6 2nd, 4 3rd, 2 4th, 1 5th; *spell selection varies*

Granted Powers: *Change self* once per day

Magical Items: *Mace +2, necklace of missiles, bracers of defense AC 5*

Beryn Talkin is tall, muscular man with straight brown hair and handsome features. His broad shoulders and tanned skin seem to radiate his love of the outdoors. A believer in action and adventure, Beryn is an excellent choice as an agent of the Cult of Iuz.

Although a priest of Iuz, Talkin does not fit within the normal hierarchy of the cult. He performs special missions for the cult, traveling when and where he is needed. This has provided him with the adventure he craves, but it has slowed his advancement as a priest of Iuz. Beryn seldom has time for the devotions and studies required.

This does not bother Talkin, since his position gives him special powers and privileges over the regular members of the cult. When assigned a task, Beryn outranks all local officials, even higher level priests of local cells. He can commandeer whatever resources he needs. Furthermore, the priest has

access to the inner circles of the cult, perhaps even to Iuz himself. This makes him a formidable enemy and rival, such that few cultists dare cross him. Beryn knows he has power, but he also knows his special position is precarious. Should he fail on one too many missions, he could quickly find himself in the Pits of Pain beneath Iuz's palace.

Beryn is evil and not to be trusted. He creates suffering and hardship for others, simply to see how they will react. Although chaotic, he remains loyal to Iuz, partially for the favors he has enjoyed, but more out of fear. He has seen, even supervised, some of the tortures Iuz's misshapen mind has devised. Beryn has no desire to experience these himself.

Bishop Haufren
Male Human
13th-Level Priest of St. Cuthbert
Lawful Neutral

Str 12 Int 14
 Dex 10 Wis 17
 Con 12 Cha 14

THACO: 12
 AC: 6 (-1)
 Hit Points: 52

Spheres: All, Charm, Combat (minor), Divination, Healing, Necromantic, Protection (minor); Additional spells—*beguiling **, *create food and water*, *speak with plants*, *heroes' feast*, *stone tell*, *succor*, *dispel evil*, *symbol*, *holy word*

Spells (chosen as needed): 8 1st, 8 2nd, 7 3rd, 4 4th, 2 5th, 2 6th

Granted Power: *ESP* once per day

Magical Items (personal): *mace of disruption*, *bracers of defense AC 6*, *field plate +1*, *shield +1*, *book of infinite spells*, *philter of persuasiveness*, *potion of fire resistance*, *potion of extra-healing (x3)*, *ring of*

earth elemental command, wand of size alteration

* Found in the GREYHAWK® Adventures hardback book.

Bishop Haufren of St. Cuthbert is a short, overweight man in his mid-50s. His heavy jowls and puffy cheeks belie the hard, unyielding gaze of his tiny eyes. His appearance makes him seem profligate and debauched, but he is far from it. Haufren is a stern and barely yielding defender of the faith, a product of his own severe upbringing. He dresses in plain clothing and cuts his hair in a tonsure, giving him the appearance of a simple monk. Simple, he is not.

Haufren's severity has made him ideally suited to his position as one of the higher ranking officials in the Order of Stars. As a bishop of the order, Haufren's task is to maintain the purity of faith and doctrine among the followers of Saint Cuthbert. This he does with great efficiency. He is neither humble nor generous in his position; he is, indeed, considered imperious and high-handed in his dealings, but he has the power to be so.

Grumble as they may about his attitude, others in the church can find no fault with Haufren's moral character. There is no taint on the bishop's career and in several instances (during the First and Second Risings of the Temple of Elemental Evil, in particular) he has fulfilled his duties with admirable zeal. Bishop Haufren hates things evil as much as he hates heresy within the doctrine. Evil is a threat to the strength of the church and must be ruthlessly crushed before it weakens the faith of the St. Cuthbert's followers.

This crusading fervor of Haufren's can make him a very difficult man to deal with. Pagans (those who do not follow St. Cuthbert) find it virtually impos-

sible to gain access to the resources of the church. Even those professing the faith are subjected to proofs of their faith before aid is rendered. A demonstration of faithfulness is useful in overcoming these obstacles. The most common form is a suitable donation (and perhaps a penance) to the church.

For non-believers and those without cash, Bishop Haufren has no qualms against using a *quest* spell, giving the characters a mission that furthers the goals of St. Cuthbert. Non-believers naturally receive more arduous quests than those of the faith—although backsliders are dealt with even more harshly.

The bishop also recognizes the usefulness of reward. Those who meet his demands—faithfulness, payment, or quests—are likely to receive the aid they sought. As the leader of the church in all the Viscounty, the bishop's resources are considerable. Healing, raising, divinations, and other spells are all within his power. The temple has a quantity of magical items and, should the need be great, Haufren may provide these. Small items (potions, scrolls, and other things with single or very limited uses) may be granted as rewards. More powerful or permanent goods are sometimes, though rarely, loaned to deserving souls. Of course, the bishop considers himself well within his rights to magically inspect the character of the recipient in these cases!

Furthermore, although he is not officially part of the government, Bishop Haufren's word carries much weight in the court. He can recommend individuals for knighthood, as a recognition of their services. Indeed, he is generous with knight bannerets and occasionally even knight commander ranks. This is more than kindness, it is also wise policy. The recipients of titles tend to be grateful to the

bishop, yet these very titles present no threat or cost to the church. There is a growing contingent of young knights in Verbobonc who feel some loyalty to Haufren because of his influence in securing their appointments.

Diraq Malcinex
Her Most Sublime Excellency,
the Heart of Vecna
Female Human
Priestess of Vecna
16th-Level Cleric/
5th-Level Wizard
Lawful Evil

Str 9	Int 15
Dex 9	Wis 18
Con 13	Cha 17

THACO: 10
AC: 0
Hit Points: 62

Spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Necromantic, Protection, Summoning

Clerical Spells (Choose as needed): 9 1st, 9 2nd, 8 3rd, 7 4th, 4 5th, 3 6th, 1 7th

Granted Powers: Command undead (use the turning tables); *legend lore* once per day

Wizard Spells (choose as needed): 4 1st, 2 2nd, 1 3rd

Magical Items: *ring of protection +2*, *bracers of defense AC 2*, *robe of blending*, *girdle of fire giant strength*, *wand of earth and stone*, *dust of illusion*, scroll with *banishment*, *detect scrying*, *disintegrate*, *finger of death*, *monster summoning IV*, *phantasmal killer*, and *reverse gravity*

Diraq Malcinex is a young, self-assured woman, far younger than one would guess for the leader of an evil secret cult. While many find this surprising, those who know her do not find her success unusual at all. They are perfectly aware of her ambition, ruthless-



ness, and complete lack of conscience. There is literally nothing she will not do to achieve her goals. No deed is too repellent for her tastes; indeed, she enjoys what others would find perverse.

Diraq is clearly of Baklunish blood, with chestnut brown hair and golden-tan skin. Slightly taller than average height, she is slender and well-proportioned. Diraq is perfectly aware of the effect she has on males, and she uses her looks and seductive talents to unhesitatingly manipulate others. She is vain, but does her best to conceal this, since she knows it would detract from her seductive charms.

Diraq is a user of other people. She has natural acting skills and can quickly leap from role to role, one moment pretending to be a virtuous innocent and, in the next, becoming a terrifying fury.

While Diraq is cunning enough to dole out rewards and recognize loyalty in her followers, she has no use for such traits. Bonds of friendship, family, love, obedience, and service mean nothing to her. She never trusts and she never grants mercy. Those she saves from her wrath are spared only because destroying them would cost her power. If she spares the life of an errant priest, it is only because she does not want to enrage his flock. Were he without such support, Her Sublime Excellency would strike the offender down in an instant. Indeed, should his followers be few, she could very well destroy them along with the offending priest.

If there is anything for which Diraq Malcinex feels passion, it is Vecna. She more than any other desires her lord and his impending return. The perverse desires she feels toward the arch-lich are as close to love as she will ever come. Thus, any who oppose or impede Vecna's return will be crushed, if she can manage it. Her passion for Vecna is also Diraq's greatest weakness, in that it can potentially

blind her to other threats and dangers. Moreover, the feeling is not mutual. While Vecna is quite pleased by the devotion of his high priestess, he would have no qualms about crushing her.

Kas the Terrible

Male Vampire
17th-Level Fighter
Chaotic Evil

Str 18 (76) Int 14
Dex 15 Wis 8
Con 18 Cha 15

THACO: 5
Damage: 1d8+4
AC: 1
Hit Points: 122

Special Attacks: *Charm person* gaze (-2 penalty to save); drain 2 levels per attack; gaseous form at will; shapechange to bat at will; summon rats, bats, or wolves (not possible at the Citadel Cavitius); spider climb at will.

Special Defenses: +1 or better weapons to hit; regenerate 3 hp per round; immune to poison, paralysis, *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; half damage from cold and electricity.

Once a warrior of legendary power and evil, Kas is remembered in the lands of Greyhawk for only two things: his fantastic sword and his spectacular demise at the hands of his master, the arch-lich Vecna. This last is most ironic, for in his death the evil lord accomplished a deed of surpassing heroism, ultimately for the good of all Oerth. It was hardly what he intended, since Kas's goal was to usurp the power of his corrupt lord. Thus it is said by the storytellers that even from the hands of great evil some good can come.

Kas did not die in that battle, though. As a final act, Vecna opened a gateway and cast his rebellious lieutenant into the bleak

realm of Citadel Cavitius, Vecna's prison on the plane of Ash. There Kas has languished ever since.

Imprisonment has changed Kas, mentally and physically. Where before he was consumed by pride and ambition, Kas is now eaten by hate. First and foremost he hates Vecna. From there his rage extends to all who enjoy freedom and light. Now he dreams of power, not to rule but to destroy all he finds vile.

Physically, Kas has gone through an even more drastic alteration. As he lived out the remainder of his years, Kas was steeped in the energies of the Negative Material plane. Slowly these accumulated and transformed him. The energy ate out his body from the inside. Finally, it seized his heart and soul, but Kas did not die. Instead, Kas the Terrible was transformed into one of the most fearsome of undead, a vampire. For centuries now, he has dwelled in the citadel, locked in this undying state. Sometimes the ancient warlord wonders if this was Vecna's ultimate irony—perpetual life imprisonment.

More than once, when thinking of an eternity trapped in Citadel Cavitius, Kas has wanted to die, but the energies of the plane have prevented that. If offered no escape but destruction, he would take it. If, however, there is a chance he could return to Oerth, then he would gladly live forever. Old ambitions, though perverted, die hard.

Since Kas never properly died or was buried, he lacks one weakness possessed by normal vampires. Never having a grave or coffin, Kas has no need to rest in one. If reduced to gaseous form, he simply retreats and hides somewhere until his corporeal form can be restored.

Oaklin the Half-Elf

Male Half-Elf
10th-Level Thief
Neutral Evil

Str 9 Int 15
Dex 16 Wis 10
Con 11 Cha 13

THACO: 16
AC: 4
Hit Points: 33

Thieving Abilities:

PP OL F/RT MS HS DN CW RL
68 56 46 68 67 40 85 40
Leather armor
Backstab x 4

Magical Items: sword +2, dagger of venom, ring of protection +2, boots of speed, scroll of protection from dragon breath, potion of vitality

Oaklin the Half-Elf is a scoundrel through-and-through. Standing only 5'4" tall, he is not particularly handsome. Indeed he looks rather ordinary, not the type to stand out in a crowd. He dresses in simple, unassuming clothes and, except for a sword, does not carry any obvious weapons. Yet he is, as noted, an evil and malicious person.

While he would like others to believe his lack of moral character is the result of a sad and prejudiced upbringing—abandoned by his mother, tormented by humans, etc.—this is far from the truth. In his youth, Oaklin had a good life. His family was strong and tightly knit, his father and mother respected and well-to-do members of the community. No, the answer is that Oaklin was just bad. His failings are his own fault and no one else's.

Oaklin has long since left his family. He and his father never agreed, as the boy's character was too low for the father. Leaving home, the youth quickly discov-

ered he had a talent for hustling. At first it seemed a successful and glamorous life, earning money by fleecing gullible marks. But it hasn't worked out that way. Never having applied himself, not even to the criminal arts, Oaklin has never been able to become more than a small-time hustler. Even his improving skill as a thief cannot change this.

Bitter and discouraged, the half-elf was a ripe candidate for recruitment by the Cult of Vecna. Offered power and responsibility among the Fingers, Oaklin eagerly took the opportunity. Now he is one of the leaders of this branch of the Organ in Verbobonc.

Of course, Oaklin is a thief. Only fear of retribution keeps him from selling out the cult. Even then, this fear can be overcome by an appropriate counteroffer: his life, for example. Oaklin is a con artist and a clever one, so he lies as a matter of habit. It is quite likely any promise he makes is a double-cross. Characters would be wise never to trust this shifty scoundrel.

Turim Varostak

Avatar of Vecna

(See Appendix 2 for statistical information.)

Turim Varostak, manifestation of Vecna, appears to be a crusty, old Rhennee, whose right leg is missing above the knee, replaced by a wooden peg. He perpetually stoops, his body bent over the single crutch the old boatman uses to support his weight. His face is saggy and thick with wrinkles, and his gray hair hangs in thin, stringy hanks. He's lost most of his molars and can eat only soft, easily chewed food.

For all of his apparent infirmity, though, Turim seems sprightly and cheerful, although his taste in humor is macabre. He calls his leg "Old Timber-Toe" and often refers to "Timber-Toe and me." Each

time he's asked, "Turim will tell a different story about how he lost his leg, but it is impossible to tell which tales are lies and which is the truth.

Turim knows the most astounding secrets and trivia and casually lets them slip at the most unexpected times. Although he claims only to be a poor sailor, he seems to have hidden skills. His interest in the cult makes him seem a great foe of evil.

Nothing could be farther from the truth, given that Turim is the current avatar of Vecna. That is, of course, not a fact he will intentionally reveal. If any character gets too close to the truth, Turim deals with him in subtle ways. One of his favorites is to use a *forget* spell to wipe out the cause of the character's suspicions. Failing that, banishment of the character to the Citadels Cavitius is always an option.

Vecna/Halmadar

Possessed Human
20th-Level Fighter
Lawful Evil

Statistics: Not applicable

THACO: 1
AC: 0
Hit Points: 89

Magical Items: The Eye and Hand of Vecna

Once Halmadar was the powerful and evil warlord Halmadar the Cruel, but that has long since changed. The fighter who once occupied this body has been possessed by the Eye and the Hand of Vecna. Now, he is a quasi-lich. His body has passed beyond life, but it has resisted entering the realms of the dead. His muscles have withered away, his hair fallen out, and his skin is stretched tight over bone. He looks dead, yet he is not dead.



Halmadar's psyche has been driven into a dark and distant corner of his own subconscious. In its place is the fragmented, yet dominating, willpower of the ancient lich Vecna. The result has made Vecna/Halmadar thoroughly, maniacally insane.

Consciously, the quasi-lich believes himself to be the great and powerful Lord Vecna, the Whispered One, Lord of the Spidered Throne. With the rudimentary understanding possessed by the Eye and the Hand, Vecna/Halmadar tries to cloak himself in the trappings of the old Vecna. Although he has no ability to use them, he takes great interest in magical spells and items. He gathers and pores through books he cannot read. He attempts to concoct magical devices without knowing how. He answers to no name but that of Vecna.

These same delusions create conflicts in his mind. He is not a wizard and his failures to use magical powers only disorients his psyche further. He denies the existence of Vecna the demigod and seeks to seize control over the cult. He cannot understand why they hail him as returned from the dead or descended to Oerth. Already his deluded brain is creating rationalizations for these contradictions.

At the same time, Halmadar is not completely overcome. In moments of weakness, or when the power of the artifacts is directed outward, Halmadar's identity struggles to reclaim its shell. The quasi-lich may be racked by "snakes in its skull," indecision, or sudden changes in behavior (suddenly taking up a sword to use in a battle). Even in calm times, the quasi-lich babbles to itself, the two halves of its personality struggling for control or building elaborate explanations for all the inconsistencies of its "life."

Vecna's followers regard these outbursts with great awe, confus-

ing madness with divinity. Clearly, to their minds, the great Vecna is far beyond their simple understandings. Fear of his power has long taught them to obey Vecna's slightest whim.

Yagos Slevak
Male Rhennee
10th-Level Thief
Neutral Evil

Str 10	Int 12
Dex 17	Wis 12
Con 16	Cha 8

THACO: 16
AC: 6
Hit Points: 58

Thieving Abilities:

PP	OL	F/RT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
76	70	52	70	62	40	85	20

Leather Armor
Backstab x 4

Magical Items: *long sword +3, leather armor +2, iron bands of Bilarro, jewel of flawlessness, potion of water breathing, scroll with conjure elemental (air), demand, foresight, meteor swarm, prismatic wall, remove curse, Serten's spell immunity (25% chance for incorrect reading of any scroll)*

Yagos Slevak is an quivering, oily little sycophant of a human being. He owes his success in life to his ability to wheedle, whine, and grovel before those more powerful than himself, while at the same time plotting ways to humiliate, betray, or backstab the target of his cringing affection. While he seems comical and helpless, Yagos is skilled and amoral enough to be a dangerous enemy.

Yagos is a slightly built man, of pale complexion (for the deeply tanned Rhennee) and long, curly dark hair. His nose is slightly bent and one front tooth is cracked, both broken long ago in a fight. He

likes to dress well, but he can seldom find or afford new finery. His outfits are strangely matched combinations of new cloth and worn-out, old clothes. No two pieces are alike, yet Yagos somehow puts it together with a sense of style.

Slevak travels among those who dwell at the fringes of Rhennee society—the worst thieves, cutthroats, robbers, gamblers, and con artists of that questionable lot. The majority of the Rhennee find Yagos and his companions bad company. Most bargemasters will not have him or his ilk on their boats. He has an evil reputation and most simply shun him. Fortunately for Yagos, there are a few bargemasters and nobles among his companions; the unscrupulous Zorran Sarraith (see the *City of Greyhawk* boxed set) is among these.

Yagos's evil reputation is well-deserved, for not only is he a thief, he is one of the leaders of the Cult of Vecna among the Rhennee. Yagos has control and influence over the Fingers of Vecna (see Appendix 2) among the Rhennee, as well as in Greyhawk and several other coastal cities. In Greyhawk, these activities sometimes bring him into conflict with the Thieves' Guild. Up to now, he has been careful not to be caught at anything. Without strong proof, the Guild cannot act against one of the Rhennee; it would precipitate a war between the two groups. The Guild would welcome any information they could use against Yagos, either to make him outcast among his own people or enrage the authorities of Greyhawk against him.

Appendix V:

Pregenerated Player Characters

Two sets of player characters are provided for this adventure. The first group, the Circle of Eight, is used only in the Prologue. For the remainder of the adventure, the Circle of Eight Henchmen (or your players' standard characters) are used.

For the Circle of Eight, an * after the spell name indicates that spell is found in the *GREYHAWK® Adventures* hardback book.

The Circle of Eight

Bigby
18th-Level Mage
Neutral
Hit Points: 46

Str 9 Int 17
Dex 17 Wis 15
Con 15 Cha 12

Bigby's Traveling Spell Book:
(spells/day)

1st Level (5): *Bigby's feeling fingers **, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *dancing lights*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *light*, *protection from evil*, *read magic*, *spider climb*, *spook*, *taunt*

2nd Level (5): *Bigby's silencing hand **, *darkness 15' r.*, *detect invisibility*, *ESP*, *fog cloud*, *glitterdust*, *levitate*, *rope trick*, *shatter*, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*

3rd Level (5): *Bigby's pugnacious pugilist **, *blink*, *clairaudience*, *fireball*, *fly*, *hold undead*, *phantom steed*, *spectral force*, *wraithform*

4th Level (5): *Bigby's battering gauntlet **, *Bigby's force sculp-*

*ture **, *fear*, *ice storm*, *Leomund's secure shelter*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *monster summoning II*, *polymorph self*, *solid fog*, *wall of fire*

5th Level (5): *Bigby's fantastic fencers **, *Bigby's interposing hand*, *Bigby's strangling grip*, *magic jar*, *stone shape*, *summon shadow*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of iron*

6th Level (3): *Bigby's forceful hand*, *conjure animals*, *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *lower water*, *part water*, *Tenser's transformation*, *true seeing*

7th Level (3): *Bigby's grasping hand*, *control undead*, *delayed blast fireball*, *finger of death*, *limited wish*, *power word stun*, *reverse gravity*, *teleport without error*

8th Level (2): *Bigby's clenched fist*, *Bigby's most excellent force sculpture **, *monster summoning VI*

9th Level (1): *Bigby's crushing hand*, *imprisonment*, *weird*

Magical Items: *Bracers of defense AC 5*, *ring of protection +3*, *boots of striding and springing*, *ring of mind shielding*, *wand of fire*, *wand of frost*, *scrolls of protection from acid*, *fire*, *werewolves*, *poison*, and *possession*

Bigby is a lean, severe-looking man with brown hair and eyes. Bigby is known for being too nervous, too cautious, and too puritanical. He strongly favors defensive spells and items, believing in safety before attack. He is quick to find fault with little things and can be difficult to get along with. However, his close friends value him for his steadfastness and his sense of humor.

Drawmij
16th-Level Mage
Neutral

Hit Points: 44

Str 7 Int 18
Dex 16 Wis 17
Con 15 Cha 9

Drawmij's Traveling Spell Book:
(spells/day)

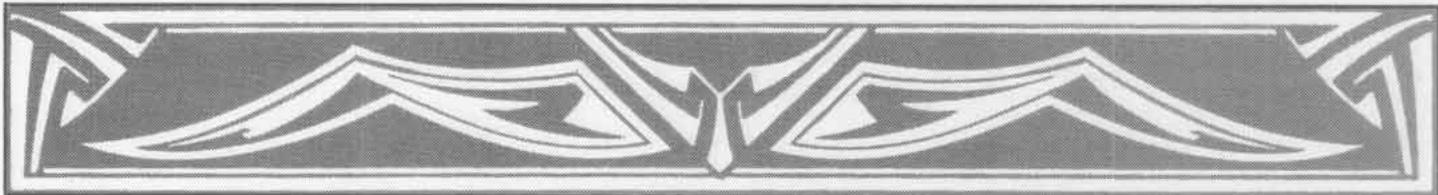
1st Level (5): *Affect normal fires*, *cantrip*, *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *dancing lights*, *Drawmij's beast of burden **, *Drawmij's light step **, *enlarge*, *grease*, *jump*, *protection from evil*, *read magic*

2nd Level (5): *Alter self*, *continual light*, *detect invisibility*, *Drawmij's adventurer's luck*, *Drawmij's breath of life*, *Drawmij's scent mask **, *Drawmij's swift mount **, *invisibility*, *irritation*, *magic mouth*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *spectral hand*, *summon swarm*, *whispering wind*

3rd Level (5): *Blink*, *dispel magic*, *Drawmij's marvelous shield **, *Drawmij's iron sack **, *flame arrow*, *hold undead*, *infravision*, *lightning bolt*, *Melf's minute meteors*, *monster summoning I*, *protection from normal missiles*, *tongues*, *water breathing*, *wraithform*

4th Level (5): *Confusion*, *contagion*, *detect scrying*, *Drawmij's handy timepiece **, *Drawmij's instant exit **, *Drawmij's protection from nonmagical gas **, *Drawmij's tool box **, *emotion*, *extension I*, *fire trap*, *monster summoning II*, *rainbow pattern*, *remove curse*, *shout*, *wizard eye*

5th Level (5): *Airy water*, *animal growth*, *cone of cold*, *conjure*



*elemental, contact other plane, Drawmij's flying feat **, *sending, stone shape, summon shadow, telekinesis, transmute rock to mud, wall of force*

6th Level (3): *Anti-magic shell, chain lightning, conjure animals, control weather, Drawmij's beneficent polymorph **, *Drawmij's merciful metamorphoses **, *legend lore, mislead, monster summoning IV, part water, shades, stone to flesh*

7th Level (2): *Control undead, delayed blast fireball, Drawmij's instant summons, duo-dimension, reverse gravity, teleport without error*

8th Level (1): *Incendiary cloud, mind blank, trap the soul*

Magical Items: *Cloak of the bat, ring of protection +3, dagger +3, chime of opening, figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl), ring of shooting stars, wand of magic missiles, wand of polymorphing*

Tall, slim and youthful-looking, Drawmij could easily have been a charmer of women, were it not for his close-lipped nature. He is intensely secretive, saying little about his opinions or his past. Still, the reclusive Drawmij is a good friend to many a rogue and minstrel. He has two passions—one for the sea and all things connected to it (he spends most of his time in the secluded depths of the ocean) and the other is an abiding hatred of Jason Krimeah, Mage of the Valley.

Jallarzi Sallavarian

14th-Level Mage

Neutral Good

Hit Points: 38

Str 10	Int 18
Dex 18	Wis 17
Con 9	Cha 17

Jallarzi's Traveling Spell Book: (spells/day)

1st Level (5): *Burning hands, cantrip, dancing lights, detect magic, detect undead, gaze reflection, hold portal, light, magic missile, mending, mount, read magic, shield, shocking grasp*

2nd Level (5): *Alter self, continual light, darkness 15' r., ESP, hypnotic pattern, knock, locate object, rope trick, shatter*

3rd Level (5): *Blink, delude, dispel magic, fireball, flame arrow, hold undead, infravision, lightning bolt, phantom steed, protection from normal missiles, slow, water breathing*

4th Level (4): *Charm monster, contagion, improved invisibility, monster summoning II, phantasmal killer, plant growth, polymorph other, polymorph self, remove curse, shadow monsters, solid fog, wall of fire, wall of ice, wizard eye*

5th Level (4): *Advanced illusion, chaos, feeblemind, major creation, monster summoning III, passwall, sending, teleport, wall of force, wall of iron*

6th Level (2): *Conjure animals, disintegrate, geas, glasse, mirage arcana, programmed illusion, transmute water to dust*

7th Level (1): *Charm plants, delayed blast fireball, duo-dimension, spell turning*

Magical Items: *Bracers of defense AC 2, ring of protection +2, staff of striking, arrow of direction, boots of elvenkind, cloak of elvenkind, hat of disguise, rope of climbing, ring of feather falling, wand of fear, wand of secret door and trap detection*

Jallarzi is the youngest and newest member of the Circle of Eight. She is also the only female mem-

ber. Her long blond hair and tan skin make her strikingly attractive and she could have more than her share of interested males to keep her company, if she wished. However, she is independent-minded and not terribly interested in the attentions of eager suitors. She is more than capable of protecting herself. As regards the old wizards of the Circle of Eight, she is not as confident or sure of her footing. Jallarzi is currently "on trial" as a member. Furthermore, she is keenly aware of the doubts of her status held by many in the Circle. She knows this is because she is a woman, but she does not also realize there are concerns about her ability to maintain the Balance.

Jallarzi is not accompanied by Edwina, her pseudo-dragon companion, on this adventure. Edwina refused to go, since Otiluke was also taking part. (The wizard and the pseudo-dragon do not get along.)

Nystul

16th-Level Mage

Neutral

Hit Points: 45

Str 7	Int 18
Dex 10	Wis 17
Con 15	Cha 15

Nystul is guarded by a permanent protection from evil spell.

Nystul's Traveling Spell Book: (spells/day)

1st Level (5): *Armor, audible glammer, burning hands, change self, detect magic, friends, grease, jump, light, message, Nystul's dancing werelight **, *Nystul's flash **, *read magic, shield, ventriloquism*

2nd Level (5): *Alter self, darkness 15' r., flaming sphere, knock, levitate, Melf's acid arrow, Nystul's blackmote, Nystul's blazing beam, Nystul's crystal*

dagger, pyrotechnics, ray of enfeeblement, spectral hand, summon swarm, web

3rd Level (5): *Clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, feign death, fly, hold undead, infra-vision, invisibility 10' r., non-detection, Nystul's crystal dirk **, *Nystul's expeditious fire extinguisher **, *Nystul's golden revelation **, *Nystul's radiant baton **, *tongues, vampiric touch*

4th Level (5): *Enchanted weapon, extension I, fumble, improved invisibility, Nystul's blacklight burst **, *Nystul's lightburst **, *plant growth, polymorph self, remove curse, shout, stonewall, wizard eye*

5th Level (5): *Animal growth, domination, extension II, Nystul's enveloping darkness **, *Nystul's radiant arch **, *seeming, sending, stone shape*

6th Level (3): *Disintegrate, geas, mass suggestion, mislead, programmed illusion, transmute water to dust*

7th Level (2): *Control undead, delayed blast fireball, duodimension, power word stun, reverse gravity, vanish*

8th Level (1): *Incendiary cloud, mass charm, polymorph any object*

Magical Items: *Bracers of defense AC 5, ring of protection +3, cloak of displacement, boots of levitation, dust of disappearance, hat of disguise, wand of enemy detection, wand of illumination, wand of illusion*

Gangly and plain, Nystul considers himself a master of disguise. He is seldom seen in his true appearance, often using magic or magical items to change his looks. To the distress of others in the Circle, he is fond of puns and quips. Still, Nystul has a keen mind for battle tactics and believes that,

given time, he can derive victory from even the worst situation.

Otiluke

16th-Level Mage

Neutral

Hit Points: 39

Str 5 *	Int 17
Dex 17	Wis 8
Con 10	Cha 11

Otiluke's Traveling Spell Book: (spells/day)

1st Level (5): *Affect normal fires, audible glamor, burning hands, cantrip, charm person, color spray, feather fall, grease, jump, Otiluke's bubbling buoyancy **, *Otiluke's smoky sphere **, *read magic, spider climb, spook*

2nd Level (5): *Alter self, blur, deep-pockets, detect invisibility, ESP, fog cloud, forget, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, irritation, knock, locate object, pyrotechnics, Otiluke's boiling oil bath **

3rd Level (5): *Blink, clairvoyance, delude, fireball, fly, gust of wind, hold person, hold undead, non-detection, Otiluke's acid cloud **, *Otiluke's force umbrella **, *spectral force, suggestion, wraithform*

4th Level (5): *Charm monster, dimension door, emotion, Evard's black tentacles, fire charm, ice storm, Leomund's secure shelter, monster summoning II, Otiluke's resilient sphere, Otiluke's steaming sphere **, *phantasmal killer, polymorph other, rainbow pattern, wall of ice*

5th Level (5): *Animate dead, cloudkill, domination, hold monster, Otiluke's dispelling screen **, *Otiluke's electrical screen **, *Otiluke's polar screen, Otiluke's radiant screen **, *seeming, shadow magic, summon shadow,*

wall of force, wall of stone

6th Level (3): *Chain lightning, globe of invulnerability, lower water, mass suggestion, monster summoning IV, Otiluke's diamond screen **, *Otiluke's excruciating screen **, *Otiluke's freezing sphere, part water, programmed illusion, shades*

7th Level (2): *Finger of death, limited wish, monster summoning V, Otiluke's death screen **, *Otiluke's fire and ice **, *power word stun, prismatic spray, reverse gravity, shadow walk, vanish*

8th Level (1): *Maze, Otiluke's telekinetic sphere, polymorph any object*

Magical Items: *Cloak of protection +4, dagger +2, gauntlets of kobold power (increase Str to 9), horn of blasting, ioun stone (increases level by 1 to 16), necklace of missiles, periapt of proof against poison +2, wand of fire, wand of frost*

Young, short, and puny, Otiluke has overcompensated for his drawbacks by being overly aggressive and abrasive. Unlike the older and contemplative members of the Circle, Otiluke believes in the use of offensive firepower. Uncertain of his standing in the Circle, he wonders if it is only his political role as an Oligarch of Greyhawk that causes the others to tolerate him.

Otto

14th-Level Mage/

5th-Level Priest

(Dual class, currently mage)

Neutral (Neutral Good)

Hit Points: 45

Str 16	Int 17
Dex 7	Wis 15
Con 15	Cha 16

Priest Spheres (5 1st, 4 2nd, 1 3rd): *Astral, Charm, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Guardian (minor), Healing (minor), and summoning*



Otto's Traveling Spell Book:

- 1st Level (5): Audible glamor, detect magic, detect undead, feather fall, friends, gaze reflection, message, Otto's chime of release *, read magic, spook
- 2nd Level (5): Deafness, flaming sphere, glitterdust, knock, know alignment, levitate, mirror image, Otto's soothing vibrations *, Otto's tones of forgetfulness *, pyrotechnics, spectral hand, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter
- 3rd Level (5/10 **): Dispel magic, gust of wind, hold person, hold undead, infravision, monster summoning I, non-detection, Otto's crystal rhythms *, Otto's sure-footed shuffle *, protection from normal missiles, slow, tongues, vampiric touch
- 4th Level (4): Detect scrying, enervation, fear, fire shield, Leomund's secure shelter, minor globe of invulnerability,

Otto's drums of despair *, Otto's silver tongue *, Otto's tonal attack *, Otto's tin soldiers *, Otto's warding tones *, plant growth, stonewalk

5th Level (4): Advanced illusion, chaos, domination, feeblemind, Otto's gong of isolation *, summon shadow, wall of force

6th Level (2): Anti-magic shell, chain lightning, legend lore, lower water, project image, transmute water to dust

7th Level (1): Charm plants, control undead, delayed blast fireball, finger of death, limited wish, shadow walk

** See ring of wizardry below

Magical Items: Footman's flail +3 ***, boots of speed, bag of holding (250 lbs.), medallion of ESP, ring of feather falling, ring of wizardry (3rd-level spells), wand of conjuration

*** Only used in extreme emergency

Fat and overdressed, the curly-haired Otto likes to pass himself off as a cheerful and outgoing merchant, dealing in luxury items of all sorts. He has a great love of fine living, culture, and the arts. He is musically trained and has a passion for music. He commonly researches minor modifications to spells, allowing him to include music in their effects. A former priest of Boccob, Otto is now fully committed to the arts of magic. He uses his priestly powers (including weapons) only when in dire peril or great need.

Rary
23rd-Level Mage *
Neutral
 Hit Points: 50

Str 7	Int 19
Dex 11	Wis 19
Con 12	Cha 16

Rary's Traveling Spell Book *:
(spells/day)

- 1st Level (5): *Affect normal fires, burning hands, cantrip, change self, color spray, comprehend languages, dancing lights, detect magic, enlarge, friends, gaze reflection, grease, hold portal, light, magic missile, phantasmal force, protection from evil, Rary's emphatic perception *, read magic, shield, shocking grasp, sleep, ventriloquism, wall of fog*
- 2nd Level (5): *Alter self, darkness 15' r., detect evil, detect invisibility, ESP, fog cloud, hypnotic pattern, improved phantasmal force, invisibility, knock, know alignment, levitate, locate object, mirror image, pyrotechnics, scare, spectral hand, stinking cloud, summon swarm, web*
- 3rd Level (5): *Blink, dispel magic, fireball, flay, gust of wind, haste, hold person, invisibility, invisibility 10' r., lightning bolt, monster summoning I, protection from normal missiles, slow, suggestion, tongues, water breathing, wraithform*
- 4th Level (5): *Charm monster, emotion, fear, ice storm, improved invisibility, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other, polymorph self, Rary's memory alteration *, Rary's mind scan *, Rary's mnemonic enhancer, Rary's spell enhancer *, remove curse, wall of ice, wizard eye*
- 5th Level (5): *Cone of cold, conjure elemental, domination, feblemind, hold monster, passwall, Rary's mind shield *, Rary's superior spell enhancer *, Rary's telepathic bond *, stone shape, teleport, wall of force, wall of iron*
- 6th Level (5): *Chain lightning, death fog, death spell, disinte-*

*grate, globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion, mislead, part water, Rary's urgent utterance *, stone to flesh, true seeing*

7th Level (5): *Charm plants, duodimension, finger of death, limited wish, power word stun, prismatic spray, shadow walk, teleport without error, vanish*

8th Level (5): *Antipathy-sympathy, glassteel, mass charm, maze, mind blank, monster summoning VI, polymorph any object, prismatic wall, sink*

9th Level (3): *Energy drain, meteor swarm, monster summoning VII, power word kill, shape change, time stop, weird, wish*

Magical Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0, ring of protection +5, gem of seeing, helm of brilliance, ring of animal control, ring of mind shielding, robe of stars, rod of beguiling, wand of paralyzation*

Rary is very much the reserved, patient, and wise old wizard of bards' songs. He holds in his head a great store of knowledge on all subjects and is always interested in learning more. He is an expert on Paynim lore as well as a respected figure among the tribesmen. With his disdain for crude, damage-causing magic in favor of more complex and subtle spells, Rary has both impressed and alienated many of the wizard community.

* Allowed additional spells, all other abilities as per 20th-level wizard.

Tenser

20th-Level Mage
Lawful Good
(Neutral tendencies)
Hit Points: 60

Str 10	Int 17
Dex 16	Wis 11
Con 16	Cha 18

Tenser's Traveling Spell Book:
(spells/day)

- 1st Level (5): *Cantrip, Change Self, Chill Touch, Comprehend Languages, Detect Undead, Feather Fall, Grease, Jump, Read Magic, Spook, Taunt, Tenser's Eye of the Tiger *, Tenser's Floating Disc, Tenser's Steady Aim **
- 2nd Level (5): *Blur, Detect Invisibility, Forget, Hypnotic Pattern, Knock, Melf's Acid Arrow, Protection from Cantrips, Pyrotechnics, Spectral Hand, Tenser's Brawl *, Tenser's Hunting Hawk *, Web, Wizard Lock*
- 3rd Level (5): *Clairvoyance, Fireball, Flame Arrow, Gust of Wind, Haste, Hold Person, Invisibility 10' r., Leomund's Tiny Hut, Protection from Evil, 10' r., Tenser's Deadly Strike *, Tenser's Eye of the Eagle *, Vampiric Touch*
- 4th Level (5): *Contagion, Emotion, Evard's Black Tentacles, Hallucinatory Terrain, Minor Creation, Rary's Mnemonic Enhancer, Shout, Tenser's Flaming Blade *, Tenser's Giant Strength *, Tenser's Running Warrior *, Tenser's Staff of Smiting **
- 5th Level (5): *Bigby's Interposing Hand, Chaos, Demi-Shadow Monsters, Major Creation, Sending, Summon Shadow*
- 6th Level (4): *Chain Lightning, Death Fog, Death Spell, Eyebite, Reincarnation, Shades, Tenser's Transformation*



7th Level (3): *Banishment, Charm Plants, Delayed Blast Fireball, Limited Wish, Mordenkainen's Sword, Power Word Stun, Prismatic Spray, Shadow Walk, Statue, Teleport Without Error*

8th Level (3): *Bigby's Clenched Fist, Incendiary Cloud, Mass Charm, Maze, Mind Blank, Monster Summoning VI, Polymorph Any Object, Power Word, Blind*

9th Level (2): *Meteor Swarm, Power Word Kill, Weird, Wish*

Magical Items: *Ring of protection +3, cloak of displacement, staff of thunder and lightning, amulet of proof against detection and location, dust of disappearance, pearl of the sirines, ring of fire resistance, wand of enemy detection, Zagy's spell component case*

Tenser is a medium-sized man, with brown hair and prominent nose. He is polite, quick-witted, and outgoing. He enjoys socializing when not on an adventure. He believes in the cause of Law and Good, to the point where he will enforce his will on others. To the others, he is something of an alarmist, always decrying the threat of evil in this quarter or that.

Circle of Eight Henchmen

Allentar Grassfield

Male Halfling
(**Stout/Tallfellow**)
12th-Level Thief
Neutral

Str 10 Int 11
Dex 15 Wis 13
Con 11 Cha 11

THACO: 15
AC: 9 (4 with magical armor)
Hit Points: 42

Bonuses: +3 bonus to saving throws vs. wands, staves, rods, spells, and poison; +1 to attack rolls with thrown weapons and slings

Special Abilities: Improved surprise when alone, limited infravision (30'), detect grade (75%), detect direction (50%), backstab x4, use magical scrolls (25% failure)

Thieving Abilities:

PP	OL	F/RT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
65	80	80	65	80	35	75	40
35	70	70	45	60	25	45	40

No armor
Studded

Languages: Common, Halfling, Goblin, Gnome, Orc, Thieves' Cant

Magical Items: *Short sword +1, studded leather +2, scroll of unseen servant and dispel magic, potion of clairvoyance*

Standing 4'3"—tall for a halfling—Allentar still has the characteristic plump shape of a halfling. Born in the Flinty Hills, Allentar was orphaned in his early teens when raiders from the North Province of the Great Kingdom passed through their lands. Fleeing their terror, he eventually drifted down to the City of Greyhawk. There he went from one con and mark to another. Only a fortunate meeting with Drawmij (his hand was in wizard's pocket) changed the course of his life. Quickly becoming a ward, then friend of the wizard, Allentar has risen to be Drawmij's trusted eyes and ears in the slums and dives of Greyhawk.

Allentar has a personal code of honor that centers around an utter loyalty to Drawmij, a man he sees as saving him from ruin. This loyalty doesn't change his view toward others or life, however. The world is a mean, hard place. Allentar

will take what he needs when he needs it.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—She's got what it takes and you respect that. The tall elf's intriguing and, like you, understands how the world really works. The pair of you could be an effective team.

Torik—The half-elf is a likeable fellow and he's fun to have around, but you wouldn't want to count on him in a pinch. The only followers of Ehlonna you ever met were the marks, and they were always easy targets.

Johanna—For some reason, she reminds you of Drawmij. You trust her, even though your better instincts say you shouldn't. For now, you're willing to give her the benefit of the doubt.

Ortux—You do not like him, but you'll work with him if you must. Nobody is as good and pure as he makes out to be—there must be some secret in his past. Now, wouldn't it be interesting if you could learn that?

Marial—You've seen her before, poking about Greyhawk in places where she has no business. Some of your friends told you she was asking too many questions. Others claim she's been helpful from time to time—providing spell services in exchange for information. What's her game? Is she really what she seems, or is she something else? She might be working for the City Watch, one of the guilds, or even one of the rival nations that covet the city's trade.

Imiric—You've seen the way that gnome watches you out of the corner of his eye. It's clear he doesn't like you at all. That little runt means trouble, but you're not going to take the blame when it happens. You'll let him make the first move, but you'll be ready.

Yars—Pure and simple, the dwarf scares you. You make a good



show of being brave and defiant in front of the others. Deep inside, though, you know that Yars's threats are more than just boasting—he would use some truly barbaric punishment if he ever caught you.

Cymria of Celadon

Female Elf

12th-Level Fighter/

11th-Level Mage

Chaotic Good

Str 17	Int 16
Dex 15	Wis 14
Con 12	Cha 8

THACO: 9

AC: 9 (2 in armor)

Hit Points: 44

Bonuses: +2 to attack roll with sword or bow, +1 to attack roll with all other weapons, +1 damage

Special Abilities: 90% resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells, infravision, chance of surprise when moving alone, secret door detection

Languages: Elven, Common, Nyronnese, Goblin, Orc, Gnome

Spells: 4 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 3 4th, 3 5th

Magical Items: *Bardiche* +2, *axe* +2, *scale mail* +2, *carpet of flying*, scroll of *lightning bolt*, scroll of *shatter*, *fire shield*, *feeblemind*, and *Tenser's transformation*, scroll of *protection from electricity*, *oil of fiery burning*, *potion of healing*

Tall and thin, Cymria has a sharp, wolfish look that matches her hard-edged disposition. Although she acts in the cause of good, Cymria is noted for her lack of mercy and distrust of compromises. She prefers a quick and efficient solution to any problem. Befriended by the outgoing Tenser, Cymria has chosen to leave her family and fellow elves to join the

great mage in his adventures. In Tenser, with his concern and curiosity for the woodland beings, Cymria has found someone she can respect.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Torik—Torik is a handsome and charming male and certainly seems friendly enough, but he's a half-elf. He's almost too soft, too compassionate. You've been taught it's not right for humans and elves to mingle so. It's clear that Torik has lost much of the true elvish nature. Still, he seems to like you and you really should try to be nice to him.

Johanna—That old woman just has a way of making you nervous. It's not like she has ever criticized you or made any judgments, but she's always watching and asking questions. She has this way of phrasing things, making you feel like the daughter—and yet she can't be any older than you!

Ortux—He's a stiff-necked and self-righteous pain, and he tries hard to avoid you. In fact, you'd be offended if his efforts weren't so self-conscious. There's something charming about his standoffishness. You don't know why, but you want to get to know the paladin better.

Allentar—The halfling you understand, which makes him easy to like. He views things in a nice, simple and direct manner—that you can relate to. Of course, you don't trust him at all, since he is a thief. He may be friendly, but you're not turning your back on him.

Marial—Somebody keep you safe from fools! How can anyone be so utterly ignorant of the realities of the world? All you can say is that she had better stay out of your way and not cause any trouble.

Imiric—That one's a tough little bugger. There's no secret he doesn't like you, but he's not pick-

ing a fight. Still, you're not going to let him push you around.

Yars—You don't like this boastful little dwarf, especially not for the way he flaunts his elven cloak. Still, you are not about to cross him because there is no predicting how he will react. If he gets in trouble, though, you'll let him sweat before doing anything to help.

Imiric von Suss-Varren

Count of the Principality of Ulek, Chamberlain of the Privy Council, Commander of the Suss March, Knight of the Order of the Forge, His Shining Servant

Male Gnome

11th-Level Fighter/

12th-Level Illusionist

Lawful Good

Str 16	Int 14
Dex 17	Wis 13
Con 14	Cha 13

THACO: 10

AC: 7 (1 with shield and magical armor)

Hit Points: 53

Bonuses: +2 reaction adjustment, +1 bonus to attack rolls vs. kobolds and goblins, +2 bonus to attack rolls with missile weapons, +1 bonus to damage, -4 penalty to attack rolls of giant-type creatures, +4 bonus to saving throws vs. wands, staves, rods, spells, and poison, +5 bonus to saving throws vs. illusions, -1 penalty to saving throws of others vs. his illusions

Special Abilities: 3/2 attacks, infravision (60'), detect grade (82%), detect unsafe construction (70%), determine depth underground (50%), determine direction underground (50%), 20% chance of magical item failure

Languages: Common, Gnome, Keolandish, Dwarf, Kobold, Burrowing mammal

Unavailable Schools: Necromancy, Invocation/Evocation, Abjuration

Spells *: 5 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 5 4th, 5 5th, 2 6th

* One spell at each level must be of the illusion school.

Magical Items: *Short sword +1, brigandine +1, robe of blending, periapt of proof against poison, ring of animal friendship, scroll with statue, potion of extra-healing*

Although his full title is imposing, this gnome far prefers the simple name Imiric, or at most Lord Imiric. He is about 100 years old. His face is wrinkled and his neatly trimmed beard and hair are starting to go white. Of late he has been considering that it is time to settle down and retire from the dangerous life of adventuring.

Although born into nobility, Imiric is no fop or pampered aristocrat. He has earned his titles and offices through hard work and cunning. Most of his adventuring has come while defending the Suss Marches against raiders from the Wild Coast and the Pomarj. He has led several expeditions into these lands, sometimes punitive and sometimes to recover treasures lost when the Pomarj was overrun. It was during these expeditions that Imiric met and befriended the wizard Otiluke. Imiric owes the mage his life for more than one timely rescue.

Now, though, Imiric is tired. Adventuring has taken its toll—he has yet to start a family or comfortably enjoy the wealth he has gathered. He worries that he's neglected his domain and has not served his subjects well. The only reason he's even here is that Otiluke may be in trouble.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—The elf-woman is too wild and cutthroat for your tastes. There's no doubt that she's competent, but her methods may cause as much damage as good. She needs a firm hand to keep her under control.

Torik—Even though he's not a gnome, Torik's a fine person, and you're glad to know him. He has a good view of life and values the things that make a community strong. There are a number of Ehlonna's followers in Ulek. You've a fair mind to offer him patronage if he would settle in your lands.

Johanna—The priestess may be wise and learned, but she seems too cold-blooded and emotionless for your tastes. It's clear she considers herself the leader, but you'd rather put your trust with Ortux.

Ortux—Ortux is a strong and upstanding man. While you doubt you could ever be so hard on yourself, you admire it in the paladin. To your mind, he's the natural leader of this group. Should it come down to it, you'll be ready to side with him.

Allentar—Halfplings have always given you trouble. Either they hide in their burrows like mice, afraid to fight for their land, or they're lazy and shiftless. Allentar's worse than some, but better than most. He's good at what he does, it's just that you don't like thieves.

Marial—The wizardess promises to be an entertaining companion. She knows so much about Greyhawk that she must have lively stories of the city. You'll just have to find a way to gain her confidence.

Yars—Would that you had a hundred Yars! With dwarves such as him, you could match the beasts of the Pomarj for sheer ferocity. Unfortunately, you've only got one Yars, but he may be enough for this group!

Johanna

Female Human

14th-Level Priestess of Boccob
Neutral

Str 12	Int 12
Dex 10	Wis 18
Con 15	Cha 14

THACO: 12

AC: 10 (-1 in armor)

Hit Points: 63

Bonuses: +4 bonus to saving throws vs. mental attacks, +2 reaction adjustment

Special Abilities: Sage abilities in alchemy, astrology, metaphysics (plane of concordant opposition), theology (of the Great Kingdom); able to use wands, crystal balls, and robes (except *robe of the archmagi*)

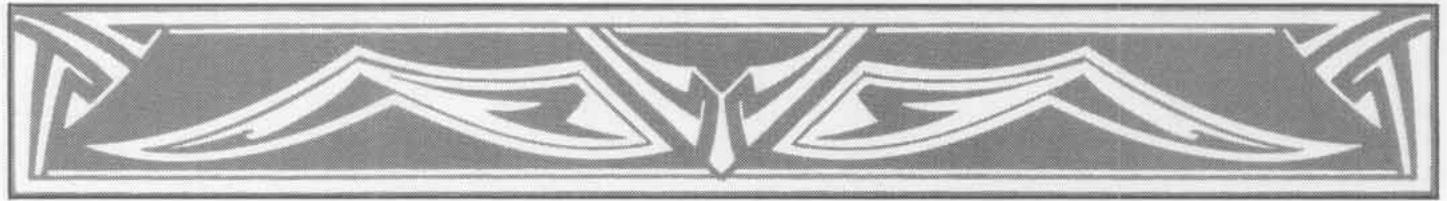
Languages: Common, Suloise, Old Oeridian

Spheres: Astral, Charm, Combat, Divination, Elemental, Guardian (minor), Healing (minor), Summoning

Spells: 8 1st, 8 2nd, 7 3rd, 6 4th, 3 5th, 2 6th, 1 7th

Magical Items: *Mace +2, plate mail +3, libram of vile darkness, scroll of aerial servant, wall of thorns, spike stones, control winds, protection from evil 10' r., and create food and water; scroll of transmute rock to mud, conjure fire elemental, speak with monsters, wall of thorns, and word of recall; scroll of aid, fire trap, glyph of warding, animal summoning I, imbue with spell ability, protection from lightning, and raise dead; potion of invisibility*

Dignified and matronly, Johanna is a tall, white-haired woman, quite proud of her 55 years. Dressed in the purple and gold robes of Boccob, she makes quite an imposing figure. Her strict, humorless demeanor only adds to this impression.



Johanna is native to the Prelacy of Almor, where she is an important official in the temples of Boccob. She has served in the priesthood all her life. It was there she first met and tutored Otto. Later, she was one of those who advised him to leave the temple. Johanna and Otto have remained close friends ever since.

To others, this seems like an odd Mutt-and-Jeff combination: the epicurean mage and the dour, strict priestess. In truth, Johanna is much less formidable than the image she presents. Uncomfortable among strangers, she lowers her defenses among friends, becoming warmer and showing a sly sense of humor.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—You have little opinion of the elf beyond the curiosity of a sage. You are most interested in what the elf can add to her professional knowledge.

Torik—The half-elf is fascinating. He's certainly charming and pleasant company, even if he is a not up to your standards. After all, he is a follower of Ehlonna and you really don't know much about them. You look forward to debating him on theological issues.

Ortux—The paladin is a good man, but what else could a paladin be? He is good friend to have, since his word is his bond. Still, paladins always seem to make trouble, so you must be watchful or there will be dissension in the group.

Allentar—You don't trust the halfling. It would be foolish, since he is a thief. You don't really like him either. He, on the other hand, seems to treat you with great respect. It's best to keep things on a professional level, since an angry thief is a dangerous enemy.

Marial—The wizardess is a quiet one. She's a bit wide-eyed and gullible, but she seems sharp enough to hold her own against the likes of

Allentar. You just hope she doesn't get herself in trouble.

Imiric—Certainly the gnome is good to have along—he's strong and should hold his own in a fight. Still, you sense hostility and distrust on his part. He may think he's superior to the rest of the group with his titles and all.

Yars—The dwarf is hopelessly barbaric and you're not likely to change that at all. It's best just to leave him alone and point him in the right direction when the battle begins.

Marial **Female Human** **12th-Level Wizard** **Chaotic Good**

Str 7	Int 15
Dex 14	Wis 14
Con 14	Cha 11

THACO: 18
AC: 10
Hit Points: 29

Languages: Common, Suloise, Old Oeridian, Wererat

Spells: 4 1st, 4 2nd, 4 3rd, 4 4th, 4 5th, 1 6th

Magical Items: *Bag of beans, ring of jumping, potion of levitation, oil of acid resistance*

Marial was born in the City of Greyhawk and there she's spent all her life. The redhead has never felt the desire to travel beyond the city walls. There is more than enough adventure in the dark corners of Greyhawk to satisfy her. She has spent many hours among the lowlife and scum of the city—it's exciting and full of danger. What she needs to know of the rest of the world she can learn from books and travelers. While this has given her some peculiar views concerning the rest of the world, few know more about the ins and outs of Greyhawk.

Marial at first seems shy, somewhat introverted, but she secretly loves the fast life of the big city. She understands all the vices, seductions, power ploys, and corruption of Greyhawk, yet she can be naive and gullible concerning the rest of the world. If a situation can be compared to one in Greyhawk, she understands it perfectly. If it is totally new and unique (and many monster encounters are), she is inexperienced and often unsuspecting.

Marial is close friend of Jallarzi, who first came to Marial for advice concerning the darker parts of the city. Since their first meetings, Jallarzi has become fascinated by Marial's paradoxical nature, while Marial eagerly listens to Jallarzi's tales of the greater world.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—The elf-woman is an interesting study. In Greyhawk, you've met many who share her attitude. Most have come to bad ends. It will be interesting to see if she winds up the same way.

Torik—You've never been particularly interested in men before, but Torik is fascinating. He's charming, kind, and so different from the hustlers and rakes of Greyhawk. Maybe it's his country upbringing, but he seems so open and honest. He just might be enough to bring you out of your shell.

Johanna—The priestess is like a lot of the priests you've know in the city—stuffy, rigid, and unyielding. You find her type boring but, fortunately, Johanna's also a sage. That at least gives you something to talk about. Still, there are others in the group you'd rather spend your time with.

Ortux—The paladin is a good man. You know you can trust him, but you can trust all paladins. At first, you were ready to dismiss him as a self-righteous jerk, but



something about the way he looks at Torik has got you wondering. Maybe there's more to the paladin than meets the eye.

Allentar—In a way, the halfling is no stranger to you. More than once, you've seen him in the gloomy dens of Greyhawk. His name has come up from time to time, in relation to some noteworthy theft or disappearance. You'd like to know more about him, but up to now he's always managed to avoid you.

Imiric—The little gnome is always courteous and polite to you, without being condescending. You can't help but like him and it seems he likes you, too.

Yars—You can't help noticing that the dwarf keeps watching you like a curious dog. You don't know what to make of him. You've never met anyone as wild and uncivilized as him.

Ortux the Hand **Male Human** **15th-Level Paladin** **Lawful Good**

Str 15 Int 13
Dex 12 Wis 13
Con 10 Cha 17

THACO: 6
AC: 10 (-2 with magical armor and normal shield)
Hit Points: 70

Bonuses: +6 reaction adjustment
Special Abilities: +2 bonus to all saving throws; detect evil, 60' r.; immune to disease; heal 30 points per day; cure disease 3 times per week; protection from evil, 10' r.; turn undead as a 12th-level priest
Languages: Common, Velondi
Spheres: Combat, Divination, Healing, Protection
Spells (cast at 7th level): 3 1st, 2 2nd, 1 3rd; 1 4th

Magical Items: Morning star +1, heavy lance +1, plate mail of ethe-

realness +4 (13 charges remaining), lyre of building, ring of human influence, elixir of youth

Tall, lean, and wiry, Ortux is not what most people expect of the heroic paladin. He's good-looking, but not stunningly handsome; strong, but not muscular; and, while brave, Ortux is far from foolhardy. Still, he has a magnetic appeal that seems to flow from inside him. He acts and people believe. They know he can be trusted. Ortux finds it impossible to betray the trust of others. He has worked all his life in the cause of justice.

Ortux is careful in his own life, following his own code of puritanical laws. As a Knight of the Hart, he does not drink, eats not to excess, never swears, and avoids all temptations of the flesh. He was not always so careful. To his eternal shame, in his youth he sired a half-elven son. Only the severest of atonements proved him worthy of paladinhood. Since then, he has been aided by his old companion, Bigby, who, for a wizard, is not entirely bad.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—In her, it's easy to see how humans and elves differ. Cymria may mean well, but she is far from understanding the true meaning of good. She is a dangerous influence, best avoided whenever possible.

Torik—Until now, you never believed yourself capable of jealousy or envy. It was quite a surprise to meet Torik, a young man even more likeable than yourself. At first you almost succumbed to envy for his natural grace, but even you find it hard to resist his charm. Worse still, you can't help being reminded of your own sin every time you look at him. You must work to be his friend and hold no hate or jealousy toward him.

Johanna—Even if she is a priestess of Boccob, she is certainly a fine and admirable woman. Indeed, you two have more in common than it would seem. There is even a chance she could learn the true meaning of justice and good from you.

Allentar—The thief is your personal challenge. It's clear he's strayed into the paths of darkness more than once, but he's not completely lost. There is still some glimmer of nobility and goodness to him. If you could bring that out and show him the benefits of his good side, you might be able to save him yet.

Marial—The wizardess seems competent with her spells, but certainly less than worldly. She could easily get herself in trouble, so you'd better keep a watchful eye out for her.

Imiric—The gnome you know can be trusted. He's the type of man (or gnome) who lives by his word and understands the difference between good and evil. He won't flinch from dangerous work either.

Yars—When you look at Yars, he gives you pause—is he what you might have become, a savage killer? The more you're with him, the more you thank the powers above for showing you the true light. You also pray they will give you the strength and means to keep his bloodlust under control.

Torik Red-Axesson of Highfolk **Male Half-Elf** **12th-Level Priest of Ehlonna*** **Neutral Good**

Str 8 Int 9
Dex 10 Wis 12
Con 15 Cha 18

THACO: 16
AC: 10 (5 in hide armor with shield)
Hit Points: 55



Bonuses: +7 reaction adjustment

Special Abilities: 30% resistance to *charm* and *sleep* spells, infravision, secret door detection, track as ranger of equal level, *animal friendship* once a day at maximum effectiveness

Languages: Common, Elven, Vclonli, Halfling, Ancient Baklunish, Druidic

Spheres: Animal, Combat, Creation (minor), Elemental (minor), Healing, Plant, Sun, Weather

Spells: 6 1st, 5 2nd, 5 3rd, 3 4th, 2 5th, 2 6th

Magical Items: *Spear +1*, *Howard's handy haversack*, *rope of entanglement*, *ring of mammal control*

Five foot seven, dressed in green robes and topped with a mop of curly red-blond hair, Torik is as charming and handsome a priest as you're likely to meet. The son of a poor woodcutter and an elven maid, Torik was sent to the temple

school in Highvale, mostly to keep him from the arms of milkmaids. There he took to his education and, while not brilliant, has managed to rise through diligence and luck. In the pulpit, he is a mesmerizing speaker, what with his natural charisma and good looks. Still, he is not the quickest wit in Highvale and he works best from a prepared sermon. He believes in the values set out by Ehlonna—harmony with nature, the cycle of life, mercy, and compassion.

Torik is a companion to the venerable mage Rary. Rary often stops by for news of the Vesve Forest or shares what he knows of events in the Yatil Mountains or Ket. More than once Torik has gone adventuring on some special mission for the old mage.

* More information on Ehlonna can be found in the GREYHAWK® Adventures hardback book.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—Thank heavens you live in Highvale! If all the elves of Celadon are like Cymria, what a grim and cold-blooded lot they must be. You try to be friends with her and it's not as if she doesn't like you, but she just seems so stiff and prideful. If she would just loosen up a little, she could be a much more attractive person, inside and out. Thank goodness Ehlonna has taught you patience.

Johanna—The matriarch reminds you of the old prelate of Highvale. She's just as firm and righteous as he was. You can't help addressing her as you did your old teachers. At least she has the glimmerings of a sense of humor!

Ortux—The paladin is a positive stiff. You can tell he's trying to be nice, but it's clear he doesn't feel comfortable around you. Does he have something against Ehlonna? Or is he just normally that way? Since you must work together, it's



best to overlook his formal tone.

Allentar—Now there's a fine example of a halfling gone bad. From what you understand, the fellow's had a tough life, though. You should be sympathetic and understanding. After all, that would be the way of Ehlonna.

Marial—She is definitely an odd one. How can she know so much about Greyhawk and yet so little about the real world? She intrigues you. In fact, you'd like to get to know her better, and show her what she has missed by staying hidden behind the walls of the city.

Imiric—The gnome seems like a good sport—a little old and tired, maybe. That hasn't slowed him down, though. Imiric never brags—when he tells stories about his adventures, you believe them. All in all, he's good company.

Yars—You've seen a few dwarves like Yars before—wild things of the deep mountains. They can be dangerous enemies, but if you can gain his trust, Yars will stand by you in the hottest fire. That's just the way these wild dwarves are.

Yars Blut-Sigul

Male Dwarf

14th-Level Fighter

Neutral

Str 18/55	Int 13
Dex 12	Wis 10
Con 11	Cha 9

THACO: 7

AC: 10 (1 with magical armor and normal shield)

Hit Points: 70

Bonuses: +3 bonus to damage, +1 bonus to attack rolls vs. orcs, goblins, and hobgoblins, -4 penalty to attack rolls of giant-types, +3 bonus to saving throws vs. wands, rods, staves, spells, and poison

Special Abilities: 2 attacks per round, infravision (60'), detect

grade (82%), detect new construction (82%), detect sliding walls (66%), detect stonework traps (50%), determine depth (50%), 20% chance magical item failure

Languages: Common, Dwarf, Gnome, the Cold Tongue, Orc

Magical Items: *Warhammer +1*, *axe +2*, *arrows +2 (x10)*, *plate mail +1*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *potion of super-heroism*, *potion of speed*

Yars is a burly, thick-necked, and hard-headed dwarf. His red hair and beard form a long, wild mane; combined with his bushy eyebrows and bulging eyes, he looks like nothing so much as a berserk warrior. In this case, it is an accurate judgment. Yars is as close to a wild dwarf as can be found in the city of Greyhawk.

Yars hails from the Rakers, a wild and uncivilized mountain range near the Duchy of Tenh. It was there that he made the acquaintance of Nystul. It was the wizard who brought the savage little warrior back to Greyhawk, perhaps to vex his friends. Whatever the reasons, Yars has found the city to his liking—for now.

Yars is a savage and a brute by civilized standards. He is blunt, aggressive, short-tempered, and direct. For example, he boasts how he got his cloak from a dead elf. He has no patience with subtleties. His own life revolves around a complex web of tribal superstitions and taboos. In battle, he works himself into a bloodlust, fighting on his own with little heed for the actions of others. It is easy to believe him insane at such times: For all this, he is fearless and efficient.

Attitudes Toward Other Henchmen:

Cymria—The elf-woman is a fool for even thinking she can match him in ferocity and skill. Unless it

will mean the failure of the mission, you do not care what happens to her one way or the other.

Torik—The half-elf is too much of a weakling—always talking about his earth goddess. Still, he understand the True Way better than the others. You doubt he has the guts for a real fight.

Johanna—Big words! This one always talks in big words, like these will do anything. She tries to impress everyone, but she doesn't scare you.

Ortux—This big one is a good warrior, but too careful. He always worries about justice. Doesn't he understand that justice belongs to those who win?

Allentar—If this one lived in your tribe, the elders would have cut off his hand and driven him into the wilderness. That is the proper fate for thieves. The others seem to think he is necessary, but if he tries anything, you will treat him as he deserves.

Marial—The human woman is quiet and secretive. You cannot guess what she is thinking. This is not something you like.

Imiric—The gnome has the spirit of the True Way, even if he does not know it. He understands the importance of steel and the forge. He has been hardened in the fire. Perhaps you two can become blood kin.



Jay Tummelson, one of the RPGA™ Network's top-ranked judges, runs a Timemaster tournament at this year's GEN CON® Game Fair.

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GREYHAWK® ADVENTURES

Official Game Adventure

Vecna Lives!

by David "Zeb" Cook

"...and so, after the Rain of Colorless Fire, the One-Named-In-Whispers ascended to the Spidered Throne. In the third year of his ascendancy, Burgred, King of the Mara, refused the tribute of heads the Whispered One demanded. The One-Named-In-Whispers took only himself and Kas, his evil counselor, and devastated the land of the Mara with his magic. Burgred paid with his own head.

"Upon their return, Kas struck against his master, so that he might become the master of the Spidered Throne. In the end, both were slain and good people rejoiced.

"It is said that not all of the evil lich was destroyed. So great was his power that his Hand and Eye have lived on, working evil over the centuries...."

For centuries, Vecna—archmage, despotic tyrant, the most fearsome of all liches—has been nothing but a fearful legend to the honest folk of Greyhawk. Once the supreme master of all undead sorcerers, even today his Hand and Eye are objects of immense power.

Now something evil is stirring in the lands around Greyhawk. The Hand and Eye of Vecna have been found—and Vecna wants them back.



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