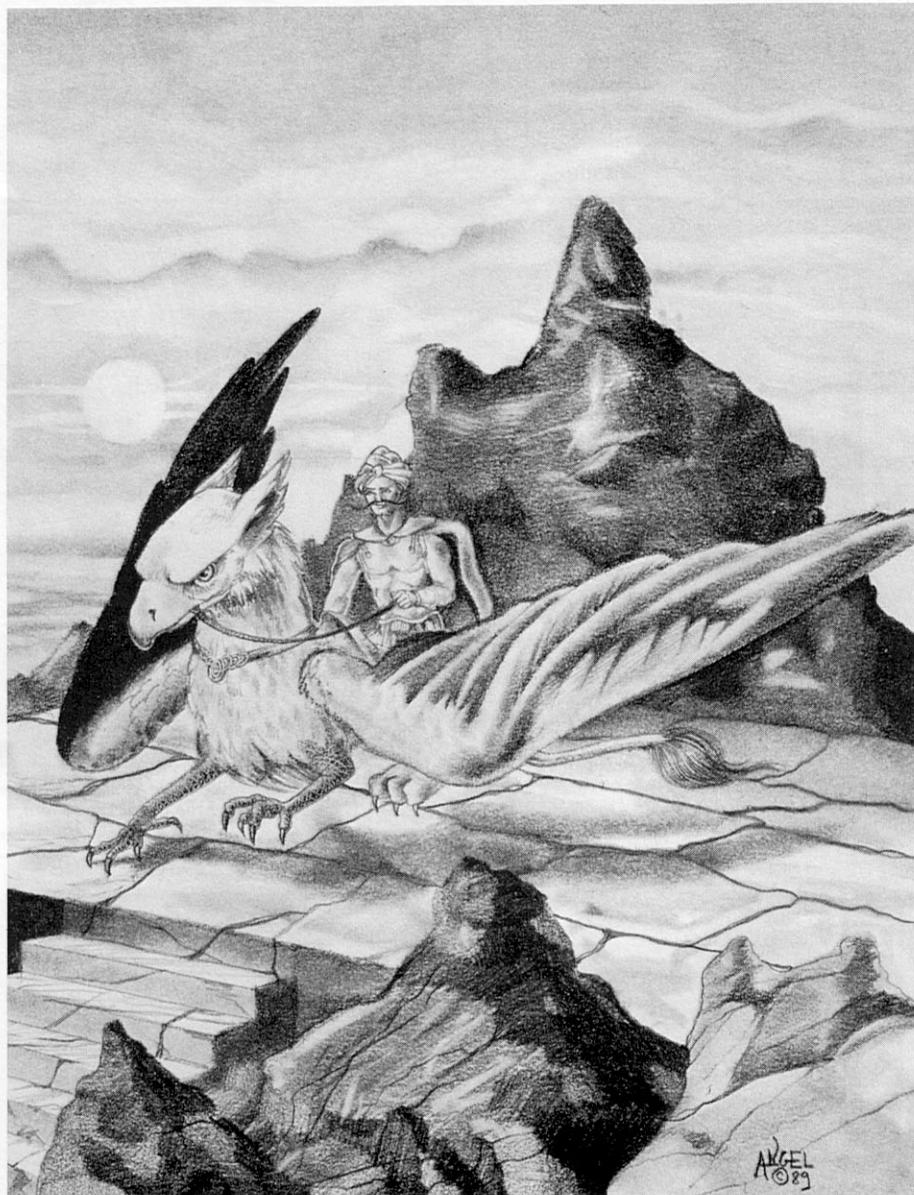


Counterfeit Dreams

ANGEL
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An AD&D® Game Adventure for
5–7 characters of levels 1–3

by Skip Williams and
Jean Rabe

Notes for the DM

Verity Overinn is a scheming fighter/thief who runs a fencing operation and safehouse out of The Overinn, a business she operates near the river. To the general public it appears to be a rundown eatery and inn that caters to few people because it is small, cluttered, and serves lousy food. Verity's clientele primarily consists of thieves who are not attached to a thieves' guild, thugs, and people on the run from the law.

Two months ago Verity expanded her operation. One of her borders, a thief who escaped from the Ravens Bluff prison, was especially skilled in jewelry-making and metalworking. The thief and Verity began a counterfeit operation in The Overinn's basement. Verity's cook, an ogre, supplies the muscle to operate the bellows. The counterfeit gold is made from lead and a shiny brass that resembles gold. Verity purchases the brass—in the form of candlesticks—from a nearby business, and melts it down in the basement.

Verity sells the counterfeit gold for real coins at a ratio of 5-to-1 or 10-to-1, depending on how hard she wants to bargain and how wealthy or shrewd her clients are. In other words, for every real gold piece paid, the clients receive five to 10 counterfeit pieces. Verity instructs her clients how to spend the gold; in small amounts spread out over the city. Unfortunately, one of her clients didn't follow her instructions.

Mortimer Mittlemer, one of Ravens Bluff's more notorious con artists, purchased 4,000 counterfeit gold coins from Verity. Mortimer is unconcerned about Verity's wrath, as he is confident his ability to disguise himself will keep Verity and practically anyone else from finding him. Mortimer, in the guise of a city noble, offers the PCs a "substantial payment"—3,000 of the counterfeit coins—if they travel to one of the spires northeast of town where they will pick up six coffers that they are to take to the Ravens Bluff harbor. The PCs perform the task, are caught with the counterfeit gold, and are forced to find the origin of the fake coins in exchange for their freedom.

Introduction

Ravens Bluff.

It is a city teeming with life, excitement, and festivals.

It took a long while to travel to the city. But the journey was worth it. The city's buildings stretch to the sky, and the roads lead from bustling marketplaces and intriguing neighborhoods to the harbor, where each day ships unload palatable delicacies and unique and wondrous items from faraway places.

There are thousands of people here, and they come from many walks of life. Although the majority of the population is obviously human, there are several dwarves, gnomes, halflings, half elves, and elves who travel the city streets. Some of the demi-humans have their own businesses, such as taverns which serve specialty foods and rare wines.

In the few weeks you have been in the city you have sampled much of the food and entertainment available near the wharfs, and you participated in one of the street festivals where acrobats, jugglers, actors, and expert pickpockets plied their trades. Of course, partaking of all these wonderful things has been costly, as has been staying in one of the city's better establishments, Volodar's Stardust Inn.

In need of some quick wealth, and not wanting to leave Ravens Bluff so soon, you began to look for work, inquiring in a few of the taverns along the wharf, and quickly finding a prospect.

A representative of Lord Merriwether Winston Sheffield-Trublood the Third, heir to the Sheffield-Trublood estate and shipping line, informed you that his lordship had need of a small group of roguish-looking people to perform an errand—to pick up a trifle for him. The agent looked you over carefully and determined your appearance fit the lord's requirements. He scrutinized the fighters' muscles, furrowed his brow, and speculated that you probably could handle any problems you might run into. The agent instructed you to meet Lord Merriwether Winston Sheffield-Trublood the Third shortly after dawn on the morrow on the docks near The Golden Goddess, a large merchant

vessel. The agent said you would be paid well for your trouble.

Pleased at the prospect of wealth, you agreed to the task and got a good night's sleep. It is now dawn, and the ships are only a few blocks away.

Encounter #1—Mortimer Merriwether

Lord Merriwether Winston Sheffield-Trublood the Third is actually con artist Mortimer Mittlemer in one of his numerous disguises. (In this case, he has taken on the appearance of Lord Charles Frederik Laverne Blacktree the Fourth, speaker of the advisory council and well-known fop.) Mortimer, a wizard who specializes in illusory magic, is having a set of six clay cylinders flown in by griffon to the peak northeast of the city. (He refers to them as coffers when speaking to the PCs.) These cylinders' contents were stolen by one of Mortimer's associates, and Mortimer has agreed to sell the merchandise for a 50% share.

Mortimer is having the cylinders flown to the peak because it is not uncommon for flying mounts to land there and drop off important visitors or noblemen or to deliver valuable items for the city's merchants. Mortimer feared a flying mount arriving anywhere else near Ravens Bluff could attract suspicion, something he can't afford.

Mortimer cannot go to the peak himself, as he is a wanted man in Ravens Bluff, and he does not want to travel through a few neighborhoods which are monitored by seasoned city watch members—some of whom might be able to see through Mortimer's disguises or *invisibility* spells. Nor does he want to accidentally become involved with the city's tax collector—The Vulture—or his staff, as Mortimer knows this man has ways of seeing through lies and deception. He feels much safer by the docks or by other entrances into the city which could provide him a quick avenue for escape.

Mortimer has been looking for a young group of adventurers to pick up his cylinders for him. That group happens to be the PCs.

You reach the docks to find Lord Merriwether Winston Sheffield-Trublood the Third waiting. At his side is the agent who contacted you about the mission. The Lord is

dressed in a deep blue velvet cloak that falls in delicate folds to the dock planks. His dark purple tunic is also made of an expensive material, silk perhaps. It is decorated with gold braid and buttons. On his fair head is a broad-brimmed ink-black hat festooned with a long sky-blue feather. The lord's blond hair is short and curly, and his faint, blond mustache curls below his cheekbones. His dark brown eyes are piercing, but friendly. He smiles at your approach and extends a ring-encrusted hand.

"Good morning, kind sirs and gentle ladies," he says, removing his hat with his other hand and waving it before him as he bows. "I appreciate your promptness. My servant apparently has selected a fine group of young adventurers. I only hope that you are up to the task!"

The lord gestures at the newly-painted ship behind you. "This is the Golden Goddess, one of the many ships in my line. In four hours it sails for Ilipur, and I doubt my captain will want to wait for the coffers. You must get them here before sailing time. The coffers are being brought in by griffon early this morning, in an hour or so. I need you to retrieve them for me and bring them here. Your payment will be 500 gold pieces each, which is in this chest." Lord Merriwether indicates a chest sitting at his companion's feet. He holds up a key, uses it to unlock the chest, and reveals the golden contents. Locking the chest again, he hands you the key and waves to his companion who carries the chest onto the ship.

"When you bring the coffers to the captain, he will give you the chest. There, that should be simple enough. I cannot get the coffers myself, as traveling to and from the peak would require going through a poor section of town. I am well known in Ravens Bluff, and I do not want to be the target of every pickpocket, con man, or hoodlum within a one-mile radius. However, the pickpockets, con men, and hoodlums will not be looking for you. You must leave at once, as it is a good hour or so walk to the peak. Please be careful not to attract the attention of any low lifes or greedy peasants. I want the coffers intact."

If the PCs ask Lord Merriwether what is in the coffers, he shrugs, grins, and

replies, "A sad and precious thing, the residue of dreams. Handle them carefully lest your own dreams crumble away." He does not reveal anything else. Lord Merriwether becomes indignant if the PCs persist in their questioning; he storms onto the ship, with his companion following behind. The PCs will not be able to question the captain, as he is "somewhere in town picking up supplies." However, they can talk to the first mate or sailors.

The sailors are busy and don't have time to waste giving the PCs detailed—or accurate—answers. They say they have heard of Lord Merriwether. (They want to seem in-the-know about Ravens Bluff nobles.) If asked if Lord Merriwether is the owner of the Golden Goddess, the sailors reply yes. They heard the lord talking with the captain about purchasing the ship, a fact they won't reveal to the PCs, and they assume the captain is going to take the lord's offer. Mortimer/Merriwether had talked to the captain about buying this ship, for an incredibly large sum. This is just Mortimer's way of conning the captain into doing his bidding; waiting for the cylinders if the PCs are delayed in bringing them to the ship.

Mortimer Mittlemer, male human specialist mage, 8th level: STR 9, INT 16, WIS 16, CON 10, DEX 17, CHR 10; AL CN; MV 12; AC 2, AC Rear 5; hp 25; #AT 1; D staff; S M; THAC0 16

Magic Items: Bracers of defense AC 5, hat of disguise, dagger +3, dust of disappearance, ring of animal friendship, potion of extra healing, potion of water breathing

Spells Carried: audible glamer, phantasmal force, ventriloquism, alter self (x2), hypnotic pattern, invisibility, non detection, fly, hold person, suggestion, improved invisibility, illusionary wall, emotion

Mortimer Mittlemer is a notorious con artist who is ever developing new scams. Mortimer's present scam is posing as a Ravens Bluff noble. Mortimer is always convincing in his roles, as he chooses them carefully and practices them on his associates before trying them out in public. Mortimer is a specialist wizard, relying primarily on spells from the school of illusion.

Elmerth Willowit, male half elven thief, 5th level (Mortimer's assistant): STR 17, INT 7, WIS 6, DEX 18, CON 18, CHR 10; MV 12; hp 30; AC 3, AC rear 7;

#AT 1; D dagger; S M; THAC0 18

Magic Items: Bracers of Defense AC 7, Dagger +2, Dust of Disappearance (2 uses)

Thief Abilities:

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Elmerth is Mortimer's assistant and considers the wizard his most trusted friend. Elmerth willingly participates in any scam Mortimer develops. In his current role, Elmerth is portraying an employee of Lord Merriwether.

Encounter #2—Coffering It Up

The walk to the peak will be uneventful. However, allow the player characters to take any precautions or discuss strategies for transporting the coffers. Neither will the PCs have any encounters on the return trip to the docks, unless they initiate them. This is explained in the **On The Street** section.

The city streets are beginning to come to life as you walk toward the peak. Bakeries are throwing their doors open for business, the scents of their fresh goods waft through the air, teasing your appetites. Dockhands pull carts loaded with imported merchandise to shops where workers are preparing to greet a new day's customers. In the background you hear the playful cries of children intermingled with yips of dogs and the scolding tones of impatient mothers. A city watchman tips his hat to you as you proceed up the street. You can see a few other watch members patrolling the neighborhood. Looking down side streets you see merchants boxing trash behind their shops and children playing catch against stucco walls.

Beneath your feet the cobblestones change from deep red to burnt orange as the sun peeks over the rooftops. In the sky ahead of you rises the peak where aerial mounts land. Something is landing there now, perhaps the griffon.

It's a long, tiring climb up the steps to the landing area, but the cool morning breeze helps keep you from breaking into a sweat. Large, dark birds, probably ravens, fly high above the summit. Ahead is the landing area. A griffon and rider await you. A large bag rests at the rider's feet.

The rider is dressed in a long forest green robe decorated with white embroidery. He wears a tall off-white turban with a silver and onyx brooch pinned to the front. Like Lord Merriwether, this man has a mustache, but his is long and waxed, extending in points a few inches on both sides of his face. His small brown eyes regard you coolly.

The rider, who is going by the name Sir Warden Jameson of the Crusade Society, does not initiate a conversation with the PCs; they must address him. He knows Mortimer/Merriwether was going to send a representative or two to pick up the cylinders. However, he was not expecting this many people. When the PCs begin talking to him he attempts to make certain they are indeed representatives of his partner. He asks them who hired them, what their employer looked like (even though he has no idea what Mortimer's current appearance is), and he asks to see the PCs' key. When he is satisfied, he gives the PCs the large sack at his feet and leaves. If they question him about the contents of the cylinders inside the sack, he becomes snobbish and tells them, "It is up to Lord Merriwether if he wishes the contents made public knowledge to rogues." If for any reason the PCs attack or threaten Jameson, he uses his *ring of invisibility* to cover his escape via the griffon; the cylinders are left behind.

Jameson, if he was not forced to escape, tells the PCs to be careful transporting the cylinders through town, as they are quite valuable, and thieves would be happy to relieve the PCs of them. He cautions the PCs not to mention Lord Merriwether, as there are bad factions within the city which seek to settle a score with the man. He will not elaborate.

The glossy black ceramic cylinders are each about 12 inches tall and weigh about eight pounds. They are sealed at one end with brass caps. The coffers are nearly identical, differing only slightly because each was handmade. Also, they are numbered, one through six, in plain white paint.

Only one of the cylinders contains treasure; it is filled with the priceless emerald collection of a wealthy lord who lives near Shadowdale. The emeralds are wrapped in leather and packed in sand. The remainder of the cylinders contain plain rocks and sand; each cylinder weighs the same. All of the cylin-

ders have had *glassteel* cast on them. The brass caps have mechanical locks. The locks have twin studs which must be depressed simultaneously to open them, and the caps have been sealed with wax on the inside and have been *wizard locked*. Furthermore, each cylinder has several *magic mouth* spells cast on it. If anyone begins casting a *knock* spell within 60 yards of a cylinder, or tries to break into a cylinder, that cylinder will begin screaming for help, sounding very much like a terrified young woman: "Help! Help! Help! No! Don't touch me! Noooo! Not that! Help! Oh please anybody! Hel. . ." The last word is cut off and accompanied by a strangled gasp. This performance will draw the attention of passersby even in Crow's End. The only way to open the cylinders, short of breaking them open, is to heat them until the wax melts, then cast a *knock* spell to temporarily negate the *wizard lock*, and then open the locked cap. Note that a single *knock* spell preforms only two functions. If the PCs cast a single knock spell on a cylinder they temporally negate the *wizard lock* (for one turn), and depress the studs (which spring back after one round), but nothing else happens. There is no visible indication that the *wizard lock* is present or has been negated. Note also that if a PC tries to open a cylinder after it has been *knocked*, but before the wax has been melted, he is breaking into the cylinder and will trigger another *magic mouth*.

Stealing the Cylinders: Mortimer, being a con man himself, has left nothing to chance. As soon as the PCs left the ship, he had another associate go to the city watch headquarters to report the cylinders stolen. If the watch catches the PCs with the cylinders, or if the PCs try to sell them (or have them examined or identified), they will be arrested for theft, and the cylinders will be confiscated. If this happens, Mortimer's agent claims the cylinders and offers to drop all charges against the PCs in return for the cylinders' immediate return. Since the Living City courts tend to be over-worked, this offer is accepted, but the PCs still will be in hot water.

Sir Warden Jameson, male human, 5th level fighter: AC 4 (chain and Dex); MV 9"; hp 56; #AT 1; D 1-8 +2 (Str bonus); AL CN; S M; THAC0 16

Griffon: AC 3; MV 12/30; HD 7; hp 42; #AT 3; D 1-4/1-4/2-16; AL N; S L; THAC0 13

Encounter #3—On The Street/ At The Docks

The following events are normal occurrences, which the PCs might mistake for potential trouble. If the PCs do not act on any of these situations, they will reach the docks quickly and without incident.

1. A drunken dock worker has just stumbled out of a tavern where he has spent most of his money and most of the night. In his present state he mistakes one of the PCs for a long-lost friend. He is accompanied by a fellow dock worker who also has had quite a bit to drink, but is not as many sheets to the wind.

"Hey! Heyyyyyy Phil!" The loud eruption is directed at your group. A man staggering out of a doorway shuffles toward you, bellowing and waving his arms. Another man in dark clothes follows. "Hey, Phil. Whatcha doin here, Phil? Howya doin pal? Ain't seen you for some time. Humphree, see I told you it was Phil. Hey, Phil!"

The drunk cannot be dissuaded through any rational attempt at conversation. He honestly believes one of the PCs is his friend, Phil. His companion has never met Phil, so he cannot vouch for the drunk or the PCs. The PCs can avoid too much of a scene if they: dispatch the drunk and his friend quickly in an alley, use spells such as *sleep* or *command*, or walk quickly away (the inebriated gentlemen can't keep up).

Drunken Dock Worker: AC 10; MV 6" (because of his drunkenness); HD 1 (0 level); hp 5; #AT nil; AL CG; S M; THAC0 20

Dock Worker's Friend: AC 9; MV 9" (because of his half drunkenness); HD 1 (0 level); hp 6; #AT 1; D 1-4 (dagger); AL CG; S M; THAC0 20

2. An ox-drawn cart overturns in the middle of the street, scattering heads of cabbage everywhere and slowing pedestrian traffic. The accident draws quite a crowd, including a few peasants who are trying to make off with some of the cabbages. At the same time, three young rough-looking men come up behind the PCs. The young men are on their way to the docks to look for work, urged on by parents who are tired of supporting them. They are ill-

tempered and pushy, but they aren't looking for a fight.

Rough-Looking Men: AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (0 level); hp 5 each; #AT 1; D 1-4 (knives); AL CG; S M; THAC0 20

3. A young man who dreams of being an adventurer has started following the PCs. He is scrutinizing their manner and their speech, as he is certain from their appearance they are adventurers. If the PCs turn to watch him or start to move back toward him, he pretends to study something in a store window. If a PC tries to talk to him or gets too close, he tries to run away.

Curious Young Man: AC 8; MV 12; HD 1 (0 level); hp 4; #AT 1; D 1-2 (fist); AL NG; S M; THAC0 20

When the PCs reach the docks, no matter how long they took traveling to or from the peak, the Golden Goddess will be preparing to leave port. The PCs cannot find Lord Merriwether or his associate, but they can speak with the captain. The captain instructs the PCs that Lord Merriwether is not on the ship, nor will he be riding on the ship to Ilipur. However, the captain will insist on taking the lord's cylinders, and if the PCs can produce their key, he will hand over the chest of gold. The captain was paid handsomely not to let the PCs ride on his ship, and he will not take kindly to the PCs' bothering him. He is the captain and demands respect. The captain has the chest carried to the dock and orders the crew to leave port.

If for some reason the PCs refuse to give up the cylinders, the captain threatens to call the city watch, as the cylinders belong to Lord Merriwether, and he knows the PCs were hired to bring them to the ship. If the PCs still refuse, enough city watch members appear to confiscate the cylinders, the chest, and the PCs. If this happens, proceed to Encounter #5.

Mortimer/Merriwether is invisibly watching the ship leave. After it is far out in the harbor, he casts a *fly* spell and flies out to meet it. There, he picks up the cylinder filled with emeralds and begins his journey to Procampur to sell the gems. If the PCs refused to hand over the coffers, and everything is confiscated by the city watch, Mortimer sends an agent to watch headquarters to recover the "stolen" cylinders. (See Stealing the Cylinders in Encounter #2). In any event, the PCs will not

encounter Mortimer again in this adventure.

If the PCs accept the chest as their payment, they must decide whether to open it on the docks, where sailors and dock workers are watching, or in another location, such as their room at the Stardust Inn.

The box, although it appears valuable and well-made, is shoddy and weak. However, the PCs will not notice this unless someone specifically states they are inspecting the workmanship of the box. Checking it for locks and traps will not suffice. If the PCs do not carry the box carefully or put it inside something else, such as a large sack, they will not have a choice where to open it; the box simply will fall apart, and the PCs will have to deal with scooping up the coins and keeping nosy sailors, dock workers, and begging urchins away. There is a total of 3,000 counterfeit gold coins in the box. To the PCs' untrained eyes, these will appear to be regular Ravens Bluff currency.

Encounter #4—All That Glitters Might Be Counterfeit

In this encounter the PCs are going to learn their payment is counterfeit. There are several ways this revelation can come crashing down upon them.

Spending The Gold: If the PCs stop along the way to buy something from a peddler, purchase something to eat, or stop to get equipment, the merchant, a burly sort with a loud voice, plays with the coin. The merchant does this as a force of habit, not because he has been plagued by counterfeit coins. The man simply picks up the money, casually twirls the coin between his fingers, and becomes immediately irate when he notices the lead core visible at the edge.

"What is this? What IS this? This is junk! This isn't real gold! There's lead inside this coin." He gives the coin a furious twist and tears the coin in half. "What are you trying to pass off? Guards! Guards!"

Before you can recover from your surprise, several uniformed fighters move up and level swords at you. They bark at you to surrender.

Paying The Inn Bill: If the PCs spend some of the gold at the Stardust Inn to take care of their bill, they will not be caught as quickly. The worker at the desk will take their money, and the PCs will get to start up the stairs to their

rooms or head toward the door to the outside. A treasury representative who has been stationed at the Stardust Inn because counterfeit coins turned up in the gambling area will inspect the PCs' coinage as soon as they walk away from the desk. He will motion to a group of plainclothes guards and have the PCs apprehended.

Doing Nothing: If the player characters take the money upstairs to their room or go elsewhere and do not spend it, eventually the tax collector's men will come and apprehend them. The men have been following leads on the counterfeit coins and have traced some of the coins to the docks (where Mortimer paid out some money in his ruse as Lord Merriwether). They learned from dock hands the PCs received a large chest reputedly filled with gold from a wealthy ship's passenger, and they want to inspect the chest.

In any case, there will be too many men of too high of level for the PCs to argue with. The gold will be inspected, found to be phony, and the PCs will be taken into custody.

City Watch: The city watch is primarily comprised of 1st through 4th level fighters. The watch also employs mages and a few clerics. Members of the watch usually are posted in pairs throughout the city. Each member has a tin whistle with a distinct sound. When the whistle is blown, 4-16 additional watch members arrive in 1d4 rounds.

Depending on the circumstances, more members of the watch can be found together, such as a unit of 10 or 12, especially if watch members are investigating potentially dangerous situations.

The DM should select his watch members from the following, taking into account the strength of the PCs and the force needed to steer them to The Vulture, and further into the adventure. The easiest way to get the party to The Vulture is to have a mage, accompanied by a 4th level fighter for protection, arrive and hit them with a *sleep* spell.

Typical first level fighter: AC 4 (chain and shield); MV 9; HD 1; hp 10; #AT 1; D 1-8; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 20

Typical second level fighter: AC 4 (chain and shield); MV 9; HD 2; hp 20; #AT 1; D 1-8; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 19

Typical third level fighter: AC 3 (chain and shield, one of which is +1); MV 9; HD 3; hp 28; #AT 1; D 1-8; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 18

Typical fourth level fighter: AC 3 (chain and shield, one of which is +1); MV 9; HD 4; hp 35; #AT 1; D 1-8 +2 (Str bonus and/or magic weapon); AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 16 (adjusted for Str or magic weapon)

Typical first level mage: AC 7 (bracers and/or Dex); MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 #AT 1; D 1-4; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 20; Spells—*sleep*

Typical second level mage: AC 5 (bracers and Dex); MV 12; HD 2; hp 8; #AT 1; D 1-4; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 20; Items—*potion of flying, potion of healing*; Spells—*Charm Person, Sleep*

Typical third level mage: AC 4 (bracers and Dex); MV 12; HD 3; hp 12; #AT 1; D 1-4; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 20; Items—*potion of flying, potion of healing, boots of elvenkind*; Spells—*Charm Person, Sleep, Web*

Typical fourth level mage: AC 4 (bracers and Dex); MV 12; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 1; D 1-4; AL varies, but good; S M; THAC0 20; Items—*wand of magic missiles, potion of flying, potion of healing, boots of elvenkind*; Spells—*Charm Person, Sleep, ESP, Web*

Encounter #5—The Vulture Strikes

If the PCs were arrested for not turning over Lord Merriwether's coffers, they eventually will be brought before The Vulture and asked to perform a task in exchange for their freedom.

They will be asked to perform this same task if they were caught by any of the methods in Encounter #4 for passing off or being in the possession of counterfeit coins.

The Vulture is in charge of Ravens Bluff's tax collection department. The three dozen tax collection agents and treasury marshals under him enforce The Vulture's policies and the city's tax laws. The agents and marshals hunt down tax evaders; investigate fraud, including counterfeiting; and assess property and records for tax purposes.

The Vulture, whose real name is Vernon Condor, is a stoop-shouldered bald-headed man with a long, crooked nose. His black beady eyes, small ears,

and deep, gravelly voice make him seem almost malevolent. His skin is smooth, so it is difficult to guess his age. Vernon has come to accept his nickname, The Vulture, in part because he believes the moniker helps to strike fear in the public's heart. And like the carrion bird which is fast upon the injured and dying, The Vulture is quick to swoop down on those who break the tax laws. He has spells and magic items at his disposal which help him ascertain the truth about possible offenders.

You are taken into one of Ravens Bluff's several government buildings, herded like animals by your fast-walking guards. They lead you to a large door, which bears a sign reading: "Vernon Condor, regent of the exchequer." You've heard of him. The man is called The Vulture, the head of Ravens Bluff's tax collection department. You know you are in trouble to be brought before this man instead of one of his lackeys.

A guard pushes open the door, revealing a large room rimmed with shelves. The shelves are filled with books, scrolls, and reams of loose parchment. At the back of the room, in the center, looms a massive, dark desk. The Vulture sits behind it, looking very small as he bends over a mound of papers. Without straightening, he crooks his head up to look at you. As his small, black eyes bore into you, it is easy to see how The Vulture got his name. His bald head softly shines in the light from the oil lamp on his desk, and his long, crooked nose resembles a sharp beak. His voice rattles like dry gravel in a tin bucket when he speaks to you.

"Counterfeit coins," he says.

"You were found in the possession of counterfeit coins—a small horde of them. That is a crime in Ravens Bluff, and it carries a hefty penalty. Others who have cheated the city and its merchants in this fashion are in the quarries. I hope you like quarries." The Vulture glances at the papers in front of him, he shifts on his perch, and settles down again. "We have approximately 158 and a half tons of granite and 457 and a third tons of marble in the quarries. The people who work there are adept at making big rocks into small rocks. I am certain you could quickly learn that skill, too. And you'll have sev-

eral years to perfect your rock smashing techniques. And if you should think yourself ill-used during those years, you'll be able to comfort yourself with the knowledge that the person or persons who made those coins involuntarily fed the ravens—if he, she, or them got caught."

He shuffles the papers, makes a note on one of the sheets, and his eyes bore into you again. "Or," he says, "we could talk. About the coins. There are sometimes alternatives to the quarries."

The Vulture questions the PCs about how they came into possession of so many counterfeit coins. The PCs are expected to be respectful and to give complete, straightforward answers. Because of The Vulture's *ring of truth*, he can tell if the PCs are lying. If the PCs were not in possession of the coins, but were holding onto "Lord Merriwether's" cylinders, he will give them a speech similar to the one above, dwelling gleefully on the quarries. In either event, the PCs will be assigned the task of ferreting out the counterfeiters.

The PCs will not be able to escape from the room, nor can they get at The Vulture or any objects in the room because they are completely surrounded by a spherical *wall of force*. Any time a PC makes an attempt to leave or accost The Vulture, The Vulture mentions something about the quarries. A PC foolish enough to lunge for the door or for The Vulture brains himself on the *wall of force*.

If the PCs explain about Lord Merriwether, the coffers, and the ship, The Vulture agrees to check into the matter, speculating that Lord Merriwether could be a fraud. The Vulture believes he is familiar with all the nobles in the city. The Vulture asks for a careful description of Merriwether. Compare the PCs' answer with the description given them at the docks. If the PCs recite it correctly, the usually unperturbable Vulture looks profoundly surprised, muses for a moment, and finally announces: "Merriwether probably was a charlatan in disguise." If the PCs botch the description, The Vulture merely shrugs and promises to look into the matter.

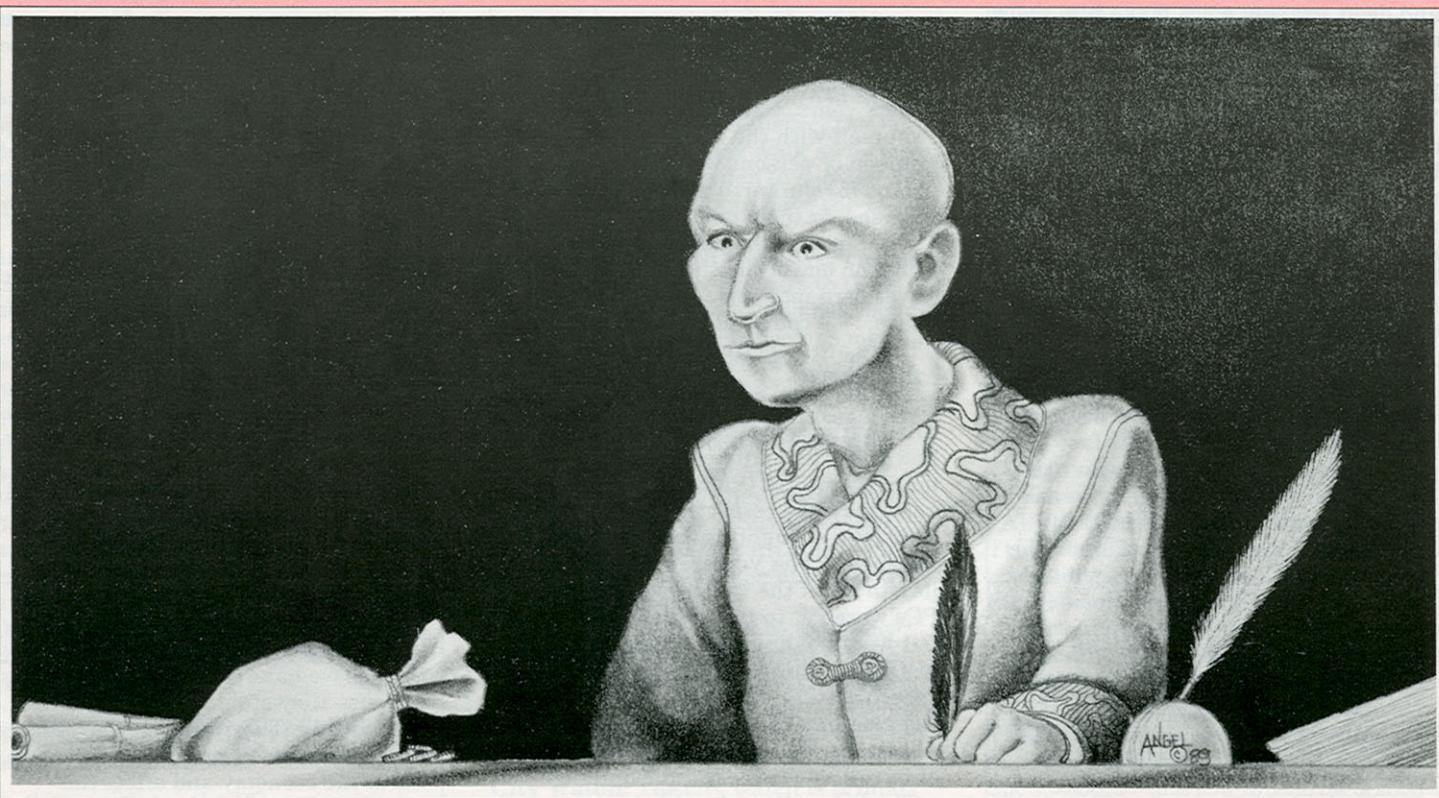
"So it's to the streets then instead of the quarries. A good choice. The quarries make men and women age

quickly." The Vulture rises from his chair, his shoulders still stooped. "I want you to help us find the root of the counterfeit operation. I fear the counterfeiters know what my agents look like. You need to just be yourselves."

If the PCs suggest that the counterfeiters probably know what they look like, The Vulture disagrees. "I suspect you have been duped by a flunky or an associate, the real counterfeiters are still well hidden I'm sure."

"I believe the operation is centered along the Fire River, in a small commercial district. We have traced a couple of the counterfeit coins to that neighborhood, although we have not yet been able to determine how the coins are getting into circulation. We know the thieves guilds are not behind the operation. Some of the thieves we have contact with are furious—they stole the stuff thinking it good gold. They are also worried, as the counterfeit operation could harm the economy and affect the guilds' business. It would please me to upset the criminal guilds, but not at the expense of the entire mercantile system. Counterfeit coins are a plague to the city's economy. And the counterfeit operation is a disease that must be wiped out immediately. The coins you had in your possession were made of lead and coated with a special brass that has the appearance of gold. There is a dwarven smith who deals in brass. That might be the place to start. Here are directions to get there. Since the dwarf probably isn't the counterfeiter, one of his customers might be.

"Consider yourselves temporary agents of my office. If you feel the need to report on your progress, leave a message at your inn. Perhaps I will be able to report on our progress of checking into this Lord Merriwether. It is important that you exercise care in your investigation and do not broadcast your association with my office. Such an announcement will make the counterfeit trail turn to ice. Also, I do not condone undue violence. If you get into unnecessary fights you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. You won't help yourselves at all if you destroy, maim, or kill during this



investigation. Of course, I realize you might have to defend yourselves, and if a fight is forced on you I can help you avoid embarrassing questions. Needless to say, you do not have the authority to make arrests. Just get the information.

"In addition to keeping you out of the quarries, my office will see that you get any rewards due you if you crack this case. You had best get started now."

The Vulture can show the PCs how to identify the counterfeit coins, indicating a thin line of lead that is visible around the coins' edges. Breaking open the coins, which are softer than the Ravens Bluff Mint coins, also will reveal the lead.

If the PCs want more information about the coins, The Vulture tells them they were noticed in circulation about four weeks ago, which means they probably have been around longer than that. However, it took that long before merchants noticed the coins were phony and before some of the coins trickled into the tax offices. The Vulture is not impressed with the workmanship on the coins. But he believes few of the mer-

chants look at their coins with a magnifying glass to spot the flaws (not to mention just looking at the edges, where the lead clearly is visible). He does not want to waste much time with the PCs, as he is very busy with the counterfeit investigation and other problems.

If, after visiting at least one business, the PCs return to Volodar's Stardust Inn to drop off a report about anything they learned in the neighborhood, the PCs find a report from The Vulture saying that Lord Merriwether definitely is not a real lord. The man was masquerading as a lord to get the PCs to do his bidding. The Golden Goddess is not owned by any lord; it is owned by its captain.

Use statistics for 4th level city watch members from Encounter #4 for The Vulture's marshals, 3rd level statistics for the agents.

The Vulture, Vernon Condor, male human, 4th level fighter, 12th level mage: STR 16, INT 18, WIS 17, DEX 12, CON 12, CHR 10; MV 12; hp 49; AC 0; AL LG; S M; THAC0 17

Magic Items: Bracers of defense AC 0, ring of truth, ring of warmth, wings of flying, amulet of proof against detection

and location, boots of elvenkind, eyes of the eagle, long sword +2 (detects precious metals, minerals, and gems in a 30-foot radius)

Spells Carried: Change Self, Charm Person, Detect Magic, Message, Detect Evil, Knock, Web, Stinking Cloud, Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Hold Person, Slow, Detect Scrying, Dimension Door, Polymorph Self, Wizard Eye, Bigby's Interposing Hand, Feeblemind, Telekinesis, Wall of Force, Anti-Magic Shell

Vernon Condor, who is known to the public as The Vulture, was born to a wealthy Ravens Bluff family who made sure he received the best education possible. Condor loved schooling and immersed himself in law books and history books. Condor planned on becoming a lawyer or politician. However, a group of close friends encouraged him to see the world first. He adventured with his small group of friends for six years, becoming a skilled fighter and then switching his studies to magic. When his parents died he returned to Ravens Bluff to inherit his estate. He settled down and began to study again, specializing this time in economics, while he kept increasing his magical knowledge. As he observed and studied

the Living City's economy, he became impressed with the positive effects brought by Mayor O'Kane's efficient and uncorrupt leadership. He began to form his own economic theories, and began to advocate a strong, mercantilistic government with a steady income from an equitable tax system. Such a government, he reasons, is the only entity capable of maintaining all the city interests simultaneously. He also reasons that unfairness and corruption channels money away from vital projects and undermines confidence in the system.

By the time he was 35 local politicians began seeking his advice on tax matters. Two years later he was appointed the city tax collector—a position he has held for 10 years.

Vernon is happier now than he ever was before. He is surrounded by the things he loves most: money, laws, and power. Vernon is a just official, greatly respected by the other city officials, admired by many in town, and feared and shunned by those who oppose taxes or who try to avoid paying them. The Vulture's policies are fair, with people taxed based on their incomes and personal wealth. The destitute and unemployed are not taxed, unless the unemployed are well off and have personal wealth and land. The Vulture strictly enforces his policies, and ruthlessly brings to justice all tax evaders, counterfeiters, and embezzlers he can find. He is in charge of a group of men and women who patrol Ravens Bluff in search of offenders and investigate counterfeiting, fraud, and tax evasion.

Encounter #6—It's A Dutiful Day In The Neighborhood

The *Cities of Mystery* building fold-ups can be used for this portion of the scenario. Select buildings to represent each business detailed in the neighborhood. Additional buildings can be set up to give the area the appearance of a neighborhood and so the PCs are not clued to the fact that only certain buildings should be visited.

The neighborhood the PCs are directed to is a small commercial district near the Fire River. There are several businesses in this neighborhood, including a few taverns, inns, a stable, and a dry goods store. However, these businesses are not detailed for this adventure. They are dead ends for the PCs. The following buildings provide encounters and leads for the PCs.

Brasshand's Foundry, a dwarven smith runs this business, which is the source of all brass in this neighborhood.

Bold As Brass, a statuary shop. It purchases its materials from the dwarven smith.

Dressed To The Nines, a jewelry and accessory shop. The proprietor pays the owner of Bold As Brass to make small, custom brass items, which Dressed To The Nines in turn sells.

Ember Me More, a shop that sells only accoutrements for fireplaces. As a side business the proprietor and his brother build fireplaces. The shop gets its brass items from the gnomes who work for the smith.

Lamps By Watt, a lighting shop. It orders its brass merchandise from the gnomes who work for the smith.

The final encounter takes place in one of the warehouse districts, far removed from the site of the PCs' investigations:

The Overinn, an establishment that masquerades as an inn. Verity Overinn, the owner, also purchases her brass from the gnomes.

Brasshand's Foundry

This 20-year-old establishment takes up nearly a third of a city block. The foundry is a large stone and wood structure with a water wheel. The front of the building has a set of big double doors, and there are barred windows all around. The building sits on the edge of a barren yard that is filled with piles of coal, scrap metal, and rocks. Four well-groomed dogs with studded brass collars lay chained in the yard, and watch each passerby's every move. The complex is ringed by a 12-foot-high, barbed fence. The front gate is open during business hours. When the foundry is closed the dogs are unchained.

The proprietor is Althjof Lah Brasshand, a 114-year-old dwarf who lives in the upper floor of the building. He is the only smith in this section of Ravens Bluff who deals in brass. In fact, he has developed a special type of brass which shines like gold. Brasshand is a black-bearded, swarthy complected 7th level fighter who talks in loud, staccato sentences. He is used to talking loud because of the noise in the foundry. He talks even louder to those taller than himself; it makes him feel more important. He speaks softer to the half-dozen gnomes in his employ.

Brasshand's brass business is a front. The dwarf's primary business is trafficking in gold. He processes gold ore for

customers, usually dwarfish and gnomish prospectors, who do not want to register their finds, and he melts down gold items into ingots and bars. He prospects for gold occasionally himself, and buys ore. He turns his ore into ingots and sells it to jewelers. Even those watching the foundry cannot tell that gold is going in and out. The dwarf is very careful and secretive about his real business. Brasshand's personal wealth is stored in a secret compartment in his living room upstairs. The compartment contains 24,000 gp worth of gold ingots, 15,000 worth of small gems, a *short sword* +2 that detects minerals and gems in a 20' radius when the command word "find" is spoken, and 300 gp worth of gold, silver, and copper pieces. In a hidden compartment in the desk in his office Brasshand keeps the foundry's wealth: 450 gp, 210 sp, and 40 cp.

Brasshand supplies brass to Bold As Brass, a statuary shop, and to his gnome employees who operate their own brass molding and smithing business on the foundry grounds. He gets a 20% share of their income in exchange for their business space rental.

When the PCs visit the foundry, they will find Althjof Brasshand arguing with his gnome employees. He claims they spend too much time on their own piece work than on the foundry work he is paying them for. When the PCs get his attention he becomes very business-like and begins to talk louder—if the PCs are taller than he is.

Coal smoke fills the air inside the foundry building. Etchings of dwarves, framed in brass, line the walls in the office. In the large room beyond you can make out several furnaces and bellows. A few gnomes are at work near the furnaces. Behind the low counter in the office a dwarf is arguing with a couple of gnomes. "Back to business, mind you. You're on my time now. You're working for me. Quit spending so much of my time on your own piece work. Keep it up and I'll kick you and your molding business out the door. You can be replaced." When the dwarf notices you, he stops yelling, dismisses the pair of gnomes with a wave, and looks up at you. The gnomes move to a small desk to the side of the office and begin poring over a stack of papers.

The dwarf raises his voice even louder when he addresses you. "Yes? Can I help you?"

The dwarf wants to sell the PCs some brass. He knows if they were looking for gold they would have approached him differently and began the conversation by placing a lump of ore on the counter. He insults them in his efforts to hawk his brass. "Is that a rivet?" he asks, pointing to a PC's armor. "What happened to your equipment, someone pelted it with a rock?" "I can fix that for a small fee." "Where did you buy THAT?"

If the PCs ask Brasshand where he sells his brass, he immediately becomes suspicious, believing they are checking out his clients in an effort to steal them away. When the PCs leave his shop, Brasshand directs three of his gnomes to follow the PCs. See "Gnome Assault." Brasshand will give the PCs very little satisfaction or information, unless they say they want to talk to one of his customers to see if the customer is satisfied with Brasshand's brass. In this case, he will refer them to Bold As Brass, a statuary shop.

If the PCs mention counterfeit gold, Brasshand becomes irate, thinking they are accusing him of selling shoddy or counterfeit goods or of trafficking in counterfeit coins. Brasshand has heard rumors of a counterfeit operation in the city, and has even received a few bad coins, but he does not know anything about the operation. Furthermore, Brasshand has not made the connection between his special gold-looking brass and the brass on the counterfeit coins. He wants the PCs out of his business quickly if they persist in their counterfeit questions.

If the PCs attack Brasshand, he and his employees will return the assault. They will try not to kill the PCs, as Brasshand does not want any guards to examine his business too closely. However, if Brasshand and the gnomes can subdue the PCs, they will turn the PCs over to city watch members, who eventually turn the PCs over to The Vulture again.

The PCs will have the best luck if they talk to the gnome employees. The gnomes' lips are a little looser, especially if the PCs make an order for molded brass items. Two of the gnomes will take time to deal with the PCs, talking quickly and softly because they do not want Brasshand to find out they are promoting their own business on

Brasshand's time. The other four gnomes are hard at work in the foundry; three of these gnomes will be involved in the "Gnome Assault."

If the PCs ask the right questions and treat the gnomes well, they can learn that:

* The gnomes have worked for Brasshand for about the past five years. Two years ago they opened their own business within the foundry—Gnomoldings Limited. Their client list is small, but the business is steady enough to provide a good income.

* They purchase brass from Brasshand and mold or hammer it to their clients' specifications. They are especially pleased with the recent brass that Brasshand developed; it looks like gold and they can charge more for it.

*The gnomes make fireplace accoutrements, such as pokers and tongs, for Ember Me More, a fireplace store. They usually put out a large order for the store every other week.

*The gnomes' biggest customer is Lamps By Watt, a lighting shop. They make candleholders, lanterns, and oil lamps for the place.

*The gnomes know other stores deal with brass, such as Bold As Brass, a statuary shop. They aren't real pleased with the shop, as they know Bold As Brass sells some brass items to Dressed To The Nines. Eventually the gnomes hope to add The Nines to their list of customers.

Altjhof Lah Brasshand, male dwarf, 7th level fighter: STR 18/70, INT 13, WIS 12, DEX 17, CON 18, CHR 12; hp 65 AC 4, AC Rear 7; AL CN: S M; THAC0 14

Magic Items: Long sword +2, bracers of defense AC 7, ring of fire resistance, wand of metal and mineral detection (53 charges)

Altjhof has operated this foundry for many years, and is considered a fixture in the neighborhood. He enjoys dealing with dwarves, gnomes, and halflings, but he is always cautious to make sure they do not reveal the true nature of his business—dealing in gold. And he is always watchful to make certain no one steals his customers.

Altjhof trusts few people, and is not completely trusting of his gnome em-

ployees. Still, he decided he could not operate the foundry alone, and the gnomes were acceptable because they did not seem as greedy as himself.

Altjhof tends not to initiate fights, as he doesn't want to get in trouble with the Ravens Bluff law. He fears such legal involvement could expose his true business.

Geehaw, gnome specialist mage: AC 7 (ring and Dex); MV 12; HD 3 (MU 3); hp 10; #AT 1; D 1-4; SA spells; AL CG; S S; THAC0 20

Spells Carried: *Phantasmal Force* (x3) *Improved Phantasmal Force, Invisibility*

Magic Items: *Potion of healing, potion of flying, ring of protection +1*

Metkrieg, gnome fighter: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 4 (F 4); hp 31; #AT 1; D 1-6 +1; AL N; S S; THAC0 16

Magic Items: *Short sword +1, potion of invisibility*

Blaburd, gnome fighter: AC 7 (leather and shield); MV 12; HD 3 (F 3); hp 29; #AT 1; D 1-6 +2 (Str and magic weapon); AL N; S S; THAC0 16 (adjusted)

Magic Items: *Spear +1*

Yezedred Gerlop, gnome specialist mage: AC 9; MV 12; HD 2 (MU 2); hp 8; #AT 1; D 1-6 (staff); AL CN; S S; THAC0 20

Spells Carried: *Change Self, Phantasmal Force, Ventiloquism*

Nardo, gnome fighter: AC 5 (chain); MV 9; HD 3 (F 3); hp 25; #AT 1; D 1-8 +1 (Str bonus); AL CN; S S; THAC0 17 (adjusted)

Magic Items: *Potion of healing, potion of extra-healing*

George, gnome fighter: AC 5; (chain); MV 9; HD 3 (F3); hp 22; #AT 1; D 1-8; AL N; S S; THAC0 17 (adjusted)

Bold As Brass

The business is housed in the lower level of a three-story building. The second story is occupied by the businesses' proprietors; the third story is rented to a couple of barge captains who stay in Ravens Bluff between runs. The captains are working on the river, and the PCs will not be able to talk to them during this adventure.

The proprietor is Irma Schotzknee, a bold, brassy human female with a big heart and an eye for a quick sale. If the

PCs enter her shop, she will do her best to sell them something.

Bold as Brass specializes in brass statues. Irma casts the statues herself, and is especially fond of animal statues. There are a dozen different brass monkeys; a brass swordfish that serves as a letter opener; a brass porcupine with removable quills that can be used as toothpicks; a brass turtle that can double for an ashtray when the shell is flipped up; and a large collection of brass walking cane heads. Most of her wares are simply ornamental statues ranging in size from six inches to three feet tall. The prices range from a few gold pieces to several hundred gold pieces. Irma also custom makes statues, although these cost more. She is adept at working gems into statue's eyes, but the customer must supply the gems.

Irma is friendly and talks to the PCs as long as she believes she can get a sale out of them. If they buy something or place an order for a custom-made statue (they aren't required to put any money down if Irma likes them), they can learn the following information:

*Irma has been trying her hand at making very small brass objects, and she is becoming quite good at it. She has been making small brass buttons, out of a brass that shines like gold, for Dressed To The Nines. These buttons have raised designs on them, and she is quite proud of her work. She says when she gets more confidence in working on small objects she will branch out into making brass jewelry.

*Irma believes brass is the most precious metal in the world. It shines warmly, is strong enough to be made into many objects, and it feels smooth and pleasing to the touch. She considers it "every-man's mineral" because it is priced low enough to be bought by commoners, yet it can be worked into large ornamental statues that appeal to the rich.

*Irma has heard rumblings about a counterfeit operation, but doesn't know anything about it. However, she knows several merchants in Ravens Bluff are scrutinizing the gold coins they take in. Irma is confident she won't be duped by the fake coins because she knows metals so well. Irma also has heard The Vulture is really hot to capture the counterfeiters.

If the PCs were not cordial to Irma, did not profess any interest in her



wares, or implied that she had something to do with the counterfeit ring, she becomes belligerent and bolder and demands they leave. If the PCs attack Irma, they will defeat her easily. But the city watch and The Vulture's men will be quick on their heels. Irma is well-liked in the area and runs a strictly legal operation.

Irma Schotzknee: AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (0 level); hp 4; #AT 1; D 1-6 (whatever brass statue is handy); AL NG; S M; THAC0 20

Magic Item: *Rag of polishing.* A wealthy brass fancier gave Irma this special magic item. When it is touched to a metal item no larger than a man and the command word—shine—spoken, the item becomes clean and shines like it was new. The rag can be used six times a day.

Ember Me More

The large, two-story building, houses Ember Me More on the first floor and the building proprietors on the second. The shop sells fireplace accoutrements made of iron, brass, and bronze. The wealthier customers purchase the brass and bronze items because the items appear more valuable. However, their

largest trade is in iron pokers, tongs, screens, and gratings. Other items for sale include small brooms, dust pans, bellows, tinder, flint and steel, and specially-treated logs which burn twice as long as regular wood. As a side business, the brothers repair and build fireplaces.

The proprietors are Woodruff and Ashley Sweep, male human twins who inherited the business from their father. They take a great amount of pride in their work, and the business is spotless. The one-room store is rimmed with fireplaces, three of which are working fireplaces. Fireplace tools hang from the walls. The more ornate items are kept in glass cases in the center of the room. The room is warm, sometimes uncomfortably so in the summer, as there is always a fire going in one of the fireplaces.

The Sweeps are friendly and take time to talk to the PCs even if the PCs don't seem interested in buying anything. However, if the PCs appear to want to talk business, the Sweeps will be happy to discuss the virtues of having a fireplace and the differences between brass, bronze, and iron fireplace tools.

The Sweeps will admit they buy their brass tools from the gnomes who work for Althjof Brasshand. They are especially satisfied with the gnomes now because of the brass that shines like gold. The Sweeps know nothing about any counterfeit coins and appear deeply offended if the PCs accuse them of being linked to a counterfeit operation. The Sweeps, no matter what the accusations, are too polite to kick the PCs out of the shop. They let the PCs stay and accuse while they sink deeper and deeper into depression. If the PCs attack the Sweeps, the battle will be swift and perhaps disastrous, as the Sweeps have very few hit points. Violence here will bring down the city watch and results in the PCs being taken before The Vulture.

Woodruff and Ashley Sweep: AC 8 (Dex); MV 12; HD 1 (0 level); hp 6 each; #AT 1; D 1-6 (fireplace implement, such as a poker); AL NG; S M; THAC0 20

Magic items: Woodruff owns a pair of *slippers of spider climbing* which he keeps up in his room and uses when working on chimneys. Ashley has a *wand of fire lighting* (83 charges remaining). When pointed at a pile of wood, or other burnable objects, and the command words—alere flammam—are spoken, a fire starts. This can be directed at a character's equipment, which burns 1d3 rounds inflicting 2 points of damage per round. Magical equipment saves vs. magical fire to avoid.

Dressed To The Nines

A free standing, brightly painted wooden billboard showing a smartly dressed soldier standing at attention marks Dressed to the Nines, an exclusive men's clothing store and haberdashery. The entire building is spotless, and a man outside dressed in a uniform that looks exactly like the one depicted on the sign nods curtly and opens the door for you.

The doorman, Kevin Naols, will not speak with the PCs. He is allowed to exchange pleasantries with the customers, but not to speak with passersby.

The Nines caters to more affluent customers, but it sells a few brass items to those who cannot afford the better stuff. They also make uniforms to order for customers who have servants or troops to clothe. Most of the brass items are intended for use on uniforms.

The store is dark inside, but there are several backlit glass cases filled with jewelry and cufflinks, a wall full of shelves containing hats, a table with racks holding cloak pins, buttons, and brass items, and a well-lit area with a half-circle of full-length mirrors. A space behind the counter appears to hold clothing. Two doors near the mirrors probably lead to fitting rooms.

Among the brass items in stock are buttons, made for The Nines by Irma from Bold As Brass. The Nines shopkeeper, an old man named Jordan Whipt, will be snooty to the PCs because he can tell they don't have much gold to spend. If the PCs ask him or his employees about brass items, they receive a rude I-thought-as-much snort, and will be offhandedly directed toward the table.

Jordan and his two assistants, Jack and Robert, wear uniforms. The Nines is a trendy store, and uniforms never go out of style—it wouldn't do to have employees wearing outdated fashions, and it would be too expensive to dress them in the newest styles.

The Nines doesn't do much off-the-shelf business, except in hats and jewelry. Customers come in, ask for what they want, and have it made to order. Jordan keeps some nearly complete versions of the latest styles behind the counter. When a customer wants one of these, he is fitted with an incomplete garment, measured, and the garment is tailored to fit and ready by the next business day. The PCs will not get much attention while they are in the shop because Lord Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree the IV is in looking at cufflinks and jewelry. All the attention is going to him, and the PCs should recognize right away that he looks just like the man who hired them to get the numbered jars.

Four men hover near one of the cases. An older man in a uniform is kneeling behind the case and lifting out trays of gem-studded cufflinks. Two younger men in uniforms are busily attaching cufflinks to the fourth man's shirt. The man has curly blond hair, a faint, blond mustache, and clearly visible in the light from the case, deep brown eyes. It is Lord Merriwether Winston Sheffield-Trublood.

Lord Charles is a fop, but is good at making a show of bravado. If the PCs threaten him, or make it known that they have a grievance against him, he begins boasting.

"Now see here you ruffians, I don't know who you are, but I suggest you leave this place before I lose my temper and violate the peace of this city, something I always am loathe to do. If you hurry along quickly you might just escape the watch. I would detain you—you obviously should be arrested for something—but I'd prefer to meet you outside the walls where I can teach you manners without breaking the law and besmirching the honor of the Lord Speaker of the Advisory council. Don't let the door spank your bottoms on the way out."

Before the PCs have a chance to reply to Lord Charles, the shopkeeper breaks in:

"What?! You fools, don't you know who you're dealing with here? Get out of my shop, and out of town before you are arrested for assaulting a city official. On second thought, don't wait that long. You've just insulted Lord Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree the fourth, and if he forgets he's a gentleman you'll be chopped into pieces and left to bleed all over my floor, very bad for business."

Lord Charles gladly will trade threats with the PCs until the watch arrives in 1d6 + 1 rounds. If the PCs kill Lord Charles, they will be arrested, tried, and likely sent to prison for the rest of their lives. If they injure Lord Charles, they cool their heals in jail for a short time, then get bailed out. The Vulture gives them a severe tongue lashing, repeats his warning from their first meeting, and puts them back on the case.

Lord Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree IV: human fighter; STR 14, INT 10, WIS 8, DEX 15, CON 12, CHA 9; HD 2 (F 2); hp 17; AC 9; AL NG; THAC0 19

Magic Items: Dagger +1, dagger +2, gauntlets of climbing and swimming

Lord Charles is 21 years old. He weighs 160 pounds, and stands 5' 11"—a tall, gangly, young man.

Lord Charles is currently Lord Speaker of the Advisory Council, a body with plenty of prestige, but no real power. Most other members are elderly retired statesmen seeking comfortable sinecures. When Lord Charles deals with important matters, the Council ensures that a more experienced advisor is assigned as his assistant—the “assistant” handles the real work.

Lord Charles was elected Lord Speaker of the Advisory Council as a mark of respect for his late father, before the Council realized what a fool Charles is.

Lord Charles enjoys his position and wealth, and doesn't mind flaunting them. He is vain, lazy, foolish, and irresponsible, and believes that the other nobles are too stuffy.

Charles is a boisterous, but naive young man who has come into his inheritance prematurely. He is always bragging about his exploits as a hunter, womanizer, and well-connected politician. In fact, there is little to support his claims. If challenged on his exaggerations, he will at first become hostile, and then he will bluster and threaten the offender. If the challenger stands up to him, Charles backs down, finding some excuse to avoid unpleasantness, while trying to save face any way he can. Socially, he constantly hosts parties on his estate for his young friends, and has acquired a reputation as a playboy. The Advisory Council tolerates Charles out of respect for his father, but their patience is growing thin. Charles is on a head-on collision course with The System. Nevertheless, the city government won't tolerate any attacks on Charles by the PCs—city officials are to be respected.

Jordan, Jack, and Robert: AC 10; MV 12; HD 1 (F 0); hp 5 each; #AT 1; D 1-6 (club); AL NG; S M; THAC0 20

Lamps By Watt

This one-story building houses a store that specializes in torches, lamps, chandeliers, large light fixtures, and lanterns. The majority of the light sources will not be of interest to most adventurers, as they are too large to be comfortably carried. The light sources are primarily used to light buildings.

The newly-painted one-story building has a lemon yellow awning stretched from its roof to the edge of the side-

walk, shading passersby. The sign hanging from the awning reads: “Lamps By Watt,” and in smaller letters, “A.C. Watt, proprietor.”

The shop is one large room. A dozen chandeliers hang from the ceiling, each has a price tag dangling from it. One wall is taken up by large torches and sconces. Large lanterns dangle from another wall, and from another a variety of light sources hang. There are three glass cases evenly spaced in the center of the room. These are filled with wicks, oil, and other accessories. A young man busies himself arranging wicks on the top shelf. An older man, probably the proprietor, addresses you.

“Welcome to Lamps By Watt. What can I do to help you.”

Aaron Coleman Watt is a jovial, beaming man. He is active and dexterous, never standing completely still. Watt also is very friendly. His prices are fair, and the workmanship is excellent. The fixtures are primarily made of bronze, brass, pewter, and iron. All of the smaller brass items are exceptionally shiny and new. He is pleased with the moongold brass because it is very shiny and helps reflect the light emanating from the fixtures.

Watt is willing to spend a lot of time with the PCs—if they appear to be customers. Although he is a pleasant man, his first interest is his business. He does not care to spend time with people who have no interest in buying anything, unless the PCs mention they are trying to find a counterfeit ring.

Watt knows there are counterfeit coins in circulation. A stranger purchased one of his most costly chandeliers with the false coins. Watt also knows the false coins are made of brass, and he is suspicious that it is moongold brass. However, Watt is certain his supplier of brass fixtures is not involved in any counterfeiting operation. He has done business a long time with the gnomes. He believes they are honest and would not stoop to counterfeiting for an income.

Watt's clerk and son, Yul, is also friendly, but is not as helpful. Yul does not know anything about counterfeiting. However, Yul is the curious sort and will ask the PCs questions about counterfeiting or anything else they are willing to talk about. Yul is a little lazy and views conversing with customers as a good way to avoid work.

Aaron and Yul are in good spirits today, and they have just received another order from their best customer, Verity Overinn. Aaron and Yul know Verity as a dignified, quiet woman who conducts her business quickly and quietly. They know she runs an inn in another neighborhood, and have shipping records showing where the inn is, and showing that she has purchased a prodigious number of brass fixtures over the past three months. Neither Aaron nor Yul know what she is doing with them.

Aaron Coleman Watt: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 4 (F 4); hp 34; #AT 1; D 1-6 (lamp or large torch) or 1-8 + 2 (broad sword +2); AL NG; S M; THAC0 17

Magic Items: *Boots of elvenkind, ring of infravision*

Yul Watt: AC 7 (Dex); MV 12; HD 1 (F 1); hp 9; #AT 1; D 1-6 (lamp or large torch) or 1d6 + 3 (Str bonus); AL CG; S M; THAC0 20

Magic Items: *Potion of levitation, potion of rainbow hues*

Bullies At Five O'Clock

This encounter occurs after the PCs have visited at least two, but not more than three businesses in the neighborhood. It can come before or after “The Gnome Assault” detailed below depending on when the PCs visit Brasshand's. Verity Overinn has eyes all over this neighborhood—thugs and thieves who fence items with her or buy stolen goods from her, criminals who she allows in her safe house, and customers who buy her counterfeit coins. Some of these people noticed the PCs poking around in the neighborhood and asking too many questions. To limit any threat the PCs might pose, Verity has hired a group of thugs to beat up the PCs and order them out of the neighborhood. The thugs use brass knuckles, which Verity makes as a sideline.

The thugs pick a quiet time when the streets are nearly empty and the city watch is not in the area.

It seems just about everyone has gone home. The only people on the street are two working class women carrying baskets of vegetables. They seem to be in a hurry, but chat merrily as the bustle along. Their chatter turns to gasps, however when they pass an alley and two pairs of

grimy hands snatch them from the sidewalk, sending potatoes, cabbages, and carrots flying. You hear a muffled shriek and the sound of cloth tearing.

If the PCs do not fall for the ladies in distress ploy, the thugs act the part of locals strolling down the street. They quickly move up behind the PCs and attempt to push them into an alley where they can beat them up without too many people watching. If the PCs can't be pushed into the alley, the thugs fight them in the open. They are not worried. If they can keep the fight short, most of the locals won't report them. Many of the people in this neighborhood have a hard time remembering things unless someone gives them gold to improve their memories.

The thugs are not armed with any other weapons, as they do not want to call undue attention to themselves, nor do they want to kill anyone. They just want to get the PCs out of the neighborhood. While fighting, they threaten the PCs, telling them to get out of the neighborhood. The thugs' goal is to beat all the PCs into unconsciousness so they wake up in the alley and crawl to another part of the city. However, if the battle goes against them, and any thug is killed or knocked out, the remainder scatter.

These thugs are tough. If caught, they will not reveal any useful information. Each thug carries 1d10 sp and 1d4 gp. The thugs have more money than this, but they know better than to carry it with them.

Thugs (8): 2 @ AC 8 (leather), 4 @ AC 5 (leather and Dex), 2 @ AC 4 (leather and Dex); MV 12"; HD 4 (F 4); hp 2 @ 29, 4 @ 32, 2 @ 40; #AT 1; D 5 @ 1d3 (brass knuckles), 3 @ 1d3 + 2 (brass knuckles and Str bonus) (75% of the damage is temporary); SA because these thugs are experts with brass knuckles, there is a +5% KO chance on each successful punch; THAC0 17

Gnome Assault

This encounter should be used after the PCs leave Brasshand's and have visited one of the businesses in the neighborhood that deals in brass. Althjof Lah Brasshand is suspicious of the PCs, fearing that they are out to steal his customers. While his primary business is working with gold, he still val-

ues his brass customers—not wanting to loose any business to newcomers. He has instructed some of his employees to follow the PCs and scare them. He does not want the PCs killed, as that could bring the Ravens Bluff Constable or his force into the neighborhood.

The gnomes were quick to follow Brasshand's orders (because he pays them and because they always enjoy an opportunity to use their illusions). They have set themselves up between two buildings. Three of the gnomes are hidden in a bunch of crates in the alley. The fourth is hanging around the shadows across the street, ready to come into the alley in his *change self* image.

The gnomes involved in the operation are Geehaw, Blaburd, Metkrig, and Yezedred Gerlop.

As you walk the streets of Ravens Bluff pondering what you have learned so far, you hear an ear-wrenching screech. Looking up you see a child dangling from a set of curtains which hang out a second-story window. A large, red ball lies on the window ledge. A crowd of confused townspeople are gathering to stare at the helpless child.

The ball is real. The child is a *phantasmal force* from Geehaw. Yezedred is using *ventriloquism* to give the child a voice: "Help me. Oh please help me!" The townspeople are real. Nobody knows who the child is or how he got up there. Nobody lives on that building's second floor.

As the PCs enter the alley, the child falls. They cannot catch him. He appears to lay lifeless in the alley. However, if the PCs turn the child over, his face becomes that of a hideous monster, and he begins to claw at the PCs. The child fights for three rounds and melts into the ground. The townspeople flee when they see the transformation.

Next, Geehaw casts a second *phantasmal force*, that of stirges flying out of the window the child fell from. The stirges fly around the heads of the PCs, each one attacking once, and then flying into the sky.

Just before the stirges fly away, Yezedred casts *change self* upon himself, to make him look like the proprietor of the business the PCs just left. The proprietor runs into the alley, shouting, "What is going on? What horror have you brought down upon this neighborhood?"

While the PCs are distracted with

this, Geehaw casts his *improved phantasmal force*. This illusion causes the ground to come alive. The ground takes on the horrid face of the illusion/child and begins to eat garbage, items laying in the alley, and looks like it is going after the PCs next. In a rumbling voice it says, "Get out of my neighborhood!"

At this point Geehaw casts *invisibility* on himself; he believes he can't be too cautious. Yezedred, who looks like a proprietor, tries to run out of the alley, and the other gnomes try to remain hidden among the boxes.

If the PCs catch any of the gnomes, the gnomes initially will say they were just out to have a good time. However, well-placed threats or bribes will get the gnomes to admit that they were told to scare the PCs out of the neighborhood because Brasshand is afraid they are out to steal his customers.

Refer to the Brasshand's entry for the statistics on the gnomes.

Phantasmal Stirges: AC 8; MV 3/18; HD 1 + 1; hp 1d3 hits; #AT 1; D 1-3; AL N; S S; THAC0 17

Child/Monster: AC 8; MV 6; HD N/A; hp N/A; #AT 2; D 1-4/1-4; AL N; S M; THAC0 17

The Overinn

The Overinn, which masquerades as a second-class inn, houses a counterfeit operation and serves as a safehouse for those who are on the run from the law or who are trying to keep a low profile. In addition, the proprietor, Verity Overinn, fences items for thieves not attached to one of the local guilds.

The Overinn is a three-story building. The first floor is the inn, the second floor is the safehouse, and the third floor is Verity's living space. A large room on the third floor is reinforced and has an iron door. This is the living quarters of her cook, an ogre. The counterfeit operation is in the basement.

The Overinn's current occupants are: Verity, who the PCs will find in the inn; her cook, who is in the kitchen; and six safehouse residents, who include two second-level thieves, three first-level thieves, and one second-level specialist wizard (enchanter).

One of the second-level thieves, Marty Beaver, is the brains behind the counterfeit operation. Marty is skilled at jewelry making. His expertise combined with Verity's greediness birthed the operation. However, Marty is considered

the lesser partner and only receives 35% of the profits.

The fencing operation is in the open, although only Verity's customers and herself know this fact. The first floor's interior walls and ceiling are covered with unusual items; there is very little blank wall space. The public perceives the items as Verity's attempt at interior decorating. However, many of the items are stolen or have been pawned, and are hanging indistinguishable amid junk.

Verity Overinn acquired the three-story building nearly a decade ago because a favorite uncle left it to her—after she coerced him into bequeathing her something. The uncle mysteriously died soon after the will was written. Verity never has run a legitimate business in the building, and she is immensely proud of herself for never attracting the attention of the city watch, city officials, or The Vulture. Verity's greatest asset is her greed. The fighter-thief lives for making more money and delights in finding ways to sidestep Ravens Bluff's legal system. She has no sense of morals or honor and only helps those who use her safehouse service because they pay her. She struck upon the idea of starting a counterfeiting operation when one of the thieves in the safehouse grumbled about being unable to duplicate the images on Ravens Bluff's coins. Verity kept her eyes out for an individual with that talent, and when one day such a man came looking for a place to hide, she lured him into her scheme.

Verity makes her counterfeit coins from the moongold candleholders she buys from Lamps By Watt. No one has thought anything of Verity's increasing orders for the candleholders. If anyone asks questions about it, she replies there are a lot of fights in her inn, and the candleholders get damaged or broken.

If the PCs watch The Overinn before going inside, they see a few fast-moving individuals go inside. No groups of people enter the inn. The building's exterior obviously is in need of repair, but it is not the worst looking building in the block.

If the PCs investigate the inn, read the following:

The Overinn is worn, an old building that has not been taken care of properly. Still, it is not the worst building on the street. A large faded sign in the shape of a skillet hangs above

the front door and reads: "The Overinn." The curtains at the windows probably once were black, but the sun has turned them a deep, splotched gray. The windows are dirty, making it difficult to see inside, but a warm glow pokes out through clear patches in the window.

The building's interior is a junkman's dream. A plethora of old and unusual items hang from the walls and the ceiling, testimony to the proprietor's crude attempt at interior decorating. A broken wagon wheel hanging from the ceiling and filled with candles serves as the inn's chandelier. Worn signs are plastered on the walls and poke out between some of the pots, pans, lanterns, and feathered face masks. One of the signs says, "This Way To The Champions' Games." A faded banner above the bar says, "Congratulations Charles Oliver O'Kane." A few animal heads hang crookedly on the walls; the largest is a moose head, which is missing a glass eye. Candles on tables and on ledges on the walls also help to light the inside. It is a small inn. A massive oak bar lines one side of the room, behind it is a plain-looking woman who spits on the bar and runs a rag over the top of it to shine it. There are a half-dozen barstools; two of them are occupied. And there is one large, round table near the wall opposite the bar.

The woman finishes shining the bar, stuffs the rag in her pocket, and looks up at you. "What can I get you sirs and ladies? Our special plate of the day? Or maybe just something to drink?"

Verity has never seen the PCs before but knows immediately they are not looking for the safehouse or to purchase counterfeit coins. Such customers immediately come to the bar, hand her a gold coin, and give her the password. However, Verity does not immediately attempt to chase them away. Always out to earn money, she is willing to sell them food and drinks.

If the PCs ask about items in the room, describe oil lamps, metal sculptures, paintings with and without frames, gaudy beads, boots, a few weapons, several kitchen implements, wall hangings, clear and colored glass figurines, broken musical instruments, hats, belt buckles, gardening tools, etc. Other items include barrel heads nailed

to the wall, an old ladder, empty flour sacks, and glass ornaments. A fisherman's net is strung across half the ceiling, and several small items are in it, including fishing lures, shells, an oar, miniature wooden boats, etc. About one-fifth of the items are in good condition and valuable, however the PCs would not be able to tell this unless they stood a few feet from the items in question and had a good light source. A few of the items are brass, but only the candleholders in the room are made of the moongold brass. There are some magic items on the walls: a *trident +1*, *dagger +1*, *short sword +2* and *shield +1*, *missile attracter*.

The value of the good objects is 19,900 gp. The brass items (other than the candleholders) include brass knuckles, brass belt buckles, a brass walking stick head, and a big brass earring.

If the PCs begin to poke around the items, Verity gets very upset, ordering them away and telling them, "There'll be no more fights in here. I'm tired of dealing with you hooligans who want to ruin my inn." Verity continues to act like the PCs are vandals. If the PCs persist, one of the customers at the bar goes upstairs to get the safehouse residents. Eventually, a fight will break out. See **The Fight** section below.

If the PCs ask Verity questions, she pretends to be friendly and plays the part of a courteous waitress. She does her best to duck the questions with, "I don't know" and "Hmmm, that's interesting." If they ask her about the brass items hanging from the wall, she replies that the decorations make the place look homey and that she has acquired the items through the decade she has operated the place. If they ask her about her orders of candleholders, she tells them many get broken in the fights that occur in the inn and she has to replace them. (Smart PCs who look at the inn to note the condition of its contents should be told the furniture is all old, but intact, and everything seems to be in average condition. In addition, the PCs can note some carvings in the table, such as "Butch and Marilyn forever." The date beneath the name is three years ago.) Verity elaborates about the rough group of clients she has; people who are out of work, drunk barge workers, husbands who have been kicked out of their homes, and paupers looking for handouts.

If the PCs mention counterfeiting, Verity becomes upset, saying she knows there are a few fake coins going around

in Ravens Bluff. She says she got one herself and has been very careful ever since about the money she takes in. If the PCs accuse her of being involved in counterfeiting, she motions for one of the patrons at the bar to go upstairs. If not stopped, he brings down the safehouse residents, who try to deal with the PCs. See **The Fight**, below. If stopped, Verity screams and the residents come down anyway.

If the PCs try to get a room at her inn, Verity tells them that unfortunately all the rooms are filled right now.

Any food the PCs order here is overcooked or undercooked and will not have a lot of flavor. The special today is boiled potatoes and veal. The meat is not veal; it is horsemeat. She gets dead or downed horses from a local breeder and gives them to her ogre cook. Of course, Verity and the safehouse residents eat much better food. The wine and ale is good, but overpriced.

Verity does her best to get the PCs to leave. She tells them her inn is small, and once they are done eating and drinking they need to leave so the table can be occupied by other customers.

The Fight

The fight can be started in a variety of ways. If the PCs acted like customers, but stayed too long, the safehouse residents come downstairs and attack.

The NPC combatants include: Verity, her ogre cook, and the six safehouse residents. The ogre initially stands in the kitchen doorway and hurls potatoes (1-2 hp of temporary damage, 5% chance to stun opponents). Verity strikes to subdue (-4 attack roll penalty, 1/2 damage, 1/2 of that temporary), as she doesn't want to be found guilty of murder. If the ogre falls victim to a *sleep spell*, Verity revives him with her *oil of disenchantment*.

If the residents are drawn to the fight by a disturbance, such as Verity screaming, they spend two rounds getting organized and rush down the stairs into the fray, supported by the wizard who casts a *sleep spell* on the party. If they can come quietly, the higher level thieves creep down the stairs, hide in the shadowy inn, and clobber the PCs from behind. Once the party notices the first group of thieves, the remaining thieves, supported by the mage, attack.

After the PCs defeat Verity and company, they can scour the building and find the counterfeiting operation. There are 5,000 counterfeit coins in a large

bin, just waiting to be bought. Other items in the basement include a furnace used to melt the brass, metalworking tools, a hundred bars of lead, and two dozen brass candleholders. There is nothing of value in the rooms upstairs.

Verity Overinn: AC 2 (bracers and Dex); MV 12; HD (F4/T5); hp 40; #AT 1; D 1d6+3 (Str and magic weapon); AL CN; S M; THAC0 15 (adjusted)

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
75 40 35 50 25 35 60 20 x3

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 6, oil of disenchantment, short sword +2*

Cookie, the ogre: AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 25; #AT 1; D 1-3 (potato), 1-6 (skillet), 1-8 (meat cleaver), or 1-10 (claw); AL CE; S L; THAC0 17

Marty Beaver, thief: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 2 (T 2); hp 12; #AT 1; D 1-6 (short sword); AL N; S M; THAC0 20

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
25 55 40 20 15 30 60 — x2

Jonah Salt, thief: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 2 (T 2); hp 10; #AT 1; D 1-8+1 (Str bonus); AL NE; S M; THAC0 19 (adjusted)

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
25 25 70 35 15 15 60 15 x2

Maynard Lenowsky, thief: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 1 (T 1); hp 6; #AT 1; D 1-6 (short sword); AL NE; S M; THAC0 20

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
35 35 20 30 25 25 60 10 x2

Lenny Molkovitz, thief: AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; HD 1 (T 1); hp 8 (Con bonus); #AT 1; D 1d8+1 (Str bonus); AL CE; S M; THAC0 19 (adjusted)

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
25 25 10 30 25 25 90 — x2

Boris Mossroses Jr., thief: AC 5 (Dex, ring); MV 12; HD 1 (T 1); hp 6; #AT 1; D 1-4+1 (weapon); AL CN; S M; THAC0 19 (adjusted)

Thieving Abilities

PP OL FT MS HS DN CW RL BS
45 45 30 20 15 15 60 — x2

Magic Items: *dagger +1, ring of protection +1*

Sheena Bullwacker, enchanter: AC 7 (Dex); MV 12; HD 3 (MU 3); hp 12; #AT 1; D 1-6 (staff); AL NE; S M; THAC0 20

Spells: *Charm Person, Sleep, Taunt, Scare, Tasha's Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter*

Magic Items: *Potion of Gaseous Form, Oil of Slipperiness*

The Aftermath

If the PCs defeat Verity and her entourage, The Vulture congratulates them and says they are "paid up" with his office. Because of The Vulture's *ring of truth* and his other abilities he will be able to tell what the PCs lifted from The Overinn. The majority of the items in the inn are stolen, and The Vulture will not let the PCs take them.

What the PCs can have from the inn is: *short sword +2, trident +1, dagger +1*, and 6,400 gp worth of unclaimed brass, gold, and silver items. If the PCs make no attempt to claim any of the treasure, they will be awarded 3,000 gp for the capture of the safehouse residents and Verity. □

