

The Crimson Ledger of Ecktoria

Political Intrigue in the Marble City

A Fate's Edge One-Shot Adventure

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

All Premise: The legendary Crimson Codex, containing every secret of Ecktoria's elite, has been stolen, causing cascading social collapse as magically enforced oaths break

Theme: Political intrigue, social collapse, and the power of truth

Focus: Social & Investigation

Combat: Low Combat Optional

Length: One-Shot

PREMISE & TONE

In the marble forums of Ecktoria, where the Utaran Empire's ghosts still echo through colonnaded halls, the city's greatest scandal isn't political—it's literary. The Crimson Codex, a legendary book of forbidden knowledge said to contain every secret, every lie, and every truth that could destroy the city's elite, has been stolen from the Library of Keys.

But this isn't just any theft. The Codex was bound in oaths—literally. Each page was a magically enforced secret, kept by the weight of sworn vows. Now those oaths are breaking, and as they do, Ecktoria's power structure is crumbling. Senators confess to treason in their sleep, merchants reveal the locations of their hidden vaults, and the High Priest of the Everflame begins preaching heretical sermons about the "true" history of the Empire.

THE HOOK

The PCs are hired by Livaea, the Crimson Courtier, to recover the Codex before the city tears itself apart. But Livaea has her own agenda—the Codex contains the location of the Red Branch, a splinter faction of the old Utaran nobility who vanished centuries ago but may hold the key to restoring the Empire.

The twist? The theft was orchestrated by Inaea, Angel of the Spider, working through a network of blackmail victims who finally found the courage to fight back. The breaking oaths aren't a bug—they're a feature. And the Codex is writing itself as it's read, with each secret revealed adding new pages of devastating truths.

FRONTS & CLOCKS

Secrets Unbound [6/8]

This clock tracks the cascading revelation of secrets throughout Ecktoria.

- **Advances when:** Major secret revealed, failed social manipulation (DV 4+), Patron Rite affecting social structures, choosing Inaea's path over Livaea's
- **Segments:**
 1. Minor scandals emerge; gossip spreads faster
 2. Moderate revelations; one significant NPC makes public confession
 3. Major social disruption; alliance breaks or forms
 4. City-wide chaos; multiple factions in conflict
 5. Institutional collapse; key organizations cease functioning
 6. Catastrophic breakdown; city government paralyzed

Codex Rewriting [4/6]

This clock represents the Codex's active response to events.

- **Advances when:** PCs read 2+ pages, 3+ NPCs make major revelations, Patron's agenda advances significantly, Secrets Unbound advances 2+ segments
- **Segments:**
 1. New minor secret appears in margins
 2. Codex gains ability to reveal one specific truth
 3. Major new chapter appears with game-changing information
 4. Codex becomes actively hostile to readers

KEY NPCs

Livaea

Tags: Patron, Social Manipulator, Elegant Destroyer

Approach: Presence 4, Wits 4, Spirit 3, Body 2

Skills: Sway 5, Command 4, Deception 4, Lore 3

Talents: Courtly Guise, Binding Vow, Sovereign Glamour

Harm: 6-clock; Armor: 2

Special: Glamour's Touch - +1d to social rolls, but cannot speak plain falsehoods

Agenda: Restore order through controlled revelation; stabilize key alliances; prevent complete collapse

Inaea

Tags: Patron, Web-Weaver, Truth-Bringer
Approach: Wits 5, Spirit 4, Presence 3, Body 2
Skills: Insight 5, Investigation 4, Sway 3, Lore 4
Talents: Strand of Inevitability, Snaring Filament, Web-Sense
Harm: 5-clock; Armor: 1
Special: Web-Sense - +2 dice to detect hidden connections and leverage
Agenda: Expose all corruption; break unjust bonds; let truth rebuild society

High Priest Valeria the Truth-Speaker

Tags: Religious Authority, Heretic, Chosen Voice
Approach: Spirit 4, Presence 3, Wits 3, Body 1
Skills: Command 4, Lore 5, Faith 4, Insight 3
Talents: Divine Authority, Prophetic Sight, Sacred Texts
Harm: 3-clock; Armor: 0
Special: Chosen Voice - Words carry divine weight, +2 Effect to declarations

PATRON INTERACTION**Livaea's Offers**

- **Binding Vow:** Stabilize a crumbling alliance. Gain +1d to social rolls with that faction, but mark 1 Obligation.
- **Sovereign Glamour:** Create a perfect social situation. Next social scene begins with Dominant Position, but generate 1 SB (Hearts).
- **Token of Favor:** Gain temporary ally's support. +1 Effect to one action, but the ally marks 1 Exposure.

Inaea's Offers

- **Strand of Inevitability:** Reveal hidden connection. Gain +2 dice to Investigation about target, but mark 1 SB (Diamonds).
- **Snaring Filament:** Set social trap. Next hostile NPC suffers -1d to social rolls, but you mark 1 SB (Spades).
- **Merciful Severing:** Break harmful tie. Remove one Condition or SB, but mark 1 Fatigue from the release.

ECKTORIA DISTRICTS - REACTIVE STATES**The Grand Forum (Law & Order)****p0.2p0.4p0.3 State Effects Social DV Modifier**

Orderly Bureaucracy functions normally Base DV

Chaotic Contracts failing, magistrates arguing +1 DV

Purges Zealous investigations, false accusations Desperate Position

Reconciliation Forgiveness sought, old debts forgiven Controlled Position

The Coin-House Floor (Commerce)**p0.2p0.4p0.3 State Effects Financial DV Modifier**

Stable Normal negotiations, sealed ledgers Base DV

Anarchic Frantic deals, bankruptcies +2 DV

Speculative Wild investments, rumors drive prices -1 DV (but risk)

Collapse Markets frozen, credit worthless Desperate Position

The Basilica of the Everflame (Religion)**p0.2p0.4p0.3 State Effects Ritual DV Modifier**

Orthodox Rigid doctrine, formal rites Base DV

Ecstatic Truth-seeking, spontaneous worship +1 Effect

Doubting Faith shaken, rituals uncertain +1 DV

Fanatical Zealous purges, forced conversions Desperate Position

THE CRIMSON CODEX - MECHANICS**Reading the Codex**

- **Risk:** Wits + Arcana DV 4. On failure, generate 1 SB. On partial, choose one:
 - Reveal truth but mark 1 Fatigue
 - Gain insight but generate 1 SB (Diamonds)
 - Learn secret but mark 1 SB (Hearts)
- **Rewards:** Successful reading grants:
 - +1d to Investigation about related topics
 - One specific truth about target NPC/faction
 - Advantage on social rolls against target (once)

Codex Backlash Table

When reading fails or generates SB, roll 1d6:

1. Your secret revealed to nearby NPCs
2. Target of your investigation becomes aware
3. Patron (Livaea or Inaea) gains leverage over you
4. New complication clock starts (2-4 segments)
5. Harm 1 (Mental stress from forbidden knowledge)
6. Gain permanent Condition: Truth-Sensitive (-1d to deception)

INVESTIGATION AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

The Web of Oaths

Create a visual map of key NPCs and connections:

- Political (red lines)
- Financial (gold lines)
- Romantic (pink lines)
- Blackmail (black lines with arrows)

As oaths break, lines snap or change color. Players can:

- **Sever** (Inaea): Cut one connection, but generate 1 SB
- **Reinforce** (Livaea): Strengthen one connection, but mark 1 Obligation
- **Redirect**: Change target of connection, but require Wits + Sway test

POTENTIAL TWISTS

The Red Branch's True Agenda

The exiled nobles aren't returning to restore the Empire—they want to reclaim their lost artifacts and disappear again, using the chaos as cover. The Codex might be their key to finding these items.

Reveal: When PCs investigate the Red Branch, they discover plans for a "quiet extraction" rather than a glorious return.

The Chosen Voice

The High Priest isn't mad; she's been chosen by the Codex itself to be its voice, preaching the "truth" it contains.

Reveal: During a religious ceremony, her eyes turn crimson when reading from any text, and she speaks prophecies that later prove true.

Personal Secrets

A PC's own secret is contained within the Codex. Reading it or being near it causes them to involuntarily reveal it, or grants the Patron leverage over them.

Implementation: Each PC writes down one secret during character creation. When Codex Rewriting advances, GM may reveal one PC secret.

GM GUIDANCE

Running the City

Make Ecktoria feel alive by:

- Describing changing atmospheres in districts
- Having NPCs react differently based on district state
- Using the Secrets Unbound clock to trigger district shifts
- Letting player actions have visible consequences on city mood

Patron Balance

Present both Patrons' offers as:

- Equally tempting within their frameworks
- Logically consistent with their natures
- Carrying clear, immediate costs
- Leading to different long-term consequences

Social Combat

Treat social encounters like combat:

- Establish clear stakes and consequences
- Use Position to reflect social advantage
- Let clocks drive escalating tension
- Reward creative solutions and roleplay

CHARACTER INTEGRATION

For Runekeepers

The abundance of oaths and secrets makes Oath-based Rites incredibly potent:

- **Binding Vow:** Stabilize crumbling alliances
- **Mark of Antlers:** Grant temporary authority in chaos
- **Revelation:** Pierce illusions but risk unwanted truths

For Cantors

The Cantor's Path can be used to "sing" truths or lies:

- **Hymn of Truth:** Force honesty in social encounters (+1 Effect)
- **Song of Lies:** Create convincing deceptions (+1d to Deception)
- **Chorus of Unity:** Calm conflicts (+1 Position to peacemaking)

For Invokers

Ritual magic excels at investigation and information gathering:

- **Reveal Rites:** Expose hidden connections or concealed truths
- **Ward Rites:** Protect against unwanted revelations
- **Command Rites:** Compel truth from unwilling sources

SESSION FLOW RECOMMENDATIONS

Opening (30 minutes)

- Establish the chaos through NPC reactions
- Present the initial hook from Livaea or contact
- Start Secrets Unbound clock at 2 segments
- Introduce 2-3 key NPCs with immediate problems

Midgame (2 hours)

- Focus on 2-3 major investigation threads
- Advance clocks through player choices
- Introduce Patron offers and complications
- Build toward Red Branch revelation

Climax (1 hour)

- Library confrontation with Codex
- Patron final gambits
- Player choice determines outcome
- Resolve major NPC storylines

Resolution (30 minutes)

- Show consequences of player choices
- Award XP for engagement and roleplay
- Discuss potential campaign expansion

"Ecktoria will never be the same. Whether it becomes a beacon of truth, a web of new connections, or a cautionary tale depends on the choices your players make."