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Dedicated to Mike McArtor.



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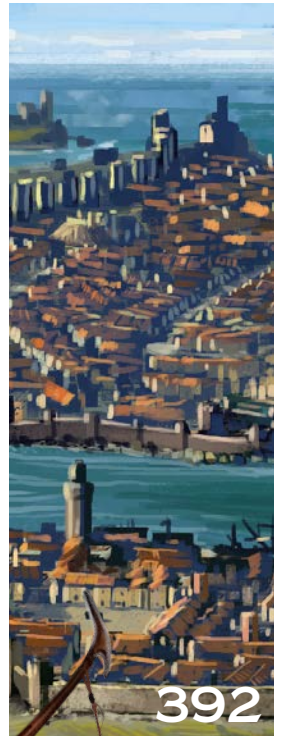
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## LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!

KORVOSA, THE JEWEL OF VARISIA, HAS LONG SPARKLED ON THE SHORE OF CONQUEROR'S BAY. ESTABLISHED JUST OVER 300 YEARS AGO BY CHELIAX AT THE HEIGHT OF THAT EMPIRE'S EXPANSION, THE CITY NOW COMMANDS ITS OWN DESTINY. A LINE OF KORVOSAN KINGS AND QUEENS EMERGED TO RULE THE CITY, ESTABLISHING AN INFAMOUS SEAT OF POWER—THE CRIMSON THRONE. RULERS HAVE SAT UPON THE CRIMSON THRONE FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, AND THE CITY HAS FLOURISHED; YET THE MONARCHY ALWAYS SEEMS ON THE BRINK OF DISASTER. THE CRIMSON THRONE IS NOT A PRIZE TO BE WON—IT IS A CURSE. NO MONARCH OF KORVOSA HAS DIED OF OLD AGE, AND NONE HAS PRODUCED AN HEIR WHILE RULING. EVEN THOUGH KING EODRED II CONTROLS KORVOSA MORE FULLY THAN ANY PREVIOUS MONARCH, THAT CONTROL REMAINS TENUOUS, AND MANY SECRETLY COUNT THE DAYS UNTIL THEIR LATEST KING FALLS TO WHAT THEY CALL THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE.

Welcome to the expanded and revised hardcover edition of Paizo's *Curse of the Crimson Throne* Adventure Path! This campaign originally appeared in print in volumes #7–12 of the *Pathfinder Adventure Path* line, and while those who have played through that version of this campaign will find familiar elements, much has changed. For the most part, these changes are additive—we've expanded greatly on the contents of *Castle Scarwall* (including the addition of a new and flavorful method of helping player characters learn more about the haunted fortress's tragic history), and an entirely new section has been added to the fourth chapter, allowing player characters to take on the *Gray Maidens* and the *Red Mantis* directly. Some of these additions are the result of feedback from those who played the previous incarnation, while others are elements we had to cut from the original publication. Chapters 2 and 4 in particular have been significantly reorganized so that their events can flow more smoothly while also encouraging a more "sandbox" style of play, where the players can pick and choose their path through the adventure rather than run along behind the plot, trying to keep up. Many of these revisions and changes were inspired by extensive feedback from the **paizo.com** messageboards, where countless GMs and players posted their thoughts and reactions to the original versions of the adventures.

If you're brand new to *Curse of the Crimson Throne*, now's your chance to experience a campaign that introduced numerous iconic locations, foes, and organizations to the world of Golarion. From the *Red Mantis* assassins and *Gray Maidens*

to unforgettable NPCs such as *Gaedren Lamm* and *Laori Vaus*, from the immense havoro to the insidious chained spirit, from the mysterious *Star Tower of Castle Scarwall* to the haunting expanse of the *Mushfens' Sunken Queen*, many of the elements of this campaign have gone on to be legends in their own right.

So have your players gather their blades and prepare their spells! *Korvosa* is about to hit some rough times, and without a new band of heroes to save it from the edge of anarchy, *Varisia's* largest city may well be doomed to suffer the effects of the *Curse of the Crimson Throne*!

## USING THIS BOOK

The *Curse of the Crimson Throne* Adventure Path is a complete *Pathfinder* campaign designed to take a group of PCs from 1st level all the way up to 17th level. During this Adventure Path, the party will face a wide range of foes and challenges, from confrontations with corrupt city guards and intense rooftop pursuits of fugitives to battles against powerful undead spellcasters and explorations of legendary castles. Devils and dragons, assassins and anarchists, sinister haunts and immense monsters, and a petulant but powerful queen await your players in the following pages!

The campaign is presented in the six chapters that make up the bulk of the book. You should make sure you're familiar with an entire chapter before running it for your group, as parts of many chapters can be played in an order quite different from the one in which they're presented on the page. The end of this book contains seven appendices designed to help expand the campaign or to present new rules elements, including monsters, significant NPCs, magic items, and many other options.

*Curse of the Crimson Throne* relies primarily on content from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* or *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, but many monsters from *Bestiary* volumes 2–5, along with foes from the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex*, have significant roles to play as well. Some NPCs have been updated with new, more appropriate options (the folk hero *Blackjack*, for example, just screamed to be rebuilt as a vigilante from *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*), and some of the elements from the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* (particularly the chase rules, but

A full-page illustration of Queen Ileosa, a woman with long red hair styled in braids, wearing a green and gold gown with a large white feathered collar. She holds a small pink fan in her right hand. The illustration is positioned in the center of the page, overlapping the text columns.

QUEEN ILEOSA

also the stat blocks for cities) have been adopted as well. The above rules can all be found online for free as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at [paizo.com/pathfinder/prd](http://paizo.com/pathfinder/prd). And while everything you need to know about the city of Korvosa to run this campaign appears in the relevant chapters or in Appendix 2, GMs who wish to add more flavor to their game should seek out a copy of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to Korvosa*, which is available online in PDF format at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com). Finally, this campaign assumes you're familiar with the world of Golarion, as detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*.

In addition, this book references content from numerous other sources—consult the list of additional supplements in the sidebar on page 9 for more information.

## CAMPAIGN SYNOPSIS

Curse of the Crimson Throne begins as a group of diverse characters are drawn together to seek revenge on Gaedren Lamm, a man whose destructive influence has impacted each of their lives in different ways. Yet with revenge against the aged crime lord complete, the PCs find their city plunged into chaos: the king has died, and the queen, a petulant, spoiled schemer named Ileosa Arabasti, now rules Korvosa!

Recruited by the Korvosan Guard, the PCs work to bring stability back to the city. During the course of several missions, they begin to uncover evidence that Queen Ileosa may not have the best intentions for Korvosa, but it isn't until a devastating disease called blood veil breaks out in the city that these rumors become fact. After helping to save Korvosa from the virulent plague, the PCs discover direct links between the queen and the troubles afflicting Korvosa, yet her plans remain nebulous.

A trip to a quarantined portion of the city reveals several awful truths, foremost among them that Queen Ileosa has acquired a powerful artifact, the *Crown of Fangs*, crafted from the teeth of an ancient dragon named Kazavon. The PCs must travel beyond Korvosa's walls into the dangerous wilds of the Cinderlands. There, after earning the trust of that region's natives, the Shoanti, the PCs learn the truth: Queen Ileosa has assumed the mantle of the long-dead Kazavon, and only the sacred blade that originally slew the dragon so long ago can secure the mad queen's defeat.

After recovering the magical sword from the depths of a legendary and devastatingly haunted fortress, Castle Scarwall, the party returns to Korvosa to face Queen Ileosa. Pursuing her to an ancient pyramid called the Sunken Queen, they must confront Ileosa and her most powerful minions before she can employ an artifact used by one of the runelords of ancient Thassilon to sacrifice thousands for her own immortality!

## CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE CAMPAIGN TRAITS

Korvosa, like any city, has its share of undesirables. Cutpurses, thugs, thieves, burglars, assassins, and lowlifes of every sort can be found in waterfront slums, creeping in the sewers, or hiding in the tangled rooftop-scape known as the Shingles. The Korvosan Guard does what it can to keep the city's criminals from causing too much harm, but the cold reality is that crooks will always outnumber the law. And that means some crimes go unpunished and some criminals see great success.

The worst of these, perhaps, are the city's crime lords. Dozens of them operate in Korvosa today, from the scheming leader of the Cerulean Society all the way down to the Varisian Sczarni thugs who preside over a gang of a half-dozen friends and cousins. These minor crime lords are often, ironically, the ones who do the most damage to Korvosa's law-abiding citizens, as larger organizations have little need to bother commoners. One such undesirable is Gaedren Lamm, a despicable wretch who missed his chance at being somebody big in Korvosa's murky underworld. Well past his prime, the decrepit thief abducts orphans and forces them to support his parasitic lifestyle with petty crime. Many members of Korvosa's lower class have had dealings with Lamm, and even a few of the city's middle class and nobility have had their lives complicated by this foul old man. Yet no matter what he does, he always seems to slip away from the guards and avoid answering for his crimes.

Gaedren Lamm's luck is about to change, though. For among those his actions have recently touched are men and women destined to become some of Korvosa's greatest heroes—the PCs of the Curse of the Crimson Throne Adventure Path!

Before your Curse of the Crimson Throne campaign begins, provide your players with the list of campaign traits presented on the following pages to choose from. These traits detail how the PCs have been wronged by Gaedren Lamm, and the campaign begins as these desperate, angry, and outraged heroes-to-be come together to do what the city guards cannot (or will not) do: see that Gaedren Lamm answers for his terrible crimes, be that in a court of law or at the edge of a vengeful blade.

The campaign traits all tie Gaedren to a PC, and represent historical snippets that explain how this detestable crime lord has affected each PC in the past. Each trait is categorized into one of six unique themes with two separate choices for each campaign trait. In addition to selecting one of these campaign traits, each player should select an additional character trait; see *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* for more rules on character traits.

CURSE  
OF THE  
CRIMSON  
THRONE

INTRODUCTION

## BETRAYED

You were hardly a model citizen as a child or young adult. Your reasons for turning to a life of crime may be varied, but what matters is that you eventually fell in with a certain well-connected and notorious crime lord named Gaedren Lamm. His reputation as a snake and a treacherous scoundrel was known to you, but for reasons of your own, you chose not to turn him down when he offered you a chance to work for him. You may have assumed you were an exception, or that you'd be able to handle him, or perhaps even planned to betray him. As it worked out, though, Gaedren got the upper hand and took you down you first. You may have served time in jail, may have been beaten by his thugs and left for dead, or could simply have had your profits stolen out from under you. Whatever the cause, Gaedren wronged you, and you are eager for the chance to get revenge.

Choose one of the following benefits.

**Hungry for Revenge:** You've never forgiven Gaedren for his betrayal, and have vowed to make him pay for what he did. Whether that's seeing him rot in jail or a shallow grave, you hope to taste vengeance someday. Whenever you deal damage with a melee weapon on a creature that is flat-footed, you gain a +1 trait bonus on the damage roll.

**Reformed Criminal:** You've given up the life of crime, and managed to talk your way out of any repercussions such as jail time or fines. You've told yourself that you would rather leave your past behind, yet the concept of seeing Gaedren Lamm pay for his crimes still appeals to you. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks, and Diplomacy is a class skill for you.

## DRUG ADDICT

Someone you know has become addicted to shiver, a drug distilled from the venom of tropical arachnids known as dream spiders. The drug induces sleep filled with vivid dreams, during which the user's body shakes and shivers, giving the substance its street name. You've always thought of shiver as a problem of the lower class, but then someone you know overdosed on the stuff. You've done a bit of investigating and have learned that the villain who got your friend addicted in the first place was a crime lord named Gaedren Lamm. Unfortunately, the guards seem to be focused on the bigger dealers. They don't have time to devote many resources to what they've called "a bit player in a beggar's problem." It would seem that if Gaedren's operation is to be stopped, it falls to you.

Choose one of the following benefits.

**Addicted Friend:** The addict is a friend or lover who might or might not have survived the overdose. Your research into the drug scene and local politics has given you a respectable education in street knowledge.

You gain a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (local) checks, and Knowledge (local) is a class skill for you.

**Personal Addiction:** You were the addict. You blame Gaedren for your brush with death and hate how his drugs are causing similar problems among other youths. Fortunately, your body recovers quickly from toxins, and you gain a +1 trait bonus on Fortitude saving throws.

## FRAMED

Someone you know and love was accused of murder. A supposed eyewitness account from a local fisherman seemed to be enough to seal the case, but the accused had enough alibis that sentencing wasn't immediate. Someone confronted the fisherman and discovered he was intimidated into providing false witness and forced into planting the murder weapon by the actual murderer—a local crime lord named Gaedren Lamm, whose thugs killed the fisherman before he could recant his testimony. Although this removed the key witness and resulted in the accused being set free, the stigma was enough to badly damage the accused's reputation. If you can find Gaedren, you're sure you can find evidence that ties him to the murder and can clear the accused's name.

Choose one of the following benefits.

**Dropout:** You were the one accused of the murder. Although you were eventually freed when a friend confronted the fisherman and got the truth, the damage had been done. You were forced to leave your school or church. As a result, you were forced to self-train and promised yourself you would become better at your chosen profession despite the spurning of your peers. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Spellcraft checks, and Spellcraft is a class skill for you.

**Family Honor:** The person who was framed was a family member, perhaps a father or sister. You managed to trick the fisherman into revealing the truth with your skilled tongue. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Bluff checks, and Bluff is a class skill for you.

## LOVE LOST

Someone you loved was knifed to death in a dark alley one night. You were called to the scene by the Korvosan Guard to identify the body, and as rough as that was for you, you also noticed a ring was missing from your loved one's finger. Whoever murdered your loved one stole that ring—you're convinced of it. You've done some investigation on your own and recently found the ring for sale at a local merchant's shop. To your great frustration, you can't yet afford the 500 gp to buy it back, but the merchant did tell you from whom he purchased the ring: a man named Gaedren Lamm. It seems likely this criminal killed your loved one, or at the very least, he knows who did. The only problem is finding him.

Choose one of the following benefits.

**All Alone:** The murder victim was a lover. With your lover's death, a part of you died as well, leaving you haunted, grim, and prone to dark musings. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Intimidate checks, and Intimidate is a class skill for you.

**Orphaned:** The murder victim was your only surviving parent. You had to work hard to make ends meet for yourself and any siblings, and often had to scavenge for food. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Survival checks, and Survival is a class skill for you.

### MISSING CHILD

You suspect that a child you know has been abducted by Gaedren Lamm. Whatever the relationship, you've heard rumors about "Lamm's Lambs," and of how the old man uses children as pickpockets and agents for his crimes. You've even heard rumors that the child you're looking for has been spotted in the marketplaces in the company of known cutpurses and pickpockets. Although the Korvosan Guard has been understanding of your plight, it has its hands full with "more important" matters these days, it seems, and has not yet been able to learn anything more about Gaedren. No one else is interested in bringing Gaedren down and rescuing his victims—that task falls to you. Yet where could the old scoundrel be hiding?

Choose one of the following benefits.

**Missing Sibling:** The missing child is a brother or sister. Although everyone else has given up hope, you believe your sibling still lives. Your constant search for the missing sibling has developed into great skill at rumormongering and finding out information from others. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Sense Motive checks, and Sense Motive is a class skill for you.

**Missing Son or Daughter:** The missing child is your own son or daughter, a niece or nephew, or a child you were charged with protecting. The child was abducted during a trip to the market or other daily event. Your stubbornness and long hours spent searching for rumors grant you a +1 trait bonus on Will saves.

### UNHAPPY CHILDHOOD

You spent a period of time as one of Gaedren Lamm's enslaved orphans, doing all manner of dirty work for him. Maybe you were abducted from your parent's home or during a trip to the market. Perhaps the irresponsible matron who ruled your orphanage traded you to him in return for a desperately needed financial loan. Or perhaps you, like most of Gaedren's slaves, were merely a child of the street who succumbed to his promise of regular meals and a roof in return for what he said would be "a little light work." Whatever the case, you spent several years of your life

## BOOK REFERENCES

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Every effort has been made to include all pertinent rules information to minimize the amount of books you'll need to reference during play at the table. Yet if you wish to dig deep into the stat blocks or expand upon the encounters, events, and options presented in this campaign, you can use the following references to do so at your whim.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3
<i>Bestiary 5</i>	B5
<i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i>	ISWG
<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Ultimate Intrigue</i>	UI
<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM

as one of "Lamm's Lambs" before escaping. You've nursed a grudge against the old man ever since.

Choose one of the following benefits.

**Religious:** Today, while on a job for Gaedren, you found a holy symbol of the god you worship, and intrigued by it, you snuck off to attend services. When Gaedren found out, he beat you to within an inch of your life and broke your holy symbol. Your faith let you block out the pain, and you escaped his control and took shelter in the church, where you spent the rest of your youth. You gain a +2 trait bonus on concentration checks and Constitution checks to stabilize at negative hit points.

**Tortured:** After you made one too many errors, Gaedren tortured you and left you for dead in a garbage heap. Your scars and memories have motivated you to hone your reaction speed and make you rather jumpy. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Reflex saves.

### CAMPAIGN TRAIT XP REWARDS

Early in the campaign, the PCs have opportunities to see closure to certain aspects of their campaign traits. These are called out in the text—as the PCs accomplish these goals, they'll earn the entire party additional experience points. Each PC who accomplishes a campaign trait goal earns the party 400 XP. If all PCs accomplish their goals, the party earns the maximum potential reward of 400 XP per player.