

# **A Necessary Evil**

**A One Round AD&D Living City Adventure**

**By James and Frank Alonso**

Special Thanks To Paul Pederson

A prominent member of the Wizards Guild is in desperate need of adventurers to quickly retrieve vital information. A "new" enemy from the North threatens to take over the Living City. Don't forget your combat boots!

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, FORGOTTEN REALMS, and RPGA are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. RAVENS BLUFF and LIVING CITY are trademarks of TSR, Inc. Tournament detail copyright 1998 by TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsulize their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Non-weapon proficiencies (NWP) will be in **bold** for ease of reference. In monster and NPC listings, spells that have been pre-cast will be written in ~~*italics*~~ *strike out*.

Please review the neutral evil alignment. It can be referenced from the *Player's Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master Guide*. The main NPC in this tournament, Snell Sneer, is neutral evil and you should role-play him accordingly. Review the tracking NWP. Please familiarize yourself with the Cyric specialty priest. It can be found in the *Faiths & Avatars* supplement.

## Tier Structure

Add the levels of the PCs to determine which tier they are on. For multi-class and dual-class characters, take the highest level and add one for each additional class. Tiered events and foes are marked throughout the text.

Tier 1:	Total levels 4-13
Tier 2:	Total levels 14-25
Tier 3:	Total levels 26-37
Tier 4:	Total levels 38-56
Tier 5:	Total levels 57+

## Tournament Background

Mulmaster, a city on the eastern end of the Moonsea ruled by the High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin, has set its sites on Ravens Bluff. Since the destruction of Zhentil Keep, Mulmaster has grown in power in the Moonsea region and is planning once again to take control of the sea-trade route along the River Lis and the Dragon Reach. The first step is to take control of a city along the Dragon Reach coast. Ravens Bluff, weakened from the war with Myrkyssa Jelan, is the perfect target.

The High Blade's plan is to place as many of his Hawk agents into the city near persons of power (mayor, Ministry of Art, Regent of the Harbor, etc.). All of his agents have had powerful abjuration magic cast on them to hide their true identities and divination magic is unable to detect them. The Brotherhood of the Cloak (Mulmaster's Wizards Guild) developed a powerful spell called *cloak of deception* (see **Judge's Aid #1**). The spell causes total immunity to all divination and enchantment/charm magic.

This spell has allowed Mulmaster assassins to infiltrate Ravens Bluff's government. Once they are all in place, the High Blade will have his agents assassinate all the top officials of the city. At the same time and as the city is in chaos, the High Blade will send a large force of Navy Vessels by sea to attack Ravens Bluff. The plan seems flawless.

Unknown to Mulmaster, a ranking member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak by the name of Snell Sneer, is actually a double agent for the Zhentarim. Snell was also an apprentice of Micah Starfire, who is the dean of the school of divination in Ravens Bluff (see Judge's Aid #4), but fled after his attempt to steal Micah's magical possessions failed.

Manshoon, creator of the Black Network, does not want Mulmaster to gain an upper hand in the power struggle to gain control of the sea-trade route connecting the Dragon Reach and the River Lis. Manshoon instructed Snell to steal a transcript of the spell *Cloak of Deception* and *teleport* back to the Citadel of the Raven, where the Zhentarim are now based.

Unable to fully comprehend the *teleport* spell, Snell attempted to cast it via a scroll and the results were sub optimal: He ended up in Halfway Village.

Not knowing of the shrine of the god Shaundakaul in the region that specifically disrupts magical means of travel (i.e., *teleportation*), Sneer attempted to teleport again by using another scroll. The result was that his spellbook was teleported instead of him. It ended up in the Citadel of the Raven and Manshoon quickly learned of Snell's whereabouts.

Snell reluctantly took up residence at Halfway Village, assuming Zhentarim agents would soon come to his aid.

After anxiously waiting for almost a day, Snell became nervous and used one of the two scrolls he had with the spell *Cloak of Deception* on it. His fear of the Mulmaster agents (known as the Hawks) and what they would do to him convinced him to use the scroll in order to hide his exact location. Unfortunately, he did not know that one of his apprentices at the Brotherhood of the Cloak switched his *amulet of proof against detection and location* with a *amulet of inescapable location*.

Knowing of the region Sneer is located in, Manshoon came up with a wicked plan of using Ravens Bluff's bleak predicament to his advantage. Manshoon had his agents in Ravens Bluff send Micah Starfire a letter. The letter said Snell, his ex-apprentice, is in trouble (see **Player's Handout #1**) and needed Micah to come rescue him. Manshoon assumes that after Micah reads the letter, he will send adventurers to go rescue his ex-apprentice to stop the Mulmaster assassins.

Once Micah sends the PCs on their journey to rescue Snell, Manshoon plans to have his agents kidnap him and wait for the arrival of the PCs. The Zhentarim agents will demand that the PCs hand over Snell and the spell components in exchange for Micah. If the PCs refuse, they will take them by force.

If the PCs agree, Manshoon will send a copy of the spell components back to Micah's office with his whereabouts after his Zhentarim agents have teleported to safety. He does not plan on letting Mulmaster take over Ravens Bluff.

If all works as planned, Manshoon and the Zhentarim will have foiled the Brotherhood of the Cloak's plan, stolen their secret spell and used the adventurers of Ravens Bluff in the process.

## Player Introduction

The PCs begin the adventure separately, so paraphrase the following:

*Today was an ordinary day. A trip to the market, buying fresh flowers for the person you fancy, running your business, teaching an apprentice a new spell or praying to the god you have devoted your life to. No dragons to slay, no magical items to pluck from dead villains' cold hands and no friends to raise from the dead.*

*The day has finally ended and you have decided it is time to get some much-needed rest. The full moon shines brightly upon you on this warm summer night. It is days like this that you wonder why you bothered taking up the dangerous occupation of adventurer.*

*As you reach your place of residence, a young man in a brown cloak stops you. "Well met," he says*

*in an adolescent voice. "I have been asked to give you this." As the young boy tells you this, he sticks his hand out to give you a small scroll case. As you start to open the scroll case, you notice the boy's hand still sticking out, palm opened, as if waiting for compensation.* (Allow PCs to state how much money they give the boy. A silver piece will do).

*As the boy strolls away in obvious delight of his newfound wealth, you open the scroll case. Inside is a parchment with writing.* (PCs without the read/writing proficiency obviously cannot read the parchment. For time's sake, allow them to ask a passer-by to read it to them). *It reads:*

*Brave adventurer,*

*The city is once again in a dire situation and is in need of your services. Please come to my private home at eight bells tomorrow morning. My home is located on Divine Road, in the Uptown section of the city. Breakfast will be waiting. This is a private matter, so please do not tell anyone of my invitation.*

*Regards,  
Micah Starfire*

*After reading the parchment, it crumbles in your hands, turning into a fine sparkling dust. The dust then metamorphoses into a butterfly that flies away in the bright moonlight night.*

Allow PCs to do a **Local History** NWP check. If successful, they will recall that Micah Starfire is the former dean of the School of Divination, which is part of the Wizards Guild. After a near death experience at the hands of Myrkessa Jelan, Micah has decided to take some time off to rest from this traumatic incident.

Any PC mage who is a diviner or a member of the Wizards Guild will retrospectively have known this. Remember the PCs are not together at this point and will show up at Micah's home separately. When PCs are ready to continue on (i.e. picking spells), proceed to **Encounter One**.

## Encounter One: Who is asking the questions?

*Morning comes and a single sunray shining directly in your eyes awakens you. Groggy and barely awake, you start gathering your belongings for the obvious and inevitably dangerous adventure that awaits you. You ponder the thought of just staying in your warm bed and forgetting all about Micah's invite, but you decide to go.*

*Micah's estate, located in Uptown, is easy enough to find. Coincidentally, there is other adventurer*

*“types” standing in front of the gate leading into Micah’s estate.*

Allow the PCs a few moments to introduce themselves to each other and then cut them off with the text below.

*Suddenly, the gate to Micah’s estate abruptly swings open. A voice that seems to be coming from a statue of a young female elf in the middle of the garden within the estate speaks, “Welcome to Micah Starfire’s home. Please proceed to the door and knock once. Do not walk on the grass.”*

*Following the statue’s instructions, you knock once. As quickly as you pull your hand away from the door, it opens and a young, comely female gold elf stands before you. “Greetings,” she says in a mousy, but sensual voice. “I am Q’ssana. Micah is anxiously awaiting you in the dining room. Please follow me.”*

*Q’ssana escorts you to a room with a large oak table with seven chairs surrounding it. In front of each chair on the table is a plate with ripe fruit, bacon, eggs and freshly baked bread. At the end of the table sits a moonelf. Smiling from ear to ear, he speaks, “Greetings, (he says all of the PCs’ names). “I am Micah Starfire, member of the Wizards Guild and former dean of the School of Divination. Please, pull up a chair and enjoy the breakfast my chef has made this fine morning. When you have satisfied your belly’s hunger, please introduce yourself.”*

Micah Starfire is elven and a 15th level diviner. He is a bit of a pacifist, and is extremely curious. Micah has a short attention span and is very inquisitive as well.

As the PCs eat, Micah will ask them questions: Where they live, why they are adventurers, what magic items they have, what their favorite color is, etc. If the PCs ask him a question about himself, he will ignore it and reply with another question.

His inquisitive nature is sometimes annoying. When the PCs start to become irritated by this and remind Micah why he invited them to his estate in the first place, continue with the following.

*“Ah, yes, yes. I almost forgot why I summoned you in the first place. Last night I received a letter from one of my old apprentices, Snell Sneer. It appeared on my doorstep yesterday evening. I was quite surprised to hear from him since he had left the school of divination so abruptly a few years back. Let me read the letter to you (Give the PCs **Players Handout #1**).*

After the PCs read the letter, they will obviously have questions. Remember, when the PCs ask the question, have Micah answer it, but also reply with another question directed to them (“Have you been to Halfway before?”).

Who is Snell Sneer?

*“Snell Sneer was one of my brightest apprentices, a poor human boy from Crows End who I caught trying to burglarize my house. I felt the boy deserved a chance in life, so I took him in and taught him the ways of magic. A few years later, he plotted to kill me and to steal my magical items. His plot failed and as a result he fled Ravens Bluff. Up until now, I did not know that he joined the Brotherhood of the Cloak and am quite disappointed in him.*

*Sneer came from a bad upbringing in Crow’s End and is a misguided soul. I miss him deeply and forgive him for what he did. All children make mistakes, especially in their adolescent years. For risking his life for our city, I would take him back as my apprentice if he wished. He is a human, about 28 years old, brown hair, bulging green eyes, yellow rotting teeth and a scar across his left cheek.*

Who is the Brotherhood of the Cloak?

*“They are Mulmaster’s Wizards Guild. It has mandatory membership and those who refuse to join are slain on the spot. They are responsible for supporting the High Blade of Mulmaster’s evil plots in and out of the city.*

Where is Mulmaster?

*“Mulmaster is a city located on the southeast part of the Moonsea, north of Ravens Bluff. It is located near the River Lis, which is the main artery that connects the Dragon Reach and Moonsea. Its power in the region has grown since the collapse of Zhentil Keep. They have attempted to take control of the River Lis in the past, but the powers in the region destroyed their Navy Fleet. They have rebuilt their Navy since then and we think they are now looking to increase their influence in the Moonsea and Vast by controlling the sea trade along the River Lis.”*

What is the powerful magic protecting the assassins?

*“We don’t know. The members of the Wizards Guild have been working long hours trying to determine what the magic is that hides the true identities of the assassins. We have the best wizards in the city working to find out exactly what the magic is.”*

Who is the HighBlade?

*He is Selfaril, the ruler of Mulmaster. He is a clever, dangerous, wily man who will do anything to make his city the mightiest in the Realms. Recently he wed the First Princess of Thay, the Tharchionness of Eltabarr.*

*The mayor tried speaking to the Mulmaster ambassador Stanbier about the possible assassination plot. Coincidentally, he and his staff left for*

*Mulmaster last week as their embassy was supposedly being renovated.*

Where is Halfway Village?

*“Halfway is a village located south of the Moonsea, along the Cross Road. It is between the towns of Blanaer and Thindilar. It is about a week’s travel from Ravens Bluff.*

How will we get there?

*There is a well-known teleport circle I have been to about 5 miles west of Halfway Village. I will mass teleport you there. The teleport circle is a ring of towering stones that mysteriously appeared after the times of trouble. The area around Halfway Village radiates wild magic and any attempts to teleport out of this area can result in disaster. I also have a map of the area (Give the PCs Player’s Handout #2: The Map).*

How will we get back?

(Micah will point at the map) *“Legend has it that there is a shrine, located on top of a hill to the east that has a magical gate. I do not know whom the shrine is dedicated to. This may transport you back to Ravens Bluff. If not, the city may be doomed. You have only until midnight tonight to bring Snell back.*

What do you want us to do exactly?

*“I want you brave souls to travel to Halfway Village, find Snell and bring him back here alive. We need his information to dispel the magic protecting the Mulmaster assassins. Do not harm him in anyway. I do not want you to use any mind influencing magic on him. This may result in him forgetting what he knows.*

*We are going to give him a total pardon for his past crimes once he reaches the walls of the city in return for the vital information he holds. If Snell is correct, the assassins will strike tonight at midnight.”*

How will Snell know who we are and why we have come to rescue him?

*“Good point. Show him the letter he sent me. That should suffice.”*

Have you told the Lord Mayor?

*“Yes, Lady Amber Thoden is aware of the crisis and has put her trust into the Wizards Guild to solve the problem. She has reluctantly agreed to pardon Snell.”*

What is our payment?

*“You will be rewarded by the Wizards Guild with a magical gift. I don’t know exactly what it is.”*

After the PCs are done asking questions, Micah will tell them that they need to leave quickly. For tiers 1, 2 and

3, Micah will give each PC a *potion of healing*. This is a non-certificate magical item that will “expire” at the end of the tournament.

If there are no rangers in the party, Micah will give one of the PCs (preferably a wizard) the *Amulet of Meilikki*. This allows the possessor the ability to track as if he were a ranger of the same level. Micah will tell the PCs they may need this item if they become separated. When the PCs return, Micah will expect them to give it back.

Micah, if asked further about Sneer, will tell the PCs that he has not seen him in years and only knows what he already told them. When the PCs are ready to be teleported read the following:

*Micah leads you down to his laboratory. There you see a large, drawn out circle on the floor with candles all around it. “Please, everyone get into the circle and I will begin the spell,” Micah says impatiently. Once all of you are all in the circle, Micah speaks a few incantations and...*

## Encounter two: What big teeth...

*Poof! You now find yourself in a mountainous region, surrounded by 10 large, stone pillars. Looking up, you can see that each pillar has a symbol engraved in it. The symbol is an upright left hand with palm out and fingers together, its wrist trailing away into rippling winds.*

*The air here is cool and the elevation makes you somewhat light-headed. The wind is quite strong, almost blowing you off your feet at first. As you gain your balance and look around, you see that many mountains and foothills span the horizon. There is a muddy trail that leads down from the hill you are standing on and looking at the map, it obviously must lead to the road to Halfway Village.*

The Stone pillars are rectangular, 10 feet tall and non-magical. A successful **Religion** NWP check will reveal that the symbol is that of the god, Shaundakaul. There is nothing else of interest around the Teleport Circle. The PCs can easily walk down to the road without any problems.

### Time and Movement

The terrain shown on the map is rolling foothills with low mountains on the outskirts. See **Judge’s Aid #2: Travel and Time**.

If by some chance the PCs travel by horseback, their movement rate increases. The terrain is rocky (even on the roads) and horses need frequent rest periods. If

somehow the PCs are all flying for an extended period of time, their movement rate is the same as those on horseback. The wind is very strong in this area and will reduce their movement. You, as the judge, need to keep track of movement and time of the PCs.

You may need to alter the box text for encounters two through seven, depending on the time of day they arrive. If they travel to all the encounters by foot, they should arrive back in Ravens Bluff at about one bell before midnight (11 p.m.). If the PCs are flying or on mount, they may arrive sooner (See **Judge's Aid #2**). Travel will be very important to the PCs because they have until midnight to find Snell.

The Teleportation Circle's magic, which is linked with the Shaundakaul shrine, disrupts any attempt to magically leave (i.e., *teleport*) out of the region. **Those who use the teleport spell while in the region shown on the map will be transported back to the Teleportation Circle.**

Once the PCs are a few miles down the road, paraphrase the following:

*So far, your travels along the road have been uneventful. As you look to sit for a moment, a wagon comes your way. On top of it, steering the horses is a fair-skinned woman in tattered clothing. "Well met weary travelers. I am Corrina, gypsy bard and entertainer of the masses. My sister and I are traveling alone and are headed to Tantras. We have been robbed by bandits along the road and have no food. Do you mind sharing some tasty morsels with my sister Sasha and I? We have music, songs and other things for your amusement."*

This is Corrina and Sasha. They both have brown eyes, brown hair, and fair complexions and are very attractive (Charisma 18). Their clothing is old and tattered and they are armed with short swords. They have a thick "Romanian" type accent and will tell the PCs they are traveling to Tantras to join Jack Mooney's Circus. Sasha, who is in the wagon when they pull up, plays the flute and will ask any bard PC if they want to play music with her. Both of them can sing and will do so as Corrina and any PC play their instruments. Sasha and Corrina will also flirt with the most charismatic male PCs in the party, trying to flatter them as much as possible.

Corrina and Sasha know nothing about Snell or the Mulmaster assassins. If they are asked about Halfway Village, Corrina or Sasha will tell the PCs it is a small village that is a resting place for caravans and travelers. That is all they know. The gypsies' wagon is unimpressive and has junk inside, mostly old empty potion bottles and a non-magical crystal ball. The two

horses pulling the wagon are draft horses of average breed.

Corrina and Sasha are actually were-creatures from the nearby woods and are looking to dine on the PCs. They masquerade themselves as gypsy bards to lure travelers into thinking they are friendly and jovial. Depending on tier, the were-creatures will attempt to use their gaze or song attack on the PCs. Once their victims let their guard down, they turn into their half-jackal or half-wolf form and attack. In the first and second tier, the creatures are jackalweres and will use their gaze attack to subdue the PCs, starting with fighter types. In the upper tiers (3, 4 and 5), they are wolfweres and will use their singing ability.

If they are detected (i.e. *detect evil, know alignment*, etc.) before they can use their special attack, the were-creatures will turn into their half-jackal or half-wolf form and attack. At tiers 3, 4 and 5, the "other" creatures will come from the surrounding area and attack the PCs on the second round of combat.

### **Tier One**

**Corrina and Sasha, Jackalweres (2)** Int Very AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA Gaze causes *sleep* as per the spell; SD see below; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

**Note:** At this tier, the jackalweres are young adults and can be hit by normal weapons, but they only do ½ damage. Magical and iron weapons do full damage. Saving throws against their gaze is made at +2 bonus.

### **Tier Two**

**Corrina and Sasha, Jackalweres (2)** Int Very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 30 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA Gaze causes *sleep* as per the spell; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons; MR nil; SZ S to M; ML 12.

### **Tier Three**

**Corrina and Sasha, Wolfweres (2)** Int High; AL CE; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 40 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6 (bite) and 1d6 (short sword); SA Singing brings on lethargy (as the *slow* spell) for 5-8 rounds; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 14.

**Worgs (6)** AL NE; AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 25 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

### **Tier Four**

**Corrina and Sasha, Greater Wolfweres (2)** Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 2 MV 18; HD 8+2; hp 50 each; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 2d6 (bite)/1d6 (claw)

1d6 (claw); SA Singing brings on lethargy (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6+4 rounds, spells; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons, regenerate all lost hitpoints at end of any given round caused by weapon attacks unless fatal; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 15.

**Note:** At this tier, Corinna and Sasha are also 5<sup>th</sup> level bards and can each cast the following spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile* x 3; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *mirror image*.

**Dire Wolves (6)** AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12.

### **Tier Five**

**Corinna and Sasha, Greater Wolfweres (2)** Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 2 MV 18; HD 8+2; hp 66 each; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 2d6 (bite)/1d6 (claw) 1d6 (claw); SA Singing brings on lethargy (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6+4 rounds, spells; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons, regenerate all lost hitpoints at end of any given round caused by weapon attacks unless fatal, *stoneskins* (6 each); MR 50%; SZ M; ML 15.

**Note:** At this tier, Corinna and Sasha are also 10<sup>th</sup> level bards and can each cast the following spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile* x 3 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *mirror image*, *blindness*, *blur*, 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *lightning bolt*, *fly* 4th level- *stoneskins*.

**Wolfweres (6)** Int High; AL CE; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 40 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6 (bite) and 1d6 (short sword); SA Singing brings on lethargy (as the *slow* spell) for 5-8 rounds; SD Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 14.

Once the battle is over, the PCs can search Sasha and Corinna. They will find nothing of value on them or in the wagon. When the PCs set off to Halfway Village, go to **Encounter Three**.

## **Encounter Three: A Day Late**

Halfway Village is a caravan village that caters to travelers. It has a large stable, an inn, a tavern, a horse leather shop and a blacksmith.

After years of constant orc hordes attacking the village, the residents made a pact with a local stone giant clan to build stone walls around the city in exchange for a monthly supply of cows to eat. The stone wall circling the village has a north, south, east and west gate. The PCs will be approaching the city from the west.

The Mulmaster agents (known as the Hawks) came to Halfway Village about a day ago and destroyed it

looking for Snell. After some searching and spell casting, the agents found Snell hiding in the tavern cellar. The assassins are now headed to a rendezvous point where they will meet a high-ranking wizard of the Brotherhood of the Cloak.

*Traveling to Halfway Village, your legs begin to ache from walking up and down so many hills. Since your pleasant luncheon with Sasha and Corinna, you have not seen another creature along the road. The air is slightly chilly and it is windy in this region of Faerun. Light drizzle sprinkles down upon you as you walk along the muddy road.*

*Finally, up ahead on the road, you see what must be the small hamlet of Halfway Village. Looking closer, it becomes obvious to you something is terribly wrong! Looking through the gate at the blackened buildings. It looks as if most of the village has been burned to the ground.*

Once the PCs go inside, continue with the following:

*Moving through the gate into the village, your eyes widen. There are two to three dozen human bodies scattered about. Some bodies are charred, obviously caused from some type of explosion. Others lie in pools of blood. Some looked to have been squashed by huge boulders. Most of the buildings have been burnt to the ground. The stables and another building are the only ones left standing.*

*Two sections of the rock and stone walls circling the village now have huge gaping holes. It is as if sections of the wall have vanished. A lone well sits in the middle of the village. Next to the well are two human-sized stone statues. Both statues have their hands out before them, as if they are shielding themselves from something.*

*Suddenly, you see a young girl running out of one of the partially collapsed buildings and in the process, a piece of her dress catches onto a nail. It causes her to fall. The impact of her fall has caused the building to start to collapse! The young girl cries out to you, "Help me!"*

PCs have one round to react. They will be able to get to her in a round, but the building will collapse before they can grab her and get her out of harm's way. The only way to save the little girl (besides magical means) is to shield her from the collapsing building by putting the PCs body over hers. If this is done, she will not take any damage, but the PC shielding her will take 1d10 points of damage per level of experience. *Stoneskins* will reduce the damage by half.

The girl is about four years old, has brown hair and green eyes. Her name is Alysha. She is very frightened and hungry. Alysha was playing with her dolls in her

room when she heard loud crashing noises coming from outside the village. She hid in her secret closet under her bed. Alysha could hear lots of shouting and fighting in the village.

She has stayed hidden in her secret closet for over a day, eating crackers and drinking sour milk. Alysha does not know who killed her family and the villagers, but others have come to the village since the battle. She only heard voices and did not see who they were.

The PCs really have no choice but to bring her with them. If they decide to leave Alysha at the village, she will cry and say she is scared. PCs who are paladins and/or lawful good in alignment should be penalized for leaving a helpless girl all by herself at the village. She has no family now and is alone. She is 0 level and has 4 hitpoints.

There is a lot for the PCs to investigate at the village. Here is what they will find:

**Villagers:** All are human and dead. Most were burned trying to run out of the buildings. Others were hacked to death with slashing or piercing weapons. Large boulders have squashed two of them. If any of the PCs casts *Speak with Dead* on them, they will learn the following (make up names for the villagers):

- A large floating monster with many eyes came and destroyed the village. A human in a purple robe and another with tattoos was with the monster.
- They were looking for a man by the name of Snell Sneer.
- None of us know who Snell Sneer is, so the humans and the floating eyes got mad and said they would kill everyone until he shows himself.

This is all any of the villagers would have known because they were all dead before the Mulmaster agents (known as the “Hawks”) found Snell.

The two statues next to the well are actually villagers turned to stone by a Beholder’s *flesh to stone* ray. A successful **Spellcraft** NWP check will reveal this (but not that it was by a beholder).

**Tavern:** This is the tavern that Snell was hiding out in. It has been burnt to the ground. PCs who search it will find the owner’s dead body. If a PC cast *Speak with Dead* on him, he/she will find the following information:

- My name is Grevin.
- Snell was my best friend. I kept our secret hidden to the end.
- A man in a purple robe and a woman with tattoos on her head threatened to kill me if I did not reveal Snell’s whereabouts. I refused.

That is all Grevin knows. The Hawks killed him right after Grevin refused to reveal Snell’s whereabouts. The

PCs should realize that what this means is that Snell let an innocent man die so he would not be found.

**Stone Walls:** The crude stone walls around the village are made of large granite boulders. There are two large holes in the walls. They are located in the northeastern and southern portions of the wall. A **Spellcraft** NWP check will allow one to “guess” that this may have been from a *disintegrate* spell. There are human/humanoid tracks that can be found leading away from the disintegrated portions of the wall.

## Encounter 3A: Tracks leading away from Halfway Village

PCs using the magical Meilikki amulet given to them by Micah, who are rangers or have the **Tracking** NWP, are able to detect fresh tracks leading away from the village. All the tracks are in soft, muddy ground, so there is a +4 bonus to all **Tracking** rolls.

Each PC may attempt to use the magical amulet once per day. Ranger characters may identify the types of tracks they are analyzing. In order for a ranger to identify the tracks, they must make a second **Tracking** NWP check. The italic description of the tracks below are the information a ranger PC will gather if he/she makes both **Tracking** NWP checks. The two tracks that can be found leading away from the village are located at the following places:

- Hole in the southern portion of the stone wall: *These are definitely giant footprints, probably stone. There is one set of them and it is moving quite hastily. The tracks are about a day old.* (These tracks lead to **Encounter 4**).
- Hole in the northeastern portion of the stone wall: *These tracks also appear to be human or humanoid and their movement was in haste. They seem to be headed northeast. There is about 6 to 7 creatures and they appear to be dragging something. Maybe another body. The tracks are about a day old.* (These tracks lead to **Encounter 5**).

## Encounter Four: Fee Fie Foe Run?

This encounter is in the foothills two miles south of Halfway Village. Have the PCs give you a marching order. They must travel single file on the trail.

*After traveling for a few hours, you find yourselves on a trail leading into the mountainous region that is shown on the map that Micah gave you.*

*No sooner as you think about where this trail is leading you to, a boulder comes crashing down in front of (pick the PC leading the party), just missing him/her by inches. By the velocity and accuracy of the thrown boulder, your infinite wisdom tells you this must have been a warning shot. Looking up, you notice huge gray skinned giants looking down upon you from cliffs high above. One of them speaks to you in a booming voice, "WHO YOU!"*

Allow the PCs to react. Eight stone giants, four on each side of the trail, are on a cliff about 50 yards up from the PCs. They saw the PCs coming up the road and set up an ambush. The one who spoke is Grok, the clan chieftain. They are all armed with dozens of boulders, which they tend to use. The stone giants will only attack if attacked first. If the PCs try to run the stone giants will throw boulders in front and behind them, blocking the trail.

The trail leads to the clan's cave and they do not allow trespassers. If PCs say they come in peace or mention Halfway Village, the stone giants will walk down to the trail to speak with them. If Alysha is with the PCs, she will tell them that, "these gray giants were the ones who built the wall around the village."

**Judge Note:** When role-playing Grok and the other stone giants, stand on your chair (if it is strong enough) and speak very loud. Make the PCs feel like they are speaking to a giant.

Grok will tell the PCs the following:

- "GROK AND BRUDDER GO TO HUMAN VILLAGE TO PICK UP COWS AND FOUND EVIL MEN AND EYE MONSTERS DESTROYING VILLAGE!"
- "GROK TRY HELP HUMAN FRIENDS THROW BOULDERS AT BAD GUYS, BUT LARGE EYE MONSTERS SHOOT RED LIGHT AT MY BRUDDER AND MAKE HIM DISAPPEAR. THINKING OF MY CHILDREN AND CLAN, I RAN AWAY"
- "GROKS CLAN HELP BUILD WALL AROUND VILLAGE. VILLAGE PEOPLE GIVE OUR CLAN COWS TO EAT EVERY FULL MOON!"
- "GROK SAD FOR HUMANS. NOW GROK MUST FIND HIS OWN COWS TO EAT!"
- "EVIL EYE MONSTERS AND HUMANS LEFT VILLAGE DAY AGO, HEADING NORTHEAST FROM VILLAGE! WISH I KILLED THEM FOR KILLING ME BRUDDER!"

Grok will tell the PCs all he knows. He feels bad about the villagers because he won't get anymore cows from them. If the PCs ask him for his help, Grok will contemplate sending one of his giants with them. To convince Grok to do this, the PCs must either tell him they will help avenge his brother's death or explain how to raise cattle (a successful **Animal Lore** NWP check will be sufficient).

Have the PC(s) talking to Grok do a reaction roll (use the **Encounter Reaction Table** in the DMG). Grok will be *Cautious* towards them and if the PCs succeed in making him *Friendly*, he will send one of the stone giants, Boomboom, with them. No matter how bad the reaction roll is, Grok and the stone giants will not become *Threatening* or *Hostile* towards the PCs. Grok just won't help their cause.

**Grok, Elder Stone Giant:** Int Average; AL N; AC 0 MV 12; HD 14+1-3 hp 110; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12 +8(clubs); SA Hurl rocks up to 300 yards for 3d10 damage SD catch stones and missiles 90% of the time; MR nil SZ H (18'); ML 16

Spells: *stone shape*, *stone tell* and *transmute rock to mud* once per day as if he was a 5<sup>th</sup> level mage.

**Boomboom, Stone Giant:** Int Average; AL N; AC 0 MV 12; HD 14+1-3 hp 80; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12 +8(club); SA Hurl rocks up to 300 yards for 3d10 damage SD catch stones and missiles 90% of the time; MR nil; SZ H (18'); ML 16

Items: Boomboom has a bag containing 8 boulders.

**Stone Giants (6):** Int Average; AL N; AC 0 MV 12; HD 14+1-3 hp 80; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12 +8(club); SA Hurl rocks up to 300 yards for 3d10 damage SD catch stones and missiles 90% of the time; MR nil; SZ H (18'); ML 16

If the PCs go back to the village and follow the tracks going northeast from the village, go to **Encounter Five**.

## Encounter Five: The Hawks

This encounter is in the foothills Two miles northeast of Halfway Village.

The Mulmaster assassins, who are called the "Hawks," have been waiting almost a day to meet with a high-ranking wizard of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. The wizard has orders to teleport to this rendezvous point and take Snell back to Mulmaster. The Hawks are camped out waiting for him to arrive. In tiers 4 and 5, the beholder, Xarranata has not left for Mulmaster yet and is floating above the campsite *invisible*.

Have the PCs give you a marching order. If Boomboom is with them, he will follow behind the PCs. Paraphrase the following:

*The tracks you have decided to follow lead you off the Cross Road, heading northeast. After traveling on a rugged trail for a while, you find yourself at the base of a hill. The tracks seem to follow a trail leading up into the hills.*

*The trail leads into a small crevasse that only allows you to walk single file. After a short while, the trail comes to an opening that appears to lead into a small valley. Suddenly, you are startled by laughter coming from the trail up ahead...*

Ask the PCs what they are doing. They may be able to sneak up on the Hawks without being detected. PCs who approach in armor heavier than chainmail will be heard by the Hawks. The trail now leads into a small valley where the Hawks are located.

There is a *glyph of warding* at the entrance to the valley and any PC walking through it will take 1d4 points of electrical damage per tier. There are two small trails that split off from the main trail and go up around the small valley (see **Judge's Aid #3: Hawk's Campsite**)

If the PCs go straight into the valley without sneaking or triggering the *glyph of warding*, go straight to combat. Look at the map to see the NPC's locations.

**Judge Note** In tiers 4 and 5, Xarranata the Beholder is floating 50 feet above the half-orcs, invisible. He is supposed to be watching for intruders, but he has dozed off and is sleeping. If the PCs use stealth and sneak up on the Hawks undetected, Xarranata will not be able to react until after the first round of combat. PCs who make a successful **hear noise** roll will be able to hear snoring, but will not know where it is coming from (unless they use *detect invisibility*, are 10<sup>th</sup> level, etc.).

Paraphrase the following if one of the PCs moves into the Hawk's campsite without being detected (i.e., move silently, *silence 15' radius*, *invisibility*, etc).

*Cautiously, you move up the hill to see where the laughter is coming from. There are five humanoids in a small valley. One is tied up and gagged, hanging from a tree by his feet. His green eyes are bulging widely as he looks over at the other men. Two other men, who appear to be half-orcs, are throwing daggers at him from a distance. None of the daggers has hit him yet, but only a few have been thrown. There are two other half-orcs that are guarding the entrance and exit to the small valley.*

The man hanging from the tree is Snell Sneer. Two of the other NPCs, Vixen and Strife, are above the valley behind some trees. They will not be seen from the valley unless an **Observation** NWP check is made at a -4 penalty. PCs may be able to see them if they follow one of the small trails branching off the main entrance, which will place them above the valley. A successful **Observation** NWP will allow them to see Vixen and Strife. If they see Vixen and Strife, read the following:

*Above the half-orcs on a cliff behind some trees are two humans, one male and one female. The male has white hair, pale skin and is wearing a purple robe. He has some sort of symbol around his neck. The woman next to him is wearing a red robe and has no hair on her head except for a long pony tail that falls down to her ankles. Looking closer, you can see tattoos on the crown of her head.*

PCs who successfully make a **Religion** NWP check will know the symbol around his neck is that of Cyric. The woman is a red wizard of Thay. If the PC(s) move up to listen to what the priest of Cyric (Strife) and the red wizard (Vixen) are talking about without being detected, continue with the following:

*You can overhear the two talking. "When is Telgar going to arrive? The jackal is late again!" says the man in the purple robe. "Don't yell at me fool," the woman hisses back. "Selfaril must have already unleashed the assassins on Ravens Bluff or Telgar would have been here by now. Maybe we should let the half-orcs torture Snell to death." "No! I want to bring him back to Master Strifelord. The church for bringing him back alive will reward me."*

Allow the PCs to decide what they want to do. If the PCs sneak up onto the Hawks without being detected, they will be able to surprise them and may be able to get one round of actions before going to initiative. If this is the case, have the NPCs all role a surprise check.

### **Tactics for NPCs and Monsters**

Boomboom, the stone giant, if with the PCs, will initially throw boulders at the wizard. In the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> tiers, as soon as Xarranata becomes visible, Boomboom will focus all of his attacks on the eye tyrant. Alysha will run and hide behind a rock during the whole combat.

Xarranata, once attacked, will focus his attention on Boomboom until he is dead. Then, Xarranata will attack the PCs. The red wizard, Vixen, will cast her most potent spells at the first chance she gets. The priest of Cyric, Strife, will move to attack the PCs, preferring to trade blows with goodly priest types, such as those of Torm, Tyr or Lathander.

At tier 3, 4 and 5, he will attempt to summon his aerial servant, first casting *protection from good*. Vixen and Strife are about 30 yards away from the half-orcs and Snell. The half-orcs will melee with the closest PCs. If attacked from a distance, they will move to use Snell as a shield and attack with their crossbows. Under no circumstances will the Hawks attempt to flee or kill Snell.

At higher tiers, PCs may try and cast the wizard spell *chaos* on Vixen and Strife. Since they both have an *amulet of chaosbane* (see below), they will get an unmodified saving throw vs. spells. If this happens, the charge used to give them the saving throw is not counted against the three charges it has (i.e., it has four charges).

### **Tier One**

**Thugs, half-orc m F1 (4)** AL LE; AC 4 MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bastard sword) 1d4 (crossbow); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

**Vixen, Red Wizard of Thay, hf W (IN) 3:** AL LE; AC 8 MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) SA spells; SD *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 7; Dex 16; Con 16; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 16; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Item: *amulet of chaosbane*. This magical amulet gives the wearer an unmodified saving throw vs. the *chaos* spell

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile x 2, burning hands, shield, 2<sup>nd</sup>-levitate, Aganazzar's scorcher, stinking cloud*

Special powers: Kit (Red Wizard). +2 bonus to her saving throws against invocation/evocation spells. PCs suffer a -2 penalty to their saves vs. invocation/evocation spells that she casts. Her saving throws against spells that are from the Enchantment/Charm or Conjuraton/Summoning schools are made at a -3 penalty. 2 extra spells per level. This kit is found in the *Spellbound* box set.

**Strife, Priest of Cyric hm P (Sp) 2:** AL CE; AC 5 (chainmail) MV 12; hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +1(long sword) SA spells; granted powers; SD *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 16; Dex 10; Con 14; Int 10; Wis 17; Cha 12; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Item: *boots of levitation* and an *amulet of chaosbane*

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level-*command, cause fear protection from good*

Special powers: +1 to saving throws against spells using illusion/phantasm magic; unaffected by *fear* spells.

### **Tier Two**

**Thugs, half-orc m F3 (4)** AL LE; AC 4 MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bastard sword) or 1d4 (crossbow); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

**Vixen, Red Wizard of Thay, hf W (IN) 5:** AL LE; AC 8 MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) SA spells; SD *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 7; Dex 16; Con 16; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 16; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Item: *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile x 3, burning hands, shield, detect magic*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *stinking cloud, levitate, Aganazzar's scorcherx2*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *fireball, protection from normal missiles*.

Special powers: Kit (Red Wizard). See 1<sup>st</sup> tier description.

**Strife, Priest of Cyric hm P (Sp) 4:** AL CE; AC 5 (chainmail) MV 12; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +1(long sword); SA spells; granted powers; SD *amulet of chaosbane*, see below; Str 16; Dex 10; Con 14; Int 10; Wis 17; Cha 12; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Item: *boots of levitation* and an *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level-*command, cause fear x 2, protection from good, cure light wounds*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level-*charm person, heat metal, hold person, produce flame, black talon*.

Special powers: +1 to saving throws against spells using illusion/phantasm magic; unaffected by *fear* spells.

### **Tier Three**

**Thugs, half-orc m F5 (4)** AL LE; AC 4 MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 14 (sword), 16 (crossbow); #AT 3/2 (spec); Dmg 2d4 (bastard sword) +4 or 1d4 (crossbow); SA specialization, strength (18); SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

**Vixen, Red Wizard of Thay, hf W (IN) 7:** AL LE; AC 6 (dex) MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) SA spells; SD *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 7; Dex 18; Con 16; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 16; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Items an *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile x 3, burning hands, shield, detect magic*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *web, stinking cloud, Aganazzar's scorcher x2* 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *fireball, lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles, fly*; 4<sup>th</sup> level-*shout, fire shield, polymorph other*

Special powers: Kit (Red Wizard). See 1<sup>st</sup> tier description.

**Strife, Priest of Cyric hm P (Sp) 7:** AL CE; AC 5 (chainmail) MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg

1d8 +1(long sword); SA spells; granted powers; SD *amulet of chaosbane*, see below; Str 16; Dex 10; Con 14; Int 10; Wis 17; Cha 12; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magical Item: *boots of levitation* and an *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level-*command, cause fear x 2, protection from good, cure light wounds*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level-*charm person, heat metal, hold person, produce flame, silence 15' radius, black talon*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *dark aura, dispel magic, bestow curse, prayer*; 4<sup>th</sup> level- *free action, \*aerial servant*.

Special powers: +1 to saving throws against spells using illusion/phantasm magic; unaffected by *fear* spells. \* Can summon aerial servant (as per the 6<sup>th</sup> level priest spell, *aerial servant*). The aerial servant will fight for the priest of Cyric and can act as a magical assassin.

**Aerial Servant** AL N; AC 3; MV 24 (Fl); HD 16; hp 50; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA strangulation; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR nil; SZ L ML 14.

#### **Tier Four**

**Xarranata, Exiled Beholder** Int Exceptional; AL LE; AC 0/2/7; MV 3 (Fl); hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA see below; SD anti magic ray; MR nil; SZ M (4'-6' in diameter) ML 14.

**Xarranata has only 9 eyestalks; a villager cut off the death ray eye.** Each of the beholder's eyes (9) have different functions. Beholders can use 1d4 smaller eyes per round. They are 1. *charm person*; 2. *charm monster*; 3. *sleep* (only one target); 4. *telekinesis* (250 pound weight); 5. *flesh to stone* (30 yard range); 6. *disintegrate* (20 yard range); 7. *fear* (as wand); 8. *slow* (only a single target); 9. *cause serious wounds* (50-yard range). The central eye produces an *anti-magic* ray with a 140-yard range, which covers a 90-degree arc before the creature. Spells cast in or passing through that zone cease to function.

**Thugs, half-orc m F6 (4)** AL LE; AC 4 MV 12; hp 50; THAC0 12 (sword) 15 (crossbow); #AT 3/2 (spec); Dmg 2d4 +5 (bastard sword) or 1d4 (crossbow); SA specialization, strength (18/51); SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

**Vixen, Red Wizard of Thay, hf W (IN) 10th:** AL LE; AC 6 (dex) MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) SA spells; SD *stoneskins* (6), *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 7; Dex 18; Con 16; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 16; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Item: *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile x 3, burning hands, shield, detect magic*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *web, stinking cloud, detect invisibility, Aganazzar's scorcherx2*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *fireball x2, lightning bolt x 2, protection from normal*

*missiles, fly*; 4<sup>th</sup> level-*shout, fire shield, polymorph other, stoneskins*; 5<sup>th</sup> level *cone of cold x 2, wall of stone, transmute rock to mud*.

Special powers: Kit (Red Wizard). See 1<sup>st</sup> tier description.

**Strife, Priest of Cyric hm P (Sp) 10th:** AL CE; AC 5 (chainmail) MV 12; hp 60; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +1(long sword); SA spells; granted powers; SD *amulet of chaosbane, stoneskins* (6), see below; Str 16; Dex 10; Con 16; Int 10; Wis 17; Cha 12; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magical Items: *boots of levitation* and an *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level-*command, cause fear x 2, protection from good x 2, cure light wounds* 2<sup>nd</sup> level-*charm person, heat metal, hold person x2, draw upon holy might, resist fire, black talon*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level-*dispel magic, bestow curse, prayer; locate object*, 4<sup>th</sup> level-*dark aura, free action, poison, cure serious wounds, phantasmal killer* 5<sup>th</sup> level-*flame strike, slay living, \*aerial servant*.

Special powers: +1 to saving throws against spells using illusion/phantasm magic; unaffected by *fear* spells. Can summon aerial servant (as per the 6<sup>th</sup> level priest spell, *aerial servant*). The aerial servant will fight for the priest of Cyric and will act as a magical assassin. Cast *phantasmal killer*.

**Aerial Servant** AL N; AC 3; MV 24 (Fl); HD 16; hp 70; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA strangulation; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR nil; SZ L ML 14.

#### **Tier Five**

**Xarranata, Exiled Beholder** Int Exceptional; AL LE; AC 0/2/7; MV 3 (Fl); hp 75; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA see below; SD anti magic ray, *stoneskins* (6); MR nil; SZ M (4'-6' in diameter) ML 14.

Each of the beholder's eyes (10) have different functions. Beholders can use 1d4 of their smaller eyes per round. The smaller eyes are as follows: 1. *charm person*; 2. *charm monster*; 3. *sleep* (only one target); 4. *Telekinesis* (250 pound weight); 5. *flesh to stone* (30 yard range); 6. *disintegrate* (20 yard range); 7. *fear* (as wand); 8. *slow* (only a single target); 9. *cause serious wounds* (50 yard range); 10. *death ray* (as the *death* spell, with a single target, 40-yard range). The central eye produces an *anti-magic* ray with a 140-yard range, which covers a 90-degree arc before the creature. Spells cast in or passing through that zone cease to function.

**Thugs, half-orc m F7 (4)** AL LE; AC 2 (splintmail and dex) MV 12; hp 70; THAC0 11 (sword), 13 (crossbow); #AT 2/1 (spec); 2d4 +7 (bastard sword) or 1d4

(crossbow); SA specialization, strength (18/91); SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

**Vixen, Red Wizard of Thay, hf W (IN) 12:** AL LE; AC 6 (dex) MV 12; hp 54; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) SA spells; SD stonelines (10); *amulet of chaosbane*; Str 7; Dex 18; Con 16; Int 17; Wis 12; Cha 16; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magic Items: *amulet of chaosbane*.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level- *magic missile x 3, burning hands, shield, detect magic*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *web, stinking cloud, detect invisibility, Aganzzar's scorcher*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level- *fireball, lightning bolt x 2, protection from normal missiles, melf's minute meteors; fly* 4<sup>th</sup> level-*shout, fire shield, polymorph other, stonelines x 2, wall of fire*; 5<sup>th</sup> level- *cone of cold x 2, wall of iron, wall of force* 6<sup>th</sup>- *chain lightning, death fog*.

Special powers: Kit (Red Wizard). See 1<sup>st</sup> tier description.

**Strife, Priest of Cyric hm P (Sp) 12:** AL CE; AC 1 (chainmail and Dex) MV 12; hp 70; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +1(long sword); SA spells; granted powers; SD stonelines (10); Str 17; Dex 18; Con 16; Int 10; Wis 18; Cha 12; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Magical Items: *boots of levitation* and an *amulet of chaosbane*

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup> level-*command, cause fear x 2, protection from good x 2, cure light wounds x3*; 2<sup>nd</sup> level- *charm person, heat metal, hold person x 3, draw upon holy might, black talon*; 3<sup>rd</sup> level-*dispel magic x 3, bestow curse, cause disease, remove paralysis, prayer; locate object*, 4<sup>th</sup> level-*dark aura, free action, poison, cure serious wounds, cause serious wounds*, 5<sup>th</sup> level-*flame strike*; slay living; 6<sup>th</sup> level-*harm, blade barrier, \*aerial servant, phantasmal killer*.

Special powers: +1 to saving throws against spells using illusion/phantasm magic; unaffected by *fear* spells. Can summon aerial servant (as per the 6<sup>th</sup> level priest spell, *aerial servant*). The aerial servant will fight for the priest of Cyric and will act as a magical assassin. Cast *phantasmal killer*.

**Aerial Servant** AL N; AC 3; MV 24 (Fl); HD 16; hp 90; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 8d4; SA strangulation; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR nil; SZ L ML 14.

## Aftermath

After the combat is over and if the PCs defeated the Hawks (not an easy task), they may search them and let Snell down from the tree. The only thing of interest on them is the *boots of levitation* and the *amulets of chaosbane*. If they are captured, the Hawks will refuse to answer any of the PC's questions. If *ESP* or other mind-probing spells are used, the PCs will find out that they were ordered to find Snell and bring him here to

meet a wizard of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. The wizard would then take Snell back to Mulmaster. The wizard is over a day late.

Alysha will come out from behind a rock and will grab onto the leg of the PC she has taken a fancy to. Boomboom, if still alive, will grunt to the PCs and say, "BOOMBOOM KILL EVIL MEN (AND/OR EYE MONSTER). GET REVENGE FOR BRUDDER. ME GO!" He will then leave.

Until Snell is cut down from the tree, he will squiggle around like a worm. When the PCs approach him, go the **Encounter Six**

## Encounter Six: With Friends Like Him...

*Approaching the man hanging from the tree, you see him gesturing for you to remove the scarf stuffed in his mouth. Taking it out of his mouth, he speaks. "Fools! Cut me down from this tree at once. Who are you and why have you come to my aid?"*

Let the PCs introduce themselves. Once the PCs show him the letter or explain why they are here, Sneer will go along with their story. Snell has cast the spell *cloak of deception* (See **Judges Aid #1**) on himself from a scroll (lucky roll), so spells such as *ESP, know alignment, charm person* etc. are useless on him.

If the PCs decide to try and trick him and not tell him who they are, he will try to run away at the first chance. Until shown the letter or told that they have been sent here by Micah to save him, Snell will perceive the PCs as his enemy and act accordingly.

After the PCs reply, paraphrase the following (Box Text may need to be altered, depending on what the PCs initially say):

*"You idiots! Where in nine hells have you been? I could have been killed! Micah sent you neophytes to aid my glorious return to Ravens Bluff. I am Snell Sneer and expect better service from peasants such as yourselves."*

Let the PCs act. They may not want to cut him down. Snell will be short with the PCs and will treat them like dung. Snell recognizes that the information he contains is vital to Ravens Bluff and the PCs are obligated to protect him from harm's way. The copy of the spell is on an invisible parchment hidden in his left boot. Since this is on his person, it will not radiate magic. He will act manipulative towards the PCs. Refer to **Judge's Aid #4** to get a "feel" for Snell Sneer's

personality and background. If the PCs cut him down continue on:

***“That is better, peasant. I am Snell Sneer, great diviner. I hold the knowledge that you seek to save Ravens Bluff. Ha Ha. Oh excuse me, Ravens Bluff. Without me, Mulmaster will surely overthrow your feeble city.***

***Let us leave. This area is crawling with Hawks and a Beholder squad is still about looking for me. Which one of you will teleport me home?”***

Let the PCs respond. Remember that if a PC uses the *teleport* spell, they will end up back at the Teleportation Circle in encounter two. Snell will say the following if they tell him they must travel south to the shrine.

***“Travel where? You must be jesting. That pointy ear fool must not care much about his city or you imbeciles. We will surely be found by the Beholder squad before we make it there.”***

Snell will treat the PCs like dirt, knowing Ravens Bluff's independence depends on the information he has. Role-play Snell so his demeanor irritates the PCs. You should get the PCs riled up so they would rather kill Snell than protect him.

If Snell is asked why he decided to help Ravens Bluff or turn on the Brotherhood of the Cloak, he will say:

***“I was a marked man in the Brotherhood of the Cloak and my days were numbered. Rival wizards were plotting to kill me. I saw this as my way to get out alive and in the process, have your city take care of me the rest of my life. Pretty good, huh?”***

**Under no circumstances will Snell reveal what the spell components are.** If PCs threaten his life for the spell components, he will say, “You will never get it from me.” Snell, after learning they must travel to the their destination, will become impatient and hurry the PCs along.

Snell, knowing his life and the information he has is vital to Ravens Bluff, plans on taking advantage of his situation. At this time, he will NOT reveal that he is a Zhentarim agent!

He will say and do the following things while the PCs are traveling to the shrine of Shaundakaul. Feel free to ad lib things to fit the particular group of PCs that you are judging.

- Casts *detect magic* to see what “goodies” the PCs have. He will try to pick pocket one of the PCs. If

caught, he will innocently say, “I thought that was mine. It looked familiar.”

- Cast *charm person* on one of the PCs. Snell is very paranoid and does not trust the PCs at all. He will attempt this on big, dumb, fighter types (avoiding elven PCs). He will first try to befriend him or her. Charmed PCs will become his personal “bodyguard.”
- Try to seduce any and all female characters (hey, he only has six charisma). Do not use any dirty language in or out of character! He will try to romance them.
- Try to trade one of the PCs his *Amulet of Inescapable Location* which he thinks is an *Amulet of Proof Against Location and Detection*. He will tell the PC it is an *Amulet of Life Protection*. He will want something really nice for it.
- Boast of his immoral deeds such as how he poisoned the water supply of Tantras, and captured, interrogated and tortured many Harper agents. Or how he once sent one of his ambitious and naïve apprentices to assassinate Elminster, knowing the young wizard would be killed.

PCs who get sick of listening to Snell may argue with him and tell him that what he has done in the past is wrong. Perceptive PCs may remember that Micah said that Snell is a misguided soul that needs direction. If they mention this, Snell will become melancholy, turn away and tell the PC(s) he does not want to talk about Micah.

Snell really sees Micah as a father that he never had. He is somewhat ashamed at what he had done, trying to kill him and all. PCs sensing this may try to convince Snell that what he has done in the past (and to Micah) was wrong. Charisma checks made at -4 by PCs pursuing this matter and who mention that Micah forgives him for what he did will get Snell to smile. With a tear in his eye, he will say the following:

***“You really think he would take me back? Micah is the only true family I have ever had and the one person who cared for me like a father. When I get back to Ravens Bluff, I will try to change my evil ways.”***

After this, Snell will become friendly towards the PCs and act as if a heavy burden has been lifted from his shoulders. He will give back any magical items he stole from the PCs and will also cast *dispel magic* on any of them that he charmed. The PCs have put Snell on the path of an alignment change (from neutral evil to

neutral). He will also come clean and tell the PCs the following:

*“I-I have a confession to make. I did not send any letter or in anyway contact Micah to rescue me. I do not know who did. Up until now, I have not told you the truth about myself. I am not a member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. I am really an agent of the Zhentarim and was instructed to infiltrate the Brotherhood.*

*When I learned of the Mulmaster plot to take over Ravens Bluff, I told my higher ups about it. I was instructed to steal a copy of the spell that the senior cloak had made and teleport back to the Citadel of the Raven. Well, the spell did not work and I ended up in Halfway Village where hours later the Hawks caught me. If possible, I will ask Micah if I may become his apprentice once more and quit the Zhentarim.”*

Snell will still not reveal what the spell is or its components. He is not sure who would send the letter to Micah and is surprised Zhentarim agents did not come looking for him.

Once the PCs reach the hill where the shrine of Shaundakaul is located, proceed to **Encounter Seven**.

**NOTE:** The PCs may decide to **tie and gag** Snell, and carry him to the teleportation area. If they do this, then let them continue the adventure. Snell will not struggle. Of course, the characters lose the chance to convert Snell, and they later don't get any cooperation from him, but that is the consequence of their choice.

## Encounter Seven: The Helping Hand

This encounter is in the foothills three miles southeast of the Hawk's campsite. It is marked “shrine” on the map.

*After travelling a few miles across hilly terrain, you finally reach the hill where the shrine is located. There is a small trail that winds up along the side of the hill. It seems much colder here and the velocity of the wind has picked up considerably.*

*Wearily, you begin your ascent up the hill. The trail is very rocky and the wind gets more intense as you near the top. Once on top, you see a tall stone arch, pierced with holes. On the keystone is a symbol: an upright silver left hand with palm out and fingers together, its wrist trailing away into rippling winds. You are startled to see that the silver hand begins to glow as the winds around you begin to get stronger.*

At this point have the PCs roll a **Religion** NWP check. If successful, they will know the symbol is that of Shaundakaul. Before the PCs move towards the archway, read the following.

*Before approaching the glowing hand, you are startled by (1 for tier one, 2 for tier two, 3 for tier three, 4 for tier four and 6 for tier five) large floating orbs dotting the sky in the distance. They appear to have ten small stalks sprouting from the top of each orb. The orbs appear to be coming your way and if not for the strong winds in the valley, they would have been upon you by now. “Oh my lord,” shouts Snell in a trembling voice “It is the Beholder squad. They found us. We are doomed.”*

Yes, this is the Beholder squad. First have the PCs roll intelligence and/or a **Direction Sense** NWP check. If successful, the PCs can estimate that the Beholder(s) will be upon them in about 2 turns (or 20 minutes).

The Beholders are interested in capturing Snell and see the PCs only as an obstacle. Once the PCs are dead or surrender, the Beholders will use their telekinesis ray to take Snell back to Mulmaster.

**Judge Note: The Beholders are meant to be a suspense builder, not a reason for a total party kill (TPK). They are to make the PCs feel a sense of urgency to find out how to activate the magical arch of Shaundakaul.**

Try your best to discourage them from taking on the Beholders if you feel the particular group of PCs you are judging are no match for them. Have Snell remind them of the glowing silver hand and how this must be the way to activate the gate. Alysha will hide behind the arch crying loudly, “I want to go home.” Some PCs will want to fight the Beholders. If you have given them enough subtle hints not to and they still want to fight with the Beholders, let them. Some PCs may want to fight them for the challenge.

Tier One: One Beholder: It does not have its death ray or disintegrate eyestalks.  
Tier Two: Two Beholders: They do not have their death ray or disintegrate eyestalks  
Tier Three: Three Beholders: They do not have their death ray eyestalk.  
Tier Four: Four Beholders  
Tier Five: Six Beholders

Use **Xarranata's statistics** (i.e., hit points) from Tier Five in Encounter Five for all of the above **Beholders**.

If the PCs all die and/or Snell is captured, proceed to **Conclusion B: Failure**.

Once the PCs move towards the archway, read the following aloud:

*As you move closer to the stone arch, the silver hand shines brightly and a piercing voice, sounding like the rippling wind, resonates from the palm. “Who be here at the shrine of the Rider of the Wind! Where is your destination?”*

Let the PCs introduce themselves and tell the magical gate where they want to go. As long as the PCs are interacting with the silver hand and/or solving the puzzle, the winds in the valley will be too strong for the Beholders to move any closer to the hillside. Once the PCs tell the magical gate they want to go to Ravens Bluff continue with the following:

*“Ravens Bluff you say. Being the Helping Hand, I will try and guide you to your destination, but first I must see if you are worthy. Let us test your knowledge of Faerun. If you can match the names of the following cities with their “other” known names, I will help you get to your destination. If not, you will have to find another way to travel.*

*Once you think you have the correct answers, speak them aloud and walk through the archway. As the voice ceases to speak, a silver shimmering essence fills the archway and writing appears.*

Give the PCs **Player’s Handout #3**. They must match the names of the cities with their nicknames. The correct answer to the puzzle is:

City of Splendor:	<i>Waterdeep</i>
City of Danger:	<i>Mulmaster</i>
Gem of the North:	<i>Silverymoon</i>
Caravan City:	<i>Scornubal</i>
Gateway to the West:	<i>Westgate</i>
Gateway to the Unapproachable East:	<i>Tsurlagol</i>
Living City:	<i>Ravens Bluff</i>
Halfway to Everywhere:	<i>Baldurs Gate</i>
City of Sails:	<i>Luskan</i>
City of Beauty:	<i>Myth Drannor</i>

PCs who go through the archway without solving the puzzle correctly will be teleported back to the Shaundakaul Teleportation Circle in **Encounter Two**. Once (one of) the PCs answer the puzzle correctly, continue with the following:

*Hoping to have finally matched up the correct nicknames with the cities they belong to, you close your eyes, speak the correct answer and walk through the stone archway. As you walk through, you are engulfed in utter darkness. You become squeamish as*

*you feel as if you are floating weightlessly, suspended in midair. Finally, your feet touch ground and you open your eyes to find yourself at the gates of Ravens Bluff.*

Once the PCs enter the city and head back to Micah’s estate, proceed to **Encounter Eight**.

If the PCs did not make it back to Ravens Bluff by midnight or come back without Snell Sneer, go to **Conclusion B: Failure**.

## Encounter Eight: A Familiar Foe

Manshooon’s underlings, Nefarious the enchanter and his elite guards, are waiting for the PCs in the study at Micah’s estate. Nefarious plans on having the PCs hand over Snell and the spell components in exchange for Micah. He then plans on teleporting them back to the Citadel of the Raven, where Manshooon waits for their arrival. Afterwards, Manshooon will send a “copy” of the spell and Micah via a *teleport without error* back to Ravens Bluff.

This should be an intense role-playing encounter, but if the PCs want to attack, they will find that Nefarious and Manshooon’s elite guards are well prepared. Manshooon has “primed” them with powerful abjuration and alteration spells.

The study, which is on the first floor, has wall-to-wall bookshelves and a desk in which Nefarious is sitting. The ceiling is 10’ high and the dimensions of the room are 60’ x 50’. There is one window in the room, which is behind the desk.

**Judge Note:** The PCs may want to take Alysha somewhere before going to Micah’s estate. They may take her to the Hand of Mercy Orphanage (detailed in Polyhedron 97). At the end of the adventure, Micah will recommend the PCs do this anyway. Once the PCs head to Micah’s estate, read the following:

*Having returned to Ravens Bluff, you quickly head to Micah’s estate. Upon arrival, the magical mouth on the statue in the front yard tells you to “Come inside. Micah is in the study waiting for you.”*

*Following the magic mouth’s advice, you go to the study. Upon arrival, you are startled to see that in the study is not Micah, but a dark robed man sitting at a desk on the other side of the room. The hood of his robe is drawn and the shadows from it do not allow you a good look at his face. On his robe is a symbol of a slashing, black Z.*

*Surrounding him are six intimidating figures in black armor. They all have the same slashing black Z*

*engraved on their armor. They wield bastard swords and glare at you with a menacing look, but seem to be holding their ground. "Nefarious," Snell says with uneasiness in his voice.*

Have the PCs roll a **Heraldry** NWP check. If successful, they will know the symbol is that of the Zhentarim. They may be shocked if they have not already found out that Snell is a Zhentarim agent and not a member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. Nefarious and his guards are here to "bargain" with the PCs. If the PCs attack, go straight to combat. If not continue:

*The dark robed man's head tilts up to reveal a wicked smile. In a cold, calm voice he speaks: " (Say the PCs names), you have done well. Bringing back the Mulmaster spell and our agent of the Zhentarim was not an easy task. Snell may have forgot to mention he works for the Black Network and not the Brotherhood. I was beginning to worry the Mulmaster beholders had found you." He pauses to take a sip of wine from a goblet.*

*"I am here to make an offer to you. Well, it is actually more of a demand. I hope we can do this without bloodshed. Manshoon's elite guards and I are more than prepared for your heroics so hear me out. Manshoon has kidnapped Micah Starfire while you were away and is holding him in a temporal stasis back in the Citadel of the Raven. His intentions are not to kill him, but if you do not agree to Manshoon's demands, he will do so."*

*"Manshoon's demands are simple: hand over Snell and the Mulmaster spell for Micah's life." The smile on Nefarious' face widens. "I will teleport them back to Citadel of the Raven. Afterwards, Manshoon will decide on whether he will duplicate the spell's writing and teleport it back here in time to stop the Mulmaster assassins. He may want a few of your city officials to 'suffer' before saving your pitiful city. He will then send a parchment telling you where you can find Micah. When he sends it will be entirely up to him."*

*"Snell on the other hand, will be disciplined by Manshoon for his failure to succeed in his task. Manshoon doe not like using vital resources for such a trivial task. This offer is non-negotiable. Do you agree to Manshoon's demands?"*

The Zhentarim mean business and are not going to take "no" for an answer. If the PCs ask Snell what to do or if he is okay with this, he will say the following:

*"If you want, I will go back to the Citadel of the Raven and face most certain death so Micah may live. It is the least I can do for him. This may be all in vain*

*since the Zhentarim are not known for keeping their word."*

If the PCs agree, go to "**PCs agree with Nefarious.**" If they disagree and refuse to his demands, continue with the following.

### **PCs disagree or attack:**

Nefarious will attempt to use his ring and teleport Snell and himself away, leaving his elite guards to kill the PCs. Nefarious will attack the PCs if they attack him and if he is unable to teleport to safety. The Zhentarim will not attack Snell.

During the combat, Snell will attempt to hide underneath the desk. If Alysha is still with the PCs, she will run out of the room and hide in one of the other rooms.

If the PCs say "no" before attacking, read the following:

*Nefarious' smile quickly turns to a frown. "Fools! You shall die!" Nefarious starts gesturing with his hands and the elite guards move in for the attack.*

Nefarious is now going to Plan B: take Snell by force. He will attempt to use his *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge) on himself and Snell in the first round of combat. He will leave his elite guards behind to kill the PCs. The elite guards will rush to attack the PCs and will block their view of Nefarious for the first round of combat.

If the PCs are killed or do not stop Nefarious from teleporting Snell away, go to **Conclusion B: Failure**. If they defeat the Zhentarim, go to **Conclusion C: The Hard Way**.

### **1<sup>st</sup> tier**

**Nefarious, hm, W (E), 3rd:** AL LE; AC 4 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 (20); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells, SD Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18; MR nil; SZ M; ML14.

Personality: Cruel, calculating, and careful.

Magic items:, *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge). Allows the wearer to teleport up to 10 beings. They must be within 10 feet of the caster and do not need to be touched.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- ~~armor~~, *charm person*, *sleep* 2<sup>nd</sup>- *mirror image*, *ray of enfeeblement*

**Zhentarim elite guard (6), hm, F2 AL LE; AC 1** (chain and dex.); MV 12; hp 28; THAC0 15 (adjusted); #AT 3/2; Dmg range (2d4)+5 (bastard sword); SA specialization, strength; SD spell; Str 18/51, Dex 18, Con 18 Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 6; MR nil; SZ L (M); ML 18.

Spells: The following spell has been cast on them at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *protection from paralysis*.

### **2nd tier**

**Nefarious, hm, W (E), 5th:** AL LE; AC 4 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 (20); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells, SD Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18; MR nil; SZ M; ML14.

Personality: Cruel, calculating, and careful.

Magic items: *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge). Allows the wearer to teleport up to 10 beings. They must be within 10 feet of the caster and do not need to be touched.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- ~~armor~~, *charm person x 2*, *burning hands*, *sleep 2<sup>nd</sup> level-darkness 15'radius*, *ray of enfeeblement x 2 3<sup>rd</sup>-hold person*, *slow*

**Note:** The following spell has been cast on him at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts 4 turns).

**Zhentarim elite guard (6), hm, F4 AL LE;** AC -1 (platemail and dex.); MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 14 (adjusted); #AT 3/2; Dmg range (2d4)\*+6 (bastard sword); SA specialization, strength; SD potion, spells; Str 18/76, Dex 18, Con 18 Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 6; MR nil; SZ L (M); ML 18.

Magic items: drank a *potion of fire resistance* (lasts 1 turn).

Spells: The following spell has been cast on them at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *protection from paralysis*.

### **3rd tier**

**Nefarious, hm, W (E), 8th:** AL LE; AC 4 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 24; THAC0 (19); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells, SD stonesskins (8) Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18; MR nil; SZ M; ML14.

Personality: Cruel, calculating, and careful.

Magic items: *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge). Allows the wearer to teleport up to 10 beings. They must be within 10 feet of the caster and do not need to be touched.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- ~~armor~~, *charm person x2*, *burning hands*, *sleep 2<sup>nd</sup> level-darkness 15'radius*, *mirror image*, *ray of enfeeblement x2 3<sup>rd</sup>-hold person*, *slow*, ~~*protection from normal missiles*~~, ~~*protection from good, 10' radius 4th-stoneskin*~~, *confusion*, *fumble*

**Note:** The following spell has been cast on him at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts 4 turns).

**Zhentarim elite guard (6), hm, F7 AL LE;** AC -2 (field plate and dex.); MV 12; hp 70; THAC0 10 (adjusted); #AT 2/1; Dmg range (2d4)+12(bastard sword); SA specialization, strength, potion; SD potion,

spells; Str 18/91, Dex 18, Con 18 Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 6; MR nil; SZ L (M); ML 18.

Magic items: drank a *potion of fire resistance* (lasts 1 turn) and *fire giant strength* (lasts 1 turn).

Spells: The following spells have been cast on them at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *protection from paralysis* and *Serten's spell immunity* (last for 4 turns).

### **4th tier**

**Nefarious, hm, W (E), 12th:** AL LE; AC 4 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 (17); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells, SD stonesskins (8) Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18; MR nil; SZ M; ML14.

Personality: Cruel, calculating, and careful.

Magic items: *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge). Allows the wearer to teleport up to 10 beings. They must be within 10 feet of the caster and do not need to be touched.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- ~~armor~~, *charm person*, *burning hands*, *sleep 2<sup>nd</sup> level-darkness 15'radius*, *mirror image*, *ray of enfeeblement x 2*, *3<sup>rd</sup>-hold person*, *dispel magic*, ~~*protection from normal missiles*~~, *fly*, ~~*protection from good, 10' radius 4<sup>th</sup>-stoneskin*~~, *fumble*, *phantasmal killer x 2*, ~~*fire shield*~~ *5<sup>th</sup>-feeblemind x 2*, *chaos*, *teleport x 2 6<sup>th</sup>-eyebite*, *disintegrate*.

**Note:** The following spell has been cast on him at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts 4 turns).

**Zhentarim elite guard (6), hm, F11 AL LE;** AC -3 (full plate and dex.); MV 12; hp 90; THAC0 6 (adjusted); #AT 4/1 (hasted); Dmg range (2d4)+13 (bastard sword); SA specialization, strength, potions SD stonesskins (10, potions, spells; Str 18/00, Dex 18, Con 18 Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 6; MR nil; SZ L (M); ML 18.

Magic items: drank a *potion of speed* (lasts for 15 rounds), *fire resistance* (lasts 1 turn) and *cloud giant strength* (1 lasts turn).

Spells: The following spells have been cast on them at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *protection from paralysis*, *stoneskin* and *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts for 4 turns).

### **5th tier**

**Nefarious, hm, W (E), 14th:** AL LE; AC 4 (*armor* spell); MV 12; hp 50; THAC0 (16); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (staff); SA spells, SD stonesskins (10) Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18; MR nil; SZ M; ML14.

Personality: Cruel, calculating, and careful.

Magic items: *ring of mass teleport* (1 charge). Allows the wearer to teleport up to 10 beings. They must be within 10 feet of the caster and do not need to be touched.

Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- ~~armor~~, *charm person*, *burning hands*, *sleep*, *color spray 2<sup>nd</sup> level-darkness 15'radius*, *mirror*

*image, ray of enfeeblement x 2, blindness 3<sup>rd</sup>, hold person, dispel magic x2, ~~protection from normal missiles, fly, protection from good, 10' radius 4<sup>th</sup> stonesskin, fumble, phantasmal killer x 2, fire shield 5<sup>th</sup>-feblemind x 2, chaos, teleport x 2 6<sup>th</sup>-eyebite, disintegrate, flesh to stone.~~*

**Note:** The following spell has been cast on him at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts 4 turns).

**Zhentarim elite guard (6)**, hm, F13 AL LE; AC -3 (full plate and dex.); MV 12; hp 110; THAC0 4 (adjusted); #AT 5/1 (hasted); Dmg (2d4)+14 (bastard sword); SA specialization, strength, potions; SD stonesskins (13), potions; Str 18/00, Dex 18, Con 18 Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 6; MR nil; SZ L (M); ML 18.

Magic items: drank a *potion of speed* (lasts for 15 rounds), *fire resistance* (lasts 1 turn) and *storm giant strength* (lasts 1 turn).

Spells: The following spells have been cast on them at the 19<sup>th</sup> level of ability: *protection from paralysis, stonesskin* and *Serten's spell immunity* (lasts for 4 turns).

### **PCs agree with Nefarious:**

Nefarious' smile widens, "Wise choice. Let us leave, Snell." He begins to gesture, obviously casting a spell. Snell turns to you and says, "Tell Micah I love him and I am sorry for what I did. Tell him to forgive me." Snell turns away, a teardrop runs down his cheek. Nefarious looks to you one last time and says, "Has been fun doing business with you." After Nefarious' last word is spoken, he, Snell, and the elite guards vanish.

*Waiting anxiously and wondering if you made the right decision, a scroll case appears on Micah's desk as you can hear the next bell ring in Ravens Bluff. Inside, you find two pieces of paper. One has magical writing on it and the other is in common. The one in common reads, "You can find Micah in the downstairs closet."*

Running down the stairs and opening the closet, you find Micah tied and gagged, with mixed looks of relief and fright on his face. Once you remove the gag, he speaks frantically, "Did you get the vital information from Snell?"

After the PCs untie him, Micah will ask them what happened to Snell. If the PCs tell him what Snell said as he was being teleported away by Nefarious, he will become teary-eyed and say, "My poor, poor child." If they mention Snell is or was a Zhentarim agent, Micah will frown and tell the PCs he is very disappointed in

his apprentice. After the PCs tell him they have the spell components, continue:

*"Good work! You will be rewarded handsomely for this. Please give me the spell. I must hurry over to the Wizards Guild and give it to the deans so we may stop the Mulmaster's assassins." With that, Micah begins running out the door. Halfway out the door, he turns to you and says, "Oh, I will be in contact with you soon to give you your payment. Good-bye."*

Once the PCs leave the estate, go to the **Conclusion A: Success!**

## **Conclusion A: Success!**

*By successfully completing your mission in time, the Wizards Guild is able to stop the Mulmaster assassins. Mulmaster's embassy has been closed indefinitely and all diplomatic ties have been cut.*

*The city is grateful for your heroic deed and Mayor Amber Thoden throws a celebration in your honor at Memorial Park. Many of the city's elite nobles come to thank you for helping to maintain their lifestyles. Afterwards, Micah and the Wizards Guild give you your much-deserved award.*

All characters are given a Wizards Guild boon (see Treasury Summary) and a fame point in city government. See *Treasury Summary* for chivalry and knightly honor awards.

## **Conclusion B: Failure!**

If the PCs fail in their mission, bad things happen. Although they will not be rewarded, Micah (once he is resurrected) will show pity on those who were slain because he miscalculated on how tough this mission was. He will help pay for a resurrection or raise dead spell for those killed by paying for half of the magic cost.

*Failing to complete your mission in time, the city suffers in the hands of the Mulmaster assassins. As Snell said, the assassins attacked at midnight. Many prominent members of the city government were killed: Lord Kothonos, Rolf Sunriver, Tordon Sureblade, Vernon Condor and Lord Calvin Longbottle. Also among those murdered was Micah Starfire, who was found in his own closet with a poison dagger in his back.*

*More would have died if not for the Wizards Guild sudden breakthrough in finally discovering what magic masked the assassins.*

Rumor has it that the Zhentarim sent a scroll with the components of the spell that protected the assassins to the Wizards Guild an hour after midnight. Some say Manshoon himself sent it and that without his help, the city would have been doomed. City officials are still contemplating why Manshoon would aid Ravens Bluff.

*Micah, after being raised from the dead, and the Wizards Guild having to put all their effort and time into dispelling the magic of the Brotherhood of the Cloak, are unable to pay you. Having to help pay for resurrecting all the prominent members of the government who were killed and your failure to complete your mission in time, has left their coffers very low.*

*Mulmaster's embassy has been closed indefinitely and all diplomatic ties with the City of Danger have been cut. A feeling of vulnerability cloaks the city.*

PCs receive one infamy point.

## Conclusion C: The Hard Way

This conclusion assumes the PCs somehow defeated the Zhentarim and Snell was not killed or teleported back to the Citadel of the Raven. Once the combat is over, Snell will come out from underneath the desk. He will be so impressed with the PC's abilities that he will cooperate with them fully. Once the combat is over, Snell will say the following:

*Having miraculously defeated the Zhentarim, you pause to take a breath. As you do, Snell pops his head out from underneath the desk. "Whoa. You guys are tougher than I thought. I suggest we get the Mulmaster spell I have over to the Wizards Guild at once."*

*Following Snell's advice, you do so. Prominent members of the Wizards Guild greet you cautiously as they listen to your story. Becoming desperate at every passing bell, they believe you and take the spell Snell gives them. The Wizards Guild is able to interpret the spell masking the Mulmaster assassins and stop their sinister plan before they strike. Mulmaster's embassy has been closed indefinitely and all diplomatic ties have been cut.*

*Afterwards, your group wonders about Micah. Where is he? The Wizards Guild, in an attempt to find his exact whereabouts, uses powerful scrying magic. They were able to find out he is hidden in a closet at his own estate!*

*Rushing to his aid, you find Micah dead with a poison dagger in his back. The dagger has the Zhentarim symbol engraved on it. The Wizards Guild*

*quickly gathers its depleted resources to get Micah resurrected. Once alive again, Micah greets you feebly.*

*The Mayor Amber Thoden and Micah are grateful for your heroic deeds. Unfortunately for you, the magical items the Wizard Guild was going to give you were used to resurrect Micah. Micah is very regretful, but when he finds out from Snell you did not agree to the Zhentarim demands, he becomes very disappointed in your lack of judgement.*

*As for Micah and Snell, well, let's just say they have a lot of catching up to do. But before they can bond once again, the Lord Mayor and the Magistrate have decided Snell will be spending a few months in the Compter.*

All characters are given a fame point in city government. See *Treasury Summary* for chivalry and knightly honor awards.

## Here Ends the Adventure

## Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living City events.

1. Sum the experience listed below for objectives.
2. Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-500 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC interacted socially.
3. Finally, multiply the total by the tier according to this chart:

Levels 6-13	Tier 1
Levels 14-25	Tier 2
Levels 26-37	Tier 3
Levels 38-56	Tier 4
Levels 57+	Tier 5

PCs should get the experience points of the tier for which they qualify, regardless of which tier is actually played. For example, if you have a Tier 3 group and you have to bump the combats by one tier to challenge them, they still get the experience points for a Tier 3 group, not for a Tier 4 group.

**Encounter Two**  
Defeating the were-creatures: 100 xp

**Encounter Three**  
Rescuing Alysha: 100 xp

**Encounter Four**

Convincing the Stone Giants to help them: 100 xp

### Encounter Five

Defeating the Hawks without the Stone Giant: 200 xp

OR

Defeating the Hawks with the Stone Giant: 100 xp

### Encounter Six

Telling Snell how Micah really feels about him: 100 xp

### Encounter Seven

Solving the puzzle: 100 xp

### Encounter Eight

Agreeing to Nefarious' demands: 150 xp

OR

Defeating the Zhentarim: 75 xp

Total Experience for Objectives: 750 xp

Roleplaying Experience: 0-500 xp

**Total Possible Experience: 1,250 xp**

For Tier 2: 2,500 xp

For Tier 3: 3,750 xp

For Tier 4: 5,000 xp

For Tier 5: 6,250 xp

## TREASURE SUMMARY:

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot have it.

### Encounter Five

- *Boots of levitation*
- (2) *Amulet of chaosbane* (3 charges): This magical item gives the wearer an unmodified saving throw vs. the *chaos* spell. This means no magical, racial or granted bonuses. Priests, paladins, rangers, rogues and wizards who are not enchanters can use it. It does not function if the wearer possesses any other magical amulet or a *scarab of protection*. Each use drains a charge. It radiates abjuration magic. XP value: 1,000 G.P. value: 5,000

### Conclusion A

Wizards Guild Boon: You have been awarded with a special Contingency Boon from the Ravens Bluff Wizards Guild. It may be redeemed twice upon courteous presentation at the guild, and cannot be traded. (These spells are cast at the 16th level of ability, and are subject to dispel magic.) The contingency spell must be used during the adventure it is redeemed, or it fades and is useless.

Judge: Circle the appropriate tier, which was played by the PC, named above. PCs may choose one of the tiers that were below the one they played.

Tier 1: Contingency - *Enlarge*

Tier 2: Contingency - *Mirror Image*

Tier 3: Contingency - *Fly*

Tier 4: Contingency - *Stoneskin*

Tier 5: Contingency - *Ironguard*

### Fame Award

1 point in city government if able to stop the Mulmaster assassins in time.

1 infamy point if PCs did not stop the Mulmaster assassins in time.

### Knightly Honors:

A knight or squire can receive only one of these and only knights of a given order are eligible for specific awards. Further, a knight can receive a chivalry point OR an honor, but not both.

### KNIGHT OF THE DOVE

*The White Rose Ring*- Presented to any Dove who sacrificed their life in an attempt to save Alysha (in encounter three) from being killed by the collapsing building. (Going below 0 hit points is acceptable in gaining this honor).

### KNIGHT OF THE HAWK

*Hawk Ring*-For showing bravery and bringing back Snell and the spell components to Ravens Bluff BEFORE the Mulmaster assassin's attack.

### KNIGHT OF THE GRIFFON

*Griffon Feather Necklace*-For inspiring others to try and defeat the Hawks (in encounter five) or the Beholders (in encounter seven).

## Judge's Aid #1

### **Cloak of Deception (Abjuration)**

8th level wizard spell

Range: Touch

Components: V, M, S

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 8

Area of Effect: 1 creature or item

Saving Throw: None

Thurndan Tallwand, senior member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak, created this spell. He created it so his assassins could infiltrate other city governments and wizard guilds, and be able to know who else is there working with them. It is a very powerful version of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level wizard spell, *nondetection*. The recipient of this spell is totally immune to all divination and enchantment/charm magic, and the caster does not have to make a saving throw. This means all spells, magical items or granted powers (such as the paladins, *detect evil* ability) that fall into these categories of magic don't work. Even if the creature is killed, *speak with dead*, will not work.

Although the spell's magic seems impenetrable, it has two subtle flaws. Anyone who has the 3<sup>rd</sup> level spell *nondetection* cast upon them will be able to see those recipients of this spell. The creatures or object will be glowing a bright red. Once a creature or object is detected in this manner, a *dispel magic* spell can be used to negate the spell, but only by the person who has the *non-detection* spell cast on them. Also, a creature wearing an *amulet of inescapable location* will not be protected from the spell *locate object*.

The material components of the spell are a piece of black silk cloth and the tongue of a Cloaker. The recipient of this spell loses one point of charisma permanently.

## **Player's Handout #1: Snell's Note**

(Dated yesterday)

**Micah,**

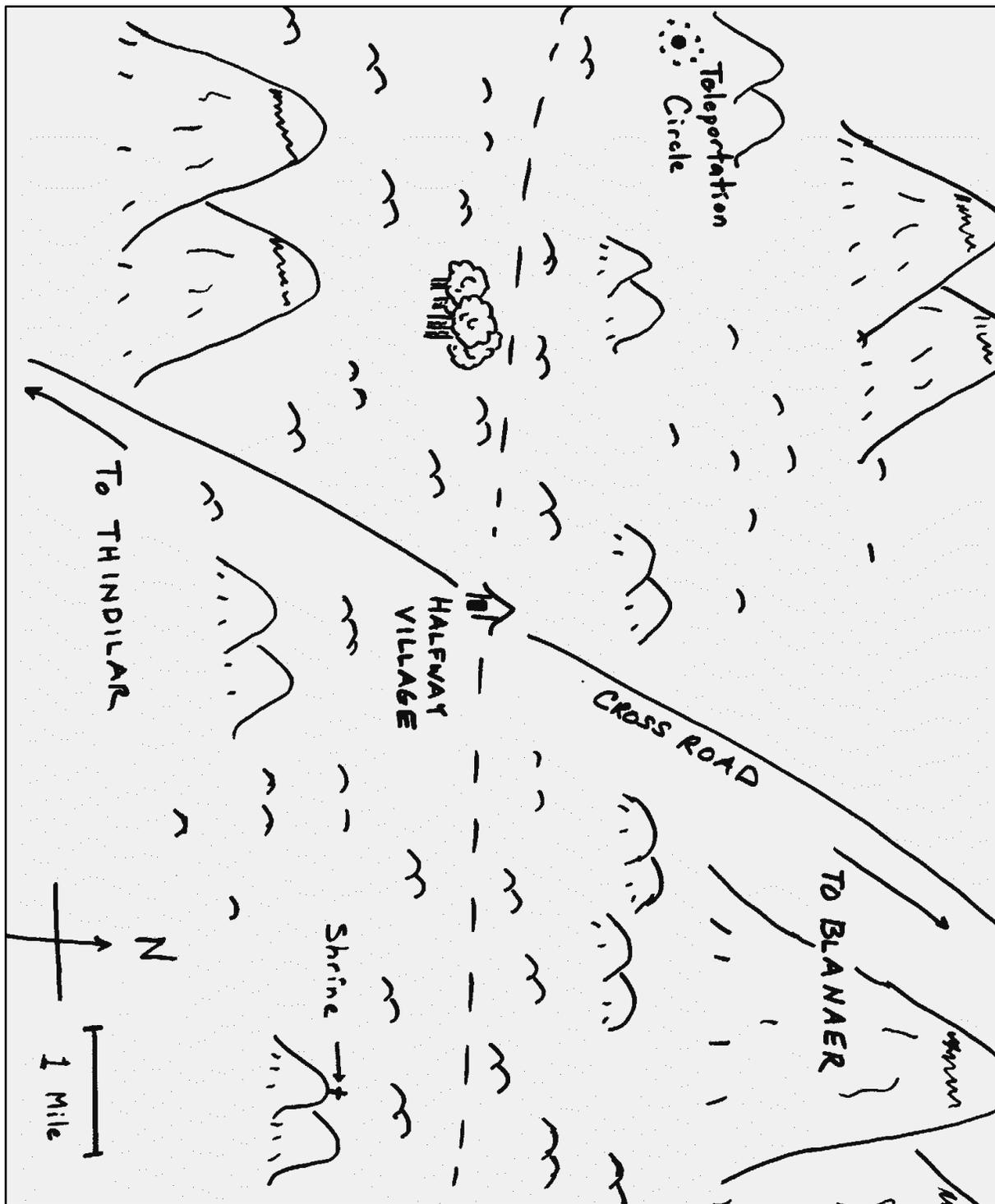
**It is I, Snell Sneer, your former apprentice. I have grave news. The Brotherhood of the Cloak of Mulmaster has infiltrated Ravens Bluff's most vital bodies of government with assassins. They are protected by powerful magic that no divination spell can detect. Your pathetic city is doomed.**

**I, with the right price, may be able to help. As you know, I am a member, well, former member of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. I was able to obtain information about the powerful magic masking the assassins. I barely escaped Mulmaster with my life. I am hiding out in a village called Halfway, North of Ravens Bluff. I fear traveling any further knowing Mulmaster's elite agents, the Hawks, are searching the valley for me. The assassins' attack will happen tomorrow at midnight. They are well prepared and have researched those that they are mimicking. Questioning people will be useless.**

**I expect to be compensated handsomely for this information. I want you to guarantee me a total pardon from both the Mayor and Magistrate for all my past crimes. I will wait here at Halfway Village for the arrival of your agents. Hurry, for the life of your city depends on mine.**

**Snell Sneer**

Player's Handout #2: The Map

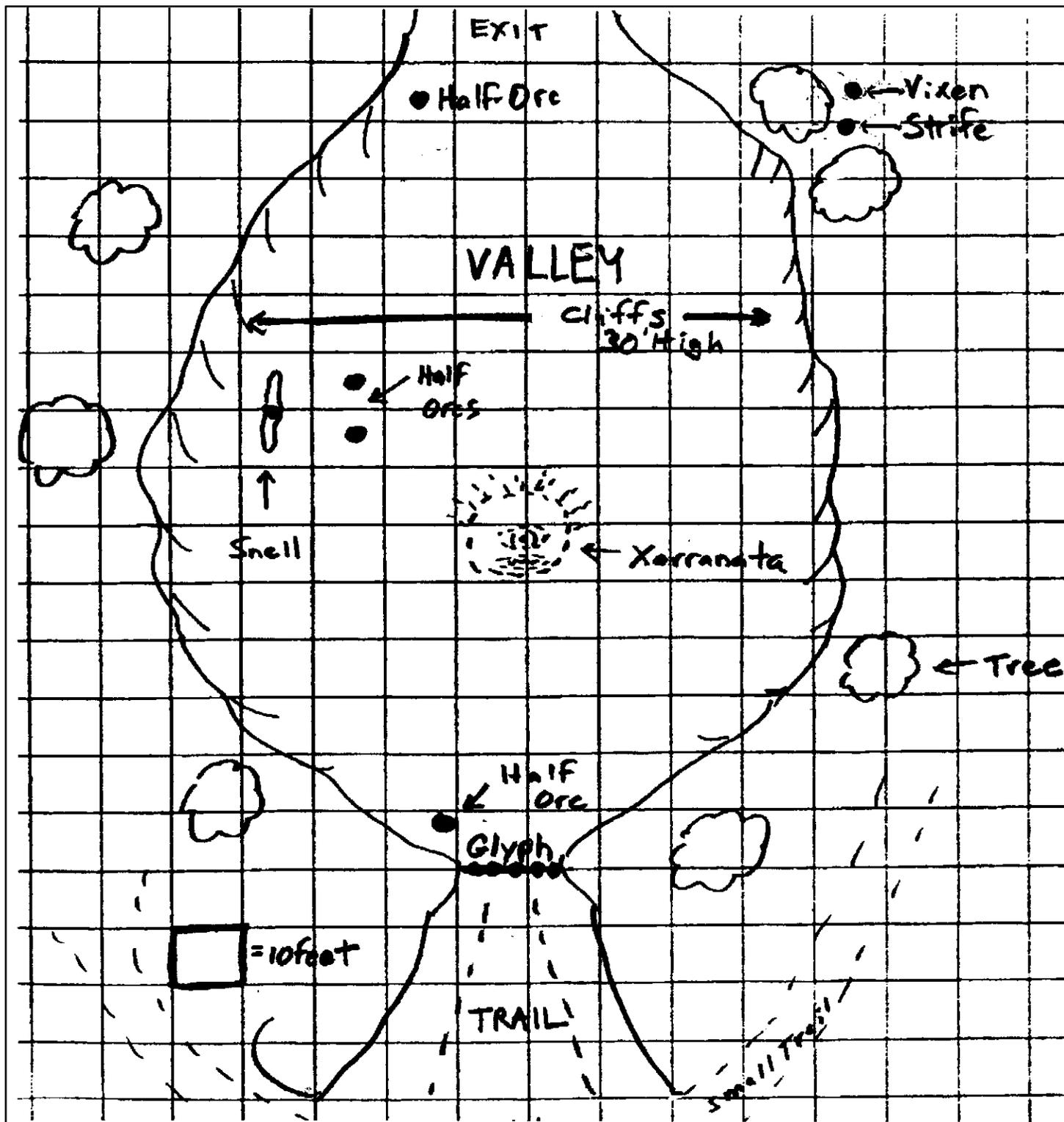


## Judge's Aid #2: Travel Time

<u>Departure and Arrival</u>	<u>Miles</u>	<u>On Foot:</u>	<u>Mounted(Flying)</u>
		<u>Hours</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Teleport Circle to Halfway Village	5	5	4
Halfway Village to the Stone Giant clan	2	2	1.5
Back to Halfway Village:	2	2	1.5
Halfway Village to the Hawks' campsite:	2	2	1.5
Hawks campsite to the shrine of Shaundakaul	3	3	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14 hours</b>	<b>11 hours</b>

If the PCs travel to all of the places on the map without any long rest periods (greater than an hour) along the way, they should arrive back in Ravens Bluff at about one hour before midnight. For simplification, one-day of travel equals 15 hours (9am to 12am). This is from the point the PCs are teleported to the Teleportation Circle to midnight the same day.

Judge's Aid #3: Hawk's Campsite



## Judge's Aid #4:

### **Snell Sneer**

Male Human (T4)/W4 (Diviner)

Str: 6                      Dex: 16                      Con: 8  
Int: 15                      Wis: 10                      Cha: 7

Height: 5'8"                      Weight: 90 lbs.                      Age: 24  
Hair: brown (greasy)                      Eyes: green (bulging)                      Alignment: Neutral Evil  
AC: 8 (Dexterity) Hit Points: 18  
Magical Items: *amulet of inescapable detection*.  
Memorized Spells: 1<sup>st</sup>- *detect magic, charm person* 2<sup>nd</sup>- none 3<sup>rd</sup>- *dispel magic*  
Languages: Common and Thieves Cant

**Thieving Abilities:** PP: 45% OL 37% F/R T 35% MS 33% HiS 30% HN 10% CW 88%

**Appearance:** Skinny, malnourished looking. He suffers from a goiter so his eyes are always bulging out and they have dark circles under them. His hair is quickly receding and is always extremely greasy. He is missing almost all his teeth and the few remaining are yellow and rotted. He speaks with a nasal tone to his voice.

**Personality Traits:** Paranoid, greedy, selfish, manipulative, manic-depressive, malleable.

**Background:** Snell Sneer grew up on the tough streets of Crows End in Ravens Bluff. The only way he knew how to survive was to steal. As a juvenile, a Demarchess of Mask recruited Snell into a now debunked Thieves Guild. His first mission was to rob the mansion of an elf by the name of Micah Starfire. Unknown to him at the time, Micah was a Diviner. As what was destined to happen, Snell was caught and sentenced to the Compter.

Micah Starfire, in an attempt to prove that not all poor people from Crow's End are scum, decided to drop the charges and take the boy in. He felt that maybe his influence could change Snell. Seizing on Micah's naïve altruism, Snell went along and played the part of "eager apprentice." Micah taught Snell the weave of magic and he grasped his newfound profession well. Over time, Snell became obsessed with magic. His lust for magic consumed all reasoning and Snell attempted to acquire Micah's magical possessions for himself.

Snell attempted to kill Micah and take his magical items. Micah survived Snell's poison dagger and was able to hold him off. Knowing his failed coup on Micah would land him in the Compter for good, Snell fled north.

He felt bad about what he did to Micah and would change what he had done if he could, but he knew it is too late. He thinks Micah would never forgive him. Depressed and angry with life, Snell traveled north and ended up in Calaunt. Here, a Zhentarim agent "convinced" him to join the Black Network. Over a short period of time, Snell quickly moved up the ranks of the Zhentarim. After many acts of sabotage, Snell was given the (suicidal) task of infiltrating the powerful wizard's guild of Mulmaster known as the Brotherhood of the Cloak (BotC). Knowing his refusal would mean instant death, he accepted the challenge.

To the astonishment of the top people in the Zhentarim, Snell's success of not only getting into the BotC without dying, but moving up to a position of recognition within the organization, was quite impressive. Snell helped Manshoon preempt the BotC anytime their self-interests crossed paths.

As the day of the coup on Ravens Bluff grew closer, Snell was ordered by Manshoon to steal a copy of the spell, *cloak of deception*. Once in his possession, Manshoon would make sure that the Wizards Guild of Ravens Bluff would receive a copy before the Mulmaster assassins attacked. Snell, with what little conscience he had left, thought that by indirectly helping to save Ravens Bluff from the Mulmaster's sinister assassination plot, he would be showing his former friend, Micah Starfire, how thankful he was for all he tried doing for him.

**Player's Handout #3: The Puzzle**

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| a) City of Splendor                      | ___ Westgate     |
| b) City of Danger                        | ___ Scornubal    |
| c) Gem of the North                      | ___ Ravens Bluff |
| d) City Of Beauty                        | ___ Turlagol     |
| e) Caravan City                          | ___ Luskan       |
| f) Gateway to the West                   | ___ Baldurs Gate |
| g) Gateway to the<br>Unapproachable East | ___ Mulmaster    |
| h) Living City                           | ___ Silverymoon  |
| i) Halfway to<br>Everywhere              | ___ Waterdeep    |
| j) City of Sails                         | ___ Myth Drannor |