

# THE HAND OF VANTH

## Setting description

To the east of Kingsalter, in the Fallwoods, lies an ancient statue. Erected in a time before the Old Kingdom was ascendant here, the hand has long inspired wonder, rumour and dark practices amongst those who know of its existence. *Was there once a whole stone body? What giant did leave his hand here? Will this god who reaches out from the ground imbue me with the spirit of her wrath?* In recent times, the stone holds the name 'the Hand of Vanth' and the powers of life and death have been ascribed to it. Legend states that the psychopompic demon Vanth installed five enchanted skulls from the underworld in the fingers of the giant stone hand. Some come here to speak to those skulls. Others, though, come to work unholy rituals upon the altar.

## Three 'Hand of Vanth' tasks that could be listed on the Adventurers' Guild Job Board

- 1 Urgent help required (discretion and haste both essential): a person of some import has been snatched by the Society of Chiromancers after having been lured to their conference under false pretences. It is believed the Chiromancers intend to sever the victim's hands upon their sacrificial altar (in the Fallwood) as part of a ritual renewal of their skills. Please retrieve the victim from this dangerous cult. Remuneration handsome!
- 2 A ranger affiliated to the Guild has reported a troubling event – whilst tracking a fey creature in the Fallwood, the informant camped near the grove that contains the old stone structure known as the Hand of Vanth. During the hours of night, it is reported that several of the stone fingers moved, repeatedly, in a beckoning motion. This strange and ominous event, so close to Kingsalter, must be investigated and any threat eliminated.
- 3 Escort wanted: I seek to travel as soon as possible to the Hand of Vanth and, having no protection of my own worth speaking of, require an armed guard for the journey and for the duration of the task that I plan to undertake. For the purposes of full disclosure, I am a travelling practitioner of the necromantic arts and am carrying with me the corpses of four clients' pet dogs. *Speak to Dr Vinglestoff in the Half and Hearth.*

## Who might have been kidnapped for sacrifice?

- 1 Merisol Stange, the wife of City Advocate Stange, who has a birthmark across her hands that, when joined, meet to form the shape of an eagle in flight.
- 2 Philaida Glidwith, President of the New Association of City Guilds, which does not allow magic societies to join.
- 3 Harold the Palmist, the son of Heleon Wyck, Kingsalter's Holder of the Treasury Key, and who has been performing shoddy clairvoyance at society events.
- 4 Roymond deRoi, a wealthy draper who won Kingsalter's Handsome Hands contest two years ago and has since lorded his paws around town, annoying a great many.

## Dogs that Vinglestoff has been paid to resurrect

- 1 Rumble, the relentlessly placid pet of the Tewin Family who was crushed by a wagon carrying chickens.
- 2 Duckweed, a small, white yadog who loved to swim and who died old and happy. His owner, Captain Sorgale of White Ivy Manor, longs to walk with him again.
- 3 Weaselhunter, a large hunting hound, beloved of Mrs Oliver Fytzdell. Accidentally shot by a woodland archer.
- 4 Samothea, a lithe and elegant black dog belonging to the Nuns of St Ninn, who was killed by town authorities when it was rumoured she was performing miracles.

## The Enchanted Skulls of the Fingers of Vanth

A visitor may choose to speak to one of the skulls in the hope of receiving a reply. Each skull has a special skill:

- 1 Inaha, the retrocog, who will answer truthfully any question about an event or person of the past.
- 2 Theox, the far-talker, who will act as a communication channel between the questioner and one person anywhere in the living world.
- 3 Ortria, the seer, who can answer one question about the future. The prophecies she speaks are the truth at the time of asking but may not always remain so.
- 4 Tesska, the necrovoch, who can speak to the dead and will ask them a question the inquirer needs answering.
- 5 Pendat, the maledictor, who falsely poses as a fount of knowledge, but instead dispenses curses (the severity of which is concordant with the questioner's manners).