

ingot worth 100 gp bearing the Cheliox coat of arms, 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 worth 150 gp bearing the inscription “For Emmah—the light in my nights,” a highly realistic and highly scandalous ivory figurine of two entwined succubi worth 450 gp, a masterwork shuriken, an adamantite arrowhead, an abalone-shell holy symbol of Shelyn worth 300 gp, a tiny 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 pseudodragon 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 1,000 gp, but more importantly, a DC 15 Knowledge (nobility & royalty) check reveals it is the possession of 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. Zellara’s spirit can sense great destinies in the PCs, and her guidance through this haunted Harrow deck becomes a key element in the coming adventures in this Adventure Path.

PART TWO: A CITY GONE MAD

As the PCs return to the streets from the fishery (likely to return to Zellara’s home to investigate), it quickly becomes apparent that something terrible has happened. Korvosa is in flames. Smoke rises on the horizon. The frantic clang of alarm bells sing out in harmony with a multifarious cacophony of screams, the clash of steel on steel, moans, and even the periodic detonation of arcane power. A wing of Sable Company griffon riders swoops overhead, angling toward Castle Korvosa at a breakneck pace. One of the badly wounded 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 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!” and “The usurper whore must die!” Through an alleyway, the party even spots a contingent of hellknights clad in dark

ZELLARA’S HARROW DECK

Aura moderate divination; CL 10th

Slot —; Price —; Weight 1 lb.

STATISTICS

Alignment CG; Ego 8

Senses 60 ft. vision and hearing

Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13

Communication empathy

Lesser Powers *identify* 3/day, *major image* 1/day

Special Purpose defend Korvosa

DESCRIPTION

Hand-painted images decorate this Harrow deck, the frames gilt in silver so that under lighting they sparkle and flash. Despite the worn condition of the card backs, the images on the faces are so vibrant they seem to move when viewed out of the corner of the eye. The deck itself handles with surprising ease, almost shuffling itself. A bent, torn, or lost card always seems to mend itself or reappear when no one is looking.

These features are subtle manifestations of the spirit that haunts the cards. In life, Zellara lived by this deck, and in death, she has become the deck. Although this magical Harrow deck wasn’t created using the standard method for creating magic items, it should nonetheless be treated as an intelligent magic item. Zellara can sense the world around the deck via sight and sound, and she can communicate with anyone who holds the deck via empathy. She can create a *major image* once per day, often doing so to generate an image of herself manipulating the cards—in this manner, she can carry on conversations with other creatures. She can also identify a magic item’s properties if one of her cards is touched to it, as the spell *identify*, up to 3 times per day. When she does so, knowledge of the item identified manifests in the mind of one creature she chooses who is also holding at least one card, or she can opt to describe the item’s functions via a *major image*.

Zellara’s Harrow deck has a special purpose as well: to defend and protect the city of Korvosa, her home in life and in death. In order to attain this purpose, she can periodically perform powerful Harrow readings for those she has chosen as Korvosa’s defenders—the PCs. Consult the Harrow article on page 58 and the notes on Zellara’s reading on page 12 for details on how these potent divinations can help the PCs during this Adventure Path.

Zellara can suppress the deck’s powers at will and doesn’t hesitate to do so if anyone attempts to sell the deck or otherwise displeases her. At best, a foolish character could possibly sell the cards as a standard Harrow deck—thus, no pricing information for the deck itself is needed.

iron armor and horned helms pursuing a small gang of what appear to be looters. The city has gone mad while the PCs battled Gaedren in his lair.

The King is Dead

So passes Eodred II, second of his honorable name, and with his last gasp the Crimson Throne becomes the seat of Queen Ileosa, his lady wife. Yet many would see it otherwise. Korvosa is a fickle mount, and bucks even the canniest and most ruthless from its seat of power.

Eodred II's sudden death took the aristocracy by surprise—his health had been declining (due to the secret regimen of poison in his diet), but the sudden turn catches most of the castle off guard. Rumors quickly spread on the street—that he suffered from some disease beyond even the priesthoods of Sarenrae and Abadar's skill to cure, and that even Asmodeus's disciples were summoned from their pentacle temple in the deep of night to try their dark 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 broke out at the base of Castle Korvosa when the grim news of Eodred's death was proclaimed.

Desperate citizens, salty dock workers, soot-covered smiths, and all manner of tradesmen, already stifled by Eodred's spendthrift reign, roar at the thought of Ileosa taking the throne. Dock workers abandon the seafront wards and caravan men lee Northgate. Frustrated merchant ships and wagon convoys turn around when they find no one to offload their goods, much less buy them. Food and other staples trickle into the city, while thousands vie for the last sack of flour or bundle of cook-fire timber in the market. Riots erupt throughout the streets. Entire wards plunge into chaos. 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 stands at the ready with halberd and crossbow to repel would-be looters. The Acadamae closes its doors as well, shutting its students and professors within its walls and closing them to the rest of the city until order can be restored. In the space of a dozen hours, all of Korvosa's oppression and anger explodes into chaos. The city lies perched on the edge of anarchy.

Ill-equipped for this level of civil calamity, the military arm of Korvosa falters, and even the griffon-mounted marines of the Sable Company are pushed far past 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.

In a desperate attempt to regain control, Queen Ileosa invites the Order of the Nail into the city, paying the Hellknights in royal gold for their mercenary services. Yet the Hellknights are a greatsword brandished in a tavern brawl, and their brutal crackdowns restore order only by drowning chaos in blood, to say nothing of the fact that they bow to their own code and ignore the queen's commands whenever they interpret the law to be at odds.

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.

City in Turmoil

It is unsafe to travel through Korvosa during this time of strife. For the duration of this adventure, you'll want to periodically confront the PCs with examples of this turmoil, ranging from riots in the streets to monster attacks. The following table presents five possible encounters the PCs can come across as they travel the streets—these encounters occur at no set time, on no set schedule, and in no particular order. You can randomly determine which ones occur, or pick ones that fit the circumstances. Specific details for these encounters are left to you to flesh out. Note that while several of these encounters are relatively high EL for a 1st or even 2nd level party, in most cases, Korvosan Guards, Hellknights, and other help should be available in short order if it comes to it.

Of all of the following encounters, the only one you should absolutely run is the encounter with Grau, whose possible redemption can impact several scenes throughout *Curse of the Crimson Throne*. Try to have the PCs encounter him before they progress too far into this adventure.

Riot Encounters

d10 Roll	Encounter
1–2	Drunken Guard
3–4	Imps and Dragons
5–6	Mad Prophet
7–8	Meet the Mob
9–10	Otyugh Uprising

Drunken Guard: This encounter can take place on the street, in a tavern, or anywhere the PCs might run across a drunken soldier. The soldier in question is a man named **Grau Soldado** (N male human rogue 2/fighter 4). Born in Sandpoint, 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 swordfighters, a man named Vencarlo Orisini. Orisini got the boy an apprenticeship with a good-natured smith, and when he wasn't working, tutored Grau free of

charge in the art of swordplay. But ill fate intervened. Grau was not Orisini's only star pupil. A young woman named Sabina Merrin caught Vencarlo's interest as well. Though he willed himself against it, Vencarlo found himself wildly attracted to 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 misunderstandings, with Grau successfully engineering a duel between Orisini and Sabina, a duel that resulted in the loss of two of Orisini's fingers and a scar on Sabina's cheek. Sabina left the school, and when Orisini discovered Grau's hand in the events, 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. Yet for a time, 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 was a lean man, with packets of 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 weeks and 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 has hit him hard, but the riots hit him harder. A DC 18 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recognize 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 Volshyenek where his fellow guards can get him sober and cleaned up. Alternatively, a few *lesser restoration* spells 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 Volshyenek on his own in this event to make amends.

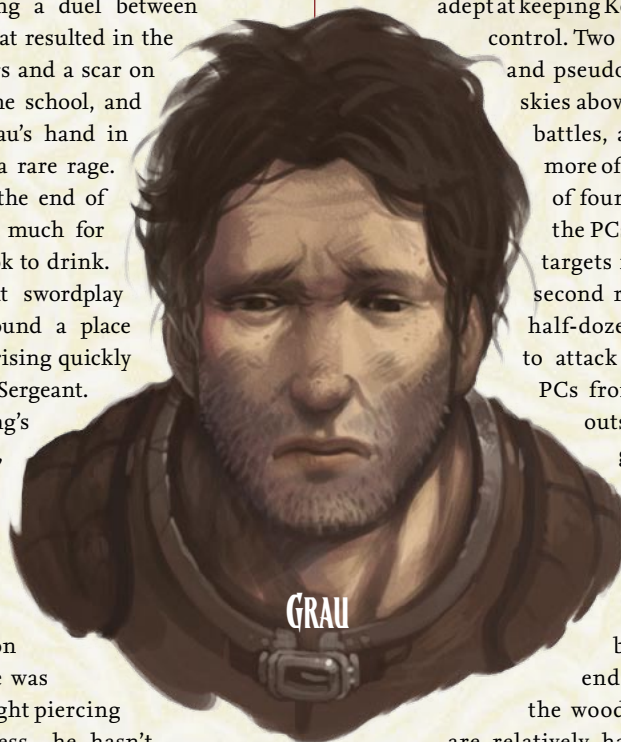
If the PCs save Grau, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 2 creature.

Imps and Dragons: A student at the Acadamae is required to undertake several dangerous steps in order to graduate—one of which is the summoning and bonding

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 in packs, often attempting to ally with or manipulate city gangs. Fortunately, the indigenous pseudodragon population, creatures who dwelt 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. Two or three times a year, the imps and pseudodragons take to flight in the skies above Korvosa and engage in mass battles, and the recent events trigger more of the same. In this event, a flight of four imps swoops down to attack the PCs, seeing them as possible easy targets for gold and mayhem. On the second round of combat, a flock of a half-dozen pseudodragons swoops in to attack the imps, likely saving the PCs from being savaged by the tiny outsiders. The pseudodragons generally avoid contact with humanoids and don't stick around long after the fight's over.

Mad Prophet: The death of King Eodred II also brings the doomsayers and end-of-the-world lunatics out of the woodwork. The majority of them are relatively harmless prophets content to lurk on their street corners and preach about the end of the world. A few are more sinister, preaching that “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 old man fixates on one of the PCs, convinced that character appeared to him in a dream, and that his nearing death during a time of great sickness and peril during Korvosa's “darkest hour” ushers in a new age of writhing doom. The insane prophet's ravings are without real basis, but the diseases he carries certainly aren't. If the PC he's obsessed with lets the old man grapple him (the mad prophet's grapple check is -2), that PC is exposed to a disease of your choice (*Pathfinder* #8 presents several options beyond those listed in the DMG).

Meet the Mob: Bands of rioting laborers run in mobs, battering anyone dressed in finery with snarling yowls of, “Die, dandy!” and, “Death to the Whore-Queen!” You can use rioting mobs as a way to steer the PCs along Korvosa's streets. 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 six men wielding shovels, chair-legs, and lengths of iron pipe surround a beardless young nobleman. One of the laborers, a fat bald man with greasy muttonchops framing his 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 young Amin Jalento. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check or a DC 20 Intimidate check is enough to 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 warriors. If the PCs defeat or drive off the mob, Amin thanks them profusely for their gallantry and tips them 5 pp, but he doesn’t stick around for long and wants only to return home.

Otyugh Uprising: A rumble issues from below, and a moment later the city street cracks apart, long fissures running across the bricks. The road bursts upward, casting chunks of rock 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. As this is a CR 4 creature, you’ll probably want to hold off on this encounter until later in the adventure—alternatively, the otyugh could burst up from below when a few Korvosan Guards or a Hellknight is close by to aid in the fight to keep the monster from running amok through the city streets.

What Now?

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 street encounters detailed above to impress upon the PCs how quickly things have gone bad, and if they really want to strike out on their own, the *Guide to Korvosa* 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: After defeating Gaedren, the PCs likely learn that Zellara has been dead for some time. Even if they don’t discover this, she’s the one who sent them to Gaedren—it’s logical to return to her to report on the mission’s success. Of course, when the PCs return, they find her home abandoned, looking as if it had been empty for weeks. No sign of food, the wall hangings,

the rugs, or Zellara herself can be found—the furniture is in pieces scattered throughout the room. If the PCs discovered *Zellara’s Harrow deck* in area A14, now would be an excellent time for Zellara to use her *major image* power to manifest before the PCs and tell them the truth, and of how she can help them in the dark times ahead (effectively revealing the various powers of her Harrow deck). If they 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 her deck. In any event, there is little more guidance Zellara can provide the PCs at this time, and nothing left in her home they can use.

The Queen’s Brooch: 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 and selling certainly does. He excitedly informs the PCs that the 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 his job by purchasing jewelry stolen from the queen, even in these doubtful times. His advice—return it to Castle Korvosa and claim the reward of 1,200 gp.

PART THREE: LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!

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 be once again relatively safe to walk, but a thick tension remains in the air. For the remainder of this adventure, riots, fires, lootings, and similar events continue to erupt, and certain small parts of the city remain out of control.

As a terrifying testament to the power of whatever mighty overlord ruled this land thousands of years ago, Castle Korvosa’s long shadow looms over the city. A magnificent achievement of architecture, the castle walls and spires rise high into the sky above. The entire structure looms even higher for its ancient foundation—a Thassilonian ruin 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 or 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 the Great Ramp, wait in the Public Courtyard to speak