

Vanguard of Vaelun

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Synopsis

An ancient order working outside the laws and restrictions of the kingdom, set on maintaining the inner political situation of a turbulent kingdom through diplomatic, political as well as more hands on interventions. They work against those who would stir up problems in the kingdom. The Vanguard mostly employs independent adventuring parties to carry out given tasks in exchange for protection of the Vanguard and gold. The loyalty of the parties is ensured by a web of agents throughout the kingdom.

Location

Though many of the parties and agents operate throughout the kingdom, the Vanguard keeps its seat in the ancient dwarven fortress of Eren Dul. Through the centuries, the many inhabitants of Eren dul have built a town underground in the entrance hall of the fortress, deep in the Shiverpeak Mountains.

Prominent Characters

Diedrich Hollgar – leader of the Vanguard

One of the ancient dragons that have survived the purge, Diedrich Hollgar was the right hand and councillor of king Norick the third before he was exiled from the kingdom with the rising hate of magic users and magical beings. Diedrich Hollgar had spent most of his adult life at court in human form aiding the kingdom. After his exile, he had found shelter at Eren Dul, which was abandoned at the time. He had invited several of his exiled colleagues and acquaintances to Eren Dul and soon, a settlement started to grow. They had sworn that though in exile, they must protect the kingdom from further inner conflict and civil war and thus set the foundations for what the Vanguard of Vaelun was to become. As Diedrich had explored further into the fortress, he had found one of the ancient fountains, the fountain of protection, and through studying and experimentation discovered a way to channel his own magic to activate the fountain. The fortress is magically protected from any would be intruders for as long as Hollgar remains at the fountain. The only way to reach the fortress is while accompanied by one of the members of the Vanguard.

Function in game

The Vanguard is known to take in people of certain skill and ability that are persecuted by either the wizard tower of Veles or the crown.

It is simultaneously seen as a populist order and an antagonist order of outlaws by the common people. Both are true to some extent, since not all of the agents are as exemplary in their intent as the leadership strives the order to be. Would be recruits are kept for months in isolated safe houses under the supervision of high ranking members of the Vanguard for evaluation before being allowed to first set foot in Eren Dul as a member of the Vanguard. The town itself is very varied and

functions much as a normal albeit small town. The people had over the course of the last few centuries built stone houses in the great hall covered with thatch, and the town is filled with traders, craftsmen and merchants. The main driving engine that keeps Eren Dul's economy up and provides untraceable funds for the order is the gold mines underneath the city. The gold ore is refined and pressed into gold pieces deep underground. Which in turn buy the loyalty of adventuring parties and ensures a steady supply of food and other commodities to the town.

Primary questline

The primary questline in the Vanguard is about aiding the order to achieve its political goals and remove Alvar Thornheart, the arch-mage of Veles, from a position of power by whatever means necessary.

Quest1 – Echoes of Betrayal

As the players first meet Diedrich Hollgar and explain the circumstances of their arrival with Deckland Sloane, Diedrich deduces that somehow information has leaked from within the inner sanctum of Eren Dul. He sets the players on a quest to identify the spy and provide sufficient evidence against them. The players ask around town for anyone who stands out and are pointed in the direction of several potential candidates. After they have investigated the four suspects, Deckland Sloane, who was supposed to help them in their mission, tells them of the unusual disappearance of the blacksmith's three year old son. The players have heard a child's cry at one of the suspect's home. The prime suspect becomes a witch named Loveta. She runs a shop in town selling and buying tears. Her store is filled with small vials filled with transparent fluid and strapped with a note describing the circumstances surrounding the tear's harvest. Loveta had lost a child in an accident involving the crownsguard in the town of Mirrvale. She had in her grief incinerated three members crownsguard and sought shelter at the Vanguard several years ago. She had before been connected to the academy of Veles, and tries to gain amnesty from the crown by providing Veles with inside

information, to once again breathe the fresh air of her hometown. Her grief had pushed her to madness and she had kidnapped the blacksmith's son to perform a forbidden spell on him, binding her lost son's soul to the blacksmith's boy with the power of the tears she had cried for him. The players revisit her shop to find the store empty. They force entrance and after investigation locate a hidden passage leading further into the mountain and connecting to a pre-existing maze of walled off hallways and chambers of the fortress. Following her trail the players interrupt her ritual and battle her and her summoned spectral guardian. They save the blacksmith's son and after searching her house, secure enough evidence against Loveta to complete their quest.

Quest2 – Ascendance of Recollection

The player characters have lost their memories the beginning of the campaign and seek to restore them at the Fountain of Memory. Their memories are also essential to the Vanguard, since the players are mentioned as key to the demise of the heir of Nurm, allegedly Alvar Thornheart. They head west through the uninhabited maze of the underground fortress, experiencing a few combat encounters with creatures from the under-dark. They emerge from the mountain just east of the dwarven town of Genar, where they contact the Vanguard agent that provides further information. The players navigate a difficult route further west higher up the mountains. While camping under the summit of mount Genmor, the players spot a source of light coming through the trees and seek shelter from the oncoming storm. The players meet an old man named Oswald living with a very overgrown garden living in a small dank hut on the side of the mountain. The old man agrees to help them find the fountain in exchange for help around the house. He puts the players through cleaning out his garden, fixing his outhouse and finding his lost hatchet in the woods. Each of these tasks is much harder than it sounds and leads to separate combat encounters that the players have to resolve on their own. Upon completing the quests, Oswald reveals himself as Eldrax, an old friend of Diedrich Hollgar. He is the dragon protector of the fountain of memory which is found following a tunnel in the back of his hut. He offers the players to drink from the fountain, regaining their memories in powerful visions that happen over the course of the next few days.

Secondary quests

The blacksmith's map

Upon completing the first main quest and saving the blacksmith's son, Edgar the blacksmith rewards the players with a map to a magical artefact, a set of rubies that are said to lie deep in the uninhabited heart of Eren dul's catacombs, in the tomb of Rorkien, a dwarven master-smith. The map is the reason his father had come to Eren Dul in the first place, and had led to his father's early demise, as he had never returned from his quest. The map is Edgar's most valuable possession. The players descend into the dark underworld of Eren Dul, and battle their way through the maze of hallways and staircases into the catacombs. They find the skeleton of Edgar's father near the sealed entrance to Rorkien's tomb, where they combat a Beholder that had come to the catacombs from the under-dark. The players enter the tomb to find a large stone sarcophagus. Opening the sarcophagus reveals a death mask with rubies set in as eyes, and atop the body of the master blacksmith, a large heavy hammer with empty sockets at either side. The players recover the rubies and bring them back to the blacksmith. He can insert them into your own weapon or set them back in Rorkien's hammer, producing a magical weapon that deals additional fire damage and the ability to heat any metal it strikes. Edgar then proceeds to offer the players a hefty sum of gold and permanent discounts at his shop if they do not wish to keep the weapon. Giving him the artefact also unlocks better quality weapons and armor from Edgar's shop.