



EDGE OF ANARCHY

BY NICOLAS LOGUE

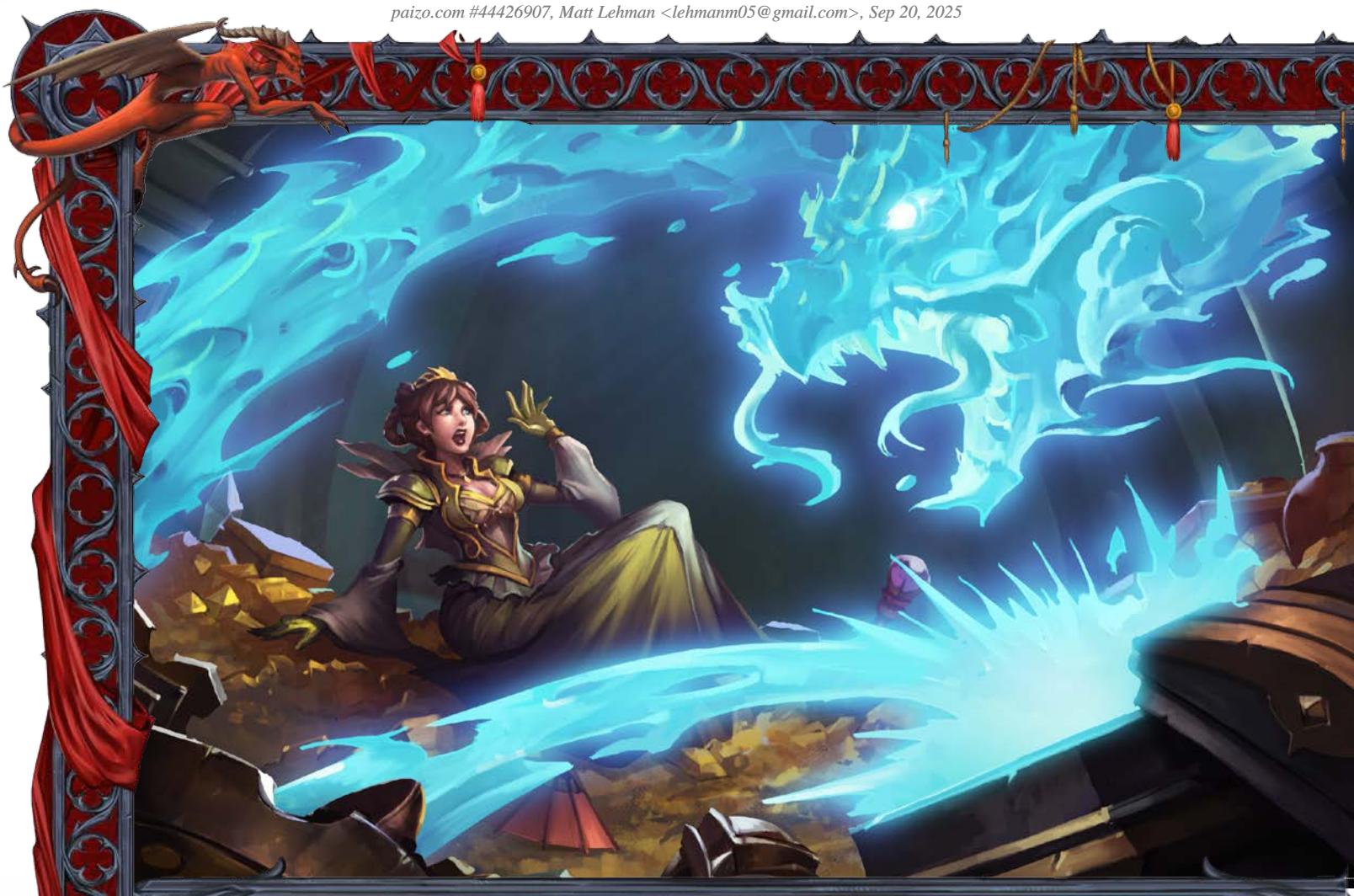


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CHAPTER BACKGROUND

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Characters begin the campaign at 1st level, and each character should have one of the campaign traits presented on page 8–9. Curse of the Crimson Throne plays best with four PCs and using the fast XP track for advancement.

2 The PCs should reach 2nd level after dealing with Gaedren Lamm in the old fishery.

3 The PCs should reach 3rd level before investigating the situation at Eel's End.

3 The PCs should reach 4th level before exploring the Dead Warrens.

The PCs should be well into 4th level by the end of the chapter.

The city of Korvosa was founded in 4407 AR when the empire of Cheliax expanded north into Varisia. Here, the Chelaxians found a Shoanti tribe living around an immense pyramid on the shores of a deep bay—a perfect site for a city. Much bloodshed eventually left the Shoanti defeated, driven back to the harsh Cinderlands. Yet as Korvosa flourished, few bothered to ask why the Shoanti had dwelt here. None of Korvosa's citizens, from beggars to the king, realized that the Shoanti were guardians. Deep below Castle Korvosa hid a great and terrible evil: the fangs of Kazavon, a relic of one of Golarion's most powerful and deadly dragons. For the past 300 years, Korvosa has grown, unaware that the city's rests on a foundation of evil and cruelty.

Today, Korvosa's reigning king, Eodred Arabasti II, is feared by all the right people. To date, however, he has produced no heir to the throne, the latest in a line of rulers affected by this facet of the so-called curse of the Crimson Throne. Whispers of his taste for scandalously young companionship have dogged the king throughout



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his rule, and when he finally wed late in life, it was no surprise that his bride was barely a third of his age. Queen Ileosa was a woman of breathtaking beauty, and some of Korvosa's nobles worried of the dangers of placing a "trophy wife" within reach of the Crimson Throne, but Ileosa's interest in the city seemed secondary to her desire for the life of luxury it afforded—and with the more-than-competent seneschal Neolandus Kaleopolis currently guarding Castle Korvosa's interests, these noble families now feel they have little to worry about.

They are about to learn how wrong they are.

On one of her recent visits to Castle Korvosa's treasury (visits that required surreptitiously "borrowing" the key from the seneschal), the queen discovered a secret door. Believing she had found a hidden vault, she investigated the room beyond, but was disappointed to find only an old stone coffer on a pedestal. She didn't understand the Shoanti warning runes carved on the walls, nor did she feel the menace and evil in the air. She opened the coffer, and her life was changed forever. For inside rested the fangs of Kazavon, and their evil had been waiting for this day. It was but the smallest fragment of Kazavon's spirit that burst from his fangs and infused the young queen, but even that small shard of cruelty and blind ambition was enough. Ileosa closed the coffer, resealed the secret door, and returned to her chambers in the castle above, her mind changed for the worse. Gone were any shreds of caution, replaced by ambition. Gone too were any fragments of self-doubt, replaced by a cruel imagination capable of envisioning all manner of depravities. In a way, Queen Ileosa died that fateful day, only to be reborn as something new—something wholly evil.

Queen Ileosa made plans for a personal guard of warrior women, the eradication of Korvosa's poor and undesirable citizens, dramatic increases to her wealth, and even a method to preserve her beauty and youth forever. But none of these plans could begin before she had full control of Korvosa. First and foremost, Eodred II had to go. Ileosa desired that he die swiftly, yet that death needed to come from what appeared to be natural causes, or at least the anarchic cruelty of an outside source. The legacy of the curse of the Crimson Throne would help somewhat in explaining a Korvosan king's sudden demise, yet his death couldn't look like murder. Ileosa needed a period of mourning where she could capitalize upon Korvosa's well-wishes and pity to put her true plans into motion, and charges of regicide would endanger that. To aid in laying her plans, she surreptitiously allied with two dangerous groups—the cult of Urgathoa and the Red Mantis assassins—yet neither group could or would aid directly in the king's death. If Eodred II was to die, it had to be at her own hands.

So she turned to Venster Arabasti, the king's deformed tiefling stepbrother. Venster had long nurtured a deep

streak of hidden jealousy for the successes of his younger brother Eodred II. For his part, Eodred II allowed his stepbrother to remain in Castle Korvosa for fear that Venster could not survive on his own. Now and then, when Eodred II was seized with pity or boredom, he visited Venster to play cards, even though the visits generally ended in arguments and insults.

Ileosa found an opportunity in Venster. She played upon his hidden envy and convinced him to take part in Eodred II's murder. To this end, she gave Venster a vial of fool's leprosy (see page 432), an ingenious venom invented by the Red Mantis. The poison mimics the effects of a rapid form of leprosy, but as a poison, it resists treatments that cure diseases. With Ileosa's aid, Venster coated the upper half of his playing cards with the poison, so when Eodred II (among other things, a compulsive nail-biter) played, he unknowingly coated his fingers and nails in the stuff, ensuring a slow but steady exposure to the poison. It took little prodding from the young queen to convince Eodred II to visit his brother, which exposed the king to her horrid toxin.

His usefulness nearing an end, Ileosa refused Venster's further requests for companionship, compelling the stepbrother to threaten to reveal to the seneschal the true nature of the king's "illness." Because Venster was relatively feeble, it was an easy matter for Ileosa to murder him and hide the crime by walling up his corpse in the castle dungeon, yet his disappearance was noticed by Neolandus Kaleopolis, the castle seneschal. He had long suspected Ileosa was up to something, and when Venster vanished, his suspicions were confirmed. But the seneschal had made fatal mistakes: he confronted the queen privately, gave her the benefit of the doubt, and underestimated what she had become. She responded by sending the Red Mantis after him. Neolandus survived the assassination attempt, but only barely. He went into hiding among contacts in Old Korvosa, afraid and powerless to move against the queen as long as her Red Mantis allies remained strong in the region.

As this Adventure Path begins, King Eodred II still lives, but the fool's leprosy has wreaked havoc on his health. He has spent the last several weeks in seclusion in Castle Korvosa, and, despite the efforts of his staff, rumors of his ill health have spread. Queen Ileosa has taken advantage of this time to become more of a ruler in the public eye, but recently flaws in her plans have begun to manifest.

Queen Ileosa worries about Neolandus. Her Red Mantis allies have promised her that Neolandus will die soon, yet he is not her only worry. For her plans to progress more quickly, she has been secretly lacing the tea Eodred II drinks with poison, speeding his death sentence. The king is about to die, and Korvosa is about to plunge over the edge into anarchy.

PART 1

HAUNTED FORTUNES

Curse of the Crimson Throne provides the PCs with a shared nemesis from the start: local crime lord Gaedren Lamm. The introduction to this book presents campaign traits that your players should choose for their characters—these traits grant small bonuses to their stats and give the PCs an in-game reason to ally. Each PC has been wronged by Gaedren Lamm, so each PC should have a built-in reason to reply to the mysterious harrow card that appears in his or her life as this chapter begins.

The PCs aren't the only ones who have been wronged by Gaedren. Among his plentiful other victims is a Varisian woman named Zellara Esmeranda, a fortune teller who lost a valuable family heirloom, an exquisite harrow deck, to one of Gaedren's pickpockets a year ago. When he learned of the theft, Zellara's son Eran took it upon himself to get the deck back. He was murdered by Gaedren's thugs and his head and hands were returned to Zellara in a box as a threat. Zellara went to the Korvosan Guard, but although sympathetic, they had little additional time or resources to devote to the crime lord.

Frustrated, desperate, and harboring a growing need for revenge, Zellara took it upon herself to track down Gaedren. She sold most of her belongings, purchased a new harrow deck, and called upon the cards for aid. Her latent magical skill, combined with her persistence and obsession, gave her results—yet as she would soon learn, not all harrowings point to triumph. She discovered the location of Gaedren's current hideout, but was seen when she attempted to infiltrate the old fishery where he dwelled. Gaedren's thugs grabbed her and brought her below to stand before the master. The crime lord was impressed that she'd gone through so much trouble to find him, but when she spat on him and cursed him, his anger got the better of him and he ordered her killed. He fed her body to his alligator, but he saved her head, keeping it in a box in his lair alongside her original stolen harrow deck. These cards, bloodstained and discarded, became the focus for Zellara's anguish and despair. Her spirit infused and haunted them, and now she intends to use her newfound supernatural power to bring down Gaedren Lamm.

Yet Zellara isn't a true ghost. Her spirit manifests more like a complex haunt, splitting its presence between the



ZELLARA ESMERANDA

heirloom cards now sealed away in a box in Gaedren Lamm's hideout and her run-down home in Korvosa's Midland district. These are her links to the living world, and through them she can sense the anguish and despair of all those in Korvosa whom Gaedren's evil has touched and hurt. She casts her mind outward, and before long narrows her search to a small group of those in whom she senses the greatest honor, the greatest strength, the greatest potential, and the greatest anger. She senses the PCs.

Through this shared anguish, Zellara can manifest phantasms in the PCs' minds to create visual and tactile illusions. Using this power, she manifests a short message for the PCs on the backs of harrow cards that match the characters' personalities and strengths. Each card appears in some place only the corresponding PC is sure to notice it. A wizard might reach for his spellbook to see a card sitting atop its cover. A cleric might find the card resting atop an altar she has been tasked with cleaning. A rogue could find the card in a pocket (either hers or a stranger's), while a fighter might find the card inside his favorite tankard. Each harrow card represents one of the 54 possible combinations of ability score and alignment. Choose the card each PC receives according to that PCs' alignment and highest ability score—if a character has equally high ability scores, choose the score most closely associated with her class. The card image itself is unmarred, but written in bold ink on the back is a short message. This message is identical for each PC—see Handout #1-1 on page 15.

A character who makes a successful DC 12 Knowledge (local) check or spends 1d3 hours asking around about the address given on the card automatically learns that it is the home and fortune-telling shop of a Varisian woman named Zellara.



ZELLARA'S HOME

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter the fortune teller's home.

The interior of this small, humble home consists of a single cozy chamber filled with a fragrant haze of flowers and strong spice. The aroma comes from several sticks of incense smoldering in wall-mounted burners that look like butterfly-winged elves. The smoke gives the room a dreamy feel. The walls are draped with brocaded tapestries, one showing a black-skulled beast juggling human hearts, and another showing a pair of angels dancing atop a snow-blasted mountain. A third tapestry on the far wall depicts a tall, hooded figure shrouded in mist, holding a flaming sword in a skeletal hand. Several brightly colored rugs cover the floor, but the room's only furnishings are a wooden table covered by a bright red throw cloth and several elegant, tall-backed chairs. A basket covered by blue cloth sits under the table.

The first PC to arrive at Zellara's home finds a simple note on the table, weighed down with a stone paperweight. The note's contents appear in Handout #1-2.

The food and wine in the basket, the note, and all of the furnishings in the room are partially real and partially illusion manifested by Zellara's spirit to create the impression that the place is occupied. This was her home for many years, and the echoes of her life here function as foci for her in the same way that the PCs' shared grief and anger does. The bread is a little stale but is filling, and the wine, while not fine, tastes good enough.

If a player expresses doubt about the food and furnishings, allow him to attempt a DC 25 Will save to see through the powerful (if minor) illusions. Note that succeeding at this Will save still allows the player to observe the illusions—he just perceives them as more ghostly and ephemeral rather than solid reality. The entire area radiates moderate illusion magic if *detect magic* is used. Likewise, *detect undead* reveals a moderate aura of undeath. As Zellara was neutral in life, spells like *detect evil* or the like reveal nothing more about the room's auras. While this initial encounter assumes the PCs don't immediately realize that they're dealing with a haunt, if they do figure things out, roll with it. Zellara's need for their aid doesn't change, and she's not evil—all the PCs miss out on by recognizing the haunt is the later revelation that the woman who hired them was already dead. The fact that she can tell them where Gaedren lives doesn't change, and her reasons for being unable to take action herself should suddenly make sense. In the end, Zellara's only real purpose is to bring the PCs together in the first place—this is already done, so it isn't a big deal if your PCs are curious and persistent enough to figure the mystery out early.

In any event, allow the PCs to arrive at her home in any order (perhaps in order of initiative checks if you wish),

I know what Gaedren has done to you. He has wronged me as well. I know where he dwells, yet cannot strike at him. Come to my home at 3 Lancet Street at sunset. Others like you will be there. Gaedren must face his fate, and justice must be done.

HANDOUT #1-1

Thank you for coming. I had to step out for a bit, but shall return shortly. Please, have a seat while you wait. The basket under the table contains bread and drink for you.

HANDOUT #1-2

giving them time to introduce themselves to each other and perhaps compare their identical messages on very different harrow cards.

Despite the note, Zellara is in fact present when the PCs first arrive. She wants to let the PCs talk among themselves for a bit, both to set themselves at ease and so she can be sure they are who she needs. When she's sure (and more importantly, when you're ready to start the campaign), she manifests out of sight on the street outside. She enters her home with a smile, thanks the PCs for coming to visit, and takes a seat at the table.

Zellara appears as she did in life—as an attractive middle-aged Varisian woman with long, dark hair. She allows the PCs to introduce themselves as she produces a harrow deck from a pocket, idly shuffling the cards. Her skill with the deck should be obvious to anyone who watches how the cards seem to float and dance through her fingers. With a nod of her head, she indicates that the PCs should sit at her table if they have not done so

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already—conveniently, there are exactly enough chairs for the entire party. Once the PCs are seated, she speaks in a soft but clear voice. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Thank you for coming, my friends, and for putting up with my unconventional method of contacting you. I have reason to remain hidden, you see—a vicious man would see great harm done to me if he knew I was reaching out for help. This man has done something terrible to each of you as well. I speak, of course, of Gaedren Lamm, a man whose cruelty and capacity to destroy the lives of those he touches are matched only by his gift for avoiding reprisal. You see, a year ago, his thieves stole this, my harrow deck, from me. It is important to me, an heirloom passed down through a dozen generations, and also my sole means of support. When Lamm's pickpockets stole it, my son Eran tracked them down and returned my deck to me. But Gaedren had him followed, and soon after he left my home, Gaedren's thugs murdered him."

"I sought help from the Korvosan Guard, but they turned me away. And so I asked around. I paid bribes. I consulted my harrow deck for advice. And recently, I was rewarded—I found out where Gaedren dwells. He can be found in an old fishery north of here, at Westpier 17, where he trains abducted children to be pickpockets and counts his stolen treasures."

"But I need your help. I cannot hope to face this man on my own, and the Guard moves so slowly that if they were willing to help, Gaedren would certainly know of their coming well in advance. And even if they arrested him, what guarantee would I have he would be punished? This criminal has evaded the law for decades. But you know of these frustrations as well, for word on the street has it that Gaedren has wronged each of you, too. So there we are. It is time for him to pay."

Once her tale is done, Zellara tells the PCs that she can perform a harrowing for them to help prepare them for the task of seeking out Gaedren in the Old Fishery—she doesn't wait for agreement, but immediately proceeds to deal cards to the PCs. These cards represent the harrowing's choosing.

At the beginning of each chapter of this campaign, the PCs have a chance to participate in additional harrow readings akin to the one Zellara performs for them now. When you perform these readings, you should take a moment to foreshadow events to come in the adventure. There's no need to reveal concrete spoilers about what's coming, but in this first harrow reading, you should warn the PCs of a coming time of unrest and violence in the streets, and that they are in some way fated to become heroes of Korvosa. Full details on how to perform these harrowings appears in Appendix 3, beginning on page 416.

Zellara exists primarily as a reason to draw together the PCs and to send them against Gaedren Lamm, so they discover the queen's brooch the old man has stolen

and keeps in his room. By portraying the fortune teller as a helpful but desperate woman, not as a sinister or suspicious force, you should be able to keep your players focused on Gaedren. Once she finishes the harrowing, she urges the PCs to move quickly to confront the crime lord—if they wait too long, he may well uproot and shift to a new hideout, after all. If the PCs insist on learning how she knew about them and their connection to Gaedren, she replies cryptically that she listens to the music of the city, and that her harrow cards tell her more than they tell most.

If the PCs return to Zellara's home after this first meeting, they're in for a shock—see page 30 for more details on what the home looks like when Zellara's spiritual presence is not in residence.

A OLD FISHERY

As with all of Gaedren Lamm's hideouts through the decades, the old fishery he now dwells in is a forgotten echo of someone else's dreams. Gaedren chooses these lairs not only to give him and his gang a place to hide, but also for their current ownership (or lack thereof), preferring buildings whose owners have died and left behind no heirs. Under Korvosan law, a building abandoned in this manner immediately reverts to the city and is held in escrow for 2 years, during which time any rightful owner who can prove a claim can regain control of the building. After the 2 years, the city claims the building, yet even then, the government is slow to handle the structure's eventual fate. Gaedren has found that by choosing the right building in the right location, one can effectively live for free for years at a time.

The old fishery is no exception. Its previous owner died when a devilfish attacked his boat, and now Gaedren uses it as a hideout and a base for a moneymaking scheme to augment what his gang of children pickpocket. The fishery is a place where desperate anglers can sell off their less fetching catches (fish caught 3 days dead in the nets, or freakish specimens unfit for sale, for example) and where fishmongers dump their old sun-tainted wares that reek with the first hints of decay. Gaedren's little workforce of enslaved orphans toil among the guts and slime, creating a foul-smelling slurry that can then be resold as bait, fertilizer, or the main ingredient for what are known as "dock-dumplings," a local favorite among poorer dock workers who can't afford fresh fish. Gaedren himself lounges in his secret chambers in the fishery's underbelly, accessible only by braving the scum-slick narrows beneath the structure itself. (Despite his age, Gaedren is quite adept at scrambling along the walkways and through the decks of the old ship *Kraken's Folly* to reach his den.) Here, he plays for hours at cards with his thick-witted companions, counts his coins and examines his stolen goods, and hurls buckets of chum to his beloved alligator, Gobblegut.



OLD FISHERY FEATURES

The old fishery is a creaking, decrepit building, yet it remains solid—it will be a few years yet before its floors start to give way and its roof begins to crumble. Gaedren fully intends to have moved on well before then, and in the meantime, the building serves him and his thugs well as a base of operations. All external windows are boarded shut but have ample slits between the planks to allow those within to peer out. The wooden doors are mottled with mold and grit, but remain solid (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 15). The fishery is perched atop a steep embankment, with most of the structure extending out over the Jeggare River on wooden pilings. The embankment drops 13 feet into the river below; the sides are slippery but can be scaled with a successful DC 10 Climb check. The fishery's external walls extend almost all the way down to the river, leaving only a few feet of space between the floor of area A8 and the water. The floor of areas A13 and A14 are a little higher, but the pilings supporting this portion of the structure are closely packed, leaving only a few inches of room between them. A Small creature could conceivably squeeze between these gaps from the river into the pool below area A13, but doing so requires a successful DC 30 Escape Artist check and puts the intruder well within the hunting grounds of that area's hungry guardian.

The encounters in the fishery assume the PCs visit during the day. At night, the fishery shuts down—all external and internal doors are locked (Disable Device

DC 20) and Gaedren's accomplice, Yargin, retires to area A5 for a full night's rest. Gaedren's other two thugs, Giggles and Hookshanks, swap out semi-regular patrols through the fishery—one at about 9:00 at night, one at midnight, and one at 3:00 in the morning, mostly to ensure that the orphans aren't getting up to trouble, but also to check for intruders. The majority of nighttime security is handled by Bloo, Yargin's mangy cur, who is allowed to wander through area A8 as he sees fit. His barks are quick to rouse the entire fishery.

Special note should be made of the orphans Gaedren "employs." Known to his thugs as "Lamm's Lambs," these little charges are tough kids, made rough as leather by Gaedren's quick hand and life on the street. They hate the crime lord, but they fear him more than Asmodeus himself. The urchins infest the fishery, toiling away under the cruel ministrations of Gaedren's fellow scumbags, with "street duty"—when they're sent out to fleece and cut purses—as a reward for good behavior. Kindhearted PCs are likely to take an interest in the urchins' well-being or make attempts to rally the kids against their taskmasters. Indeed, befriended orphans can prove to be a font of information on Gaedren and his thugs. They might even lend the party a quick hand in battle. In any of the following areas where the urchins toil, a PC who attempts to rally them against their taskmasters must succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check (Intimidate checks won't work—the kids are too inured to this tactic to turn against Gaedren). See the Orphans

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sections in several of these encounters for ideas on how the kids might lend a hand if this Diplomacy check is successful. Conversely, if the party takes no interest in the kids, the orphans might aid their brutal masters against the PCs (for fear of what kind of repercussions they'll face if they do not). The orphans have no knowledge of any area past A9, since those sent below for punishment by Gaedren never emerge again.

Although there are only nine orphans to be found in the fishery during the day, many more are out in the city streets. At night, all 26 of Gaedren's Lamm's Lambs can be found in area A8, sleeping in their hammocks. If the PCs invade the fishery at night, the orphans are too confused and frightened to aid in combat, despite any threats from the thugs, and instead attempt to escape into the surrounding slums as soon as their oppressors are dead.

Use the following statistics for an orphan as needed.

LAMM'S LAMB

CR 1/3

XP 135

Young human expert 1
N Small humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 5 (1d8+1)

Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger -1 (1d3-2/19-20) or
pitchfork -7 (1d6-2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with pitchfork)

TACTICS

During Combat Typically an orphan spends the first round of combat in shock and surprise, although once a few battles have broken out in the fishery, feel free to have the orphans react more quickly. The orphans prefer to attack with the long pitchforks they use to load and unload fish (these pitchforks function as improvised weapons with reach), but they switch to daggers if anyone is able to get inside their reach.

Morale An orphan who takes any damage attempts to flee to area A8, unless all of Gaedren's thugs are either dead or out of sight, in which case the orphan abandons the fishery entirely into the surrounding slums.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 16, **Con** 11, **Int** 11, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** -3; **CMD** 10

Feats Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +4, Climb +2, Escape Artist +7, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +8

Languages Common

Gear dagger, pitchfork

Story Award: Once Gaedren is out of the picture, the orphans are quick to flee into the surrounding slums, making it difficult for PCs to gather them up and relocate them into a proper orphanage, but if the PCs manage to do so, grant them 135 XP for each orphan so rescued (to a maximum XP award of 1,350 in all). In addition, if any PC has the Missing Child campaign trait, one of the orphans encountered here should be that child—getting the child to safety provides a happy ending for that character and earns the party an additional 400 XP.

A1 FRONT DOOR

The reek of brine and the stink of week-dead fish hang thickly in the air here. The old double doors in the side of this weathered building are tightly closed, with a drooping signpost hanging above. The sign it once displayed is long gone, leaving behind only a single short length of rusted chain.

The main doors to the fishery are kept locked (Disable Device DC 20), since most of the business going through the place is handled at area A7. Knocking on the door (or open attempts to pick the lock) brings an immediate response from Yargin (see area A6).

A2 LOADING DOCK

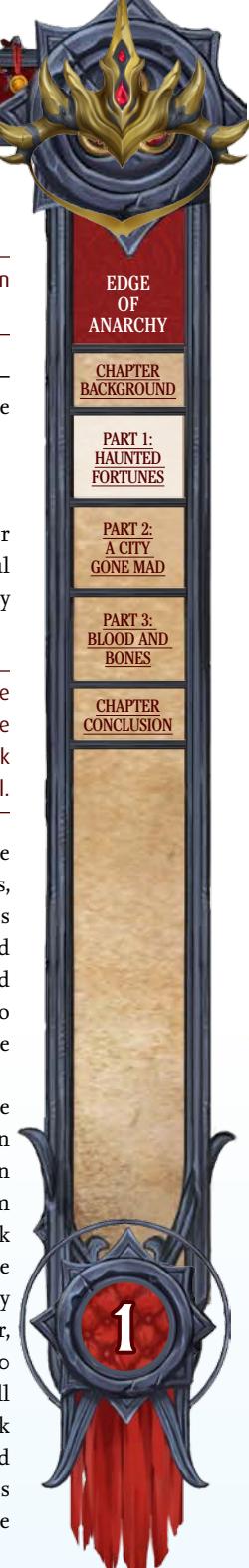
A fifteen-foot-wide loading dock abuts the side of the building here. A few carts sit nearby, partially loaded with large, tar-caked barrels marked with a fish-shaped splotch of red paint on the side. Double doors to the immediate south of the loading dock's ramp provide access to the building's interior, while a rickety flight of stairs descends ten feet to a point just three feet over the river's surface, where a simple door provides a secondary entrance.

During the day, the double doors into area A7 are kept ajar or even wide open, but the door to area A8 is always locked (Disable Device DC 20). The demand for cheap fish slurry keeps the fishery busy, and it ships out one or two wagons of the foul stuff each day, generally near evening. The orphans in area A7 do the heavy lifting while Hookshanks oversees.

A3 BACK ALLEY

A slippery boardwalk clings to the side of the fishery, held together by barnacle-encrusted pilings that have had half of their thickness worn away below the waterline twelve feet below.

The door to area A6 is kept locked (Disable Device DC 20).



This boardwalk is about 13 feet above the water as it winds along the building's south wall, but slopes downward as it approaches the ship to the east, where it stands about 10 feet above the river. The dock is slippery—as long as someone navigating it moves no more than her speed per round, there's no chance of disaster. As soon as anyone takes a full-round action to move (or fights or runs on the slippery boards), she must attempt a DC 10 Acrobatics check. Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall into the water below. In addition, the old wood can't support much weight beyond a typical Medium creature. A larger creature, a character wearing heavy armor, or two or more Medium creatures who attempt to traverse the planks while remaining within 5 feet of each other cause the wood to creak and groan alarmingly. If such a PC (or PCs) remains in one spot on the pier for more than 1 round, the wood collapses, dropping the PC (or PCs) into the water. A fall into the water results in no falling damage (the water is deep enough and the fall short enough), but swiftly attracts the attention of the shark that swims below (see area A12).

Despite the boardwalk's decrepit condition, it remains Gaedren's primary method of coming and going from his den (area A13). He tends to spend days or even weeks at a time downstairs (so as to minimize his time in public) and uses this route only a few times a month.

A4 FRONT ROOM (CR 1/3)

A single desk sits in the middle of this room, with a moldy chair pushed up against it. A small pile of ratty furs and straw is heaped under the desk.

This room isn't used too often—in theory, this is where Yargin meets with new customers to set up delivery schedules, but new customers are something of a rarity. Any significant noise in this room quickly brings both Yargin and Hookshanks to investigate.

Creature: Yargin's grizzled dog, a foul-tempered cur named Bloo, spends most of his day sleeping on the disgusting, makeshift bed under the desk. Bloo reacts quickly (and noisily) to any perception of intrusion into this room by someone whose scent he doesn't recognize. The dog is fearless and attacks strangers on sight, no matter how big they are. The orphans of the fishery fear Bloo greatly, and as long as the dog is present, a thug receives a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks to bully the orphans to fight.

Bloo	CR 1/3
XP 135	
Dog (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 87</i>)	
hp 6	

A5 BARRACKS

A pair of bunk beds sit against the far wall of this room on either side of a boarded-over window.

Gaedren's thugs—Yargin, Hookshanks, and Giggles—share this room. The fourth bunk is unused. The three thugs don't trust each other, and keep no valuables here.

A6 YARGIN'S OFFICE (CR 1)

Squeezing through the partially blocked western door from area A4 into this room is possible with a successful DC 20 Escape Artist check—the room's occupant normally enters this room via the eastern or southern door.

A wooden desk sits in one corner of this room, its side preventing the western door from opening all the way. The table is heaped with dozens of slate boards covered with chalk scrawls, while to the east a cabinet slouches against the wall.

This is the fishery's office. The slates on the table are covered with transaction records, addresses of customers, and other accounting notes. Every month, these notes are compiled (messily) onto scrolls that are then stored in the cabinet. In theory, this paperwork would be used in the event of a surprise investigation by the Guard to prove that there's nothing more sinister going on here than slurry.

One of the floorboards behind the chair in the northeast corner of the room is in fact a cunningly hidden trap door—a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check spots it. The door is wedged shut and barred from below, and must be smashed open from above (break DC 15) unless the wedge is removed. Once opened, the trap door reveals a 1-foot-square hole that opens directly into area A13. It's a 10-foot drop to this lower chamber, but a Medium creature would need a successful DC 30 Escape Artist check to wriggle through the hole (a Small creature needs only a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check to do so), so there is little threat of falling in. A rope and pulley system used to transport meals and other supplies between the two rooms makes clambering down from the hole once one squeezes through easier (Climb DC 5).

Creature: Gaedren's right-hand man and his longest-lived accomplice is Yargin Balko, a bitter human alchemist who's served variously as Gaedren's accountant, advisor, assassin, and fence for nearly a decade. Yargin is a perpetually sour-faced man with short blond hair and a fondness for expensive clothing. As the public face of the operation here, he takes pride in his appearance even though his taste in clothes always seems to be at least 2 decades out of style. Yargin is also the man responsible for seeing that Gaedren gets regular shipments of food,

water, and entertainment through the hidden trap door, since the old man abhors going out in public and spends so many days shut into his den below. When Yargin is ready to send supplies, he knocks three times, then once, then three times on the trap door to alert Gaedren, who then removes the wedge from below so Yargin can make the delivery.

Yargin's true obsession is acid—he carries several vials of the stuff with him wherever he goes. He has even concocted a weak acid that plays a key part in the rendering of fish into slurry (and is sometimes used to punish wayward orphans).

YARGIN BALKO**CR 1****XP 400**

Male human expert 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +5**DEFENSE**

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** dagger +2 (1d4/19-20)**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20)**TACTICS**

During Combat Yargin prefers to use his *wand of acid splash* in combat, but since he needs to roll at least a 12 to activate it with a Use Magic Device check, it occasionally fails—each time it does, he erupts into a loud burst of profanity and shakes the wand in frustration. Once he fails to use the wand a third time, he gives up and switches to thrown vials of acid or his crossbow. He is deathly afraid of melee combat, and fights with his dagger only if cornered.

Morale Once he has used up his acid and his wand has failed him three times (or as soon as he takes any melee damage at all), Yargin shrieks in panic and attempts to flee to Gaedren's side to warn him. That he might inadvertently lead Gaedren's enemies right to him doesn't cross his mind in his panicked state.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 9,

Cha 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14**Feats** Persuasive, Point-Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device)**Skills** Appraise +4, Craft (alchemy) +6, Diplomacy +5,

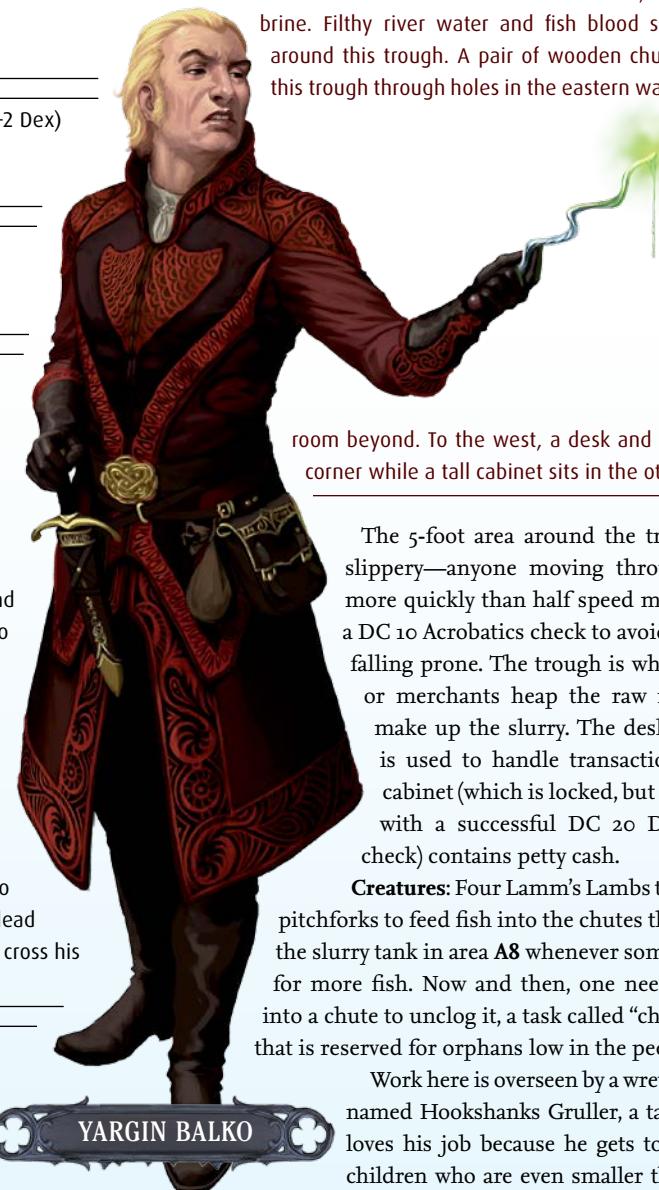
Disable Device +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +6,

Linguistics +5, Perception +5, Spellcraft +6, Use Magic

Device +8

Languages Common, Gnome, Varisian**Combat Gear** *wand of acid splash* (28 charges), acid (3), thunderstone; **Other Gear** leather armor, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, brass key (unlocks all doors in the fishery), iron key (unlocks the cabinet in area A7), garnet amulet worth 100 gp**A7 UPPER WORKROOM (CR 2)**

The stink in this room, a mixture of fish and sweat, is enough to make the eyes water. To the east, a large wooden trough holds a hideous mound of half-rancid fish, seaweed, and brine. Filthy river water and fish blood stain the floor around this trough. A pair of wooden chutes lead from this trough through holes in the eastern wall into a larger



room beyond. To the west, a desk and chair sit in one corner while a tall cabinet sits in the other.

The 5-foot area around the trough is quite slippery—anyone moving through this area more quickly than half speed must succeed at a DC 10 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and falling prone. The trough is where fishermen or merchants heap the raw materials that make up the slurry. The desk to the south is used to handle transactions, while the cabinet (which is locked, but can be opened with a successful DC 20 Disable Device check) contains petty cash.

Creatures: Four Lamm's Lambs toil here, using pitchforks to feed fish into the chutes that empty into the slurry tank in area A8 whenever someone calls out for more fish. Now and then, one needs to clamber into a chute to unclog it, a task called "chum chucking" that is reserved for orphans low in the pecking order.

Work here is overseen by a wretch of a gnome named Hookshanks Gruller, a taskmaster who loves his job because he gets to bully human children who are even smaller than him (well,

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some of them, anyway). Hookshanks is quick to berate the orphans and threatens to “feed them to the dog”—even the kids bigger than the gnome have learned to shut up and follow his orders as a result. Hookshanks often dresses the part of an orphan himself and appears to be one unless a PC successfully opposes his Disguise check with her Perception check (gnome PCs get a +5 bonus on this check).

HOOKSHANKS GRULLER

CR 1

XP 400

Male gnome rogue 2

NE Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +6**DEFENSE**

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 18 (2d8+6)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** -1; +2 vs. illusions**Defensive Abilities** defensive training, evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** mwk kukri +4 (1d3+1/18-20)**Special Attacks** hatred, sneak attack +1d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd;

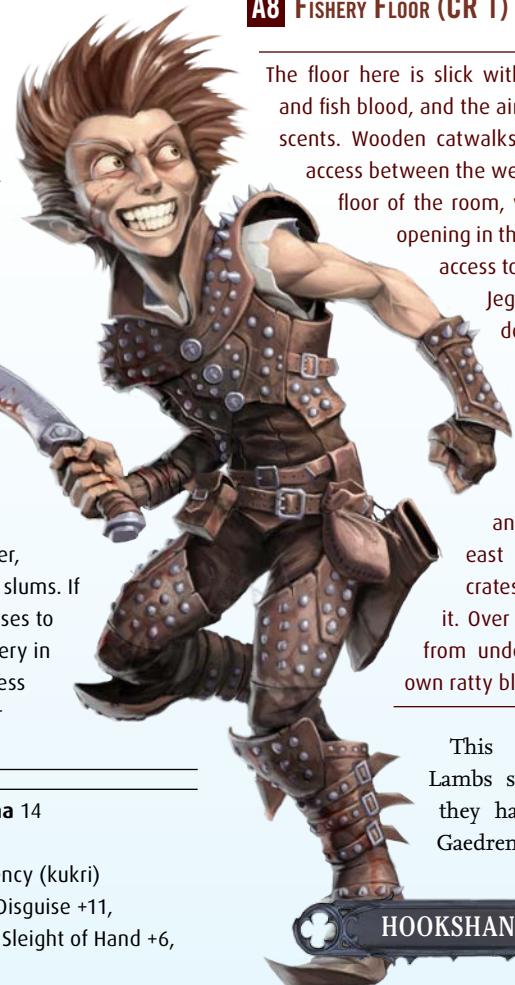
concentration +4)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound*
(DC 13), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals***TACTICS****During Combat** Hookshanks orders

the orphans to attack the PCs (they do so if Hookshanks succeeds at a DC 9 Intimidate check), then moves to open the door to area A4 to yell out an alarm and let Bloo enter the fray. He prefers to use his kukri in melee combat against intruders.

Morale If reduced to 4 hit points or fewer, Hookshanks attempts to flee into the slums. If caught, he begs for his life and promises to tell the PCs everything about the fishery in return for mercy. He knows more or less everything about the place except for what’s in Gaedren’s den (area A14).**STATISTICS****Str** 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13**Feats** Deceitful, Martial Weapon Proficiency (kukri)**Skills** Acrobatics +1, Bluff +9, Climb +5, Disguise +11, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +10, Swim +5**Languages** Common, Gnome, Sylvan**SQ** gnome magic, rogue talent (combat trick), trapfinding +1**Gear** studded leather, mwk kukri, disguise kit, key to cabinet, 7 gp**LAMM'S LAMBS (4)**

CR 1/3

XP 135 each**hp** 5 each (see page 18)**HOOKSHANKS GRULLER**

The floor here is slick with river water, bits of seaweed, and fish blood, and the air is thick with the accompanying scents. Wooden catwalks to the north and south allow access between the western part of the fishery and the floor of the room, which is ten feet lower. A wide opening in the floor to the south allows direct access to the sloppy, muddy water of the Jeggare River a further three feet down, while to the northwest stands an immense eight-foot-tall wooden vat, its sides caked and waterproofed with tar. Inside is a foul-looking mixture of chum, river water, and who knows what else. To the east are stacked many barrels and crates, each with a fish painted on it. Over a dozen small hammocks hang from under the catwalks, each with its own ratty blanket and pillow.

This room is where Lamm's Lambs spend much of their days if they haven't yet earned enough of Gaedren's trust to go on pickpocketing

excursions in the city. The immense vat is filled with a foul combination of river water, seaweed, fish, and a weak acidic mixture. During the day, a pair of Lamm's Lambs use long oar-like stirring rods to keep the mixture churning, working from atop the two catwalks. Every hour or so, some of the orphans harvest buckets of slurry and fill barrels for that evening's shipment, while other kids refill the vat with more water drawn up from the bay to the south and call out for additional fish from the bin in area A7.

Working conditions here are abysmal, and many orphans die from disease and mistreatment at the hands of the thugs. A typical work day is 12 hours long, with a single 10-minute lunch break in the middle of the day and a dinner break just before bedtime. Meals almost always consist of gritty bread and dock dumplings, but Gaedren rewards the "good kids" with sweet pastries every Sunday. These pastries are pretty much all the poor orphans have to look forward to—many of them have taken to eating only a tiny bite of their pastries each day to stretch them out over the week.

Creatures: Five orphans toil in this chamber during the day, watched over by an unforgiving taskmaster named Giggles, a half-orc brute who titters as he beats children who aren't working fast enough. Giggles lost an eye to a devilfish several years ago, and his face still bears several angry pucker-shaped scars from the creature's suckers. He wears his scars with pride. If no one has raised the alarm, Giggles does so when he spots the PCs and then attempts to force the orphans (Intimidate DC 9) into attacking them.

GIGGLES CR 1

XP 400

Male half-orc fighter 2
CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
(+6 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 21 (2d10+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee flail +6 (1d8+3)

Ranged composite longbow +3
(1d8+3/x3)



GIGGLES

TACTICS

During Combat Giggles lives up to his name in combat, chortling and snickering at anything remotely funny (and often at things that aren't funny at all). He focuses his attacks on whoever struck him most recently in a combat. Giggles uses his Bludgeoner feat to deal nonlethal damage with his flail at first, hoping to catch the PCs alive for later interrogation, but if he's reduced to 15 or fewer hit points, he starts dealing lethal damage instead. He drinks a *potion of cure light wounds* whenever he's reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, if he can disengage from melee.

Morale Giggles fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Bludgeoner^{UC}, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (flail)

Skills Acrobatics -3, Intimidate +6

Languages Common, Orc

SQ orc blood

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (3); **Other**

Gear chainmail, composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, flail, 72 gp

LAMM'S LAMBS (5) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 5 each (see page 18)

Orphans: If the PCs win the urchins' favor here, several use long-handled wooden push brooms (whose bristles are filthy beyond reason) to jab at Giggles. He must succeed at a DC 10 Acrobatics check each round to avoid tripping over these brooms.

Story Award: Award the PCs 135 XP for each orphan who survives the fight.

A9 KRAKEN'S FOLLY

The rotten deck of this ancient sailing ship seems to be barely intact; its hull is worn and thick with seaweed and barnacles. The ship is held together primarily by the layers of old rope that lash it securely to the pilings that support the fishery and the nearby boardwalk. The rickety walkway leads along the ship's starboard, a foot below its railing. A single wooden door leading into the aft cabin bears a crude painting of a red fish on its surface.

This derelict, the *Kraken's Folly*, was moored here by the fishery's previous owners, and over the years it has become a part of the building—it is



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no longer seaworthy. Gaedren has little use for the ship other than as a way to come and go from his den.

With the exception of the deck within 10 feet of the stern, the surface of the ship is quite weak. Any Medium or larger creature that walks upon the rotten wood toward the bow breaks through, falling into area A11 and taking 1d6 points of damage from the fall unless it succeeds at a DC 12 Reflex save.

A10 SPIDER NEST (CR 1/4)

The air in this room is thick and musty. Thick sheets of cobwebs hang from the walls and mounds of blankets, cushions, and straw clutter the floor. To the south, a narrow flight of stairs leads down into the ship's hold.

Creature: This filthy cabin has become the lair of a dark brown long-legged spider the size of a cat—one of Korvosa's notorious drain spiders. While such creatures are normally sewer inhabitants, this spider is part of a larger nest in the hold of the *Kraken's Folly*. Highly aggressive, the spider lunges to attack the first person to enter the room. This spider and those dwelling in the hold below can't stand the scent of the vermin repellent Gaedren keeps on hand in his den, and they automatically fail their Fortitude saves to resist the effects of this alchemical paste.

DRAIN SPIDER

CR 1/4

XP 100

hp 4 (see page 477)

A11 KRAKEN'S FOLLY HOLD (CR 1)

Dark and dank, the ship's hold smells of mildew. Several barrels, crates, and other containers lie stacked here and there. Dust and grime cover the floor, except where river water has collected in puddles.

Gaedren had a secret door built into the hull of this ship, allowing access to area A12 and beyond. The door can be spotted with a successful DC 20 Perception check, and if the PCs notice the faint trail of Gaedren's tracks leading to and from the door through the filth on the floor with a successful DC 15 Survival check, they gain a +10 circumstance bonus on attempts to spot the secret door.

Creatures: Four drain spiders dwell in this long-abandoned hold—they're quite aggressive, and move to attack anything that enters this area unless they smell the pungent odor of vermin repellent.

DRAIN SPIDERS (4)

CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 4 each (see page 477)

A12 UNDERPIER (CR 1)

A narrow space exists under the fishery, with about three feet of room between the floor of the eastern side of the building and the languid, foamy river water below. Wooden pilings support the building, and thick mats of moss and cobwebs hang from ropes and rusted chains between them. A wooden walkway floats on the river's surface, winding along the inner wall of pilings that supports the building's frame above. The walkway leads from the sodden ship to the east all the way west to a small two-and-a-half-foot-square door that leads into an understructure below the fishery's land-bound half. The pilings below this understructure are densely arrayed, leaving only narrow gaps into the water below that area.

When an orphan outlives her usefulness, it usually falls to Giggles to lower the poor child through the hole in the floor of area A8 into a skiff below, so she can be sent to area A13 to speak to Gaedren. Such orphans are never seen again, having been fed to Gaedren's pet alligator.

Creature: The waters under and surrounding the fishery have become the territory of a jigsaw shark that scavenges the food scraps that drift out from area A13 or leavings cast aside from the operation in area A8. (Gaedren's thugs enjoy dropping scraps through the hole there to encourage the shark's presence, delighting in how the sight of it frightens the orphans.) It isn't above attacking anyone who falls into the water, but only leaps out to attack those on the underpier if it is attacked and damaged first.

Jigsaw sharks are a breed common to the waters off Varisia's southern coast, particularly the Mushfens. Known for their distinctive jagged markings, mottled hide, and fierce temperament, jigsaw sharks are capable of living in freshwater as well as salt water, and often swim far up rivers or into the depths of the Mushfens in search of food.

JIGSAW SHARK

CR 1

XP 400

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N Medium animal (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., keen scent; **Perception** +6

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 11 (2d8+2)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Perception +6, Swim +10

1



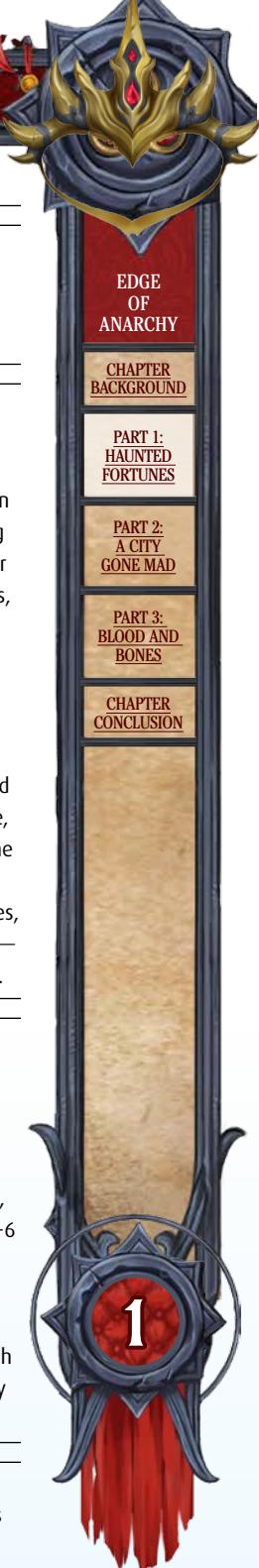
A13 Gaedren's Playground (CR 4)

The door to this area from the underpier is 2-1/2 feet square and kept locked (Disable Device DC 20), but the brass key Yargin carries can unlock it. The strange size of the door makes it somewhat awkward for Medium creatures—as a result, it takes a move action for a Medium creature to pass through this door unless the creature succeeds at a DC 20 Escape Artist check.

The air in this large room is chilly and stinks of the river, thanks to a huge opening in the floor that drops away to the river shore three feet below. Several pilings emerge from the waters to support the roof eight feet above the floor, with mossy ropes slung between them. In two places, rusty manacles hang from the ropes over the water. Two five-foot-wide walkways cross the hole to the other side of the chamber, where a collection of old cabinets, lockboxes, and piles of clutter are strewn about. Chipped porcelain plates, a cracked goblet, badly rusted silverware, an old wooden shield with a crossbow bolt embedded in it, the odd dinged helm, and other “treasures” litter the floor of this side of the chamber. Three tables heaped with clutter stand amid this mess. In the southwest corner, a wooden door provides access to a walled-off section.

Creatures: Gaedren Lamm—a twisted thieving snake, a plague on Korvosa’s forgotten children, and all-around despicable wretch—can be found here. The foul man usually spends his time sitting at one of his tables and sorting the previous day’s haul, painstakingly examining, appraising, and cataloging his loot. Every sunset, Gaedren’s little pickpockets return from a day on the streets and turn their takings over to Yargin, who then lowers the daily haul through the trapdoor in area A6 down to this room. Most of what the Lamm’s Lambs steal ends up being classified as junk and tossed aside, while the true finds go into Gaedren’s lockbox in area A14 to be fenced by Yargin every month or so. Every few weeks, Gaedren loads all the refuse back into a few crates in a skiff and has one of his thugs dispose of it by sinking the crate out at sea—the amount of clutter currently in the room means such a trip will happen soon.

Gaedren uses the rusty manacles hanging from the ropes to feed his pet alligator, Gobblegut, who dwells in the waters below. Typically, he has Giggles hang a doomed orphan by the ankles and then slowly lower the child down into Gobblegut’s snapping jaws, stringing out the torment for his own twisted entertainment by making the



child answer impossibly complex questions and having Giggles drop him a few inches each time the orphan fails to answer.

Gaedren Lamm is a jaundiced and bent corpse of a man, his eyes yellowed and skin speckled from age. His left leg has a pronounced limp as he shuffles about. His old skin can no longer stand the chafe of armor more significant than padded armor, but the gray suit of armor he does wear is magical. On his rare trips outside, he also wears a tattered wide-brimmed sun hat to protect his bald head from sunburn.

Gaedren is well-schooled in the credo “secrets can kill,” and the miserable cur hasn’t survived to become the nasty old man he is now by letting people get the drop on him. Yet he’s also a proud and bitter man, used to fighting tooth and nail to keep what’s his. In his youth, a more cautious Gaedren would have pulled up roots and fled his lair at the first sign of trouble, abandoning all of his thugs to their fate. Today, Gaedren doesn’t take this route—he elects to stay and fight, not out of any loyalty to his thugs but simply because he’s grown too greedy to give up what he thinks of as his. As such, if the PCs take more than one foray to reach this point, they still find the cantankerous old man here, stubbornly clinging to what is fated to be his final hideout.

Of course, Gaedren recognizes each of the PCs when they enter to confront him. Depending on his prior relationship to them, his response can vary from an outflow of profanity and threats (“I should have fed you to Gobblegut the moment you showed up snot-nosed on my stoop!”) to job offers (“I know you! I always thought you’d make a good partner—what say you shiv these other fools for me? The pay’ll be more than fair.”) to panic (“You! How the hell did you find me?”). Try to ensure that Gaedren personally threatens or insults each PC at least once, if not before combat begins, then certainly during a fight with the old man. Anyone who mentions Zellara’s name to Gaedren gets a snicker and the following cryptic response, “Yes, I remember her. Such beautiful eyes and silky hair! I couldn’t bear to feed them to my pet—she’s in the next room if you’d like to speak to her...”

GAEDREN LAMM

CR 2

XP 600

Male old human expert 4/rogue 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 20 (6d8-10)

Fort -1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities evasion

Weaknesses limping gait

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft.

Melee +1 dagger +6 (1d4-2/19-20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Although he is much higher level than the

PCs, Gaedren’s age has all but crippled him. He’s aware of his flaws and limitations, but his bitter and cruel personality gets the better of his judgment. His first act in combat is to fire a crossbow bolt at Gobblegut—assuming he hits, the sudden pain drives the cantankerous alligator into a frenzy. Gaedren then turns his crossbow on the PCs, remaining away from the edge of the pool and hoping that Gobblegut takes care of the PCs. He switches to his dagger only if confronted in melee.

Morale Although unwilling to give up his latest home, Gaedren knows when he’s in trouble. If reduced to fewer than 6 hit points, he tries to escape to one of the skiffs tied to the hidden walkway in area A12 to row away. Of course, if Gobblegut is riled up, navigating the walkway around the alligator’s den might just be the last thing Gaedren does. It’s unlikely that Gaedren can escape the PCs, but if he does, they may well have secured a significant recurring enemy—see What If Gaedren Escapes? on page 27 for more details.

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 13, **Con** 7, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +15, Disguise +11, Handle

Animal +12, Intimidate +12, Linguistics +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10, Swim +6

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Infernal, Orc, Shoanti, Varisian

SQ rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding +1

Gear +1 padded armor, +1 dagger, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, brass key (unlocks all doors in the fishery), rusty iron key (unlocks the strongbox in area A14)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Limping Gait (Ex) Age has not treated Gaedren well.

Although his mind remains sharper than ever, his body is failing. The most significant manifestation of Gaedren’s long life of crime is his limp; an old wound to his left leg reduces his base speed to 15 feet. This, combined with the way his old age reduces his physical ability scores, reduces his overall CR to 2.

GOBBLEGUT

CR 2

XP 600

Alligator (use the statistics for crocodile; *Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 51)

hp 22

TACTICS

During Combat If enraged (such as if shot by Gaedren), Gobblegut bellows and snaps at anyone within 5 feet of the edge of the pool. The alligator has to succeed at a DC 20 Swim check to surge out of the water high enough to bite at someone that close to the edge, and even then the cover provided grants his target a +2 bonus to its AC. If there's more than one target, roll randomly to see who Gobblegut tries to bite—even Gaedren could be a target, as the old man's treatment of Gobblegut has hardly been kind over the years. Anyone who the alligator successfully grabs is automatically pulled down into the water below, but the alligator doesn't perform a death roll on a victim if any other potential targets remain in area A13. Instead, the alligator drops the grabbed victim in preference for continuing to attack more targets on the ledges above.

Morale If he's ever reduced to 7 hit points or fewer, Gobblegut retreats into the water to hide. He can't escape the pool below this area, and if cornered, fights to the death.

Treasure: Very few of the trinkets or junk on the tables are worth much—Gaedren has already stashed the valuables in his strongbox in area A14. Still, seven applications of foul-smelling vermin repellent (*Pathfinder Player's Companion: Adventurer's Armory* 11) can be gathered from the table. Finally, one cabinet contains a darkwood coffer worth 100 gp. The coffer is latched but not locked, and contains 20 doses of shiver that Gaedren hasn't yet sold to addicts. The drug is currently worth 25 gp per dose on the street.

Development: Take note of what the PCs do with Gaedren's body if he's killed—if they leave it here, Gaedren's son Rolth finds the body soon after and they'll face an undead version of their old enemy at this chapter's end!

Story Award: If any PC has the Drug Addict trait and the party either destroys the shiver or turns it over to the city watch (who in turn destroy it and reward the PCs 500 gp to boot), award the party 400 XP per PC with this campaign trait.

In addition, for bringing Gaedren to justice (be it by his death or imprisonment), the PCs earn 400 XP for each character who has the Betrayed, Love Lost or Unhappy Childhood campaign trait, as these characters finally have the opportunity for some measure of closure.

A14 GAEDREN'S DEN

This foul-smelling room seems to be a combination bedroom and study. A wooden bed with a lumpy mattress stands against the east wall, while a round table heaped with dirty plates, bread crusts, stained goblets, fruit rinds, and scuttling cockroaches sits nearby. At the foot of the bed sits a large strongbox; a slightly rusted lock secures it and a moldy ledger with pages rippled from moisture sits atop its lid. A sagging dresser filled with moth-eaten clothes well past their glory days is in one corner. What appears to be a wooden hatbox surrounded by a small cloud of flies sits atop this dresser.

This is Gaedren's home and castle, the place where he sleeps and eats. The old man's personal habits are very much on display—he has little interest in cleanliness. Bedbugs infest the sheets, a chamber pot pushed under the bed is badly in need of cleaning, and the bits of food heaped on his table have attracted many roaches.

The hatbox contains something shocking—Zellara's severed head, poorly preserved and decorated with unsightly makeup in a crude attempt to give her dead flesh the semblance of life. A successful DC 10 Heal check is enough to note that the fortune-teller has been dead for weeks. Her harrow deck (see Treasure below) sits in a smaller wooden box under the ragged stump of her neck.

Treasure: The ledger on top of the strongbox contains a remarkably complete and concise accounting of much of Gaedren Lamm's criminal activities, although the entries are somewhat coded. A character who speaks Varisian and succeeds at a DC 15 Linguistics check can decipher the relatively simple code after a few hours of work. This ledger is worth more than Gaedren's death or capture to the Korvosan Guard, for it contains notes that

allow the authorities to close the books on dozens of minor (and a few major) unsolved cases. The Korvosan Guard pays the PCs a bounty of 250 gp for handing over the ledger—if the PCs provide a key for the code in which it is written, this reward increases to 500 gp.

Although the vast majority of the loot Lamm's Lambs bring in is fenced relatively

GAEDREN LAMM



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quickly, the old man has a habit of sorting through each batch for bits of finery that catch his eye, which he adds to his collection of treasures kept in the footlocker at the foot of his bed. The locked footlocker can be opened with the rusty iron key Gaedren carries or a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. Each of these treasures is individually wrapped in a cloth that's tied shut with twine. The treasures include a narrow teak cigar case inlaid with tiny bits of jade (worth 25 gp) a 2-pound gold ingot bearing the Chelax coat of arms (worth 100 gp), a miniature gold crown (worth 350 gp), a fist-sized scrimshaw carving of a kraken with garnets for eyes (worth 200 gp), a silver ring bearing the inscription "For Emmah—the light in my nights" (worth 150 gp), a highly realistic and highly scandalous ivory figurine of two entwined succubi (worth 450 gp), a masterwork shuriken, an adamantine arrowhead, a masterwork dagger with a strange blade shaped almost like a key bearing the inscription: "For an inspiration of a father" (worth 750 gp), an abalone-shell holy symbol of Shelyn (worth 300 gp), a glass tube containing a dose of oil of keen edge, an obsidian wand of magic missile (23 charges), a crystalline vial (itself worth 50 gp) containing a dose of silversheen, and a bejeweled brooch with a broken clasp.

Even to an untrained eye, this brooch is obviously the most valuable object in the entire collection. The circular gold brooch depicts a house drake and an imp coiled around each other in an almost yin-yang pattern. The pseudodragon's eye is an amethyst, while the imp's eye is an emerald. The brooch itself is worth 2,000 gp, but more importantly, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check recognizes it belongs to Queen Ileosa herself. It was pickpocketed from a thief who stole it from a jeweler who was contracted by one of the queen's handmaidens to repair the clasp—Gaedren hoped some day to use the brooch's return as leverage with the queen should he ever be arrested.

One last item of value remains in the room: Zellara's harrow deck. It remains haunted by Zellara's spirit even after Gaedren is defeated. This spirit grants the deck several helpful powers and is effectively an intelligent magic item (see page 437 for more details). Zellara's spirit can sense great destinies in the PCs, and her guidance through this haunted harrow deck becomes a key element in later chapters.

Development: The strange, key-shaped dagger is in fact a gift from Gaedren's estranged son Rolth, a man the PCs are destined to confront in the next chapter. Rolth is also one

of Korvosa's most notorious killers, a man who slaughtered over 15 dozen victims between 4690 and 4697 before his killing spree mysteriously ended. A character who studies the curious blade and makes a successful DC 20 Knowledge (history or local) check recognizes the style of blade as one used by the notorious killer. (More information about

Rolth and the Key-Lock Killer can be found on page 452.) A spell like *object reading*^{OA} or the psychometry occult skill *unlock*^{OA} used on this unique blade gives a glimpse of Rolth's appearance as he looked 2 decades ago or perhaps an unsettling glimpse of the murder of a young woman in her home, but time has dulled the psychic impressions on the blade. At most, this should foreshadow Rolth's appearance in the next chapter.

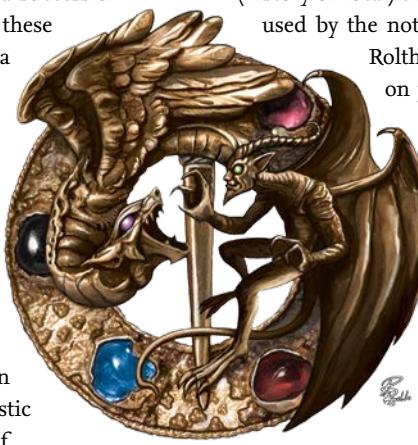
Story Award: The PCs earn 800 XP for recovering Zellara's harrow deck and discovering her fate. In addition, if the PCs recover the ledger and break its code, proof that Gaedren orchestrated the murder from the Framed campaign trait surfaces; award the party 400 XP for each PC who has this trait.

WHAT IF GAEDREN ESCAPES?

The combination of Gaedren's advanced age (which reduces his speed) and the likelihood of his own abused pet alligator getting revenge on him make it unlikely that the criminal will escape the PCs, but if he manages to flee the old fishery (perhaps with the aid of surviving NPC minions, who slow pursuit down), Gaedren makes his way into the back alleys of Korvosa to lie low. If you want him to make a reappearance, consider the following options.

Gaedren's Son: Although Gaedren has sired several children in his long life, only one still lives, and that son is arguably a worse human than his father. Rolth Lamm is destined to cross paths with the PCs in the next chapter, but if Gaedren escapes, he may well seek his son out. Whether Rolth accepts his father's return and allies with him (in which case you can have the PCs encounter Gaedren again at Rolth's Side in Chapter 2), or Rolth simply murders the old man and hands him over to his derro ally Vreeg (see the end of this chapter) is left to you to decide.

Into Old Korvosa: Alternatively, Gaedren may make his way to the tangled alleys of Old Korvosa to cash in on some old favors. He might seek shelter in Eel's End, finding common cause with Devargo Barvasi as a fellow shiver peddler, or perhaps he lies low until Chapter 3, when the PCs can encounter him once more as an advisor to the Emperor of Old Korvosa.



QUEEN'S BROOCH

PART 2

A CITY GONE MAD

At some point during the PCs' final foray into the fishery, word swiftly spreads of King Eodred II's sudden death. Time this development so that the PCs have no notion of it until they emerge from the fishery with Ileosa's brooch and Zellarra's haunted harrow deck in their possession. As they step out onto the streets of the city, be it day or night, it should be immediately obvious that something major has happened, for parts of Korvosa are in flames!

The sight of smoke rising on the horizon or (if the PCs emerge at night) the flickering glow of fires is impossible to miss. The frantic clang of alarm bells sing out in harmony with a multifarious cacophony of screams, the clash of steel on steel, shrieks of terror, and even the periodic detonation of arcane power. A wing of Sable Company hippogriff riders swoops overhead, angling toward Castle Korvosa at a breakneck pace. One of the badly wounded hippogriff mounts rains blood down on the street around the PCs before it succumbs and crashes headlong into a statue, taking its rider and itself to a messy, bone-crunching demise. The others in the flight do not pause to check on their fallen ally. Amid the chaos, the voice of a Korvosan herald cuts through the din: "The king is dead! Long live the queen!" only to be shouted down by ragged cries of "Hang the queen!" or "The usurper must die!" The city has gone mad while the PCs battled Gaedren in his lair.

THE KING IS DEAD

Eodred II's demise takes the city by surprise—true, his health had been declining (due to the secret regimen of poison in his diet), but his sudden turn catches most of the government and citizenry off guard. Rumors spread quickly that he suffered from some disease beyond what even the priesthoods of Sarenrae and Abadar could cure. Some say that even Asmodeus's disciples were summoned from their pentacle temple in the deep of night to try their hand at restoring the king. With the king's death, Queen Ileosa ascends the Crimson Throne, much to the displeasure of most Korvosans, who view her as a petulant gold-digger at best. Worse, the castle seneschal has vanished, supposedly slain in one of the initial riots that



EODRED ARABASTI II

broke out at the base of Castle Korvosa when the grim news of Eodred II's death was proclaimed.

Desperate citizens already stifled by Eodred II's spendthrift reign—salty dock workers, soot-covered smiths, and all manner of artisans and laborers—roar at the thought of Ileosa taking the throne. Stevedores abandon the seafront wards and caravan guards leave Northgate.

Frustrated merchant ships and wagon convoys turn around when they find no one to offload their goods, much less buy them. The movement of food and other staples into the city slows to a trickle, and thousands vie for the last sack of flour or bundle of firewood in the market. Riots erupt throughout the streets. Those who

do not rove the streets with cudgel and torch in hand instead lock their doors against the gathering mob. The Bank of Abadar closes its gilded gates, and a contingent of the Coin's Faithful stand at the ready, armed with crossbows to repel would-be looters. The world-famous (some would argue infamous) institution of learning known as the Acadamea closes its doors as well, shutting students and professors within its walls until order can be restored. In the space of a dozen hours, all of Korvosa's oppression and anger explode into chaos. The city perches on the edge of anarchy.

Ill-equipped for this level of civil calamity, the military arm of the city falters, and even the hippogriff-mounted marines of the Sable Company are pushed beyond their limits. The Korvosan Guard does the best it can to quell the riots, yet its members are cut off from each other and forced to operate on their own. Several junior officers, thrust into the harrowing responsibility of command, break under the pressure and abandon their posts, or worse, become part of the problem by attempting to institute martial law.



Korvosa is in desperate need of heroes to bring order—if someone doesn't step in soon, the city might very well tear itself apart.

At this point, you should use the Korvosa (Anarchy) statistics for the city, as presented on page 399 of Appendix 2.

INVESTIGATING THE QUEEN

At some point during this campaign, the PCs will cross paths with the woman destined to become their primary antagonist—Queen Ileosa. Wise characters will do a little digging on the queen early on, perhaps once they learn they've recovered her brooch or after they hear a particularly intriguing rumor about her (see page 403 of Appendix 2 for several rumors relating to the queen).

Some of the queen's history is relatively common knowledge; a PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (nobility) or a DC 20 Diplomacy check to gather information recalls this lore. Korvosa's new queen was born Ileosa Arvanxi in the Chelish city of Westcrown in 4687 AR. Most expected her to marry into a more powerful Chelish line, yet she scandalized her family by abandoning Cheliax and sailing to the city of Korvosa.

As a politically savvy aristocrat, Ileosa learned much about Eodred II's tastes and desires before she arrived. When she presented herself to him, she was able to coax him to fall in love immediately. The two were wed after a scandalously short courtship, and, perhaps the most shocking move of all, Eodred II spurned his numerous previous lovers in favor of his new queen. Barely 17 years old when she took Eodred II's side, Queen Ileosa has managed a minor miracle in the past several years—she's single-handedly shifted the citizens' dislike and disapproval away from King Eodred II to herself with her open distaste for Korvosa (a city she's been heard to call "a backwater colonial village" more than once).

Ileosa's true feelings about the city she now rules are suspected by many, yet confirming the following information should be difficult for the PCs this early in the campaign. Ileosa herself certainly bore no true love for Eodred II—he was nothing but an endurance test to her, a necessary stepping stone on her path to becoming the ruler of Korvosa. For while she continues to loathe the city, she does not loathe its riches. When they married, Eodred II was, in her eyes, an old man, but it soon became apparent that he was not as old as she anticipated—his health remained good and no sign of the Crimson Throne's curse seemed evident. As the months turned to years, Ileosa began to fear that Eodred II would be the first of Korvosa's kings to die of old age, and as her patience wore thin, her thoughts turned more and more to regicide. Yet the young queen was also wary and self-doubting, a combination that kept these murderous thoughts nothing more than idle fancies. It was only when she discovered

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

That the king is dead and won't be coming back is an important part of this campaign's plot. The players may be intrigued or confused as to how a powerful noble who had been in ill health could die so suddenly, when *remove disease* spells can be had aplenty—likewise, they may wonder at why the king simply isn't restored to life via *raise dead*.

Of course, the real reasons behind this are that Ileosa simply won't allow it. The poison she used to murder him is a cunning design by the Red Mantis assassins meant to mimic the symptoms of a sickness, so that attempts to cure it via spells like *remove disease* simply fail. Put plainly, no one realized the king was suffering from poisoning and not a disease, and while a *neutralize poison* or *heal* spell could have saved him, the queen helped ensure that no one got a chance to try such a tactic.

The ravages of the poison mimicked a fast-acting form of leprosy, and once Eodred II is dead, the queen has his body sealed away in the royal crypts below the castle. Word that the body was in no shape for public viewing certainly sparks rumors of conspiracy, yet still the king is given no significant public funeral. His body crumbles quickly, leaving very little to communicate with via *speak with dead*. *Resurrection* or more powerful magic could, in theory, restore him to life, but by the time the PCs (or any other significant NPCs) have the resources to attempt this, Eodred II's soul has been judged and he is beyond the power of mortal magic.

The PCs may learn answers to some or all of these mysteries in time as the campaign plays out, but for now, they should remain just that—mysteries.

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the Kazavon's fangs in the Castle Korvosa dungeons that she would find the ruthlessness and determination to act on her murderous plans.

CITY IN TURMOIL

After the PCs emerge from Gaedren's fishery to find Korvosa in chaos, their fate is in large part left to them to decide. You can use some of the descriptive text detailed above to impress upon the PCs how quickly things have gone bad, and if they really want to strike out on their own, Appendix 2 has a wealth of information on the city. Yet two options in particular are more likely than anything else the PCs might try to do, and it is these two options that trigger the Curse of the Crimson Throne Adventure Path: returning to Zellara's home and researching the curious brooch they found in Gaedren's lair. Beyond these two events, the PCs will certainly

THE KORVOSAN RUMOR MILL

As Curse of the Crimson Throne progresses, the PCs should have ample opportunities to overhear gossip and rumors; some may have little to do with the campaign's actual plot, but others might directly lead the PCs to investigate key portions of the Adventure Path on their own. A large table of rumors for the PCs to stumble across is presented on page 403 of this book in Appendix 2. Note that many of these rumors point to mysteries and events that the PCs may well have a hand in exposing; if you roll up a rumor that the PCs have already addressed in such a way, you should adjust the rumor to account for that. Having the PCs hear a growing number of rumors about how they solved a problem is a great way to give them in-game feedback about their growing success.

Regardless of how often the PCs hear rumors, before **Event 11** begins, they should hear rumors about the city's growing discontent with Ileosa and gossip that the king didn't die of natural causes at all, but was deliberately killed by infection or dark magic.

encounter other set pieces during the course of this chapter—the remainder of this part presents several complex and often dangerous encounters for you to use throughout “Edge of Anarchy.”

Korvosa remains in turmoil for much of this chapter, with things finally starting to calm down only when the PCs begin the final part of this chapter. Present the events below according to the time frame provided, but in whatever order best fits the PCs’ adventures. You can certainly have some of the later events take place once order is more or less restored—pockets of chaos and anarchy remain in Korvosa for some time to come, after all.

No maps are provided for any of the following events. This is because they are intended to occur organically as your PCs explore and travel—the location of each event will depend entirely on when you time it to occur. The PCs might encounter the drunken guard in a run-down tavern or staggering through a wide street, for example, and Otyugh Uprising could occur in a narrow alley, broad thoroughfare, or even in the basement of a shop where the PCs happen to be. Paizo produces a wealth of flip-mats and map packs for use in urban environments, and it might be handy to have some of these on hand for use in these encounters as your PCs explore the city. Alternatively, you can use some of the other street and building encounter maps spread throughout this book as needed for the encounter.

The amount of time that passes during this chapter is likewise left vague. There is no schedule the PCs need to

adhere to in order to succeed—they can blaze through this chapter’s encounters in the space of a week if they wish (and if they have the luck, resources, and skill to do so without tragedy), or they can take their time, spending weeks or even months at a time solving the various problems that come before them. This Adventure Path assumes that the events of “Edge of Anarchy” take about a month to play out between the death of King Eodred II and Queen Ileosa’s attempted execution of her chosen scapegoat, as detailed in the Chapter Conclusion on page 66, but the exact amount of time that passes is left to you and your party.

EVENT 1: A RETURN TO ZELLARA’S HOME

This event occurs if the PCs return to Zellara’s home at any point.

After defeating Gaedren, the PCs should discover Zellara’s severed head, at which point it should be obvious that the woman has been dead for some time. Even if they don’t discover her grisly remains, she’s the one who sent them on their mission to the fishery, and thus it is logical to report back to her on the mission’s success. When the PCs return, they find Zellara’s home abandoned, and showing clear signs of having been empty for weeks. No sign of the food, the wall hangings, the rugs, or Zellara herself can be found—the furniture is in pieces, scattered throughout the room under a thick layer of dust disturbed only by the footprints and evidence the PCs left themselves on their prior visit.

If the PCs have *Zellara’s harrow deck* at this point, now would be an excellent time for Zellara to use the deck’s *major image* power to manifest before the PCs and tell them the truth, and explain how she can help them in the dark times ahead (revealing the various powers of her harrow deck). If the PCs didn’t find her deck, Zellara’s link to her home of 30 years remains strong enough that she can manifest one final ghostly image of herself to steer the PCs back to the fishery to find it. In any event, there is little guidance Zellara can provide the PCs at this time, and nothing left in her home they can use. Going forward, she can manifest her power only through the haunted harrow deck.

EVENT 2: THE MYSTERIOUS BROOCH

This event occurs when the PCs turn their attention to the expensive but mysterious brooch they find in Gaedren’s stash of treasure.

As mentioned in area **A14**, it takes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check to recognize it as one of the queen’s possessions. Even if none of the PCs recognize the source of the expensive brooch from Gaedren’s treasure, the first merchant they take it to for appraisal certainly does. The merchant excitedly informs the PCs that the



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brooch belongs to the queen, and furthermore, that it's been registered with the Korvosan Guard as stolen property. The queen has even offered a reward for its return. Certainly, the merchant doesn't want to risk her job by purchasing jewelry stolen from the queen, even in these doubtful times. She advises the PCs to return it to Castle Korvosa and claim the reward of 1,200 gp. When the PCs follow up on this, proceed with **Event 8** on page 34.

EVENT 3: MAD PROPHET (CR 1)

This event should occur not long after the PCs first start traveling through the streets of Korvosa.

Creature: The death of King Eodred II brings doomsayers and end-of-the-world lunatics out of the woodwork. The majority of them are relatively harmless prognosticators content to lurk on their street corners and preach about the end of the world. A few are more sinister, shouting, "The Eye of Groetus has turned from the Boneyard to look upon Korvosa!" and similar strange, obscure threats. In this encounter, one wild-haired and sick-looking lunatic fixates on one of the PCs, convinced that the character appeared to him in a dream. He screams that the PC will near death during a time of great sickness and peril during Korvosa's darkest hour, and that this event will usher in a

new age of writhing doom. The insane prophet's ravings are without real basis, but the disease he carries certainly isn't. If the PC he's obsessed with lets the mad prophet grapple her (the mad prophet has a CMB of +1), that PC is exposed to filth fever (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 557).

MAD PROPHET

CR 1

XP 400

N human commoner 1/rogue 1 (use the statistics for a beggar; *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 300)

hp 13

EVENT 4: IMPS AND DRAGONS (CR 4)

This event can occur at any point as the PCs are traveling the streets of Korvosa.

A student at the Acadamea is required to undertake several dangerous steps in order to graduate, one of which is the summoning of an imp. Many students opt to take imps as familiars, but just as many fail and let those imps get loose. As a result, imps are a constant problem in Korvosa. Nests of them lurk in the eaves of the city's shingles, often attempting to ally with or manipulate city gangs. Fortunately, the indigenous house drake population, tiny dragons evolved from the pseudodragons

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who dwelled in the region before Korvosa was founded and adapted readily to the city's advent, are quite adept at keeping Korvosa's imp population under control.

Creatures: Two or three times per year, the imps and house drakes take to flight in the skies above Korvosa to engage in mass battles, and the recent events in the city trigger more conflicts between them. In this event, a pair of imps swoops down to attack the PCs, seeing them as easy sources of gold and targets for mayhem. On the second round of combat, four house drakes swoop in to attack the imps, likely saving the PCs from being savaged by the tiny outsiders. The house drakes generally avoid contact with humanoids and don't stick around long after the fight is over, but at your discretion, if a PC saves one of the creatures, it might stay long enough to use its healing magic on the PCs as a reward.

HOUSE DRAKES (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each**hp** 19 each (see page 474)

IMPS (4)

XP 600 each**hp** 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 78*)

Development: As the chapter progresses, you can repeat this encounter as often as you wish—feel free to increase the number of imps or to delay the arrival of the house drakes if the PCs are able to handle them with ease!

EVENT 5: MEET THE MOB (CR 3)

This event can occur at any point as the PCs are traveling the streets of Korvosa.

Creatures: Bands of rioting laborers run in mobs, battering anyone dressed in finery with snarling yowls of “Die, dandy!” and “Death to the false queen!” You can use encounters with these angry mobs as a way to steer the PCs along Korvosa’s streets if you wish, or simply to remind them of how bad things have grown in the city in the aftermath of the king’s demise. If you want to throw the PCs a bit more into the action of a riot in progress, though, have them come across the edge of a riot where a mob of thugs wielding shovels, chair-legs, and other club-like weapons surround Amin Jalento, a beardless young nobleman. One of the laborers, a burly woman with greasy strings of hair framing her rotund face, jeers and addresses the young man in a booming voice, “Bet’cha never worked an honest day’s wage in your life, eh, Queen’s Man? M’brother had his arm crushed

by a barrel on the docks when he was younger than you. Never raised a mug of ale with that wrist again. Wanna know what it feels like?” If the PCs don’t swiftly intervene,

the mob attacks Amin. With a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or DC 20 Intimidate check, a PC can disperse the mob long enough to let Amin escape to safety—otherwise, the PCs might find themselves in a fight against six 1st-level human commoners.

RIOTERS (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Human commoner 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10**hp** 9 each (1d6+6)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.**Melee** club +1 (1d6+1)

TACTICS

During Combat Rioters attack the closest target unless an obvious well-to-do socialite is present, in which case a rioter focuses her attacks on the apparent noble.

Morale A rioter flees combat as soon as she takes any lethal damage.

STATISTICS
Str 13, **Dex** 11, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11**Feats** Great Fortitude, Toughness**Skills** Perception +4, Profession (laborer) +4**Languages** Common**Gear** club

AMIN JALENTO

CR 1

XP 400

Human aristocrat 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

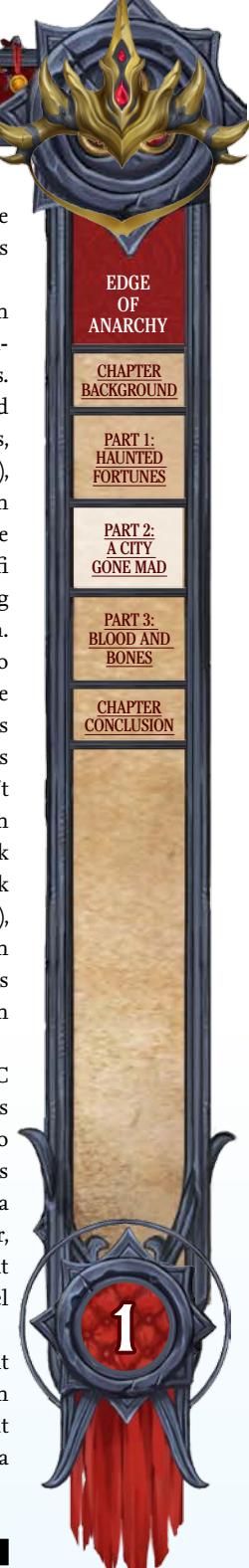
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE
AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)**hp** 19 (3d8+6)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk rapier +5 (1d6+1/18–20)

TACTICS

During Combat Amin has never been in a real fight and this encounter with the rioters convinces him that fighting is not his thing; he fights defensively if he has no chance to flee combat.



Morale Amin flees from combat as soon as he can.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier)

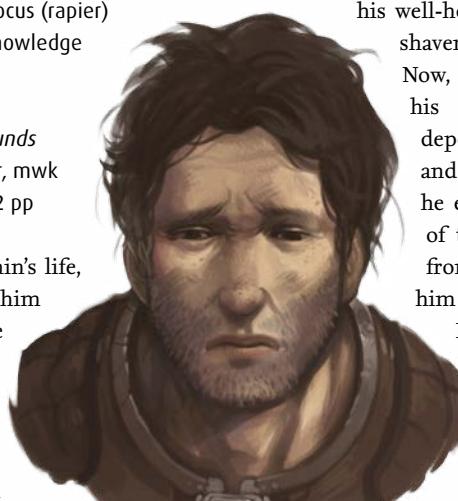
Skills Acrobatics +5, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Perception +5

Languages Common

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds

(2); **Other Gear** mwk leather armor, mwk rapier, noble's outfit, signet ring, 12 pp

Story Award: If the PCs save Amin's life, award them XP as if they'd defeated him in combat. In addition, he offers the PCs a gold ring worth 250 gp as thanks for their aid.



GRAU SOLDADO

EVENT 6: DRUNKEN GUARD (CR 5)

This encounter can take place on the street, in a tavern, or anywhere the PCs might run across a drunken soldier. It should occur at some point before they're sent after Trinia (see **Event 11** on page 38).

Creature: The drunken soldier in question is a man named Grau Soldado. Born in Sandpoint over on Varisia's west coast, Grau fled an alcoholic and abusive father at an early age. He wound up here in Korvosa where, after a failed pickpocketing attempt, he was taken in by one of Korvosa's most talented fighters, a man named Vencarlo Orisini. Vencarlo got the boy an apprenticeship with a good-natured smith, and when Grau wasn't working, the swordmaster tutored the young man free of charge in the art of swordplay. But ill fate intervened. Grau was not Vencarlo's only star pupil. A young woman named Sabina Merrin caught his interest as well. Though he fought against it, Vencarlo found himself wildly attracted to the beautiful Sabina—as did Grau. The fact that Sabina herself was more interested in women complicated matters even further, eventually resulting in a three-way confrontation of frustration and misunderstanding, with Grau successfully engineering a duel between Vencarlo and Sabina, a duel that resulted in the loss of two of Vencarlo's fingers and a scar on Sabina's cheek. Sabina abandoned her lessons with Vencarlo and joined Korvosa's Castle Guard. When Vencarlo discovered Grau's hand in the events soon thereafter, he expelled him in a rare rage. The loss of his teacher and the end of his unrequited love was too much for Grau, and he increasingly took to drink. Still, his skill at swordplay remained and he swiftly found a place among the Korvosan Guard, rising quickly through the ranks to Watch Sergeant. With the advent of the king's death

and the following riots, Grau abandoned even these responsibilities and now spends all his waking hours drunk and despondent.

Grau used to be a lean man, with steely muscle on his well-honed physique. He was always clean-shaven, with bright piercing green eyes. Now, he's a mess—he hasn't changed his uniform in days (perhaps weeks, depending on when you time this event), and he reeks of stale sweat and ale. When he encounters the PCs, he mistakes one of them for an old friend named Neffi from Sandpoint and insists on buying him several drinks at the closest tavern.

It doesn't take Grau long, though, to bemoan what he believes will be the end of Korvosa—the king's death hit him hard, but the riots hit him harder. If the PCs don't commiserate with him (which requires either a successful Bluff check opposed by Grau's Sense Motive check or a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check),

he becomes convinced that one of the PCs (perhaps even the one he thinks of as Neffi, or another PC who reminds him of Vencarlo or Sabina) is the reason why he's fallen on hard times, and he draws his sword and demands a duel.

With a successful DC 18 Knowledge (local) check, a PC recognizes him as the well-liked watch sergeant he was before the king's death. The right thing to do for Grau is to escort him to Citadel Volshynek, where his fellow guards restore his sobriety and clean him up. Alternatively, a lesser restoration spell can bring him back to being sober, at which point he thanks the PCs greatly and realizes what an ass he's been making of himself—he returns to Citadel Volshynek on his own in this event to make amends.

If the PCs agree to a duel with Grau, he's ready to fight there and then. If the PCs fight in public, the Korvosan Guard arrives in 3d6 rounds to try to break things up, but Grau agrees to relocate to a more private area (such as a back alley) if the suggestion is made.

GRAU SOLDADO

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human fighter 4/rogue 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 63 (6 HD; 2d8+4d10+28)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** -2 (+1 vs. fear)

Weaknesses drunk

OFFENSE**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 mithral longsword +6 (1d8/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**TACTICS**

During Combat Grau's sword is a masterful piece of work—the only thing of any real value he still owns. It represents the talent he once had, but as long as he's drunk, he makes poor choices. He always uses Power Attack and more or less ignores any opportunity to set up a sneak attack. He limits his attacks to the PC whom he challenged to a duel, but if any other PC enters the fight he sputters and cries out "Foul! You'll pay for that, varlet!" and from that point on attacks random PCs each round, to the extent that he may well provoke attacks of opportunity as he moves from foe to foe.

Morale If Grau is reduced to fewer

than 10 hit points, the fight goes out of him entirely; he drops his sword and breaks down in tears of self-loathing.

STATISTICS**Str** 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4 (+6 sunder); **CMD** 19 (21 vs. sunder)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +2

Languages Common, Varisian**SQ** armor training 1, rogue talent (resiliency), trapfinding +1

Gear mwk chainmail, light steel shield, +1 mithral longsword, 32 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

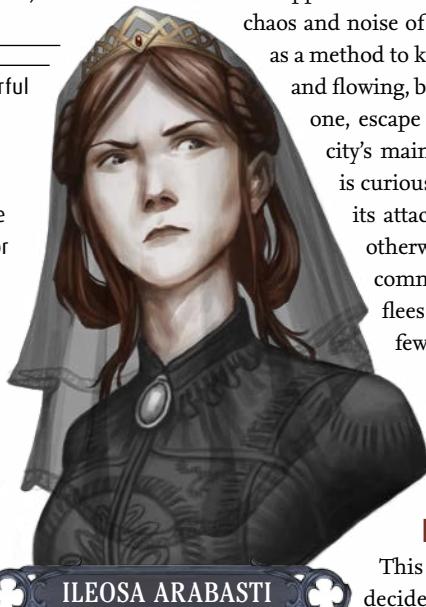
Drunk (Ex) As long as Grau remains drunk, he functions as if he were sickened—these penalties are included in the statistics above.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to get Grau back to the Korvosan Guard more or less intact, award them XP as if they'd defeated him in combat.

EVENT 7: OTYUGH UPRISEING (CR 4)

This event should occur at some point as the PCs explore the streets of Korvosa and after they've reached 3rd level.

Creature: A rumble issues from below, and a moment later the city street cracks apart and long fissures run across the bricks. The road bursts upward, casting chunks of rock

**ILEOSA ARABASTI**

into the air and raining bricks on the surrounding area. The stench of sewer filth and garbage belches forth, heralding the approach of a loud and hungry otyugh, drawn by the chaos and noise of the world above. Korvosa uses otyughs as a method to keep the sewers under Old Korvosa clean and flowing, but now and then some of them, like this one, escape their pits and find their way into the city's main sewers. The otyugh is as hungry as it is curious about all the noise up top, and focuses its attacks on the PCs if they swiftly engage—otherwise it starts snatching up shrieking commoners and biting them. The monster flees back into the sewers if reduced to 10 or fewer hp.

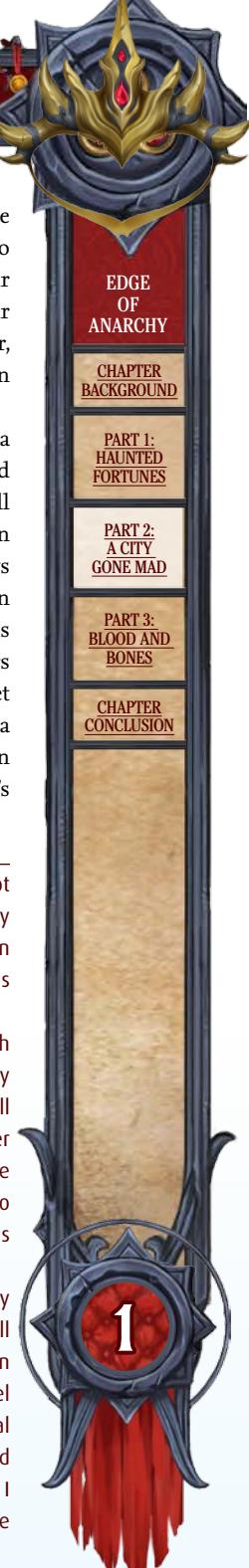
OTYUGH**CR 4****XP** 1,200**hp** 39 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 223*)**EVENT 8: LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!**

This event takes place as soon as the PCs decide to return the brooch they found in Gaedren's lair to the queen. This event triggers much of the rest of this chapter, and you should strive to have the PCs deliver the brooch soon after its recovery at the end of Part 1.

The initial civil unrest and outbreaks of riots are quelled quickly, thanks to swift action by the Korvosan Guard, the Sable Company, and the Hellknights. By the time the PCs decide to approach Castle Korvosa to return the queen's brooch, the streets should once again be relatively safe to walk, but a thick tension remains in the air. For the remainder of this chapter, riots, fires, looting, and similar events continue to erupt, and certain small parts of the city remain out of control. As a result, when this event begins, stop using the Korvosa (Anarchy) statistics for the city and use the Korvosa (Unrest) statistics on page 399 instead.

Castle Korvosa's long shadow looms over the city as a terrifying testament to the power of whatever mighty overlord ruled this land thousands of years ago. A magnificent achievement of architecture, the castle walls and spires rise high into the sky above. The entire structure looms even higher because of its ancient foundation—a Thassilonian monument in the shape of an immense flat-topped pyramid. Although one corner of this impressive foundation has fallen into ruin, the additions built onto the sides by eager and talented Korvosan masons have created one of the most recognizable landmarks in all of Varisia.

Castle Korvosa can be approached from all four directions—ramps and stairways allow access up the sides of the pyramid to the courtyard surrounding the



central structure. Normally, petitioners to the monarchy (such as PCs seeking to return a stolen brooch) would approach from a broad ramp, wait in a public courtyard to speak to the Korvosan Guards on duty, and hope for a chance to be heard. In these frantic times, the Castle has been locked tight and bristles with swords and crossbows. Guards demand to know the PCs' business as they approach, then converse among themselves quickly at the answer. As long as the PCs provide a reasonable answer, the nervous guards don't immediately chase them off. Mentioning that they wish to return the queen's missing brooch certainly gets things moving a little faster, as does a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check.

Before too long, one of the guards nods at the PCs and indicates that they should head up the stairs to the courtyard. Weapons must be left with the guards at the base of the stairs—no obvious weapons are allowed in the queen's company. Characters who refuse to part with their weapons are not allowed to see the queen, but those who acquiesce have no need to fear—their weapons are returned as soon as their business with the queen is done.

The invitation to ascend to the castle isn't one extended out of respect for the PCs or even allowed so they can return the stolen brooch in person—Queen Ileosa has told her guards that any group of trustworthy-seeming adventurers that approaches for work should be allowed into the castle to introduce themselves. The Korvosan Guard finds this an unwise decision, but the queen's orders are orders. If she wants to trust mercenaries to aid in keeping the city's peace, it's the Korvosan Guard's duty to help her realize the plan.

A group of obviously nervous guards armed with heavy crossbows and swords escort the PCs up to the castle. Feel free to refer to the map and encounter locations described in Chapter 6 of this book as needed, keeping in mind that the castle as presented at the end of this campaign is in many ways a different place than it is now. As the PCs reach the top of the pyramid and the wide stairs curling up to the castle's third floor, where the Crimson Throne awaits, they are greeted by a stern-looking woman dressed in magnificent full plate armor—the queen's handmaiden, bodyguard, and closest companion: Sabina Merrin (see page 454).

Sabina nods curtly at the PCs as they approach, then says, "Greetings. They tell me you've something that belongs to the queen. Is this correct?" If the PCs show her the brooch, Sabina smiles and steps aside, holding out a hand to welcome the PCs to Castle Korvosa. As the guards make to follow, she steps in: "You may return to your posts. These heroes pose no threat to the queen." Sabina hopes to engender a bit of trust in the PCs by doing so—she certainly isn't threatened by them and is confident she can handle any trouble they might have planned.

Sabina Merrin is not much for mincing words. She curtly asks the PCs how they'd like to be introduced to the queen. As they answer, she continues to appraise their trustworthiness and skill, and more importantly, their eagerness to please the queen. As they round the corner, she announces their arrival with a loud, clear voice, then steps aside to allow the PCs to enter the throne room.

Queen Ileosa sits upon the Crimson Throne. She is a vision of beauty despite the black mourning dress and veil she wears in honor of her husband's death. A small silver coffer sits in her lap. The throne room itself—an open area with a vaulted ceiling, stained-glass windows of past kings and queens looking down from the eastern wall, and crimson tapestries hanging along the others—is pristine but strangely empty. An immense fireplace offers additional light and heat to the hall, and a silk carpet provides a gently arching path to the throne's base. Sabina takes the brooch from the PCs, hands it over to her queen with a flourish, and then takes up a position at the throne's left side as Ileosa addresses the PCs.

"This brooch was stolen from me some time ago—I had not expected to see it again, truth be told. And yet, here on my darkest day, you come before me with kindness. The return of this brooch is much more than an honorable deed. It is inspiration. It is hope.

"I love Korvosa, as my husband did before me. His death has shocked the city as it has me, but I will not see his legacy destroyed in death, and I shall not see my city torn apart. All Korvosa stands at the precipice of a disaster wrought by her citizens—these riots cannot continue. You have already done my heart a great service in returning this precious heirloom to me on this dark day, and you shall be rewarded. Yet perhaps you can serve your city more.

"The Korvosan Guard is stretched thin, and it could certainly use the aid of heroes such as you. If you so choose, I shall have Sabina see to it that you have an escort of guards when you leave here—they can see to your safe journey to Citadel Volshynek. I shall send word ahead of you to Field Marshal Cressida Kroft to let her know you are on the way. Now, I need to retire to my chambers—my grief has drained me. Again, I thank you for the kindness you have shown me, and I hope your days of serving the crown are only just beginning."

With this, the queen directs Sabina to hand over the reward for returning the brooch. The bodyguard swiftly does so, handing the small silver chest (itself worth 50 gp) to the PCs. Inside the red-velvet-lined interior rest 12 gold ingots imprinted with the royal seal of Korvosa—each bar is worth 100 gp.

At this point, Queen Ileosa excuses herself. With a whirl of the hem of her mourning dress, Queen Ileosa is gone from sight. Sabina escorts the PCs back out of Castle

Korvosa and, if they wish, assigns them an escort to the Citadel before bidding them farewell also.

Of course, Queen Ileosa is playing the PCs this whole time. The only truly honest emotion she shows is her delight at getting back her brooch. Yet the PCs should, at this point, have no reason to suspect the queen of deception. She's currently under the effects of a *misdirection* spell, and any attempt to read her aura instead reads Sabina's aura, indicating that Ileosa is a lawful neutral human. This is the primary reason Ileosa never lets Sabina wander far from her side in public—she needs the woman to shield her true nature from prying divinations.

If the PCs accept Sabina's offer of several Korvosan Guards as escorts, they should be able to make the journey to Citadel Volshynek without trouble—continue at this point with **Event 9**, below.

Story Award: In addition to the monetary award, grant the PCs 800 XP for meeting the queen and returning her recovered brooch.

EVENT 9: WELCOME TO THE GUARD

Citadel Volshynek is located in Midland, overlooking Jeggare Harbor, where it serves as the base of operations for the Korvosan Guard. The Citadel currently operates on a skeleton crew, as almost all available guards are hard at work in the city, desperately trying to keep order. Two nervous guards stand at the entrance to the yard, but as the queen promised, the PCs are expected. The guards wave the party through, and one escorts the PCs into the central keep, where a harried and tired-looking woman rises from her desk to greet the PCs—this is Field Marshal Cressida Kroft, an attractive, dark-haired human woman dressed in red armor. She introduces herself and asks for the PCs' names as she bids them to sit. Since Eodred II's death, Cressida hasn't slept, yet she bears her exhaustion well, in no small part due to regular visits from a priest of Abadar who casts *lesser restoration* on her to help in fighting back fatigue. She sighs deeply as she speaks to the PCs. (See page 442 for Cressida Kroft's statistics and additional information about her personality and background.)

"Ah, yes—you are the ones sent by Queen Ileosa. Greetings! My name is Cressida, and heroes of your caliber are exactly what Korvosa needs now. You've been on the streets. You know better than me how bad things are out there. It's breaking my heart to see Korvosa tear itself apart like this. Every little bit of aid we can get from upstanding citizens like

you helps. If you're willing, I'd very much like to retain your services as agents of the Guard. You will, of course, be well compensated for these services."



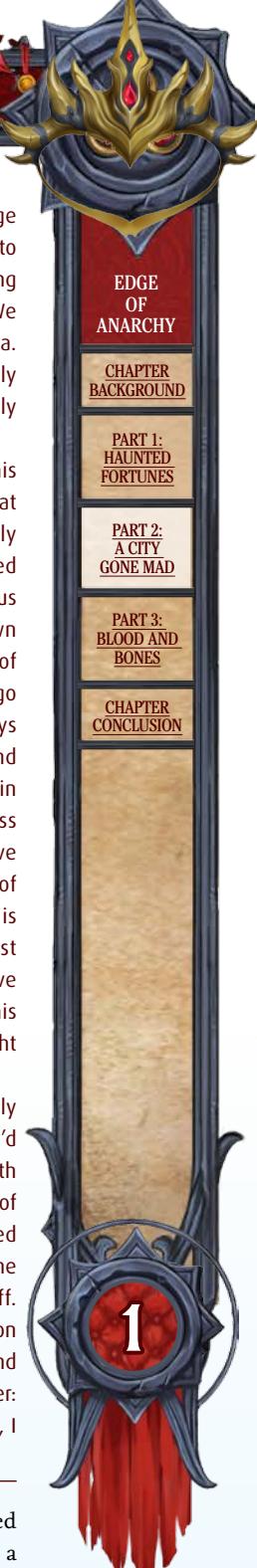
CRESSIDA KROFT

Assuming the PCs agree to hear her out, Cressida continues. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Korvosa's got enough troubles as it is without my own guards losing their way. Many have deserted their posts, more concerned about friends and family than the city. I can understand this, yet not all of the deserters have family—some of them are simply using the riots as an excuse for personal gain. One such man is Verik Vancaskerkin. Worse than a lone deserter, he's convinced a small group of fellow guards that Queen Ileosa is going to ruin the city. Whether she does or doesn't isn't the point—right now, we've got a city-wide crisis on our hands, and I need all of my guards working with me to see us through. A deserter is worse than a lost resource—it's an infection. I can't afford to pull any of my other patrols off duty to deal with Vancaskerkin, and I'd rather not expose any of them to him anyway, since I don't want Vancaskerkin to infect more guards with his talk of secession, nor do I want some overly patriotic guard killing Vancaskerkin outright. I need impartial, skilled talent. Talent like you.

"Vancaskerkin and his followers have holed up in an abandoned butcher's shop up in Northgate—a place once called 'All the World's Meat.' I need you there. Try to avoid killing any of the deserters if you can, but if you must, they brought it upon themselves when they threw in their lot with Vancaskerkin. I'd really prefer it if you could capture Vancaskerkin alive and return him to me for interrogation, but if he makes that impossible, I'll accept his body as well. Finally, see if you can find out why Verik deserted—if there's more to it than simple personal politics, I need to know immediately. Bring me Verik alive, and there's a five hundred gold in it for you. Dead, he's worth only half that."

Cressida offers the PCs a spot in the Citadel barracks if they need somewhere to stay the night or to rest. This gives the party not only a place to sleep and eat while they're in the service of the Guard, but also a place to retreat to for safety between adventures. Cressida has worked with adventuring parties before and knows how to treat them well. She's destined to become one of the PCs' stronger allies during Curse of the Crimson Throne, so make an extra effort to see that the PCs see her as a friend and supporter.

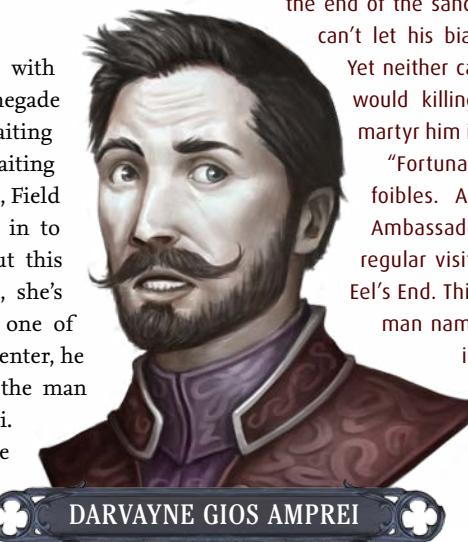


Once the PCs head out to investigate All the World's Meat, continue with that encounter location in Part 3, starting on page 44.

EVENT 10: THE AMBASSADOR'S SECRET

After the PCs resolve the situation with Verik Vancaskerkin (with the renegade guard either behind bars and awaiting trial for desertion or in a coffin awaiting burial) and have collected their reward, Field Marshal Cressida Kroft invites them in to her office with another job offer. But this time, when she meets with the PCs, she's not alone. A handsome man sits in one of the chairs at her desk, and as the PCs enter, he rises and bows. Cressida introduces the man as an old friend—Vencarlo Orisini. With a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) check, a PC recognizes him as one of Korvosa's most respected and renowned teachers of the honorable arts of fencing and swordplay. Vencarlo is a charming man, and he bows deeply as he's introduced (see page 462 for his statistics and details on his history and personality). Cressida explains that although Vencarlo himself has always been an outspoken critic of Korvosa's government, she has always valued him as a friend and advisor. Particularly in these dark times, his input about the temperament and morale of the citizens of Korvosa is invaluable to the field marshal, who's desperate to get the city back under control. Vencarlo is complimentary and polite to the PCs, congratulating them on their successes and noting that "If Korvosa had more fine folk like you, we'd already be out of this mess." He pays particular attention to attractive female PCs, going as far as to kiss the backs of their hands and offering one of them his chair. The man is gregarious, and you should strive to present him as a gentleman and philosopher capable of carrying on intelligent discussion on a variety of topics, but before he can really get to know the PCs, Cressida gently cuts him off.

"As much as I would enjoy continuing the conversation, I fear we just don't have time. Vencarlo has learned something that could degrade into sanctions, embargoes, or even war against Cheliax if we don't act now. This problem is a man named Darvayne Gios Amprei, an ambassador from Cheliax whose disdain for Korvosa is well documented, though he's taken great pleasure in what our city has to offer. Even before this recent unrest, this man was ready to recommend to his government a sanction on trade, or perhaps even an embargo. Vencarlo has learned through his own considerable sources that Ambassador Amprei's actual goals are to undermine



DARVAYNE GIOS AMPREI

Korvosa's economy to the point where he can buy up large portions of the city from desperate landholders. He plans to establish himself in a position of power here before advising

the end of the sanctions with his allies in Cheliax. We can't let his bias or personal plans hurt Korvosa.

Yet neither can we take drastic action—not only would killing him be wrong, but it'd simply martyr him in Cheliax's eyes.

"Fortunately, the ambassador has his foibles. Again, Vencarlo has learned that Ambassador Amprei has been making fairly regular visits to a place in Old Korvosa called Eel's End. This den of vice is run by a dangerous man named Devargo Barvasi, better known in Korvosa's alleys as the King of Spiders. I'd love to put Devargo out of business, but he pays his vice taxes regularly and never causes any problems—in fact, since he keeps his business constrained entirely within the five

ships moored at Eel's End, he's actually one of the least of my worries. Truth be told, I can't decide whether Devargo is a stig or a kraken. He seems like a bloodsucking pest most days, but sometimes I fear just how far his tentacles have wormed their way into our great city. In this case though, his insidious web stretching across Korvosa's underworld might be to our advantage.

"Devargo would never let someone he recognizes as an ally of the Guard into Eel's End, but your group's a different case. I'd like you to pay a visit to Eel's End and secure an audience with Devargo. Find out what he knows about Amprei, get proof of any illicit goings-on the ambassador might be involved with, and bring that proof to me. I can use it to undermine any forthcoming attempts by him to get Cheliax to cut us off. Devargo might not be willing to part with his information easily. I'll supply you with some gold to bribe him, and whatever's left over you can keep for yourself. Remember: Devargo is dangerous, but so are you—if things get violent, I wouldn't mourn his passing."

Cressida hands one of the PCs a small pouch filled with 1,000 gp—their funds for bribing Devargo. With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, the PCs can convince Cressida to increase this amount to 1,500 gp. As she prepares to give the PCs the address of Eel's End, Vencarlo steps in, saying he was heading back up to his academy in Old Korvosa anyway, and that he'd love to escort the PCs as far as Old Korvosa whenever they're ready.

Continue with Eel's End on page 49 when the PCs depart with Vencarlo on their way to Old Korvosa.

Development: When the PCs return to Citadel Volshyeneck and hand over the scandalous letters to Field

Marshal Cressida Kroft, she blushes as she reads them and quickly passes them to a clerk for safekeeping, stating that they should work perfectly should the need for some leverage against the ambassador ever come up. She thanks the PCs again, rewarding them with a further 500 gp over and above the bribe money she gave them earlier to pay Devargo. If she's received word that the King of Spiders is dead, she seems even more pleased but can't, legally, award the PCs any more gold for something she'd rather not admit to knowing about. Instead, she tells them that, "for going above and beyond in Korvosa's service," she'd like to award each PC the drake's mark, a medal that symbolizes a character is a champion of Korvosa. These medals are worth 400 gp, but more importantly, they grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks made against citizens of Korvosa if worn openly.

EVENT 11: THE QUEEN'S SCAPEGOAT

Once the PCs have dealt with Eel's End, Devargo, and the ambassador's secret, a startling new rumor starts to filter through the streets—at your discretion, the PCs may even hear of this rumor first while they're still at Eel's End. At this point, the whispers that Ileosa was in some way responsible for Eodred II's death begin to shift, with new rumors suggesting a local artist was responsible for his demise. Shortly after hearing these rumors, the PCs should receive an urgent summons from Cressida Kroft regarding this new information (if they're not already on their way back to report to her on their mission to Eel's End).

With these rumors riling the city up, once again use the Korvosa (Anarchy) statistics for the city (see page 399).

The gossip about the king having been murdered by Queen Ileosa, of course, is correct. As soon as Queen Ileosa learns of these rumors, she realizes that she needs resolution as swiftly as possible, theorizing that the people of Korvosa don't want to see her hang for regicide as much as they just want someone to pin the blame upon. She decides to find a scapegoat for the king's death, and she has just the right person in mind—a pretty young artist named Trinia Sabor who painted a portrait of the king not half a month before his death. Eodred II's chamberlain secured the girl's services, hoping that regular visits from the artist would improve his health and spirits. Trinia spent hours in private audience with the monarch while Ileosa seethed with jealousy. Trinia's innocent eyes, golden hair, and lithe frame set many of the castle guards gawking and murmuring as she came and went, and Ileosa even swore she caught Eodred II gazing wistfully at the girl on more than one occasion.

Ileosa's selection of Trinia as the scapegoat is not random—fueled by Kazavon's wrath, Ileosa's natural jealousies and prejudices are amplified. Her jealousy of potential rivals is the same emotion destined to fuel

one of Korvosa's most dangerous new organizations—the Gray Maidens. Even as she engineers Trinia's capture and execution, Ileosa has already begun forming this soon-to-be notorious faction of guards.

As regards setting up her scapegoat, Ileosa's first act is to question the guards she saw gawking at Trinia. With Sabina's aid, Ileosa coaxes eye-witness (but fabricated) accounts of Trinia behaving oddly during her trips to the Castle. Eventually, working on her own, Ileosa wrenches a false confession from one guard who, under the duress of agonizing torture, swears he was part of the young painter's plot and saw her slipping a specially prepared poison powder into Eodred II's tea the night he took ill and her portrait of him was completed.

This confession, repeated in the presence of Sabina and several Korvosan Guard officers (including Cressida Kroft, who alone among those gathered silently suspects the reliability of the confession), triggers a city-wide hunt for the young artist. Word of the confession spreads rapidly, and the guard's apparent suicide (a leap from one of the towers of Castle Korvosa—a leap, in truth, propelled by Sabina, who was in a rage that the guard hadn't come to her earlier with the news) cements Korvosa's anger. In no time, Trinia's name becomes a household word, and once again riots threaten to erupt in the streets. This time, however, the cries are not for the queen's death, but the death of the king's "true" murderer, Trinia Sabor.

Such is the state of things when Cressida Kroft contacts the PCs with a third mission, taking them into the solitude of her office to speak to them alone, without the prying ears of other officers. Cressida suspects there's more going on than meets the eye and wants the PCs to verify the truth behind the accusations if they can.

"You've doubtless heard the stories that the king's killer has been named. Yet there's something more going on here, I'm afraid. Queen Ileosa could have quietly had this Trinia Sabor arrested at any time, yet the way in which she revealed the information to the city seems to me like she wants the riots to come back. With the city the way it is, the girl doesn't stand a chance of a fair trial. They'll lynch her the moment they catch her. Even if she did kill the king, mob justice isn't the way. Worse, if she's innocent, the real killer—if indeed the king was murdered at all in the first place—can use this distraction to throw us off the trail forever.

"Before Trinia is captured and executed, I need to be absolutely sure she's guilty. And that means we need to catch her before someone else does. I've managed to determine her last known address—a flat in Midland at 42 Moon Street—but soon, so will the rest of the Guard, and the mob itself, for that matter. These rumors have riled up the locals something fierce, and there's even bands of Hellknights of the Order of the Nail patrolling the streets looking for her. On top of all



**EDGE
OF
ANARCHY**

**CHAPTER
BACKGROUND**

**PART 1:
HAUNTED
FORTUNES**

**PART 2:
A CITY
GONE MAD**

**PART 3:
BLOOD AND
BONES**

**CHAPTER
CONCLUSION**



this word is that Queen Ileosa's not satisfied with what the Korvosan Guard's been doing to address the situation, and that she's preparing to disband the Sable Company and reveal a newly founded order of specialized guards to help bring order to the city. For now, I've still got a fair number of Korvosan Guards who are loyal to me, but the problem is that I've got them at work keeping things from getting any worse—and if I were to send them into Midland, they'd trigger a riot.

"I'm sure you can see where this is going. I need you to get into Midland, find Trinia, and bring her back to me so we can deliver her, safe and sound, to somewhere she can be interrogated—preferably with magic, so we can be absolutely sure about her role in Eodred II's death. Get in there, catch her, and get out without letting the mob or the Hellknights or the queen's guards get their hands on her. I'll have loyal agents and officers nearby to take her into custody. If you can get her to one of them, we'll be in the clear. Any questions?"

Cressida does her best to answer any questions the PCs might have, but she is clearly worried—she'd like the PCs to be off as soon as they can. She promises them a reward of 1,000 gp if they can deliver Trinia safe and sound to a member of the Korvosan Guard and points out that every minute they delay is 1 more minute for the mob in

Midland to grow. Once the PCs agree to take on this latest task, proceed with **Event 12** below.

EVENT 12: INTO THE SHINGLES (CR 4)

This event occurs once the PCs travel to Midland to seek out the suspected killer Trinia Sabor.

Although the PCs might worry that finding Trinia will be difficult, entering Midland without arousing suspicion is relatively easy if they take pains to avoid the main streets. An encounter with rioters along the way (see page 32) would certainly help build tension if you want, but the PCs should be able to arrive at 42 Moon Street soon enough. They find the address in a densely built section of the city, a place where, at ground level, direct sunlight is a rarity. Above, jury-rigged catwalks, overhanging roofs, lines of laundry, and homemade bridges of rope and boards create a cluttered tangle, a multi-level mess of gutters, upper floors, and rooftops. This is the slum above—a sprawl known as the Shingles (see page 410 in Appendix 2 for more details).

This is where Trinia lives, and this is why the mob hasn't found her yet. Still, the woman is frightened. Her neighbors remember how excited she was when she was hired to paint the king's portrait, and how generous she was with the gold she took away from the commission,

SHINGLES CHASE OBSTACLES

The following obstacles lie in wait for Trinia and the PCs in the chase through the Shingles.

Card	Obstacle	Skill and DC
1	Cluttered rooftop	Acrobatics DC 10 or Climb DC 15
2	Crumbling rooftop	Climb DC 15 or Acrobatics DC 20
3	Gap in wall	Escape Artist DC 15 or Climb DC 20
4	Hidden shortcut	Perception DC 15 or Escape Artist DC 20
5	Narrow hole in wall	Climb DC 20 or Escape Artist DC 25
6	Narrow rooftop leap	Acrobatics DC 15 or Climb DC 20
7	Burst of stirges	Intimidate DC 15 or Perception DC 20
8	Tightrope shortcut	Acrobatics DC 20 or Climb DC 25
9	Very hidden shortcut	Perception DC 25 or Climb DC 30
10	Very steep roof	Climb DC 10 or Acrobatics DC 15
11	Avoid drain spider nest	Survival DC 15 or Knowledge (nature) DC 20
12	Surly rooftop vagrant	Intimidate DC 10 or Bluff DC 15
13	Jagged nails	Perception DC 10 or Acrobatics DC 15
14	Cranky rooftop tomcat	Handle Animal DC 10 or Sense Motive DC 15
15	Tangle of debris	Disable Device DC 10 or Strength DC 15

which is why they haven't yet turned her over to the crowd. They simply can't or won't believe that such a friendly, unselfish woman could have done something as terrible as killing a king. While her neighbors and friends have begun to distance themselves, they haven't abandoned her completely. As she hides out in her third-floor flat, hoping and waiting for the mob to die down so she can try to flee the city, her neighbors do their best to divert the mob away from her. When it becomes obvious that the PCs know where she lives, these neighbors send up an alarm to let Trinia know she's been found out. Only if the PCs are incredibly stealthy or manage to convince the 2d6 neighbors they encounter on their way up to Trinia's flat (each of whom can be won over with a successful Bluff check against a Sense Motive with a +3 modifier) do they have a chance to catch the woman in her home—otherwise she has a head start on the PCs in the resulting rooftop chase (see Shingles Chase on page 41).

The building Trinia's been living in is an old tenement, three floors high and containing two dozen flats, many of which are homes to artists, singers, students, and artisans. Trinia's flat is on the third floor in the southwest corner, and the PCs' directions lead them here with little problem. However, the door is barricaded by several chairs Trinia has pushed up against it from the inside (the tenement doors have no real locks). A successful DC 16 Strength check is needed to push the door open—an act that should give Trinia at least a round or 2 to get a head start on her flight through the Shingles. When the PCs gain entry to her 15-foot-by-15-foot flat, proceed to Shingles Chase after reading or paraphrasing the description of her home as follows.

This one-room flat combines all the amenities of a bedroom, a kitchen, and a painter's studio, leaving little space for much else. A stack of cheese and bread sits on the counter next to several full waterskins, while the easel in the opposite corner holds a half-completed painting of an imp and a house drake fighting atop a church steeple. A single window looks out over the tangled rooftops of the city; just under it sits a low bed.

Creature: Trinia has never been good with money—she's already spent all of what she was paid to capture Eodred II's likeness in portrait, and there's nothing in her flat of value. Certainly, there's no evidence to be found here to indicate that she killed the king. Of course, the PCs probably don't have much time to look through her flat when they first arrive. Chances are great that she's been warned of the PCs' approach by her neighbors or by the sound of the PCs fumbling at her barricaded door, in which case she's taken the time to cast *minor image* to make it appear that she's sleeping in her bed. She ceases concentrating on the illusion as soon as the PCs enter the room, so it persists for 2 rounds before vanishing. During this time, she slowly creeps away across the rooftops below her window. She must attempt a Stealth check each round, and all characters in her flat can attempt Perception checks to notice her. Anyone who looks out the window gains a +5 bonus on the check. If 4 rounds pass before she's spotted, she manages to make it over the next building's roof and around the corner and effectively escapes the PCs (only to be caught by the Sable Company a short time later).

If the PCs manage the unlikely event of reaching her flat without her neighbors giving her advance warning, the amount of time it takes the PCs to smash through



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her door indicates how much time she has to escape. She's slept in her gear, but takes time to grab her dagger and *wand of daze monster* as well before leaping out her window. In this event, she doesn't bother with *minor image*, and a successful DC 5 Perception check is all the PCs need to notice her fleeing across the rooftops.

If the PCs manage not only to get to her flat without raising the alarm but also to get into the room without smashing down her door, they find her just waking up from a fitful sleep; in this case she leaves her dagger and wand behind as she immediately leaps out the window and flees into the Shingles.

TRINIA SABOR

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 36 (see page 460)

Shingles Chase: Once the PCs spot or hear Trinia, she abandons stealth and flees at top speed across the Shingles. If the PCs want to catch her, they must give chase across the cluttered, tangled, and dangerous rooftop slums. Trinia has the advantage of familiarity with the area, but the PCs have the advantage of numbers—by attempting dangerous leaps from rooftop to rooftop, scrambling frantically up walls, and navigating narrow walkways, they have a good chance of catching her.

The Shingles are a tangled, confusing maze consisting of multiple levels, interconnected bridges, ropes, and cluttered swaths of rooftops. Vagrants, thugs, imp nests, stirges, weakened rooftops, and even the odd choker make the place even more dangerous. Catching Trinia is not a simple matter of being faster or cutting her off at a corner. Neither is it necessarily efficient to provide a map of the area—tracking the movement of a full party of PCs to every detail would compromise the excitement and fast pace of the chase.

The best way to run this encounter is to use the chase rules detailed on pages 232–233 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*. The chase covers 15 chase cards—you can select 15 appropriate cards from one of Paizo's Chase Card decks, or you can use the 15 obstacles listed in the Shingles Obstacles sidebar on page 40. If the PCs manage to completely surprise Trinia, the chase has a sudden start and all the PCs and Trinia start on the first card. If the PCs alert her beforehand but don't give her time to create an illusion of herself in the bed, Trinia has a three-card head start. If her neighbors give warning and she creates the illusion of herself, she has a five-card head start, plus one additional card per round that passes between the PCs entering her flat and realizing she's not home.

There's an additional danger in this chase beyond simply falling behind. If a character becomes mired on a card, this indicates he or she has fallen to the street below

and takes 2d6 points of falling damage. Such a character has two choices to get back into the chase: either succeed at a DC 15 Climb check to return to the Shingles (and to the card in which he became mired) or wind through alleys and over fences and through mobs to continue the chase by succeeding at a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (his choice) to move one card. A fallen character cannot attempt to move two or three cards until he climbs back up into the Shingles.

Trinia generally moves only one card at a time as long as she maintains at least a three-card lead over the PCs. She uses her *wand of daze monster* against the closest PC in an attempt to slow down pursuit and always chooses Acrobatics checks whenever she can, taking risks to move three cards when a PC is within two cards of her position. If a PC is on her same card, she uses *hideous laughter* in an attempt to shut him down for a few rounds.

If a character ends his turn on the same card as Trinia, he can attempt a single grapple check to grab and restrain her. Once Trinia is pinned, unconscious, or killed, the chase ends. Likewise, the chase ends if Trinia manages to move off of card 15.

If the PCs catch Trinia, she breaks down in tears, sobbing that she's been set up, that she didn't kill the king, and that she doesn't want to die. She's telling the truth, but it's up to the PCs to decide whether they believe her and what to do about it. If they turn her over to the queen's guards, she's carted off to Castle Korvosa to await her fate. If they make sure to turn her over to Cressida, the field marshal keeps the capture quiet and intends to pursue a fair and balanced interrogation, but unless the PCs help, word gets out and guards who are loyal to the queen intervene, forcing Cressida to hand Trinia over to Queen Ileosa.

If the PCs decide to let Trinia go, or if she escapes them in the chase, she doesn't escape the law. Not long after her escape she's spotted by a patrol of Hellknights who round her up and hand her over to the queen for a nice reward.

Only if the PCs take pains to provide Trinia with a place to hide in the city, perhaps with Cressida's direct aid, does she have a chance to escape capture. If the PCs hide her themselves, it's up to you to decide whether the deception is enough to keep her safe until the end of the chapter—see the Chapter Conclusion for more details. If Cressida is involved, she calls upon her friend Vencarlo, who within 30 minutes arrives and bustles Trinia off to a safe place in Old Korvosa to hide; in this case, you can assume she's automatically safe for the remainder of the chapter. In this case, the queen still needs a scapegoat, and one day after the chase word spreads that the assassin has been captured after all, and that she has been imprisoned in Castle Korvosa pending a closed-to-the-public trial. The PCs may be concerned in this case, but checking up on Trinia reveals she's still safe and sound. Whether or not

the rumors of the captured assassin are legitimate or not (and if they are, who might be unfortunate enough to play the role of “captured assassin”) remains a mystery for the moment, for in the meantime, Cressida has a more important matter for the PCs—continue with **Event 13**.

Once this event resolves, things in Korvosa calm. Use the Korvosa (Unrest) statistics on page 399 for the remainder of this chapter and the start of the next.

Story Award: If the PCs catch Trinia, award them experience as if they had defeated her in combat (even if they ultimately decide to hide her or let her go).

If the PCs catch Trinia and turn her over to Cressida, Cressida pays the PCs 1,000 gp as a reward. If they let her go or put her in hiding, Cressida agrees with their choice but points out that this is not the time or place to be public about such a decision.

Furthermore, she would prefer not to pay the PCs now so as to avoid a money trail, should the situation be investigated later by their enemies. She promises to pay the PCs 2,000 gp at a later date once things have settled down, and she’s true to her word, adding the 2,000 gp to the reward fee for recovering Gaekhen’s body (see **Event 13**), so that, to outward appearances, the PCs are being paid for that service instead of something subversive.

If the PCs catch Trinia and decide to turn her over to the queen themselves, Ileosa is pleased with their choice but somewhat dismissive of their actions. With a wave of her hand, she indicates that Sabina should hand the PCs a silk pouch containing 200 pp as a reward, but also invites the PCs to attend Trinia’s execution when the time comes—she makes no mention of a trial. See the Chapter Conclusion for more details.

EVENT 13: A MISSING BODY

This final event occurs soon after Trinia either is captured or goes into hiding. As news that the assassin has been apprehended spreads (even if Trinia is still in hiding and the “assassin” is merely another scapegoat selected by the queen), the mood in Korvosa once again calms down. Yet during the recent mob fervor and riots revolving around the queen’s announcement that the king was assassinated, a group of racist thugs took the opportunity to use the unrest to fuel their own agenda.

Tensions between Korvosa and the Shoanti have simmered since the city’s foundation some 300 years ago, but in recent years those Shoanti who continue to dwell in Korvosa have sought a more peaceful accord. Led by a visionary known as Thousand Bones, a large group of

Shoanti have been in talks with the Korvosan government for years now, hoping to find a way their two peoples can coexist in peace.

Thousand Bones’s mission is anything but easy. A large number of Korvosa’s citizens are prejudiced against the Shoanti and see them as little more than violent barbarians. Curbing and moderating the violence between these racists and the quick-to-anger Shoanti who dwell in and near Korvosa is a constant battle for the man. Thousand Bones’s patience reaches its limit when one of his grandsons, a young warrior named Gaekhen, is murdered by a mob that uses the unrest in Korvosa as a feeble excuse for vigilantism.

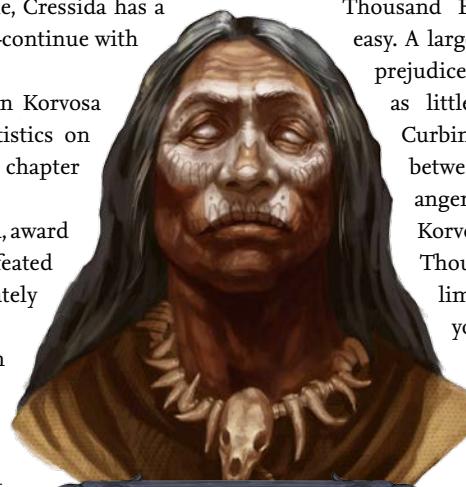
When the PCs next visit Field Marshal Cressida Kroft after dealing with Trinia (perhaps even to seek Cressida’s aid in getting Trinia a

safe place to hide), they find Citadel Volshynek’s guards unusually agitated and nervous. If questioned, the guards explain, “One of those Shoanti kids went and got himself killed, and now the rest of them are all worked up—if it’s not one riot about to erupt, it’s another! Field Marshal Kroft’s in her office now, trying to talk some sense into the Shoanti ambassador. In fact, she mentioned that she’s looking for you all to help with the situation.”

Cressida Kroft isn’t alone when the PCs arrive at her office; with her is an elderly Shoanti man of 60 winters. This is Thousand Bones (see page 458 for more details). He regards the PCs sternly while Cressida introduces him, telling the PCs that he’s a shaman of the Skoan-Quah, the Clan of the Skull. Cressida bids the PCs sit, tells them about the situation with the mob violence and the murdered Shoanti man, then turns the floor over to Thousand Bones. The old shaman speaks with a deep voice, his words carefully chosen but delivered with a barely restrained anger.

“My people have worked hard to understand those who dwell in Korvosa, yet it seems each day we see new examples of how this city’s people work just as hard to foster old hatreds. My grandson is dead, beaten to death by cowards in your city street. I do not blame you, yet still Gaekhen is dead, and my son and his kin are not so forgiving as I. They wish to return to the Skoan-Quah in the Cinderlands, to join with the Sklar-Quah and rally to war against Korvosa. This would be disastrous, for both our peoples. Amends must be made.

“Our ways are not as yours. If a body does not go whole to the fires of the ancestors, the smoke of a warrior’s spirit cannot rise to the Great Sky. If I could send Gaekhen’s body to



THOUSAND BONES



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the Great Sky with honor and dignity, his father and brothers would listen to me and stay their wrath—the talks of peace between my people and yours could continue. But he was not just murdered. His body was taken from the scene of his death, sold by a peddler of corpses to a necromancer known as Rolth, a criminal to both our peoples. I have spoken with the spirits, and they have revealed to me that Gaekhen's body has been taken to a place below this city's graveyard, a place the spirits call the Dead Warrens.

"With this knowledge, I could surely lead a group of my finest warriors into your graveyard to retrieve Gaekhen's body, but this would be seen as an act of aggression by your people. No, it falls to you to make amends for what has been done. You must bring me Gaekhen's body, lest we be forced to recover him ourselves. And although it pains my heart to say it, we will not be gentle if it comes to this."

Thousand Bones then rises, nods curtly to Cressida, and leaves the room to return to his people and await the delivery of his grandson's body. If the PCs seem taken aback, Field Marshal Kroft apologizes for the man's brusqueness, but makes it clear she agrees with his assessment. Someone tied to Korvosa needs to find the dead Shoanti's body and return it to his people as a gesture of good will, or things will quickly go from bad to worse. If the PCs can help her, there's also another 1,000 gp reward in it for them. Cressida would like the PCs to begin immediately, but she can certainly answer a few questions the PCs are likely to have.

Who is Rolth? "Ahh... Rolth Lamm has long been a thorn in my side. A failed Academae student, Rolth's a monster of a man who was expelled after the true nature of his experiments were revealed. He was butchering vagrants, stray animals, and anything else he could get his hands on to try to build some sort of golem from their collected parts. The Academae didn't press charges because it didn't want to cause a scene—it just quietly expelled him and the man's been trouble ever since. Personally, I suspect he's responsible for a large number of additional murders over the past decade, each involving mutilation to the body, but he's a slippery one and I've never been able to find any evidence against him. He might or might not be in the Dead Warrens, but anything you can find there that could lead to his arrest would be greatly appreciated." If the PCs express shock at hearing the man's last name, Cressida can confirm that Rolth is said to be the only surviving son of local crime lord Gaedren Lamm, who she may or may not know has recently gone silent. If the PCs reveal to Cressida anything about their history with Gaedren, she congratulates them and thanks them for dealing with one of the city's more notorious thugs, but apologizes that she can't officially reward them for this task since she can't officially condone vigilantism. She warns the PCs that

Rolth may well know what hand the PCs had in Gaedren's fate, and she tells them to be exceptionally wary in their dealings with the son as a result.

What are the Dead Warrens? "Korvosa's graveyards, in the Gray District, are riddled with underground chambers, some of them burrowed by ghouls or other monsters, others remnants of ancient Shoanti burial grounds. Some of these warrens are patrolled and kept clear of monsters by the church of Pharsma, yet the Gray District is a large place and the tunnels below are vast and tangled. The Pharasmins focus on containing the problems with undead and necromancers, but as soon as they wipe out one, it seems as if two are ready to spring up in its place. The problem's particularly vexing in Potter's Ward, where the bodies of the poor and homeless are buried. According to Thousand Bones, the Dead Warrens were one of his people's burial vaults. You can find the Dead Warrens in the chambers that lie under Potter's Ward."

How do we enter the Dead Warrens? "We have the man who sold Gaekhen's body to Rolth in custody: a simpleton named Elkaris. He spilled everything when we told him what was going on and how much trouble he was in. In any event, Elkaris says he delivered the body via wheelbarrow to a partially collapsed mausoleum deep in Potter's Ward, near the southern edge. A toppled and headless statue of a sword-wielding gargoyle lay in the dirt near the mausoleum's entrance—he was told to leave the body behind the gargoyle. This location matches where Thousand Bones believes the Shoanti burial grounds called the Dead Warrens are located, so that's the best place to start the search."

How will we recognize Gaekhen's body? "Thousand Bones described Gaekhen as about 18 years old with short brown hair and a distinctive scar from a firepelt's claw on his left cheek. Furthermore, Gaekhen had several large and distinctive Shoanti tribal tattoos on his arms and torso. It's unlikely that any other freshly killed Shoanti are in the Dead Warrens today, so that should be a dead giveaway."

EVENT 14: A LOVELY DAY FOR AN EXECUTION

The final event of this chapter, the attempted execution of the queen's scapegoat, takes place once all other plots and encounters in this chapter have concluded. Once the scapegoat (be she Trinia or another) is in custody, you should set the date of the execution so that the PCs have enough time to finish off the last bits of this chapter (which should, in theory, just be the exploration of the Dead Warrens), but if the execution occurs before this chapter is concluded, that's fine—there's plenty of wiggle room in the timing between chapters to let the PCs finish up here before the plague begins to spread in Chapter 2.

Full details on the execution itself are presented in the Chapter Conclusion section on page 66.

PART 3

BLOOD AND BONES

Although things start to settle down in Korvosa after the king's death, it swiftly becomes obvious that the city has changed significantly during its brush with anarchy. City guards have shirked their duties to become part of the problem. Established dens of criminal activity ironically become some of the safest places in Korvosa. And those who have preyed upon the weak and unfortunate of the city find new opportunities to bring misery to their victims.

This part of "Edge of Anarchy" includes three expanded encounter areas the PCs are sent to investigate over the course of the chapter: an abandoned butcher's shop called All The World's Meat, a shady bazaar of vice called Eel's End, and a dangerous dungeon of traps and monsters called the Dead Warrens.

B ALL THE WORLD'S MEAT

Sergeant Verik Vancaskerkin is not brilliant by any stretch of the imagination, but he has always been opportunistic. The sergeant probably should have hung his ambitions up the first time he was contacted by a woman named Meliya Arkona, but the sensuous prodigal daughter of the powerful Arkona family proved most persuasive.

The Arkonas are one of Korvosa's oldest noble families, and thanks to their strong ties and regular trade with the distant country of Vudra, they're one of Korvosa's wealthiest. Rare and exotic imports from Vudra guarantee the Arkonas' continued wealth, and it was on this foundation that the family rose in power to become the de facto rulers of Old Korvosa, the large island just north of the city proper. The family's own open acceptance of all manner of vice has certainly influenced the growth of Old Korvosa, yet it nevertheless keeps things under relatively tight control, so the Arkonas are viewed as heroes by much of Old Korvosa's lower class and as troublemakers by most of the rest of the city. But the Arkonas' true secret is one of Korvosa's best kept—the leaders of this family are rakshasas.

One of these rakshasas is a woman named Vimanda, and it is in her guise as Meliya Arkona that she's been stealthily infiltrating dozens of organizations and families throughout Korvosa, building a network of contacts she hopes to some day use to her advantage. Her chosen contact among the Korvosan Guard was a man of high enough rank to wield some power, but not so high so as to be the center of attention—Verik Vancaskerkin.

It was through Vimanda's contacts and her pulling of strings that Verik blazed through the lower ranks to

make watch sergeant. With little more going for him than a fit physique, piercing eyes, and a winning smile, Vancaskerkin has done well for himself, but he has set his sights higher, and he definitely doesn't know when to quit.

Right after Queen Ileosa ascended the throne, the Arkonas saw the end of the current monarchy blowing in the wind. With the right moves, they hope to topple Ileosa and claim the throne for themselves by installing a puppet prince. When the protests, strikes, and violence began, Vimanda quickly contacted Verik (who believes her to be nothing more than his secret Vudrani lover, Meliya) and convinced him to gather his closest friends, forsake the Guard, and claim control of an old butcher's shop. As the Arkonas suspected, food has quickly become a source of contention in Korvosa, with regular shipments of meat and produce from outlying farms cut off. Already, Vancaskerkin and his thugs have gathered a sizable following throughout Northgate, and when that following is large enough, the Arkonas plan to step in and mobilize an army.

Vancaskerkin is in his early twenties. He escaped early from the streets of Riddleport to seek his fortune elsewhere, leaving behind several siblings, but the only one he misses is his older brother, Orik, a strong role model in Verik's younger years. Last Verik heard, Orik had been forced to flee Riddleport as well, after some scandal involving a tiefling prostitute and an alchemist. Verik hopes some day to take the time to return to Riddleport and track down his brother, but for now, his secret duties to Meliya increasingly keep his attention.

The previous owner of All the World's Meat was arrested for tax evasion and soon thereafter died in prison. His shop remained in escrow with the government for nearly a year, boarded over and empty until Vancaskerkin moved in. Verik has taken to sleeping in the small upstairs office. His four accomplices spend most of their time here as well, sleeping wherever they can find someplace comfortable. The shop is located at 22 Stirge Street.



Should the PCs ask around on the street about Verik and his boys, with a successful DC 10 Diplomacy check to gather information, they learn that the five have taken to calling themselves the Cow Hammer Boys, and that their program of free meat during the time of unrest is keeping many families from going hungry. Furthermore, the PCs also hear that the Cow Hammer Boys hire out as mercenaries—if one wishes to hire them in this manner, one must simply ask about “the night’s special cuts.”

B1 SHOP FRONT (CR 1)

A sign bearing the image of a fat, smiling cow hangs above the entrance to this shop. Inside, a long counter runs over half the room’s width, beyond which a door stands ajar. A low bench sits against the east wall, while to the north a marble-topped table displays cuts of meat before a wide, grimy window. A few flies circle in the air above the meat.

This room is where Verik’s thugs hand out fresh meat to locals in search of food. The meat on display in the window is replaced daily, but by the end of the day the flies are present in force. This doesn’t dissuade the ex-guards from handing out these aged cuts to the day’s last customers, of course.

Traffic in and out of the building is heavy for the first hours of the day, as locals arrive in large numbers for free

meat. Stragglers wander by now and then throughout the rest of the day, but the free meat goes fast and most of those who arrive after noon leave empty-handed. Once the sun sets, the doors into areas B1 and B6 are locked, but lights burn in the windows of areas B4 and B7 for several hours before going out. Livestock (usually skittish-looking cattle or pigs) is brought into the pen (area B6) every morning just before the shop opens. The animals are butchered after dark and the meat is stored in area B3. Based on the number of animals that pass through the pen, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check or a DC 15 Profession (butcher) check confirms that there is an unexpectedly large amount of meat coming back out.

Creatures: The butcher’s shop is staffed by four self-important ex-guards who are more impressed with Verik’s rebellious nature than the concept of feeding hungry locals. They’ve taken to calling themselves the Cow Hammer Boys, and they enjoy the power of deciding which families eat at night. They’ve been talking among themselves about methods to use their newfound power to get rich, though they haven’t quite decided yet if they’re going to let Verik in on their plan. During the day, one guard stands at the entrance to the building, one staffs the shop front and hands out meat, and the other two handle the actual preparation of the meat in area B4 or tend to whatever animals they’ve got in the pen.

Two guards stand at attention here: Baldrago (a tall man with bushy eyebrows that merge into one just above his large, flat nose) and Malder (a wheezy man whose chainmail doesn't quite fit his ample frame). Unless the PCs are disguised as down-on-their-luck locals, both guards have little interest in handing out meat to them and gruffly ask them to "kick off." Mentioning "the night's special cuts" brings an immediate end to their hostility, and Malder nods to Baldrago, who closes the front door to allow a little privacy. The Cow Hammer Boys hire themselves out for petty thuggery—they ask no questions of those who hire them, only demanding a payment of 50 gp per person to be beaten. Although the guards never openly admit that those they beat are almost always killed, they certainly imply that fact by offering guarantees that after they visit the mark, their client need never worry about the victim again. What they never allude to at all is how they dispose of the bodies.

At no time do the Cow Hammer Boys let anyone up to talk to Verik. The reason for this is simple—Verik doesn't know about the renegade guards' side business as thugs for hire, and they worry that if he found out how they've been getting rid of the bodies, he'd do the same to them. If anyone attempts to push through them into the back room (or if anyone blatantly refuses to leave the shop after being told to do so), both Baldrago and Malder raise their longbows and call out to area **B4** for help. They don't attack first unless a PC successfully makes it further into the building. If a fight breaks out, the Cow Hammer Boys open with shots from their longbows, switching to melee only if their enemies close to do the same. A Cow Hammer Boy reduced to 4 or fewer hit points attempts to flee into the city, and if at least two are killed, the others abandon Verik and flee as soon as they see proof of the other two's deaths.

COW HAMMER BOYS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male human brigands (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 266)

hp 15 each

B2 HALL

The stairs in this hallway lead up to area **B7**.

B3 MEAT LOCKER (CR 3)

The air in this room is stale, stinking of day-old meat and blood. Straw litters the floor, scattered to catch the drips from the meat as it hangs. Meat hooks are affixed to the walls and ceiling on metal rods. To the north is a low blood-stained table and two barrels of salt, while double doors stand in the wall to the south. An iron bar extends through a narrow hole at the top of the doors; the bar runs along the ceiling for five feet before ending at a vertical pole running floor to ceiling.

Meat butchered in the early evening is salted and then stored overnight in this room; by noon, it's all gone. If the PCs enter this room while meat is being stored, the majority of it consists of pork and beef, but at least a half-dozen cuts are harder to identify. A closer examination and a successful DC 20 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check reveals that these cuts don't come from animals at all, but from humanoids.

B4 KILLING FLOOR (CR 1 AND 4)

The floor of this grim chamber is strewn with blood-stained straw, and the reek of slaughter is almost overpowering. The room is a killing floor. Meat hooks dangle from a metal track affixed to the ceiling that allows the hooks and their gory loads to be moved easily around the room. In the northwest corner, a large hammer sits on the floor amid a permanent bloodstain. To the south, a bloodstained grill covers a wide hole in the floor. Just north of the grill sit two large vats of water, one boiling and one cold. Two large butcher blocks stand to the east next to barrels of salt, and in the southeast corner sits a reeking vat of cast-off meat and bones.

This is where the Cow Hammer Boys slaughter animals (and victims of their under-the-counter mercenary work), preparing them to be the next day's handouts. Animals are killed in the northwest corner of the room after being led in from the holding pens, then hung from hooks and hauled along the track over to the grate to be bled and skinned. The blood and the majority of the entrails are allowed to slop through the grate into the pit below. Once the animal is prepared, it is soaked in the boiling water and then the cool water to clean the carcass and slow decay, and is then hauled over to the blocks to be butchered.

The rusty grating in the southwest corner can be bashed through or pried up out of the ground (hardness 10, hp 15, lift DC 18, break DC 22) to allow access between the filthy tunnel below and area **B4**. The area below is a disused sewer tunnel that runs due east into the river, although the tunnel narrows down to a 4-foot-wide, mostly flooded passageway for much of that length. The Cow Hammer Boys dispose of the grisly leftovers through this grating, but anyone who drops into the tunnel below finds the half-flooded chamber to be relatively clean of debris—thanks to the scavengers who dwell there (see **Creatures**).

Creatures: During the day, there's a 75% chance of encountering the remaining two Cow Hammer Boys here. Parns, a broad-shouldered man with long sideburns, worked as a butcher before joining the Guard and meeting Verik; his skills made him the key recruit to Verik's plan. Parns welcomed the opportunity since the Korvosan Guard simply wasn't as exciting a job as he'd hoped. Now his job as a butcher and mercenary provides a perfect outlet for



his sadism. The other man found here is Karralo, a thin and jittery man with a sallow complexion. Of the four renegades, Karralo is the most unsure—he doesn't mind beating up folk for money, but butchering them to dispose of the evidence has made him increasingly nervous.

If Parns and Karralo aren't here during the day, they're instead in area **B5** or **B6** tending to the day's livestock. For several hours after sunset, the two are busy butchering animals in here. When victims of their mercenary work arrive, the unfortunates are smuggled into this room already unconscious or dead and wrapped in sacks. Parns particularly enjoys butchering humans, but Karralo has increasingly begged off this duty. Such grisly work typically takes place after midnight, but doesn't occur every day—usually the renegades "process" three or four victims a week in this manner.

Characters who choose to investigate the sewer tunnel below are quickly attacked by the three reefclaws that have moved in. The spiny aberrations are the only reason the room hasn't overflowed and the drainage hasn't clogged, but even then, the monsters are barely keeping up with the grisly offerings. Well-fed, the creatures attack only if they think intruders are attempting to steal their food—by searching through the remains, for example.

REEFCLAWS (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 234)

COW HAMMER BOYS (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male human brigands (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 266)

hp 15 each

Treasure: A successful DC 20 Perception check in the sewer below results in a disturbing discovery: a human finger wedged in a crack between two stones just above the waterline. The reefclaws haven't yet gotten to the finger, which still wears a mithral ring set with tiny slivers of obsidian. The ring is worth 500 gp.

B5 HOLDING PENS

Two foul-smelling animal pens take up the majority of this room. Each pen is defined by a wooden fence set with a gate. Inside each is a long water trough and heaps of filthy hay. The floor here is hard-packed earth.

These southern pens are meant to hold animals ready for slaughter, but the Cow Hammer Boys have taken to bringing in livestock directly from the yard (area **B6**).

Treasure: Under the water trough in the southernmost pen, the Cow Hammer Boys have dug a small hole in

which they hide their earnings from their mercenary work. Discovering the secret stash requires a successful DC 20 Perception check. The stash consists of several bags, which contain a total of 450 gp and 740 sp, as well as 800 gp worth of assorted pieces of jewelry and gemstones.

B6 CATTLE PEN

This large cattle pen is open to the air, and the stink of manure, mud, and animal is strong, despite the breeze that wafts through the stockade's wooden fence. To the south stands a roofed shed containing a straw-filled wagon.

Every morning, a delivery of 1d6-3 cows and 1d4-2 pigs arrives here, brought by ranchers brave or desperate enough to make the trip into the city despite the rising tensions. On some days, no livestock arrives at all, forcing the Cow Hammer Boys to gather their own meat or turn away needy customers. The animals found here are skittish but relatively harmless.

B7 BREAK ROOM

A round table sits in this room, surrounded by four wooden chairs. A stack of cards sits on the tabletop. A cabinet to the southwest hangs open, revealing a tangle of dirty clothes and blankets. Four thin bedrolls lie rolled up against the north wall.

This room is where the Cow Hammer Boys come to relax every evening. They typically play cards late into the night, then unroll their bedrolls and flop down anywhere there's space when the urge to sleep hits. The stairs descend to area **B2**.

B8 SLAUGHTERHOUSE OFFICE (CR 3)

A single large desk stands in the eastern part of this large office, transformed into a makeshift bed by a bedroll and several blankets and pillows. A chamber pot sits under it. A table and three chairs sit to the west; several papers lie strewn over the table's surface. One of the papers is pinned to the tabletop by an exquisite silver dagger.

Creature: This room has been claimed by Verik as his personal quarters. He's been living here ever since he fled the Guard when the king died, emerging less frequently as his paranoia that the Korvosan Guard might try to track him down grows. He spends an increasing amount of time each day drinking and sleeping, leaving the day-to-day running of the operation to his four accomplices (which incidentally gives them a lot of leeway to conduct their mercenary work on the side). Verik hasn't seen his lover Meliya since the riots began. He entertains thoughts

of making the trek to Old Korvosa to call on her, but he hasn't yet worked up the energy to do so.

Vancaskerkin is a handsome man who still wears his Korvosan Guard livery and armor, even though he abandoned everything it stands for by organizing his gang. If he hears fighting or calls for help from his thugs below, he doesn't immediately react—he assumes the Korvosan Guard has come for him, and spends several rounds trying to decide whether to make his rebellion official by joining the fight or to clamber out a window to escape. In the end, he decides to join the fight, likely arriving just as the confrontation with his thugs below comes to an end.

Verik's initial attitude is hostile. He refuses to surrender unless he's defeated in combat or his attitude is adjusted to friendly (this requires a successful DC 36



Diplomacy check or DC 13 Intimidate check—but if intimidated, he attempts to flee at the first opportunity if he's not bound or otherwise restrained). If confronted with hard evidence that his thugs have been murdering locals on the side for pay (the stash of treasure from area **B5**, the severed finger from area **B4**, or a confession from one of his thugs would all work), his spirit breaks. Realizing how much harm he's actually been doing, he drops his weapons and allows the PCs to arrest him. He won't reveal Meliya's role in the affair unless made helpful, in which case he finally admits that it was her idea to leave the Guard and form a gang to help feed the locals. He's quick to point out that her plan isn't bad—people need to eat, after all—but can't give a good reason why one of the Arkonas would want him to do this. In any event, Meliya cannot be contacted at this point and the Arkonas have no interest in discussing her current location or any supposed links to Vancaskerkin. If the PCs do try to make contact, the Arkonas begin keeping an eye on them. This is unlikely to have any immediate repercussions, but Meliya's brother Glorio (himself a rakshasa named Bahor; see page 440) certainly begins to plot the uses the PCs might one day provide for him.

Verik is not the only one of Vimanda's agents in this room. The silver dagger on the desk, a gift to him from the lovely Meliya Arkona, is in fact a raktavarna rakshasa, a spy of sorts bound to Vimanda's mind and soul. In the form of the silver dagger, the raktavarna has been keeping an eye on Verik, and if it sees him captured, it immediately shifts its observation to the PCs. The creature hopes to be claimed by one of them as treasure so it can report on the PCs to Vimanda at a later date. It radiates magic if *detect magic* is used, although an attempt to identify it reveals no powers. The raktavarna remains with the PCs as long as possible—it can be sold as a normal silver dagger (and if it is, it attempts to escape its new owner to return to the PCs as a different object) but doesn't function as either magic or silver for the purposes of creatures' damage reduction.

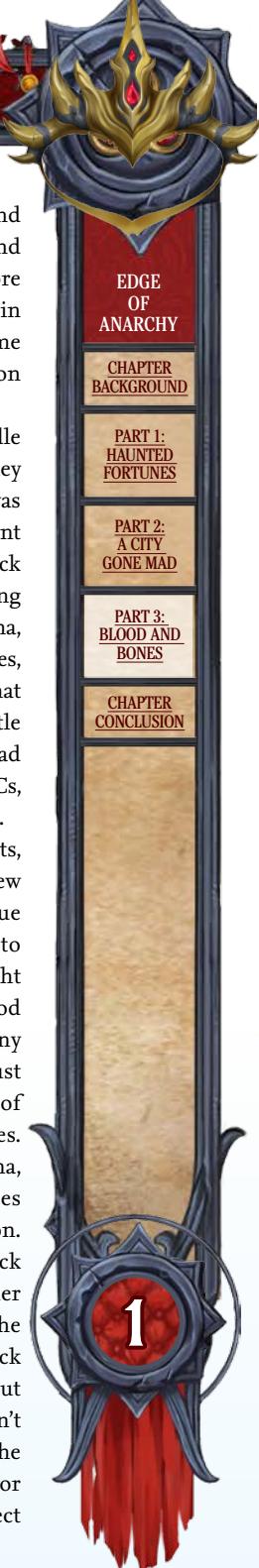
If the raktavarna is discovered for what it truly is, it reverts to its true form and attacks for 1d3 rounds, at which point Vimanda decides the spirit has outlived its usefulness and severs her link with it, leaving it to fight to the death on its own. Confronted with the dagger's true nature, Verik is startled. He admits that the dagger was given to him by Meliya, but claims he didn't know it was some sort of "snake spy."

VERIK VANCASKERKIN

XP 800

Male human fighter 4
CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; Senses Perception -1

CR 3

**DEFENSE**

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 34 (4d10+8)

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk spear +8 (1d8+4/x3)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +9 (1d8+6/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Verik prefers to fight with his longbow. He switches to his spear only if someone manages to engage him in melee.

Morale Verik surrenders if brought below 6 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)

Skills Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Ride +7

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds (3); **Other Gear** mwk chainmail, mwk composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 +1 arrows, mwk spear, 28 gp

RAKTAVARNA RAKSHASA

CR 2

XP 600

hp 22 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 229)

Story Award: If the PCs manage to bring Verik back alive without resorting to combat, award them 800 XP.

C EEL'S END

When Cressida Kroft initially asks the PCs to investigate Eel's End to learn more about the Chelish ambassador, Vencarlo Orisini is present and offers to accompany the PCs on most of the trip, since he's headed home to Old Korvosa himself. If the PCs accept the invitation, continue with A Walk with Vencarlo below; otherwise, skip ahead to the Eel's End encounters, which start on page 50.

A WALK WITH VENCARLO

Vencarlo Orisini leads a dual life: many know him as an outspoken critic of the government and an advocate of the lower class, but perhaps even more know him in his alternate persona as Blackjack, Korvosa's most loved (and hated) folk hero. Of course, very few living realize that Vencarlo and Blackjack are one and the same. As the PCs head north on their walk with Vencarlo, take time to develop him into a likable character—the PCs' fates will bring them back to him several more times over the course of Curse of the Crimson Throne. He pays particular

attention to attractive female PCs or any PCs who remind him of himself in youth (brash, skilled at swordplay, and humorous). Although his interest might seem little more than gentlemanly politeness, Vencarlo's true goals are in fact much greater, for as he grows older, he has become increasingly aware of the fact that Blackjack will soon need an heir.

If the PCs met Grau in **Event 6** and managed to handle the situation well, Vencarlo thanks them for how they dealt with his former student. He admits that Grau was once one of his most promising pupils, at which point a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check recalls hearing something about some scandal involving Grau, Vencarlo, and Sabina. If asked about Sabina, Vencarlo's eyes grow sad for a moment and then he smiles, saying only, "She found her true calling. I just hope that it's something that deserves her attentions." He has little more to say about his ex-students at this time, and instead tries to shift the topic of the conversation back to the PCs, using flattery and compliments as his primary weapons.

Since losing both Grau and Sabina as students, Vencarlo has seen little to inspire him among his new pupils, and it doesn't take long for the PCs to intrigue him. From Cressida, he knows of the party's exploits to date, and their heroism rekindles something he thought long dead inside his soul. Things had been pretty good in Korvosa for the last several years—despite what many might have said about King Eodred II, his rule was just and balanced. Now, though, Korvosa is more in need of heroes than ever, and Vencarlo is fresh out of proteges. He attempted to groom a successor in Grau or Sabina, but those attempts failed. In the PCs, he sees heroes he might be able to trust with Blackjack's tradition. Vencarlo suspects the best way to find the next Blackjack is to pick someone already half in the mindset rather than attempting to instill that mindset himself. The best nomination among the PCs for the new Blackjack is a chaotic good rogue, swashbuckler, or vigilante, but really, anyone who exhibits a love for Korvosa and isn't a blind slave to the law works. Vencarlo isn't tied to the traditional image of Blackjack; a hero of any race or gender will do in his eyes, as long as the will to protect the city and the city's downtrodden is present.

By this point in the adventure, you should have a good grasp on the personalities of your PCs. Vencarlo knows that adventurers lead dangerous lifestyles, so he initially picks any PCs who even vaguely meet his requirements as possible successors. Over the course of the chapters to come, he keeps his eye on these PCs to determine which of them would best fit the demands of becoming Blackjack. These characters should be nonlawful, nonevil characters initially, and should prefer an urban life over a rural or wilderness life. For now, he keeps his plans to himself,

but in time he will approach his chosen successor with this offer (see page 463).

When the PCs finally cross the Narrows and enter Old Korvosa, Vencarlo tells them they can find Eel's End to the east, on the first pier after the last bridge over the Narrows. With a swift bow, he spins on a heel and is gone.

EEL'S END FEATURES

A sprawl of light and sound marks the first (or last, depending on your orientation) pier of Old Korvosa. Glowing lanterns in the shape of dream spiders and coiled eels hang from pilings or lampposts, flickering through all hours of the night. During the day, Eel's End is quieter, yet the place never truly sleeps, catering to the vices and base needs of Old Korvosa at all hours.

The pier itself is 70 feet long, although its last 30 feet widen into a large square platform on the water. A ship and four smaller vessels are permanently moored to the pier; the ship is the *Eel's End*, a warship that serves as the stronghold of Devargo Barvasi and the administrative center of his entire operation. The four vessels are owned by various peddlers and captains, and they pay regular rent for the honor of attaching to Eel's End. Those who fail to pay or abide by Devargo's laws find their ship cut loose in the middle of the night, often in flames or infested with deadly spiders.

Eel's End (the name applies both to the warship and the entire collection of moored ships) is open and welcoming of nearly everyone. The enforcers and merchants here are naturally suspicious of well-dressed visitors, but their suspicion quickly caves to greed as they try to fleece these hopefully naive patrons. Only characters who are obviously affiliated with the Korvosan Guard, the Hellknight Order of the Nail, or the Sable Company (or, in short order, the Gray Maidens) aren't welcome on Eel's End. Since Devargo pays his vice taxes and polices Eel's End well enough that trouble here never impacts the city at large (including a strict policy of handing over anyone he realizes is trying to use Eel's End to hide from the law), the Korvosan Guard rarely has any cause to send members out to visit Eel's End. As a result, the PCs should find little problem entering.

Ironically, Eel's End is actually one of the safer, more stable locations in Korvosa these days. The riots haven't touched the place, and in fact, the increased need for escapism from the horrors of reality means that business is booming.

How the PCs get the information they seek from Eel's End is up to them—this chapter makes no assumptions about the methods used. Certainly, the safest route is to please Devargo with bribes and entertainment. A group could also sneak below decks to steal the information from Devargo's quarters, or could even fight its way in to

claim its prize (although this is a dangerous proposition for low-level PCs).

What's not as important is Devargo's fate. He's certainly a villain and an evil man, and many groups might feel ill at ease allowing him to continue to rule Eel's End. Full details on his floating stronghold are provided, even though you're unlikely to need them at this time if the PCs use Diplomacy to get what they need. If the PCs are (rightfully) sickened by Devargo's cruelty, they could well come back to finish him off at a later time in the campaign.

While his mastery at playing the system might frustrate those who feel he should be in jail, Devargo's effective immunity to the law has unwittingly removed a layer of protection. If the PCs attack and kill him, the Korvosan Guard does not press charges (in fact, several guards privately thank the PCs for handling the embarrassing situation). Setting the barges on fire is a riskier proposition, since that not only destroys the evidence the PCs need, but also results in criminal prosecution for arson and perhaps even murder, as the city's ambivalence toward Devargo's fate does not extend to endangering the public.

C1 EEL'S END PIER (CR 6)

The sound of carousing booms from the elegantly painted barges moored to this long pier. Large signs painted in several languages are nailed to pilings and hang from ropes slung between barges. The closest barge to the east bears a sign that says, "The Twin Tigers—Take the Tiger by the Tail and Try Your Luck!" Opposite that, to the west, a boat's sign says, "Welcome to the Goldenhawk—No Safer Stay in Old Korvosa!" Further to the southeast is "Dragon's Breath Corridor—Dream the Dragon's Dreams at Affordable Prices!", while opposite that is the "House of Clouds—The Caress of Our Lovelies Will Take You Straight to Heaven!" Only the largest vessel, an old warship to the south, bears no signage at all. Short rope bridges or gangplanks provide access to the decks of these ships from the pier and from the decks of other ships.

Eel's End is a rough place, where no one takes notice of armed or armored characters unless they're obviously agents of the Guard. Apart from being propositioned by prostitutes or accidentally shoved by drunkards, the PCs should have little problem exploring this area unless they attempt to sneak below deck on the *Eel's End*.

Creatures: Among the services Devargo offers to his renters is security. He employs a dozen human enforcers, all of whom started their careers as mercenaries, soldiers, or sailors but lost their jobs due to laziness, theft, or incompetence. Once they came to work for Devargo, though, they quickly learned the value of remaining alert and sober while on the job—those who disappoint the King of Spiders feed his ravenous pets in the hold of the *Eel's End*.



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The enforcers bunk in hammocks hung under sails on the aft of the *Eel's End*; during storms, they're allowed to spend their nights in rooms set aside on the *Goldenhawk* (area C₃). Once per week, an enforcer gets a day of shore leave, but at most two guards are on leave at a given time, and there are always 10 enforcers in *Eel's End*, ready to respond to an alarm. Of these, four patrol the pier and the decks of the five ships, two stand guard on the deck of the *Eel's End*, and four sleep in their hammocks.

EEL'S END ENFORCERS (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Human fighter 2/rogue 1

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 29 (3 HD; 1d8+2d10+10)

Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk sap +7 (1d6+3 nonlethal)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat The enforcers call out an alarm if a fight starts. Their goal in a fight is to chase trouble onto land or to force the miscreants into the waters below. Killing visitors brings too much paperwork and

investigation from the Korvosan Guard, so if they drop a foe, an enforcer typically ignores him and might even try to bandage him if she gets the chance.

Morale The enforcers fear Devargo and his uncanny mastery over spiders almost as much as they value the money he pays them. As a result, they fight until reduced to 2 hit points or fewer, only then attempting to flee to safety.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 16

Feats Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Toughness, Weapon Focus (sap)

Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +7, Swim +9

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ trapfinding +1

Gear +1 studded leather, mwk buckler, mwk sap, 19 gp



C2 EEL'S END DECK (CR 7)

The large ship tied off to the pier bears the name *Eel's End*; its figurehead is a coiling eel with a woman's head. Several drunkards, sailors, and revelers dance and drink on the large open main deck here, while the aft deck is relatively clear. A pair of large double doors bearing a complex painting of a spider allows entrance into the stern section of the main deck.

Only the aft deck is clear of carousers; here, four enforcers sleep in hammocks strung in the rigging above. The two additional enforcers who stand guard before the doors to area C7 stop anyone attempting to enter, saying that unless they're expected, the King of Spiders has no interest in visitors. A successful Bluff check is enough to convince the guards that Devargo is expecting the PCs, as is a successful DC 29 Diplomacy check or DC 13 Intimidate check (although with the Intimidate route, the guards nervously accompany the PCs into area C7). If the PCs indicate that they're here on Korvosan Guard business but that their interests lie not with Devargo but with a man who might be hiding out here, the PCs gain a +15 bonus on any Diplomacy checks to gain entry to the *Eel's End*.

EEL'S END ENFORCERS (6)**CR 2****XP 600 each****hp** 29 each (see page 51)**C3 GOLDENHAWK**

This small ship has seen countless crude repairs—its seaworthiness is dubious, but lashed as it is to the pier, it seems stable enough. The nameplate proclaims it to be the *Goldenhawk*.

Here, those whose endurance has been taxed by wild cavorting at Eel's End's can retreat to sleep it off. The *Goldenhawk*'s rates are good, only 4 sp a night, but the bunks stuffed into the lower hold are lumpy and cramped. Still, with Devargo's presence, nights spent here are relatively safe. A lisping gnome named **Tuggins** (CN male gnome expert 3/rogue 1) presides over the floating inn. Tuggins has a walleye and a patchy beard, wears a crumpled hat, and has an extensive collection of keys (though he has no idea what most of them open). If a fight breaks out on Eel's End, he hides under one of the bunks below decks.

C4 TWIN TIGERS

Two hut-like structures sit atop this barge, raucous laughter and periodic roars of victory sound from within.

The *Twin Tigers* is a gambling hall. Inside of each of the structures on the main deck, tables are packed with gamblers. Dice clatter, cards are dealt, wheels spin, and coins aplenty dance and jangle to the fickle whim of fate—knivesies is a particular favorite (see the sidebar on page 53). One of the four enforcers assigned to patrol is always found here, for fights break out more often on the *Twin Tigers* than anywhere else in Eel's End. Brawlers are typically thrown over the side, and on lucky nights they

don't have to worry about jigsaw sharks or reefclaws in the water.

The masters of the *Twin Tigers* are two dark-skinned human brothers wrapped in red veils. These are twin Vudrani men named **Anpugit** (N male human expert 4) and **Rajeek** (CN male human expert 2/rogue 1), entrepreneurs always looking for new games to add to their offerings. Of the two, Anpugit is the more garrulous and does most of the talking while Rajeek quietly hangs back and watches for cheaters or opportunities for him to skew a game in the house's favor.

C5 HOUSE OF CLOUDS

A single long structure sits atop the main deck of this barge—the double doors always hang open to reveal a large room decorated with throw rugs, large pillows, and air thick with incense and lit by red paper lanterns. The scent of anise, rosewater, and cinnamon pours forth from smoking bronze braziers set on silver stands, which are carved in the likenesses of slit-eyed serpents and proud hunting birds. Several scantily clad men and women loiter about the barge's deck.

The *House of Clouds* is a brothel run by a madam named **Halvara** (CN female half-elf expert 5). A patron talks to the men and women who work here until he finds one who strikes his fancy. The patron then pays a 5-gp fee, and the two retire to one of several private rooms in the ship's lower deck for 15 minutes of low-cost bliss. Halvara herself has been known to personally entertain wealthier customers (she charges 100 gp for her time, though). Rumor holds that she is Devargo's sometimes lover. Whether or not this is true, the rumor is enough—few patrons ever even think about causing trouble here.

C6 DRAGON'S BREATH CORRIDOR

This once-proud vessel, the *Dragon's Breath*, has been painted in gaudy red. A sign at the aft entrance reads simply, "Pass into the Dreams of the Dragon."

Thick, pungent smoke assails the nose below deck, the open interior of which is partitioned with silken curtains and filled with large beds and couches. Glossy-eyed patrons loll about and mewl, their minds burning with shiver, pesh, flayleaf, and other exotic drugs. A skinny, short man named **Bezzeraty** (CN male human expert 3) wanders languidly about the smoky room, wheeling a large hookah to and fro on a cart and muttering "Get smoked!" at anyone who enters the establishment. Many people mistake 3-foot-tall Bezzeraty for a gnome or halfling, an error sure to incite his shrieking anger and bring several enforcers running. Likewise, he starts shrieking if visitors



KNIVESIES

The ever-popular knivesies is the game of choice among the steeliest pirates, brigands, thieves, and scallywags in Riddleport. Its increasing popularity in Korvosa is in large part due to Devargo's enjoyment of the game.

Knivesies is simple to play. Two contestants stand on top of opposite ends of a long wooden table. Their right hands are bound to their sides with boiled leather straps, belt pouches are fitted to their waists, and a dagger is stuck in the tabletop between them. The game begins after a count of 10, during which time observers can place bets by tossing gold pieces (roll 3d6+20 to determine how many gp land on the table) onto the table and standing at the end of the table where their chosen fighter stands. As the game begins, each contestant rolls an Initiative check.

There are two ways to win knivesies. You can force the other contestant to fall off the table, or you can end the game with more gold than your opponent claimed. Snatching a fistful of 1d10 coins off the table is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Since each opponent has only one free hand, the first round is typically a mad lunge for the dagger, forcing the slower opponent to make grabs for gold. There aren't any more rules beyond this; most knivesies games devolve into tabletop brawls, with the first person to drop or touch the ground losing.

The game ends once a contestant is unconscious, dead, or knocked off the table; as soon as no coins remain on the table; or as soon as any coin is knocked off the table. When the game ends, an unconscious, dead, or de-tabled contestant is automatically the loser. Otherwise, the winner is determined by which person has the most coins in his pouch. At the end of the game, all money is emptied from the pouches back onto the table. Half the total is paid to the winner, while the remainder is split evenly among all of those who stood at the winner's end of the table.

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don't pay him the 5 gp entrance fee to enjoy his wares. Anyone who spends at least a minute in this smoke-filled area must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom damage, after which the fumes have no further ill effect for 24 hours. Whenever a patron passes out completely, Bezzeraty rifles through the patron's pockets to find gold to pay for his troubles, and if successful he calls upon an Eel's End enforcer to drag the unconscious body over to the *Goldenhawk*. Otherwise, the patron is quietly stripped of all belongings and dumped in an alley in Old Korvosa.

C7 THRONE OF SPIDERS (CR 6)

This large room, once a captain's cabin, has been converted into a throne room of sorts. The walls are thick with spider webs, in which scuttle dozens of spiders, some as large as a fist but most considerably smaller. These spiders seem content to stay in their webs and do not venture into the room itself, which is furnished with two sturdy oaken tables surrounded by chairs. Aft, a wooden stage supports a large leather chair covered with cobwebs and scampering spiders. A narrow door stands to port, hanging ajar and revealing a flight of stairs leading below. An iron birdcage hangs from the ceiling like a chandelier.

A hidden trap door just before the throne can be spotted with a successful DC 20 Perception check. This trap door can be opened by flipping a hidden switch in the arm of the throne (locating it requires a second successful DC 20 Perception check). Those standing on

the door when it opens must make a successful DC 15 Reflex save to cling to the sides of the opening as they fall in; otherwise, they're dumped into area C15 and are attacked by that room's denizens.

Creatures: This is the throne room of Devargo Barvasi, the self-styled King of Spiders. He is a tall, muscular man with shaggy black hair and a fierce glare. He accents his black leather armor with a steel spider-shaped shoulder baldric and a thick chain crisscrossing his chest, linked together in the shape of a spider. His signature weapons—gauntlets fixed with blades over the knuckles—glisten with poison. Now and then, spiders clamber over his skin, but he takes no notice. Whispers say that Devargo has the blood of fiends in him, and that he can communicate with spiders telepathically. In fact, Devargo's secret is an ettercap named Chittersnap, who lives in the chamber below his throne room. Devargo provides Chittersnap with a safe place to live and all the food and treasure he wants, and in return the ettercap allows Devargo to maintain his charade of being able to control spiders, when in fact that control rests entirely with the ettercap.

Once a smuggler from Riddleport, Barvasi crossed the wrong people there and ended up on the run for years before he found a partner in Stanris Sevenfingers (then called Stanris the Swifthand). The two had a murderous falling out shortly after they conceived of Eel's End, and Stanris was one of the first victims offered to Chittersnap when he objected to Devargo's decision to take charge. In the years that followed, Devargo earned his moniker well by collecting the secrets of many powerful personages

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throughout Korvosa and using those secrets to bend them to his influence. Key to his success are the regular shipments of shiver he supplies to Arkona family agents; in return, the Arkonas see to it that Eel's End's vice taxes are always paid on time. With an alliance with the Arkonas and no reason for the Korvosan Guard to object too loudly to his operation, Barvasi is living proof that sometimes, crime does pay.

Today, Devargo spends most of his time at Eel's End, entertained by lickspittles and sycophants, all of whom are petty scoundrels and thugs desperate to earn the King of Spiders' favor. An invitation to join Devargo in his throne room is both a blessing and a threat to an up-and-coming thief, since attendance is no guarantee of alliance and often results in torture, torment, and death. Devargo spends the majority of his afternoons and the first few hours of each night here, from noon to a few hours after dusk. He sometimes steps out to get fresh air, to visit the other establishments, or even to meet with Arkona agents or other contacts in Old Korvosa, but should the PCs arrive between noon and midnight, they find him here. After midnight, he retires to his quarters in area C14 to relax, look over the day's business reports (which are delivered to him nightly on pieces of slate), and eventually sleep—this is the best time to infiltrate Eel's End.

Assuming the PCs first arrive when he's here, Devargo is evaluating six thugs and cutpurses for recruitment into his enforcers. These six thugs are seated at the tables, enjoying a sumptuous meal and loud storytelling. The steel birdcage that hangs from the ceiling holds one of Devargo's latest acquisitions, a house drake named Majenko. The house drake was gifted to Devargo by one of his most recent recruits, and its torment at being caged lifts Devargo's warped and twisted spirits—when bored, he enjoys watching the dragon fight for its life against dream spiders. Devargo has grown fond of tormenting the dragon, and hears nothing of requests to let it go. He will, however, agree to sell the creature to a PC for the measly cost of 5,000 gp. If the PCs enter this room late at night when the chamber is otherwise abandoned, Majenko desperately begs to be set free. Its cage can be forced open (break DC 22) or the lock can be picked (Disable Device DC 25).

Although it's easy to get distracted by Devargo's cruelty and sinister nature, the primary goal of the PCs shouldn't be to kill him. All they really need to do at Eel's End is secure proof of any illicit activities Ambassador Amprei might be involved with. In truth, Devargo has a number of racy love letters to the ambassador from the wife of an important Chelish noble, letters that could end the ambassador's career (and perhaps even his life) if the husband were to read them. Devargo has been making a

fair amount of money blackmailing the ambassador and is hesitant to give up so lucrative a deal, so before he can be convinced to expose the ambassador, the PCs must give him a good reason.

As long as the PCs aren't overly antagonistic or insulting in their dealings with Devargo, he's willing to entertain a plea for aid, if only to show to the simpering thugs just how important he is. When he does, he asks one of the PCs to step forward to plead the case (so that this PC stands atop the hidden trap door). Allow the PCs to present their case and make their request to the King of Spiders, then have the character with the highest Diplomacy score attempt a Diplomacy check (Devargo does not respond well to Intimidate, and any such attempt simply starts a fight). Other PCs in the group can use the aid another action to help that PC—each attempt that equals or exceeds DC 10 grants the primary roller a +2 bonus, while each failed check imposes a -2 penalty (Devargo has little patience for fools). Devargo's response to the PCs' request depends on the result of that check, as detailed below.

DC 4 or Less (Anger): Devargo is insulted and offended by the PCs. He triggers the trap door into area C15 and then attacks.

DC 5 (Impatience): Devargo isn't impressed with the PCs, and he tells them as much, pointing out that information is a commodity and that his time and resources are valuable. If the PCs don't get the hint and bribe him at this point, he grows even more impatient and orders them to leave Eel's End. If they don't leave (and they still refuse to bribe him), he attacks. If the PCs do bribe him, increase the result of the Diplomacy check by 1 for each 50 gp worth of bribe they offer to determine Devargo's new attitude. For example, if the PCs get a Diplomacy check result of 12 and offer him 100 gp, their new score is only a 14 and the King of Spiders indicates that they should keep paying. If they then give him another 600 gold pieces, their new result is 25 and he becomes friendly.

DC 15 (Boredom): Devargo is mildly entertained by the PCs and admits he may know something of a delicate matter that involves the ambassador, but before he agrees to just hand it over to the PCs, he wants something in return. The implication is a payment of gold (see above for how bribes can adjust his attitude), but he also suggests a bit of entertainment. He calls for a game of knivesies (see the sidebar on page 53) between one of the PCs and one of the hopeful thugs in the room. Each time a PC wins a game of knivesies, increase their effective Diplomacy score by 5 until they win enough games to amuse him or they give up. Devargo won't agree to knivesies games between PCs.

DC 25 (Amusement): Devargo reacts as per the result for a successful DC 15 check, but he admits that he does

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indeed have the information the PCs seek, and that he keeps it below in his quarters. He also points out that while the letters have brought him plenty of “income,” he’s sure the ambassador will soon find a way to render the letters useless as blackmail material. He is thus willing to let the letters go for a mere 1,500 gp. With a second successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC can persuade him to lower his cost to 1,000 gp. If the PCs agree to the price, Devargo is delighted (see the result for a successful DC 40 check below).

DC 40 (Delight): If the PCs reach this point, Devargo claps his hands in delight and thanks the PCs for their generosity and entertainment, calls in four of his enforcers to watch the PCs, and asks the characters to wait while he goes below to gather up the information he’s promised them. When he returns in a few minutes, Devargo confides in the PCs that he learned of a scandalous affair Ambassador Amprei was having with the wife of an important noble back in Cheliax. Apparently, the ambassador and this woman have been corresponding since Amprei was first stationed here in Korvosa. When Devargo heard these rumors, he paid the man a visit. Devargo attempted to befriend the ambassador, giving him a gift of several vials of shiver and proposing open a line of trade with Cheliax. The ambassador refused and had Devargo escorted from his home, but Devargo pickpocketed the man’s house key as he left. He returned later that night to return the key and steal several of the ambassador’s letters to his paramour. Devargo has been selling the letters back to the ambassador at the rate of one every few weeks, taking great delight in the man’s discomfort whenever he visits Eel’s End to purchase one of them. The fact that the ambassador hasn’t gone to the Korvosan Guard and is attempting to keep his reacquisition of the stolen letters as quiet as possible says plenty about how dangerous the contents would be to his career. Devargo hands the last two letters over to the PCs with a smile and says, “Pleasure doing business with you!” He expects the PCs to leave Eel’s End at once—the longer they linger, the better the chances are Devargo gets fed up and attacks.

If combat breaks out, the six hopeful thugs compete to impress Devargo,

and as a result don’t fight well together. They might even compromise each other’s defenses accidentally by getting in the way of charges or by using each other as cover. Although eager to please Devargo, these thugs are cowards. A thug flees Eel’s End as soon as he takes any damage. Devargo’s own tactics are detailed below in his stat block.

DEVARGO BARVASI

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male human rogue 5

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +7**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 41 (5d8+15)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +0**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk spiked gauntlet +7 (1d4+1 plus poison), mwk spiked gauntlet +7 (1d4 plus poison)**Ranged** mwk hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6**TACTICS****Before Combat** Devargo coats the blades of both of his spiked gauntlets with medium spider venom.**During Combat** Confident and brave, Devargo begins combat by opening the trap door and dumping anyone standing on it into area **C15**. Once the trap door is triggered, Devargo leaps into the battle with his gauntlets, grinning sadistically as he fights. His enforcers are used to the sounds of battle and fights in the throne room and they don’t respond until Devargo raises the alarm or until the first hopeful thug flees into area**C2**. Once this occurs, enforcers arrive in this area at the rate of one every round until all 10 enforcers on duty in Eel’s End have arrived.**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, Devargo calls out for help from his enforcers, drinks his *potion of invisibility*, and then flees downstairs. He drinks his *potion of***DEVARGO BARVASI**

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cure moderate wounds as soon as possible and barricades himself in his quarters in area **C14**, hoping his enforcers can finish off the fight for him.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (spiked gauntlet)

Skills Bluff +9, Climb +9, Craft (alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +12

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ rogue talents (lasting poison^{APG}, swift poison^{APG}), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility, medium spider venom (4); **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk spiked gauntlets (2), key to area **C9**, key to footlocker in area **C14**, 79 gp

MAJENKO

CR 2

XP 600

Male house drake

hp 19 (see page 474)

HOPEFUL THUGS (6)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Human brigands (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 266)

hp 15 each

Story Award: If the PCs release Majenko, award them 600 XP. In addition, Majenko offers to serve the PC who let it loose for a year out of gratitude. At your discretion, it could even become a spellcaster's familiar or a leader's cohort, in which case this period of loyalty extends in duration as appropriate. Majenko has countless other house drake friends scattered throughout Korvosa, and as long as it remains a PC's companion, the house drake can be sent out to gather information at any time in the city. Each information-gathering mission takes Majenko only 1 hour to complete; it attempts a Perception check in place of the normal Diplomacy check to determine the success of its information gathering efforts.

If the PCs secure the letters from Devargo without resorting to combat, award them 1,600 XP.

C8 SHIVER LAB

Two large wood-burning stoves are built into the curving wall of the ship's hull here. Each is fitted with an iron bar on which dangle several cauldrons. Firewood is stacked to the north in a haphazard mound. Dozens of empty glass vials sit atop the mantle of each stove.

This room is used to brew shiver to supply to the Arkonas. With Chittersnap's aid and his own skill in alchemy, Devargo needs to spend only a few hours each week preparing shipments. The strange, bitter smell in the room comes from the cauldrons, which are boiling down a mixture of alcohol, water, and dream spider venom into several doses of the drug—a process that takes several hours.

Treasure: Among the empty glass vials on the mantles are six not-so-empty vials, each of which contain a dose of shiver (worth 25 gp apiece).

C9 BRIG

This foul-smelling room is empty, save for a mound of filthy straw seething with vermin.

Sometimes Devargo doesn't simply throw prisoners or troublemakers to Chittersnap. In unusual cases where he needs to keep someone imprisoned, he stashies the person in this brig. Currently, the room is empty.

C10 HATCH

This opening drops 7 feet into the bilge (area **C16**). A slimy knotted rope hanging over the edge provides clammy access to and from the bilge—a successful DC 7 Climb check is needed to ascend or descend the rope.

C11 FORWARD HOLD

Crates and barrels, and furniture in need of repair are scattered around this cramped hold.

The contents of the crates and barrels here are mostly food, water, and firewood. There is little of actual value.

C12 PRIVIES

Three narrow privies line the wall here. Access into *Eel's End* via the narrow chutes that open into the river is impossible for anything larger than Tiny (and even Tiny creatures must succeed at a DC 30 Escape Artist check to wriggle through the befouled openings).

C13 MEETING ROOM

A single low desk sits against the wall of this room. A large wooden door marked with a painting of a spider stands in the southern wall.

This room is used by Devargo to meet with more important guests, which doesn't happen often. (He has even moved the two chairs from here up to area **C7** so he can entertain more guests there.)



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C14 DEVARGO'S DEN

This wooden chamber is clean and dry. A four-poster bed with ornately carved posts and gauzy drapes rests against the far wall, while a single dresser and a round table and chair fill out the rest of the room. A wooden sea chest sits at the foot of the bed.

These are Barvasi's personal quarters; he flees here if things turn bad for him in area C7 above.

Treasure: The sea chest can be opened with the key Devargo carries or with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check. Devargo keeps his favorite treasures inside: a jasper studded amulet (worth 500 gp), a gold necklace fitted with emeralds (worth 600 gp), a mother-of-pearl horn (worth 50 gp), a *ring of feather fall* with cameo of a dragonfly worked in jade, a *scroll of blur*, an *elixir of love*, two pouches of *dust of appearance*, and six sacks containing 100 gp each.

In addition, the chest contains the last two scandalous letters written to Ambassador Amprei from a woman named Verania T vastiox, the young wife of one of Amprei's superiors back home in Cheliax. The details in the letters are quite salacious and exacting, leaving little room for misinterpretation. If they were to be made public, Amprei would be disgraced.

C15 THE SPIDER'S WEB (CR 5)

This dark chamber is riddled with dizzying tunnels and twisting corridors formed by thick cobwebs. The floor is a sticky, lumpy mass of webbing and dozens, if not hundreds, of bones—many of which appear to be from humanoid bodies. Some of the webs seem to shimmer and dance, almost as if reflecting rainbows in their silken forms.

The rainbow-colored strands are in fact dream spider webs, and contact with them can poison certain creatures (see page 477). Every square in this room contains dream spider webs, and any character who moves through the room must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save each round to avoid contact with them.

Creatures: Here, Devargo Barvasi keeps his greatest secret: the monster that allows him to control the wild menagerie of spiders he so adores. This is a disgustingly bloated ettercap named Chittersnap ("Chitters" for short). The fleshy abomination has made its lair here, enjoying the sport Barvasi provides when he dumps meals down into these dark, web-clogged depths. The gibbering monster has come to see Devargo almost like a father and controls the other spiders on *Eel's End* for him, ensuring they do the King of Spiders' bidding. If the ettercap is slain, the spiders on the floating shipwreck revert to their

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primal nature and begin hunting—not even Devargo is safe from them in this event.

Chittersnap is not alone here. He shares this den with an enormous brown spider and a pair of dream spiders (the same ones used by Devargo to brew shiver).

CHITTERNAP

CR 3

XP 800

Male ettercap

hp 30 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 129)

Giant Spider

CR 1

XP 400

hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

Dream Spiders (2)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (see page 477)

C16 BILGE

Murky water floods this filthy bilge, its surface dark and calm.

The bilge leaks terribly, and were it not for the fact that *Eel's End* is stoutly supported from below by several pilings (once supports for the pier), the ship would have sunk long ago. Water floods the bilge here to a depth of 2 feet. Devargo hasn't used this area for storage for years.

C17 SODDEN HOLD (CR 1)

This old cargo bay is partially collapsed. Only a soggy section of hull remains in the center of the room.

The floor in this room floats on the water; anything larger than a Small creature walking on it is enough to cause the rotten wood to collapse. Characters can use this area as a way to stealthily enter *Eel's End* if they discover it, although doing so requires a swim under the pier.

Creature: There's a 25% chance that a jigsaw shark is nearby at any time the PCs are using this entrance to come and go from *Eel's End*, in which case the aggressive shark immediately attacks.

Jigsaw Shark

CR 1

XP 400

hp 11 (see page 23)

D THE DEAD WARRENS

Korvosa's vast graveyard, a region known as the Gray District, is a mournful place even by day. The district is alone in being a place of quiet and calm in the face of the civil unrest, yet there is an unnatural stillness in the air, almost as if the graveyard were preparing for a vast influx of new dead. Nowhere is this ominous feeling more noticeable than in Potter's Ward, the final resting ground for Korvosa's poor and homeless. Mounds of unmarked



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dirt stretch far and wide, indicating sites of mass graves, while crumbling mausoleums from years ago, abandoned by their families as the Gray District expanded to the west, dot the bleak landscape, forgotten and empty. Mourners do not visit here, for the dead buried in Potter's Ward leave behind few who regret their passing.

Locating the entrance to the Dead Warrens is a relatively simple task with Cressida's information in hand. No sign of Gaekhen's body remains in the area, although a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals the presence of a man's tracks and a wheelbarrow trail. More interestingly, several smaller humanoid tracks clutter the site as well. These tracks lead into a mausoleum, where a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals a poorly hidden trap door in the floor that leads down into the dark. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check reveals the tracks to be derro footprints.

While the PCs may expect to confront Rolth in the Dead Warrens, these tunnels are not Rolth's primary lair, but rather one of several laboratory sites he maintains throughout the city. Currently elsewhere in Korpasa securing a key component for the completion of his first flesh golem (a *scroll of limited wish* that fate continues to deny him), Rolth left the Dead Warrens under the watchful eye of a small band of derros whose services he acquired after agreeing to take on one of their number as an apprentice. This apprentice, named Vreeg, is a gifted necromancer himself. Vreeg hopes to use what he learns from Rolth to eventually replace the human necromancer and use Korpasa as his own playground. In addition to Vreeg and his simpering derro kin, several of Rolth's other experiments and creations guard this laboratory, along with a particularly ugly ogrekin Rolth charmed long ago. Although the charm has long since worn off, Cabbagehead (as Rolth calls him) is now quite loyal to the necromancer and enjoys his current job as jailer for the prisoner pit deep in the Dead Warrens where Rolth keeps living stock on hand for his evil experiments.

Rolth is not scheduled to appear in this chapter, even if the PCs end up taking more than a day to complete their mission. Rather, he returns to the Dead Warrens some time after the PCs leave, only to find the place in ruins. It takes the enraged necromancer some time to discover who was responsible, but when he does, the PCs hear from him. More details appear in the next chapter, "Seven Days to the Grave," and on page 452.

DEAD WARRENS FEATURES

The Dead Warrens are dimly lit by patches of eerily glowing but harmless mold that fills the chambers here with a cold blue light. These patches of mold are cultivated by the derros, who find its radiance soothing and its flavor

delicious. The air in the Dead Warrens is musty and damp, with the stink of rotting flesh always present in the background (or in the case of some rooms, quite in the foreground). Several chambers and halls here are ancient Shoanti constructions, while others are natural caves dug by a now-departed tribe of ghouls. Side passages lead from area D3 and D9 to other underground complexes under Potter's Ward, but these areas are beyond the scope of this chapter (feel free to describe these tunnels as collapsed if you want to focus the PCs on the encounters presented below). The ceiling height in the warrens remains relatively constant at 6 to 6-1/2 feet unless otherwise indicated—a bit claustrophobic for some Medium creatures but not low enough to constrain mobility significantly.

As the PCs are soon to discover, recovering Gaekhen's body isn't an easy task, since Rolth has already harvested the only part of the body he needs to finish his flesh golem: the head. The rest of the body—the legs, the torso (and attached right arm), and the left arm—are found elsewhere in the Dead Warrens. Fortunately, Gaekhen's body need not be whole for Thousand Bones—but he does need all four parts.



D1 OSSUARY (CR 4)

This large room is supported by four wide pillars of stone. The ceiling above arches in a dome nearly twenty feet high. The walls are lined with skeletons caked into the mud—adult human bones mostly, but here and there smaller bones might be from halflings or perhaps children. Fifteen-foot-square pits sit to the east and west, each filled with a large heap of hundreds of bones. To the south, a crude hole has been gouged out of the wall, providing access to a tunnel.

This area is one of many ossuaries used to store bones. It was abandoned when the church of Pharsma finished construction of its cathedral and moved the primary ossuary into the catacombs below that structure.

Creature: Not content to leave the protection of his lair to the derros alone, Rolth animated several skeletons and posted them in this room. The skeletons lurk in the bone pits—four human skeletons to the west and an owlbear skeleton to the east. All are partially buried in the pile but can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Perception check before they clatter to unlife and clamber up the stairs to attack intruders. The human skeletons pursue foes throughout the Dead Warrens, but not up into Potter's Ward above.

OWLBEAR SKELETON**CR 2****XP 600**Owlbear skeleton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 250, 224)

NE Large undead

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0**DEFENSE****AC** 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, -1 size)**hp** 22 (5d8)**Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4****DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** bite +6 (1d6+4), 2 claws +6 (1d6+4)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**TACTICS**

During Combat The skeletal owlbear treats the narrow stairs as difficult terrain if it clambers up them and must squeeze to press between the pillars. Otherwise it attacks the largest nearby target each round.

Morale The skeletal owlbear fights until destroyed, but unlike the human skeletons, it does not pursue foes out of this room.

STATISTICS**Str** 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)**Feats** Improved Initiative**HUMAN SKELETONS (4)****CR 1/3****XP 135 each****hp** 4 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 250)

Development: Later in this campaign, the church of Pharsma secretly allies with the growing rebellion against Queen Ileosa and offers the use of the Dead Warrens, particularly this room, as a safe place to meet and plan.

D2 CRAWL SPACES

The derros use these tunnels to move quickly from room to room. Each of the secret doors that hide these tunnels can be found with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

D3 DERRO CAVE (CR 5)

Rank with the stink of sweat and mud, this cavern contains four filthy straw pallets and a low table covered with dice and a miniature maze of carved clay.

Creatures: Vreeg's four derro followers use this room to rest, relax, and eat. At any one time, two can be found here, playing a game of Rat Squish (a complex and cruel game using a rat, a maze, handfuls of stones marked with numbers, a hammer, and a pair of pliers). As soon as the derros notice intruders, they take up weapons and attack.

DERROS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 25 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)**D4 CORPSE DUMP (CR 4)**

The majority of this room contains a nasty-looking stretch of mud—a partially collapsed sinkhole—kept damp by rivulets of water seeping from the walls. A patch of solid ground extends into the mud to form an island, on which is heaped a reeking pile of body parts. To the north, a rickety wheelbarrow sits on its side against the wall.

Creature: Rolth lured an otyugh here with promises of a regular diet of delicious discards, which is how the derros dispose of extra body parts. When the PCs first enter this room, the otyugh is enjoying its latest meal as it wallows in the mud. When it notices the PCs, it cries, “Warm food!” in a slobbery voice as it lumbers forth to attack.

OTYUGH**CR 4****XP 1,200****hp** 39 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 223)

Treasure: Among the still-uneaten body parts on the muddy island in the center of the chamber are the



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broken legs and hips of a human—both of which are decorated with bold Shoanti tattoos. These legs once belonged to Gaekhen.

The mud here is a few feet deep in most spots, and takes quite some time to sift through in any thorough manner. A determined PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check, though, is rewarded with a few interesting trinkets left over by the otyugh's messy meals: an amber necklace worth 350 gp, a silver dagger, a wax-sealed *elixir of vision* in a metal flask, a *wand of spiritual weapon* (48 charges), and a *ring of swimming*.

D5 EXSANGUINATION CHAMBER (CR 4)

Three wooden tables stand in the middle of this room, their surfaces stained red with old bloodshed. To the east stands a ten-foot-wide hutch with wicker doors opening into a straw-lined cage.

Creatures: Many of Rolth's necromantic experiments, particularly the construction of golems, work best with body parts that have been completely drained of blood. The hutch in this room contains his blood draining “tools”—a nest of six stirges harvested from the Shingles. As the PCs arrive, a lone derro toils here over the freshly

dead body of a vagrant. The derro has just placed a fourth stirge on the body and, when she notices the intruders, she reacts with a shriek. Her first action in combat is to yank open the stirge hutch. The four stirges that are already attached to the dead body are content with their gorging and aren't dangerous, but the remaining two that buzz out of the hutch are hungry and attack the PCs immediately as the derro ducks into the secret tunnel and tries to flee to area D3 to alert her allies there. If she finds them dead, she abandons her post, fleeing down the western tunnel.

DERRO CR 3

XP 800

hp 25 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 70)

STIRGES (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 260)

D6 SKULL CORRIDOR (CR 5)

The walls and ceiling of this tall hallway are encrusted with dozens of yawning skulls. Their mouths open into dark holes in the walls.

Creatures: Two of the skulls along the walls here are actually the heads of a pair of necrophidiuses—undead creations Rolth crafted from the skulls of two of his older victims from his days as the Key-Lock Killer. These skull-topped skeletal serpents are housed in the walls, one on each far end of the corridor, their jaws wide open but motionless. After the trap in this room (see below) is sprung, they slither out of the walls to strike, gaining surprise against characters who don't hear the telltale rattle of their ribs against the walls as they slither out to attack.

NECROPHIDIUSES (2) CR 3
XP 800 each
hp 36 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 196)

Trap: Several of the skulls that adorn the walls here are part of a magical trap. Two rounds after a creature enters this room, the skulls spray acid from their open mouths. All creatures in the hall are targeted by two *acid splash* spells as a result. Rolth and the derros generally avoid the trap by moving from the door into area **D7** to the nearby secret door into area **D2**, entering and exiting the room before the trap triggers.

ACID-SPRAYING SKULLS CR 1
XP 400
Type magic; **Perception DC** 25; **Disable Device DC** 25
EFFECTS
Trigger proximity; **Onset Delay** 2 rounds; **Reset** automatic (after 10 minutes)
Effect spell (two *acid splash* spells per person; +5 ranged touch; 1d3 acid damage each)

D7 ALCHEMY LAB (CR 3)

The wooden tables here are stacked with vials, beakers, and other alchemical gear, although the southern one is heaped with broken vials and leans awkwardly on a hastily repaired leg. Three large cauldrons sit against the east wall, one of them upended. Its foul, rancid contents—old rendered fat—have spilled onto the floor.

This room is where Rolth performs his alchemical experiments and refines reagents and components for his necromantic research.

Creature: The fourth and final of Vreeg's derro minions works here at cleaning the place and repairing a table that was crushed when a berserk carrion golem tore through the room earlier in the day (see area **D8**). The derro reacts to intrusions with shock, spending the first round of combat in stammering confusion, unsure whether he should flee and report the intrusion or stay and fight.

In the end, he opts to fight, fleeing to area **D3** if brought to fewer than 5 hit points.

DERRO CR 3
XP 800
hp 25 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 70*)

Treasure: Several valuable items were destroyed by the golem's rampage, but a search of the ruins (which requires 10 minutes of work and a successful DC 20 Perception check) reveals a fair amount of surviving treasure, including enough material to cobble together an alchemist's lab^{UE}, 3 doses of vermin repellent^{UE} (this is the same foul-smelling mixture the PCs may have found in the old fishery—Rolth is his father's source for the stuff), two tanglefoot bags, 4 doses of black adder venom, a *hybridization funnel*^{UE}, 2 doses of *silversheen*, and a *handy haversack* containing three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of invisibility*, two *scrolls of false life*, and a *scroll of dispel magic*.

D8 STORE ROOM (CR 4)

The door to this room is boarded over, but can be broken down with a successful DC 24 Strength check or can be opened with ease if the boards are removed (a noisy process requiring 1d3 minutes of work).

This room, once a pantry, is in shambles. Broken crates and shelves lie strewn about the place, with the foodstuffs, firewood, and other supplies they once contained scattered across the floor.

Creature: Early in the morning, before the PCs entered the Dead Warrens and as Rolth made ready to leave for the day, his most recently created carrion golem went berserk. The creature tore free from its table in area **D11** and made its way here, smashing a good portion of the equipment in area **D7** before Rolth managed to trap it in this room. Rolth has added all of the alchemical gear the golem smashed to his shopping list. The resulting delay to his outing prevents him from returning to the Dead Warrens until after the PCs are gone.

Rolth intended to let the golem simmer in here for a few days to see if it recovered from its berserk state before he was forced to destroy it. If the PCs open the door, the golem emerges and attacks them at once. It still clutches a severed arm that it snatched when it first went berserk. This arm is marked with Shoanti tattoos—it's another fragment of Gaekhen's body.

CARRION GOLEM CR 4
XP 1,200
hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 136)

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CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE

paizo.com #44426907, Matt Lehman <lehmannm05@gmail.com>, Sep 20, 2025



D9 PRISONER PITS (CR 3)

This foul-smelling cavern is bordered on three sides by ten-foot-deep pits. From these pits wafts the rancid smell of excrement and decay. Each pit contains a few heaps of moldy straw, a wooden trough containing filthy water, a few rotting body parts, and a couple of still-living prisoners.

These pits are where Rolth keeps living victims until he finds a need for their bodies (or, at the very least, a need for their body parts). Each of the three pits currently contains two frightened, malnourished, and sickly humans, victims who have been imprisoned here for weeks, and the partial remains of a few others.

Creature: This prison is guarded by one of Rolth's more loyal minions, the ogrekin Cabbagehead. Hideously deformed and with a cruel nature to match, Cabbagehead has come to think of Rolth as a father, and wants desperately to please the necromancer by showing him how devoted and observant a guard he can be. His deformed frame makes him unsuitable for public uses, but he has taken to the care, feeding, and torment of this room's prisoners with a vengeance.

CABBAGEHEAD

CR 3

XP 800

Male human ogrekin fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 204)

CN Medium humanoid (giant, human)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 36 (3d10+15)

Fort +9, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0 (+1 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d3+5)

TACTICS

During Combat Cabbagehead shrieks and yells as he fights, saying things like, "Rolth give me big reward for your head, pretty elf!" or, "You go in pit now! Me feed you later. Maybe!" He fights bare fisted, pummeling foes mercilessly.

Morale Cabbagehead fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Perception +7, Swim +11

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1, thick skin, weak mind

Gear +1 studded leather

Treasure: If rescued, the human prisoners have little means to repay the PCs apart from their gratitude, but one woman, a somewhat successful cutpurse named **Tiora** (CN female human rogue 2), has stashed a nest egg in her home. Pickpocketing is what got her into this problem in the first place, and she vows to make amends for her life. Within a day of her rescue, she seeks out the PCs and offers them a *wand of cure moderate wounds* (3d4 charges) as thanks.

D10 LIBRARY

Two wide, freestanding bookshelves furnish this room. The shelves are filled with row upon row of carefully arranged tomes and scrolls.



CABBAGEHEAD

EDGE OF ANARCHY

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

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Treasure: The books and scrolls are mostly treatises on necromancy or the art of crafting golems, but there's also a surprisingly large number of books about diseases and plagues here as well. Any character attempting a Knowledge check on these topics while using these books as resources gains a +2 circumstance bonus on the check. The collection of books as a whole is worth 300 gp. Of more portable interest are two magic scrolls wedged between the pages of a thick picture book on humanoid anatomy—these are a *scroll of identify* and a *scroll of command undead*.

D11 STITCHERY

The nauseating mixture of decay and strange chemicals fills the air of this large room. Glinting saws, pliers, long stitching needles, and other surgical equipment are organized on shelves and benches along the walls. A sturdy wooden table in the center of the room supports a large humanoid shape—a thing stitched together from a patchwork of dozens of different bodies. The thing would stand nearly seven feet tall if it rose.

This chamber is Rolth's workshop, the place where he assembles the bodies of his constructs. He has built several carrion golems over the years (most of which he has sold to interested parties or uses to guard other hideouts), but the nearly completed flesh golem body strapped to the table is his first attempt at such a creature. The head stitched to the body is strangely small for its massive frame—a head crowned with brown hair and bearing a distinctive scar upon the left cheek. This is, of course, Gaekhen's head.

D12 ROLTH'S ROOM

This chamber holds a large four-poster bed and a simple writing desk, along with a full-length mirror propped up against one earthen wall.

Rolth uses this room to rest and relax as the need takes him, so he doesn't have to abandon his laboratory between long sessions of work on a project. He has other laboratories elsewhere in Korvosa—as a result, he keeps little of value here.

Treasure: Sitting on the desk is a curious but broken knife with a key-shaped blade. The broken blade itself is of sufficient quality to count as the masterwork component for forging a dagger, and is thus worth 300 gp. The weapon is similar to the one the PCs may have found in Gaedren's lair (see area A14), another of Rolth's signature knives. The PCs may not realize the significance of these blades until they finally encounter Rolth in the next chapter.

A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a hidden niche in the wall behind the mirror (this check is automatically successful if a PC specifically looks behind the mirror). The niche is mostly empty—Rolth keeps his spellbooks here only when he's within the Dead Warren—but a few items of value remain, including a set of masterwork thieves' tools, a pearl and silver snuffbox worth 250 gp that contains a single dose of *dust of disappearance*, and a *sustaining spoon*.

D13 VREEG'S CHAMBER (CR 6)

This dry, well-kept chamber contains a narrow bed, a relatively empty shelf holding only a few books and some bones and skulls, and a long bench. A man's torso, the chest bearing numerous tribal tattoos, lies on this bench. The right arm is still attached, and periodically thrashes and clutches at the air as if it were alive.



The torso and arm belonged to Gaekhen. Vreeg claimed them before Rolth could discard them along with Gaekhen's legs in the corpse dump (area D4), and although he hasn't yet learned how to fully animate the dead, the insane derro was still able to infuse a few fragments of negative energy into the torso to give it horrible, twitching life. The torso and arm thrash and claw if handled, making unarmed strikes at the rate of one per round (+0 mele, 1d3+2 nonlethal, 50% miss chance due to blindness). The animating force in the torso is fragile, though, so it has only 2 hp. It can be damaged by positive energy as if it were undead.

Creatures: The derro Vreeg dwells here, where he lives a relatively simple life. When Rolth is present, the derro follows the human around like a lapdog, ready to attend to his every need, but when Rolth is out, the derro's natural inclination toward laziness and cruelty takes control—he spends 2 to 3 hours per day tormenting Cabbagehead and the other



derros and the rest of his time here at rest, tinkering with his own necromantic experiments, or reading books he's borrowed from the library (area D10).

Vreeg is attended by a single human zombie, left by Rolth to serve the derro as a bodyguard. If the PCs left Gaedren Lamm's body unattended, this zombie is none other than Gaedren himself, whose body was recovered by his son Rolth and then animated to serve the son in undeath. As a mindless zombie, Gaedren won't recognize the PCs, but his appearance here should unsettle the PCs and provoke concerns over who might have had the desire to restore the old man to unlife in the first place.

VREEG CR 6

XP 2,400

Male derro necromancer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 70*)

NE Small humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+1 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield, +1 size)

hp 69 (8 HD; 5d6+3d8+39)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

SR 14

Weaknesses vulnerable to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee mwk dagger +7 (1d3+1/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Derro Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +8)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

1/day—*daze* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 17)

Necromancer Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8)

6/day—*grave touch* (2 rounds)

Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—extended *false life*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *scorching ray*, extended *shield*, *spectral hand*

1st—*cause fear* (DC 15), *chill touch* (DC 15), *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *sleep* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

Opposition Schools

Conjuration, Illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Vreeg casts extended *false life* every morning. If he hears intruders, he also casts *fly* and extended *shield*.

During Combat Vreeg uses flight to remain out of melee combat, casting spells and throwing undead from his *robe of bones* until cornered or forced into melee. At this point, he uses his *wand of ghoul touch* against foes, or makes sneak attacks against a character on whom he has cast *blindness/deafness*.

Morale Vreeg fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Turn Undead

Skills Bluff +13, Fly +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Perception +5, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +16

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant, Terran, Undercommon

SQ arcane bond (*wand of ghoul touch*), madness, poison use, power over undead

Combat Gear robe of bones, wand of ghoul touch (22 charges), blue whinnis (3); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, ring of protection +1, 38 gp

HUMAN ZOMBIE CR 1/2

XP 200

hp 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 288*)

Treasure: Vreeg's spellbook sits on the bookshelf. This tome contains all the spells he has prepared, plus every cantrip (excluding conjuration and illusion ones), *command undead*, *darkness*, *feather fall*, *gentle repose*, *scare*, *sleep*, and *water breathing*.

In addition, the derro has stashed a small collection of valuables he has stripped from the dead bodies he has handled. This collection includes two silver rings worth 100 gp each, a gold and pearl bracelet worth 150 gp, a mithral hip flask emblazoned with an etching of a house drake (worth 400 gp), and a *traveler's any-tool* ^{UE}.

RETURNING GAEKHEN

The PCs need only return Gaekhen's corpse to Field Commander Cressida Kroft—she'll handle the delicate prospect of seeing the body is properly handled and returned to Thousand Bones (including seeing to de-animating the torso if needed). This is for the best, as the big news bustling about the city as the PCs emerge triumphant from the Dead Warrens is that Trinia Sabor's "trial" has concluded. Queen Ileosa has announced that the assassin is to be executed at sunset and has invited many of Korvosa's nobles, military officers, and anyone of any real import to Castle Korvosa's public courtyard to witness the event.

Cressida Kroft wants the PCs to be there. Something about the whole affair doesn't sit right with her, and the way things have been going lately in Korvosa, Kroft worries that the execution might trigger another riot. When you're ready to conclude this chapter and present the execution, proceed with the Chapter Conclusion on the next page.

Story Award: If the PCs recover Gaekhen's body and return it to Thousand Bones, award them 1,600 XP.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Korvosa has been dealt a serious blow during this first chapter, and as the first chapter of Curse of the Crimson Throne draws to an end, the PCs should not feel that they've solved the city's problems. This last event—the attempted execution of an innocent—serves as a turning point for the PCs in that it gives them, potentially, their first chance to stand directly against Ileosa's growing power. This event, which takes place in a public courtyard in the shadow of Castle Korvosa itself, should play out not as a standard encounter but a sort of interactive "cut scene."

The execution it is not an affair to be missed. The toast of Korvosa is in attendance in garish gowns, fine capes, and enough jewels to blind the common citizen. The overall feel of the event is that of a grand ball or party, not an assassin's public execution.

Queen Ileosa emerges amid a great flourish and pomp as heralds announce her arrival with a fanfare of music and drums. She has fully accepted the mantle of sole monarch now, and carries herself with poise, style, and grace. She wears a green and white silk dress worth thousands of gold coins and is attended by a small army of striking guards. Chief among these is Sabina, although she is not immediately recognizable, clad as she is in a striking brand-new suit of full-plate armor with a closed helm sporting a flowing crimson plume.

Ileosa takes her seat in a high throne-like chair at one end of the public courtyard, while a guillotine stands ominously at the other. The executioner is a towering, muscular man wearing an executioner's hood and idly holding an immense axe. Whispers ripple through the assemblage—admiring comments on the queen's attire, predictions regarding how the traitor Trinia might comport herself, speculations on the identity of the armored guardian who stands at Ileosa's side, and, if you wish, even gossip about the PCs' exploits during the course of the adventure.

Then, as an ominous drum beating begins, the gawkers fall silent. The drum sets the pace for Trinia's procession to the executioner's block. As they reach the block, a guard removes Trinia's shackles and the hood, revealing a very frightened woman who bravely holds back her tears. (If the PCs hid Trinia, the prisoner revealed is a secondary scapegoat—someone who looks superficially similar to Trinia but is equally innocent of the crime. In this case, the following events play out more or less the same, as Blackjack has no intention of letting anyone be falsely executed by the queen.) Trinia is led up to stand before the guillotine, her arms bound behind her back by a leather cord as Queen Ileosa addresses the crowd.

"Fellow Korvosans! You have suffered greatly these past few weeks. Homes have burned, family members have died, and fortunes have been lost. I feel your suffering, for not only have I lost a beloved husband, but with each act of anarchy that followed, my heart bled more. This has been a trying time for us, yet the torment is at an end. Before you is the source of your anguish and pain. Do not be deceived by this murderer's timid nature—she is a black-hearted assassin. I offer you her death as a salve against the hatred and hurt you have suffered.

"And so, without further delay, let us usher in this new dawn with justice! OFF WITH HER HEAD!"

Yet just before the executioner forces Trinia into the guillotine, the man cries out in pain as a hurled dagger embeds itself in the back of his hand. As the executioner's grip on Trinia falters, a cry echoes through the crowded courtyard: "By the gods! It's Blackjack!"

An instant later, a man dressed in a hooded cloak and black mask springs up to Trinia's side. Using a dagger, he cuts the bonds on Trinia's wrists and then throws the same dagger down to pin the executioner's left foot to the wood platform. He then turns to address the shocked crowd.

"Yes indeed, my queen! Let us usher in justice, but let that be justice for Korvosa, not this shambles you call a monarchy! Long live Korvosa! Down with the queen!"

Blackjack's words cause the crowd to erupt into action. Some demand that he release the assassin while others call for the queen's resignation. Queen Ileosa stands stunned for a few moments, whispers something to Sabina, and then quickly turns to flee into Castle Korvosa, Sabina and a dozen guards behind her to cover her retreat. The remaining guards in the courtyard move to apprehend Blackjack, but the gathered nobles, thirsty for blood, make it difficult to move. At the same time, the executioner recovers from his wounds and lifts his axe over Blackjack, who seems to have momentarily forgotten the man in his apparent delight at having forced the queen to flee.



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INVOLVING THE PCS

What happens here is up to the PCs. Don't run this encounter as a battle, but think of it more as an interactive scene the PCs can take part in. Go around the table and ask the players what their characters want to do.

If their actions would do little to impact the scene, Blackjack notices the executioner in time and ducks out of the way of his axe, dragging Trinia with him. He clammers up a hanging banner to a nearby wall, hauling Trinia up behind him. As the two reach the wall, he swiftly drinks a *potion of feather fall* and bows to the crowd while backlit by the setting sun. Then both he and Trinia leap from the wall to make their escape into the city.

If the PCs help Blackjack, describe how their actions save Blackjack's life. When he reaches the castle wall, his bow is to the PCs in particular, and he even raises his rapier in salute to them before he and Trinia escape.

Although the remainder of this Adventure Path assumes that Blackjack and Trinia escape, it's certainly possible the PCs could attempt to hinder him as well. If the PCs take this route, have them roll attacks as necessary—if they roll relatively low numbers, simply describe how Blackjack and Trinia escape despite their efforts. If, however, they roll high, go ahead and let their actions be the deciding factor. In this case, Blackjack is captured and revealed

to be Vencarlo Orisini before being thrown into Castle Korvosa's deepest dungeons, Trinia is executed (although this time in a private chamber in the dungeons below), and things become a bit more difficult for the PCs in the chapters to come as you see fit.

Escaping the chaos after Blackjack's exit should be relatively simple. Even if the PCs' actions help Blackjack to escape, they need not fear any retribution from the Korvosan Guard. This is partially due to the chaos of the scene, but also due to an important shift in Korvosa's attitude. Blackjack has long been seen as a hero of the city, and the fact that he has taken up a position in such direct opposition to the queen causes many of those who supported the monarchy to begin to doubt their convictions. Soon enough, her true nature will be impossible to ignore. After Blackjack's daring rescue of Trinia, Queen Ileosa remains ensconced in Castle Korvosa for several weeks, which gives Korvosa the time it needs to recover from recent events.

Yet however safe the city might seem, its troubles are far from over. Korvosa is in the eye of the storm. Greater wheels are turning, and somewhere not too far from shore, a black three-masted vessel flying the orange lanterns of a plague-ship drifts ever closer to shore. Death follows it.