

# Assault on Castle Greyfist

## A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Verbobonc Regional Interactive Adventure

Version 1.0

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**Triad Reviewers:** Ron Lundeen and Vernon Vincent

Secrets are revealed, and the battle lines are drawn. The time has come to force the villain's hand. As the sun sets on the Viscounty, Verbobonc City is engulfed in the flames of war, pitting brother against brother in a desperate battle of epic proportions. The Prophecy shall be fulfilled... A one-round Verbobonc battle interactive for characters level 4-15 (APL 6-14), and of special interest to characters closely tied to the Verbobonc regional campaign.

**Metaorganizational Focus:** Battirovka Family, Black Rose Company, Bondsmen of Estival, Clan Rockhall, Clan Tuvar, Council of Abbots (Ehlonna, Fharlanghn, Heironeous, Old Faith, Pelor, Pholtus, Rao, St. Cuthbert, and Zilchus), Dwarven Pantheon, Elven Clans, Elven Enclave, Elven Pantheon, Gnarley Druids, Gnarley Rangers, Hardiggan League, House Avgustin, House Langmuir, House Vassal (Jimm, Milinous, Vaswell, and Velysin), Itinerant Evangelist, Riverwalk Society, Verbobonc Town Project (Cienega Valley, Humming's End, Irondelve, Ketter's Hearth, Swan, Twilight Falls, and Validia) and the Wanderers of Coldeven.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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## RPGA® SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D® campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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### Players Read No Farther

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

### Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in

Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

## LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

	Mundane Animals Effect on APL	# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
6	6	8	9	10	
7	7	9	10	11	

3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.

4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Verbobonc regional interactive adventure. All characters native to Verbobonc pay 2 Time Units per round; all others pay 4 Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

Before the Interactive truly begins, identify members of the following organizations, as they receive special instructions as noted in the adventure text:

- **Bondsmen of Estival**
- **Company of the Black Rose, Battirovka Family, and Wanderers of Coldeven**

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over the last three years, a sinister worshipper of Vecna by the name of Halmadar has been manipulating nearly every major event in the Viscounty in a twisted scheme to take revenge on the descendants of Kas the Betrayer and to become an avatar of his god.

As if that weren't bad enough, the newly appointed Viscount, Lord Wellborn Estival, a charming and generous patron of adventurers, has revealed himself to be nothing short of a tyrant now that he has the throne.

It has only recently come to light that Halmadar and Lord Wellborn Estival, newly appointed to the highest office of the land, Viscount of Verbobonc, are actually one and the same man.

Behind the scenes, the Battirovka Family, the Company of the Black Rose, and the Wanderers of Coldeven have been active for the past few months and now make common cause under the banner of the Resistance. Since the shocking revelation of the extent of Halmadar's power, the Resistance has scrambled to prepare a response.

With the reemergence of the former Viscount, Langard, the Resistance has a man around whom they can rally to the cause. Langard has summoned the brave adventurers who have uncovered Halmadar's secrets to Black Rose Manor. There, the heroes of Verbobonc assemble to launch an assault on Castle Greyfist, the fortress at the center of Verbobonc City.

But the dark forces at Halmadar's command are not waiting idly. Simultaneously, they mobilize to crush the valiant rebels who hope to restore freedom to the Viscounty...

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

### **Introduction: Briefing the Resistance**

The characters gather in Black Rose Manor, where a leader of the Resistance provides an overview of the challenges ahead. Players break off into tables without regard to APL to complete mini-missions in Verbobonc City; these missions focus on gathering resources and allies.

### **Phase I: Out in the Streets**

The various groups of adventurers are sent out into Verbobonc City to gather the resources needed for the assault. They must all meet back at the rendezvous point.

### **Intercalary: Scythe and Sheaf**

At the rendezvous point, the basement of the Scythe and Sheaf, the highest ranking Family member summarizes victories, and losses. The Assault plan is briefly outlined before the heroes of the Resistance are split into attack groups based on their abilities.

### **Phase II: The Assault Begins**

Each tactical team undertakes its chosen mission in an effort to breach the outer defenses of the castle.

### **Interlude: The Villain Appears**

Halmadar the Cruel appears on a balcony of the inner bailey of Castle Greyfist. He swears that the heroes shall fall. Dark energies erupt from the castle, and the minions of Halmadar join the battle against the heroes. As the resistance regroups, adventurers are re-mustered into APL appropriate tables.

### **Phase III: Hell Unleashed**

The heroes fight to hold their ground and capture Castle Greyfist once and for all.

### **Conclusion**

Whether the assault succeeds or fails there is only one thing left to do – breach the inner keep and defeat Halmadar the Cruel himself. This will be dealt with in VER8-06: *Noble Ambitions*.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

This Battle Interactive adventure is the penultimate adventure in the Living Greyhawk Verbobonc region. There are many powers at work, and great evil is everywhere in Verbobonc City. This has a number of

effects both in the rules of the game and in the execution of those rules.

### AR ENTRIES

There are a few AR entries that are either relevant to the adventure, or are referenced. Please review the Verbobonc regional adventure records of your players for the following entries.

#### **Secrets**

In each Year 8 Verbobonc adventure, characters had the opportunity to discover a **Secret** about Halmadar's designs. These Secrets come into play during this battle.

Examine each characters ARs. For every Secret that they have earned in a Year 8 Verbobonc adventure, the player should be given a gold token. These tokens may be spent at any time during the Assault on Castle Greyfist Interactive to gain a reroll on any die.

Even if it is worse than the first, the results of the second roll must be used.

#### **Estival's Favor**

Any characters who have used Estival's Favor from VER6-02 Discontent of Our Winter have unknowingly tainted their fate.

For every one of the five possible uses of his favor, a player gets a black token. If a Judge sees fit, he can call in one of these black tokens and force a player to reroll any die roll during the battle interactive.

Unlike with the Secret favor above, with **Estival's Favor**, the **worse** of the two rolls is used.

### SPELLCASTING

A number of spellcasting effects are altered or reduced during this event.

#### **Divinations**

As the god of secrets and lies, Vecna has taken great measures to hobble those who would oppose him. Any divination spell directly involving the caster's deity (*augury, commune, divination, etc*) is secretly answered not by the caster's god, but by Vecna. He answers any and all of these spells in the manner which serves his cause the best.

Since Vecna is the god of deception, there is absolutely no game mechanic to discover this subterfuge. If a player is suspicious of the answers (if, for example, the answers do not seem like the answers that their god would provide) then their character may be suspicious, as well. But there is no way to confirm or deny these suspicions.

### Summon Planar Ally and Gate

Sensing the coming conflict, Vecna has gathered damning facts about the other gods of Oerth and used them to blackmail and intimidate the Powers That Be into a stance of non-interference in the coming battle for Verbobonc. Furthermore, he has both forced and tricked the other gods into agreements whereby any extra-planar allies or angels gated into Verbobonc will not serve those heroes who have summoned them, but instead will turn on those who seek their aid.

In game, any outsiders brought in to aid in the battle will remorsefully apologize for what they must do. "I am sorry for this, but my lord has bound me to abide by his arrangements." The outsider then attacks, fighting to the best of its ability.

This has no effect on the various *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* spells, only spells that bring outsiders by way of arrangements and deals.

### Har's Impervious Impediment

At the outset of Phase Two, a command team of the Verbobonc Resistance sets out to bring down the *forbiddance* spell which protects Castle Greyfist. Furthermore, they have been provided with an epic-level spell of Magister Obble Har's creation called *Har's impervious impediment*.

During the briefing for Phase Two, the command team's plan is described to the adventurers. They are told that once the *forbiddance* is brought down, that the Resistance will have six seconds before the *impervious impediment* is brought up. It will act in many ways like a new *forbiddance* spell, encompassing Castle Greyfist and a portion of the city approximately 100 feet around it.

Unfortunately, this does not happen as expected.

Due to unexpected events during the command team's mission, they were unable to raise the *impervious impediment* until **eight rounds** after the *forbiddance* was dispelled. This should prove to be a source of suspense for the players participating in Phase Two of the Interactive.

Once *Har's impervious impediment* does become active, though, it should be noted that it completely negates all extra-planar travel within the area of Castle Greyfist. This includes, but is not limited to: *blink*, *dimension door*, *gate*, *teleport*, *summon monster*, *summon nature's ally*, *summon planar ally*. Magic items that emulate these effects (*anklet of translocation*, *cape of the mountebank*, etc.) are similarly neutralized.

It does not dismiss outsiders who have already been called, but all further attempts to travel between planes automatically fail.

The *impediment* also prevents anyone from entering the barrier without first speaking the password keyed to the spell (as *forbiddance*). The password is "Die, Vecna! Die!" though the characters have virtually no way of finding this out during the course of the adventure.

Passage out of the barrier by normal means is unimpeded.

## OTHER CONDITIONS

### Weather Conditions and Moon Phases

The skies are overcast and a gusty wind blows into Verbobonc City from the north. The cloud cover casts the entire city in the dark of twilight, even at the height of the day.

The battle takes place on the 4th of Richfest, the Greyhawk Summer Solstice and the longest day of the year. Both moons, Luna and Celene are full, though the overcast skies will hide their light from the battlefield.

### Four and Twenty Blackbirds

Halmadar has secretly spread his spies throughout Verbobonc City. Chief among these are the vitreous drinkers, hideous undead who have the power to see through their victims eyes and who command up to two dozen spectral crows as incorporeal scouts.

With the revelations of VER8-05 *Quisling*, Halmadar knows that the heroes of Verbobonc will likely attempt a strike against him. As a follower of Vecna, Halmadar also knows that knowledge is power, and has ordered his vitreous drinkers to send their crows throughout the city to hunt down and locate the Resistance.

The spectral crows appear throughout this scenario, primarily in Phases One and Two, and most notably at the end of the introduction. See any vitreous drinker statistics block in **Appendix One** for more details on the spectral crows.

### Insider Knowledge

Some characters have an advantage of knowing certain facts, due to the contacts and experiences that they have. These facts are listed in **Appendix 5: Insider Knowledge**.

At the beginning of this adventure, the heroes of Verbobonc already have some scraps of information that may prove useful in the coming attack. These pieces of information, and who should receive them, are listed in **Appendix 5** under the heading **Introduction**. These pieces of information should be

handed out to characters prior to the adventure's Introduction.

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: CHARACTER DEATHS

Battle interactives are special events which allow regions to offer styles of play and cooperative play that are not usually available in regular play. This Interactive is specifically designed to kill as many characters as possible, and for good reason, which we will get to in a moment.

But first - we want you to think about what a character death means to the player. Usually it means that the character loses a level, and almost certainly loses money in paying for the reincarnate or raise dead to be cast on him or her. But that's about it. In this Interactive we provide for the character to receive a true resurrection, at half price, at which point the cost of it may be made lower based upon how many favors that character has in the region.

Do **NOT** however tell your players that we are offering this until you hand out the AR's and explain the mechanics. It is better if they think they are dead, unrecoverable, and have lost their character.

These mechanics virtually eliminate the negative impact of a character's death, in game terms.

But this interactive isn't about game terms - it's about the story. And the story of the characters dying, and being brought back to finish the region's story in VER8-06: *Noble Ambitions* is more dramatic than if the characters succeeded in destroying the opposing forces.

Think of the small band of Rebel fighters flying in to stop the Death Star from destroying their base. The single ship *Serenity* fleeing the reavers and dashing through the lines of the Alliance in order to complete their mission. These stories are memorable because a few people faced incredible odds, faced certain defeat and yet were able, despite losses, to win the day.

This is why we want you to kill every character at your table. Because it makes the story better.

Do not have mercy on them. Do not allow them to flee. Be as mean and as cruel as a person named "Halmadar the Cruel" warrants. In the end the characters will appreciate your dedication to presenting a story they will remember.

### Avoiding Death

Note that characters who might otherwise die on the field of battle are free to call on the **Aid of Iuz**, staving off death. If they choose to do this, they can fight on, but the deal has a price. See **Phase I: Encounter 5 The Enemy of My Enemy** and **Aid of The Old One** in **Appendix 4** for more information on this.

## INTRODUCTION: BRIEFING THE RESISTANCE

*This Part should take about 10 minutes.*

**NOTE:** Before the Interactive begins, all Bondsmen of Estival are gathered by an Interactive Coordinator and taken aside for the Alternate Bondsman Introduction. Like all Bondsmen missions in this interactive, this is contained in the separate **Bondsmen Interactive** document.

Prior to the Interactive, all players should receive **Player Handout 1: A Call to Arms**. This handout explains the circumstances that bring the players together for the adventure.

Also, any players who identify themselves as active members of the Battirovka Family, Company of the Black Rose, and Wanderers of Coldeven should be invited to stand at the front, facing the assembly.

An Interactive Judge should read or paraphrase the following.

*You have all arrived in Verbobonc City, and by following the whispered hints of several covert contacts, you have come to Black Rose Manor near the southern city wall.*

*Other adventurers have also gathered here, all having come to the same grim conclusion. A man calls for quiet and addresses the assembled heroes.*

Another Interactive Judge, in the role of Llertos, Commander of the Black Rose Adventuring Company, steps forward. "Llertos" should motion for silence and attention before reading or paraphrasing the following.

*"Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Black Rose Manor. I apologize for the cramped quarters and the shortage of chairs, but I think you would all agree that, considering the circumstances, a lack of seating is the least of our concerns, and I would rather see the Manor teeming with heroes tonight rather than empty for lack of bravery.*

*For those who do not know me, I am Kvelduf Llertos, Commander of the Black Rose Company. I know that*

many of you are probably wondering where our mutual half-elven friend is. Langard is safe, and he sends his regrets that he could not join us here.

I think we all know why we have assembled: Something must be done about the insidious evil that has festered here in the Viscounty for far too long. Halmadar is close to completing his quest for revenge on the House of Kas, whereby we believe he shall become a proxy of the Whispered One here on Oerth.

If we hope to stop him, we can delay no longer. We must move in on Castle Greyfist and confront this deceiver with sword and spell.

Word has been sent to Lord Milinous, Lord Langmuir, House Augustin, Prince Jimm, and Shannus of the Iron Wood, but it is unlikely that their forces will arrive in time to help us. We're on our own, adventurers.

To discuss the defenses of Castle Greyfist, I'm going to cede the floor to Brooknir Battirovka, Bear of the Family, one of the architects of our attack plan."

"Llertos" steps aside and an Interactive Coordinator playing the part of Brooknir Battirovka steps forward. This speech should have a no-nonsense clip to it, and a grim tone.

"An assault on Castle Greyfist is not a task to be undertaken lightly.

The sheer walls of the fortress stand a full fifty feet high. They are almost thirty feet thick at the base and are warded against spells like soften earth and stone and disintegrate. The Viscount's casters come out at regular intervals and cast spike stones on the exterior walls, and exploding spikes have been planted at random intervals, making a climb up them virtual suicide.

The four towers of Castle Greyfist rise above the walls by another ten feet – that's sixty feet total for you Barbarians here. The northwest and southeast towers are both topped by an arcane ballista that fires lightning, likely modified for extended range and increased damage. These artillery pieces have a full 270-degree vertical arc of firing, and their crews are always on alert for aerial threats.

The other two towers, the northeast and the southwest, fly magical banners bearing the crest of House Estival. Our spies haven't been able to get close enough to determine what effect they bestow on the Viscount's troops, but you can bet that it isn't going to be good for us.

Battlements circle the entire castle wall, and at any time there are between twenty and forty archers patrolling it.

Estival has recently supplemented these defenders with evoker mages.

The castle's main gate is sealed by two portcullises. The outer one is two feet thick and made of solid darkwood. The inner is cold iron, gilded in adamantine. The controls for each of these gates are housed entirely within the gatehouse above, which is divided in half, meaning you'd have to break into both the east and west sides to open the gate below.

Once inside, it's a hundred yard dash across an open courtyard and past the Viscount's new topiary garden to the inner bailey.

When the castle is under attack, contingency spells take effect protecting this inner keep with guards and wards that take hours to dispel. At that point, you're essentially forced to capture the entire castle and then tackle the bailey as an entirely separate endeavor.

In short: you'd have to be crazy to attack this place... [add a wry smile and pause for effect] So here's how we're going to do it... Llertos?"

"Brooknir" steps aside to allow "Llertos" to again address the assembly.

"Our attack will have four strike teams, each simultaneously breaching the castle's defenses by different means: flying over, digging under, sneaking around, and punching through. You'll be briefed on the details of the assault later, but before we can enact any of those plans, we have to consolidate all of our resources from across the city.

Many of you know of provisions, supplies, or even sympathetic contacts who may be able to lend their aid. We must turn to one another in these desperate times and work together to investigate every lead that we can. The most unassuming object might prove to be the key to our victory.

"Llertos" has just referred to the Inside Knowledge handouts that players should have already been given.

But time is running out. You'll have to act fast to gather supplies, aid, and information and then rendezvous at our forward staging base in the cellar of the Scythe and Sheaf Inn, which is already being prepped.

As you prepare for battle, remember this: We must exercise control tonight. We cannot be butchers. Every drop of blood we shed in this endeavor, even in response to this ruthless tyrant's forces, undermines our victory with the people.

Not every Bondsman of Estival is an agent of Halmadar. Many are simply lawful men, who have been drawn into

*his web of lies... not unlike many of you were with his magnanimous ways when he first came to our lands.*

***We must uphold both good and justice. Do not kill the Bondsmen of Estival unless you have proof that they serve Vecna or you have no other recourse. If our mercy fails us, we have already lost.***

“Llertos” should take a moment to let that statement sink in, and then continue with a hopeful tone.

***Bear no illusions. The task before us is all but impossible. We will not all live to see the dawn. Some of us will fall. But every one of us who rises up against this evil shall gain immortality one who stood their ground, who did not yield, but fought to the last breath of their being for the survival of the lands that we call home.***

***But time is short, and I have kept y—***“

At this point another Judge in the role of a Resistance lieutenant should point to the back of the room, interrupting Llertos.

“Lieutenant 1”: ***“Sir! A spectral raven!”***

An Interactive Judge should describe how a ghostly raven has flown in through a wall. It circles the room and then flies out through another wall in the direction of Castle Greyfist.

“Brooknir”: ***“We’re compromised! Brothers, get to safety!”***

“Llertos”: ***“There’s no time to form proper squads. Everyone split up and gather what resources and information that you can, and then get to the rendezvous at the Scythe and Sheaf!”***

One table of volunteers will be needed to cover the other characters’ escape from Black Rose Manor. The Judge who will run this table should call out for volunteers:

“Lieutenant”: ***“We need six volunteers to act as the rear guard to cover our escape! Volunteers! Gather over here!”***

This Judge should take the first six players who come to him, regardless of character level or role. There is no time to properly organize a balanced team.

These volunteers will immediately jump into **Introduction: Encounter 1: The Rear Guard.**

The Interactive Judges should divide the player pool randomly at this point. Having the players ‘count off by the number of tables is a good way to handle this.

Once the players have been assigned to their tables, all other Table Judges are encouraged to create urgent chaos as players settle in to play. They may call out orders and panicked statements. They should have fun with it.

Some examples of panicked dialogue are provided: “You! Come with me!”; “Don’t worry about your buddy, you’ll see him at the rendezvous!”; “Go! Go! Go!”; “The Bondsmen are coming! Get out of here!; We’re doomed!”; “Hurry up, dwarf, or we’ll leave you behind!”

Once tables are sat, they should proceed immediately to **Phase I: Out in the Streets.**

Introduction: Encounter One: The Rear Guard

The six volunteers taken from the player pool should calculate their Average Party Level. Note that this party could be made up of a large range of character levels and/or a narrow range of character abilities. In the chaos of fleeing from Black Rose Manor, there was no time to build a properly balanced party.

The Judge running this encounter should have a map of Black Rose Manor laid out. The players have full reign over the building and may cast buffing spells and position themselves wherever they like.

***The other adventurers flee the building, but you valiantly have chosen to remain to cover their escape. You would guess that you have a minute, perhaps less before Halmadar sends his killers to cut down the Resistance.***

***One of your fellow adventurers pauses before he leaves. “Hold them off for as long as you can, then get to the rendezvous at the Scythe and Sheaf, if you can.” He pauses a moment and adds, “Your sacrifice will not be forgotten.” He then joins the fleeing rebels.***

Make sure that players have placed their miniatures on the map. Then continue.

If anyone is keeping watch on the streets, they may see the arrival of the Khaasta barbarians before they break in to the Manor.

Halmadar’s raiders prefer the direct route. Vecnan Wizards cast *dimension door* to deposit the Khaasta barbarians half a block from the manor house. The barbarians approach swiftly, throw torches on the east and west wings of the manor catching it on fire, and then break through the front door.

### **APL 6 (EL 7)**

**Halmadar Raiders (2):** Male Khaasta Barbarian 2; 77 hp each; see Appendix 1.



## APL 8 (EL 9)

**Halmadar Raiders (4):** Male Khaasta Barbarian 2; 77 hp each; see Appendix 1.

## APL 10 (EL 11)

**Halmadar Brutes (3):** Male Khaasta Barbarian 2/Fighter2/Exotic Weapon Master 1; 122 hp; see Appendix 1.

## APL 12 (EL 13)

**Halmadar Brutes (3):** Male Khaasta Barbarian 2/Fighter2/Exotic Weapon Master 1; 122 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Advanced Vitreous Drinker:** hp 117, see Appendix 1.

## APL 14 (EL 15)

**Halmadar Brutes (5):** Male Khaasta Barbarian 2/Fighter2/Exotic Weapon Master1; 122 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Advanced Vitreous Drinkers (2):** hp 117, see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The barbarians rage and attack. If there are Vitreous Drinkers present, they enter melee and lead with their quickened vampiric touch, followed by a regular vampiric touch. In subsequent rounds, they lash with their tongues and drink eyes. If one cannot position for melee, then it uses its *wand of scorching ray*.

As the battle proceeds, the manor quickly becomes engulfed in flames. It is unlikely that the party can both stave off the raiders and fight the fire. Note that it is not important how fast the manor burns down, nor is it excessively important to track environmental effects. This is primarily a story device, but play the threat as real.

**Development:** If the adventurers are slain here, then the raiders take their bodies back to Castle Greyfist. Halmadar's casters attempt to *speak with dead* to find out the Resistance's plan. The bodies are then deposited in the dungeons of Castle Greyfist, where Operation: Shadow Walk may find them. Their gear is held by the soldiers guarding the dungeons. See **Phase II: Operation Shadow Walk** for more details.

If the party successfully foils Halmadar's attack, then they should proceed with haste (and due stealth) to the rendezvous in the cellar of the Scythe and Sheaf. But before they get there, they are accosted by a mysterious stranger. Proceed to **Phase I: Encounter 5: The Enemy of My Enemy**.

# PHASE I: OUT IN THE STREETS

*This Part should take no more than 40 minutes.*

This Phase emphasizes fast-paced, cinematic adventure and uncertainty in Verbobonc City. Judges are responsible for keeping the pace urgent, and the tone of the town as one on the precipice of chaos.

Each character should have been mustered into a random table at the end of the Introduction. Character class and level do not matter. A 6<sup>th</sup> level character could be part of the same table as a 13<sup>th</sup> level character. In fleeing Black Rose Manor, there is no time to properly form into balanced strike teams.

The table's APL should be calculated as usual, with the exception that there is no limit to the range of the characters' levels.

The players must now decide where to go in the city to gather resources for the Resistance. But because the assault must proceed, each team only has enough time to investigate one lead. Depending on the players' choice, the Judge will run one of the first four encounters ("Black Rose Scavenger Hunt", "Elven Enclave Errand", "Black Sheep in the Family", or "The Best Miners in Gnomeburg"). If the characters choose to ignore the rumors and Insider Knowledge that they have been given and wish to search elsewhere, then they run into Halmadar's spies. Choose any APL-appropriate encounter from Phase I and spring it on them as an ambush. Other sources of help, however, are either not sympathetic to the cause or have already given as much assistance to the Resistance as they can.

Proceed with the mission that the party decides on, below.

## ENCOUNTER 1: BLACK ROSE SCAVENGER HUNT

Characters undertaking this mission must travel to a Black Rose storehouse. There, they must collect all of the stockpiled provisions that they can and get them to the rendezvous point at the Scythe and Sheaf Inn. Unfortunately, the Viscount's agents have already discovered the storehouse of weapons and supplies, and the characters on this mission are walking into a trap.

*The streets of Verbobonc seem charged with anticipation and dread. The wind blows hard from the north, and dark clouds hang low, threatening a storm.*

Determine how the characters are moving across Verbobonc City. Since they are traversing the streets of an essentially hostile city, pay special attention to how the party is moving, including marching order, mode of travel (flying/mounted/hiding), and visible weapons. How conspicuous do the characters appear to casual observers or to law enforcement?

Once this is determined, continue. If the party is being stealthy, describe a close scrape with Bondsmen of Estival on patrol. If they are flying, describe a flash of lightning that strikes close by. If they are simply openly walking through the streets, describe how some citizens eye them warily or suspiciously. Ask for Spot checks. Regardless of the outcomes, have the highest Spot check reveal one citizen who rushes away in the opposite direction.

Choose a location from one of the following: Oxric's Drye Goodes, the Tavern of the Two-Foot Traveler, Old Dieg Manor (abandoned for these last nine years), or the Gentle Mirror clothing shop. The warehouse that the party is looking for is just behind that building. When the party arrives, read the following.

***The warehouse doesn't look like anything special, just one more building in the city, but the scrap of parchment says this is the place. A faint light streams out into the evening from behind shuttered windows.***

Have the players make Spot checks:

DC 15: There is someone hiding in a pile of refuse near the mouth of the alley next to the warehouse.

DC 20: A cloaked figure in a doorway across the street is not fumbling with his key – he is watching you.

DC 22: On the roof of an adjacent building is a sniper hiding in the shadows between two eaves.

DC 24: There are actually two snipers hiding between those eaves on the adjacent building.

DC 35: Blood is dripping from the neck of one of the snipers on the adjacent roof. He looks dead.

***At the mouth of the alley, a figure rises slowly from the pile of refuse there. Shaggy brows and a scraggly beard frame keen eyes that glint with suspicion from the shadows. The low growl of the voice is more animal than man. "Maybe you'd best be movin' along... 'less'n ye've got bid'ness wit' someone?"***

This esteemed personage is Senior Armed Drifter "Shivs" MacKenzie, a trusted gnome hobo scout and lookout who has been posted at the supply cache by the Company of the Black Rose.

Unfortunately, Shivs is also a gnome who can be bought, and he has sold the Black Rose out to the allies of Halmadar. Shivs knows that the adventurers are allied with the Black Rose's cause, but he is waiting for them to make the first move.

Once the party members admit to being on a mission for the Resistance, Shivs immediately warms to them.

***"Well, heh! Why di'n' ye say so gov'na?" The gnome waves an all-clear sign to an archer on the roof above you. "Name's Shivs. Shivs Mackenzie, Senior Armed Drifter an' esteemed personage. Come along, then. There ain't much time." The gnome takes a gulp from a small keg under his arm and glances both ways before opening a concealed door to the warehouse halfway down the alley. He motions for you to go inside.***

This friendliness is an act. If any party members ask for a Sense Motive check, they must beat Shivs' Bluff check (+8 modifier). If they do, they realize that the gnome is being excessively friendly for some reason.

Ask for Spot and Listen checks as the party moves into the alley. The following information may be caught:

- Spot DC 16: The cloaked figure in the doorway across the street is beginning to move toward the alley.
- Spot DC 18: Shivs' eyes dart upward, to the opposite roof for an instant.
- Spot DC 20: On the roof of an adjacent building is a sniper hiding in the shadows between two eaves.
- Spot DC 22: There are actually two snipers hiding together between those eaves on the adjacent building.
- Spot DC 28: This result reveals the location of any other hiding archers (the number of them depends upon the APL, see below).
- Spot DC 33: Blood is dripping from the neck of one of the snipers on the adjacent roof. He is most certainly dead.
- Listen DC 30: You hear the soft creak of a bow being pulled.
- Listen DC 50: You hear the sound of a single drop of liquid. It sounds like... blood.

If anyone in the party who made one of these checks declares the intent to ready for combat (drawing a weapon, casting a spell, attacking Shivs, etc), then they may act in the surprise round. Otherwise, when half of the party is through the door, Shivs slams it shut and initiates combat. Roll for initiative.

## **APL 6 (EL 5)**

**Shivs MacKenzie:** male gnome Monk 5/Drunken Master 2; 52 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Gnarley Forest Anarchists (2):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 1; 37 hp each; see Appendix 1.

## **APL 8 (EL 8)**

**Shivs MacKenzie:** male gnome Monk 5/Drunken Master 2; 52 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Gnarley Forest Anarchists (2):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 2/Ranger 1; 56 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of Vecna:** male human Cleric 5; 42 hp; see Appendix 1.

## **APL 10 (EL 10)**

**Shivs MacKenzie:** male gnome Monk 5/Drunken Master 2; 52 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Gnarley Forest Anarchists (2):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 2/Ranger 1; 56 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of Vecna:** male human Cleric 7; 46 hp; see Appendix 1.

## **APL 12 (EL 11)**

**Shivs MacKenzie:** male gnome Monk 5/Drunken Master 2; 52 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Gnarley Forest Anarchists (2):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 2/Ranger 1; 56 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of Vecna:** male human Cleric 9; 65 hp; see Appendix 1.

## **APL 14 (EL 13)**

**Shivs MacKenzie:** male gnome Monk 5/Drunken Master 2; 52 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Gnarley Forest Anarchists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 4/Ranger 3; 103 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Clerics of Vecna (2):** male human Cleric 9; 65 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** Shivs took a move action to Drink Like a Demon just before opening the concealed door. He chose to increase his Strength by 2 points. At APL 4 and APL 6, he runs off as soon as he slams the door. At higher APLs, he attempts to use his Stunning Fist feat in order to give the archers a better chance at taking out easier targets.

The cleric pursues similar tactics, opening with *hold person* or (at higher APLs) *unholy blight*. If the fight goes poorly, the cleric(s) will move away from the mouth of the alley and call for the City Guard.

The archers remain on the roofs and use Rapid Shot to rain arrows down on the party. If strong melee characters begin to close with them, they attempt to flee.

**Treasure:** The Black Rose stockpiles are still in the warehouse. But the party must search for the proper crates. If Shivs has been taken prisoner, he will gladly assist the party, telling them that he had been forced into setting up the trap.

Without Shiv's help, the party must make Search checks. There are eight parcels of equipment hidden in the warehouse. Each one requires a DC 25 Search check. With each success, roll 1d8 to randomly determine which parcel is found. If the die indicates a parcel that has already been found, roll again. Only one parcel may be found by a character each round.

Taking 20 will not be possible, since the noise of the battle has alerted the Bondsmen of Estival and they will arrive in less than two minutes.

Using *detect magic* to locate the prized magic items will not work, since the boxes the Black Rose Company uses are lined with lead.

1. Two tanglefoot bags, four vials of holy water, one magical standard bearing the symbol of the Black Rose Company.
2. Four vials of *adamansheen*, one *wand of cure moderate wounds* (8 charges), three vials of holy water, one strange box.
3. Two vials of *silversheen*, one *wand of magic missile* (CL 5, 8 charges), two *oils of blessed weapon*, one strange box, one *scroll of planar ally*.
4. Four vials of holy water, two vials of *adamansheen*, one magical banner bearing the symbol of either the Black Rose Company or the Battirovka Merchant Family (50% chance for either).
5. Two *potions of lesser restoration*, two *scrolls of freedom of movement*, one disguise kit, three tabards of House Estival.
6. One *scroll of sculpt sound*, two vials of *adamansheen*, one *scroll of stone to flesh*, one magical standard bearing the crest of the Battirovka Merchant Family.
7. One *scroll of raise dead*, four flasks of alchemist's fire, three vials of unholy water, one strange box.

8. One scroll of greater restoration, one potion of fly, three antitoxins.

**The strange boxes:** The strange boxes that may be found here are gnomish tumbleprank boxes. Gnomish characters automatically know what they are. Other characters may make a DC 15 Knowledge (local [any]) check (or another appropriate skill check at the DM's discretion, eg. Profession (jester)) to know the following information.

A **gnomish tumbleprank box** is a toy often used in practical jokes. The box appears to be a normal case, about the size of a cigar box. But a secret timer can be set on the box and released with a catch. When the timer runs out, the box springs open and tips over, causing its contents to tumble out.

As the characters should expect, the City Guard is on the way. The party has 1d6+5 rounds to search the warehouse. At that point, another group of Bondsmen arrives. For this second wave (if necessary), use the enemies from **Encounter 3: Black Sheep in the Family**, below. (Note that the enemies in Encounter 3 are not Evil.) Fleeing from this second group is easily accomplished, since they do not give chase, instead seeing to their fallen brethren.

**Victory Conditions:** All equipment that is found on this mission and successfully brought to the rendezvous point becomes usable by the Resistance as they see fit. Successes at different tables are cumulative.

Note that there are many items in this stockpile that could be useful in Phase Two. But the most important items are the magical standards (of which at least two are needed for Operation Shadow Walk and Operation Storm Tower to be fully successful) and the adamansheen (which is needed for the dire badgers in Operation Earthen Grasp).

Any of this equipment that is not used by the end of this adventure cannot be kept.

**Development:** Before the party makes it to the Scythe and Sheaf, they will encounter a shadowy stranger who offers to make a deal with them. Proceed to **Encounter 5: The Enemy of My Enemy**.

## **ENCOUNTER 2: ELVEN ENCLAVE ERRAND**

Characters undertaking this mission travel to the Elven Enclave in Verbobonc City. There, they must talk to an elf named Killian-Rhaine, who may be

supportive of the rebels' cause. Unfortunately, on the way to the sylvan community, the party encounters an angry mob and (at higher APLs) a Vecnan agent who has spurred them into action.

***In the chaotic departure from Black Rose Manor, you catch only a few scraps of information to guide you in your task: Go to the Elven Enclave and ask for Killian-Rhaine. He and his family are potential allies and may have supplies to help us. Convince them to do so, and once you have, go to the rendezvous at the Scythe and Sheaf Inn with whatever they have given you as fast as possible.***

Make certain that the players are clear about their mission, but do not elaborate on their instructions. The flight from Black Rose Manor did not allow time for questions and answers. Once you are sure that the players know what they need to do, continue.

***The streets of Verbobonc seem charged with anticipation and dread. The wind blows hard from the north, and dark clouds hang low, threatening a storm.***

Determine how the characters are moving across Verbobonc City. Since they are traversing the streets of an essentially hostile city, pay special attention to how the party is moving, including marching order, mode of travel (flying/mounted/hiding), and visible weapons. How conspicuous do the characters appear to casual observers or to law enforcement?

Once this is determined, continue. If the party is being stealthy, describe a close scrape with Bondsmen of Estival on patrol. If they are flying, describe a flash of lightning that strikes close by. If they are simply openly walking through the streets, describe how some citizens eye them warily or suspiciously. Ask for Spot checks. Regardless of the outcomes, have the highest Spot check reveal one citizen who rushes away in the opposite direction.

### **Civil Unrest**

If the characters are moving across the city in the air, alter the description below to fit the party's view of the mob's approach to the Enclave. Otherwise, when the party is almost to the elven community, read or paraphrase the following.

***Not far from the Elven Enclave, the glimmering light of torches, the shaking of pitchforks, and the din of angry voices mark the approach of a mob of incensed Verbobonc citizens. They are clamoring up the street in the direction of the Elven Enclave, and you are standing directly in their path.***

**Creatures:** Verbobonc citizens have been spurred by fear to protect their Viscount from the chaotic

elements of the city. Elves, being a stereotypically freedom-loving (read: chaotic) race, have become the target of some misguided artisans, commoners, and various otherwise-innocent cityfolk.

At higher APLs, the mobs have formed a full-force riot, and the gifted orator who prodded them to action is still with them, a Vecnan cultist who happens to be a bard by profession.

### **APL 6 (EL 5)**

**Throng of Gnomes:** hp 70; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 7)**

**Throng of Gnomes (2):** hp 70 each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 9)**

**Mob of Humans:** hp 135; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Bard:** male human Bard 7; hp 37; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 11)**

**Mobs of Humans (2):** hp 135 each; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Bard:** male human Bard 9; hp 47; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 13)**

**Mobs of Humans (4):** hp 135 each; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Bard:** male human Bard 9; hp 47; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The incensed citizens are outraged at the lack of respect that their beloved Viscount Estival has been getting from some people lately. They're going to teach those chaotic elves and self-righteous adventurers a lesson!

The Vecnan bard uses his abilities to inspire courage in the citizens, egging them on to greater chaos. He supports their rampage by hurtling spells at the adventurers while maintaining his bard song through the Melodic Casting feat.

**Development:** Once the party either defeats, diffuses, or avoids the angry citizens, they can proceed to the Elven Enclave.

### **The Elves of Verbobonc City**

This portion of the mission deals with contacting Killian-Rhaine and attempting to obtain the help of the elves for the Resistance. Unbeknownst to the party, Killian-Rhaine witnessed what they chose to do when the hostile citizens were approaching the Enclave. Depending on whether or not the party neutralized the mobs, the elves are either Friendly toward them or Unfriendly. Go to the appropriate section below.

### **The Party Neutralized the Mobs**

If the party intercepted the mobs and successfully dispersed them before they reached the Enclave, then Killian-Rhaine and his kinfolk who witnessed this begin their interactions with the characters as Friendly.

*Three tall elves with the rough look of rangers and druids slide down ropes to meet you. The leader's speech, however is in unaccented common: "I witnessed what you did there, keeping those ignorant people from attacking the homes of my people here. I am Killian-Rhaine; how can I repay your selflessness?"*

Because the party selflessly intervened to save the Elven Enclave from the threat of fire (whether that was their intent or not is irrelevant, since that is what Killian-Rhaine believes and he will hear nothing to the contrary), Killian-Rhaine is predisposed to aid the party. All that is required to secure his help is a single DC 20 Diplomacy check, with the DC modified as follows:

- **Each elf in the party:** -2, since they have helped their fellow elves
- **Each dwarf in the party:** -2, since their timely aid has undermined the negative opinion elves have of the bearded folk.
- **Every ranger or druid in the party:** -2, since they obviously share the elves' concern for protecting nature.

Members of the Elven Enclave automatically succeed on this check.

Once this is accomplished and Killian-Rhaine hears what the heroes desire, Killian-Rhaine is fully willing to aid the Resistance with what he can.

He cannot supply troops, as with the city about to become a war zone, he plans on leading the women and children of the Enclave out of Verbobonc City immediately and will need those skilled in battle to protect them.

He can, however, lend the aid of three giant owls, if the party will accept them. The owls have their own saddles and bridles and are trained to carry riders.

Go on to the Victory Conditions and Development sections below.

### **The Party Avoided/Ignored the Mobs**

If the party completely avoided or ignored the threat of the mob, then the hostile townfolk descend on the wooded homes, setting the Enclave on fire with their torches. The flames catch quickly, and rage out of

control, scaring the humans (or gnomes) into dispersing.

Describe the mass chaos of the elves attempting to fight the fire, which has spread rapidly amongst this portion of the Enclave.

But before the party can act to douse the flames, a localized downpour of rain puts them out. Killian-Rhaine and his kin have cast *quench* and stemmed the destruction.

**Three tall elves with the rough look of rangers and druids slide down ropes to meet you. The leader, however, angrily condemns you in unaccented common: “We witnessed what you did there, ignoring the bigots who would destroy the homes of my kin. What business do craven cowards like yourselves have here in the Elven Enclave? Speak!”**

The elves begin interactions with the adventurers as Unfriendly, believing that if they had been true heroes, then they would have done something to stop the mobs from destroying the elven homes.

The party may make use of the Diplomacy skill to convince the elves to lend their aid to the Resistance, but it will be difficult.

The characters must make four successful DC 25 Diplomacy checks before failing three Diplomacy checks in order to convince the elves to assist the cause against Halmadar.

Allow the players to make their case before each of the Diplomacy checks is rolled. You may apply a +2 modifier to their check for good roleplay. After each check, roleplay Killian-Rhaine’s reaction, based on the Diplomacy roll. A successful check may mean that he is swayed somewhat, but he needs more convincing. A failed roll may mean that he takes offense at something that the player characters have said.

The following modifiers apply to the Diplomacy check DCs:

- **Each elf in the party:** +2, since they should have helped their fellow elves
- **Each dwarf in the party:** +2, since their inaction has reinforced the negative opinion they have of the bearded folk.
- **Each ranger or druid in the party:** +2, since they obviously care nothing about protecting nature.
- **Each member of the Elven Enclave in the party:** +10, since these members obviously care nothing for their fellow family members.

If the party is unsuccessful in their negotiations, Killian-Rhaine scoffs at the chances that Verbobonc City has, with “heroes” like the party to defend it. Killian-Rhaine departs to help his kin. The party has failed their mission and must go to the rendezvous empty-handed.

If the party is successful in their negotiations, however, then Killian-Rhaine becomes sympathetic to the cause.

He cannot supply troops, as with the city about to become a war zone, he plans on leading the women and children of the Enclave out of Verbobonc City immediately and will need those skilled in battle to escort them.

He can, however, lend the aid of three giant owls, if the party will accept them. The owls have their own saddles and bridles and are trained to carry riders.

Go to the Victory Conditions and Development sections below.

**Victory Conditions:** Tables that are unsuccessful in this mission have nothing to bring back to the rendezvous. They have no other business here. Go on to the Development section, below.

Each table that successfully completes this mission adds three giant owls to the list of assets useable in Phase Two. They will be of most use to Operation Storm Tower. The party must determine how they plan to move three giant owls across the city without raising undue suspicion or drawing attention to themselves. Once they have determined this, continue to the Development section, below.

**Development:** Before the party makes it to the Scythe and Sheaf, they will encounter a shadowy stranger who offers to make a deal with them. Proceed to **Encounter 5: The Enemy of My Enemy**.

### **ENCOUNTER 3: BLACK SHEEP IN THE FAMILY**

Characters undertaking this mission travel to a Battirovka Family safehouse. From there, they must escort a halfling who has escaped from the dungeons of Castle Greyfist back to the rendezvous point at the Scythe and Sheaf Inn.

Before undertaking this mission, ask if any of the players at the table played VER8-03 *Darkness is Unbound* with this character. Note especially the **Enmity of the Family** award. This will affect the reaction of the Family rogue who awaits the party at the safehouse.

Once you have reviewed the ARs, read or paraphrase the following.

***The streets of Verbobonc seem charged with anticipation and dread. The wind blows hard from the north, and dark clouds hang low, threatening a storm.***

Determine how the characters are moving across Verbobonc City. Since they are traversing the streets of an essentially hostile city, pay special attention to how the party is moving, including marching order, mode of travel (flying/mounted/hiding), and visible weapons. How conspicuous do the characters appear to casual observers or to law enforcement?

Once this is determined, continue. If the party is being stealthy, describe a close scrape with Bondsmen of Estival on patrol. If they are flying, describe a flash of lightning that strikes close by. If they are simply openly walking through the streets, describe how some citizens eye them warily or suspiciously. Ask for Spot checks. Regardless of the outcomes, have the highest Spot check reveal one citizen who rushes away in the opposite direction.

#### **The Safehouse**

***Your group comes upon an innocent-looking house that, according to your information, should be the place. It is not unlike the homes adjacent to it, though this one's windows have been boarded up from the inside.***

Members of the Family are aware that safehouses are usually guarded by traps. The safehouse has both a front door and a back door, and both doors are currently locked (Open Locks DC 30) and trapped.

#### **APL 6 (EL 4)**

**Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

#### **APL 8 (EL 6)**

**Flame Strike Trap:** CR 6; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*flame strike*, 9th level cleric, 9d6 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

#### **APL 10 (EL 8)**

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

#### **APL 12 (EL 10)**

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Word of Chaos Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*word of chaos*, 13th level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

#### **APL 14 (EL 12)**

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Word of Chaos Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*word of chaos*, 13th level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Weird Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*weird*, 17th level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save for partial); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

A grisly scene awaits the party inside the safehouse.

***It is clear that this place has recently been the site of a fierce battle. Bodies of Bondsmen and Battirovka rogues lie in pools of blood on the floor. Broken furniture is strewn about, and small crimson rivulets drip down the stairs.***

***From the number of bodies here on both sides, it is unclear who won.***

Allow the characters to declare a few actions.

The battle plainly roamed all throughout the house, with clear bloody footprints leading up the stairs. An overturned and partially smashed cabinet reveals (with a DC 15 Search check) six unbroken potion vials. These are tagged with yellow labels that read "Lesser Restoration." Family members, however, know that these are not what they appear to be, but are instead filled with poison (arsenic: ingested; Fort DC 13; 1 Con/1d6 Con).

Family members should already have been given a bit of Insider Information, warning them that Family potions labeled with yellow tags are not what they appear to be.

Before they get far in their investigation or are able to go up the stairs, interrupt them with the following text:

*Suddenly a woman whose black leathers are covered in blood leaps out of the shadows down the stairs, two daggers at the ready. “Black-hearted bandogs!” she cries, but upon seeing you, she hesitates.*

This is a Sister in the Family and the sole survivor of the melee that tore the house apart. She instantly recognizes any members of the Family in the party. Likewise, any Family members present know her, as well. Use any of the following names for the dual-dagger wielding vixen, or the Judge may create one to use: Marwie Two-Knives, Nadya, Candella Carruthers, or Kaylissa Whispersail

Note: Some adventurers condemned Kaylissa Whispersail to death by turning her in to the Bondsmen of Estival during VER8-03: *Darkness is Unbound*. If any character at the table has the **Enmity of the Family** favor from that adventure, do not use Kaylissa’s name. Instead, the Sister who is present will attempt to subtly avenge her fellow Family member by passing poison off to the characters as valuable curative potions. See “Burying the Hatchet”, below

**Family Sister:** female human Rogue 10; 57 hp (47 currently); Bluff +48 (with *potion of glibness*).

This rogue expected the party to be a second wave of Estival Bondsmen. Having seen that the party does not wear the tabards of Estival, she is willing to speak.

Allow the party to react. If they attack, the rogue hides in plain sight and flees the scene.

If the party is willing to speak, she relaxes only slightly and introduces herself.

*“Can’t be too careful,” the woman says without apology. “Those bloody myrmidons knew the knock. They crashed two Cousins ‘fore we knew we’d been swung. Figured my only spot was to flick the traps and ace it upstairs. I ‘spose you’re here for the binger hin, then.”*

The Sister is speaking in thieves’ cant, a slang code that all Family members are fluent in. For those who need translation, she has just explained that the Bondsmen knew the password to get into the safehouse and killed two rogues before they knew what was going on. After the fight, she turned on the trap defenses and hid upstairs. She assumes that the party is here to escort the halfling escapee.

Once the party confirms that, yes, they need the “package,” the Sister heads up the stairs and obtains the halfling.

The Battirovka rogue returns with a very frightened halfling, who she pushes in front of her while keeping hold of the collar of his shirt.

*“Here he is, scapegallowses,” the rogue says, presenting the halfling. “Swipe him to the rendezvous. And that’s the rub for me. I’ve got another game to ante up in.”*

The rogue will confirm that the halfling is the “package” and that he has information vital to the rebellion. She cannot, however, say anything more about her next mission.

### **Burying the Hatchet**

Before she departs, the Family Sister here presents the party with a few more supplies: six blast discs and six antitoxins. She doesn’t know if they will come in handy, but the people here won’t be needing them.

If there is anyone in the party with the **Enmity of the Family** award from VER8-03: *Darkness is Unbound*, she also points out to the party the “*potions of lesser restoration*” in the cabinet. ***“We’re all on the same side now,” she says, “It’s time we put that unpleasantness behind us.”*** If the players ask for a Sense Motive check, the DC is opposed by the Sister’s Bluff check of +49. Note if anyone takes them, and if they turn them in as supplies for the Resistance or if they keep them for themselves.

*The Sister pauses to take a dagger off of one of her fallen comrades. “Thanks, Rukk,” she says quietly to the corpse. “Fidelis familius.” She then slips out the way you came in.*

She has no time to spare, and nor do the heroes, so she departs, leaving the characters alone with the halfling.

### **The Halfling Fugitive**

The halfling is one of four escapees who were able to find a secret escape route out of the dungeons of Castle Greyfist. Choose a name for the halfling from one of the following, or create your own: Beasley, Orlane, Hesselwhite, or Jooster ‘the Booster’.

The knowledge he possesses is essential to the Resistance, but he does not know exactly what it will be used for. Unfortunately, the route that he and his friends used to escape the dungeons is not something that he can impart to anyone. He knows that he would have to show the rebels the way in person.

The halfling here also knows that his three fellow escapees are being kept at other Family safe houses in the city, but does not know where. It is clear that other heroes have been dispatched to escort them to the rendezvous, so that if any of the halflings are killed,



there will still be a chance that their knowledge will survive. This thought does not comfort the halfling.

He is perfectly willing to divulge (hastily) the information above. There are two things that he would rather not share, however:

First, having just witnessed the merciless ways of the Bondsmen, the halfling is having second thoughts about remaining involved. He would much rather put as much distance between himself and Castle Greyfist as possible. His nerve is hanging by a thread. Again, he does not reveal this to the characters, though it might be discovered with a Sense Motive check versus the halfling's Bluff (+4 modifier).

Second, if he is asked why he was a prisoner in Castle Greyfist, he says that he was nabbed for pickpocketing. This is a lie (Bluff +4 modifier). He and his fellow halflings are convicted murderers.

When the party is ready to move out, determine how they plan on moving across the city to the rendezvous point in the cellar of the Scythe and Sheaf Inn.

### **ALL APLS**

**Halfling Fugitive:** male halfling Rogue 2/Scout 4; 51 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **Return to the Rendezvous**

An anonymous tip (from a Vecnan spy) has informed the Bondsmen of Estival that the four halfling murderers who escaped from Castle Greyfist are still in Verbobonc City. They have also been informed that they may be working with the Company of the Black Rose to subvert the Viscount.

A number of Bondsmen have been put on alert to watch out for these halflings, and a number of details have been placed around the city to ambush them, should they be spotted. Halmadar's spectral ravens have already located the Family safehouses where the halflings are being kept. Perhaps unfortunately for Halmadar, the closest Bondsmen details are all composed of true law men of the region, and not Halmadar's cultists of Vecna.

As a result, in this encounter, the party faces Lawful Neutral and Lawful Good law enforcers. The Bondsmen below are identical to the evil Bondsmen, except they have LN and LG alignments. The Clerics of Saint Cuthbert here are genuine Clerics of the Cudgeller.

Use the enemies below, at the appropriate APL for the randomly-mustered table to create an ambush of the party while they have the halfling escapee in their

custody. When they spring upon the party, the cleric calls out "Stop in the name of the Cudgeller!"

It is possible that the party may be able to completely avoid detection in crossing the city. If they proceed in such a way that the Judge cannot devise a way to ambush them, then the party will make it back to the Scythe and Sheaf without incident.

If there is any doubt, however, if it is *at all* possible for the heroes to be spotted or detected in crossing the city, then they will be ambushed. Remember that Halmadar has essentially an infinite number of allies at his disposal, including the vitreous drinkers' spectral ravens, the Bondsmen of Estival, and citizens of the Viscounty who still believe the Viscount to be magnanimous.

### **APL 6 (EL 5)**

**Bondsman Recruits (5):** male or female human Fighter 1; 11 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 7)**

**Bondsman Recruits (5):** male or female human Fighter 1; 11 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of St. Cuthbert:** male human Cleric 5; 37 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 9)**

**Bondsmen of Estival (3):** male human Monk 2/Fighter 2; 33 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of St. Cuthbert:** male human Cleric 7; 37 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 11)**

**Bondsmen of Estival (3):** male human Monk 4/Fighter 2; 47 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of St. Cuthbert (2):** male human Cleric 7; 37 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 13)**

**Bondsmen of Estival (3):** male human Monk 4/Fighter 4; 63 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Cleric of St. Cuthbert (2):** male human Cleric 9; 65 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The Bondsmen attack the party for non-lethal damage, attempting to take the party prisoner. They only turn to lethal force after any of the adventurers attacks for lethal damage first. They are men of the Law, not evil cultists.

In the first round, or as soon as he can, the frightened halfling flees down a nearby alley. Anyone can see that the halfling has lost his nerve for the mission and is attempting to abandon his duty to the Resistance. The

party must fight off the Bondsmen and recapture the frightened halfling before he loses them in the city streets.

The halfling murderer double-moves for two rounds and then attempts to hide. Depending on the Judge's discretion, the Bondsmen may give chase to those heroes who are chasing down the halfling.

**Victory Conditions:** At least 50% of the tables undertaking this mission must successfully return to the rendezvous at the Scythe and Sheaf with their halfling informant. If they do, then seeing the prowess of the Resistance, the halflings are inspired to help guide Operation: Shadow Walk to the secret tunnels to the Dungeons and the north towers of the Castle in Phase Two.

If fewer than 50% of the halflings are brought back (whether killed in the effort or if they escaped from the player characters), those who do make it to the rendezvous are too frightened to guide the effort. Operation: Shadow Walk cannot proceed in Phase Two.

**Development:** Before the party makes it to the Scythe and Sheaf, they will encounter a shadowy stranger who offers to make a deal with them. Proceed to **Encounter 5: The Enemy of My Enemy**.

## **ENCOUNTER 4: THE BEST MINERS IN GNOMEBURG**

Characters undertaking this mission travel to the Kron Hall tavern in Gnomeburg. There, they must talk to the owner, a female gnome named Miral Cutterfro, whose four sons will supply them with some gnomish mining tools.

*The streets of Verbobonc seem charged with anticipation and dread. The wind blows hard from the north, and dark clouds hang low, threatening a storm.*

Determine how the characters are moving across Verbobonc City. Since they are traversing the streets of an essentially hostile city, pay special attention to how the party is moving, including marching order, mode of travel (flying/mounted/hiding), and visible weapons. How conspicuous do the characters appear to casual observers or to law enforcement?

Once this is determined, continue. If the party is being stealthy, describe a close scrape with Bondsmen of Estival on patrol. If they are flying, describe a flash of lightning that strikes close by. If they are simply openly walking through the streets, describe how some

citizens eye them warily or suspiciously. Ask for Spot checks. Regardless of the outcomes, have the highest Spot check reveal one citizen who rushes away in the opposite direction.

### **Kron Hall**

*Making your way to Gnomeburg, you easily find Kron Hall tavern, one of the few meeting places in Gnomeburg built to accommodate human-sized patrons.*

*Miral Cutterfro, the matronly owner seems to be expecting you. "Oh, dearie me. I can't believe it's really come to this. Well come on, they're out back." She hustles you to the small yard behind the tavern.*

*Outside are four gnomes who bear a family resemblance to Miral. They each bear gnomish picks at the ready. Nearby, a small, cobblestoned sty holds a small group of dire badgers. "Well, here they are," she says, "your commanders wanted diggers... an' they're the best in the city."*

The four gnomes guarding the badgers are Miral's sons: Cobbwyn, Turrick, Raulwick, and Folbur. One of them explains to the party that in order to better insure that at least some of the miners get to the rendezvous, that multiple groups of Company members will be escorting them.

*"You're the last group, I think," says one of the gnomish brothers, "so these four are yours. Make sure they get to the rendezvous in one piece." He hands you four leashes and moves to open the badgers' sty.*

Cobbwyn explains that in order to insure that at least some of the badgers make it to the rendezvous, they've been split into separate groups and entrusted to multiple escort parties. He uses his racial ability to speak with burrowing animals to explain to the dire badgers to follow the party and that they will keep them safe.

If asked to accompany the party, the brothers exchange looks with one another, heft their mining picks, and say with grim smiles that they've got their own assignments. They aren't allowed to divulge them to the adventurers and urge them to get moving.

Miral and her sons wish the blessings of Garl Glittergold on their mission and send them on their way.

Determine how the party plans to get four dire badgers across the city to the rendezvous point in the cellar of the Scythe and Sheaf Inn.

### **Return to the Rendezvous**

Due to his myriad contacts and spies, Halmadar has been alerted to the Resistance's plan to obtain dire

badgers. Although the Vecnans do not know their purpose, they do know that the dire badgers are important to the Resistance and thus intend to kill them in an ambush.

Use the enemies below, at the appropriate APL for the randomly-mustered table to create an ambush of the party while they have the dire badgers in tow.

It is possible that the party may be able to completely avoid detection in crossing the city. If they proceed in such a way that the Judge cannot devise a way to ambush them, then the party will make it back to the Scythe and Sheaf without incident.

If there is any doubt, however, if it is *at all* possible for the heroes to be spotted or detected in crossing the city, then they will be ambushed. Remember that Halmadar has essentially an infinite number of allies at his disposal, including the vitreous drinkers' spectral ravens, the Bondsmen of Estival, and citizens of the Viscounty who still believe the Viscount to be magnanimous.

### **APL 6 (EL 5)**

**Kenku Toughs (2):** male Kenku Ranger 1/Rogue 2; hp 25 each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 7)**

**Kenku Toughs (2):** male Kenku Ranger 1/Rogue 2; hp 25 each; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Wizard:** female human Wizard 5; 39 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 9)**

**Kenku Strikers (2):** male Kenku Ranger 2/Rogue 3; hp 33 each; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Wizard:** female human Wizard 7; hp 36; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 11)**

**Kenku Strikers (4):** male Kenku Ranger 2/Rogue 3; hp 33 each; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Wizard:** female human Wizard 9; hp 36; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 13)**

**Kenku Assassins (2):** male Kenku Ranger 2/Rogue 3/Assassin 3; hp 51; see Appendix 1.

**Advanced Vitreous Drinker:** hp 117, see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** All of the Vecnans here are initially target the dire badgers. The Kenku rogues attempt to strike from hiding and then move to flank. The Vecnan casters start with area of effect spells. The Vitreous Drinker relies on his spell-like abilities.

**Victory Conditions:** For each dire badger that is successfully returned to the Scythe and Sheaf, Operation: Earthen Grasp has an opportunity to dig a five-foot wide tunnel under Castle Greyfist. Each badger also needs two vials of adamansheen (from the Black Rose Scavenger Hunt mission above). Depending on the total number of badgers and adamansheen vials that are successfully obtained in Phase Two, Operation: Earthen Grasp may be able to dig any combination of tunnels. For example, if three badgers and six vials are brought back successfully, then there could be three Earthen Grasp missions with one five-foot wide tunnel each; one Earthen Grasp mission with a five-foot-wide tunnel and one with a ten-foot-wide tunnel; or one Earthen Grasp mission with a 15-foot-wide tunnel. It will be up to the players to decide how to use their resources during the mustering for Phase Two.

If no dire badgers or adamansheen is recovered in Phase One, then Operation Earthen Grasp cannot proceed.

**Development:** Before the party makes it to the Scythe and Sheaf, they will encounter a shadowy stranger who offers to make a deal with them. Proceed to **Encounter 5: The Enemy of My Enemy**.

## **ENCOUNTER 5: THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY**

In this encounter, a shadowy agent of Iuz named Margus the Patriarch approaches the adventurers with an offer of aid in the battle against Halmadar.

This encounter is intended to happen just outside the Scythe and Sheaf, but if the party will somehow miss it as written, the Judge should use his discretion in finding an opportunity to insert this meeting into the players' experience in Phase One. He is encouraged to take liberties with Margus's abilities (give him *true seeing*, etc) if it is necessary to help ensure that the offer is made.

For purposes of the story and for balance, this encounter can not be skipped.

Margus is a middle-aged man with dark (but graying) hair, sharp features, a well-trimmed goatee, and a scar that crosses his nose and left cheek. He is a polite and gracious diplomat. At the beginning of this encounter, he is *invisible* and hiding in the shadows near the Scythe and Sheaf Inn (DC 45 Spot check). He has no intention of fighting, and only wishes to speak with the characters.

***The Scythe and Sheaf is only a few steps away when you hear an urgent whisper from the growing shadows of a nearby alley.***

***“Heroes of Verbobonc, a question: Is the enemy of your enemy your friend?”***

If the adventurers are jumpy and choose to initiate combat, the agent immediately flees using a *word of recall* spell. For these parties, Phase One is complete. Go on to the **Phase One Conclusion** below.

If, instead, the party is willing to speak, the answer that the agent is looking for is “Yes.”

If he gets an opening from any of the characters, he will attempt to make his offer.

***A middle-aged man emerges from the shadows as he pulls back the hood of his cloak. “I was hoping that you would have the wisdom to hear me out. My name is Margus the Patriarch.”***

A DC 30 Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (local:VTF) check reveals that Margus the Patriarch was the second-in-command of a small cult of Iuz that worked out of Verbobonc City almost a decade ago. The cult was discovered and foiled by adventurers while they investigated the source of the spread of the Plague of 589 CY. Margus was thought to have been killed with the rest of the cult.

***The man continues: “I come to you with a message from my lord. While he is bound not to intervene in this conflict directly, he has no wish to see the Whispered One’s followers succeed here. Your efforts must succeed, and he offers his assistance.”***

If adventurers interrupt at this point with questions, Margus insists that they please hear him out first, for there is little time. He continues, quickly:

***“I have been authorized by my lord to make an offer: In the coming battle, should you find yourself about to enter the cold embrace of death, simply call out to my lord for aid, and your plea shall be answered.”***

At this point, Margus pauses to see how receptive the characters are to this idea. If they ask what they should call out, or who Margus's lord is, he replies:

***“You need only call out ‘Save me, Old One,’ and your plea shall be answered.”***

If the characters do not instantly recognize the moniker of one of the most evil demigods in the World of Greyhawk, feel free to let them know with a DC 5 Knowledge (religion) check that the Old One is another name for Iuz the Old. DC 10 on the check reveals Iuz as the god of oppression, pain, and deceit. A

DC 15 on the check confirms that Iuz has a deep hatred for Vecna, rivaled only by his hatred of Saint Cuthbert. Followers of Saint Cuthbert automatically succeed on all of this information.

If asked, Margus will reveal the benefits that Iuz can provide: Heal, Delay Death, and improved defensive abilities. He stresses that if a hero is about to die, that the Old One will most assuredly prevent it from happening, allowing the character to continue fighting the good fight against Halmadar.

If asked, Margus knows of no negative effects that are attached to this offer.

***“If it seems like a distasteful option, as I fully understand it may be to you, I urge you to consider what fate awaits the Viscouny should your attack on the castle fail.” He adds with emphasis, “You face unimaginable evil in the battle to come.”***

Margus does not have much time to discuss the offer at great length, since he has other heroes that he must speak to. He is satisfied so long as the adventurers have the option in front of them should they need it.

Margus wishes the heroes good fortune in the coming battle. ***“May the blessings of all of the gods go with you... for all of our sakes.”*** With that, he departs.

**Development:** Calling to Iuz for aid during this Battle Interactive is an immediate action. For its effects, refer to **Appendix 2: The Aid of the Old One**. Unbeknownst to the characters (or to Margus), any person who accepts this aid is forever tainted with the touch of darkness. They will receive the Special Certificate **Doomed**.

Proceed to the **Phase One Conclusion**, below.

## **PHASE I: CONCLUSION**

If any tables are not finished when only 5 minutes remain in the time allotted for Phase One, the Interactive Coordinator should move from table to table in the role of an armed drifter, rushing past them calling:

***“Make haste! Time is short! Get to the rendezvous!”***

When each party reaches the rendezvous point, the table's Judge should read or paraphrase the following:

***Arriving at the Scythe and Sheaf Inn, your party is directed silently by the barkeep to the cellar stairs. Below, a Black Rose drifter and a Battirovka cutpurse, both of whom look to have seen combat in the last hour,***

*recognize you. They lead you through a secret door and down a twisted passage that opens into a dark and musty chamber that looks to once have been a temple.*

*Some senior members of the Family, the Black Rose Company, and the Wanderers of Coldeven are huddled around an altar at the far end of the room, going over maps and battle plans.*

*Other members of the Resistance are here, waiting for the rest of your fellows to arrive.*

Any resources that the characters have gathered in Phase One should be accounted for. Ask the players if they are keeping anything for themselves or if they are turning it all in to the Resistance leadership.

At this point, characters are free to do what they wish until the Phase Two Briefing. They may not, however, leave the Scythe and Sheaf for any reason. If they need healing, they should speak with other characters that have finished their Phase One missions.

At this point, the Judge should dismiss his players from the table, informing them that the tables will be remastered in Phase Two using different criteria.

The Judge should then report the results of his table's Phase One mission to the Interactive Coordinator and await the start of Phase Two.

When all tables have completed Phase One, the Interactive Coordinator should get the attention of all Judges and players and move on to the **Intercalary: Scythe and Sheaf**.

## **INTERCALARY: THE SCYTHE AND SHEAF INN**

*This Part will take about 15 minutes.*

Former Viscount Langard appears before the members of the Resistance and delivers an inspiring speech.

Any players who identify themselves as active members of the Battirovka Family, Company of the Black Rose, and Wanderers of Coldeven should be invited to stand at the front of the room, facing the assembly.

The Interactive Coordinator, in the role of former Viscount Langard addresses the assembled crowd; arrayed behind him are various players and judges representing members of the Verbobonc Resistance. One of the Judges in this role should call for silence in the room and pronounce **“I present Langard, the once and future Viscount!”**

The Coordinator playing the part of Langard should deny the title quietly and reluctantly step forward to speak.

*“Dear, dear friends. It has been too long since I have stood with you like this. Baron Avgustin often said that adventurers were the strength of the land. I look around this room and I see that strength. In body and in force of will. Never have I been more proud to see so many willing to do what is necessary for our salvation.*

*Our land has seen many dark days these past years. The Cowled Lady and the Giant Wars. The darkness below Ulthak-Nor. A resurgence of Elemental Evil. Civil wars amongst our own nobles. Assassinations, both foiled and successful. Imposters and traitors, murder and war. And through it all, adventurers like yourselves have protected this land from the vile forces that would devour the light and hope of the world.*

*The Viscounty's past is stained with the blood of ignoble deeds. But its future is not yet written.*

*Tonight we face the greatest threat that Verbobonc has seen in a generation. And tonight we make our stand against that darkest evil.*

*We have convened here, in the basement of the Scythe and Sheaf Inn because seventeen years ago, in this dank place, on this very ground, Halmadar the Cruel was stricken down. And so it is from here that we launch our attack, to finish him once and for all.*

*Some of your fellow adventurers, leaders of the Battirovka Family and the Black Rose Company, have devised a plan that is both cunning and sound. Against the forces that Halmadar has arrayed against us, it is no guarantee of victory, but it is our best chance and our only hope.*

*Our attack on the castle itself will be four-fold, insuring that should one attack fail, we shall still have three other avenues for our final strike at Halmadar's heart.*

*Each one of you will be part of one of these four strike teams. Listen carefully, for you will not be dividing into tactical groups based on your experience, but on your talents and capabilities.*

*The four attack groups are as follows: Storm Tower, which will attack by air; Shadow Walk, which will infiltrate the castle secretly; Earthen Grasp, which will bring down the walls of Greyfist; and True Strike, the front line of our assault.*

*But none of these strike teams will have a chance of succeeding unless we can bring down the forbiddance spell which guards the castle and its grounds.*

To this end, a fifth group of volunteers has formed: **Heart Ripper**, a command team made up of high ranking members of the Black Rose, the Family and the clergy of Pelor. They will journey to the source of the forbiddance to dispel it. If all goes according to plan, once they bring down the abjuration, you will all have a six second window to breach the area of effect before we lock it down with a spell given to us from beyond the grave by Magister Obble Har: Har's impervious impediment will bar dimensional travel, preventing Halmadar from calling any more extra-planar allies, and trapping him within the castle, preventing his escape.

*Make no mistake: the path we tread is treason, and the lawful authorities of the Viscounty will show us no mercy, should we fail. There is no turning back. From here, we face only victory or death.*

*But for my part, I would not see the cruel hand of Vecna take the Viscounty without a fight. Our children and our children's children will not grow up knowing only tyranny and deceit.*

*For the people of Verbobonc everywhere, we must be willing to fight and even die in the name of all that is good and holy in this world. For the chance that hope and light fade forever. For earth and stone, man and gnome, we must be victorious!*

If any Bondsmen NPCs were slain in Phase One, Brooknir chides the heroes who have harmed the cause and warns that this violence will not bode well for us now. Once he is done, he continues

## Mustering for Phase II

When Langard has finished his speech, four Interactive Judges in the roles of the Mission Leaders should take positions in four separate areas of the room. All other Judges should help players determine where they should be going.

It will be necessary to remind players that mustering in this Phase is determined by a character's talents and abilities, not by character level or a concern for party balance.

1. Characters who can fly by magic or wildshape, or who have other means of getting airborne should join **Operation: Storm Tower**. If giant owls were obtained from the Elven Enclave, then they are available to this group in case players are needed to fill out parties. Two parties are needed for this mission; no more, no less.
2. Characters who are stealthy and skillful should move to **Operation: Shadow Walk**.

People who can move unheard and unseen, whether that is by skill or magical means should join this mission. Two parties are needed for this mission; no more, no less.

3. Characters who are comfortable working underground or have knowledge of engineering should enlist in **Operation: Earthen Grasp**. The supplies that were recovered in Phase One determine the maximum number of parties that can undertake this mission.
4. Characters who prefer to meet their problems directly, who are trained in diplomacy or in open warfare should march with **Operation: True Strike**. This mission can accommodate any number of parties.

Some characters will not feel that any of these categories fit them, or that they fit into more than one category and cannot decide which to go to. Many people will want more information. But in order to keep events moving, more information will not be provided. (In character, the details of each mission are on a strictly need-to-know basis, since Halmadar's spies are everywhere.) Players must choose and choose quickly.

Judges should do whatever they can to help speed these decisions, to shore up numbers for the missions that need them, and to secure places for people who will not fit on missions with a limited number of spaces.

Whenever possible, players' first choices should be accommodated.

Once all players are placed in one of the four mission groupings, the Judges playing the Mission Leaders should begin their briefings. These briefings are handled with all players for each mission at once, before they are split into separate tables, to both simulate the experience in the Scythe and Sheaf cellar, and to insure that all tables on a particular mission begin at the same time.

Proceed to the appropriate Mission, below.

## **MISSION ONE: OPERATION: STORM TOWER**

The Mission Leader for Storm Tower is Owain, a paladin of Rao who was appointed to be a Knight of the Faithful Defender by Viscount Langard in 593 CY. Since then, Owain has been on assignment in Veluna.

An Interactive Judge should collectively brief this mission's participants in the character of Owain.

Storm Tower's targets are the southern towers of the castle. Atop the southeast tower is an arcane ballista that must be captured or destroyed. The southwest tower bears a magical banner of Estival, which must be brought down and replaced with the colors of the Black Rose. Once the towers are secured, Storm Tower must move to the gatehouse and open the castle portcullis.

***"You stand with the valiant volunteers of Operation: Storm Tower.***

***While the brutish grunts of Earthen Grasp are skulking around underground, we will be bravely and boldly making the first attack on Halmadar's fortress.***

***Yes, the honor of first blood will be ours.***

***As the first wave of the assault, our success is essential, for we will open the way for the ground forces.***

***In a few minutes, we will depart from the Scythe and Sheaf and make a low altitude run around the outside perimeter of the City. We'll reenter the city walls at the Southgate, and amongst the trees of the Elven Enclave, we shall split into two strike teams approaching Castle Greyfist from the southwest.***

***One team will descend upon the southwest tower. On its roof flies a magical banner bearing the livery of House Estival. That banner is providing advantages to troops allied with the Viscount. It must come down.***

If players recovered a Banner of the Black Rose during Phase I, Owain adds the following paragraph:

***This team will also need to raise the Standard of the Black Rose in its place. This will grant all of our allies a combat advantage.***

Continue:

***The second team will dive on the castle's southeast tower, where a lightning ballista is mounted. You will be facing heavy fire from it, so get in fast and take it out. Disable it, destroy it, or -better yet- capture it so we can use it against Halmadar's forces ourselves.***

***Once the towers are taken, both teams will have to move in on the castle's gatehouse. You'll have to break in there and raise the portcullises so that Operation: True Strike on the ground can move in on the courtyard.***

***Each of the two portcullises are independently controlled in each half of the gatehouse, so both teams will have to succeed in order for True Strike to breach the castle wall.***

***Now remember: We'll have to time this just right, since the forbiddance protecting the castle hasn't been brought down yet. When it does, we'll have only a six second window to get within the barrier before Operation: Heart Ripper activates Har's impervious impediment, locking down travel within the castle. So be swift on the wing.***

***Time is short, but do you have any questions?"***

There is little time for questions. Some that the players may ask and Owain's answers are below. Owain obviously wants the mission to succeed, and he will help as best as he can.

- What are the other missions doing?

I can't tell you. Halmadar has his spies everywhere, and the less you know the better. I can say this, though: if everyone does their job, then we'll have Halmadar and his forces surrounded and trapped in the castle courtyard.

- What kind of resistance should we expect?

It's hard to say. Since we will be the first wave of the assault, we should be braced for anything. We know that the ballista fires lightning, and that the walls are manned by archers and mages.

- What's so important about the banners?

They are magical, providing advantages to those who are allied with the symbol that they bear. When Estival's banner is brought down, his soldiers will be weakened; when the Black Rose banner is raised, the Resistance troops will be bolstered.

- Once we capture the arcane ballista, how do we operate it?

I believe it is a fairly simple magic item. Point it in the right direction and then look for a trigger.

- What will we do after this?

After you've taken the towers, remember that you must take the gatehouse and open the two portcullises.

- What's in it for me?

If you are looking for monetary reward, then you can just stay here in the cellar. I don't need to be worrying about whether you've been bought off or not. In fact, thanks for volunteering to fly in the point position. I don't want any mercenaries skulking behind any of these dedicated soldiers.

There are three more things that Owain needs to impart to the heroes.

First, the characters should remember that while they are facing off against Bondsmen of Estival, not all of

them are followers of Halmadar. If it's at all possible, don't kill them unless it is necessary. Of course, we're all traitors now, so do what you see as necessary to accomplish the mission.

Second, once they reach the tower roofs, the Storm Tower operatives should stay out of the courtyard. It is most important to secure the high ground perimeter of the castle, neutralize the ballista, and raise the Black Rose banner. The courtyard will be likely be teeming with wizards and if the heroes engage them, then that's a completely new problem that we don't want to deal with.

Thirdly, Owain will remind the adventurers that if all goes according to plan, then the *forbiddance* will come down and the Resistance will have a six second window to get into the area around the castle. At that point, they will raise a spell given to the Resistance by Magister Har from beyond the grave: *Har's impervious impediment*. This spell will act as our own *forbiddance*, preventing Halmadar from bringing in any extraplanar assistance. It will also prevent him from fleeing by extra-dimensional travel.

Once the *impervious impediment* is raised, we know that Halmadar will be ours. If it doesn't come up, then you'll know that the Command Team has failed, and the Resistance will have to fight that much harder to make sure that Halmadar is destroyed.

At this point all of the players undertaking Operation Storm Tower should be fully briefed. Owain wishes them all the blessings of the Peacemaker, and he sends them off.

The players should divide into two teams, go to their tables and get started with their mission, below.

### **The Approach and First Blood**

At this point, the Judge should find out how each character will be flying into battle. He should also get a preliminary flight formation from the players.

Once all pre-combat buff spells and other preparations are made, begin the assault with the following text.

**Operation:** *Storm Tower speeds low through the streets of Verbobonc and out the northwest gate. The knight Owain leads the combined attack group on his white griffon Brightmane, making a hairpin turn back into the city's southwest gate at breakneck speed.*

*Suddenly, you are amongst the trees of the Elven Enclave, weaving between the branches, still staying relatively low to the ground.*

Anyone who is flying on an animal mount must make a DC 15 Ride check to pull off these maneuvers. Failure means that they fall behind the rest of the attack group and will join combat in the second round.

***Over the rushing wind, you hear Owain call out, "Break on my mark! ...Now!"***

***The other flight of Storm Tower veers off as you emerge from the shelter of the Elven Enclave. Castle Greyfist suddenly looms before you like a great impenetrable monolith.***

***The faintest glimmer of a dome over the castle gleams in the dusk sky. Someone calls out, "Abort! The forbiddance is still up!"***

***But at that moment, there is an ephemeral dispersal of energy, and the glimmer is gone.***

***As you pass through the air where the barrier once stood, you hear Sir Owain, call out a battle cry: "REMEMBER EGLATH!"***

Roll for initiative.

**Note:** *Har's impervious impediment* does NOT arise the round after the *forbiddance* comes down, as was planned in the briefings. The impediment comes up in round eight of this phase. If it does not come up during combat, then it should activate when the heroes are moving toward the gatehouse to open the portcullis.

For the team moving in on the southeast tower, the arcane ballista fires as the characters move in. It has a range of 180 feet. The ballista fires its line of lightning to catch as many characters as possible. If only one can be caught in the line, the crew fires at the first character in the flight formation.

<p><b>Lightning Ballista:</b> This magic light ballista does not use traditional ammunition. Instead, it fires a 120-foot line of lightning when triggered. Creatures in the path of the bolt take 8d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 18 half). In a stormy environment, like the weather surrounding the Assault on Castle Greyfist, a <i>lightning ballista</i> can be fired every other round. A <i>lightning ballista</i> requires no loading time or attack roll.</p>
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<p><b>Banner of Estival:</b> This noble standard bears the symbol of House Estival, a black sword before a red sun. It provides a +2 bonus to turn resistance to all undead within Castle Greyfist and those within 30 feet of the outer walls. This turn resistance stacks with any turn resistance that the undead may already possess.</p>
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**Banner of the Black Rose:** The standard of the Company of the Black Rose offers the aegis of chaos to the troops of the Resistance. All non-lawful allies of the Resistance within Castle Greyfist and those within 30 feet of the outer walls are protected as if by the *protection from law* spell.

Identical groups defend each of the southern towers being attacked by Operation: Storm Tower.

### **APL 6 (EL 7)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** male human Wizard 3; hp 21 each; see Appendix 1.

**Verbobonc Militia (8):** male human Warrior 1; 26 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 9)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 5; hp 39 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 1; 37 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 11)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 7; hp 57 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 2/Ranger 1; 56 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 13)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 9; hp 73 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 4/Ranger 1; 76 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 15)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 11; hp 89 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 4/Ranger 3; 103 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The defenders here begin combat with *potions of fly* in effect. The wizards concentrate fire with their magic missiles on one target at a time. If this does not prove effective, they fly higher than their enemies and use their *piercer cloaks* with their ray spells. One of the mages has *greased* the stairs leading up to the ballista/banner.. At higher APLs, they use their Double Wand Wielder feat to fire twice as many missiles. At higher APLs they have greater invisibility active when the player characters arrive.

The Loyalists fire dragonsbreath arrows at lightly armored enemies, hoping to catch them on fire. They are stationed on top of the central platform of each tower, either protecting the banner or activating the arcane ballista every other round.

### The Greyfist Gatehouse

Once the towers are secured, the Storm Tower teams will need to move in on the gatehouse. The gatehouse has been locked down, and troops who would normally be stationed here have already been defeated.

The only thing that bars entry is a dangerous arcane trap that has been armed.

#### APL 6 (EL 6)

**Flame Strike Trap:** CR 6; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*flame strike*, 9th level cleric, 9d6 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

#### APL 8 (EL 8)

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

#### APL 10 (EL 10)

**Dictum Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*word of chaos*, 13th level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

#### APL 12 (EL 12)

**Meteor Swarm Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*meteor swarm*, 17th level wizard, DC 23 Reflex save for half); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

**Weird Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*weird*, 17th level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save for partial); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

#### APL 14 (EL 14)

**Dictum Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*word of chaos*, 13th level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

**Flame Strike Trap:** CR 6; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*flame*

strike, 9th level cleric, 9d6 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

**Meteor Swarm Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*meteor swarm*, 17th level wizard, DC 23 Reflex save for half); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

**Weird Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset (immediate); spell effect (*weird*, 17th level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save for partial); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

Once past the traps, the characters on Operation: Storm Tower may enter the gatehouse. It is a simple matter of pulling a heavy wheel (three consecutive DC 20 Strength checks) in order to open the portcullis.

Note that only one portcullis's controls are accessible from either side of the gatehouse. Both sides of the gatehouse must be broken into in order to lift both portcullises.

## **MISSION TWO: OPERATION: SHADOW WALK**

The Mission Leaders for Shadow Walk are "Uncle" Farrin Freehill and "Cousin" Aloysius Krot.

Uncle Farrin Freehill, attorney at law, is a lisping halfling who until very recently acted as the Family's top operative in Darkhapor. Having survived the events of VER8-04: *Bred in the Bone*, Farrin has relocated to Verbobonc City to aid the Resistance and get revenge on Estival.

Aloysius is the genuine nephew of "Uncle" Krot, a late member of the Battirovka Merchant Family. Uncle Krot appeared in the Fools series of Verbobonc adventures, and was killed in VER7-09 *Jinxed*. Aloysius is new to the Family, but eager to live up to his uncle's hopes for him.

Two Interactive Judges should collectively brief this mission's participants as Aloysius Krot and Uncle Farrin.

**"Brothers and Sisters, welcome to Operation: Shadow Walk. If you're here, then that means you're either naturally gifted with the skills of stealth, or else you know how to cheat with magic to achieve the same ends.**

**We'll leave the flashy, high profile, suicidal approach to those furry fliers on Operation: Storm Tower. That's not our style.**

**Some of you may have helped escort halfling fugitives back here to the rendezvous. These halflings are the only people ever to break out of the dungeons of Castle**

**Greyfist. But you, my friends, are going to be the only people ever to break in.**

**Lucky you.**

**Here's the plan: The halflings will guide you through the sewers to the place where they made their escape. After heading up a couple of secret passages that lead into the dungeons, you'll slip past the guards and up the rear stairs to the northern towers of the castle.**

**The strike force will split up there.**

**One team will ascend the northwest tower. On its roof is an arcane ballista. This team will have to take it out. Disable it, destroy it, or -better yet- capture it.**

**Meanwhile, the other half of you will head up the northeast tower, where the colors of House Estival are flying. You'll need to bring down the standard of Estival and raise the Battirovka banner in its place.**

**In short, we're going to steal Halmadar's advantages and make them our own. Any questions?"**

Time is short and there is little time for questions. Some that the players may ask and the Leaders' answers are below. Both Aloysius and Uncle Farrin obviously want the mission to succeed, and they will help as best as they can.

- What are the other missions doing?

*I can't tell you. Halmadar has his spies everywhere, and the less you know the better. I can say this, though: if everyone does their job, then we'll have Halmadar and his forces surrounded and trapped in the castle courtyard.*

- What kind of resistance should we expect?

*It's hard to say. But by the time Shadow Walk reaches the towers, we know that the frontal assault on the south side of the castle will already have begun. If we're lucky, there may only be a token force in the northern towers.*

- What's so important about the banners?

*They are magical, providing advantages to those who are allied with the symbol that they bear. When Estival's banner is brought down, his soldiers will be weakened; when the Battirovka banner is raised, the Resistance troops will be bolstered.*

- Once we capture the arcane ballista, how do we operate it?

*I have no idea. Maybe there's a manual up there. Or maybe you'll just have to improvise.*

- What will we do after this?

After you've taken the towers, make sure that they are secure. We can't afford to lose our advantage. If a situation demands action, do what you have to, but don't lose those towers.

- What's in it for me?

Seriously? You're kidding, right? This guy wants to kill you, your family, your dog, your neighbors, your neighbor's dog, and then pretty much erase the fact that you ever lived. Pretty much end the world. How about 'living to see tomorrow'? Is that good enough motivation for you?

There are three more things that Farrin and Krot need to impart to the heroes.

First, the characters should remember that while they are facing off against Bondsmen of Estival, not all of them are followers of Halmadar'. If it's at all possible don't kill them unless it is necessary. Of course, we're all traitors now, so do what you see as necessary to accomplish the mission.

Second, once they reach the tower roofs, the Shadow Walkers should stay out of the courtyard. It is most important to secure the high ground perimeter of the castle, neutralize the ballista, and raise the Battirovka banner. The courtyard will be likely be teeming with wizards and if the heroes engage them, then that's a completely new problem that we don't want to deal with.

Thirdly, the characters should be made aware that a small group of volunteers will be undertaking a mission to bring down the *forbiddance* spell that Halmadar has encompassing the castle. If that all goes according to plan, then the *forbiddance* will come down and the Resistance will have a six second window to get into the area around the castle. At that point, they will raise a spell given to the Resistance by Magister Har from beyond the grave: *Har's impervious impediment*. This spell will act as our own *forbiddance*, preventing Halmadar from bringing in any extraplanar assistance. It will also prevent him from fleeing by extra-dimensional travel.

Once the *impervious impediment* is raised, we know that Halmadar will be ours. If it doesn't come up, then you'll know that the Command Team has failed, and the Resistance will have to fight that much harder to make sure that Halmadar is destroyed.

At this point all of the players undertaking Operation: Shadow Walk should be fully briefed. Farrin and Krot wish them all the blessings of the Laughing Rogue and the Summoner, and send them off.

The players should divide into two teams, go to their tables and get started with their mission, below.

**Descending into the sewers beneath Verbobonc, you follow the halfling who knows the way to the dungeon's secret entrance. You rendezvous with four Rhennee refugees from Darkhapor who supply you with boats and set off to navigate a maze of low, pathless tunnels.**

**The halfling counts off side passages as you proceed, following a map that exists only in his memory.**

**Abruptly, he commands a stop. "This is it," he says, pointing to the left and the right at two of the countless unremarkable drains leading from above. "That one leads to the northwest portion of the dungeons. And that one leads to the northeast. Once inside the dungeons, you should look for a way up. There should be a stair nearby that can take you all the way up the north towers."**

At this point Operation: Shadow Walk splits into its two squads.

The halfling guide (or guides) does not accompany the adventurers. He has done his part, and has no interest in returning to the dungeons of Castle Greyfist. He wishes the parties luck and takes the boats with him. The party will have no choice but to fight their way to the surface.

**After climbing through a filth-covered tunnel for what seems far too long, you come to a metal grate. Above, is what appears to be a small, cramped cell.**

The grate is locked with an excellent lock, but it is on the opposite side of the grate. This increases the Open Lock difficulty by 5, making it a DC 35 to undo the lock and gain access to the prison cell. Alternately, a DC 30 Strength check can break the iron grate from its housing.

Note that spell completion items like scrolls or wands of *knock* still require a verbal component to activate. Characters are aware of this, and the noise that it would create, which could alert nearby guards.

Unbeknownst to the characters, there are no guards nearby, so if they are forced to rely on magic to gain access, they will not yet be found out.

If necessary, remind the characters that the battle should already be raging above, and they need to move swiftly.

### **The Prison Block**

The party emerges into a small, ten-foot-square cell on what is clearly a cell block. The cell holds nothing but a pile of straw to sleep on. The door is locked, but not trapped. (Open Lock DC 30)

Outside the cell are a dozen other cells. All are empty, unless any player characters have been captured by the Viscount's agents in Phase I.

Any characters who have been captured, including Bondsmen of Estival who attempt to sway Estival at the beginning of the Bondsman Alternate Introduction are here. They have been stripped of their gear.

At the end of the hall are two doorways: One steel door that leads out of the dungeons, and one open doorway on the right that leads into a 30-foot-square guard room.

Within the guardroom, a heated argument is taking place between two Bondsmen. One is complaining about how all of the action is happening upstairs and they have been stuck on guard duty. The second maintains that they have orders to stay here. But, the first one says, when they were assigned to guard the cell block, they didn't know that the castle was going to come under attack. He believes that they should forget their orders and go up to the ramparts where they can help.

Inside this room are the belongings of any imprisoned characters who were present in the cells of Castle Greyfist.

The steel door at the end of the hall is locked and in plain view of the guards inside the guardroom. They are distracted by their argument, however, allowing characters to hide in shadows as they pass the open doorway.

***Not far outside of the cell block, you find a stair leading upward.***

This is a service staircase, and the one that the halfling mentioned. It spirals in a single file line straight up the tower. Narrow tunnels lead off into the various levels of the castle, but the players should be clear on what they need to do: get to the top of the tower and take control of it.

***The stairs end at a trap door in the ceiling. The sounds of the battle raging outside leave little doubt that your objective is on the other side of this trap door.***

This door is trapped with a greater dispel magic trap, which triggers whenever someone who can be seen by true seeing passes through the doorway.

**Greater Dispel Magic Trap;** CR 7; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset (1 round); spell effect (dispel magic, greater, 13th-level wizard); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

As soon as the door is opened, roll for initiative. With the assault on Castle Greyfist already underway, these defenders are ready for just about anything.

### **APL 6 (EL 7)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** male human Wizard 3; hp 21 each; see Appendix 1.

**Verbobonc Militia (8):** male human Warrior 1; 26 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 9)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 5; hp 39 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 1; 37 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 11)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 7; hp 57 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 2/Ranger 1; 56 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 13)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 9; hp 73 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 4/Ranger 1; 76 hp each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 15)**

**Greyfist Mages (3):** human Wizard 11; hp 89 each; see Appendix 1.

**Elf Loyalists (3):** male wood elf Barbarian 2/Fighter 4/Ranger 3; 103 hp each; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The defenders here begin combat with *potions of fly* in effect. The wizards concentrate fire with their magic missiles on one target at a time. If this does not prove effective, they fly higher than their enemies and use their *piercer cloaks* with their ray spells. One of the mages has *greased* the stairs leading up to the ballista/banner. At higher APLs, they use their Double Wand Wielder feat to fire twice as many magic missiles from two wands at once. At higher APLs they also have *greater invisibility* active when the player characters arrive.

The Loyalists fire dragonsbreath arrows at lightly armored enemies, hoping to catch them on fire. They are stationed on top of the central platform of each tower, either protecting the banner or activating the arcane ballista every other round.

**Lightning Ballista:** This magic light ballista does not use traditional ammunition. Instead, it fires a 120-foot line of lightning when triggered. Creatures in the path of the bolt take 8d6 points of

electricity damage (Reflex DC 18 half). In a stormy environment, like the weather surrounding the Assault on Castle Greyfist, a *lightning ballista* can be fired every other round. A *lightning ballista* requires no loading time or attack roll.

**Banner of Estival:** This noble standard bears the symbol of House Estival, a black sword before a red sun. It provides a +2 bonus to turn resistance to all undead within Castle Greyfist and those within 30 feet of the outer walls. This turn resistance stacks with any turn resistance that the undead may already possess.

**Banner of the Battirovka Bear:** The standard of the Battirovka Merchant Family provides a bonus for tactical combat. All allies of the Resistance within Castle Greyfist and those within 30 feet of the outer walls gain an additional +2 bonus for flanking and an additional +1d6 damage when flanking. This extra damage applies even if the attacker does not have the sneak attack class feature, and even if the flanked target is not subject to sneak attacks or critical hits.

Once the tower is secure, if any of the characters have the inclination and the means to join any other Phase II combats that are still occurring at other tables, they may do so. Otherwise, they have five rounds of in-game time to cast spells or otherwise recover from their own fight before Halmadar appears and addresses the adventurers.

The Judge should take a moment to inform the Interactive Coordinator that his table is done. Then he should wait for Phase III to begin.

### **MISSION THREE: OPERATION: EARTHEN GRASP**

The Mission Leader for Earthen Grasp is an armed drifter by the name of Bub Tympanum. Bub is a stonemason who has seen too many of his friends and family subjected to abuse at the hands of Estival's Bondsmen. Adventurers may have met Bub before if they played VER5-04: *Fools Gold*.

An Interactive Judge should brief this mission's participants in the character of Bub Tympanum.

**"So you're the volunteers for Operation Earthen Grasp. They tell me you lot are ready and willing to march right up between the Viscount's legs and take a hammer to his rocks."**

**"Well, I hope so, because that's exactly what we're going to do."**

**"Taking the fight to Halmadar is all well and good, but we've got the principal problem of getting into the castle. Now, there's a big front gate we could use, but only a fool would walk in where he's expected. We'll let those sissies on Operation: True Strike worry about the front door."**

**Us? We're going to make our own!**

**Thanks to the combined efforts of you adventurers all over town, we have everything that a quick, efficient sapper team needs.**

**Take this dire badger here, courtesy of the gnomes, add a little adamansheen to its foreclaws, and presto: a fast, efficient digger who can cut right through solid stone.**

**We take this little fellow and his buddies and we get them to dig a tunnel out of the basement of a safehouse and right up to Castle Greyfist's foundation.**

**Once there, you'll need to use the blast discs that the Family supplied. Use your good sense and keen engineering skills to set the charges for maximum effect.**

**Once you set the blast discs, you'll need a way of triggering them without having to be nearby. That's where we use these gnomish tumbleprank boxes. Just set the secret timer on the side and run like hell.**

**If you set the charges right, they should blow a hole clean through the castle foundations, and with luck, it'll bring one of the walls down, too.**

Bub recommends for a team to target the north wall of the castle, away from the main gate. If there are enough supplies and characters participating for more than one team, then they will attack the east and west sides. The south wall already has the main gate in it, so that wall should not be targeted.

**It isn't exactly professional-grade, and now that I think of it, it's pretty childish, but we do what we have to to get the job done. So what do you think? Any questions?**

Time is short and there is little time for questions. Some that the players may ask and Bub's answers are below. Bub obviously wants the mission to succeed, and he will help as best as he can.

- What are the other missions doing?

*I can't tell you. Halmadar has his spies everywhere, and the less you know the better. I can say this, though: if everyone does their job, then we'll have Halmadar and his forces surrounded and trapped in the castle courtyard.*

- What kind of resistance should we expect?

It's hard to say. Hopefully none. But the streets are riddled with Bondsmen, and they clearly know that we're up to something. Be ready for anything.

- What will we do after this?

After you've set the charges, get clear of the blast. You'll want to be far and clear. After the blast, get the diggers to come topside as fast as you can. Then join the battle to break the castle's defenses. We'll need every axe and pick that we can get.

- What's in it for me?

Are you serious? You disgust me. Go fight in the front line with True Strike.

There are three more things that Bub needs to impart to the heroes.

First, the characters should remember that while they are facing off against Bondsmen of Estival, not all of them are followers of Halmadar. If it's at all possible don't kill them unless it is necessary. Of course, we're all traitors now, so do what you see as necessary to accomplish the mission.

Second, once they reach the tower roofs, the Shadow Walkers should stay out of the courtyard. It is most important to secure the high ground perimeter of the castle, neutralize the ballista, and raise the Battirovka banner. The courtyard will be likely be teeming with wizards and if the heroes engage them, then that's a completely new problem that we don't want to deal with.

Thirdly, there is another strike team that was not mentioned before. A small group of volunteers will be undertaking a mission to bring down the *forbiddance* spell that Halmadar has encompassing the castle. If that all goes according to plan, then the forbiddance will come down and the Resistance will have a six second window to get into the area around the castle. At that point, they will raise a spell given to the Resistance by Magister Har from beyond the grave: *Har's impervious impediment*. This spell will act as our own forbiddance, preventing Halmadar from bringing in any extraplanar assistance. It will also prevent him from fleeing by extra-dimensional travel.

Once the *impervious impediment* is raised, we know that Halmadar will be ours. If it doesn't come up, then you'll know that the Command Team has failed, and the Resistance will have to fight that much harder to make sure that Halmadar is destroyed.

At this point all of the players undertaking Operation: Earthen Grasp should be fully briefed. Bub wishes

them all good luck and the blessings of Garl Glittergold, and he sends them off.

The players should divide into their separate teams, go to their tables and get started with their mission, below.

### **Digging and Demolition**

Each team is given an equal number of the blast discs, gnomish tumbleprank boxes, and dire badgers. Each team is also given two adamansheens for each dire badger.

**Setting out from the Scythe and Sheaf, you make your way quickly to an abandoned house which has been secured ahead of you by Resistance commandos.**

**The two rogues standing watch seem relieved to see you. They lead the way to the basement and step aside so that you to get to work.**

1. Each dire badger should have both of their front claws treated with a vial of adamansheen.

2. Next, the party needs to get the badgers to dig a tunnel to the foundations of Castle Greyfist. This is a simple matter and can be accomplished in a number of different ways:

- *Handle Animal* (DC 10): The badgers have already been trained to work, so commanding them to do this is fairly easy.
- *Speak with animals*: By using this spell, the badgers can be instructed exactly what to do.
- If players devise another, more creative way of accomplishing this (ie. dangling a carrot on a stick in front of each badger), it should be permitted.

**In a flurry of scratching claws and flying pebbles, the badgers set off through the solid rock toward the Viscount's stronghold.**

For each dire badger digging, the tunnel toward the target site is five feet wide. For example, if there are three badgers available for a team, the tunnel will be 15 feet wide.

It will take approximately two minutes of digging to reach the foundations of the castle, but the characters will need to do their best to stop digging directly under the castle wall.

Characters with the stonemasonry racial ability (dwarves and deep halflings) will intuitively know when the badgers have gone far enough and should stop digging.

If there is no dwarf or deep halfling in the party, then the party will have to rely on a DC 20 Survival or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check.

If this check is failed, the party overshoots or undershoots (equal chance) the target location by five feet for every two points by which their check has fallen short of 20. For example, if the party's Survival check is a 14, then their party has either overshoot or undershot the target by 30 feet.

When they stop digging, the party must set the blast disc charges. This is represented by a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check. Other Profession and Craft skills may be applicable here, as well, if players volunteer them. Unlike usual Knowledge checks, characters may assist one another on the checks for setting the explosive charges.

The higher the DC reached, the more destruction will be wrought on the castle wall when the charges go off.

Secret modifiers to the demolition check:

- Set charges at the proper site: +10
- Each 10 feet off from the target site: -2
- Each badger used in digging the tunnel: +2
- Each blast disc used after the fourth: +2
- A kobold character assists on the check: +5

The check result indicates the size of the gap that the explosion will create in the castle wall. For each point on the check, the explosion creates a 2-foot wide hole in the castle wall. Therefore a check of DC 20 will create a 40-foot gap in the wall.

Keep the result of this check a secret from the players to prevent them from meta-gaming their performance in setting the charges.

3. Once the blast discs are set, the party needs to set the gnomish tumbleprank box to spring open, triggering the blast discs.

This is a simple matter and requires no check. But ask the players how long they are setting the timer for.

### **The Explosion**

Depending on the circumstances of their escape from the tunnel, the party may witness the explosion first hand. The Judge is trusted to adapt this to circumstances as needed in order to create the most cinematically satisfying image for the party.

If the adventurers wait in the tunnel for the charges to go off, describe the sound of the explosion, a blast of

heat, and a loud rumbling followed by a blinding cloud of dust and debris.

If the party plans to be above ground for the explosion, then they will first face the combat below. Regardless of when the gnomish tumbleprank box is due to trigger the charges, have it happen just as the combat with Pyuss and his goblin minions ends. After all, gnomish technology is not always reliable and it's simply more cinematic to punctuate the combat with a massive explosion signifying a job well-done.

The adventurers should be treated to a spectacular explosion that sends chunks of stone into the air and causes the castle wall to collapse, opening the way for Resistance ground troops.

In the wake of the explosion, tell the players the results of their labors and the extent of the damage (see above). If the circumstances warrant it, it is perfectly acceptable to announce the explosion to the entire room so that the feel of a single battlefield is reinforced. If a large hole has been broken in the wall, the Judge should encourage the players at his table to announce to the room the result (for example, "The north wall has collapsed! Earthen Grasp is victorious!").

### **Returning to the Surface**

Regardless of where or when they come out, as the party returns to the surface, one of Halmadar's agents attacks them.

*As you emerge into the Verbobonc night, the sounds of battle ring out from Castle Greyfist. The sky is lit up by magic missiles and lightning bolts erupting from the castle walls. The battle there is well underway.*

*Suddenly, a young man wearing a brass crown comes around a nearby corner. He is followed by a small horde of goblins, each wearing a tunic of the Black Rose Company or the Wanderers of Coldeven.*

*Spotting you, the man sneers, points in your direction, and cries out a command: "Kill them!"*

Anyone who succeeds on a DC 25 Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (local-VTF) check, and any characters present who played VER2-04 Goblin Crown, instantly recognize the Crown of Kurotha. With a DC 20 Intelligence check, they can recall the essential powers of the crown. Refer to the Crown of Kurotha's entry in **Appendix 4** for this information.

**Creatures:** Pyuss is the younger brother of a Vecnan named Davout who wore the Crown of Kurotha in 592 CY. Halmadar sought him out and granted him the honor of bearing the Goblin Crown. Pyuss has converted many commoners of the city into goblins

over the past few weeks, including the armed drifters and Wanderers of Coldeven that appear with him here. Now he commands them to kill all those who oppose Vecna and Halmadar.

### **APL 6 (EL 7)**

**Goblins (8):** male goblin Warrior 1; hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Goblin Scrounger:** male goblin Rogue 3; hp 18; see Appendix 1.

**Pyuss of the Cult of Vecna:** male human Sorcerer 6; 21 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 9)**

**Goblins (8):** male goblin Warrior 1; hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Goblin Scrounger:** male goblin Rogue 3; hp 11 each; see Appendix 1.

**Goblin Prophet of Vecna:** male goblin Cleric 5; hp 43

**Pyuss of the Cult of Vecna:** male human Sorcerer 8; 27 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 11)**

**Goblins (8):** male goblin Warrior 1; hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Goblin Thief:** male goblin Rogue 7; hp 37 each; see Appendix 1.

**Goblin Prophet of Vecna:** male goblin Cleric 5; hp 43, see Appendix 1.

**Pyuss of the Cult of Vecna:** male human Sorcerer 10; 33 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 13)**

**Goblins (8):** male goblin Warrior 1; hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Goblin Thief (2):** male goblin Rogue 7; hp 37 each; see Appendix 1.

**Goblin Prophet of Vecna (2):** male goblin Cleric 5; hp 43, see Appendix 1.

**Pyuss of the Cult of Vecna:** male human Sorcerer 12; 44 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 15)**

**Goblins (8):** male goblin Warrior 1; hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Goblin Thief (2):** male goblin Rogue 7; hp 37 each; see Appendix 1.

**Goblin Prophet of Vecna (2):** male goblin Cleric 5; hp 43, see Appendix 1.

**Pyuss of the Cult of Vecna:** male human Sorcerer 14; 51 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** Pyuss uses his *potion of fly* (already active) to keep his distance from the adventurers. The goblin rogue (or rogues) begins combat having been made

*invisible* by Pyuss, and he uses his poisoned blade to sneak attack any weak-looking characters. Pyuss begins combat with a *mass suggestion*, following it up with an attempt to *polymorph* an adventurer. After that, he turns to damage-dealing spells. On the round following any successful polymorph, the polymorphed character attacks a companion.

**Treasure:** Before the heroes depart to join the battle, find out if any of the characters are looting the bodies of the fallen. If so, find out what gear they take and whether that gear includes the crown that Pyuss is wearing.

The crown is made of brass and is inlaid with four dark green gemstones. It radiates a strong aura of evil but does not detect as magical.

The moment that the crown is removed from Pyuss's head, all of the goblins revert to their natural forms.

If any characters put on the Goblin Crown, see the Section on the **Crown of Kurotha** in **Appendix 4: DM Aids** for the ramifications of this action.

**Development:** When the characters are finished here, they should move on to the battle already raging on the walls of Castle Greyfist.

If any of them have the inclination and the means to join the Phase Two combats that are still occurring, they may do so. Otherwise, they have five rounds of in-game time to cast spells or otherwise recover from their own fight before Halmadar appears and addresses the adventurers.

The Judge should take a moment to inform the Interactive Coordinator that his table is done. Then he should wait for Phase Three to begin.

## **PHASE II: OPERATION: TRUE STRIKE**

The Mission Leader for True Strike is Sir Dainurkell, a dim but zealous half-orc paladin of Heironeous. Adventurers who played in VER8-02: *Crypt Things* recognize Dainurkell as one of the three adventurers who were released from the *mirror of life trapping* which also held former-Viscount Langard.

An Interactive Judge should collectively brief this mission's participants in the character of Dainurkell.

Operation True Strike comprises the bulk of the assault. True Strike will take the direct route, engaging the castle gate's contingent of soldiers until the portcullises are opened or the walls are destroyed.



**“Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Dainurkell of Heironeous, and I am proud to stand with the brave volunteers of Operation: True Strike.**

**We are the strength of the assault. Without us, all those frail thieves skulking around in the sewers on Operation: Shadow Walk wouldn’t stand a chance.**

**Where subtlety may fail, we bring the unquestionable might of steel. As men of honor, we will take the direct approach.**

**Our objective is the main gate of Castle Greyfist. There, a host of the Viscount’s best troops await. They are former Mounted Borderers and former Knights of the faithful Defender.**

**These are our former allies, duped by Halmadar’s vile lies. But the time for diplomacy has passed. We must move in and neutralize them as quickly as possible.**

**Within a minute, maybe less, the men and women of Operation: Storm Tower will open the two portcullises, giving us access to the courtyard beyond.**

**If they should fail, Operation: Earthen Grasp is attempting to provide us with an alternate path for our charge.**

**Now remember: Halmadar has a forbiddance spell around the castle. We will approach, and when the spell is negated, we’ll have only a six second window to get within the barrier before Operation: Heart Ripper activates Har’s impervious impediment, locking down extra-dimensional travel within the castle. So we will have to be swift.**

**Time is short, but do you have any questions?”**

There is little time for questions. Some that the players may ask and Dainurkell’s answers are below. Dainurkell obviously wants the mission to succeed, and he will help as best as he can.

- What are the other missions doing?

I can’t tell you precisely. Halmadar has his spies everywhere, and the less you know the better. I can say this, though: if everyone does their job, then we’ll have Halmadar and his forces surrounded and trapped in the castle courtyard.

- What kind of resistance should we expect?

We know that many of the knights posted at the main gate are skilled in mounted combat, so be ready to defend against a charge.

- What will we do after this?

After we’ve fought through the front gate’s defenders, we will make for the courtyard. We’ve been warned that there are a

great number of mages within, however, and the command team has decided it would be wisest if we secure the outer defenses before moving in on the courtyard as a consolidated action.

- What’s in it for me?

If you are looking for monetary reward, then you can just stay here in the cellar. I don’t need to be worrying about whether you’ve been bought off or not. I don’t want any mercenaries skulking behind any of these other dedicated soldiers.

There are three things that Dainurkell needs to be sure to impart to the heroes.

First, the characters should remember that while they are facing off against Bondsmen of Estival, not all of them are followers of Halmadar. If it’s at all possible, don’t kill them unless it is necessary. Of course, we’re all traitors now, so do what you see as necessary to accomplish the mission.

Second, once they breach the castle gate, the True Strike operatives should stay out of the courtyard. It is important that the various attack groups secure their ground and allow the resistance to regroup before tackling the challenges within the castle itself. The courtyard will be likely be teeming with wizards and if the heroes engage them, then that’s a completely new problem that we don’t want to deal with on our own.

Thirdly, Owain will remind the adventurers that if all goes according to plan, then the *forbiddance* will come down and the Resistance will have a six second window to get into the area around the castle. At that point, they will raise a spell given to the Resistance by Magister Har from beyond the grave: *Har’s impervious impediment*. This spell will act as our own *forbiddance*, preventing Halmadar from bringing in any extraplanar assistance. It will also prevent him from fleeing by extra-dimensional travel.

Once the *impervious impediment* is raised, we know that Halmadar will be ours. If it doesn’t come up, then you’ll know that the Command Team has failed, and the Resistance will have to fight that much harder to make sure that Halmadar is destroyed.

At this point all of the players undertaking Operation True Strike should be fully briefed. Dainurkell wishes them all the blessings of the Invincible One, and he sends them off.

The players should divide into teams, go to their tables and get started with their mission, below.

**Operation: True Strike boldly marches out toward the heart of Verbobonc City. Castle Greyfist looms before you,**

*its sheer walls rising toward the darkening sky. Beneath the massive gatehouse, the two portcullises – one of steel and the other of darkwood stand closed.*

Make sure that the party has an opportunity to cast any pre-combat buffing spells, and obtain a marching order from the players before continuing.

*On the grounds before the gate, resolutely standing guard, are a line of cavalry and foot soldiers. The holy symbols of Heironeous, Rao, and Saint Cuthbert are all well-represented here.*

*“Halt!” calls out a cavalier bearing a shield emblazoned with a lightning bolt. “The rightful lord of Verbobonc remains under the protection of the Knights of Luna! Turn back, unwitting agents of Halmadar, and abandon your uprising. We have no wish to harm you, but you will not pass this gate!”*

*Without warning, an almost invisible dome over the castle blinks for a moment and then vanishes completely. “The forbiddance – it’s down!” calls out an elven Wanderer of Coldeven.*

Offer the players a chance to do something. Most likely, they will move in beyond where the barrier once stood.

**A battle cry erupts around you: “Remember Eglath!”**

Roll for initiative.

### **APL 6 (EL 7)**

**Raoan Paladins (2):** male half-orc Paladin 5; hp 49 each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8 (EL 9)**

**Raoan Paladins (2):** male half-orc Paladin 5; hp 49 each; see Appendix 1.

**Knight of Luna:** male human Cleric 5/Ordained Champion 2; 66 hp; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10 (EL 11)**

**Knights of Luna (2):** male human Cleric 5/Ordained Champion 2; 66 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Knight of Luna Lieutenant:** female human Cleric 5/Ordained Champion 4; hp 111; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12 (EL 13)**

**Knight of Luna Lieutenants (2):** female human Cleric 5/Ordained Champion 4; hp 111; see Appendix 1.

**Knight of Luna Sergeant:** male human Cleric 6/Ordained Champion 5; hp 144; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (EL 15)**

**Knight of Luna Sergeant (4):** male human Cleric 6/Ordained Champion 5; hp 144; see Appendix 1.

**Creatures:** The knights present here have all been duped by Lord Estival/Halmadar. They truly believe that he is a rightful, if harsh, lord. Similarly, they know the debt that Verbobonc owes to its adventurers.

## **PHASE III: HELL UNLEASHED**

On a balcony of the inner keep of Castle Greyfist, Viscount Estival reveals himself to truly be Halmadar the Cruel. He calls all of the minions of the Whispered One to his aid and commands them to destroy the rebels once and for all before vanishing into the keep.

The Interactive Coordinator should read the following aloud to the assembled players:

*All eyes turn to the balcony of the inner keep. The cry goes up from the assembled combatants: “Estival! The Viscount appears!”*

*The figure studies the crowd, and is suddenly consumed in writhing black flame, leaving a formless gloom in the shape of a man. When the figure raises his arms, a sudden wave of pressure dulls all sound, except for a flat hateful whisper that carries across the courtyard.*

*“Attend! Halmadar speaks!”*

*“My master Vecna prizes secrets above all, for from knowledge flows the power to dominate.”*

*“Miserable adventurers, know now that all your secrets are compromised. Nothing you have planned, nothing you have hoped or feared is hidden from me.”*

*“I watched you build towns, shape institutions, lay plans, strive to understand your brief lives and place on this Oerth. I impart to you this last shard of knowledge, before your destruction: Everything is meaningless. All you build, all you shape, all you ponder will be swept away. The pathetic sparks of your minds will die, extinguished in the infinite gulfs of uncaring time.”*

*“I do find amusement in the fact that it took you so long to realize that Wellborn Estival was not the kindly lord he seemed. I hope you enjoyed the extra gold I gave you – I know I benefited greatly from those transactions.”*

*“The secrets you unwittingly shared with me soon will power my ascension to become the Proxy of Vecna. Regrettably, none of you will be alive to witness it.”*

*“And so I call forth the legions of Magic, Deception, and Death.” The clouds roil and a vortex of dark energies*

*descends from the storm clouds, spiraling down to touch the roof of Castle Greyfist's inner bailey.*

*Halمدار the Cruel turns his back and walks away into the keep, disappearing from sight. Final words resound in his absence:*

*"Annihilate them."*

*As the forces of evil emerge from the castle, the Resistance cry goes up across the battlefield: "Regroup! Regroup! Prepare for counter attack!"*

Players should muster themselves quickly into APL-appropriate and balanced adventuring parties. Each party of six adventurers will find themselves defending a particular section of the castle grounds.

### **Preparations for Battle**

Before jumping into the fight for control of Castle Greyfist, all Interactive Judges should be very familiar with some special rules that apply to this portion of the Battle Interactive.

#### **Continuous Spell Effects**

In addition to Har's impervious impediment (detailed in the adventure preparations section at the beginning of the scenario), Castle greyfist has been unhallowed. All undead appearing in this Battle Interactive have +2 turn resistance in addition to any natural turn resistance they may possess.

#### **Castle Greyfist as the Battlefield**

Refer to the attached map of Castle Greyfist and seat tables from the highest APL beginning at table 1 at the Main Gate. Proceed in assigning tables according to descending APL in the order of the areas listed on the map. If there are more tables than there are areas, the lowest level heroes find themselves outside the walls of Castle Greyfist attempting to defeat Halمدار's minions before they wreak havoc on the City.

#### **Moving Across the Battlefield**

All areas of the Castle Greyfist map are contiguous. Characters may move from one area of the battlefield to another simply by moving off of the battle map of a given table and onto the corresponding area of the next table's map.

Note that it is not necessary to describe all of the rules that follow to a player in any great detail. As long as the Table Judges all know how battlefield movement works, it is enough to let players know that characters can move between adjacent, contiguous portions of the larger battlefield.

Judges should be familiar with which tables have been assigned each of the areas adjacent to their portion of the map so that when a character moves off of their table's battle mat, the Judge can direct the player to the appropriate table featuring the castle area that their character has moved into.

When a player character moves into a new area of the battlefield, he should go to the appropriate table and inform the Judge there of his character's initiative count and from which area he is arriving.

The new table's Judge will inform the player which edge of the battle mat his or her character is arriving on and will immediately insert the newly-arrived character into the table's initiative order.

If a character has any remaining movement when coming into a new area, they may use that movement when they first arrive, starting from the appropriate edge of the battle mat. A newly arriving character cannot, however, perform any other kind of action (except immediate) until their initiative count comes up in the order.

#### **Affecting Other Parts of the Battlefield Without Moving Across the Battlefield**

Ranged attacks are a basic part of the Dungeons & Dragons game. Firing an arrow or hurtling a *fireball* one hundred feet away are perfectly legitimate tactics in a large scale war like this.

If players wish to affect other tables with long ranged spells and other effects, they are welcome to do so. They need only tell their Judge what they wish to do. The Judge should go to the table that will be affected and politely inform the Judge there of what his player has done.

With siege weapons in place on two of the four towers of Castle Greyfist, this kind of co-operation is not only expected but encouraged.

#### **Monsters on the Battlefield**

Just as player characters can move from one area of the battlefield to the next, so too can Halمدار's forces. They work under the same rules and restrictions as above.

In most instances, however, they do not take advantage of this mobility. Due to the nature of the Living Greyhawk game and the tiered nature of the encounters in this phase, the monsters respect the boundaries of the table that they begin on.

Each set of monsters has a 'home' table to which they are assigned according to APL. This is where they begin, and this will be where they fight the characters.

There are only two circumstances in which the monsters break this 'non-roaming' rule.

1. The first instance arises with Halmadar's Elite Commanders (see below). These enemies are designed to roam the battlefield. They have no 'home' table to which they belong and in fact are intended to strike one party and then move on to another.
2. The second exception to the 'non-roaming' rule occurs when a monster is left on its 'home' table with no player characters to attack. This could happen if a party retreats from Castle Greyfist or if every party member runs to aid another area (or multiple areas) of the battlefield. This could also happen if a wave of monsters utterly defeats the party that they were fighting.

### **Cascading Defeat**

This second exception reinforces the need for every party in this battle to defeat the enemies that rise to face them. If they do not, it is likely that the parties making up the Resistance will collapse one by one as the enemy forces snowball.

For example, if an APL 14 party fails to defeat the monsters that threaten it, and the high-level heroes are all killed or routed, then all of the remaining monsters at their table will migrate to other adjacent areas of the battlefield, one of which is likely an APL 12 table facing an APL 12 threat.

These new monsters could prove to be the extra edge that makes the second table's battle un-winnable. When those heroes are killed or forced to flee, then all of the monsters on the second table (and any remaining from the first) will move on to other tables. Continuing in this manner, it becomes very possible for the failure of a single table to cause the defeat of the entire Resistance army.

That's war.

But also note the two 'safety nets' mentioned in the preparatory notes of this Interactive under the heading "Avoiding Death and returning from the Dead".

### **The Nuts and Bolts of Monster Movement**

As was mentioned above, monsters adhere to the same rules of moving from table to table as player characters do. They can only move to a contingent area of the battlefield; they maintain their initiative count, and

they may not make a standard action until their turn comes up again at the new table.

Additionally, (except for the Elite Commanders), they have standardized guidelines when they do move between tables.

After a monster defeats or drives off a party of adventurers, it should move to an adjacent area of the battle whose designated APL is closest to its 'home' APL. If two adjacent battle areas are equally close in threat level, the monsters move to the area that is the closest in proximity to their position on the battlefield.

If multiple monsters have defeated a party at a table, they do not all need to move on in the same direction, and may very likely split up and go to two (or more) different tables.

When victorious monsters move on to other parts of the battlefield, the monsters' Judge should inform the Judge at the new table of the monsters that are joining the battle. Follow the same rules that apply to player characters for arrival location, initiative, and actions.

The only difference is that a Judge may have to pass control of the monster (along with relevant information like current hit points and spells already cast or active) to the new table's Judge if his victorious monsters have split up.

If the Judge of a roaming monster can remain playing the monster, rather than passing it over to the new table's Judge, that is encouraged.

### **Halmadar's Elite Commanders**

In addition to the creatures listed below by APL, Halmadar has retained the services of three elite commanders in his schemes.

The first is a mysterious ethergaunt wizard known as **Ts'tar'chk the Red**. Ts'tar'chk is a master of knowledge and commands unparalleled arcane power.

The second commander is **Virlym the Bleeder**, the kobold assassin who killed Sir Peri Swan before the Battle of Validia. Virlym is a paragon of duplicity.

The third and final commander is a figure from Verbobonc's past: Sir Willow Swan. Once a knight who upheld the highest ideals of the Viscounty, he met his demise in Highfolk several years ago. Now he returns in Verbobonc's darkest hour as the fearsome **Lord Willow Swan**, Death Knight of Verbobonc, atop his abyssal drake mount Ashreaver. Lord Willow is the embodiment of death.

These three elite commanders roam the entire battlefield during Phase Three. Each should be run by a

Judge whose sole role in Phase Three will be to create as much chaos and death as possible until their elite commander is defeated.

Since these threats exist independently of APL and EL in this phase, it is expected that some adventurers will need to break off from the threats at their table to deal with each commander.

The tactics for Virlym, Ts'tar'chk, and Lord Willow Swan are detailed in their statistics blocks in Appendix 1.

Ts'tar'chk the Red and Virlym begin Phase Three *invisible* and hiding on opposite sides of the castle courtyard. Lord Willow Swan makes his grand entrance approximately ten minutes into Phase III. See "The Return of Willow Swan" below.

### **The Battle for Verboobnc Begins**

Enough with the explanations; it's time to fight!

**Creatures:** Each table will face two waves of enemies, appropriate to their APL. For high-level tables whose APL falls closer to 15 than to 14, an additional tier of "APL 14 (Challenging)" has been included, for use at the Judge's discretion.

The waves of creatures are described below.

Tactics for each group have been loosely delineated. But since each portion of the castle contains different terrain features, no two tables will have the same experience.

Depending on the terrain of his table, the Judge will have to describe how the waves of enemies approach the party. Incorporeal undead may fly in from out of the sky or rise from out of the ground. There are a number of buildings within the castle walls. Enemies can emerge from any of them except for the main keep. The contents of the inner bailey is the subject of VER8-06: Noble Ambitions, and should not be touched on in this Battle Interactive.

Note that tables fighting on the towers may have arcane ballistas at their disposal. Note also that for tables with which include the towers, the enemies (where possible) will be attempting to wrest control of the ballistas away from the Resistance. Additionally, intelligent enemies will also be attempting to pull down the Battirovka and Back Rose standards and re-raise the banners of Estival. This should add a dynamic element to the parties who are holding the towers.

### **WAVE 1**

### **APL 6: WAVE 1 (EL 8)**

**Allips (2):** hp 26 each; see *Monster Manual* page 10.

**Plague Walkers (2):** hp 42 each, see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Cleric:** male human Cleric 5; hp 36, see Appendix 1.

### **APL 8: WAVE 1 (EL 10)**

**Bane Wraith:** hp 52; see Appendix 1.

**Mageripper Swarms (2):** hp 55 each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 10: WAVE 1 (EL 12)**

**Bane Wraiths (2):** hp 52; see Appendix 1.

**Vecnan Priest:** male human Cleric 10; hp 86; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 12: WAVE 1 (EL 14)**

**Ultraloth:** hp 171; see Appendix 1.

**Nycaloth:** hp 161; see Appendix 1.

**Mezzoloths (2):** hp 95 each; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14: WAVE 1 (EL 16)**

**Entropic Reaper:** 142 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Thought of Vecna:** male human Cleric 14; hp 100; see Appendix 1.

**Ultraloth:** hp 171; see Appendix 1.

### **APL 14 (CHALLENGING): WAVE 1 (EL 17)**

**Entropic Reaper:** 142 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Thought of Vecna:** male human Cleric 14; hp 100; see Appendix 1.

**Ultraloth:** hp 171; see Appendix 1.

**Nycaloths (4):** hp 161 each, see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** See the appropriate APL below for basics, but the differing terrain on each area of the castle prevents detailed tactics from being delineated in advance.

**APL 6, Wave 1:** The allips and the plague walkers rush the party, providing a front line behind which the cleric can safely cast from a distance. If the plague walkers fall below 25% of their original hit points, they activate their putrid burst. This does not damage their incorporeal allies the allips.

**APL 8, Wave 1:** The bane wraith approaches the party disguised as a Wanderer of Coldeven running away from the mageripper swarms. He looks for party clerics and asks for healing. When he is close enough he attempts to surreptitiously drain Wisdom. If there is no cleric present, the bane wraith targets the weakest looking party member with Strength drain. The mageripper swarms target the enemy with the most magical auras.

**APL 10, Wave 1:** The bane wraiths approach the party disguised as Black Rose Company armed drifters fleeing from the Vecnan Priest. They employ the same tactic as the bane wraith in APL 8. The Vecnan opens by activating his robe of bones to create more allies. He then hurtles spells from behind this front line, avoiding melee as much as possible.

**APL 12, Wave 1:** The ultraloth hangs back behind the Mezzoloth troops. It fires a *quicken scorching ray* every round and stays out of melee combat if possible, relying instead on its spell-like abilities. The mezzoloths live only to protect the ultraloth. The nycaloth attacks from the air to gain a bonus for higher ground. It rips into enemies with its battle axe and claws. If both claws hit, it can start a grapple as a free action. If its target weighs less than 800 pounds, it will use its Liftoff ability to carry off the victim. Depending on whether the ultraloth needs protecting, the nycaloth may leave the battlefield for a round to gain more altitude before dropping the grappled character.

**APL 14, Wave 1:** The ultraloth and the Thought of Vecna begin combat with area of effect spells to channel the heroes toward the Reaper, who acts as a front line to protect the casters. The ultraloth fires a *quicken scorching ray* every round and stays out of melee combat if possible, relying instead on its spell-like abilities. Likewise, the cleric turns to the power of his dark god, rather than engaging in melee.

**APL 14 (Challenging), Wave 1:** As APL 14, with the nycaloths providing additional muscle to block the party from attacking the casters (as the nycaloth does at APL 10).

### The Return of Willow Swan

Once all of the tables involved in the Interactive have begun Phase Three and are approximately two rounds into combat, the Interactive Coordinator or the Judge designated to play Lord Willow Swan should silence the room and read or paraphrase the following:

*Overhead, the dark clouds part, and silhouetted against the two full moons of Luna and Celene is a terrifying figure. A huge, red, winged serpent swoops out of the sky. Astride this terrible beast is a knight clad in black armor. From out of his antlered helmet gleam two piercing red eyes, and his hollow voice echoes across the battlefield: "Look on me and despair, for I have returned! Lord Willow Swan, Death Knight of Verbobonc!" The draconic mount roars and descends to join the battle.*

At this point all Table Judges should ask their players to make Will saves against the frightful presence of the

death knight's draconic mount. Any other creatures under the control of a player (mounts, familiars, summoned animals, etc) must also make the save. The Will save DC for this fear effect is 17.

- Creatures who succeed in making the DC 17 Will save are unaffected by it.
- Creatures who are immune to fear are unaffected by it.
- Creatures with 10 or more class levels or Hit Dice are unaffected by it.
- Creatures that fail the save and have between 5 and 9 class levels or Hit Dice are shaken for 4d6 rounds.
- Creatures that fail the save and have 4 or fewer class levels or Hit Dice are panicked for 4d6 rounds.

After the heroes defeat one wave of monsters, they will have 1d4 rounds before another group of monsters arrives. This time can be used as the players see fit.

The Judge may feel free to elaborate the pervasive battle occurring around the characters, but time is of the essence in this event, and the fast pace should still be upheld between these waves of the battle.

## WAVE 2

### APL 6: WAVE 2 (EL 9)

**Corruptor of Fate:** hp 52; see Appendix 1.

**Dread Guards (3):** hp 27 each; see Appendix 1.

**Gloom Golem:** hp 74; see Appendix 1.

### APL 8: WAVE 2 (EL 11)

**Nycaloth:** hp 161; see Appendix 1.

**Mezzoloths (2):** hp 95 each; see Appendix 1

### APL 10: WAVE 2 (EL 13)

**Shadesteel Golem:** hp 119; see Appendix 1.

**Greater Shadows (5):** hp 58 each, see *Monster Manual* page 221.

### APL 12: WAVE 2 (EL 15)

**Advanced Vitreous Drinker:** hp 117; see Appendix 1.

**Entropic Reaper:** 142 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Voor Dreadful Lashers (3):** hp 142 each, see Appendix 1.

## **APL 14: WAVE 2 (EL 17)**

**Greater Shadesteel Golems (2):** hp 178 each, see Appendix 1.

**Dread Wraiths (3):** hp 104 each, see *Monster Manual* page 258.

## **APL 14 (CHALLENGING): WAVE 2 (EL 18)**

**Greater Shadesteel Golems (2):** hp 178 each, see Appendix 1.

**Dread Wraiths (3):** hp 104 each, see *Monster Manual* page 258.

**Advanced Vitreous Drinker:** hp 117; see Appendix 1.

**Entropic Reaper:** 142 hp; see Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** All enemies in this phase of the Assault on Castle Greyfist fight to the death, unless otherwise noted in their statistics block. Also note the basic tactics by APL, below.

**APL 6, Wave 2:** Unaffected by the gloom golem's aura of crushing despair, the dread guards immediately move into melee. The gloom golem uses its spiked chain to attack the party from the second rank. Note that the golem's touch of despair works through any weapons that it wields. The corruptor of fate moves to flank with one of its allies. If it hits in melee, it can *bestow curse* as part of the attack.

**APL 8, Wave 2:** The mezzoloths move directly into melee. The nycaloth attacks from the air to gain a bonus for higher ground. It rips into enemies with its battleaxe and claws. If both claws hit, it can start a grapple as a free action. If its target weighs less than 800 pounds, it will use its Liftoff ability to carry off the victim, dropping it from 60 feet the next round.

**APL 10, Wave 2:** The shadesteel golem charges the nearest opponent. The greater shadows encircle the party and engage, staying within 40 feet of the golem, spring attacking on the second round. On the third round, as a free action, the shadesteel golem releases its negative energy pulse, damaging enemies within 40 feet, and healing any injured shadows. The golem continues slamming and releasing its pulse every 1d4+1 rounds. The shadows spring attack.

**APL 12, Wave 2:** The dreadful lashers move into melee, attacking from thirty feet away. The entropic reaper positions itself in front of the lashers, forcing the heroes to move through threatened area in order to engage it. The vitreous drinker attempts to avoid melee at first, using its spell-like abilities. Any enemies,

within 30 feet are subject to its horrific gaze. Note that the drinker's allies here are not affected by this.

**APL 14 (Challenging), Wave 2:** The greater shadesteel golems stagger their initial negative energy bursts. Note that this heals all of the golem's allies in this wave, and since they are aware of this, the forces here remain within 40 feet of the golem at all times. The entropic reaper moves in to attack light fighters and rogues, using the dread wraiths to flank when possible. The vitreous drinker attempts to avoid melee at first, using its spell-like abilities and magic items. Any enemies, within 30 feet are subject to its horrific gaze. Note that the drinker's allies here are not affected by this.

## **CONCLUSION**

At the end of the event, the Interactive Coordinator should assemble all players who participated in the event and read the appropriate conclusion below.

### Overwhelming Victory

If Halmadar's forces are utterly defeated, the Interactive Coordinator should read the following at the end of the event.

*The defenses of the castle have been broken!*

*As the last remaining outsiders and undead are destroyed, a screech rings out overhead. Leading a flight of reinforcements atop a black-feathered griffon is Lord Simon Milinous. At his side atop a pegasus is his bride the Lady Eleanor. "For Vicounty and Victory!" they cry.*

*The Milinous noble guards take over the front line of the battle, forcing the few remaining Vecnans to run to ground.*

*The battle is certainly won, but as night closes in, Halmadar's agents are not yet ready to surrender. Skirmishes and ambushes continue to arise in the city, endangering the Resistance's tenuous hold on Castle Greyfist. And the inner keep, where Halmadar is trapped, has yet to be breached.*

*The tyrant's plan to become the Proxy of Vecna has not yet come to fruition, but time is running out, and rest is not a luxury that can be afforded.*

*Tonight Halmadar the Cruel must die.*

**To be Concluded...**

### Utter Defeat

If Halmadar's forces kill or rout all of the Player Characters, the Interactive Coordinator should read the following at the end of the event.

*The defenses of the castle have held!*

*As the last remaining heroes flee from battle, a screech rings out overhead. Leading a flight of reinforcements atop a black-feathered griffon is Lord Simon Milinous. At his side atop a pegasus is his bride the Lady Eleanor. "For Vicounty and Victory!" they cry.*

*The Milinous noble guards take over as rear guard to cover the retreating Resistance forces.*

*The battle is certainly lost, but as night closes in, it is clear that agents of the Resistance are not yet ready to surrender. Skirmishes and ambushes continue to arise in the city, continuously harrying Halmadar's hold on Castle Greyfist. Though the warlord is confined in the inner keep, the magics holding him there will not last forever.*

*The tyrant's plan to become the Proxy of Vecna has not yet come to fruition, but time is running out, and rest is not a luxury that can be afforded.*

*Tonight Halmadar the Cruel must die.*

*To be Concluded...*



## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

All characters participating in this interactive circle the APL equal to their character level (round down if character level is odd). Each character earns the maximum amount of XP for the APL played. A judge should feel free to award less than this amount if the character did not substantially participate in the event.

## TREASURE SUMMARY

All characters participating in this interactive circle the APL equal to their character level (round down if character level is odd). Each character earns the maximum amount of gp for the APL played, from his or her share of the treasure gained from the adventure

## ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

**Battlefield Triage:** You have been slain on the field of battle, but the Viscounty still needs your help. Canoness YDey herself arranges for a True Resurrection to be cast on you and covers half of the 25,000gp material component cost. Any remaining cost may additionally be reduced by 1000gp per expenditure of influence point and the influence points may be spent from source save for House Estival. Mark down below the total number of influence points used and the final cost to the character.

•••Remaining cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks of the Church:** For your assistance with the assault on Castle Greyfist you receive 6 influence points with one of the following churches: church of St. Cuthbert, church of Trithereon, church of Pelor, church of Moradin.

Circle the appropriate church, cross off this entry when the influence points are used.

**Owned by Iuz:** You have invoked the name of Iuz to save yourself. Now that Iuz has acted to save you, he expects you to act to serve him. On any attack roll, skill check, SR check, or damage roll you make against a follower of Iuz, the god imposes a -8 penalty to your roll. Refusing this penalty imposes a harsh punishment; the first time you refuse your alignment shifts twice on the Lawful/Chaotic axis towards

chaotic. If your alignment is already neutral or chaotic, remaining shifts occur on the Good/Evil axis. For example: A Neutral good character would shift to a chaotic neutral character. Please note that this has serious repercussions on characters that use divinely granted abilities. Note the character's current alignment\_\_\_\_\_

### **Item Access**

#### **APL 4**

- ❖ *Healing belt* (Frequency; adventure 750 gp; MIC)

#### **APL 6 (as APL 4 plus)**

- ❖ *Gloves of the starry sky* (Frequency; adventure 1100 gp; MIC)

#### **APL 8 (as APL 4-6 plus)**

- ❖ *Piercer cloak* (Frequency; adventure; 700 gp; MIC)

#### **APL 10 (as APL 4-8 plus)**

- ❖ *Bands of the blood rage* (Frequency; adventure; 2,600 gp; MIC)

#### **APL 12 (as APL 4-10 plus)**

- ❖ *Ring of spell battle* (Frequency; adventure; 12,000 gp; MIC)

#### **APL 14 (as APL 4-12 plus)**

- ❖ *Ring of greater counterspells* (Frequency; adventure; 16,000 gp; MIC)

### **OTHER CERTIFICATES:**

In addition, the following special certificate should be distributed as necessary.

To any character who puts on the Crown of Kurotha:

#### **Cursed by the Goblin Crown**

You have placed the Crown of Kurotha on your head. In doing so, you have permanently lost 2 points of Strength.

A thing of darkest evil, the Crown grants the following benefits and powers, as if cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer with save DCs equal to 20 + your Charisma bonus:

Continuous: SR 10 + your HD

Continuous: Immunity to poison

Continuous: *Dominate goblinoids* – all goblinoids within 300 feet of you, as the *dominate person* spell cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer

3/day: *mass suggestion*

3/day: *goblinoid polymorph* – as baleful polymorph, but transforms the subject into a goblin

These powers come with a price: Each week that the crown is worn, you transform more into a goblin. At the beginning of every adventure that you play, you must make a DC 17 Will save to resist the transformation. After you fail this Will save six times, you are transformed into an infernal goblin one size category larger than your original form.

If this occurs, you are retired immediately from the Living Greyhawk Campaign.

Removing the crown will result in your death. It also breaks the spell on any creature that you have polymorphed into a goblin.

# APPENDIX 1: ALL APLS

## INTRODUCTION: THE REAR GUARD

### ADVANCED VITREOUS DRINKER CR 12

NE Medium undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +23

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

**AC** 33, touch 19, flat-footed 28

(+5 Dex, +4 deflection, +10 natural, +4 *mage armor*)

**hp** 117 (18 HD) **DR** 10/good

**SR** 22

**Resist** +6 turn resistance

**Immune** mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, ability damage, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, death by massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (except those that work on objects)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** tongue lash +15/+10 (2d4+1 plus eye drinking)

**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +10

**Atk Options** eye drinking, horrific gaze

**Combat Gear** *potion of gaseous form, scroll of enervation, wand of invisibility, wand of scorching ray*

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 18th):

At will—*arcane eye, detect thoughts* (DC 16), *tongues*

3/day—*eyebite* (DC 22), *vampiric touch* (quicken 1/day, +14 touch)

1/day—*dimension door, finger of death* (DC 21)

**Abilities** Str 12, Dex 20, Con —, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 18

**SQ** spectral ravens, undead traits, unholy grace

**Feats** Ability Focus (eye drinking), Ability Focus (*eyebite*), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*vampiric touch*), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (tongue lash)

**Skills** Balance +7, Bluff +10, Concentration +21, Decipher Script +21, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (local: VTF) +11, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Listen +2, Sense Motive +16, Spot +23, Use Magic Device +21 (+23 scrolls)

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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**Possessions** combat gear plus *cloak of charisma* +2, holy symbol of Vecna

**Eye Drinking (Su)** A vitreous drinker can use its lashing tongue to magically steal a creature's ability to see. This ability has no effect on creatures that lack sight. A creature struck by the drinker's tongue must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the creature's eyes become covered with thick, milky cataracts. The creature cannot see farther than 60 feet, and all melee and ranged attacks it makes within this range have a 20% miss chance. This effect can be removed only with a *greater restoration* or *miracle*, or by the destruction of the drinker that stole the victim's sight. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A creature who has its sight stolen has a –4 penalty on Will saves made to resist the vitreous drinker's abilities and any of its spell-like abilities. The victim cannot avert its eyes to avoid the drinker's horrific gaze (see below).

A vitreous drinker can see through the eyes of a creature whose eyes it drinks, using the victim's full, normal sight. It does not suffer the restrictions and penalties imposed on a victim of eye drinking. The range and duration of this ability have no limit, though the drinker can view through only one victim's eyes at a time. A drinker uses its own Spot skill to view details through the victim's eyes and benefits from its darkvision.

**Horrific Gaze (Su)** A vitreous drinker's disgusting visage revolts even the strongest soul. A drinker has a gaze attack with a range of 60 feet that causes a creature to be nauseated for 1 round. A successful DC 23 Fortitude save negates this effect, but a creature must attempt another save each round it remains within range of the gaze. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spectral Ravens (Su)** A vitreous drinker is accompanied at all times by spectral ravens that serve the drinker unconditionally. The drinker shares a powerful symbiotic link with the spectral ravens. It is constantly aware of what they see and hear and can direct them as a free action. The ravens are incorporeal, and a vitreous drinker can control them as long as they remain on the same plane as the drinker. The ravens are not creatures, but rather objects spawned by the drinker. Each raven has 5 hit points and AC 15. Otherwise, treat them as unattended, Tiny objects. A vitreous drinker is accompanied by up to twenty-four ravens, and if any are destroyed, the creature can restore them at a rate of one per day.

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The ravens have a fly speed of 100 feet and perfect maneuverability. They cannot take independent action, nor can they do anything to physically affect the world around them. They exist solely to observe.

**Unholy Grace (Su)** A vitreous drinker adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on its saving throws and as a deflection bonus to its AC. Included above.

**Description** *This hunched, shambling figure might be able to pass for human except for the bulging, wet eyes that cover every inch of its skin and the long, repulsively prehensile tongue that lolls from its gaping mouth. Several translucent, shadowy ravens circle the creature's head, their beaks open in silent cries.*

## PHASE III: HELL UNLEASHED

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**LORD WILLOW SWAN, DEATH KNIGHT OF VERBOBONC** CR 18

Cleric 9/Ordained Champion 5/Blackguard 1  
Lawful Evil Medium Undead (Death Knight)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60', low-light vision, *true seeing*, 120'; Listen +6, Spot +6

**Languages** Common

---

**AC** 37, touch 19, flat-footed 32  
(+5 Dex, +8 armor, +5 shield, +5 natural, +4 deflection)

**hp** 96 +47 temporary hit points (15 HD)

**DR** 15/magic **SR** 25

**Immune** cold, electricity, polymorph, and undead immunities (mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, fatigue, exhaustion, any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also affects objects or is harmless, critical hits, nonlethal damage, physical ability (Str, Dex, Con) damage, ability drain, energy drain, death from massive damage)

**Fort** +20, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23

---

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares), or fly (poor) 150 ft. (30 squares) when mounted

**Melee** +30+3 *lance of mighty smiting* (1d8+37)\* or

**Melee** +28 masterwork heavy flail (1d10+37/19-20)\*

**Smite with Lance:** +35 +1 *lance of mighty smiting* (1d8+53)\*  
[13/day]

---

When using Mounted Combat feats, Smite ability, and Power Attack, Lord Willow's melee charge attack changes as follows:

**Melee lance** +32 (3d8+159)

[159 = (+3 weapon, +3 divine favor, +16 Power Attack, +2 armbands of might, +13 Str x 1.5 for 2 handed, +16 smite damage, +4) x3

\*calculations above include the *divine power*, *divine favor*, and Power Attack for 8

**Ranged** masterwork longbow +5 (1d8/x3)

**Base Atk** +15; **Grp** +29 (or *freedom of movement*)

**Atk Options** Awesome Smite, Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, rebuke undead, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge

**Combat Gear** *scroll of harm*, *wand of inflict serious wounds* (10 charges)

\*already used; incorporated into the statistics here

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 13th (or 15th for War domain spells), DC = spell level +4, Domains: Destruction, Evil, War):

7th—(1+1/day) *disintegrate*\*

6th—(2+1/day) *harm*\* (x3)

5th—(3+1/day) *dispel good*\*, ~~*divine agility*~~, *mass inflict light wounds*, ~~*true seeing*~~

4th—(5+1/day) *unholy blight*\*, ~~*divine power*~~, ~~*freedom of movement*~~, ~~*greater resistance*~~, *inflict critical wounds* (x3),

3rd—(5+1/day) ~~*magic vestment*~~\* (x2), *inflict serious wounds* (x2), *invisibility purge*, *remove blindness/deafness*

2nd—(6+1/day) *spiritual weapon*\*, ~~*aid*~~, *inflict moderate wounds* (x4), *silence*

1st—(6+1/day) ~~*protection from good*~~\*, *bles*, *divine favor*, *inflict light wounds*, *obscuring mist*, ~~*protection from good*~~, ~~*shield of faith*~~

0—(6/day) *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance* (x2), *inflict minor wounds* (x2)

\*Domain spell.

Striken text indicates a spell already cast; it is incorporated into the statistics block.

---

**Abilities** Str 28, Dex 23, Con —, Int 11, Wis 18, Cha 20

**SQ** fear aura, undead traits

**Feats** Awesome Smite, Cleave, Die Hard, Extra Turning, Improved Sunder, Necrotic Reserve, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (heavy flail)

**Skills** Concentration + 21, Diplomacy +11, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Ride +17 (includes masterwork tool)

**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 *lance of mighty smiting* (8310gp), *masterwork mithril breastplate* (4200gp), +1 *animated heavy steel shield* (9170gp), *armbands of might* (4100gp), *cloak of charisma* +4 (16K), *peripart of wisdom* +4 (16K), masterwork spare lance, masterwork spurs (Ride) 50gp, military fliers saddle

---

**Abysal Blast (Su)** Once per day, Lord Willow Swan can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 1000 feet (400 ft. + 40' per HD). The blast deals 18d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire, but the rest results directly from divine power. A Reflex save DC 24 (DC 10 +1/2 the death knight's HD + death knight's Charisma modifier) reduces the damage by half.

**Aura of Evil (Ex)** The power of Lord Willow's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is equal to a 15<sup>th</sup> level cleric.

**Channel Spell (Sp)** Lord Willow can channel any spell he has available to cast into his melee weapon. Doing so takes a move action and uses the spell as though it had been cast. The channeled spell affects the next target that is successfully attacked with that weapon, though saving throws and spell resistance still apply normally. Even if the spell normally affects an area or is a ray, it only affects the target of the attack in this case. On a successful hit, the spell is discharged from the weapon, which can then hold another spell. Lord Willow can channel his spells into only one weapon at a time. A spell channeled into a weapon is lost if not discharged within 8 hours.

---

**Dark Blessing (Su)** Lord Willow Swan applies his Charisma bonus to all saving throws

**Detect Good (Sp)** At will, Lord Willow can use a spell-like ability to *detect good*, as the spell.

**Divine Bulwark (Sp)** Lord Willow Swan can sacrifice a prepared spell as a swift action to gain damage reduction. The value of the damage reduction equals 1 + the spell level sacrificed, and it lasts for 5 rounds. It can be overcome by a chaotically-aligned strike. For example, if Lord Willow sacrifices a flame strike spell, he would gain damage reduction 6/chaotic for 5 rounds.

**Fear Aura (Su)** Lord Willow is shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within 15 feet of him must succeed at a Will save DC 24 (DC 10 + 1/2 death knight's HD + death knight's Charisma modifier) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by an 18th level caster.

**Fist of the Gods (Sp)** Lord Willow can sacrifice a prepared spell as a swift action to deal extra damage. Doing so grants him a bonus equal to 1 + spell level sacrificed on his melee attacks' damage. This benefit lasts for 5 rounds.

**Holy Warrior (Sp)** Lord Willow can use one daily use of his rebuke undead ability as a swift action to bring his Wisdom into play in combat. For 5 rounds after this ability is activated, he can use his Wisdom modifier in place of his Strength modifier on attack and damage rolls.

**Modified Spontaneous Casting (Ex)** Lord Willow can not spontaneously cast *inflict* spells. Instead, he can swap out previously prepared cleric spells for any spells of equal or lower level from the War domain.

For ease of reference, Lord Willow's War domain spells are: 1: *magic weapon*, 2: *spiritual weapon*, 3: *magic vestment*, 4: *divine power*, 5: *flame strike*, 6: *blade barrier*, 7: *power word blind*.

**Poison Use (Ex)** Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

**Rapid Spontaneous Casting (Ex)** Any spell from the War domain that Lord Willow spontaneously casts requires only a swift action if its normal casting time is no more than 1 standard action. If its normal casting time is 1 full-round action, then it takes only a standard action to cast.

**Rebuke Undead (Su)** Lord Willow can rebuke undead 12 times per day. He gains a +2 to his rebuke checks from Knowledge (Religion) synergy.

**Smite (Su)** Lord Willow can spend one daily use of his rebuke undead ability as a swift action to turn his next melee attack into a smite. He gains a bonus equal to his Charisma bonus (+8) on his attack roll and deals extra damage equal to his effective rebuking level (+16 points of damage). His smite is not limited by alignment or race; he can smite any foe. Except as noted here, this ability functions like the paladin's smite evil ability.

Lord Willow gains an extra use of his smite ability when he wields his *lance of mighty smiting*.

**Touch Attack (Su)** Lord Willow's touch attack uses negative energy to deal damage equal to 1d8+6 (his Charisma modifier) to living creatures. Each successful attack also

deals 1 point of Constitution damage. A Will save DC 24 reduces the damage by half and negates the Constitution damage.

Lord Willow uses this ability to heal himself when not engaged in melee. He may also use this negative energy effect to heal his mount Ashreaver, who has the Tomb-tainted Soul feat, but Ashreaver is not immune to the Constitution damage, so Lord Willow does not do this if he has any other alternative.

**Turn Immunity (Ex)** Death Knights cannot be turned. Lord Willow can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if he were an evil outsider. If this happens, he is sent back to the plane of Acheron. Note that by the time Lord Willow appears on the battlefield, *Har's Impervious Impediment* will be active, preventing all planar travel within the vicinity of Castle Greyfist.

**War Caster (Ex)** Lord Willow gains a +2 bonus to his effective caster level when casting spells that appear on the War domain spell list.

---

**Tactics** Lord Willow most often uses a swift action to activate his smite ability for a ride-by spirited charge in combination with the "seeking smite" option of his Awesome Smite feat, which allows him to ignore miss chances due to concealment. He has

Alternatively, he can use his turn's swift action to cast a quickened spell from the War domain. In this case, he is more likely to spend his standard action, not charging, but rather to cast a spell.

If Swan (or his mount Ashreaver) is grievously wounded, he withdraws from combat in order to cast an inflict wounds spell (or *harm*) to heal.

Lord Willow does not prefer to fight toe-to-toe with anyone, but if forced to, it is not beneath him.

---

## ASHREAVER, LORD WILLOW'S MOUNT

CR 9

Abyssal Drake

CE Huge Outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60', low-light vision; Listen +17, Spot +17

**Languages** Abyssal, Common

---

**AC** 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25

(-2 size, +1 Dex, +5 armor, +12 natural)

**hp** 95 (10 HD)

**Immune** fire, magic sleep effects, paralysis

**Resist** acid 20, cold 20, electricity 20

**Vulnerable** cold

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

---

**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares) or fly (poor) 150 ft. (30 squares)

**Melee** sting +19 (1d6+9 plus poison), or

**Melee** sting +19 (1d6+9 plus poison) and bite +14 (2d6+4), or

**Melee** 2 claws +19 (2d4+9)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +18

**Atk Options** breath weapon (60-foot cone, 10d6 ½ fire and ½ unholy, Ref DC 20 half), Flyby Attack, Power Attack

---

**Abilities** Str 29, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 15

**SQ** frightful presence, outsider traits

**Feats** Alertness, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Tomb-tainted Soul

**Skills** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +5, Hide +12, Intimidate +5, Listen +17, Move Silently +14, Search +11, Spot +17

**Possessions** mithral breastplate barding

**Breath Weapon (Su)** 60-foot cone, every 1d4 rounds, 10d6 special, Reflex DC 20 half. Much like a *flame strike* spell, half of this damage is fire damage and the remainder is unholy damage (and thus not subject to resistance to fire and similar defenses). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Flyby Attack (Ex)** When using the Flyby Attack feat, an abyssal drake can attack with sting, bite, or two claws.

**Frightful Presence (Ex)** When an abyssal drake charges, attacks, or flies overhead, it inspires fear in all creatures within 120 feet that have fewer Hit Dice or levels than it has. Each potential victim must attempt a C 17 Will save. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds, and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. A successful save leaves that opponent immune to that abyssal drake's frightful presence for 24 hours. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of an abyssal drake, as do other abyssal drakes.

**Poison (Ex)** Sting, Fortitude DC 20; initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con.

**Rend (Ex)** If an abyssal drake hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This rending attack automatically deals an extra 4d4+13 points of damage.

**Outsider traits** An abyssal drake cannot be raised, reincarnated, or resurrected (though a *limited wish*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection spell* can restore life).

**Description** Ashreaver, like all abyssal drakes, is the horrific result of an ancient breeding program that combines the nastiest elements of demons, wyverns, and red dragons. With only two legs, he resembles his wyvern ancestors, but his dark red, scaled hide betrays his fiendish nature. He has powerful, bat-like wings, a serpentine neck, and razor sharp claws.

Due to the Tomb-tainted Soul feat, Ashreaver is healed by *inflict* spells and harmed by *cure* spells. Because of this connection with death, Ashreaver has chosen to serve Lord Willow Swan as his horrific mount in battle.

### TS'TAR'CHK THE RED

CR 16

Male Red Ethergant wizard 4/loremaster 3

NE Medium Aberration (extraplanar)

**Init** +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +15, Spot +17 (see invisibility, total vision within 40')

**Languages** auran, abyssal baklunish, celestial, common, draconic, dwarven, elven, goblin, gnomish, halfling, Infernal, orc, khi-zai suloise, terran

**AC** 39, touch 18, flat-footed 34

(+5 Dex, +6 greater mage armor, +4 shield, +9 natural armor, +2 deflection, +1 haste)

**hp** 130 (+22 temporary) (12 HD)

**Resist** Fire 20

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23 (+2 vs. enchantment)

**(against spells)** **Fort** +23, **Ref** +22, **Will** +27 (+2 vs. enchantment)

**Speed** 60 ft. (12 squares), fly 40 ft.

**Melee** dagger +5/+0 (1d4-1/19-20x2)

**Ranged** spells +16 touch (damage per spell)

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +8

**Combat Gear** lesser rod of Quicken spell, ring of greater counterspells, ring of spell battle

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 16th, DC 23+spell level):

8th—~~empowered chain lightning (DC 31), protection from spells, greater shout (DC33) (x2)~~

7th—~~empowered cone of cold (DC30), forcecage, greater arcane sight, limited wish (freedom of movement), limited wish (open spell),~~

6th—~~chain lightning (DC31), disintegrate, greater dispel magic(x2), heroism, greater~~

5th—~~cone of cold (DC30) (x2), feeblemind (DC 28), empowered fireball (DC 28) (x2), overland flight, teleport~~

4th—~~dimension door, empowered false life, enervation, ice storm(x3), wall of fire (DC29)~~

3rd—~~dispel magic, dragon skin, empowered ray of enfeeblement, fireball (DC28) (x2) greater mage armor\*, haste,~~

2nd—~~cat's grace, glitterdust (DC 25) false life, scorching ray (x3), see invisibility, shatter, Tasha's hideous laughter (DC 25)~~

1st—~~comprehend languages, mount, magic missile (x3), shield(x1), true strike~~

0—~~acid splash, detect magic, read magic, ray of frost, flare (DC 25)~~

**Pre-cast Spells:** *dragonskin* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *barkskin* (CL3, factored into these stats) *cat's grace* (CL16, factored into these stats), *false life* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *freedom of movement* (CL 16), *haste* (CL 16, factored into these stats), *greater arcane sight* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *greater mage armor* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *greater heroism* (CL 16, factored into these stats), *hero's feast* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *overland flight* (CL 16) *protection from spells* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *see invisibility*, (CL 16, factored into these stats) *shield* (CL 16, factored into these stats) *stalwart pact* (CL 16, activates at 65 hp)

**Abilities** Str 14, Dex 21, Con 20, Int 36, Wis 16, Cha 13

**SQ** Lore, (Lore of True Stamina), Secret (applicable knowledge) Immunity to Spells You may choose to ignore the effects of arcane spells up to 2nd level, as if the spellcaster had failed to overcome spell resistance. Total Vision: you to discern everything within 40 ft. You usually do not have to make Listen or Spot checks.

**Feats** Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Spell Focus (Evocation), Greater Spell Focus (Evocation) Scribe Scroll, Extend Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]),

**Skills** Concentration +24, Knowledge (arcane) +35, Knowledge (history) +35, Knowledge (local: VTF Trade route) +35, Knowledge (religion) +35, Knowledge (nobility) +35 Listen +15, Spellcraft +34, Spot +17

**Possessions** dagger, toad familiar, holy symbol of Vecna, headband of intellect +6, amulet of health +4, cloak of resistance +4 spell components,

### **VIRLYM THE BLEEDER**

CR 13

Male Kobold Rogue 5/Assassin 8

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +15, Spot +15

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven

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**AC** 26, touch 17, flat-footed 21

(+1 size, +4 Dex, +5 armor, +1 deflection, +4 shield)

**hp** 70 (13 HD), plus false life;

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +15, **Will** +5 (+4 vs. poison)

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** +1 spiked chain +12 (1d6-1, plus 7d6 sneak attack) or

**Melee** +1 spiked chain +12 (1d6-1, plus 7d6 sneak attack) and +1 spiked chain +7 (1d6-1, plus 7d6 sneak attack)

**Ranged** short bow +13 (1d4, plus 7d6 sneak attack) or

**Ranged** short bow +13 (1d4, plus 7d6 sneak attack) and short bow +7 (1d4, plus 7d6 sneak attack)

**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +4

**Atk Options** Combat Reflexes, sneak attack (+7d6), death attack (DC 22, death or 1d6+8 paralysis)

**Combat Gear** healing belt, potion of cure blindness/deafness (x2), potion of cure light wounds (x2), ~~potion of fly, pass without trace, scroll of shield (x2), vanisher cloak~~

**Assassin Spells Known** (CL 7)

4th (2/day, 1 remaining)—*assassin's darkness* (CS), *greater invisibility*\*, *dimension door*

3rd (4/day, 3 remaining)—*deeper darkness*, *misdirection*, *vital strike* (CM), *false life*\*

2nd (4/day)—*blade of pain and fear* (SpC), *fell the greatest foe* (SpC), *invisibility*, *spider climb*

1st (4/day)—*critical strike* (SpC), *ebon eyes*(SpC), *sniper's shot*, *true strike*

\*cast prior to combat

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**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 8

**SQ** poison use

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Fortuitous Strike, Victor's Luck, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Balance +11, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +1, Disable Device +21, Disguise +3, Hide +28, Jump +6, Knowledge (local:VTF) +6, Listen +15, Move Silently +19, Open Lock +6, Search +21, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +15, Tumble +21, Use Magic Device +7

**Possessions** combat gear plus +1 shadowed mithril chain shirt, ring of protection +1, amulet of health +2, vest of resistance +2, headband of intellect +2, gloves of dexterity +2, dagger, short bow, spare spiked chain, spiked gauntlet, sap, masterwork thieves' tools, explorer's outfit, shard of thinnan, various tooth and bone trophies from victims, 37gp.

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**Death Attack:** If Virlym studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (assassin's choice). While studying the victim, Virlym can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does

not detect the assassin or recognize the assassin as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 22) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the assassin. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the assassin has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds.

If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the assassin does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before he can attempt another death attack.

**Description:** Virlym the bleeder is a silent assassin, letting his cold and ruthless weapons speak for him. He is dressed in black armor and wears a black mask. Characters who played VER7-05 The Lion and the Dragon will recognize him as the kobold assassin who killed Sir Peri Swan. Virlym does not necessarily uphold Halmadar's philosophies, but as he is a professional, respects the contract he has with the Viscount. This respect does not, however extend to Virlym being willing to die for his employer. If it is clear to the kobold that he has been bested, he will attempt to flee the battle, or even surrender if he thinks it is likely to be accepted.

**Tactics:** Prior to entering combat, casts greater invisibility on himself, and hides in plain sight. He maneuvers to a position where enemies will provoke attacks of opportunity and makes use of his spiked chain's large threatened area in combination with his Combat Reflexes to deliver multiple sneak attacks while invisible. He then moves on to another table of heroes. He avoids Pelorites and will not remain on a battlefield section with them, preferring to move on to easier prey. If an invisibility purge goes off, he likewise flees for easier pickings.

## **ADDITIONAL STAT BLOCKS**

Due to the substantial number of stat blocks required for each APL of this event, we have broken the stat blocks into separate PDF files for the following ranges.

1. APL 6-8
2. APL 10-12
3. APL 14 only

Contact your Senior DM for copies of the appropriate stat blocks.



## APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

**Benefit:** You can expend one luck reroll as a swift action to reroll a critical threat confirmation roll. You gain one luck reroll per day.

### NEW FEATS

#### Awesome Smite [Tactical]

Through a combination of sheer muscle and mystical acumen, you can deliver devastating smite attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Power Attack, base attack bonus +6, smite ability.

**Benefit:** This feat allows the use of three tactical maneuvers, each of which requires that you make a smite attack while using the Power Attack feat (minimum penalty -1). You must declare the use of this feat before making the attack roll. You can employ only one of these maneuvers at a time.

**Demolishing Smite:** Your smite attack punches through your enemy's defenses. For the purpose of this single attack, you can ignore a number of points of damage reduction (except DR/— or DR/epic) up to twice your Charisma bonus (if any). For instance, if your Charisma is 26 (+8 bonus), you ignore 16 points of your target's damage reduction when making a demolishing smite.

**Overwhelming Smite:** Your smite attack can knock an opponent prone. If the attack hits and deals damage, it is treated as though it were also a trip attack. Make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Strength or Dexterity, with all the normal trip modifiers (PH 158). A foe that resists is not entitled to make a trip attempt against you in return. You can attempt an overwhelming smite only once per round.

**Seeking Smite:** Your smite attack is uncannily guided to its target. For the purpose of this single attack, you ignore any miss chance your foe might have, though your weapon must still be able to strike the target. Thus, while this maneuver allows you to strike an incorporeal creature unerringly with a magic sword, it does not allow you to strike it with a nonmagical weapon.

#### Fortuitous Strike [Luck] (Complete Scoundrel)

You can hit a foe in just the right place.

**Prerequisite:** Character level 6th, any luck feat.

**Benefit:** You can expend one luck reroll as a swift action to reroll a weapon damage roll. You can expend two luck rerolls as a swift action to reroll an attack roll. You gain one luck reroll per day.

#### Tomb-tainted Soul [General]

Your soul is tainted by the foul touch of undeath.

**Prerequisite:** Non-good alignment.

**Benefit:** You are healed by negative energy and harmed by positive energy as if you were an undead creature. This feat gives no other penalties or benefits of the undead type.

#### Victor's Luck [Luck] (Complete Scoundrel)

You strike with devastating accuracy more often.

### NEW SPELLS

#### DIVINE SACRIFICE

Evocation

Level: Blackguard 1, paladin 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

Giving up some of your life force to win the battle, you empower your next blow against your foe.

Your first attack each round for the duration of the spell deals an extra 5d6 points of damage if it hits, and you take 10 points of damage each time you make such an attack, whether or not the attack is successful.

#### DEIFIC VENGEANCE

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Cleric 2, Purification 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will half

Spell Resistance: Yes

You call out to your deity, declaring your foe's crimes and asking your deity to punish him.

This spell deals 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6), or 1d6 points per caster level (maximum 10d6) if the target is undead.

#### DRAGONSKIN (Spell Compendium)

Transmutation

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 10 minutes/level

You say nothing, but make the motions in the prescribed pattern and hold the dragon's scale aloft. Your flesh erupts with hard, colorful scales.

Your skin toughens and becomes scaly like that of a chromatic dragon, of a color that you select. You gain an enhancement bonus to natural armor equal to +1 per

two levels (to a maximum of +5 at 10th level), as well as energy resistance 10 against the type of energy appropriate to the color you select: acid (black or green), cold(white), electricity (blue), or fire (red).Your energy resistance increases to 20at 10th level.

Material Component: A dragon's scale.

### **ASSASSIN'S DARKNESS** (*Complete Scoundrel*)

Evocation (Darkness)

Level: Assassin 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: 40-ft.-radius spherical emanation

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

You call a globe of absolute darkness into being, which only you can see through. All other creatures within or who enter this spell's area are blinded while they remain in the area. Even creatures that have darkvision cannot see through this magical obscurement, although creatures capable of seeing in magical darkness (such as devils) are not affected by it.

While you are outside the sphere, you can see nothing within, and every creature within has total concealment. Upon entering the spell's area, however, you can see as if the area were illuminated by bright light and can interact with those within as normal, even though they cannot see you.

### **CRITICAL STRIKE** (*Spell Compendium*)

Divination

Level: Assassin 1, bard 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

Whenever you make a melee attack against a flanked foe or against a foe denied its Dexterity bonus, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage, your weapon's threat range is doubled (as if under the effect of *keen edge*), and you gain a +4 insight bonus on rolls made to confirm critical threats. The increased threat range granted by this spell doesn't stack with any other effect that increases your weapon's threat range.

Creatures immune to extra damage from sneak attacks are immune to the extra damage dealt by your attacks.

### **EBON EYES** (*Spell Compendium*)

Transmutation

Level: Assassin 1, cleric 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The subject of this spell gains the ability to see normally in natural and magical darkness, although it does not otherwise improve the subject's ability to see in natural dark or shadowy conditions. The subject ignores the miss chance due to lack of illumination other than total darkness. While the spell is in effect, a jet-black film covers the subject's eyes, a visual effect that gives the spell its name.

*Material Component:* A pinch of powdered black gemstone of any type.

### **FELL THE GREATEST FOE** (*Spell Compendium*)

Transmutation

Level: Assassin 2, cleric 3, paladin 2, ranger 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The subject gains the ability to deal greater damage against larger creatures. For every size category of an opponent bigger than the subject of the spell, the subject deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on any successful melee attack. For example, a Medium creature would deal an extra 1d6 points of damage against a Large creature, 2d6 against Huge, 3d6 against Gargantuan, or 4d6 against a Colossal creature.

*Material Component:* A dragon's claw or a giant's fingernail.

### **Orb of Acid, Lesser**

### **UNLUCK**

Divination

Level: Bard 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Spewing a curse of bad luck, you fling a piece of broken mirror at your target. The mirror shard dissipates

harmlessly as soon as it leaves your hand, and the sound of rolling dice is perceptible for an instant.

When you cast this spell, you negatively influence the randomness of fortune for the target. Whenever the affected creature undertakes an action involving random chance (specifically, whenever any die roll is made for the creature, including attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws), two separate rolls are made and the worse result applied.

A creature carrying a stone of good luck is immune to the effect of unluck.

Material Component: A piece of a broken mirror.

### UNSEEN STRIKE (Complete Mage)

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Assassin 4, hexblade 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

This spell has no immediate effect upon you. However, the next time you deliver a successful melee attack, you instantly turn invisible (as the *invisibility* spell). If you do not make a successful melee attack within 1 hour per level of casting the spell, the effect ends.

### VITAL STRIKE (Complete Mage)

Divination

Level: Assassin 3

Components: S

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: One attack

You gain temporary, intuitive insight into the actions of your foes. Your next single attack roll (if it is made before the end of the next round) is considered a sneak attack, even if your foe is neither flat-footed nor flanked. This spell does not allow you to sneak attack creatures normally immune to such attacks, nor does it allow you to make use of other abilities—such as certain feats—that deal ability damage, or otherwise grant you extra benefits, when you make a sneak attack.

## NEW ITEMS

### GLOVES OF THE STARRY SKY

Price (Item Level): 1,100 gp (4th)

**Body Slot:** Hands

**Caster Level:** 3rd

**Aura:** Faint; (DC 15) evocation

**Activation:** — and standard (mental)

**Weight:** —

*These supple gloves are velvet black. In their darkness, stars seem to swim.*

While wearing gloves of the starry sky, you emit a bright, silvery radiance equivalent to a light spell. You can douse or renew this light with a standard (mental) action. In addition, three times per day you can activate these gloves and sacrifice a prepared spell or spell slot of 1st level or higher to use magic missile (as the spell), using your own caster level rather than that of the gloves. The missiles created by the gloves appear as a series of tiny falling stars.

**Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, magic missile, possession of a piece of the set.

**Cost to Create:** 550 gp, 44 XP, 2 days.

### HEALING BELT

Price (Item Level): 750 gp (3rd)

**Body Slot:** Waist

**Caster Level:** 3rd

**Aura:** Faint; (DC 16) conjuration

**Activation:** — and standard (command)

**Weight:** 1 lb.

*This broad leather belt is studded with three moonstones.*

While wearing a healing belt, you gain a +2 competence bonus on Heal checks. This is a continuous effect and requires no activation.

In addition, the belt has 3 charges, which are renewed each day at dawn. Spending 1 or more charges allows you to channel positive energy and heal damage with a touch. (You can also use this ability to harm undead, dealing them an equivalent amount of damage instead.)

1 charge: Heals 2d8 points of damage.

2 charges: Heals 3d8 points of damage.

3 charges: Heals 4d8 points of damage.

**Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, cure moderate wounds.

**Cost to Create:** 500 gp, 40 XP, 1 day.

### PIERCER CLOAK

Price (Item Level): 900 gp (4th)

**Body Slot:** Shoulders

**Caster Level:** 3rd

**Aura:** Faint; (DC 16) transmutation

**Activation:** Swift (mental)

**Weight:** —

*The back of this dark cloak depicts a silver spear pointed downward.*

The wearer of a piercer cloak can make devastating attacks when positioned above her enemy. When you activate a piercer cloak, any attack you make on your

current turn from higher ground (PH 151) deals an extra 1d6 point of damage. If you charge your enemy from at least 10 feet above him, this extra damage increases to 2d6. This benefit lasts for 1 round. This ability functions three times per day.

**Lore:** When the Halfling Rain came to Holtberg—the seven nights when halfling thieves pounced from rooftops onto passersby, assassinating them or knocking them out and taking every last stitch they owned many of the thieves wore these cloaks (Knowledge [history] or Knowledge [local] DC 15). Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, bull's strength, jump.

**Cost to Create:** 450 gp, 36 XP, 1 day.

### BANDS OF BLOOD RAGE

**Price (Item Level):** 2,600 gp (7th)

**Body Slot:** Arms

**Caster Level:** 5th

**Aura:** Faint; (DC 17) enchantment

**Activation:** Swift (mental)

**Weight:** 2 lb.

*These armbands are made from red gold studded with tiny rubies. Dozens of needle sharp spikes extend slightly from the inside of the bands.*

Each time you don bands of blood rage, they deal 1 point of damage to you. This damage can't be healed as long as you wear these armbands.

When you activate bands of blood rage, you and any willing ally within 30 feet can enter a blood rage that lasts for 5 rounds. This blood rage can't be ended prematurely except by unconsciousness or any effect that would end a rage (such as a calm emotions spell). Unlike a barbarian's rage, the blood rage doesn't limit your actions in any way.

While in a blood rage, a character gains a +5 morale bonus on melee weapon damage rolls. However, each affected creature also takes 5 points of damage each round at the end of its turn as its own body suffers under the strain. If you are a sorcerer or you have the dragon blood subtype (see Races of the Dragon or Dragon Magic), you also gain a +5 morale bonus on damage with your arcane spells while in a blood rage created by bands you wear.

Bands of the blood rage function three times per day.

**Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, rage, sorcerer or dragonblood subtype, possession of a piece of the set.

**Cost to Create:** 1,300 gp, 104 XP, 3 days.

### RING OF GREATER COUNTERSPELLS

**Price (Item Level):** 16,000 gp (14th)

**Body Slot:** Ring

**Caster Level:** 15th

**Aura:** Strong; (DC 22) abjuration

**Activation:** — and immediate

(command)

**Weight:** —

This white gold ring is forged in a braided pattern. A single ruby set in its center flickers and pulses with magical energy.

A ring of greater counterspells can hold a spell of 1st through 6th level, much like a ring of counterspells. You cannot cast a stored spell out of the ring, but should that spell ever be cast upon you, it is immediately countered, as a counterspell action, requiring no action (or even knowledge) on your part. This use causes the ruby stone to flash once and uses up the stored spell. Once it is gone, a new spell (or the same one as before) can be placed into the ring. If you are a spellcaster capable of countering a spell on your own, you can also access the ring's secondary ability. Once per day as an immediate action, you can attempt to counter a single spell cast by a spellcaster you can see, provided he is within 100 feet. Like the ring's other ability, this one requires no preparation or knowledge on your part. You need not make a Spellcraft check to identify the spell being cast, and the spell you use to counterspell can be of any level. This counterspell attempt functions like greater dispel magic used to counter a spell, except that you add your caster level to the counterspell check (maximum +20). Thus, a 12th-level wizard wearing a ring of greater counterspells would roll 1d20+12 when activating this ability. When you activate this secondary effect, the braids of white gold seem to twist and writhe on your finger, and the metal glows faintly as if it were growing hot, although you feel no heat.

**Prerequisites:** Forge Ring, greater dispel magic, imbue with spell ability.

**Cost to Create:** 8,000 gp, 640 XP, 16 days.

### RING OF SPELL-BATTLE

**Price (Item Level):** 12,000 gp (13th)

**Body Slot:** Ring

**Caster Level:** 14th

**Aura:** Strong; (DC 22) abjuration

**Activation:** — and immediate (mental)

**Weight:** — This simple gold band looks like a tiny armored girdle set with small spheres of silver. A ring of spell-battle informs you of all spell-casting that occurs within 60 feet of you, as well as allowing you to attempt a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level) to identify the spell being cast (even if you can't see its casting or effect). This is a continuous effect and requires no activation. Once per day, when you succeed in identifying a spell in this manner, you can activate the ring to counterspell that spell as if with dispel magic, or change the target of the spell to any target within 60 feet of you. If you choose an illegal target (because of the spell's range limitation or other restrictions), the spell functions normally and the effect is wasted.

**Prerequisites:** Forge Ring, detect magic, dispel

magic, spell turning, Spellcraft 10 ranks. Cost to Create: 6,000 gp, 480 XP, 12 days.

## APPENDIX 3: THE LAWS OF THE VISCOUNTY

The Laws of Verbobonc are designed to maintain the status quo, protecting the nobility at the expense of the common man. Commoners – including all player characters – have very few rights. If they break the law, they will be punished.

### HIGH CRIMES AND LOW CRIMES

All crimes in the Viscounty are classified as either high crimes or low crimes.

Commoners can be accused of any crime by any agent of law enforcement or any noble at any time, so long as the accusing authority is within his jurisdiction.

Nobles cannot be accused of low crimes. They can be accused of high crimes, but only by individuals with the Right of High Justice.

### LEGAL AUTHORITY: THE RIGHT OF JUSTICE

All legal authority in Verbobonc is divided into two distinct categories: High Justice and Low Justice.

Representatives of the law imbued with the Right of Low Justice are involved in the prosecution of ‘day-to-day’ law enforcement and may charge and arrest any non-noble offender for any crime. A character that bears the Right of Low Justice may only arrest another character if he either witnesses a crime being committed or if a criminal confesses to committing a crime. Arresting agents cannot fine other player characters TU and gold, nor can they remove characters from play. The DM adjudicates the penalties for breaking the law.

The Right of High Justice is held by the Viscount, the heads of noble houses, and their most highly appointed representatives. Anyone with the Right of High Justice may charge, arrest, investigate, try, and sentence any offender for any crime. Only those with High Justice may charge a noble with breaking the law, and only for high crimes. Nobles are immune to prosecution for low crimes. No player character in Verbobonc has the right of High Justice, unless he has specific regional documentation to that effect.

See the **Table 1** below for more details on authority and jurisdiction of various Metaorganizations.

### LAWS IN THE GAME

Laws are enforced by the Dungeon Master when the need arises. Before the arrest and adjudication of a player character happens, the DM should warn the player that he is about to commit a crime. If the player decides to act criminally, the DM must decide if there is any way for the authorities to know what has transpired. If so, he should inform the player that his actions will have consequences and that they will be adjudicated after the play session. If the player continues to commit crimes, the DM should adjudicate it immediately and remove the character from the play session for the time being.

Once play has finished, the DM should make a final determination of all of the penalties that the character will receive, using **Table 2** below for guidance. Any crimes for which the punishment is Death or Exile, must be adjudicated by a member of the Verbobonc Triad. All other crimes may be adjudicated by the judge at the table.

If the player of a convicted character wishes to appeal the judge’s ruling, he should contact the Verbobonc Triad.

### ILLEGAL GOODS

The following items are illegal in the Viscounty: *Assassin’s dagger*, *Dagger of venom*, *Darkskull*, drugs, *Dust of disappearance*, flesh golems and *Flesh golem manuals*, *Gal-garan*, *Hand of glory*, *Hand of the mage*, holy symbols of evil gods, holy symbols of Trithereon, *Life-drinker*, *Nine lives stealer*, poisons, *Robe of bones*, slaves, *Slaying arrow*, *Sword of life stealing*, thieves’ tools, thinuan weapons, and *Unholy weapons*.

Additionally, scrolls and wands of spells with the [Evil] descriptor and any item that radiates an aura of evil, requires an evil creator, bestows curses, summons or commands elementals, demons, or devils, or animates the dead are likewise outlawed.

This list is not exhaustive, and Dungeon Masters should exercise their judgment.

More detailed information on Verbobonc’s laws, legal system, and methods of law enforcement can be found in the *Laws of the Viscounty* document, available for download at [www.verbobonc.net](http://www.verbobonc.net).

**Table 1: Legal Jurisdiction of Verbobonc Metaorganizations**

Organization	Authority	Jurisdiction
Knights of the Faithful Defender	High Justice	All Verbobonc
Bondsmen of Estival - House Nobles	Low Justice	All Verbobonc
Gentlemen of the Watch	Low Justice	Verbobonc City
Gnarley Rangers	Low Justice	Gnarley Forest
Noble House Guards	Low Justice	Appropriate Noble Lands
Mayors, Sheriffs, and Constables	Low Justice	The local settlement they have been appointed to

**Table 2: Crimes and Penalties**

Crime	Class	Penalty
Aiding and Abetting	Low	100 gp OR 500 gp OR 1,000 gp + 4 TU
Arson	High	500 gp +, 1 TU
Assault	Low	50 gp OR 1,000 gp, 2 TU
Banditry	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, 1 TU per 100 gp of stolen goods.
Battery	Low	200 gp OR 2,000 gp, 10 TU
Blackmail	High	90% of wealth, 26 TU
Blasphemy	High	Public whipping
Bribery	Low	Ten times value offered and public whipping OR forfeiture of all gold carried, expulsion from metaorg, and public whipping
Burglary	Low	200 gp, 2 TU OR 1,000 gp, 10 TU
Destruction of Noble's Property	High	Cost of repairs, 1 TU per 1,000 gp of damage
Disturbing the Peace	Low	Up to 450 gp and/or 1 TU
Extortion	High	90% of wealth, 26 TU
Forgery	Low	Confiscation of all possessions, 13 TU, loss of finger
Fraud Against a Noble	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, 26 TU OR death
Grave Robbing	Low	Confiscation of carried goods, 1,000 gp, 5 TU OR confiscation of goods, 5,000 gp, 13 TU
Impersonation of a Noble	High	Forfeiture of wealth and all possessions, 52 TU OR death
Interfering with the Representative of a Noble	Low	Up to 300 gp, 4 TU
Kidnapping goods	High	Confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 26 TU OR confiscation of carried, 10,000 gp fine, 104 TU, and loss of eye and hand.
Magical Assault	High	Confiscation of spellbooks, 500 gp, 4 TU OR confiscation of and goods carried, 2,000 gp, 13 TU, and loss of ear.
Malicious Mischief	Low	Up to 1,000 gp, up to 4 TU, and full reimbursement of property value
Manslaughter	High	Forfeiture of all equipment, property, and wealth, 52 TU.
Murder	High	Death
Negligent Use of Magic	High	Confiscation of spellbooks, 500 gp, 4 TU OR confiscation of spellbooks and goods carried, 2,000 gp, 13 TU, and loss of ear.
Ownership of Illegal Goods	Low	Varies: Confiscation of the item(s) owned and a warning and fine of 100 to 2,000 gp to exile from the region, as deemed by the item.
Perjury	High	600 gp, 8 TU
Piracy	High	Confiscation of all wealth, 500 gp, 10 TU OR confiscation of all wealth, 2,000 gp, 26 TU, and loss of eye.
Resisting Arrest	Low	300 gp, 2 TU OR 600 gp, 4 TU
Robbery	High	Confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 10 TU OR confiscation of goods carried, 5,000 gp, 26 TU, loss of hand
Sedition	High	13 TU
Smuggling	High	Confiscation of illegal goods, 2,000 gp, 13 TU, public whipping, finger. Sometimes exile.
Theft	Low	Confiscation of goods carried, 200 gp, 5 TU OR confiscation of goods carried, 1,000 gp, 12 TU, loss of finger
Treason/Revolt	High	Forfeiture of all possessions, property, and wealth, and death by draw and quartering, or stoning.
Trespassing	Low	20gp - 500 gp





## APPENDIX 4: DM AIDS

### AID OF THE OLD ONE

Calling upon the aid of Iuz is an immediate action, usable only once by each character during the *Assault on Castle Greyfist* battle interactive.

When a character calls out for Iuz to save him, the following effects are immediately granted to the character:

1. Heal from a 15<sup>th</sup> level caster
2. Delay death from a 15<sup>th</sup> level caster
3. *Shield of faith* from a 15<sup>th</sup> level caster (+4 deflection bonus to AC)
4. An infernal bonus to saving throws equal to ½ of the character's level (rounding down) for a number of rounds equal to the character's level
5. The evasion and mettle special abilities for 1d4 rounds (all saving throws made for partial effects are completely negated with a successful save)

### THE CROWN OF KUROTHA, THE GOBLIN KROWN

*This crown is made of brass and set with four dark green gems.*

The Crown of the Goblin King Kurotha is an ancient and mystical device of corruption. It is a minor artifact created by cultists of Vecna to enable them to spread their influence through otherwise uncooperative goblinoid tribes.

Ever since adventurers recovered it in 592 CY, it has been hidden away from the powers of evil in the secure vaults of Castle Greyfist. When Lord Wellborn Estival took office as Viscount of Verbobonc in early 598 CY, he gained access to the crown and has recently unleashed its powers on the world once more.

It acts as a conduit of power for Kurotha, who was himself consumed by the power of the crown. In order to be used, the crown must be placed on the head of a humanoid creature. The bearer immediately and permanently loses 2 points of Strength.

When worn, the crown bestows the following abilities:

Constant—SR 10 + the wearer's HD, immunity to poison, *command* all goblinoid creatures within 300 feet of the crown are utterly loyal to the Goblin King. All goblinoids will do anything to protect the Goblin King, even if it means slaying their companions or facing certain death. This ability is otherwise similar to *dominate person* cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer.

*3/day-mass suggestion, goblinoid polymorph* (as *baleful polymorph*, but transforms the subject into a goblin)

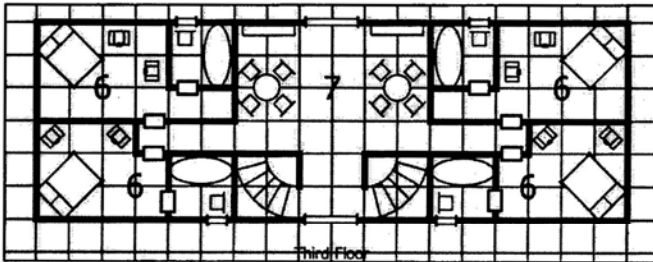
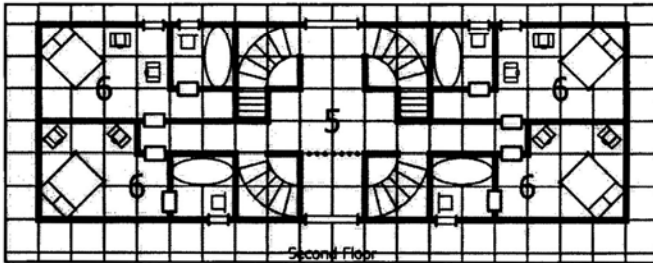
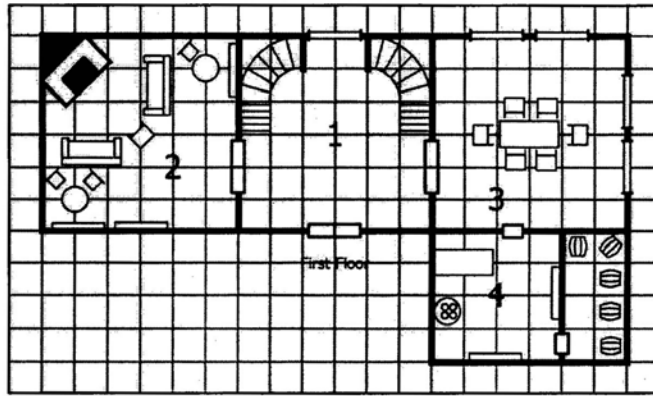
All powers take effect as if cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer, and save DCs equal 20 + the wearer's Charisma bonus.

Each week that the crown is worn, the wearer transforms more into a goblin. The wearer is allowed a DC 17 Will save to resist transformation each week, taking 6 weeks to transform into an infernal goblin one size category larger than the wearer's original true form.

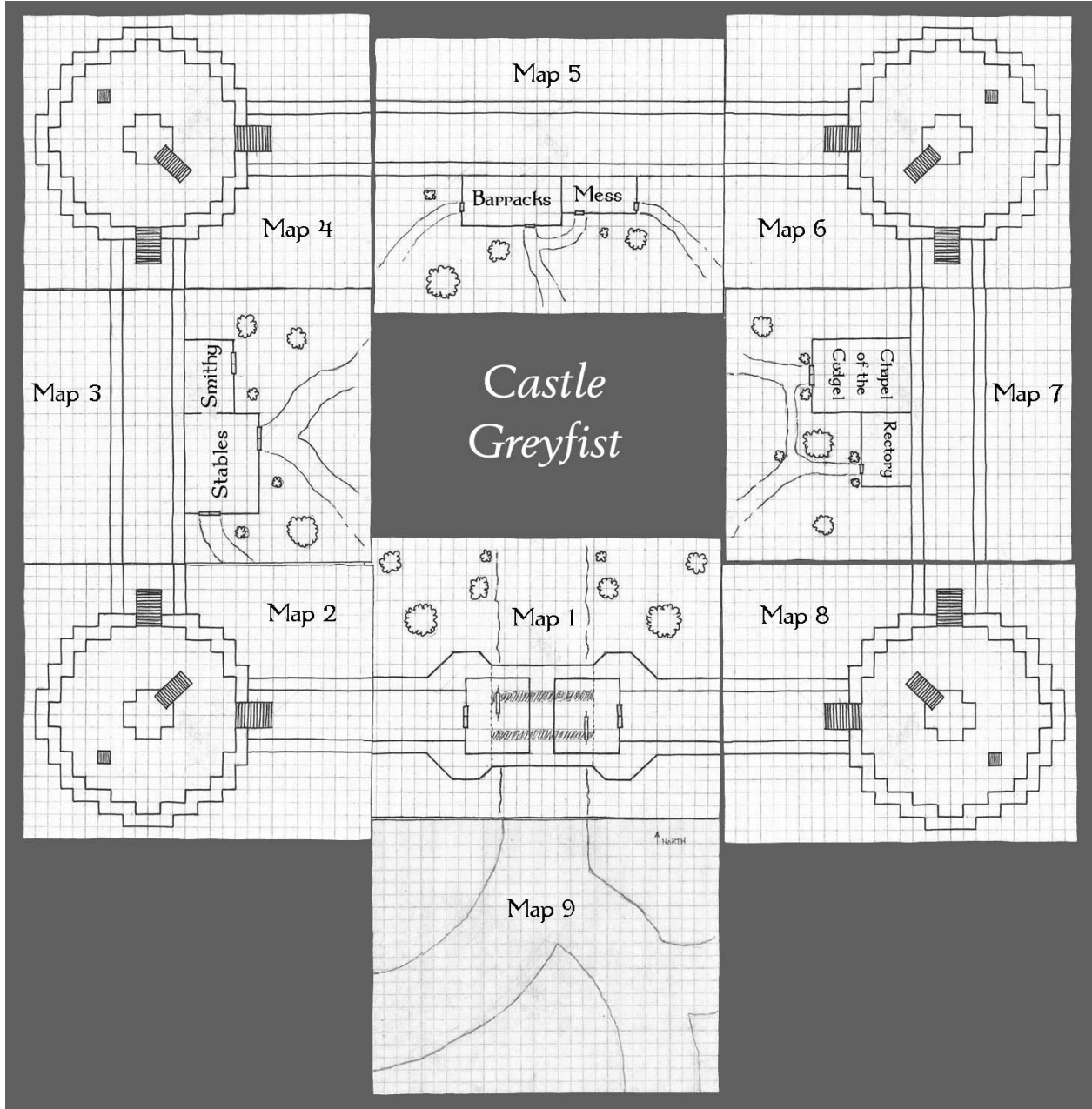
Removal of the crown, once worn, always results in the death of the wearer. This also breaks the spell on any creatures that have been polymorphed into goblins by the now-dead wearer.

## BLACK ROSE MANOR MAP

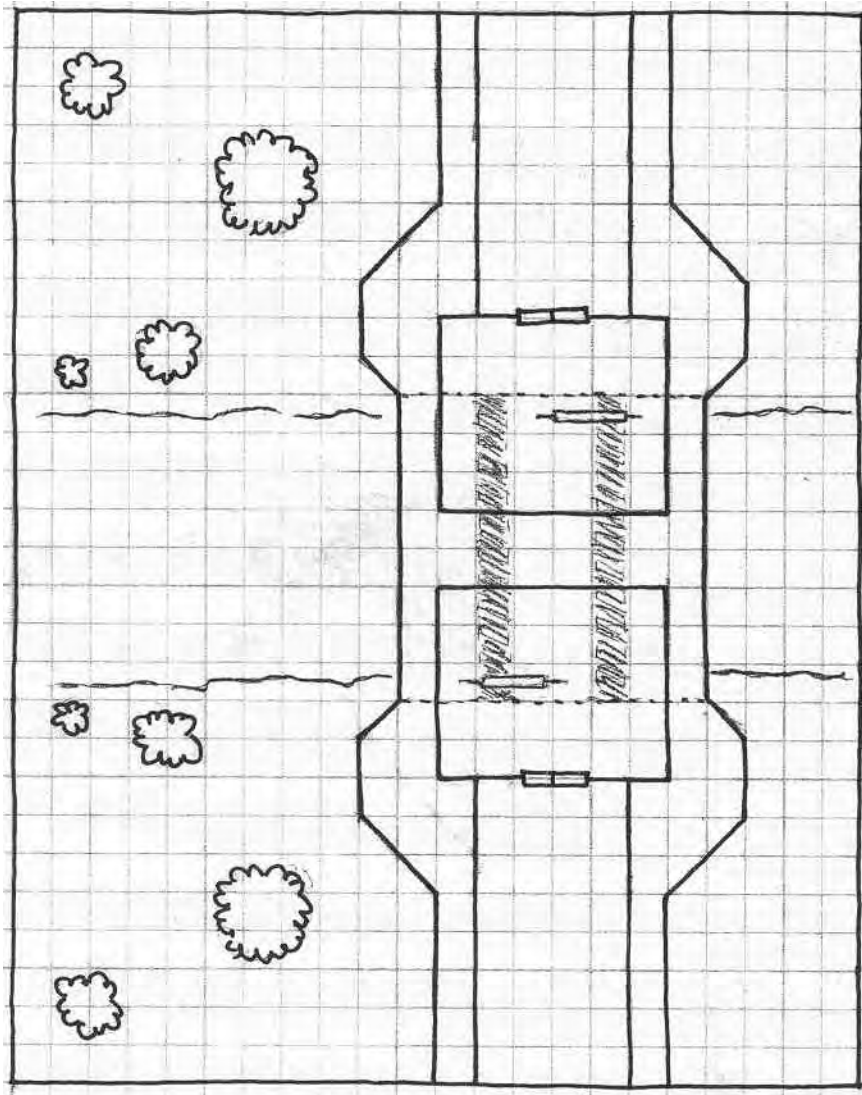
1. **Foyer:** Two staircases and a great window reaching up to the ceiling are the main features of this entry-way. A plush red carpet lines the floor and two great sets of double-doors (one each on the east and west walls) bear in bas-relief the seal of the black rose.
2. **Library, Fancy:** A fireplace and several bookshelves are the main features of this room, along with two couches and chairs. The books cover many subjects, but all deal in some fashion with the handling of magical beasts and monsters. The fire elemental Ssherthle lives within the fireplace, often regaling those that use the library with stories and songs.
3. **Dining Hall:** This dining hall has a great table in the center, capable of seating six individuals comfortably. Four great windows – two each on the north and east walls – provide a view of the outside and let the morning sunshine into the dining area. Along the west and south walls, two tapestries hang near the doors, showcasing some of the more notable moments in the history of the Black Rose Adventuring Company. A set of double-doors stands in the west wall, and a door to the kitchen is in the middle of the south wall.
4. **Kitchen and Pantry:** This serviceable kitchen hold a stove, work table, and several shelves for goods and food. The attached pantry holds casks of wine, ales, and other foodstuff.
5. **Landing:** This landing has several staircases, two leading up to the third floor, and two leading down to the first floor. Two hallways on the east and west lead to bedrooms and a great window stands in the north wall.
6. **Bedroom:** This master bedroom holds two chests for valuables and a privy with bath. A small window above the privy serves as a place through which the contents of a chamber pot can be emptied.
7. **Meeting Area:** This room, which also serves as the third floor landing, has two small tables and bookshelves, and serves as an informal meeting room and common area. Two great windows stand in the middle of the north and south walls, respectively.



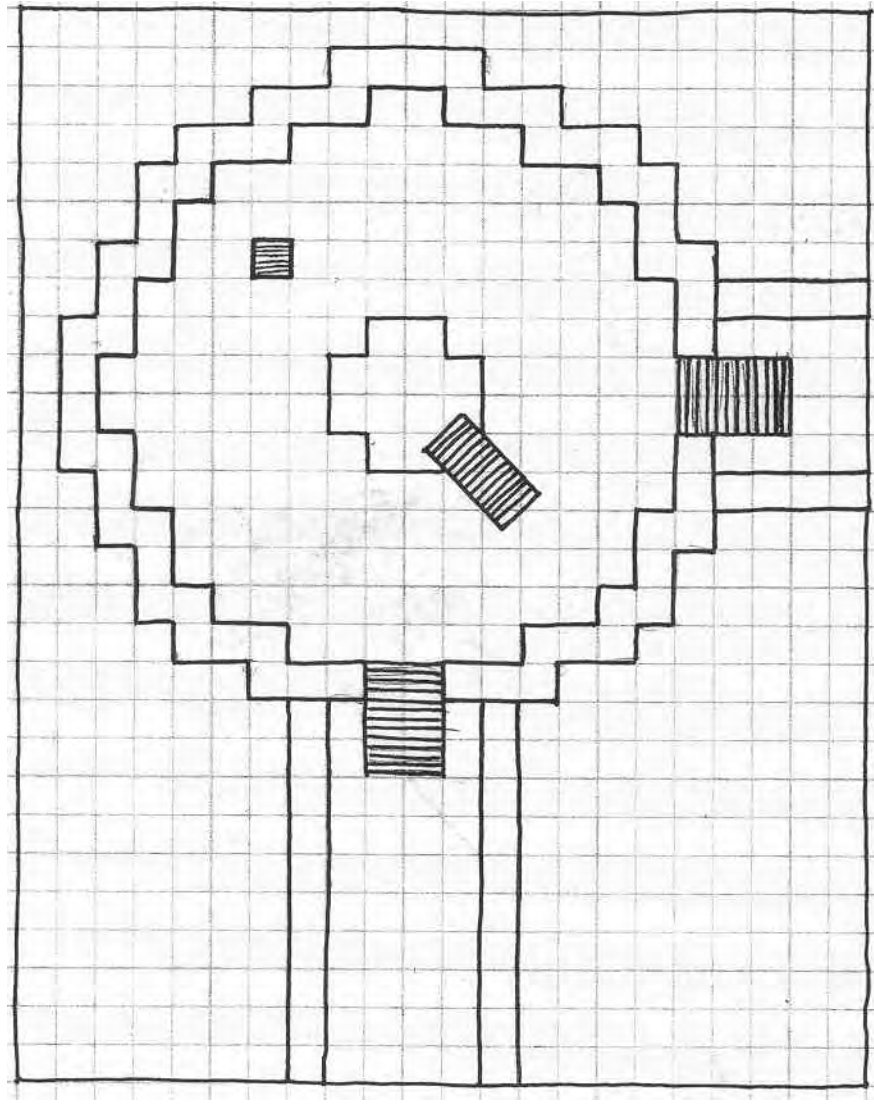
# CASTLE GREYFIST MASTER MAP



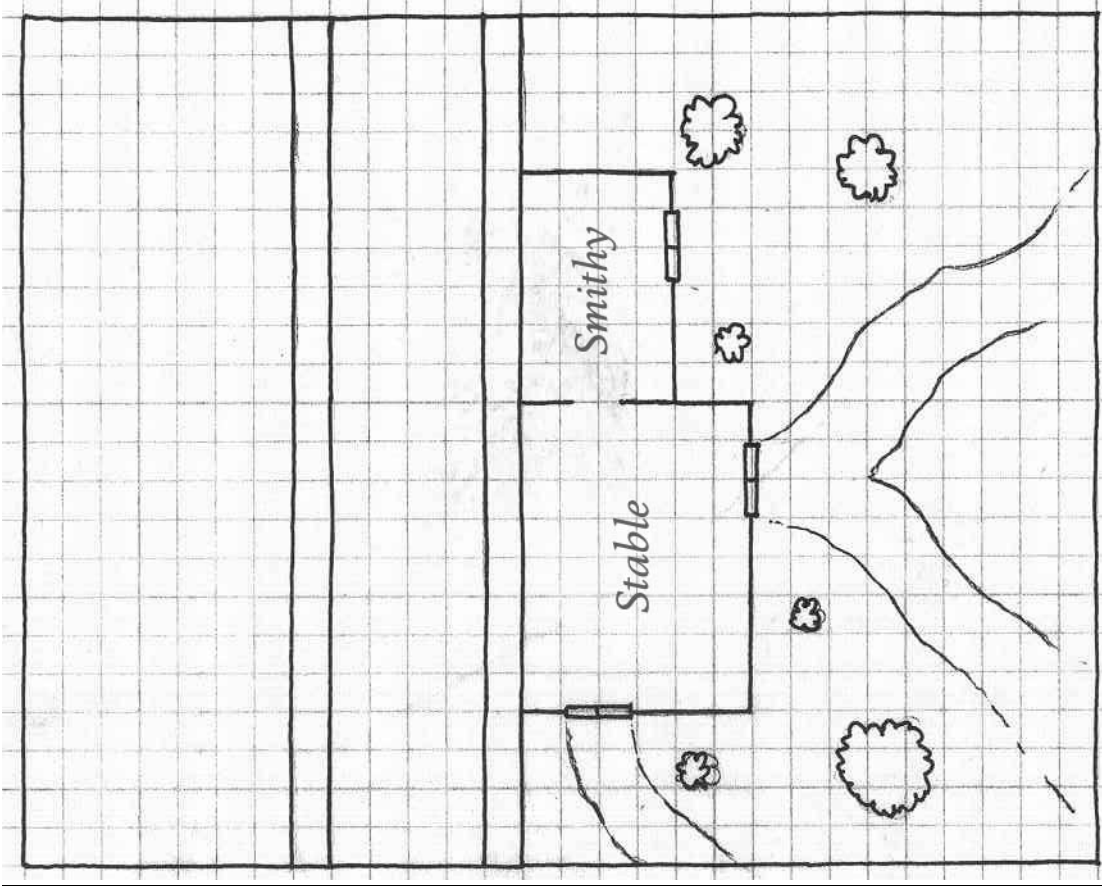
CASTLE GREYFIST: MAP 1



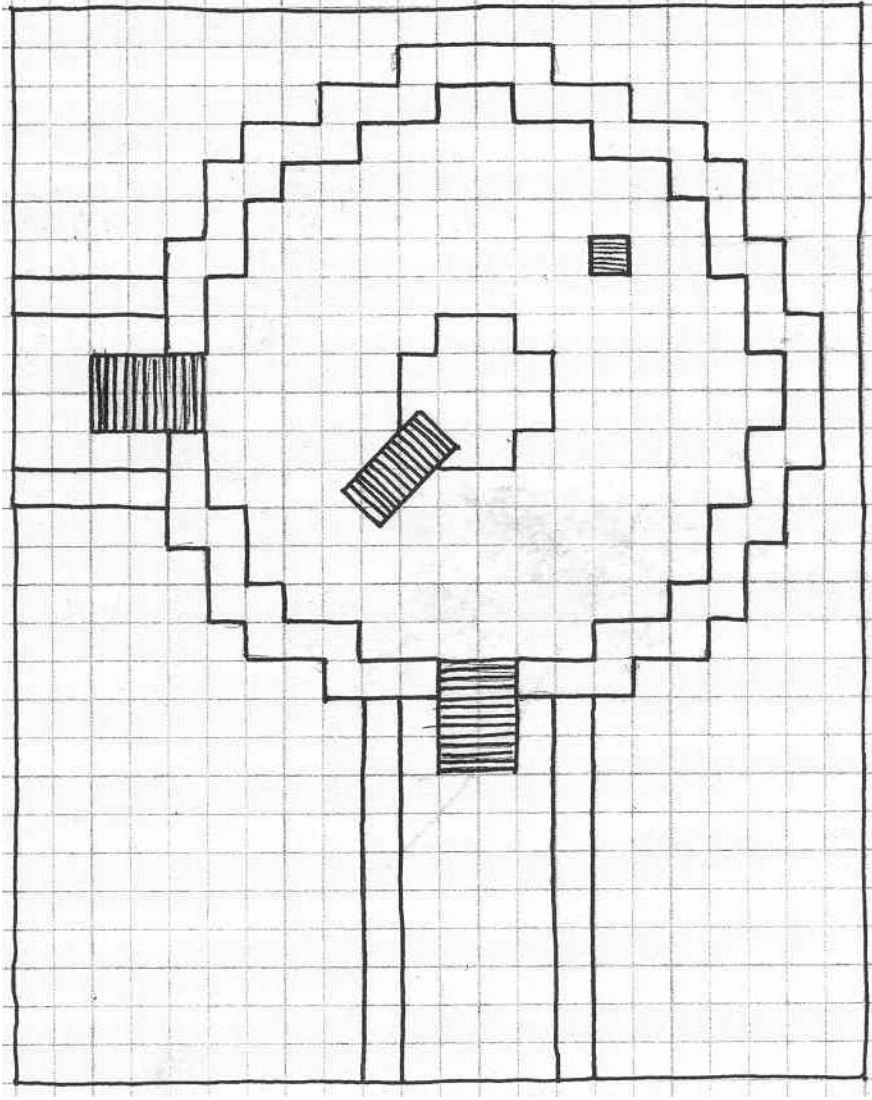
CASTLE GREYFIST: MAPS 2 AND 6



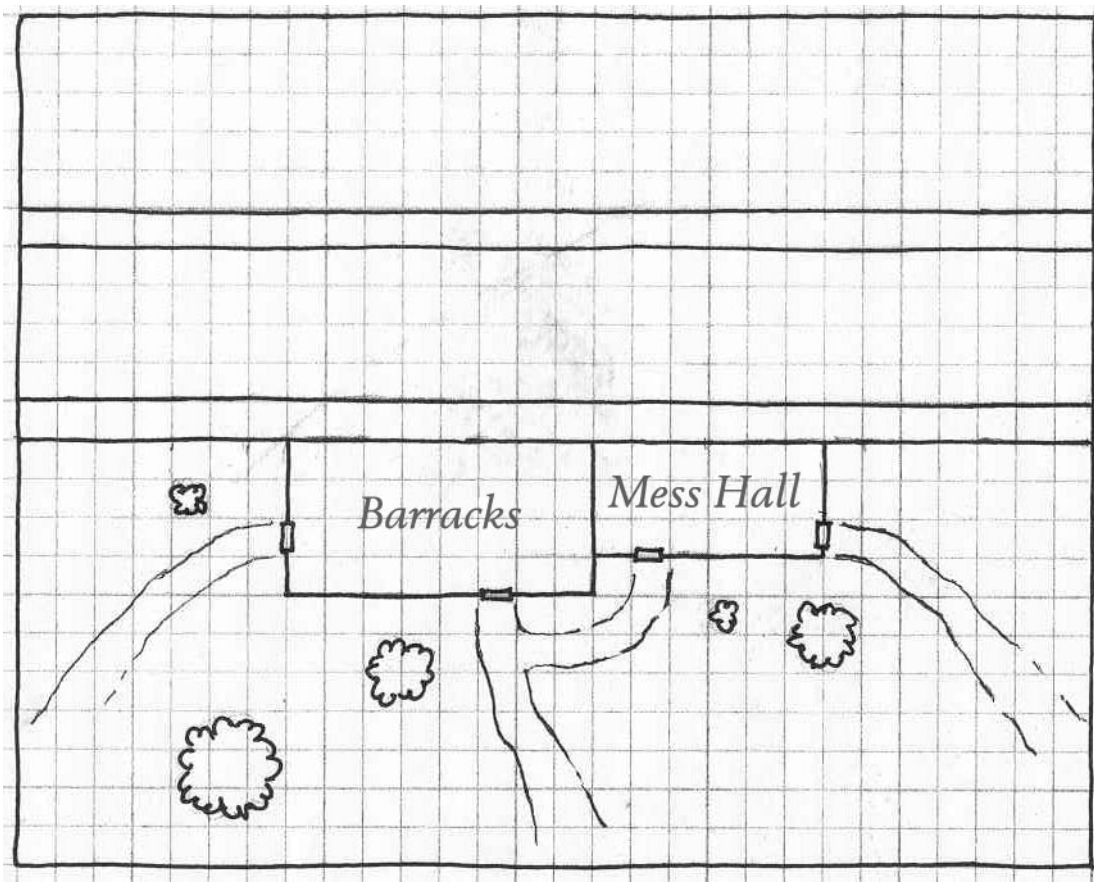
CASTLE GREYFIST: MAP 3



CASTLE GREYFIST: MAPS 4 AND 8

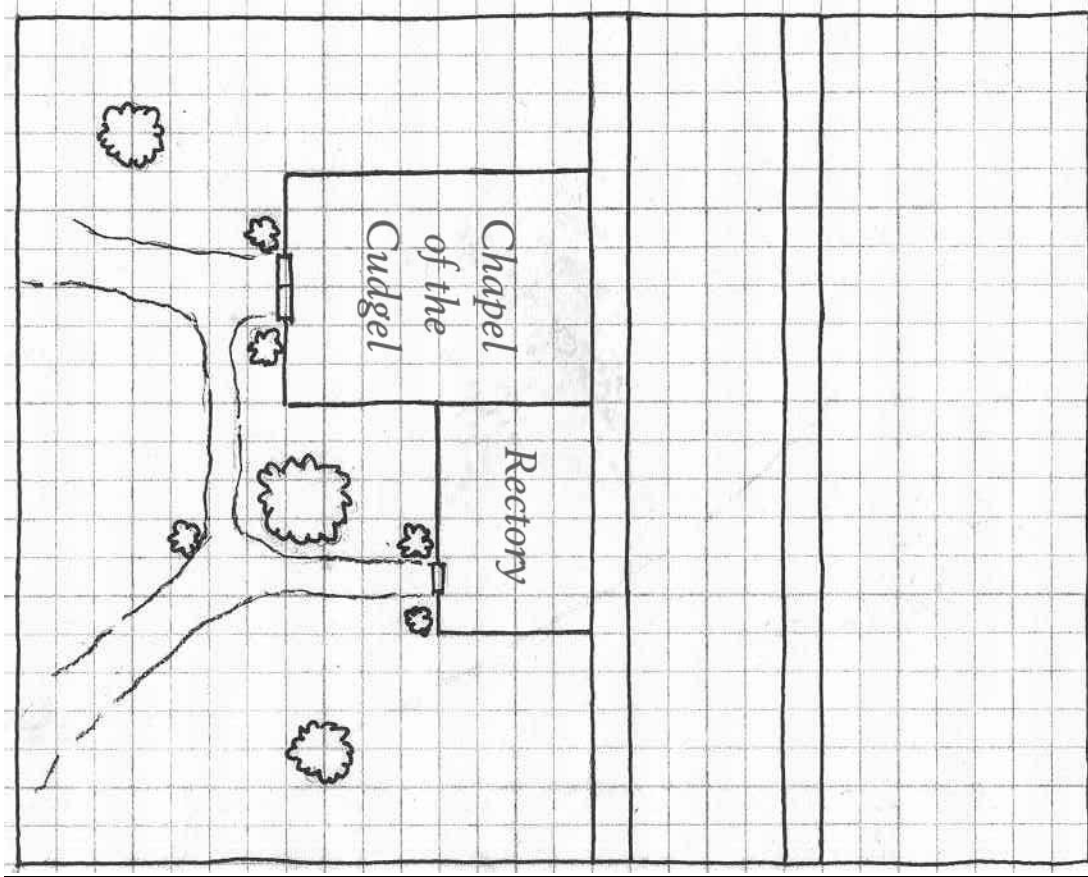


CASTLE GREYFIST: MAP 5

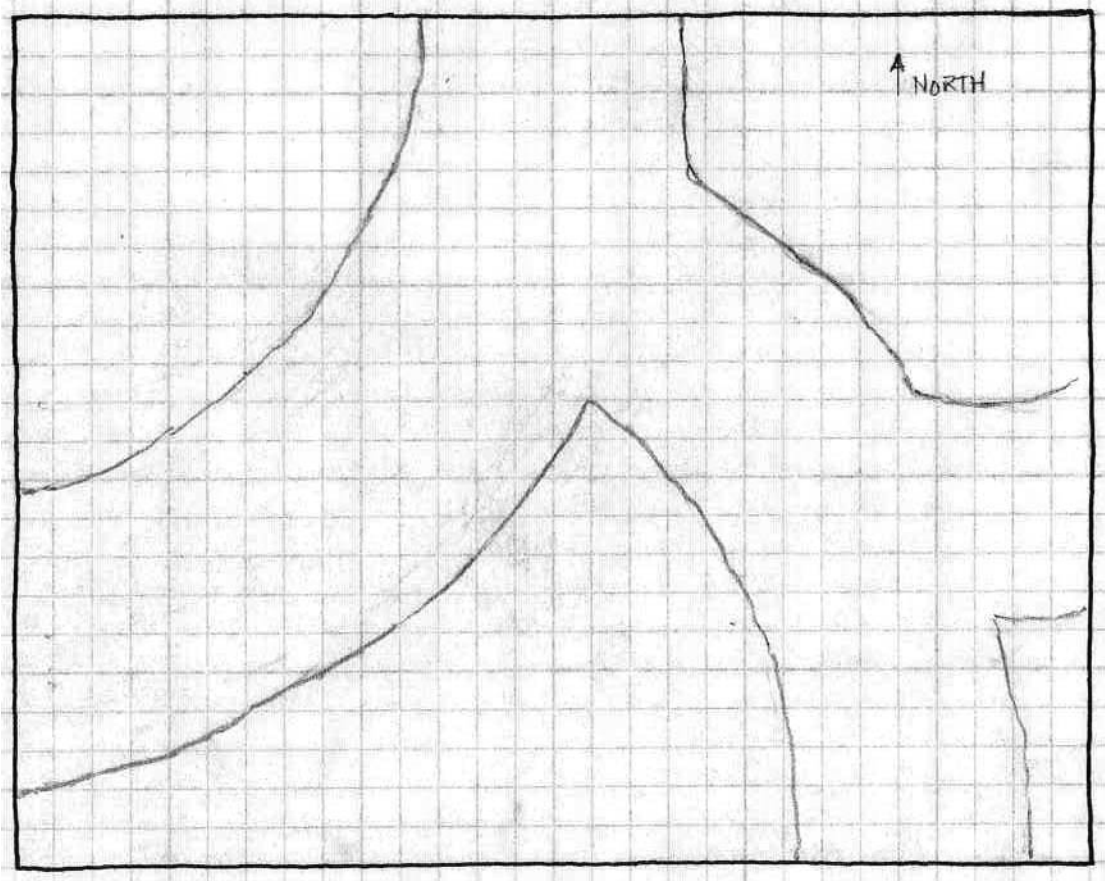




CASTLE GREYFIST: MAP 7



CASTLE GREYFIST: MAP 9



# APPENDIX 5: INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

## KEY TO SCRAPS OF INFORMATION AND INSIDER KNOWLEDGE

*Distribute these scraps of insider knowledge to players based on their membership in groups / possession of skills. Distribute remaining scraps at random or in discretion of judges. Some bits of information are vital; some are red herrings. No player should get more than about 5 scraps, and we are aiming for a good mix across the player base to reflect the varied knowledge the PCs bring to the Interactive.*

1. Gnomes / Knowledge (Architecture & Engineering) (+5 bonus or higher)
2. Company of the Black Rose
3. Family / Craft: Alchemy (+10 bonus or higher)
4. Elves / Elven Enclave
5. Clerics / Paladins / members of any Church meta-org
6. Company of the Black Rose
7. Halflings / Family
8. Random
9. Gnomes / Dwarves / Clan Rockhall / Clan Tulvar
10. Knowledge (Local: VTF)(10 ranks or greater) or Bardic (+10 or greater)
11. Random
12. Random
13. Random
14. Half-Orcs / Knowledge (REL)(+10 or greater) / any religious org.
15. Company of Black Rose / Random
16. Family / Alliance / Random
17. Family / Company of the Black Rose / Alliance / Random
18. Half Elves / Gnomes / PCs from out of region

### **1. TUMBLEPRANK BOX**

A gnomish tumbleprank box is a toy often used in practical jokes. The box appears to be a normal case, about the size of a cigar box. But a secret timer can be set on the box and released with a catch. When the timer runs out, the box springs open and tips over, causing its contents to tumble out.

### **2. SUPPLY CACHES**

There are a number of secret warehouses in Verbobonc City where the Company of the Black Rose has been stashing various alchemical and magical supplies over the past few months. You know the location of one of these secret warehouses.

### **3. DRINKING PROBLEMS**

It is a regular Family practice to use false and misleading labels on potions. These labels are always yellow.

### **4. ELVEN ASSETS**

An elf by the name of Killian-Rhaine in the Elven Enclave possesses a number of oddities that may be of help to the Resistance.

### **5. A FALLEN HERO RETURNS?**

Some oracles have foreseen that Sir Willow Swan, a mighty paladin and long-lost hero of Verbobonc, shall return in the Viscounty's darkest hour.

## **6. A DRIFTER OF SUBSTANCE**

Senior Armed Drifter “Shivs” MacKenzie is a gregarious hobo scout affiliated with the Company of the Black Rose. Rumor has it this gnome has amassed large gambling debts over the past year.

## **7. HALFLING FUGITIVES....**

The Family has been protecting a number of halflings who recently escaped from the dungeons of Castle Greyfist. These halflings may have information that would be essential to the assault.

## **8. “ACTUALLY....”**

Hellequin Humansbane, a renowned archer and elven elitist, was one of the founders of the Company of the Black Rose. Hellequin retired as a Constable in the Gentlemen of the Watch. (A very, very corrupt Constable.)

## **9. MINING EQUIPMENT**

Miral Cutterfro, who owns the Kron Hall tavern in Verbobonc City’s Gnomeburg neighbourhood, has no love for the new Viscount. She has hinted that she would be able to lend the aid of Verbobonc’s hardest diggers, if someone might need strong backs to do hard work to undermine Estival.

## **10. SERVANT OF OLD WICKED**

Margus the Patriarch was the second-in-command of a small cult of Iuz that worked out of Verbobonc City almost a decade ago. The cult was discovered and foiled by adventurers while they investigated the source of the spread of the Plague of 589 CY. Margus was thought to have been killed with the rest of the cult.

## **11. SUB ROSA**

Despite their public rhetoric about uplifting the commoners and defending Verbobonc against the overreaching of the new Viscount, the Company of the Black Rose actually has been infiltrated by agents of Halmadar the Cruel. How high this corruption spreads, you do not know.

## **12. A Fleeting Glimpse**

As you passed through the streets of Verbobonc City, you could have sworn you caught a momentary look at a blonde half-elven man who seemed naggingly familiar. Could it have been Langard, the long-missing former Viscount?

## **13. A CONSTABLE OF CONSCIENCE**

Recently you had dealings with Caleb, a Rhennee man who formerly was a Captain of the Gentlemen of the Watch. Since the Watch was absorbed by the Bondsmen of Estival, the now-demoted Caleb seems conflicted about enforcing the laws of the new regime. At one time, Caleb knew more about the underworld of Verbobonc City than practically anyone else, including the Family....

## **14. EVIL VS. EVIL**

Iuz and Vecna are ancient enemies and do everything in their power to thwart the plans of the other god’s followers, even providing help to the forces of Good.

#### **15. A TAINTED SOUL**

Kveldulf Llertos, Black Rose Commander and General of the Resistance, once was possessed by a powerful demon. Since that time, he has displayed erratic behavior and seems obsessed with enlarging his following of armed drifters. Recently, he has begun to affect outmoded, foppish styles of dress and speech and to sport a *Rod of Cats*.

#### **16. RISE OF THE BEAR**

Brooknir "The Luckbane" Veladorn was once a lowly Rhennee cutpurse trying to make his way in the Viscounty. But when Cordova "The Bear" Battirovka was assassinated, Brooknir saved Cordova's daughter, Taurina. The rogue has since wed Taurina and assumed both her father's moniker and the last name of the Merchant Family.

#### **17. DANGEROUS CARGO**

The Battirovka Merchants have been working closely with the Company of the Black Rose. Some say that they are smuggling weapons for the adventuring company.

#### **18. DEFENDERS OF THE DEFENSELESS**

The Wanderers of Coldeven, a group of adventurers dedicated to action over words, is beloved of the common folk. Wanderers roam the Viscounty, watching over the small hamlets and scattered farmholds, and stepping in when trouble arises.