

MINI2-3

RAVEN KNIGHTS

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING* *FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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An ancient threat has returned, and the fate of Ravens Bluff hangs in the balance. Only a handful of heroes know the truth. They alone have the opportunity to save the city. But are they up to the challenge? A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Ravens Bluff for characters levels 1-4. This adventure is the third and final part of the three-part *Return to Ravens Bluff* mini-campaign. It is recommended that you play the mini-campaign adventures in sequential order with the same character, but this is not required.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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OFFICIAL D&D PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an event, or you received it from your organizer. To play this adventure and receive rewards for it, you must schedule it as an 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.

To schedule a game for public play, you must be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. Information on enrolling in the program can be found at www.wizards.com/wpn. If you are scheduling the game for private play, you do not need to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. The person who schedules the event, called the organizer, is in charge of making sure the event is scheduled before play, runs smoothly on the date scheduled, and gets reported back to Wizards in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the organizer is also the table DM. You don't have to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network to DM this adventure if you are not the organizer.

By scheduling and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for scheduled play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

To learn more about event scheduling and DM REWARDS, visit the D&D Events website at www.wizards.com/dnd and click on "Events."

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an officially scheduled event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 1-4. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter – that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success – they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the previous MINI2 adventures (*MINI2-1 A Mourning of Ravens* and *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Midday Sun*), the heroes learned about the existence of the fabled *Cup of Truth*, an artifact that can make one's enemies incapable of lying. Many factions desired the *Cup*, but the artifact found its way into the hands of the Blacktree family,

thanks to the skill and dedication of a group of adventurers that the Blacktrees hired to retrieve the *Cup of Truth* from its last-known resting place.

Although the *Cup* is now in possession of the Blacktrees, some of the factions that previously sought it have not given up yet. The matriarch of the Blacktree family, Lady Charissa Blacktree, was kidnapped from in front of her home in the Tentowers section of Ravens Bluff. The kidnappers quickly demanded a ransom: Lady Charissa would be returned safely and without harm in exchange for the *Cup of Truth*.

Lady Charissa's abductors are a gang of ne'er-dowells led by a doppelganger swordmage going by the moniker Tiptoe. Although the PCs probably assume the kidnappers are Netherese, Tiptoe was actually hired by the Sembian rebels who want to gain possession of the *Cup* and frame the Netherese in the process. (The kidnapping was done in public by doppelgangers disguised as shadar-kai.) Tiptoe only wants to take possession of the *Cup of Truth* so she can turn it over to her employers and get the promised money. Tiptoe and her gang are not killers. They will not kill Lady Charissa or any of the PCs, despite their threats.

Not knowing how to proceed, and warned against contacting the authorities, the Blacktrees turn to the PCs to act as the go-betweens in making the swap with the kidnappers.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

This adventure revolves around the PCs undertaking a frantic scramble around the city of Ravens Bluff, attempting to follow the complex instructions of the kidnappers. While this is happening, the PCs may attempt to learn the truth behind the kidnapping.

Because of the nature of the events taking place in the adventure, this adventure can be very complicated to run. The kidnappers insist that only one PC (known throughout this adventure as the **messenger PC**) delivers the *Cup of Truth* to ransom Lady Charissa, so the rest of the PCs (referred to as the **pursuing PCs**) have to somehow keep in contact with the messenger PC without making it obvious that they are following. Because of this, the unforeseeable actions the PCs might take require you to make judgments about the consequences of those actions. In all your decisions as the DM, you should first and foremost try to give the PCs the kind of fun and challenge they are looking for.

The tension that the DM needs to maintain here requires walking a fine line. Tiptoe will not kill Lady Charissa, but she needs to make sure that the PCs think she will if they do not properly follow her instructions. With that in mind, she is not above cutting the hand or

tongue from a corpse and sending it to the PCs, claiming it belongs to Lady Charissa. She also threatens to use powerful magic to maim or kill Lady Charissa in a manner that cannot be undone.

In general, rituals and powers that call upon divinations to locate things do not work to find Lady Charissa, as she has been warded against such magic by her kidnappers, but such rituals and powers might be used in other ways. A PC casting Spirit Fetch or Hand of Fate in an attempt to locate Lady Charissa finds that the spell actually leads them in the wrong direction. However, similar rituals work when used to find the messenger PC if she gets separated from the other PCs.

Several twists and turns might occur in the adventure, where certain individuals are not who they seem and are trying to fool the PCs. It takes a good deal of roleplaying skill on the part of the DM to make these moments seem both surprising and organic. With this in mind, the DM should feel empowered to make changes to the adventure to keep the PCs guessing about the truth and worried about what future surprises await.

Another unique aspect of this adventure is that it involves an artifact: the *Cup of Truth*. This artifact, in its current state, leaves its possessor unable to lie. This aspect of the Cup can be emphasized – for both humorous and dramatic effect – throughout the adventure. For example, during a walk through the slums of the city, a street urchin might come up to a PC and ask, “Do you have a silver piece you could spare for a starving child?” Remind the PC that he must not lie.

If a PC knowingly lies while in possession of the Cup, the first instance results in the PC losing a healing surge and being wracked with pain (stunned and knocked prone [save ends]). The second instance means that the same thing happens, but the *Cup of Truth* also teleports itself away from the lying PC to the nearest PC. If that PC lies once, the same result occurs as in the first instance above. In the second instance, the Cup teleports far away from the party forever, hiding itself until a more worthy owner can find it. This leaves the PCs in a sticky situation. Wily PCs might try to use this property to their advantage to trick the kidnappers. Let them do so if applicable, but don’t forget the kidnappers are cunning and devious as well.

If the PCs are playing this adventure immediately after playing *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Middy Sun*, they should be given the opportunity to take an extended rest, even if they don’t rest the full amount of time. Just assume they were able to rest long enough to get back resources that would return after an extended rest.

PLAYER’S INTRODUCTION

The read-aloud text in this Introduction assumes that none of the PCs at the table played *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Middy Sun*. If any or all of the PCs have played either of the previous adventures (*MINI2-1 A Mourning of Ravens* and *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Middy Sun*), give them the opportunity to describe briefly what occurred in those adventures. This gives vital information to any players who did not take part in those adventures, and it lets you know what their experiences were up to this point, giving you clues regarding the PCs’ relationships with the important NPCs. In this case, after the PCs describe the events, move directly to Encounter 1.

If none of the PCs at the table have played *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Middy Sun*, the DM can change the details a bit, using this introduction:

Dawn breaks fresh and clear over the city of Ravens Bluff. The streets slowly fill with the sounds of vendors, urchins, teamsters, and all of the other cogs in the great machine that keeps this amazing city moving.

You go about your business, whether searching for adventure, breaking your nightly fast, or trying to catch a few more moments of rest after a long night of debauchery.

At this point the PCs, individually or as a group, are interrupted by Kiira Stoneshield, the dwarf chamberlain of Blacktree House. The PCs know her if they played the previous adventures in this series. She bows hastily, presenting the PCs with a letter bearing the Blacktree seal. The note was scrawled hastily, and the ink is fresh. Present the PCs with the **Appendix 1** handout.

After the PCs read the missive, Kiira speaks:

“Master Anton needs to speak with you immediately. Gather your gear and present yourselves at Blacktree House as quickly as you can. There is no time to spare. I must run more errands, but I will meet you there.”

If asked about the situation or why speed is so important, Kiira simply replies that she cannot say anything else about the matter, but that Master Anton will be able to provide the PCs with all the information they need. She stresses, however, that the situation is a life-or-death matter that needs immediate attention.

Once the PCs gather their gear, they should travel immediately to Blacktree House (and on to Encounter 1).

ENCOUNTER 1: PROOF OF LIFE

SETUP

Sir Anton Blacktree, noble of Ravens Bluff, male human (Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +6)

Shevri Stoneshield, imposter for Kiira Stoneshield, female dwarf (Bluff +10, Streetwise +11)

Even if the PCs did not play the earlier adventures, they have no trouble finding Blacktree House. If the PCs played *MINI2-2*, they are already at the house, so adjust the encounter accordingly.

When you arrive at Blacktree House, Sir Anton Blacktree is waiting for you in the front gardens. He motions for you to follow him as he enters the house.

Anton tells the PCs that his mother (Lady Charissa Blacktree) was snatched from the street outside a home owned by House Taldavar (see the Conclusion of *MINI2-2 Ravens Under the Middy Sun*).

Anton can show the PCs the letter that arrived less than an hour ago. If the PCs played the previous adventure, they were present when the message arrived. This is shown as **Appendix 2**. Anton shows the PCs a pouch, which contains a piece of silk ribbon and a lock of hair. Anton confirms that these items and the message were delivered less than an hour ago. The messenger boy said that a man who looked like a gray-skinned human gave him a piece of silver to bring the leather pouch and the message to Blacktree House. The messenger boy was questioned by Anton, but he did not have any other pertinent information, except that the coin bore the stamp of Netheril. Anton says that the lock of hair and the silk ribbon definitely belong to his mother.

Very soon after the PCs read the original message, there is another knock on the door. A street urchin named Stearj stands at the door, this one holding a red velvet bag. He says the following, his eyes closed as if trying to remember something word for word:

“I was told by a shadowy tattooed man with gray hair that your messenger was to step outside with the prize held overhead. The messenger should then put the prize in this red bag and say the following aloud: ‘I vow not to remove the prize from this bag or let the bag leave my possession until I am told by the shadow man.’ The messenger should remain in public with the prize in the bag, and only leave the public outdoors if so instructed. This single messenger is the only person who should

undertake the journey. If you follow these instructions, nothing will get broken. If you don’t, your goods might get returned damaged—or not at all. The messenger should then take the bag with the prize and wait outside the office of the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter. Further instructions await there.”

The urchin who delivers the bag and the message cannot really say much else about who hired him, except it was a gray-haired man with tattoos who paid with a silver coin that was not minted in Ravens Bluff. He has already spent the coin, buying food off of a street vendor while walking here.

Give the PCs a few moments to decide who is going to take on the role of the messenger. During the discussion, Kiira Stoneshield returns from her errands to gather adventurers, claiming that she could not find any other trustworthy individuals that were willing to help on such short notice, and she could gain no other helpful information in the city.

In reality, Kiira went to see her twin sister, Shevri, who is known to associate with some of the less savory elements of Ravens Bluff. Unfortunately, Tiptoe’s gang of kidnappers knew this as well, and they paid Shevri a large sum of gold to join their side. When Kiira approached Shevri to ask for information, the kidnappers waylaid Kiira. Shevri assumed Kiira’s identity and now acts as a spy to learn of any trickery the PCs might use to fool the kidnappers as the adventure progresses. After the PCs make their plans and leave Blacktree House, Shevri notifies the kidnappers so they can be prepared for any tricks the PCs may plan.

This means that, assuming the pursuing PCs follow the messenger PC in possession of the *Cup of Truth* at a discreet distance, the kidnappers know they are doing so because Shevri tells them as soon as the PCs leave Blacktree House.

Shevri has had so much practice impersonating Kiira and they look so similar that no one can tell the difference between the two. If directly questioned, a passive DC 40 Insight (between her practice imitating her sister and magical augmentation) suggests that “Kiira” is knows more than she is saying. If called on this, she refuses to cooperate short of actual torture or magical domination (both of which are illegal and acts Anton would never allow). If the PCs do manage to compel her somehow, she believes the exchange is happening at the cemetery (Encounter 3). Further information is not forthcoming and at best the PCs can refuse to plan in front of her, and perhaps ask Anton to have her detained until further investigation can occur.

If the PCs discuss the choice of which PC should be the messenger, Anton suggests one of the PCs who is a

Defender, given that they are likely to be more durable if caught alone.

At this point, the party begins the skill challenge in Encounter 2, starting with going to the Trumpeter.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Having received the package and the initial instructions, the *Cup*-bearing PC should receive the instructions at the Trumpeter offices and head to the Ravens Bluff Cemetery.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE TRUTH

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 2/4, COMPLEXITY 3 (375/525 XP)

SETUP

This skill challenge takes place over the course of the entire adventure. In addition to the details of the overall skill challenge, several scenes are described below. Each scene is supposed to be run at a particular time, but the DM can re-arrange the order of the scenes and encounters if the decisions and actions of the PCs make it appropriate to do so.

Generally, for each scene the messenger PC must attempt a check AND the pursuing PCs must attempt a check (sometimes individual checks and sometimes group checks, as noted in each scene). In both cases, checks must be attempted until success is achieved in the scene. When each gains 1 success in a scene, they can move on. As soon as they gain 3 failures total, the PCs have failed the skill challenge, but you can still have them play through the various scenes, including uncovering the truth behind Kiira's twin sister Shevri and the location of Tiptoe's hideout. However, once the PCs fail the skill challenge, they cannot find and/or get to the hideout in time, so they must go to the rendezvous site in Encounter 6A if they hope to rescue Lady Charissa.

The DM is encouraged to use this skill challenge as a loose framework. Make changes to it based on the actions of the PCs, while keeping the overall goals in mind. Tiptoe and her gang want only 1 PC at the rendezvous, so they try to give instructions that cause the messenger PC to lose the pursuing PCs. They cut off the tip of Lady Charissa's pinky as a warning when the PCs fail to follow directions. They may later send the hand or tongue of a corpse to try to fool the PCs into thinking they are harming Lady Charissa further, but they do not harm her save for that first warning.

SKILL CHALLENGE: THE KIDNAPPERS' GAUNTLET

Goal: Successfully follow the kidnappers' directions while at the same time keeping the party together and learning the location of the kidnappers' hideout.

Complexity: 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: See each scene.

Other Skills: See each scene.

Victory: The PCs are able to successfully follow the kidnappers' directions and discern the location of their

hideout. The PCs may play Encounter 6B instead of Encounter 6A.

Defeat: The PCs have trouble keeping up with the demands of the kidnappers, and they fail to learn the location of the kidnappers' hideout, and are thus forced to make the ransom trade in a location beneficial to the kidnappers. The PCs must play Encounter 6A instead of Encounter 6B.

SCENE 1 – TO THE TRUMPETER

As the messenger PC travels to the office of the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter (after Encounter 1 but before Encounter 3), she can make a Perception check to notice that she is being watched.

Perception DC 5/7 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The messenger PC, if successful, notices that several street urchins and one particularly large human man are paying extra close attention to her. Also, an inordinate number of crows and ravens are perched in the area. All of these creatures and people appear to be observing the PC. If the messenger PC attempts to confront the observers, they disappear into a crowd. If the messenger PC strays from the route to the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter office, an urchin says "If you stray from the path, the shadowy man will be angry."

The pursuing PCs should be making every attempt to keep the messenger PC in sight without themselves being seen. This check should be a group skill check, with a success occurring if half or more of the pursuing PCs succeed at the check. Each PC must attempt one of the following skills:

Bluff DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC pretends to be doing other things while following the messenger PC.

Stealth DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC sneaks through the streets and allies, keeping hidden while following messenger PC.

Streetwise DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC knows enough about traveling through city streets to remain out of sight while following the messenger PC.

AT THE TRUMPETER OFFICE

When the messenger PC arrives at the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter offices, she is immediately approached by Blake, the butler of Sir Reginald Longbottle. (The PCs may have encountered him in *MINI2-1 A Mourning of Ravens*.) Any PC interacting with Blake can make a DC

10/12 Insight check to realize that he is not himself, and an additional DC 10/12 Arcana check reveals that he is under some sort of charm magic that is compelling him to deliver the message.

Blake says to the messenger PC, *“The shadow man says that your prize awaits you in the Moorland Family Mausoleum in the Ravens Bluff Cemetery. You must go alone.”*

After the message is delivered he hands the PCs a map drawn in his hand and walks away in an apparent enchanted stupor. Not long after this, the charm magic fades. If he is followed or questioned, he says that he was just out running errands for Sir Reginald, and he has no memory of delivering the message.

After the messenger PC finishes with Blake, Lady Silva Sinaran emerges from the offices. If the PCs have played the previous adventures, they have met her. In this case, she attempts to make small talk with the PC. This is an opportunity for the messenger PC to be tested, as lying to Lady Silva risks triggering the effects of the *Cup of Truth*, but telling the truth risks Lady Charissa’s life.

If the PC can find a subtle way to let Lady Silva know of the situation without making it obvious to the spies that are watching the messenger PC, you can allow the PCs to ignore one failure during the Encounter 2 skill challenge. Such ways would require something like telepathy, certain powers, or DC 15/17 skill checks in an appropriate skill. However, failure in an attempt to communicate this information to Lady Silva would mean one automatic failure to start the Encounter 2 skill challenge.

Proceed to Encounter 3 and return to this skill challenge following Encounter 5.

SCENE 2 – SWIMMING AND FOLLOWING

The scene should take place immediately after the PCs take a short rest after the combat in Encounter 5. The messenger PC was instructed to swim through the water-filled passage to reach the next set of instructions.

The messenger PC needs to either make an Athletics or Endurance check to successfully make it through the passage unharmed. Each failure at the check means the messenger PC loses 1 healing surge. Allow only 3 failures before the PC arrives at the other end of the tunnel safely.

Athletics DC 7/9 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC swims through the water-filled passage as quickly as possible, emerging safely.

Endurance DC 7/9 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC’s impressive stamina allows him to hold his breath while navigating the water-filled passage, emerging on the other side before breathing in water.

The rest of the PCs should now realize that they risk the kidnappers killing Lady Charissa if they are spotted following the messenger PC through the tunnel. However, with some quick thinking they can figure out where the water-filled passage emerges. If successful, the PCs are able to get to the docks just as the messenger PC emerges from the water-filled passage. If this check fails, the rest of the PCs cannot figure out where the passage emerges in time, and they arrive at the next scene late (with consequences detailed in the following scene).

Dungeoneering DC 15/17 (1 success, 1 maximum)

Based on the cliff formation and the way tunnels are formed, the PC can figure out where this passage leads. One PC can be the primary, and up to 4 PCs can assist.

Nature DC 15/17 (0 successes, 1 maximum)

Another PC can make a Nature check. If successful, this PC knows enough to add a +4 bonus to the above Dungeoneering check. There is no penalty for failure.

SCENE 3 – AT THE DOCKS

As the messenger PC emerges from the water-filled tunnel, she finds herself at the Ravens Bluff docks. After coming out of the water, another urchin approaches and says that the tattooed shadow man wants the messenger PC to go “to the alley between the two bloody buildings” in the Shadystreets neighborhood of the Crow’s Nest district. The urchin reveals that the shadow man said the PC would know it when she saw it.

After the instructions are delivered, the PCs catch their first break. The Blacktree’s coach driver Korben drives past and recognizes the messenger PC (or the red bag if the messenger PC is disguised, or the pursuing PCs). He says the following:

I was driving through the area looking for signs of my lady when I saw Kiira. I wondered what she was doing by the docks, because she was supposed to be searching elsewhere. It looked like she was hurt or maybe drunk, if you can believe that. She was practically being dragged by a couple of terribly large humans. I lost sight of them, but I know they are around here somewhere.

If the pursuing PCs succeeded at Scene 2, they can overhear this conversation. In this case, the PC with the highest Perception modifier can attempt the Perception

check below. If it fails, the PC with the next highest modifier can make the check.

If the PCs failed to arrive here in time (failed the checks in Scene 2), only the messenger PC can attempt the Perception check.

Perception DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC catches a glimpse of Kiira looking out the window of a small warehouse in the area. She looks both groggy and alarmed.

If the PCs fail the Perception check, and do not continue looking for Kiira but rather simply follow the directions the kidnappers gave, the PCs automatically proceed to Encounter 6A.

Once Kiira is spotted, the PCs can rush to the building. However, they must get into the building to rescue and talk to her.

Thievery DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC picks the lock and gets to Kiira.

Athletics DC 15/17 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC breaks down the door to get to Kiira.

Once the PCs gain access to Kiira, they find that she has been drugged and her uniform stolen. Kiira regains her senses enough to inform the PCs that her twin sister Shevri, who Kiira approached looking for information, helped some shadar-kai and enormous human ruffians waylay her. It should become obvious through the conversation that Shevri replaced Kiira. Shevri is probably at Blacktree House, and the PCs might be able to get information from her.

SCENE 4 – THE FAKE KIIRA

After the PCs find that the real Kiira was waylaid and replaced by her twin sister Shevri, they can learn the whereabouts of the kidnapper's lair by questioning Shevri. They find the imposter at Blacktree House. At first Shevri denies the truth, but when confronted with evidence, she clams up. The PCs have to work to get the truth out of her.

Intimidate DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs threaten and cajole Shevri enough to get her to confess and tell them what she knows.

Diplomacy DC 15/17 (1 success, 1 maximum)

By promising that they will not turn her in to the authorities (and swearing on the *Cup of Truth* to keep their pledge), the PCs convince Shevri to reveal what she knows.

When the PCs convince Shevri to talk, she reveals the following:

- A gang of shapeshifters who moved to the area within the last few months are behind the kidnapping. They hired Shevri to play the part of Kiira.
- Their hideout is in the Anvil neighborhood of the Crow's End district. It is in the basement of a tavern that was hit by an arsonist a few months ago. Shevri has never been there, but she knows that is where they are.
- She does not know who hired the gang.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Success: The PCs figure out that agents of Netheril are not responsible for the kidnapping, and they learn where Lady Charissa is being held. This allows the PCs to play Encounter 6b, attack the kidnappers in their lair, thus gaining tactical advantages.

Failure: The PCs fail to learn the complete truth about who is responsible for the kidnapping. They must meet the kidnappers at the pre-arranged rendezvous point, giving the kidnappers a significant advantage in the combat.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 75/105 XP each for successfully completing this skill challenge, or half if they fail.

ENCOUNTER 3: A BONE TO PICK

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2/4 (625/875 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 skinwalker skeleton (level 2) (S)
- 1 sliver wraith guardian (level 1) (G)
- 4 witherlings (level 1) (W)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 skinwalker skeleton (level 3) (S)
- 1 sliver wraith guardian (level 2) (G)
- 4 witherlings (level 3) (W)

Following the initial instructions provided by the kidnappers, the messenger PC enters the Ravens Bluff Cemetery to make what he or she believes is the exchange. The rest of the PCs are most likely following at a discreet distance.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The mausoleum dedicated to the Moorland family is in an older part of the cemetery. A few people stroll through the grounds, but this part of the cemetery is quite empty now. A path leads past a small mausoleum dedicated to Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver, a former constable of Ravens Bluff, and a ring of monoliths surround a gravesite honoring a former Deputy Mayor of the city named Belanor Fenmarel. Near these sites, a larger mausoleum bears the name Moorland. This is where the meeting is to take place.

The bearer of the Cup should enter the Moorland Mausoleum at this point. Upon entering, the skinwalker skeleton gains a surprise round, which it uses to move adjacent to the PC. Once that has happened, the surprise round ends.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Brightly lit by sunlight.

Monolith Circle: The circle of monoliths is the resting place of former Deputy Mayor Belanor Fenmarel. His many crimes have caused the area within the circle or within one square of any of the monoliths to be defiled ground. Undead in the defiled ground roll a saving throw when they are reduced to 0 hit points. On a successful save, they rise again at the beginning of their next turn with 1 hit point. On a failed save they are

destroyed. If radiant damage reduced the undead to 0 hit points, they take a -5 penalty on the saving throw. The monoliths act as blocking terrain. The magical aspects of the monolith circle can be learned with an Arcana check (DC 15, made as a free action).

Sacred Ground: The mausoleum and courtyard in the bottom-right section of the map is the resting place of Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver, former Constable of Ravens Bluff. His honor and sense of justice has turned the area within the courtyard into sacred ground. If a living creature uses a healing surge within the sacred ground, that character regains 4 additional hit points and gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls until the end of the encounter. This benefit can only be gained once per PC during the adventure. The magical aspects of the sacred ground can be learned with a Religion check (DC 15, made as a free action).

Grave: The grave within the sacred ground belongs to King the Dog. His tombstone reads "Here lies King the Dog. His guidance was always true." All living creatures gain a +4 bonus on saving throws and skill checks made while adjacent to the grave. The magical aspects of the grave can be learned with a Nature check (DC 15, made as a free action).

Moorland Family Mausoleum: During the day the doors of the mausoleum are left unlocked and open, as the inside contains ancient statuary and architecture of interest. The bodies of the Moorland family were moved long ago, when this place opened to the public.

Trained Ravens: A trio of trained ravens has been sent by Tiptoe to attempt to steal the bag containing the Cup of Truth. If the PC carrying the bag dies or is knocked unconscious, one of the ravens swoops down and grabs it. It attempts to fly away (speed 4 when carrying the bag and speed 8 when unburdened). After 5 rounds of flying, the laden raven gets to a place where it cannot be seen anymore and therefore escapes. Treat the ravens as minions with defenses of 12. If one raven is killed while trying to escape with the Cup of Truth, another raven takes over until all three are killed.

TACTICS

The undead encountered here were raised and summoned forth by a necromancer hired by Tiptoe's gang. They were instructed to attack anyone entering the Moorland Mausoleum or anyone attacking them. While Tiptoe's gang generally avoids killing the PCs, they gave no such instructions to the necromancer, and his baser instincts take over.

The skinwalker skeleton mindlessly attacks the first PC entering the mausoleum. The sliver wraith guardian begins inside one of the monoliths, moving out and

attacking as soon as a PC enters the mausoleum. Its phasing allows it to pass through solid objects as necessary. The witherlings burst from the graves on their turn as a minor action. They try to stay in a pack, focusing their attacks on PCs that grant them combat advantage.

The flow of the combat could work as follows: the Cup-bearer enters the mausoleum and is attacked by the skinwalker, so the defender/striker PCs rush forward to enter the place, leaving the softer characters behind, where they are attacked by the witherlings and wraith a round later.

The undead follow the PCs into the city, even if they try to flee. If the PCs continue to flee, the DM may consider having the city watch show up eventually to aid the PCs in destroying the undead.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one witherling.

Six PCs: Add another witherling.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Assuming the PCs were able to defeat the undead creatures and keep the ravens from stealing the Cup and carrying it away, they have a chance to take a single short rest at this point before the next messenger arrives. If they take another short rest after the messenger arrives and delivers the message, assign one automatic failure for the Encounter 2 skill challenge for each extra short rest taken. Before assigning these failures, give the players unobvious clues that these rests are possibly taking minutes off Lady Charissa's life.

If the PCs lost the Cup to the ravens, the PCs have no real recourse unless they come up with an inventive plan (DM's discretion). Tiptoe's gang gets the Cup and gives it to their employers, and Lady Charissa is subsequently released. However, the gnome's gang from Encounter 5 still believes that the PCs possess the artifact. Skip over Encounter 4 and run that encounter, changing the setting of the combat to take place on a street within the city. While the PCs still fail because the ravens stole the Cup, they at least get a chance to play another encounter and learn that the kidnappers were not from Netheril. If there is still time left, you can even let the PCs play Encounter 6B, as Lady Charissa can remember enough details to send the PCs to Tiptoe's lair. However, the Cup is long gone by this time, so the PCs can only learn that the Cup was given to a buyer from Sembia.

After 5 minutes of rest (or when the PCs begin to move), another urchin approaches carrying a message. The first part of the message is carried in a small leather pouch. The urchin says that an old halfling witch gave him the leather pouch and told him where to deliver it. The urchin says the old woman told him to tell the PCs the following: ***"This is the first and only warning you will get. Our instructions said ONE messenger, not several. That one messenger should walk to entrance of the cemetery where further instructions await. The rest of you will NOT follow."*** In the leather pouch is the severed tip of a pinkie finger and a signet ring. The signet ring looks exactly like the one worn by Lady Charissa.

When the messenger PC goes to the entrance of the cemetery, proceed to Encounter 4.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC gains 125/175 experience points for successfully completing this encounter.

TREASURE

Wrapped around the leg of one of the witherlings is a *floating lantern* (both tiers). Another wears a ring worth 50 gp per PC. The skinwalker skeleton has a ritual scroll of *Comprehend Languages* and a *potion of healing*.

ENCOUNTER 3: A BONE TO PICK STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Skinwalker Skeleton		Level 2 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 125
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant (when bloodied)		
Speed 5		
m Putrefying Pummel (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease		
+5 vs AC; 1d8+8 damage (crit 15 damage, and the target contracts skinrot).		
Skin Case (until first bloodied)		
A skinwalker skeleton's fleshy exterior grants it a +2 bonus to AC and Fortitude (already included), negates its vulnerable 5 radiant, and infects a target with skinrot (see below) when the skinwalker skeleton scores a critical hit. These benefits end when the skinwalker skeleton is first bloodied.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages --
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)

Skinrot		Level 2 Disease
Endurance improve DC15; maintain DC 10; worsen DC 9 or lower		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls. Final State: While bloodied, the target takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls and cannot spend healing surges. 		

Witherling		Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural animate (undead)		XP 100
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +0; low-light vision	
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 8; climb 6		
m Claw (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs AC; 1d6+1 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
M Double Attack (standard; usable only while bloodied, at-will)		
The witherling makes two claw attacks.		
Combat Advantage		
A witherling deals 1d6 extra damage on attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.		
Pack Attack		
A witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.		
Sudden Leap (move; at-will)		
The witherling jumps 4 squares. During the jump, it gains a +5 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and any enemy that misses the witherling with an opportunity attack grants combat advantage to it until the end of the witherling's turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Abyssal	
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 19 (+4)	Wis 11 (+0)
Con 16 (+3)	Int 7 (-2)	Cha 12 (+1)

Sliver Wraith Guardian		Level 1 Soldier
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)		XP 100
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1	
Hypnotic Form (Charm) aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn in the aura is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.		
HP 20; Bloodied 10		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 13, Will 12		
Immune dazed, disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
m Dizzying Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
+4 vs. Will; 1d6+1 psychic damage, and the target is marked and grants combat advantage until the end of the guardian's next turn.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Deep Speech
Str 6 (-2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 13 (+1)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 10 (+0)	Cha 15 (+2)

ENCOUNTER 3: A BONE TO PICK STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Skinwalker Skeleton	Level 3 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 150
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 55; Bloodied 27	
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant (when bloodied)	
Speed 5	
m Putrefying Pummel (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease	
+6 vs AC; 1d8+8 damage (crit 15 damage, and the target contracts skinrot).	
Skin Case (until first bloodied)	
A skinwalker skeleton's fleshy exterior grants it a +2 bonus to AC and Fortitude (already included), negates its vulnerable 5 radiant, and infects a target with skinrot (see below) when the skinwalker skeleton scores a critical hit. These benefits end when the skinwalker skeleton is first bloodied.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages --
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 3 (-3) Cha 3 (-3)

Skinrot	Level 2 Disease
Endurance improve DC15; maintain DC 10; worsen DC 9 or lower	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls. Final State: While bloodied, the target takes a -4 penalty to attack rolls and cannot spend healing surges. 	

Witherling	Level 3 Skirmisher
Small natural animate (undead)	XP 150
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +1; low-light vision	
HP 48; Bloodied 24	
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Speed 8; climb 6	
m Claw (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
M Double Attack (standard; usable only while bloodied, at-will)	
The witherling makes two claw attacks.	
Combat Advantage	
A witherling deals 1d6 extra damage on attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
Pack Attack	
A witherling's melee attacks deal 2 extra damage against any enemy that has two or more of the witherling's allies adjacent to it.	
Sudden Leap (move; at-will)	
The witherling jumps 4 squares. During the jump, it gains a +5 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and any enemy that misses the witherling with an opportunity attack grants combat advantage to it until the end of the witherling's turn.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Abyssal
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 19 (+5) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 7 (-1) Cha 12 (+2)

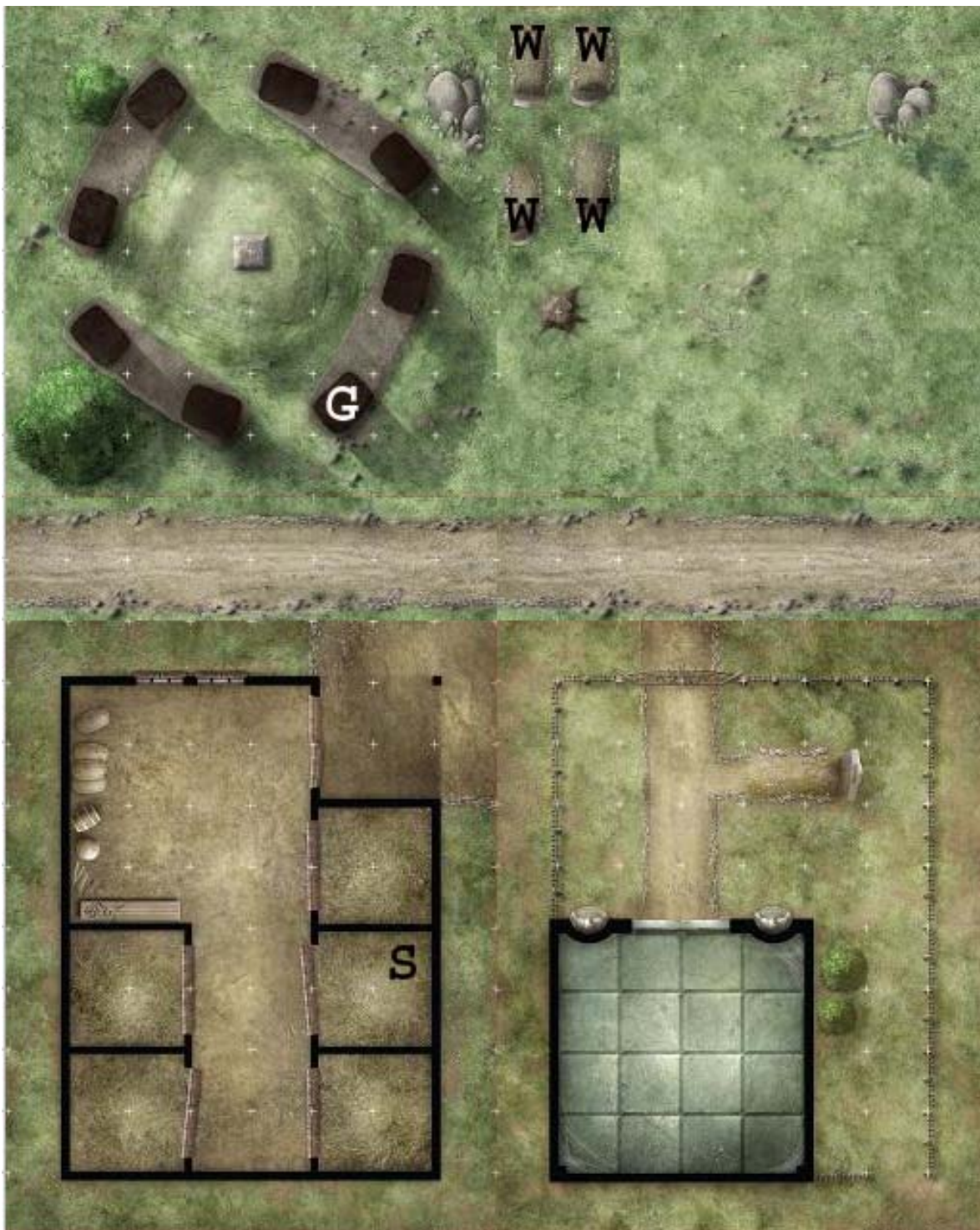
Sliver Wraith Guardian	Level 2 Soldier
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)	XP 125
Initiative +4 Senses Perception +2	
Hypnotic Form (Charm) aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn in the aura is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.	
HP 26; Bloodied 13	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13	
Immune dazed, disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
m Dizzying Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
+5 vs. Will; 1d6+2 psychic damage, and the target is marked and grants combat advantage until the end of the guardian's next turn.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech
Str 6 (-1)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 15 (+3)

ENCOUNTER 3: A BONE TO PICK MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Hidden Crypts x1

Ruins of the Wild x1



ENCOUNTER 4: GETTING LOST

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 1/3, COMPLEXITY 1 (100/150 XP)

SETUP

After the attack at the cemetery, the PCs should still be in possession of the *Cup of Truth*, assuming the ravens were not able to steal it. They received a message and a warning at the end of that encounter, and the PC in possession of the *Cup of Truth* should move to the entrance to the cemetery as instructed. When the messenger PC does that, read:

At the cemetery's entrance, all is peaceful. A flock of crows sits on a dead tree. The birds' shining eyes seem to turn in your direction. Suddenly, a carriage being drawn by two horses, one black and one white, careens around a corner and in your direction. The carriage driver is a young human woman of marrying age. She says in an accent of someone of the lower classes, "Aye. I got pay to pick ya' up. Get in quick and hold tight to yer boots."

Within the carriage sits a rotund human male dressed in clothes that indicate an upper-middle class background. The man looks nervous, sweat resting heavily on a brow that sits atop a puffy face. He mops the sweat with a silk handkerchief and says in a low monotone, "Show me what's in the bag."

The driver is actually Allest duMonde, a consultant in the employ of the Ravens Bluff city watch. She works undercover, keeping a vigilant eye on the city from within its underbelly. She reports back to Captain Ivor Baroom when she gains information that she thinks might pertain to crimes and investigations. She caught rumors that Lady Charissa was taken, so she took the guise of a carriage-for-hire driver and stayed near suspicious sorts. As fate would have it, she was hired by an associate of Tiptoe to pick up the messenger PC and take him to the next point of the journey.

The person in the carriage is Pressage Prue, a human merchant. Tiptoe is blackmailing Pressage, forcing him to take part in this caper. Pressage is involved in smuggling goods into and out of Ravens Bluff. Tiptoe learned of this, and she now forces Pressage to do small favors for her.

Once the messenger PC opens the bag and Pressage confirms the *Cup* is still there, he nods. He wraps his walking stick on the top of the carriage, and it takes off at a break-neck pace. If the cup is not inside, he

demands that the PC produce the cup before they can move onto their destination. Pressage is very nervous and doesn't have any useful information about what is going on. He simply knows that he is to deliver the PC and the cup or he will be in trouble.

Once the carriage is underway, Pressage speaks again:

"I have further instructions. We are going to a cave near where the old docks were located. You are to enter the cave and locate the underwater passage containing the rusty chain. Swim through the passage; further instructions await you on the other end."

SKILL CHALLENGE: STAYING TOGETHER

Goal: Despite getting separated, the PCs must find a way to keep in touch with each other.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, History, Insight, Nature, Perception, Stealth, Streetwise

Victory: The pursuing PCs are able to remain close enough to the messenger PC.

Defeat: The pursuing PCs are able to find the messenger PC's final destination, but they are exhausted by the frenzied chase. They begin Encounter 5 winded, so that they grant combat advantage to all enemies for the first 2 rounds of combat, as well as the surprise round if there is one.

In this skill challenge, the messenger PC may attempt one skill check to give the pursuing PCs a clue or a trail to follow. The pursuing PCs must then succeed at 3 skill checks to keep up and stay close to the messenger PC.

Bluff/Stealth/Thievery DC 8/10 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The messenger PC is able to leave a clue or trail for the pursuing PCs that neither Pressage nor any of the watchful spies notices. This counts as a success and also gives the pursuing PCs a +2 bonus to Nature, Perception or Streetwise checks to follow.

Athletics DC 10/12 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The pursuing PCs run after the carriage, keeping just close enough to see where it is going and not falling too far behind.

Nature DC 10/12 (1 success, 2 maximum)

The pursuing PCs pick up the trail of the carriage and are able to follow it rapidly.

Perception DC 12/14 (1 success, 2 maximum)

The pursuing PCs pick up the trail of the carriage and are able to follow it rapidly.

Streetwise DC 10/12 (1 success, 2 maximum)

The pursuing PCs are able to get information from the common folks on the street and use shortcuts to stay close to the messenger PC.

It is entirely possible that the PCs come up with another plan to stay in close contact with each other. Allow such plans to work as long as they make sense. Just remember that these plans must take very little time. The threat of the kidnappers ending Lady Charissa's life should keep them from taking more than 5 minutes, using most rituals, or following other leads.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Success: The carriage arrives at the cave, and the pursuing PCs keep tabs on the messenger PC and arrive in good shape.

Failure: The pursuing PCs have trouble keeping tabs on the messenger PC, and although they finally do arrive at the cave, they are exhausted. The pursuing PCs grant combat advantage for the first two rounds of the combat in the next encounter, plus the surprise round if there is one.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Allest duMonde can be used by the DM in this adventure to help the PCs move from one encounter to the next. She can also show up later to provide them with a piece of helpful information if the PCs are lost at how to proceed. Also, since she is, unknowingly to them, an ally of the PCs, she is more than willing to pass along notes or messages to the pursuing PCs after dropping off the messenger PC.

Pressage knows nothing more than any of the previous urchins or messenger boys have known. If confronted, he tells the PCs that he owed a favor to a business associate, and a tattooed shadar-kai rented the carriage and told him what to tell a person carrying a red bag who left the cemetery.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC earns 20/30 experience points for successfully completing this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5: A MURDER OF CROWS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 2/4 (625/875 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 gnome trickster spectral assassin (level 1) (G)

3 half-orc archers (level 1) (A)

5 crazed human rabble (level 2) (R)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

1 gnome trickster spectral assassin (level 3) (G)

3 half-orc archers (level 2) (A)

5 crazed human rabble (level 3) (R)

The instructions and the carriage lead the messenger PC to a cave near the former dock area of Ravens Bluff. When the Spellplague caused the level of the Sea of Fallen Stars to recede, this area was left dry, and much of it was used to expand the Foreign Quarter, though some of it on the edges was left barren. What were once underwater caves were exposed to the light. Within the cave is a water-filled passage, which Tiptoe expects the messenger PC to swim through, in one more attempt to lose anyone who might be following.

However, the Netherese have used spies and divinations to learn that an adventurer is wandering the streets of Ravens Bluff with the *Cup of Truth*. They have also learned that the PC with the artifact is going to be entering this cave. A gnome called Giffly has been hired by the Shadovar to gain possession of the *Cup of Truth*. The gnome hired some half-orc mercenaries to assist him, and then used some evil mind-control magic to turn Ravens Bluff citizens into crazed killers.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The instructions of the kidnappers lead to some caves that, until the devastation of the Spellplague, were covered by water. Now these caves are exposed to the light.

It is easy to find the cave detailed in the kidnappers' instructions. After traveling into the cave entrance for a few yards, the sunlight gives way to shadows. In the faint light of the cavern, you can see the shining eyes of countless crows. They stare at you as if they know why you are here. To your right, the floor gives way to steep cliffs that fall away to more caverns below.

Any attempts to shoo away the crows fail. More arrive if some are killed. The merchants who hired Tiptoe's gang are using primal magic to observe the actions of the PCs via these birds.

The gnome is hiding invisibly near the entrance of the cave. PCs cannot note his presence unless they make a Perception check (DC 22/24) or if they can see invisible creatures.

The PCs can hear the sounds of the half-orc archers and human rabble in the lower section of the caverns, although those enemies are currently out of line of sight.

When the first PC reaches the lower cavern and sees the half-orcs and human rabble, the closest half-orc speaks.

"You have come far enough. Throw the object to me or you will be killed."

The bad guys here do not realize that Lady Charissa has been kidnapped or that the PCs have already received instructions to swim through the underwater passage to reach the next set of instructions. If the PCs mention a prisoner or a trade, the half-orc tries to bluff that they have the prisoner, but a DC 5 Insight check reveals he is lying.

The PCs should also recognize that the mob of crazed human rabble is made up of common folks from Ravens Bluff. Feel free to make one or more of them individuals whom the PCs recognize from previous adventures: sailors on the *Lady Luck*, guards from noble estates, etc. At the end of the encounter, none of them remember how they got here.

A DC 20 passive Perception check before the start of the combat allows the PC to hear the crunch of gravel suggesting that there is an additional hidden foe somewhere nearby.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light on the top of the ledge, but otherwise brightly lit by torches and lanterns.

Cliffs: The cliffs that lead down into the interior caves are 10 feet (2 squares) high. They can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Northern Water: The water in the northern portion of the map is 4 squares deep and has been stocked with a rare species of flesh-eating fish. A creature starting its turn in the water takes 5 damage and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses. Once the creature leaves the water, the creature continues to take a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

To swim within the water, a creature must make a DC 10 Athletics check. Getting out of the water onto

land requires 2 squares of movement. See the Athletics skill in the PH for more information on swimming.

Southern Water: The water on the southern portion of the map is the beginning of a flooded passageway that contains a rusted iron chain. A creature entering the water can swim with a DC 5 Athletics check or use the chain to pull itself along if both hands are free.

Plank: The orange rectangle across the water is a plank that the bad guys have used to get into position. It can be crossed at half speed with a DC 5/7 Acrobatics check, or full speed with a DC 15/17 check. Failure by 4 or more means the crosser falls off the plank and into the water. The plank can be moved into a new position as a minor action.

TACTICS

The gnome waits until some of the PCs have climbed down the walls into the lower cavern and interacted with the half-orc archers and human rabble—then he attacks from hiding with surprise. The gnome's *assassin's fading* and *fade away* mean that he should get the chance to spend several rounds invisible during the combat. The gnome can use *great leap* to move from the top of the cliff to the lower cavern if needed, using the Acrobatics skill to reduce or eliminate damage. *Great leap* can also take the gnome across the water if needed. Giffly is a particularly dangerous opponent and the DM is encouraged to use his abilities according to the strength of the table. It is no fun for a table of brand new players with 1st-level characters to be TPKed because the dice go against them.

The half-orc archers try to keep the human rabble between themselves and the PCs. They can use the plank to cross the water and then pull it away, making the PCs work to enter melee with them. Given the angle of the cliff, it is quite possible that PCs that back up to fight the gnome will be out of sight of the archers.

The human rabble have been affected by some sort of charm magic, turning them into babbling automatons. After the initial discussion between the two sides, the rabble attack wildly. They use their *aura of madness* to pull PCs closer or slide them off the cliff or into the water. An Insight check DC 15 made as a free action shows that the rabble are under some mind-control effect that can be alleviated. A DC 15/17 Arcana check (trained only) made as a minor action within 5 squares of a human rabble removes that creature's *aura of madness* and *psychic feedback* powers, but the creature still attacks until killed or knocked unconscious. If this check is failed, a rabble becomes more crazed, gaining a +1 bonus to attack rolls and 2 extra points of damage on

club attacks. If the human rabble are unable to get into melee, they will use the plank, swim or jump as appropriate to get near potential enemies (while trying to avoid killing themselves by the fish).

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a half-orc archer.

Six PCs: Add another half-orc archer and two more crazed human rabble.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the battle has concluded, the crows squawk and watch the PCs intently. Questioning the gnome or half-orcs (or a search of their bodies) reveals that they are in the employ of shadowy people they believe to be agents of the Netherese government. They can describe the woman that hired them as a well-dressed, attractive human woman. The description of her face does not match any of the people the PCs have seen. The Netherese learned that the PCs might have the *Cup of Truth* and have been traveling around the city, so they were hired to ambush the PCs. This should clue the PCs to the revelation that the Netherese are not behind the kidnapping.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

For successfully completing this encounter, each PC receives 125/175 experience points.

TREASURE

The gnome Giffly wears a *ruby scabbard*. He also wears a silver belt buckle (a stylized 'G') worth 25/50 gp per PC. The half-orc archer carries a *shroud of protection*.

ENCOUNTER 5: A MURDER OF CROWS STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Gnomish Spectral Assassin	Level 1 Elite Lurker
Small fey humanoid	XP 200
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 44; Bloodied 22	
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 5	
Action Points 1	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage, or 2d4+8 with combat advantage, and the gnome spectral assassin slides the target 1 square.	
M Blinding Cut (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d4+4 damage, or 2d4 + 8 with combat advantage, and the target is blinded until the end of the gnome's next turn.	
Assassin's Fading (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes a melee or ranged attack against the spectral assassin; recharge 5 6)	
♦ Illusion	
The spectral assassin becomes invisible until the end of its next turn, and it can shift 1 square as a free action.	
Combat Advantage	
A spectral assassin deals 1d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to it.	
Invisible Killer	
While invisible, a spectral assassin scores a critical hit on a roll of 19-20 and deals 1d10 extra damage with a critical hit.	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome trickster takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion	
The trickster becomes invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Great Leap (move; at-will)	
The trickster jumps 7 squares.	
Reactive Stealth	
If the trickster has any cover or concealment when making an initiative check, the trickster may make a Stealth check.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Arcana +6, Stealth +10, Thievery +9	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 16 (+3) Wis 11 (+0)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 14 (+2) Cha 15 (+2)
Equipment box of dirty tricks, dagger, leather armor, <i>ruby scabbard</i>	

Ruby Scabbard (free action; encounter) ♦ Weapon
Giffly can draw his dagger from this scabbard as part of the same action used to make an attack with that weapon. He can use the <i>ruby scabbard</i> to gain a +1 power bonus to the next damage roll he makes with his dagger before the end of his next turn.

Half-Orc Archer	Level 1 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 100
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision	
HP 26; Bloodied 13	
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 11	
Speed 6	
m Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.	
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +7 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage.	
Furious Assault (free, when the half-orc archer hits an enemy, encounter)	
The triggering attack deals 1d6 extra damage if it was a handaxe attack or 1d10 extra damage if it was a longbow attack.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Endurance +4, Intimidate +7, Stealth +9	
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 19 (+4) Wis 14 (+2)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 11 (+0) Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment arrows (30), handaxe, leather armor, longbow, <i>shroud of protection</i>	

Crazed Human Rabble	Level 1 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25
Initiative +0 Senses Perception +0	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 10, Will 10; see also <i>mob rule</i>	
Speed 6	
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Aura of Madness (opportunity; when a creature starts its turn within 3 squares of the crazed human rabble)	
The human rabble slides the triggering creature 1 square.	
Psychic Feedback (when the human rabble drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic	
Each enemy adjacent to any crazed human rabble takes 2 psychic damage. This damage stacks if the enemy is adjacent to multiple crazed human rabble.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 10 (+0) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1) Cha 11 (+0)
Equipment club	

ENCOUNTER 5: A MURDER OF CROWS STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Gnomish Spectral Assassin	Level 3 Elite Lurker
Small fey humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 68; Bloodied 34	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 14	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 5	
Action Points 1	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, or 2d4+9 with combat advantage, and the gnome spectral assassin slides the target 1 square.	
M Blinding Cut (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 2d4+5 damage, or 2d4 + 9 with combat advantage, and the target is blinded until the end of the gnome's next turn.	
Assassin's Fading (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes a melee or ranged attack against the spectral assassin; recharge 5 6)	
♦ Illusion	
The spectral assassin becomes invisible until the end of its next turn, and it can shift 1 square as a free action.	
Combat Advantage	
A spectral assassin deals 2d6 extra damage against any target granting combat advantage to it.	
Invisible Killer	
While invisible, a spectral assassin scores a critical hit on a roll of 19-20 and deals 1d10 extra damage with a critical hit.	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome trickster takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion	
The trickster becomes invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Great Leap (move; at-will)	
The trickster jumps 7 squares.	
Reactive Stealth	
If the trickster has any cover or concealment when making an initiative check, the trickster may make a Stealth check.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +7, Stealth +11, Thievery +10	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 14 (+3) Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment box of dirty tricks, dagger, leather armor, <i>ruby scabbard</i>	
Ruby Scabbard (free action; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Giffly can draw his dagger from this scabbard as part of the same action used to make an attack with that weapon. He can use the <i>ruby scabbard</i> to gain a +1 power bonus to the next damage roll he makes with his dagger before the end of his next turn.	

Half-Orc Archer	Level 2 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 32; Bloodied 16	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	
Speed 6	
m Handaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
r Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +8 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.	
Furious Assault (free, when the half-orc archer hits an enemy, encounter)	
The triggering attack deals 1d6 extra damage if it was a handaxe attack or 1d10 extra damage if it was a longbow attack.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Endurance +5, Intimidate +8, Stealth +10	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 19 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 11 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)
Equipment arrows (30), handaxe, leather armor, longbow, <i>shroud of protection</i>	

Crazed Human Rabble	Level 3 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 38
Initiative +1 Senses Perception +1	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 12; see also <i>mob rule</i>	
Speed 6	
m Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 5 damage.	
Aura of Madness (opportunity; when a creature starts its turn within 3 squares of the crazed human rabble)	
The human rabble slides the triggering creature 1 square.	
Psychic Feedback (when the human rabble drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic	
Each enemy adjacent to any crazed human rabble takes 3 psychic damage. This damage stacks if the enemy is adjacent to multiple crazed human rabble.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0) Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment club	

ENCOUNTER 5: A MURDER OF CROWS MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Caves of Carnage x1



PCs Enter Here

ENCOUNTER 6A: RENDEZVOUS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3/5 (775/1,075 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 doppelganger sneak swordmage (level 2) (S)
- 1 wereboar (level 2) (W)
- 4 claw doppelganger darkmages (level 1) (D)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 doppelganger sneak swordmage (level 5) (S)
- 2 wereboars (level 3) (W)
- 4 claw doppelganger darkmages (level 2) (D)

If the PCs are unable to figure out where Lady Charissa is being held, or if they decide to meet the kidnappers at the rendezvous point instead, run this encounter.

DM NOTE: The plans the party may have concocted by this point are nearly infinite, so it is likely that you will need to adjust the read aloud test and set up of this encounter to match the way in which the PCs approach the exchange.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The instructions from the kidnappers have led you to the Crow's Nest section of Ravens Bluff. This seedy neighborhood is normally quite crowded, but right now this section is eerily still and empty.

You see two abandoned buildings that are splattered with some sort of red paint, which makes them look bloody. In the alley where you were told to go, Lady Charissa is flanked by a pair of large humans of astounding girth and stature. Charissa has put on a brave face and says, "Do not give them what they ask for. I order you." A grate leading to the sewers has been opened behind her.

The large men shake her a bit and tell her to be quiet. One of them says in a grunting voice, "Throw the bag over here, and we'll release the dame."

The wereboars order the PCs to enter the red-shaded area on the map, but to come no closer. If the PCs fail to comply, the gang attacks.

While the PCs talk with the gang, anyone succeeding at a DC 22/23 Insight check realizes that something is not quite right with Lady Charissa. An amused smirk, barely perceptible, passes her lips while the discussion goes on. PCs who know that

shapechangers are involved by talking to Shevri get a +4 to their Insight checks.

The doppelganger sneak swordmage, called Tiptoe by her peers, wants this encounter to play out as follows: the PCs throw the bag containing the *Cup* to her guards, they drop the bag down the sewer grate, she changes shape and mocks the PCs for a bit, and then the real Lady Charissa is brought up from the sewers and given to the PCs. At the bottom of the sewer (10-foot drop) wait 4 gang members all holding identical bags. If the *Cup* gets dropped to them, one of them takes it, and they all scatter throughout the sewers, making finding the right person unlikely. The kidnappers want only to get the *Cup of Truth* and get paid, and they do not want to fight unless it is necessary.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Brightly lit.

Sewer Grate: The grate here has been removed, leaving a hole in the ground. The shaft drops 10 feet into series of sewer tunnels.

Buildings: The buildings are abandoned and boarded up. They are 3 squares tall and require a DC 12/13 Athletics check to climb. Certain areas of the walls have been sabotaged to hinder climbing. If a creature attempts to climb the walls of a building, roll a d10. On a 1-6, the PC must make an Acrobatics check DC 10/11 to avoid falling when a piece of the building breaks away. On a successful check, the PC can continue the movement. On a failed check by 3 or less, the PC must end the move action but does not fall. On a failed check by 4 or more, the PC falls 2 squares, taking 1d10 damage and ending prone unless a trained Acrobatics check negates it as per normal Acrobatics skill rules.

TACTICS

The swordmage plays the role of the victim as much as possible, only wanting to get the *Cup* and deliver it. If she knows that combat is inevitable, she tries to use her disguise to get into a position to surprise the PCs. She marks PCs targeting the darkmages on the roofs or the wereboars. If a PC is in the middle of climbing, Tiptoe can use *lightning lure* to pull them off the wall if they fail a saving throw. Her shortsword is secured in the sewers and can be called into her hand as a minor action.

The wereboars change shape as needed, using *gore* in dire boar form if they need to charge, then changing back to humanoid form to deal more damage with a *maul* attack.

The darkmages snipe at the PCs from cover on the rooftops. They take turns cursing the nearest non-cursed

PC so that some of them are attacking each round. The extra curse damage from each darkmage's attacks only affect the targets that individual darkmage has cursed. Having the attacks of each darkmage affecting all cursed PCs would likely result in too much damage for the PCs to absorb. The darkmages attempt to target those PCs whom they have cursed to get the extra damage. Note that each darkmage's cursebite power only targets those targets actually cursed by THAT darkmage.

If any PC is dropped below 0 hit points, they are knocked out, not slain. Tiptoe and her gang have instructions not to kill the PCs if there is no need.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a claw doppelganger darkmage.

Six PCs: Add another wereboar.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs are defeated, they are not killed. Tiptoe and her gang simply take the *Cup of Truth* and leave the PCs and Lady Charissa alive. They deliver the artifact and leave the city immediately with their payment.

If the PCs succeed in defeating Tiptoe and her gang and hanging onto the *Cup*, they have succeeded in rescuing Lady Charissa.

None of the doppelganger darkmages know who hired their gang to perform the illegal deeds, but Tiptoe and the wereboars do. If promised freedom, any one of them happily reveals that the person who hired them to kidnap Lady Charissa and frame Netheril was a representative of the rebels who are working to free Sembia from the rule of Netheril. He also works on some ship as a navigator. If the PCs need additional help, the prisoner describes Arvond the Navigator from the previous adventures. Even if the PCs have not met him, they can take the description back to Blacktree House, and the Blacktree family knows who it is, although they find it hard to believe, as Arvond was injured in the attack that captured Lady Charissa in the first place.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC earns 155/215 experience points for successfully completing this encounter.

TREASURE

One of the darkmages has a book containing the ritual *Seek Rumor*.

ENCOUNTER 6A: RENDEZVOUS STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Doppelganger Sneak Swordmage	Level 2 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 250
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2	
HP 62; Bloodied 31	
AC 20; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 15	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
M Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)	
+5 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.	
R Lightning Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning	
Range 3; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is pulled to the closest unoccupied square to the doppelganger sneak swordmage.	
M Frost Backlash (immediate interrupt; daily) ♦ Arcane, Cold, Weapon	
<i>Trigger:</i> when doppelganger is hit by an adjacent creature, it can make an attack against the attacking creature; +5 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 cold damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
C Aegis of Assault (minor; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Teleportation	
Close burst 2; one creature in burst is marked by the doppelganger. The doppelganger may one mark one target at a time. If the marked target makes an attack that does not include the doppelganger, that attack suffers a-2 to hit. Additionally, if the attack hits and the attacker is within 10 squares of the doppelganger, the doppelganger may choose to teleport adjacent to the marked attacker and make a melee basic attack against the marked attacker as an immediate interrupt.	
Mythal Recovery (minor; encounter) ♦ Arcane	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage makes a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.	
Swordbond (minor; at-will)	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage can call his short sword to his hand from up to 10 squares away.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +9, Bluff +10, Insight +9, Stealth +9	
Str 11 (+1) Dex 16 (+4) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 15 (+3)	
Equipment short sword	

Moontusk Fever	Level 2 Disease
Endurance improve DC15; maintain DC 10; worsen DC 9 or lower	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 to saving throws while bloodied. While bloodied, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects. Final State: When the subject rolls a saving throw, it rolls two dice and takes the lower of the two results. 	

Wereboar (level 2)	Level 2 Brute
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 125
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +4	
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
Regeneration 5	
AC 13; Fortitude 17, Reflex 12, Will 13	
Immune bloodtusk fever	
Vulnerable silver (if the wereboar takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn)	
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)	
m Maul (standard; usable only while in humanoid form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.	
m Gore (standard; usable only while in boar form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to moontusk fever.	
M Death Strike (when the wereboar drops to 0 hit points)	
The wereboar makes a gore or a maul attack.	
Bloodied Resilience (while bloodied)	
The wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and deals ongoing 10 damage with its gore attack instead of ongoing 5 damage.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereboar can alter its physical form to appear as a dire boar or a unique humanoid.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common,	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +9, Intimidate +6	
Str 20 (+6) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)	
Equipment hide armor, maul	

Claw Doppelganger Darkmage (level 1)	Level 1 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 100
Initiative +1 Senses Perception +5	
HP 24; Bloodied 12	
AC 13; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
r Dark Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 2 necrotic damage against a target at full normal hit points.	
C Cursebite (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Close burst 20; targets cursed enemies; +4 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 3 necrotic damage.	
Curse (standard; at-will)	
The claw doppelganger darkmage curses the nearest noncursed enemy. The curse lasts until the end of the encounter. Once per round when the darkmage hits a cursed enemy, it can deal that enemy 1d6 extra damage.	
Darkmage Fanatic (when the claw doppelganger darkmage drops to 0 hit points)	
The claw doppelganger darkmage makes a basic attack.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Elven, Goblin	
Skills Arcana +8, Intimidate +8	
Str 10 (+0) Dex 10 (+0) Wis 9 (-1)	
Con 12 (+1) Int 16 (+3) Cha 18 (+4)	
Equipment leather robes, rod, mace	

ENCOUNTER 6A: RENDEZVOUS STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Doppelganger Sneak Swordmage	Level 5 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 400
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2	
HP 110; Bloodied 55	
AC 23; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
M Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)	
+8 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.	
R Lightning Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning	
Range 3; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is pulled to the closest unoccupied square to the doppelganger sneak swordmage.	
C Corrosive Ruin (standard; encounter) ♦ Acid, Arcane, Implement	
Close blast 3; targets all creatures in blast; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+3 acid damage.	
M Frost Backlash (immediate interrupt; daily) ♦ Arcane, Cold, Weapon	
<i>Trigger:</i> when doppelganger is hit by an adjacent creature, it can make an attack against the attacking creature; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 cold damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
C Aegis of Assault (minor; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Teleportation	
Close burst 2; one creature in burst is marked by the doppelganger. The doppelganger may one mark one target at a time. If the marked target makes an attack that does not include the doppelganger, that attack suffers a -2 to hit. Additionally, if the attack hits and the attacker is within 10 squares of the doppelganger, the doppelganger may choose to teleport adjacent to the marked attacker and make a melee basic attack against the marked attacker as an immediate interrupt.	
Mythal Recovery (minor; encounter) ♦ Arcane	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage makes a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.	
Swordbond (minor; at-will)	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage can call his short sword to his hand from up to 10 squares away.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +11, Insight +10, Stealth +10	
Str 11 (+2) Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)	
Con 13 (+3) Int 10 (+2) Cha 15 (+4)	
Equipment short sword	

Moontusk Fever	Level 4 Disease
Endurance improve DC16; maintain DC 11; worsen DC 10 or lower	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 to saving throws while bloodied. While bloodied, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects. Final State: When the subject rolls a saving throw, it rolls two dice and takes the lower of the two results. 	

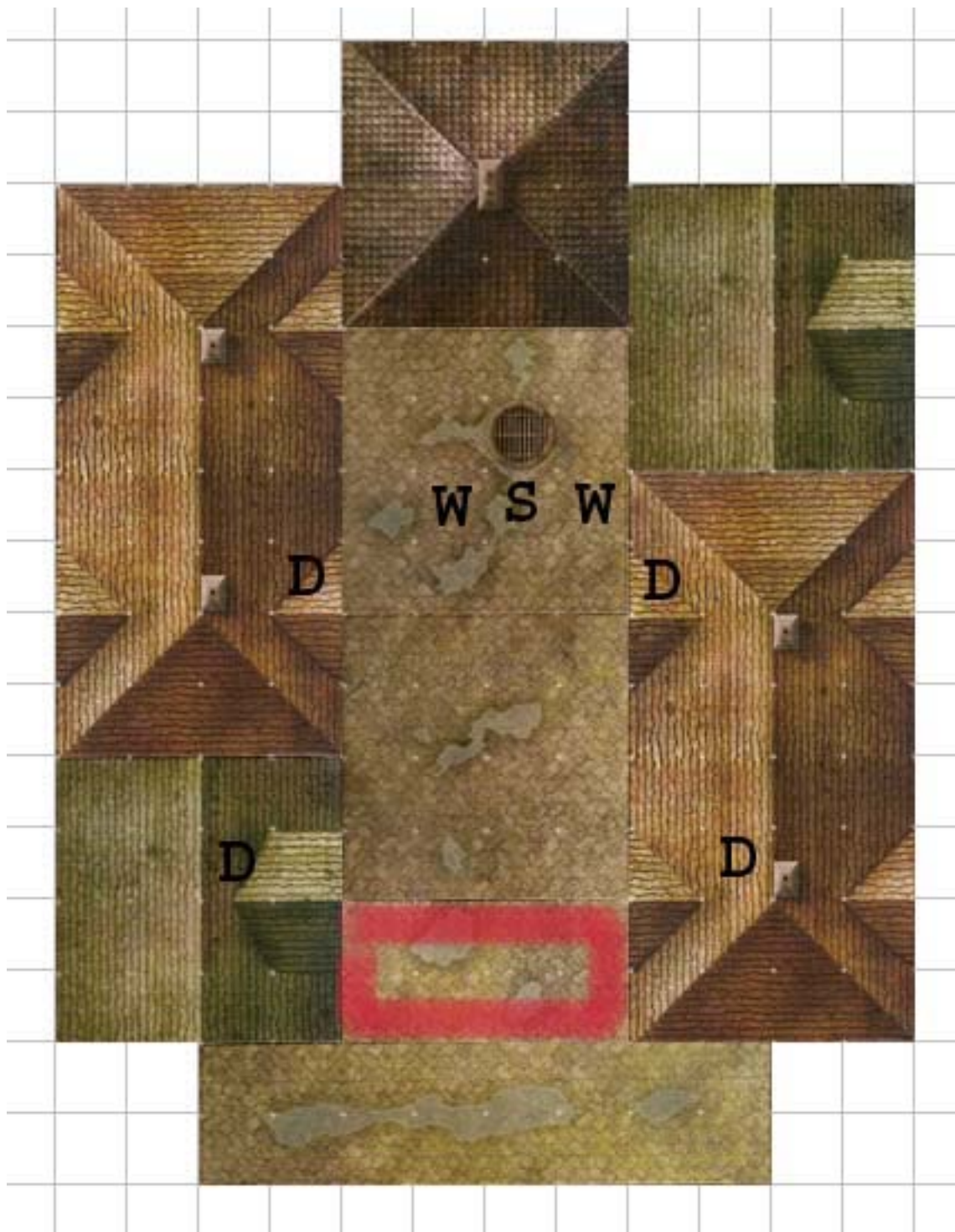
Wereboar (level 3)	Level 3 Brute
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 150
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +4	
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
Regeneration 5	
AC 14; Fortitude 18, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Immune bloodtusk fever	
Vulnerable silver (if the wereboar takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn)	
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)	
m Maul (standard; usable only while in humanoid form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.	
m Gore (standard; usable only while in boar form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to moontusk fever.	
M Death Strike (when the wereboar drops to 0 hit points)	
The wereboar makes a gore or a maul attack.	
Bloodied Resilience (while bloodied)	
The wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and deals ongoing 10 damage with its gore attack instead of ongoing 5 damage.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereboar can alter its physical form to appear as a dire boar or a unique humanoid.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common,	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +9, Intimidate +6	
Str 20 (+6) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)	
Equipment hide armor, maul	

Claw Doppelganger Darkmage (level 2)	Level 2 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 125
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +6	
HP 30; Bloodied 15	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
r Dark Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage against a target at full normal hit points.	
C Cursebite (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Close burst 20; targets cursed enemies; +5 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage.	
Curse (standard; at-will)	
The Claw doppelganger darkmage curses the nearest noncursed enemy. The curse lasts until the end of the encounter. Once per round when the darkmage hits a cursed enemy, it can deal that enemy 1d6 extra damage.	
Darkmage Fanatic (when the claw doppelganger darkmage drops to 0 hit points)	
The claw doppelganger darkmage makes a basic attack.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Elven, Goblin	
Skills Arcana +9, Intimidate +9	
Str 10 (+1) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 9 (+0)	
Con 12 (+2) Int 16 (+4) Cha 18 (+5)	
Equipment leather robes, rod, mace	

ENCOUNTER 6A: RENDEZVOUS MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Streets of Shadow x1



ENCOUNTER 6B: TAKING INITIATIVE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3/5 (775/1,075 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 doppelganger sneak swordmage (level 2) (S)
- 1 wereboar (level 2) (W)
- 4 claw doppelganger darkmages (level 1) (D)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 doppelganger sneak swordmage (level 5) (S)
- 2 wereboars (level 3) (W)
- 4 claw doppelganger darkmages (level 2) (D)

If the PCs learn the truth behind the kidnapping and the location of the kidnapping gang's hideout by succeeding in the skill challenges, they can play this encounter instead of Encounter 5A and catch the kidnappers by surprise.

DM NOTE: The plans the party may have concocted by this point are nearly infinite, so it is likely that you will need to adjust the read aloud test and set up of this encounter to match the way in which the PCs approach the hideout.

When the PCs find the building where they learned Lady Charissa is being held, read:

The building where Lady Charissa is being held is in the Anvil neighborhood of the Crow's End district. The abandoned tavern has fire damage and only one intact floor, although there is a single low window that offers access to a basement. The window is soot covered.

When the PCs investigate the building, they find that the first floor is abandoned completely, and all that is left in it is a door leading to the basement.

PCs can either open the door or clean the soot away from the window quietly. Either of these require a DC 8/10 Stealth check. If successful, the PCs can get a view of the layout of the basement and gain a surprise round. Failure means that Tiptoe and her gang are aware of the PCs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Brightly lit, both inside and outside the basement.

Window: The window is on the wall marked X on the map. It has been covered with soot to keep people from looking in on the gang. It can be opened or smashed with a minor action, and then people can move into the basement through the window as two squares (difficult terrain) of movement. Going from inside the basement to outside through the window requires a full move action. Ranged attacks can be made through the window into the basement from a person outside the window, and the person making the attack has cover from attacks made inside the basement.

Stairs: It is difficult terrain to go up the stairs but normal movement going down. Attacks from creatures on the stairs can be made normally, and the attackers gain cover against attacks from people in the rest of the basement. Doors at the top of the stairs can be opened with a minor action.

Refuse: The basement floor at the bottom of the stairs is covered with refuse. This area counts as challenging terrain. Anyone moving through it must make a DC 7/9 Acrobatics check or fall prone in the first square of it that they enter. Otherwise it counts as difficult terrain.

Tables: The tables can be flipped onto their sides as a minor action and use as cover against ranged attacks.

Bookcases: The bookcases can be toppled with a DC 15 Strength check as a minor action. Any creatures in the squares immediately in front of the bookcases are targeted: +8 vs. Reflex; 1d6+4 / 1d10+5 damage and are knocked prone. Toppled bookcases become difficult terrain.

Trap Door: The trap door in the upper left covers a ten-foot-deep pit. The pit currently holds Lady Charissa. There is a ladder in the pit that can be climbed with a DC 3 Athletics check.

TACTICS

Tiptoe tries to mark a ranged striker who is attacking either the wereboars or the darkmages. She then uses *aegis of assault* to attack that target. Otherwise Tiptoe uses the most effective attacks at her disposal.

The wereboars change form as needed to get their most favorable attack: *maul* or *gore*. The claw doppelganger darkmages stay away from melee combat if possible, cursing PCs whenever possible to get the extra damage. They use *cursebite* as long as they have at least 1 target cursed. The extra curse damage from each darkmage's attacks only affect targets that individual darkmage has cursed. Having the attacks of each darkmage affecting all cursed PCs would likely result in too much damage for the PCs to absorb.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a claw doppelganger darkmage.

Six PCs: Add another wereboar.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs are defeated, they are not killed. Tiptoe and her gang simply take the *Cup of Truth* and leave the PCs and Lady Charissa alive. They deliver the artifact and leave the city immediately with their payment.

If the PCs are victorious in their battle against Tiptoe's gang, they can pull Lady Charissa from the pit in the floor.

None of the doppelganger darkmages know who hired their gang to perform the illegal deeds, but Tiptoe and the wereboars do. If promised freedom, any one of them happily reveals that the person who hired them to kidnap Lady Charissa was a representative of the rebels who are working to free Sembia from the rule of Netheril. He also works on some ship as a navigator. If the PCs need additional help, the prisoner describes Arvond the Navigator from the previous adventures. Even if the PCs have not met him, they can take the description back to Blacktree House, and the Blacktree family knows who it is, although they find it hard to believe, as Arvond was injured in the attack that captured Lady Charissa in the first place.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC earns 155/215 experience points for successfully completing this encounter.

TREASURE

One of the darkmages has a book containing the ritual *Seek Rumor*.

ENCOUNTER 6B: TAKING INITIATIVE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Doppelganger Sneak Swordmage	Level 2 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 250
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2	
HP 62; Bloodied 31	
AC 20; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 15	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
M Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)	
+5 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.	
R Lightning Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning	
Range 3; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is pulled to the closest unoccupied square to the doppelganger sneak swordmage.	
M Frost Backlash (immediate interrupt; daily) ♦ Arcane, Cold, Weapon	
<i>Trigger:</i> when doppelganger is hit by an adjacent creature, it can make an attack against the attacking creature; +5 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 cold damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
C Aegis of Assault (minor; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Teleportation	
Close burst 2; one creature in burst is marked by the doppelganger. The doppelganger may only mark one target at a time. If the marked target makes an attack that does not include the doppelganger, that attack suffers a -2 to hit. Additionally, if the attack hits and the attacker is within 10 squares of the doppelganger, the doppelganger may choose to teleport adjacent to the marked attacker and make a melee basic attack against the marked attacker.	
Mythal Recovery (minor; encounter) ♦ Arcane	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage makes a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.	
Swordbond (minor; at-will)	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage can call her short sword to her hand from up to 10 squares away.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +9, Bluff +10, Insight +9, Stealth +9	
Str 11 (+1) Dex 16 (+4) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 15 (+3)	
Equipment short sword	

Moontusk Fever	Level 2 Disease
Endurance improve DC15; maintain DC 10; worsen DC 9 or lower	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 to saving throws while bloodied. While bloodied, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects. Final State: When the subject rolls a saving throw, it rolls two dice and takes the lower of the two results. 	

Wereboar (level 2)	Level 2 Brute
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 125
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +4	
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
Regeneration 5	
AC 13; Fortitude 17, Reflex 12, Will 13	
Immune bloodtusk fever	
Vulnerable silver (if the wereboar takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn)	
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)	
m Maul (standard; usable only while in humanoid form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.	
m Gore (standard; usable only while in boar form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+5 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to moontusk fever.	
M Death Strike (when the wereboar drops to 0 hit points)	
The wereboar makes a gore or a maul attack.	
Bloodied Resilience (while bloodied)	
The wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and deals ongoing 10 damage with its gore attack instead of ongoing 5 damage.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereboar can alter its physical form to appear as a dire boar or a unique humanoid.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common,	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +9, Intimidate +6	
Str 20 (+6) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)	
Equipment hide armor, maul	

Claw Doppelganger Darkmage (level 1)	Level 1 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 100
Initiative +1 Senses Perception +5	
HP 24; Bloodied 12	
AC 13; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will)	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
r Dark Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +7 vs Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 2 necrotic damage against a target at full normal hit points.	
C Cursebite (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Close burst 20; targets cursed enemies; +4 vs Fortitude; 2d8 + 3 necrotic damage.	
Curse (standard; at-will)	
The Claw doppelganger darkmage curses the nearest noncursed enemy. The curse lasts until the end of the encounter. Once per round when the darkmage hits a cursed enemy, it can deal that enemy 1d6 extra damage.	
Darkmage Fanatic (when the claw doppelganger darkmage drops to 0 hit points)	
The claw doppelganger darkmage makes a basic attack.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Elven, Goblin	
Skills Arcana +8, Intimidate +8	
Str 10 (+0) Dex 10 (+0) Wis 9 (-1)	
Con 12 (+1) Int 16 (+3) Cha 18 (+4)	
Equipment leather robes, rod, mace	

ENCOUNTER 6B: TAKING INITIATIVE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Doppelganger Sneak Swordmage	Level 5 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 400
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2	
HP 110; Bloodied 55	
AC 23; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.	
M Shapeshifter Feint (minor; at-will)	
+8 vs. Reflex; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.	
R Lightning Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning	
Range 3; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 damage, and the target is pulled to the closest unoccupied square to the doppelganger sneak swordmage.	
C Corrosive Ruin (standard; encounter) ♦ Acid, Arcane, Implement	
Close blast 3; targets all creatures in blast; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+4 acid damage.	
M Frost Backlash (immediate interrupt; daily) ♦ Arcane, Cold, Weapon	
<i>Trigger:</i> when doppelganger is hit by an adjacent creature, it can make an attack against the attacking creature; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 cold damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Combat Advantage	
The doppelganger sneak deals an extra 1d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
C Aegis of Assault (minor; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Teleportation	
Close burst 2; one creature in burst is marked by the doppelganger. The doppelganger may only mark one target at a time. If the marked target makes an attack that does not include the doppelganger, that attack suffers a -2 to hit. Additionally, if the attack hits and the attacker is within 10 squares of the doppelganger, the doppelganger may choose to teleport adjacent to the marked attacker and make a melee basic attack against the marked attacker.	
Mythal Recovery (minor; encounter) ♦ Arcane	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage makes a saving throw against an effect that a save can end.	
Swordbond (minor; at-will)	
The doppelganger sneak swordmage can call his short sword to his hand from up to 10 squares away.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +11, Insight +10, Stealth +10	
Str 11 (+2) Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)	
Con 13 (+3) Int 10 (+2) Cha 15 (+4)	
Equipment short sword	

Moontusk Fever	Level 4 Disease
Endurance improve DC16; maintain DC 11; worsen DC 10 or lower	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target is cured. Initial Effect: The target takes a -2 to saving throws while bloodied. While bloodied, the target can roll only one saving throw at the end of its turn, even if it is affected by multiple effects. Final State: When the subject rolls a saving throw, it rolls two dice and takes the lower of the two results. 	

Wereboar (level 3)	Level 3 Brute
Large natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 150
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +4	
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
Regeneration 5	
AC 14; Fortitude 18, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Immune bloodtusk fever	
Vulnerable silver (if the wereboar takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn)	
Speed 6 (8 in boar form)	
m Maul (standard; usable only while in humanoid form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.	
m Gore (standard; usable only while in boar form; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to moontusk fever.	
M Death Strike (when the wereboar drops to 0 hit points)	
The wereboar makes a gore or a maul attack.	
Bloodied Resilience (while bloodied)	
The wereboar gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and deals ongoing 10 damage with its gore attack instead of ongoing 5 damage.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereboar can alter its physical form to appear as a dire boar or a unique humanoid.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common,	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +9, Intimidate +6	
Str 20 (+6) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)	
Equipment hide armor, maul	

Claw Doppelganger Darkmage (level 2)	Level 2 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 125
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +6	
HP 30; Bloodied 15	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 15	
Speed 6	
m Mace (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
r Dark Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +8 vs Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage against a target at full normal hit points.	
C Cursebite (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Close burst 20; targets cursed enemies; +5 vs Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage.	
Curse (standard; at-will)	
The Claw doppelganger darkmage curses the nearest noncursed enemy. The curse lasts until the end of the encounter. Once per round when the darkmage hits a cursed enemy, it can deal that enemy 1d6 extra damage.	
Darkmage Fanatic (when the claw doppelganger darkmage drops to 0 hit points)	
The claw doppelganger darkmage makes a basic attack.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common, Elven, Goblin	
Skills Arcana +9, Intimidate +9	
Str 10 (+1) Dex 10 (+1) Wis 9 (+0)	
Con 12 (+2) Int 16 (+4) Cha 18 (+5)	
Equipment leather robes, rod, mace	

ENCOUNTER 6B: TAKING INITIATIVE MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Arcane Towers x1



ENCOUNTER 7: AFTERMATH

SUCCESS

Once the PCs have defeated the gang, rescued Lady Charissa, and gathered any information there is to gather, Lady Charissa will ask to be taken back to Blacktree Manor.

The return of Lady Charissa and the Cup of Truth is met with great celebration. Anton hugs his mother tightly and warmly shakes your hand. "I can't thank you enough. You must stay for the celebration!"

Already servants are bringing out food and drink. In short order guests and well-wishers arrive and you are surrounded by merriment. Lady Silva Sinaran offers a toast to your party and smiles, "So I guess all that remains is for you to tell us what you're going to do with the Cup of Truth." All around you, the party quiets. The Blacktrees, the Longbottles, Captain Baroom of the City Watch, Mayor Tasamber, and dozens of other people focus their attention on you.

The PCs are the heroes of the hour and as such, no one argues with Lady Sinaran when she seems to suggest it is up to the PCs to decide who should get the Cup. Anton Blacktree argues that since his ancestors were the last to hold the Cup, it belongs with his House. Of course Reginald Longbottle supports giving it to the Raven Knights to guard. The Mayor believes it should pass to the city so that elected officials chosen by the people will be in charge of such a powerful artifact. Everyone has their own belief and no one really agrees, leaving it to the PCs to make the final choice. Regardless of which organization the PCs choose to pass it onto, no one will bemoan their decision.

Two NPCs that the PCs might be interested in are not present (and indeed cannot be found anywhere within the city). Arvond the Navigator has fled the city and House Taldavar claims to not know where he has gone to. Lord Pavel Taldavar denies any knowledge of the plot, and is tactful enough to refrain from suggesting the Cup should be given to the Sembian rebellion regardless of their methods. Another strange disappearance: Lady Enatta Raphael is still nowhere to be found. Should the PCs describe the woman who apparently hired the mercenaries in the name of Netheril, either Anton or Reginald can haltingly admit that it does generally sound like Enatta. Both are quick to say that general description could however be any number of people.

As long as the PCs have rescued his mother and acted an honorable manner (see Appendix 3 - Knightly Code for the ideals they aspire to; while a PC doesn't have to be perfect, they should strive to meet these qualities), Anton will offer to support their nomination to join the Knights of the Golden Rooster (story award MINI29 *Knightly Conduct II*).

If the PC has both of the Knightly Conduct story awards (MINI24 and MINI29), they are offered the chance to squire to the Knights of the Golden Rooster. Doing so requires the PC to take an oath to defend Ravens Bluff from all enemies, to bolster morale and pride among the citizens, to behave honorably and bravely, to refrain from lying and cheating, to act generously, and to deal fairly with all persons they meet. Membership in this Knighthood does not require the PC to swear total allegiance to the City of Ravens Bluff, and joining this organization declares the PC as an ally of Ravens Bluff but does not require them to forsake allegiances to other countries or cities. PCs who take the oath receive the story award MINI30 *Squire of the Golden Rooster*.

In addition to the chance to join the Knights of the Golden Rooster, whomever the party gives the Cup of Truth to rewards the PCs with a magic item (treasure bundles D, E, or F).

FAILURE

If the PCs were unable to retain possession of the Cup of Truth and it was traded or lost to either the agents of the Sembian Rebels (the kidnappers in Encounter 6) or Netheril (the mercenaries in Encounter 5), they have failed. If Lady Charissa was somehow also killed, the DM will have to adjust the read aloud text accordingly.

The Cup is lost. After a day, Lady Charissa, looking worn and bedraggled, appears on the doorstep of Blacktree Manor. True to their word, the kidnappers released her. They must have drugged her meal; she woke up under some bushes in the park.

Anton thanks you for trying and quietly explains that he knows you did your best, despite the unfortunate outcome.

PCs who receive this ending do not successfully complete the major quest and do NOT get access to treasure bundles D, E, or F. They do not receive story awards MINI29 or MINI30.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs have story awards MINI23 and MINI26 and are able to return Lady Charissa to Blacktree House

alive AND retain the *Cup of Truth* long enough to decide who should end up with it in the end (in other words, they didn't have it taken from them by the kidnappers or the mercenaries hired by Netheril), they have successfully completed the major quest "Return to Ravens Bluff and the Cup of Truth." In this case, they have access to three special treasure bundles:

- A single magic feet slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1 or less (treasure bundle D);
- A single magic hand slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1 (treasure bundle E);
- A single magic head slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1 (treasure bundle F).

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Each PC that completes the major quest earns 125/175 experience points for successfully completing the quest.

TREASURE

See above.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 2: The Truth
75/105 XP

Encounter 3: A Bone to Pick
125/175 XP

Encounter 4: Getting Lost
20/30 XP

Encounter 5: A Murder of Crows
125/175 XP

Encounter 6A: Rendezvous
or
Encounter 6B: Taking Initiative
155/215 XP

Major Quest: Return to Ravens Bluff
125/175 XP

Total Possible Experience
620/875 XP

Gold per PC
75/100 gp
(Encounter 3: 50/50 gp, Encounter 5: 25/50 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or

subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *floating lantern* (level 3; AV)
Found in Encounter 3

Bundle B: *shroud of protection* (level 2; AV)
Found in Encounter 5

Bundle C: *ruby scabbard* (level 5; AV)
Found in Encounter 5

Bundle D: A single magic feet slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle E: A single magic hand slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle F: A single magic head slot item from any player-legal source with an item level less than or equal to the PC's level plus 1
Found in Encounter 7

Bundle G: ritual scroll of *Comprehend Languages*
Found in Encounter 3

Bundle H: Ritual book containing the ritual *Seek Rumor*

Found in Encounter 6

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 0/25 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 50/75 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards.

MINI29 Knightly Conduct II

You have impressed Knight of the Golden Rooster Sir Anton Blacktree by your conduct while rescuing his mother and keeping the *Cup of Truth* out of devious hands. Sir Blacktree is willing to provide one of the two recommendations you require to squire as a knight of the Golden Rooster. Continued conduct in line with the Knightly Code and a second recommendation may result in you being able to join the ranks of the Knights of the Golden Rooster Knight in Ravens Bluff.

MINI30 Squire of the Golden Rooster

You have received two recommendations to join the Knights of the Golden Rooster for your right and honorable conduct in the service of the people of Ravens Bluff. While not swearing total allegiance to Ravens Bluff, you have sworn an oath to defend Ravens Bluff from all enemies, to bolster morale and pride among the citizens, to behave honorably and bravely, to refrain from lying and cheating, to act generously, and to deal fairly with all persons they meet.

Your membership in this Knighthood may have benefits in future adventures.

NEW RULES

Floating Lantern

This silver lantern floats in midair under your control.

Level: 3

Price: 680 gp

Wondrous Item

Property: This lantern never needs lighting or refilling. When you let go of the lantern, it continues to hang in the air where you leave it. If weight in excess of 1 pound is applied to the lantern, it falls to the ground.

Power (At-Will): Minor Action. While you hold the floating lantern or are adjacent to it, you can set its light to be bright (10-square radius), dim (5-square radius), or off.

Power (At-Will): Move Action. The last creature to hold the lantern can mentally command it to move up to 10 squares in any direction, but not more than 10 squares from it.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*.

Ruby Scabbard

Blood-red rubies adorn this scabbard, their magic granting your blade an extra edge.

Level: 5

Wondrous Item 1,000 gp

Property: This scabbard resizes to fit any light blade or heavy blade. You can draw a weapon from this scabbard as part of the same action used to make an attack with that weapon.

Power (Encounter): Free Action. Use this power when you attack with the weapon most recently sheathed in the scabbard. Gain a +1 power bonus to the next damage roll you make with that weapon before the end of your next turn.

The weapon must have been sheathed in the scabbard within the past 24 hours to gain this power.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*.

Shroud of Protection

This diaphanous shroud appears insubstantial. Yet when laid over a dying ally, it provides a defense stronger than steel.

Level: 2

Price: 520 gp

Wondrous Item

Power (Daily): Standard Action. When you place the shroud of protection over an adjacent dying creature, that creature gains resist 20 to all damage. This effect lasts until the creature regains consciousness or dies, or until the shroud is removed (a standard action), whichever comes first.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*.

Seek Rumor

Noises fade away, replaced by the whispers of alleyways and clamor of taverns. Through the jumble of words, you hear a few choice phrases related to your purpose, and you feel a tug toward their source.

Level: 2

Category: Divination

Time: 30 minutes

Duration: Instantaneous

Component Cost: 20 gp

Market Price: 50 gp

Key Skill: Arcana

You sit in meditation and let rumor drift into your mind, blown in on the wind of the community consciousness. Your Arcana check for this ritual counts as a Streetwise check for gathering information. Treat the Streetwise DC as 5 higher. You learn only information you could pick up by a normal use of the Streetwise skill.

Reference: *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*

APPENDIX 1 – LETTER FROM THE BLACKTREE FAMILY

You have proven yourself trustworthy, honorable, and skilled in the past, and your services are needed by our family now more than ever. A dreadful act has been committed upon our family. Please come to Blacktree House as quickly as you can. There is no time to provide details. Please inform Kiira if you are unable to offer your assistance immediately. I am indebted to you, and I am, as always,

Your trusted friend,

Sir Anton Blacktree

APPENDIX 1 – LETTER FROM THE BLACKTREE FAMILY

You have proven yourself trustworthy, honorable, and skilled in the past, and your services are needed by our family now more than ever. A dreadful act has been committed upon our family. Please come to Blacktree House as quickly as you can. There is no time to provide details. Please inform Kiira if you are unable to offer your assistance immediately. I am indebted to you, and I am, as always,

Your trusted friend,

Sir Anton Blacktree

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APPENDIX 2 – INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE KIDNAPPERS

Lady Charissa is safe and enjoying our hospitality for the time being. We have no intention of harming her, but her final fate depends entirely on your choices over the next few hours. All we require is the *Cup of Truth*. In return for the *Cup*, Lady Charissa will be returned to you unharmed.

In exactly one hour, you will receive another message from us. This message will contain instructions on how and where the exchange will take place. You should hire a single messenger to carry the *Cup* and follow the instructions leading to the rendezvous point. If you contact any of the military authorities or city guards, we will consider this a breach of our agreement, and Lady Charissa's life is forfeit. Our messenger has a pouch containing something that will offer proof of the gravity of our intentions.

Follow our instructions to the letter, and avoid any trickery, and you will see Lady Charissa safe and sound by the end of this day. Attempt any subterfuge, and your next viewing of Lady Charissa will be of her corpse. If you think that you might be able to use divination magic to find her, or use other magic to bring her back from the dead, be assured that we have taken steps of block divinations, and we know ways to end a person's life that make resurrection impossible – while also doing particularly nasty things to that person's soul.

More instructions will follow shortly.

APPENDIX 3 – A KNIGHTLY CODE

The following information was derived from the 1998 sourcebook *The City of Ravens Bluff*.

Every knight lives by a code; this is what separates knights from other armed warriors. While each knightly order is different and emphasize different elements, these principles are core for all, particularly as espoused by the orders in Ravens Bluff.

FAIR PLAY

- Never attack a defenseless foe.
- Do not use lethal force to end barroom brawls.
- Avoid lying or deception through silence.
- Keep promises to a fellow knight.
- Avoid cheating and torture.

NOBILITY

- Obey local laws
- Administer Justice and show Mercy.
- Protect the innocent while always maintaining self-control.
- Show respect to authority.
- Accept and acknowledge personal responsibility for your actions.

VALOR

- Exhibit courage in word and deed, defending the weak and innocent.
- Destroy evil in all its forms, crushing the monster that would steal our land and enslave our people.
- Fight with honor, avenging the wronged.
- Never abandon a friend, ally, or noble cause.

HONOR

- Always keep your word or promise while maintaining your principles.
- Never betray your order, or a confidence or a comrade.
- Respect all life and freedom.
- Die with honor.

COURTESY & BENEVOLENCE

- Exhibit manners; always be polite and attentive.
- Be respectful to hosts, women, knights, the elderly, and all who are honorable.
- Be generous to the less fortunate.
- Seek personal glory, not monetary reward.
- Serve your realm and her people, not yourself.
- Set an example of right action to all people.

APPENDIX 4 - RAVENS BLUFF

The following information, some of which is from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide* and some of which is updated from the 1998 sourcebook *The City of Ravens Bluff*, can be used for reference and shared with players.

VESPERIN

A young nation made from former independent city-states, Vesperin is a nexus for trade rumormongering and skullduggery. Commerce and corruption rule this land more surely than government. The capital city, Tantras, is very wealthy and the worship of Torm remains strong, helping to provide stability to the population. To the north, another large city, Calaunt, has recently become more vigilant about pirates and raiders although the Merchant Dukes are bribable. Ravens Bluff is the largest of the three cities and the friendliest to adventurers. Most of Vesperin is rolling farmland with some woods.

VESPERIN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

History DC 10: The region, once called the Vast, has seen an influx of immigrants, especially the city of Ravens Bluff. Many Sembian merchants relocated here in the face of Netheril's occupation of their homeland. A couple of decades ago, Netheril outlawed all such immigration. Sembians who tried anyway wound up dead.

Streetwise DC 10: Gold counts for more than blood here. Vesperin is a place for intrigue, double crossing, and conversing with those normally met as enemies on the battlefield. With Sembia under the thumb of Netherese, Vesperin has flourished. Here, neutrality is the rule.

RAVENS BLUFF

Ravens Bluff straddles the mouth of the Fire River on the eastern shore of the Dragon Reach, that most northerly arm of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Ravens Bluff stands just north of the Earthfast Mountains, on the site of the onetime dwarven city called Sarbreen (or The Realm of the Glimmering Swords).

Over the last hundred years, Ravens Bluff eclipsed Calaunt as the largest city, some 40,000 residents, in the region. Ravens Bluff is sweeter smelling than the tannery-scented Calaunt and less structured than Tantras, with its rigid economic, social and political class arrangements. As a result, most immigrants choose to settle here.

With the dramatic 50-foot fall of the level of the Sea of Fallen Stars due to the Spellplague, Ravens Bluff temporarily suffered considerable economic and

population loss. The city responded by extending its walls out from the old harbor, building new wharves and constructing new districts for immigrants, warehouses and shipping, almost begging the city, several noble families and many wealthy retired adventurers. Combined with impact from the death of three deities (Mystra, Tyr and Helm) and the loss of many powerful wizards, the former government was reduced in scope. The old, ruling Clerical Circle is gone, replaced with a mere custom of annual meetings between the temples. Major temples of Amaunator, Chauntea, Gond, Ilmater, Kelemvor, Oghma, Selune, Sune, Tempus, Torm, Tymora and Waukeen are found in the city.

Guilds typical to major cities represent crafts, professions and commerce. Unusual to Ravens Bluff are several orders of Knights: Golden Rooster, Griffon, Dove, Hawk, and Raven. Roughly two dozen hereditary noble families live in or near Ravens Bluff. The City Watch is tolerant of adventurers so long as damages are compensated. A mayor runs the city but receives advice from neighborhood-elected councilors and the noble families. The weekly city broadsheet is the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter.

RAVENS BLUFF LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful skill check.

Streetwise DC 10: The hereditary nobles include the Blacktree, Longbottle, Taldavar, and Sinaran families. Blacktree has the reputation of a history of adventuresome rogues and own a two thousand acre estate outside of the city and a townhouse in the city. Longbottle has the reputation of honorable service to the city either in government or in a Knightly order. They are less wealthy than most of the noble families. House Taldavar has the reputation of wise, humorless elders with extensive investments. They are rumored to have extensive holdings in Sembia. The Sinaran moon elf clan is the only nonhuman noble house. Lady Silva Sinaran is also unusual in that she serves as the editor of the Ravens Bluff Trumpeter and keeps her finger on the pulse of the city. Merchant House Raphiel was once noble, but has fallen on hard times. The daughter is reputed to be very beautiful and courted both Anton Blacktree and Reginald Longbottle

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS **LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS**

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:
(cross out those not received)

MINI2-3 RAVEN KNIGHTS

MINI29 Knightly Conduct II

You have impressed Knight of the Golden Rooster Sir Anton Blacktree by your conduct while rescuing his mother and keeping the Cup of Truth out of devious hands. Sir Blacktree is willing to provide one of the two recommendations you require to squire as a Knight of the Golden Rooster.

Continued conduct in line with the Knightly Code and a second recommendation may result in you being able to join the ranks of the Knights of the Golden Rooster in Ravens Bluff.

MINI30 Squire of the Golden Rooster

You have received two recommendations to join the Knights of the Golden Rooster for your right and honorable conduct in the service of the people of Ravens Bluff. While not swearing total allegiance to Ravens Bluff, you have sworn an oath to defend Ravens Bluff from all enemies, to bolster morale and pride among the citizens, to behave honorably and bravely, to refrain from lying and cheating, to act generously, and to deal fairly with all persons they meet.

Your membership in this Knighthood may have benefits in future adventures.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS **LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS**

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(This number was given to the organizer when the event was scheduled)

Adventure Title: _____ Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

SESSION TRACKING

DUNGEON MASTER

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